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PART: 3

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Chapter 3.1: Introduction

The objective of this Handbook is to promote and support the wider use of dialogue to address societal challenges. We do not insist that organizing a dialogue process be the approach of choice in every instance, nor do we advocate a particular process design or process tool. Rather, we aim to promote sufficient understanding of dialogue to enable people to determine when dialogue is the appropriate choice—alone, or combined with other tools such as negotiation or mediation—and to develop an approach that is responsive to the context at hand. Each practitioner must make those determinations on the basis of the particular circumstances she or he is confronting. This part of the Handbook offers some perspective on what this may mean in practice, by looking in depth at three dialogue experiences in three quite different contexts.

Parts 1 and 2 draw extensively on case material to illustrate specific aspects of dialogue concepts or practice. The Overview of Dialogue Initiatives in Appendix 1 provides a broad cross-sectional view of a great variety of cases from many different countries. This section offers a more comprehensive picture of how dialogue processes unfold in the field. The case of San Mateo Ixtatán in Guatemala was a regional dialogue, sponsored and supported by the OAS, that sought to address the deep-rooted issues underlying persistent conflict in that area. The UNDP case of the Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals in Mauritania provides an example of the use of dialogue at the national level to help defuse a potentially violent political conflict and open the way for factions to begin addressing pressing issues of economic and human development. The final case presents an example of a thematically focused dialogue sponsored by IDEA in support of democratic constitutional development in Nepal.

Taken together, the three cases explore the application of dialogue processes to three major areas of need: conflict prevention, development, and strengthening democracy. They convey a sense of how these organizations use dialogue to advance their missions. At the same time, these cases illustrate how practitioners must respond to the conditions presented by the context at hand and the political nature of democratic dialogue.

Chapter 3.2: Dialogue on Peaceful Coexistence, Guatemala

In 2001, the OAS was called upon to assist an effort to resolve a dispute and prevent violence in San Mateo Ixtatán, a region of Guatemala still deeply divided by the animosities created by the country's long civil war. Rural villagers and urban inhabitants were locked in a battle for political control of the regional government and in need of negotiated agreements that would allow them to coexist peacefully. The aim of the dialogue process was to go beyond negotiation and to build the mutual respect and trust necessary to transform the underlying conflicts that were causing the political competition to erupt into violence and threaten a fragile peace.

Context

San Mateo Ixtatán is a municipality of the Department of Huehuetenango on Guatemala's northern border with Chiapas, Mexico. It is one of the most impoverished municipalities of Guatemala and was adversely affected and divided by the country's armed conflict, which lasted for more than three decades.

Most of the population of Huehuetenango is of Mayan Chuj origin, but there is no official population count because births and deaths are not regularly registered. The municipality has no reliable population statistics or documentation. During the civil war the civil registry was burned, registry books were re-compiled and residents had great difficulty obtaining personal identity documents. After the signing of the peace accords in 1996, which brought an end to the 36-year civil war, many displaced and repatriated persons returned to the municipality, significantly increasing the population.

The persistent conflict in the municipality is also rooted in the extreme poverty present in the region, the lack of state- or NGO-provided services, and an old struggle between urban and rural residents. During the armed conflict, the region's urban and rural communities aligned themselves on opposite sides: the inhabitants of San Mateo Ixtatán, an urban area and the region's official centre, supported the civil self-defence patrols; the rural villagers supported the guerrilla groups. Although the signing of the peace accords ended the civil war, these divisions and the bitter feelings they created remained strong.

In 1996, eager to overcome the social exclusion they had historically experienced, the rural inhabitants decided to challenge the power of the urban area. They organized themselves and nominated a mayoral candidate who campaigned on the promise that there would be an increase in state services such as development projects and infrastructure in the rural area. The rural candidate won the 1996 mayoral election.

The urban authorities, however, refused to accept the results of this election or to cede municipal management to the new mayor. In response, the departmental governor presented a judicial order to the town, authorizing the transfer of the municipal corporation to Bulej, the new mayor's home town. Ultimately, a force of more than 300 police and soldiers was needed to intervene in order to secure the transfer of the municipality's documents and registries.

In the three and a half years when the municipality was located in Bulej, services were provided and activities were carried out that mainly benefited the local community and surrounding areas. Local residents and those of neighbouring communities made arrangements to establish Bulej permanently as the head of the municipality. During that period, however, the mayor and the members of the municipal corporation were accused of mismanaging municipal funds. This situation weakened the mayor's authority, and tensions mounted among leaders of the rural area. As a result, a mayoral candidate representing the urban area won the 1999 elections.

The transfer of power from the rural to the urban leader created new tensions and conflicts. The outgoing mayor agreed to transfer authority to the newly-elected mayor but refused to hand in some record books and other official municipal items. In response, the new mayor reinstalled the head office of the municipality in San Mateo Ixtatán and brought legal proceedings against the ex-mayor. Leaders of the rural villages declared that the communities would be willing to solve the problem only when an auxiliary civil registry of the municipality was created in Bulej. The urban leaders refused to agree to this request on the grounds that acceding to it would entail the creation of a new municipality.

In 2000–2001, the Guatemalan Government made two unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a settlement to this dispute. In both instances, through a combination of miscommunication and mismanagement of information by government representatives, and inflamed tensions between the opposing groups of citizens, efforts to resolve the conflict led to violent incidents. In March 2001, facing the threat of a return to civil war in the region, the government formed the Presidential Unit of Conflict Resolution (UPRECO). Its mission was to respond to conflicts of national, state or municipal governability. At the departmental level, the Departmental Commission of Attention to Conflicts (CDAC) was created as a formal mediator to represent the government and to support UPRECO's work. Comprising the same governmental institutions as UPRECO, the CDAC began to address conflicts in the department of Huehuetenango. It also asked the Culture of Dialogue Program: Development of Resources for the Construction of Peace (PROPAZ), which the OAS had initiated in Guatemala, to provide technical assistance and support to its effort.

Purpose

From the perspective of OAS/PROPAZ, this situation called for a consensus-building dialogue, 'a collaborative and participatory problem-solving initiative designed to bring parties together in a proactive manner to generate options and reach mutually agreeable solutions to specific problems, where decisions are taken, agreements are created, and compromises are made'.¹⁹² There was a clear need for negotiation, but also a need for dialogue to address the underlying causes of the struggle for power between the rural and urban populations in the municipality.

It was believed that dialogue could address the pressure the population experienced as a result of a lack of attention to poverty, the absence of economic development and the suffering caused by the armed conflict. In the short term, dialogue was recognized as the best alternative to alleviate tensions between the parties to the conflict, avoid escalation and end sporadic acts of violence. It was also an appropriate means of tackling the controversies, improving the relationship between the parties and finding creative solutions to each party's demands.

It was recognized that the structural problems in Huehuetenango would not disappear instantaneously. In addition to compliance with the agreements reached between the two parties, there was a need for continuing development efforts to address those underlying issues. In the long term, the dialogue sought to build a strong and productive relationship between the leaders of the rural and urban communities, so that together they could address and resolve the municipality's problems as they arose in the future, without depending on outside assistance.

The Dialogue Process

The dialogue in San Mateo Ixtatán proceeded in stages from 2001 to 2002. To a great extent, the process and its pace developed in response to unfolding events in the region.

Stage 1: Awareness-Raising

Strategically, UPRECO/CDAC and OAS/PROPAZ decided that, in the beginning, it was necessary to work separately with the leaders of the rural and urban areas. The first phase was to convince key representatives of the communities that dialogue was an adequate means of finding mutually satisfactory solutions to the conflict. Beginning in May 2001, for each group, OAS/PROPAZ led an awareness-raising/sensitivity training process on negotiated exits from the conflict.

This training had three goals: to provide potential participants with knowledge and techniques for analysing and resolving conflicts; to specify the use of dialogue as an alternative method for the transformation of the municipality's conflict; and to determine the minimum conditions necessary for the parties to hold joint meetings in order to negotiate the issues that divided them. The training also sought to raise awareness of how to deal with social interactions during a dialogue, and to facilitate in-depth understanding of the emotional nature of the process.

Stage 2: The Call to Dialogue

The call to the dialogue was different for each side. Rural community leaders, who had just participated in the sensitivity training sessions, called for open, public assemblies for all residents in their respective communities. These assemblies had three fundamental objectives: to make clear to the populations the purpose and process of the dialogue; to confirm their acceptance of the dialogue as a mechanism to confront the existing conflict; and to ensure that the participants from the rural area were properly authorized to represent their fellow citizens. The residents produced a document that confirmed their acceptance of the dialogue process, and they approved the participants chosen to represent their interests by signing their name or giving their fingerprints. The document also detailed the selected representatives' responsibility to inform their communities of advances in the dialogue process.

In the urban area, the call was simpler because it relied on an existing representative structure. That structure included both elected members of the municipal council and non-elected community leaders who were part of councils of elders—traditional authorities of the indigenous culture. Nevertheless, as with the rural representatives, the urban leaders had to present a document that endorsed their authority to represent the interests of the community, and in which they promised to inform the community of progress in the dialogue.

In general, the rural representatives were community leaders and/or former members of guerrilla groups who had formed a political party when the armed conflict ended. There was minimal representation of NGOs in the rural area—only one rural NGO participated in the dialogue process. The urban area was represented by employees of NGOs, community leaders with basic educational skills and small business owners. Not all of the urban and rural population participated in the dialogue, but an attempt was made to represent as many groups as possible.

Stage 3: The Dialogue Process

The dialogue in San Mateo Ixtatán was convened in October 2001. From that point forward, meetings were held every 15 days, with some interruptions. Each meeting lasted about two days, and at the end of each the date and agenda for the next were set. The convening, reminders and extra sessions were planned through letters and phone calls. The process was prolonged because of external circumstances not directly related to the process itself. For example, community participation in the dialogue diminished during the rainy season, since farmers had to prepare the land for cultivation. The dialogue concluded in November 2002.

The meetings were held in the city of Huehuetenango, the head of the department. The city was chosen as a neutral location and because it had adequate logistical conditions and infrastructure. A politically and ideologically neutral place was needed to ensure the participants' security and safety. There were some disadvantages in choosing Huehuetenango. Its long distance from San Mateo Ixtatán and the lack of easy access entailed additional expenses and time. Generally, though the sessions only lasted two

days, participants were forced to miss four days of work and their personal lives every 15 days—which imposed an economic burden on many of the participants.

Officially, the facilitation group comprised five government entities: the Coordinating Commission for Presidential Policies on Issues of Human Rights; the Secretariat of Strategic Analysis; the Secretariat of Peace; the Presidential Commission for the Resolution of Land Conflicts; and the Secretariat of Executive Coordination of the Presidency. OAS/PROPAZ was invited to ‘accompany’ those governmental actors responsible for the transformation of the conflict and to offer them feedback on their actions. At crucial moments, however, OAS/PROPAZ assumed the leading role in the design and facilitation of the dialogue. At these points, the CDAC, representing the governmental facilitation group, limited its activities to observing and learning from the facilitators of the OAS/PROPAZ programme. During this process, an adviser provided legal assistance to OAS/PROPAZ.

In addition, NGOs and parishes of the Catholic Church acted as observers, a practice that was decided upon and accepted by both parties. The media were also present, particularly in 2001 when the repercussions of violence and the total breakdown in relations between the rural and urban areas were highly evident. Once the dialogue began, however, coverage was minimal. OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC designated spokespersons to represent each side and to discuss progress in the dialogue with the media. Coverage of the events did not in any case affect the dialogue process.

In the period before the negotiation process, OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC tried to understand the interests of both sides, and to create an agenda that would address those issues and be mutually acceptable. This agenda included three main themes: requirements for peaceful coexistence; strengthening the municipality; and municipal proceedings. During the dialogue’s inaugural session, the proposed agenda was presented to the participants for their ratification. From that point forward, the dialogue group worked through each topic of the agenda one by one. The facilitators helped structure the discussions in such a way that the parties could identify their interests, generate options, evaluate the choices and select the solutions that would satisfy the interests of both parties. Although this outline seems simple, the topics presented varying degrees of difficulty and the group discussed each topic for months.

In the first meeting, the participants also laid ground rules for coexistence during the ensuing process. Among these rules were various points on mutual respect and due forms of communication and behaviour. Both parties agreed that when either of them violated the rules, the facilitators could insist that they follow those rules. In this first session, the participants also decided to use consensus as the method for decision-making.

As they proceeded under these ground rules, the participants were able to overcome their mutual distrust, open channels of communication and create a safe and healthy environment in which to share perspectives, one that allowed for increased mutual understanding of their different viewpoints. The high degree of confidence achieved

between the parties allowed the process to evolve into a true dialogue, as opposed to a mere multiparty negotiation. The parties were able to express their opinions of the conflict openly, and established good communication with each other.

In a defining moment of the talks, the parties were able to share with each other the pain and suffering the civil war had caused. They spoke of the harmful effects of the conflict in their lives and communities, and throughout the municipality. This honesty exposed many people's feelings and actions in the conflict and the civil war, but the exchange did not cause a stalemate or an interruption of the process. Instead, participation in the open environment produced a commitment to develop an Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence, as each party acknowledged and recognized that the war had caused suffering on both sides.

Outcomes and Impact

The successful results of the San Mateo Ixtatán dialogue and negotiation process are evident in three significant agreements. But it was the conditions of trust, transparency, mutual respect, tolerance and responsibility created during the dialogue that led to the transformation of the conflict. These conditions opened up a space in which the agreements could be discussed and reached.

The Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence

At an early stage in the process, the participants decided that one topic on the agenda should be to create an Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence, under which all the municipality's rural and urban residents would follow the same rules of conduct. This agreement was reached once the parties agreed on two key points: first, that no judges, police officers or government representatives—who could exert pressure on the process or dictate a solution—would participate in the dialogue; and second, that the agreements resulting from the process would be a commitment reached between the parties and the communities they represented of their own free and good will.

This agreement was a commitment on both sides to continue the dialogue and comply with certain rules, thus ensuring friendly relations between the parties. Personal accusations, offensive statements and defamatory language were prohibited. The agreement also allowed for free movement between urban and rural communities, since at one point during the conflict the communities had levied tolls on people travelling through the area. The agreement laid the foundation for the other agreements that followed.

The Agreement to Strengthen Institutionalization in the Municipality

By this accord, which emerged from informal and formal conversations, the participants agreed to maintain a single, undivided municipality. The agreement allowed for municipal mayoral elections to be held without confrontation and established that both communities would accept the winner, regardless of his or her political affiliation. The two parties had had clear positions on the issue: rural inhabitants threatened to create a new municipality, while the urban dwellers opposed such a division. Taking

the rural sector's threat seriously, facilitators and observers worked with that party's representatives to analyse the economic consequences of creating a new municipality and to consider the many and costly governmental requirements to form one. Finally, the rural groups recognized that it was not feasible to create a new municipality and renounced their formal position. The dialogue progressed as a result, since both parties recognized a common goal: the strengthening of the municipality's institutions.

The Agreement on Problems of Personal Documentation and Municipal Proceedings

After the dialogue group decided that the municipality would not be divided, representatives of the rural communities expressed the need for improvements in documentation. Coincidentally, there was a 30-day window of opportunity before the expiration of the extraordinary law on personal documentation, a temporary law that had extended the period for Guatemalan citizens to request personal documents they lacked. It was suggested that residents should take advantage of the time left to secure the documentation.

Hence it was proposed in the dialogue group that residents organize documentation days in the whole municipality. The rural and urban representatives had to work together, with the aid of OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC, to collect the money and to arrange these registrations days. For the rural inhabitants, the registration of 734 people was a significant achievement. This collaboration between the parties helped foster mutual trust. In turn, there was a greater willingness to agree on solutions to related issues. In particular, the parties reached an agreement stipulating that municipal issues of personal documentation and other proceedings would be entrusted to the Municipal Development Council, which would be responsible for finding a lasting solution to these problems.

The Agreement on the Clarification of Missing Persons

The Agreement on the Clarification of Missing Persons was not a formal agreement like the previous accords, but rather a procedural agreement that was noted in the minutes of a particular session of the negotiation process. In it, participants decided that any issues regarding disappearances should be presented to the appropriate authorities, such as the Public Ministry or the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman.

Follow-Up Work and Commitments

When the dialogue process ended in November 2002 the parties promised to comply with the agreements reached but made no plans for follow-up activities. National and municipal elections were to be held in 2003, however, and there were signs of a resurgence in the conflict between the rural and urban areas as a result of the presidential and municipal campaigns. OAS/PROPAZ contracted two consultants from the Soros Foundation in Guatemala to begin an information campaign, using radio broadcasting in the local language, to inform the entire municipality of the contents of the agreements.

Simultaneously, OAS/PROPAZ organized various workshops, each involving about 55 people, to distribute the information contained in the agreements and to inform the public of the appropriate rules of conduct for the election campaign. The workshops also served as an instrument to present the Development Councils Law, a federal government initiative to provide guidelines for citizen participation in determining development priorities. The law provided a methodology that the inhabitants of both communities had to follow to organize their Municipal Development Council.

Despite the tensions created by the elections of 2003, there were no further violent confrontations between rural and urban inhabitants of San Mateo Ixtatán. The rural area's candidate won the elections, and he discharged his duties from the head of the municipality without objections from either side. The new mayor endorsed the agreements reached during the dialogue process and supported the creation of the Municipal Development Council in particular.

Although the CDAC disappeared, its members have continued to collaborate with other governmental entities to prevent an outbreak of new conflicts in the area. A departmental network for conflict resolution, which included NGOs, was also created. The ProPaz Foundation has been set up as an autonomous, national NGO and has assumed the objectives and intentions of OAS/PROPAZ. In this capacity, the foundation facilitates workshops to analyse, mediate and resolve conflicts, develop constructive communication skills and build consensus between the parties.

Lessons Learned

Building Trust

The San Mateo Ixtatán conflict, which originated in competition between the rural and urban communities for control over municipal power, was directly influenced by the distrust created in both communities as a result of more than three decades of armed conflict. If mutual accusations had continued unabated, the dialogue process would have been jeopardized. OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC took several measures to avoid this. For example, they provided awareness training separately to the parties before the dialogue and secured the participants' agreement on ground rules for the process. Those rules helped ensure mutual respect and appropriate forms of communication and behaviour. During the process, the participants decided that the Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence should be an agenda topic, and they successfully created a safe and structured environment in which they could express the pain caused by the civil war. It is not easy to create a safe space for such key exchanges or to manage it once it has been set up. In addition to applying techniques such as those described, therefore, it is important to involve personnel who are capable of effectively overseeing these environments.

A Dissemination Campaign

From the outset, the CDAC and OAS/PROPAZ recognized that participants in the dialogue would have to inform their communities of the successes achieved. This was

one of the duties specified in the documents conferring authority on the representatives. But neither the CDAC nor OAS/PROPAZ followed this activity closely, leaving it to each representative. Unfortunately, the presidential and municipal election campaigns, which began immediately after the negotiation process ended, threatened to destabilize the agreements achieved, jeopardizing the peace of the whole municipality. This circumstance was directly linked to residents' unfamiliarity with the agreements reached during the negotiation.

OAS/PROPAZ was able to address this problem by initiating an information campaign to publicize the agreements. This case, however, demonstrates the importance of an effective strategy for informing the public of progress in the negotiations, and the need to incorporate this strategy into the negotiation process as a whole. If this is to be a responsibility of the facilitators, it should be specified before the process begins.

Economic Resources

This case also reveals the importance of having the necessary resources to carry out the dialogue process and avoid its being delayed or stagnating. Since San Mateo Ixtatán is one of the poorest municipalities in Guatemala, and since the central government has scant economic resources, OAS/PROPAZ had to secure financing for the entire project. This included covering the costs of representatives' participation every 15 days, so that the dialogue would continue. Private donations paid for the participants' logistical expenses, such as transport, food and lodging. On the basis of this experience, OAS/PROPAZ developed criteria for its future involvement in similar processes. It is important to ensure that minimum resources are available to hold the dialogue and meet unforeseen needs. It is equally important to avoid the proliferation of commitments, such as raising funds or disseminating and monitoring the agreements. In this regard, dialogue processes should indicate those responsible for disclosing and monitoring the agreements, and how to ensure that they will perform their duties.

Definition of Roles

As the dialogue was taking shape, the members of the OAS/PROPAZ team assumed the role of facilitators to the process. It is important to maintain communication among organizing entities, so as to have a clear understanding of the conditions under which the roles should change. It is crucial to recognize that dialogues of this type are extremely fragile, and that the entire process can be threatened if the coordinating organizations display a lack of skill and/or knowledge during the process. Hence the contracted facilitators must judiciously balance their responsibilities with the parties involved and with the governmental organizations that are making it possible.

Knowledge of the Language and the Context

The facilitation group's unfamiliarity with the Chuj dialect precluded their understanding many of the issues discussed until the moment the agreements were to be reached. For OAS/PROPAZ, this meant that the team was excluded from many discussions. In order to be completely immersed in a dialogue process, the facilitators should be able to communicate in the participants' language.

The San Mateo Ixtatán case also demonstrates the importance of conflict analyses and the difficulties involved in conducting them. The complexity of the situation often calls for urgent action and does not allow for an in-depth study of the conflict's historical context. It is very likely that a high level of tension forces the dialogue organizers to intervene quickly and begin resolving the conflict in order to obviate its escalating. Although facilitators need to be informed, it is imperative that they are not overwhelmed with information that will sway them or make their decisions partial. A systematic increase in information is recommended both before and during the process. This allows for a better understanding of the conflict, such that the main themes can be identified and articulated, and the process's potential obstacles and strengths can be recognized.

Structural Problems and Dialogue Outcomes

The San Mateo Ixtatán conflict was exacerbated by several structural problems. The limitations of state institutions constrained the options for possible solutions to resolve the dispute. At the same time, some of the agreements that the parties reached depended on the capacity and willingness of the municipal and central governments to comply with the decisions made during the dialogue. For OAS/PROPAZ, the structural problems—such as the lack of economic resources, laws and decision-making authority—meant that other mechanisms would have to be found so that the dialogue would be conducive to creative agreements and would not be interrupted by structural inefficiencies.

This case shows that, even when resources are extremely limited, dialogues can have concrete and positive outcomes. The parties, for example, successfully maintained a unified municipality and agreed upon the rules of conduct necessary to avoid a resurgence of conflict and violence. Compliance with the agreements was possible because the relationship between the parties had improved throughout the dialogue process. An in-depth analysis of the tangible and intangible advantages of dialogue is always recommended. At the same time, a dialogue process should not be abandoned on the grounds that structural limitations will preclude viable resolutions. On the contrary, one should trust in the participants' abilities to find creative solutions to resolve their differences.

Chapter 3.3: Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals, Mauritania¹⁹³

In 2004–2005, UNDP in Mauritania supported a dialogue project that engaged local and national elites in addressing the challenge of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Political stalemate had given rise to coup attempts against the Mauritanian Government in 2003 and 2004. The dialogue aimed to avert violent conflict and break the political deadlock that was keeping the country from implementing coherent, multi-stakeholder initiatives to deal with the social and economic issues confronting it. The topic of the Millennium Development Goals provided a neutral platform for addressing those issues, so that the government, opposition groups and civil society all became involved, directly or indirectly, in this dialogue project.

Context

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 152nd out of 177 nations on the 2003 Human Development Index. The country covers a vast area, 90 per cent of which is desert, and its 2.5 million people face a number of severe challenges. These include high levels of poverty and inequality, widespread malnutrition and hunger, high levels of maternal and child mortality, a rapidly rising rate of HIV infection and high mortality rates from diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria, and environmental problems, especially continuing desertification.

A society that arose at a key intersection of Arab and African peoples, Mauritania is also challenged by a history of slavery and continuing discrimination by the ruling, fair-skinned Maures against citizens of African origin, especially former slaves. As recently as 1989–1991, there had been a violent conflict stemming from these human rights violations. Mauritania's social fabric is also weakened by patterns of strong tribal identification and a relatively limited sense of national identity. On the other hand, an established pattern of alliances and intermarriage between ethnic groups exerts a moderating force on the conflicts within society.

The political context was tense and deteriorating in 2003–2004, as the idea of a dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals was emerging. After 20 years of military rule, the

country had adopted a democratic constitution in 1991, but democracy remained largely a formality. President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya and his party, the Democratic and Social Republican Party (Parti Républicain Démocratique et Social), had become increasingly isolated and autocratic since coming to power in 1992. The opposition parties had boycotted the 1992 elections but had subsequently competed successfully in municipal elections, and had won several seats in the National Assembly in October 2001. However, relations between the governing party and opposition parties were hostile, and there was virtually no communication between the two sides. President Taya's decision to establish diplomatic contacts with Israel and his fight against Islamic fundamentalist groups in Mauritania were unpopular policies, widely viewed as seeking mainly to strengthen his own hold on power. Finally, the prospect of substantial oil and gas revenues from the exploitation of oil reserves discovered off the coast of Mauritania in 2001 fuelled all of these tensions by dramatically raising the stakes of the political contest.

With elections due to take place in November 2003, opponents of the Taya government launched three unsuccessful coup attempts, in June 2003, August 2004 and September 2004. The leader of these coups, former army major Saleh Ould Hanenna, declared at his trial that his goal was to end corruption, tribalism, poor pay and mismanagement, and discrimination against black Mauritians. These events formed the immediate backdrop to the convening of the dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals, creating a context of political instability with the threat of further violence.

Purpose

From the perspective of UNDP, the initiative that led to the Mauritanian dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals had two major and interrelated objectives. On the one hand was the urgent need to open some channels of constructive communication between the government and the opposition in order to forestall the possibility of violent conflict. On the other was the institutional imperative to pursue the goals laid out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and create a global partnership for development. Mauritania had signed the Declaration and made some attempts to pursue its goals, but progress to date had been unsatisfactory and few people among the general public or within the administrative offices of the government were aware of the initiative.

These two purposes were mutually reinforcing inasmuch as the topic of the Millennium Development Goals provided a safe point of departure, one that focused on aspirations for the future but that, within that framework, opened space for public conversation about the current state of Mauritanian society. Initially proposed as a political dialogue between the government, the opposition and civil society, the project immediately confronted the government's unwillingness to participate in such a format. Reframed as an initiative to advance the Millennium Development Goals, however, it could proceed

as a dialogue among political elites, with the government as an interested and active observer.

Another key objective of the initiative was to help create a culture of communication and cooperation that would ultimately enable the government, the opposition and civil society groups to take joint responsibility for advancing the Millennium Development Goals. This objective made a dialogue initiative preferable to facilitated negotiations between the parties. In the long term, UNDP aimed to establish an enduring framework for dialogue among political and civil society actors, so as to strengthen democratic institutions and culture in Mauritania.

The Dialogue Process

The dialogue unfolded over a period of six months, from August 2004 to February 2005. The initial strategy was to engage the elites of Mauritanian society, in the hope of creating a critical mass of people who could help the country proceed peacefully towards achievement of its goals. More than 400 people participated in workshops held in different parts of the country, and thousands more were able to follow the process through media coverage.

The Steering Committee and UNDP's Role

A broadly representative Steering Committee was responsible for designing and implementing the dialogue process. UNDP Resident Representative Cécile Molinier and Mohamed Saïd Ould Hamody, a former Mauritanian ambassador, were co-chairs of this group. The committee brought together ten national individuals, each well known and respected both as an independent thinker and as a representative of his or her constituency, such as the President of the Federation of Francophone Women, the President of the Association of Mayors of Mauritania, the President of the Association of Oulémas (Islamic scholars), and representatives of youth organizations, the private sector and the media. This committee helped ensure national ownership of the dialogue process.

UNDP was able to play a leading role in promoting the dialogue, partly because in 2002 the Mauritanian Government had requested its technical support for a national good governance programme, including reform of the public administration, macroeconomic governance, justice reform, strengthening human rights, strengthening civil society organizations, support for government decentralization and support to the parliament. UNDP's goal was to act mainly as a catalyst, using the neutral and universally accepted platform of the Millennium Development Goals as a basis for promoting discussions among Mauritians of all political and social groups about their common future. At the same time, its mandate to promote good governance enabled it to advocate in particular for opening up the dialogue to human rights groups and issues, as well as a broad range of civil society organizations. The country office, drawing on the resources of various units of the UN and UNDP, supported the Steering Committee's work with advice and technical and financial support.

Stage 1: Political Dialogue for the Strengthening of Democracy

The first stage of the process included four workshops in August and September 2004, held in geographically dispersed locations, each on specific topics related to the large theme of strengthening democracy. In Rosso, in the south of Mauritania, the topics were health, water and sanitation, and the environment. In the central town of Kiffa, they were modern education, traditional education and youth culture. In Atar, to the north, the workshop focused on justice, human rights and citizenship.

About 90 people, representing the elites of the region, participated in each of these events. Each workshop followed a similar format, opening with a plenary session in which a few experts presented substantive reports on the Millennium Development Goals and the event's specific topics. Then, still in plenary, the participants brought forward the particular perspectives, concerns and opinions of the different stakeholder groups represented, and debated the issues from those perspectives. In the second stage of the workshop, participants reconvened in small working groups, each charged with developing recommendations on the issues.

Whereas the presentations and debates of the plenary session helped inform participants of the issues and allowed them to express their opinions, the smaller working groups created the setting for dialogue. Both observers and participants noted the lack of partisanship, the 'spirit of tolerance' and the calmness with which the working groups were able to talk about even the most sensitive issues. The concluding segment of each workshop was another plenary session, in which all participants considered the recommendations of the working groups and talked about them to the point that they could be approved by consensus.

Stage 1 of the process concluded with a national-level workshop of about 130 people, convened in the capital, Nouakchott, in October 2004. Participants represented the range of political parties, as well as business, labour and civil society groups. This workshop brought together all the recommendations from the previous regional workshops and focused on building a vision of Mauritanian society in 2015, having achieved the Millennium Development Goals. It also considered strategies for moving from recommendations on what should be done to attain the goals, to consideration of how to do it.

Stage 1 participant groups

- the Oulémas
- all parties in the parliament
- the Association of Mayors in Mauritania
- the University of Nouakchott
- professors' organizations
- student organizations
- employers' confederation
- labour unions
- lawyers' organizations
- the Association of Jurists
- human rights organizations
- doctors' organizations
- midwives' and nurses' organizations
- journalists' organizations
- NGOs
- Mauritania's development partners.

Stage 2: Dialogue among Economic and Social Actors to Strengthen Development Strategies and Attain the Millennium Development Goals

Stage 2 included three events, all in November 2004. The first was a workshop that assessed the Mauritanian economy's capacity to achieve the Millennium Development

Goals. It took place in Nouakchott with about 100 participants, including political leaders and civil society representatives. The workshop group addressed three major questions: What policies related to growth and the economy are necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? What is the debate on the Millennium Development Goals? And what are the strengths, weaknesses and competitiveness of the Mauritanian economy within the global economy? Following the design of the earlier workshops, this gathering used working groups to produce conclusions and recommendations.

The second workshop in Stage 2 was held in Nouadhibou, a port city in the north whose economy is largely dependent on fishing and mining. The fishing sector and its prospects for development by 2015 were major topics of this workshop. Others were the mining and oil industries, and their potential role in the future of the Mauritanian economy.

On the evening of the first day of the Nouadhibou workshop, there was an additional event, a televised round-table discussion on the question 'Oil and Gas Resources: A Common Good or a Potential Source of Disparities'. The round-table format allowed a panel of 15 people, representing diverse groups within Mauritanian society, to address the matter and answer questions posed by an audience. Although the amount of concrete information available about the proposed exploitation of offshore oil reserves was limited, this event succeeded in putting this pressing issue before a larger audience and at the same time making people aware of the dialogue process.

Stage 2 also concluded with a national-level workshop that focused on combining the recommendations made in regional workshops into a unified agenda for moving towards the Millennium Development Goals. Following the established workshop format, this event produced a consensus document specifying what needed to be done and leaving most questions of implementation for later. The Steering Committee delivered the report of these recommendations to President Taya. The Committee's Co-Chair, Mohamed Saïd Ould Hamody, suggested that the report was powerful because 'it used extreme caution while it never accepted any compromise'. This 'realistic approach' made the findings compelling.¹⁹⁴

Stage 2 participant groups

- the Oulémas
- all parties in the parliament
- the employers' confederation
- trade unions
- Banks and insurance companies
- the University of Nouakchott
- major business enterprises
- development NGOs
- professional associations
- media specialized in economics, social issues and the environment
- Mauritania's development partners.

Follow-Up Events

In early December 2004, the Steering Committee launched an online forum, 'Mauritania 2015', in order to broaden participation in the conversation, especially to include more women, and to develop the recommendations further. Participants could contribute in either Arabic or French, and they accepted a charter agreeing to show respect and tolerance for others' views. Actual participation was more limited than anticipated, perhaps largely because the Internet is not widely accessible in Mauritania. The forum

was more of a debate than a dialogue, but it succeeded in opening a space for discussions of issues usually considered to be out of bounds for public consideration, such as human rights abuses and inequities in education.

A second follow-up event, in January 2005, reconvened many of the participants in the Nouakchott and Nouadhibou workshops. In a two-day course, the African Futures Institute provided an introduction to its prospective visioning approach for developing long-term national development strategies. This session inspired workshop participants, including managers from business, government and civil society organizations, to launch a project to develop scenarios for 'Mauritania 2030'.

Outcomes and Impact

The Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals had a number of positive outcomes. Among the elite of society, it induced discussions between the supporters of the ruling party and the opposition, and fostered their joint engagement in considering the country's future well-being. At the conclusion of the process, there was a general agreement that the participants had demonstrated an openness to dialogue and commitment to a pluralistic and democratic society. In the words of one former government minister, 'the project brought forth the Mauritanian conviviality in the political sector'.¹⁹⁵

Tackling of sensitive issues

Additionally, while the process was organized around the non-controversial topic of the Millennium Development Goals, it eventually legitimized open discussion of some of the most sensitive issues. In the words of Ambassador Hamody, 'progressively, the workshops were relayed by the official audiovisual means (TV and radio), and [the sessions were] opened up by the provincial governors, general secretaries of ministries, and even by important ministers, even though issues that were previously considered taboos were introduced: "human rights", "slavery", "corruption", "cultural discrimination" etc.'¹⁹⁶ This gradual acceptance of the substance of the dialogue extended to the President's office. When the Steering Committee co-chairs presented the final report to President Taya, he responded by committing himself to new initiatives on legal reform, including human rights, and on long-term planning for the development of Mauritania's key resources, fisheries and oil.

Defining consensus on political values

Finally, the initiative helped lay a foundation for a more participatory democracy by creating a 'critical mass of influential individuals who value dialogue, understand its dynamics, and own the dialogue process'.¹⁹⁷ The significance of this achievement became increasingly clear in the months following the conclusion of the formal process. In April 2005, one of the political parties allied to President Taya, which had been a major participant in the dialogue process, organized a two-day forum on 'democratic values'. Ambassador Hamody reported that 'the consensus reached between opposed parties, different labor unions, the independent press, and organizations of the civil

society resulted in the establishment of a platform that finally opened the country's political scene'.¹⁹⁸

Reaching Political Commitment

This consensus on political values became extremely important after August 2005, when a peaceful *coup d'état* deposed President Taya. The leader of the coup, police Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, a former ally of Taya, became the new President. With widespread public support, the new government launched a transition to a more democratic regime. The conclusions and recommendations of the forum on democratic values provided a framework for a new initiative for a permanent structure for ongoing dialogue among the government, the National Independent Electoral Commission, all political parties, the media and civil society organizations. In June 2006, Mauritians overwhelmingly approved a new constitution, including presidential term limits, which Col Vall promised to honour.

Chapter 3.4: Dialogue on a Constitutional Process in Nepal¹⁹⁹

Context

In 2004, Nepal was in the throes of a long-running political crisis. In response to a widespread popular democracy movement, the country had established a limited constitutional monarchy in 1990. Democracy, however, had not improved the lives of the rural population, which suffered severe poverty and social exclusion. Since 1996, the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal, with its base in this rural population, had been waging guerrilla warfare with the aim of overthrowing the government. The conflict had claimed more than 12,000 lives and atrocities were committed on both sides. In 2002, with Maoists in control of most of the countryside, King Gyanendra had dismissed the parliament and the elected Prime Minister, and appointed a new Prime Minister and Cabinet of his own choosing.

In response to this situation, IDEA decided to respond to a recognized need among Nepali stakeholders for a revitalized dialogue on establishing an inclusive constitutional process. Its decision was also in response to a European Commission call for proposals for projects to help address the underlying crisis of governance that Nepal had been experiencing over the previous two years. IDEA had a long-standing engagement with Nepal, starting in 1997 when it conducted a democracy evaluation and brokered support for the establishment of a national multiparty foundation, the Center for Studies on Democracy and Good Governance (CSDGG). Since 2001, Nepal had been an important part of IDEA's democracy support programme in the South Asia region.

Purpose

The overall objective of the dialogue on the constitutional process in Nepal was to revitalize the debate among key Nepali stakeholders on conditions for an inclusive constitutional process and thereby, in the longer term, contribute to the establishment of a pluralistic democracy. Specifically, IDEA's objectives were to:

- stimulate a dialogue among a wide range of stakeholders on democracy-building through a review of the constitutional processes and reform

- assist in the process of engendering national consensus on political reform around concrete constitutional processes and institutions
- build the capacity of Nepali stakeholders to strengthen their approaches to peace-building and constitutional reform by making them aware of comparative experiences.

The project aimed to combine democracy-building and conflict transformation. It sought to induce citizens to express and exchange views on the shape and direction of the constitutional agenda. It also promoted an exchange of views among organized political actors within political parties, proxies for the Maoists, civil society organizations and representatives of established interests such as the monarchy. It was expected that by engaging several different types of actors in dialogue on constitutional reform, the capacity of Nepal as a whole to conduct such reforms would be increased—partly through better information about other countries’ experiences, but also as a consequence of the improved relationships between the stakeholders that have to accept the idea of an inclusive constitution-building process.

The Dialogue Process

In this case, dialogue was not a specific method applied to a limited number of participants. IDEA’s programmes aim to build countries’ capacity to achieve democratic transition and consolidation, which requires both the design of the democratic reforms to be undertaken and a certain degree of shared ownership of those designs and their implementation. In this sense, it is important that there is an exchange of views between different perspectives in the polity. It is also important to introduce new knowledge and comparative experiences that enrich the perspectives of different actors, thereby helping them over the longer term to identify mutually acceptable solutions to seemingly intractable disputes.

Although it is important for a smaller group of key stakeholders to exchange perspectives and develop new ways of looking at the situation in order for progress to be made, it is also vital to engage the society in which these key stakeholders are situated. As much as possible, the same issues that are discussed behind closed doors—such as constitutional monarchy or negotiating political settlements—must also be explained to a wider audience. This is necessary for the general public to understand the outcomes of a dialogue, such as a written agreement between political parties on guiding principles for a constitutional process.

With these considerations in mind, IDEA pursued a range of activities in Nepal, beginning with a broad citizen survey and opinion poll, and continuing with a variety of forums on constitutional issues and peace-building. In support of these two major thrusts, IDEA also

To meet the objectives set, the project methodology combined

- surveys to help the dialogue focus on citizens’ real aspirations and perceptions of democracy
- democracy assessments
- dialogues on democracy catalysed by comparative experiences in democracy-building and conflict transformation.

undertook to bring in comparative experiences of constitution-making and peace-building, and to disseminate the results of all of these activities as broadly as possible within the society. Finally, it developed a supporting body of applied research on Nepali experiences of democracy and democracy-building.

Survey on Citizens' Perceptions of Democracy

Dialogues and evaluations of democracy often focus on institutional matters and exclude citizens' perceptions. Using a survey in a dialogue is a way to bring a broader range of opinion into the process. A public opinion survey also helps to assess the representativeness of the views expressed by the often organized political interests taking part in a process, who claim that their opinions reflect a greater part of the population. A fresh and credible public opinion survey on the matter under discussion can help the dialogue to be precise about the public's political aspirations. Publishing an opinion poll is also a good way of attracting media attention to an issue and thereby bringing attention to the dialogue, if that is deemed helpful.

With these considerations in mind, it was decided to conduct a country-wide quantitative sample survey of the opinions, attitudes, values and aspirations of the Nepalese. The survey focused on citizens' perception of the constitutional framework and linked it to their conception of good governance, democracy and human security. The survey questionnaire was developed in collaboration with international, regional and Nepali experts. A team of national experts agreed on the final design of the survey questions.

A sample of 3,249 persons was interviewed on a range of issues relating to democracy in Nepal. The democracy survey was conducted in 163 polling stations (31 in urban areas and 132 in rural areas) covering 38 of the total 75 districts. In two areas, Dailekh and Bajhang, the survey could not be conducted because the survey teams did not receive permission from the Maoists who controlled those areas. In one incident, the Maoists apologized for having kept the team under their 'hospitality' while deciding whether to allow the survey. In other cases they either authorized the survey or appear to have turned a blind eye and permitted the survey to proceed.

A separate booster sample of 1,000 was interviewed to capture the opinions of groups that were assumed to be missing from the general probable sampling. 'Missing people' would be those who for one reason or another do not live in the place they have announced as their address. The 'missing groups' were identified as restaurant workers, refugees of Tibetan origin, sex workers, *ex-kamayats* (bonded labour), migrant workers, internally displaced people and some nomadic groups.

The survey was presented at a media briefing and at a People's Forum that opened in Kathmandu city hall on 5 November 2004 (more information about this forum is presented later in this case study). It was presented again on 6 November at a workshop convened as a part of the People's Forum, and was subjected to much debate and analysis. The survey was discussed with the international community in an event hosted by the Delegation of the European Commission in Nepal. The results were

referred to in both the Nepali and the Indian media. The survey results continue to generate great interest and debate, and were discussed in interviews on several regional FM radio stations. Copies of the survey results were distributed to all the campuses of the Tribhuvan University around Nepal, the political parties, the Peace Secretariat, the print and electronic media, the National Planning Commission and the international community.

A key message of the survey findings was that a clear majority of Nepali citizens still preferred democracy to any other system of governance despite almost ten years of the Maoist insurgency, disappointment with the political parties, a worsening security situation and rampant corruption. Two-thirds of Nepalis disapproved of the King's intervention in 2002. To bring the armed conflict to a negotiated settlement, the majority recommended convening a round-table conference, the formation of an interim government including the Maoists, and a constituent assembly. Most of those who favoured convening a constituent assembly were expecting this initiative to bring 'peace and stability'.

Many participants in the political discussion in Nepal, and the dialogue process organized by IDEA, were relieved to find that the people of the country had convergent and essentially peaceful, consensus-building approaches to political reform and the re-establishment of democracy. The survey findings enabled the participants of the dialogue processes that proceeded during 2004 to focus on *how* a participatory constitutional process should be built, rather than questioning *if* it should take place at all.

Dialogues on Democracy, Catalysed by Comparative Experiences

Very importantly, the dialogues on constitutional processes were convened with the support of national partners.²⁰⁰ The partners were identified and partnerships developed after wide and extensive consultations with many stakeholders and civil society networks. National partners proved to be tireless in the energy that they put into the programme in a variety of important ways: in finding appropriate national resource persons as dialogue facilitators; in presenting the Nepali experiences; in developing the agendas; in finding the right balance of participation; in ensuring translation, interpretation, publicity and media coverage; and in taking care of all the logistical details.

One of IDEA's important contributions as an international and impartial partner was to bring in experts with comparative experiences of constitutional processes in Sri Lanka, India, South Africa, Kenya, Afghanistan, Thailand and Cambodia. Significantly, these were regional experts who could speak about similar democracy-building challenges in the context of ethnic and religious divisions, caste stratification, poverty and diminishing national resources. Their comparative experiences helped to foster a concrete discussion of key topics, including peace negotiations, constitutional reform, the role of unique institutions such as the monarchy, and challenging processes such as affirmative action programmes that must balance individual and community rights and interests. New spaces were thus created for fresh thinking on these issues.²⁰¹

The dialogue involved different types of sessions. ‘Open space’ dialogues included civil society representatives and people broadly defined as ‘political activists’. There were also political party dialogues—closed spaces in which the party representatives could feel secure enough to take an attitude of inquiry rather than adopt positions. As these proceeded, a dissemination programme gave them the widest possible exposure in Nepali society. The process concluded with a large-scale People’s Forum in November 2004.

The meetings were not held only in luxury hotels in Kathmandu and the surrounding valley, but also in Banke (east), Jhapa (west) and Chitwan (south). For the most part they were conducted in Nepali, and the presentations by and interactions with international experts were translated. These were essentially Nepali-driven dialogues.

Open Space Dialogues²⁰²

Each of the open space workshops within the dialogue process discussed a theme of relevance to resolving the political situation. The themes included (1) negotiating political settlements, with comparative experiences from South Africa and Sri Lanka; (2) developing inclusive constitutional processes, with experiences from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Afghanistan; (3) the role of the monarchy in a democracy; and (4) developing inclusive and participatory processes through electoral reforms and affirmative action policies. A final meeting discussed possible elements of a future political agenda, drawing on the four topics discussed in the other meetings.

Each meeting was attended by between 40 and 60 participants from a wide variety of stakeholders and opinion-makers. They included the facilitators of previous peace talks, trade unions, women’s organizations, Dalit communities, royalists, ethnic nationalities, religious leaders, human rights activists, political parties, student leaders, the media, academia and either former Maoists or their current proxies.

Political Dialogues

Closed space dialogues with political parties were held to discuss the same themes, but in a different setting. Political parties nominated the participants for the meetings and requests were made to ensure a gender balance and ethnic balance. (These requests, especially for ethnic balance, were not fully met.) About 25 participants attended each meeting. At the outset, much time was spent persuading the political parties to participate, but towards the end of the series a genuine interest in the programme had been established among party members. Some party members participated in more than one dialogue and found them valuable.

One important outcome of these dialogues was that the political parties agreed on a framework document, ‘Future Political Agenda for Re-building Peace and Democracy in Nepal’, which draws on the proceedings of the dialogues and provides options in the following areas: (1) negotiating a political settlement; (2) designing a constitutional process; (3) defining the role of the constitutional monarch; (4) defining the people’s sovereignty; (5) the nature and scope of minority rights and reservation; (6) state restructuring;

(7) drawing up of a road map to peace and democracy; and (8) transitional arrangements. In this framework document, party representatives also agreed on the importance of stimulating greater awareness of governance reforms—including political party reform—to increase trust in political institutions.²⁰³

Dissemination

A dialogue process, particularly one that deals with a broad and complicated national issue, often generates much valuable information. This is in the form of inputs to the process, to inform the participants, and at the end of the process it manifests more or less the shared knowledge, if not the agendas, of the participating individuals and organizations. On the assumption that a better-informed society can more easily make appropriate choices on issues regarding its own future, it is important that the dialogue process have a well planned dissemination policy so that wider circles of people and stakeholders can take part in discussions.

In this process, reports of the dialogues were printed in both Nepali and English. The report from the National Dialogue on Affirmative Action and Electoral System in Nepal was subsequently published as a book. Additionally, much of the subject matter discussed in the open and closed space dialogues was shared in public lectures, attracting audiences of between 300 and 500 people to listen to presentations on: (1) negotiating political settlements, with comparative experiences from South Africa and Sri Lanka; (2) developing inclusive constitutional processes, with experiences from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Afghanistan; and (3) the role of the monarchy in a democracy, with experiences from Cambodia and Thailand. These meetings were reported in the press, and were attended by national stakeholders and the representatives of the international community.

To enhance the realism and factual basis of the various dialogues, IDEA commissioned a body of expert assessments to enrich the results of the surveys of people's perceptions. These assessments were discussed in a working group held as a part of the People's Forum programme. They were further edited and published as a separate volume in 2006.

The People's Forum

To conclude the programme and to review the experiences and outcomes of the constitutional dialogues, a People's Forum was convened in early November 2004. It was attended by more than 800 people from Kathmandu and the regions, representing a wide range of social and economic sectors such as youth, students, academics, trade unions, teachers, lawyers, the private sector, Dalits, Madhesis, women, indigenous peoples, political leaders, human rights activists and peace campaigners. The civil society networks that helped organize the dialogue took complete ownership of the Forum, arranging logistics and media coverage, booking venues, and ensuring the attendance of the national resource persons. Most participants travelled to the Forum by road, which is a cheap form of transport but time-consuming and uncomfortable. In

Kathmandu they were hosted by local families. They attended the Forum because they felt motivated rather than induced to do so.

The Forum began with a plenary session at Kathmandu's city hall. It then continued in groups in the city's various campuses: 26 parallel working groups on different themes, such as armed conflict, constitutional reform, human rights, political parties and the role of the monarchy. It concluded with another plenary at the college campus. An unusual aspect of the concluding plenary was the presentation of the workshop expenses to ensure full transparency and financial probity.

The objective of the People's Forum was to develop a plan of action enabling civil society to advance the inclusive constitution-building process further. It was envisaged that civil society, like the political parties, would develop a minimum statement of common intent to present to the palace and the Maoists, with a view to restarting negotiations for a political settlement and rebuilding a constitutional order. In the end there was no formal statement, but the thrust of the popular demands was clear—that there should be a negotiated settlement to the conflict with the Maoist rebels, an all-party conference leading to a constituent assembly, and a new draft constitution based on popular and broadly-based consultations. The People's Forum also recommended a nationwide campaign geared to the cessation of hostilities. It called on all political parties to seriously consider internal democratization, and requested all political forces to express a clear view of the relevance of constitutional monarchy.

Outcomes and Impact

Many outcomes are expected of this kind of programme, which involves a large number of activities whose common aim is to improve the quality of interaction between people and thereby contribute to democratization. The proposal for the process envisaged that the project would generate some broadly defined outputs, such as:

- greater public access to information on, and tools relevant to, comparative constitutional processes
- greater awareness of citizen expectations of the political process
- increased national capacity to launch initiatives that advance debates on constitutional reform processes when the political openings emerge.

Raising Awareness

To a great extent, these outputs were achieved. One of the most notable outcomes was the publicity and broad interest that the process generated. High-level political actors within the political parties, the Peace Secretariat, the civil bureaucracy, the military, civil society and the international donor community were aware of the programme and engaged in it on various levels: by participating in meetings; by following the activities through the media; and by commenting on and supporting them in formal and informal ways. Political party members who participated in the closed space dialogues commented on the value of the discussions, and on how the process helped bring them together to develop a minimum common position. On hearing the experiences of political

negotiations from the South African expert, and the careful planning, preparations and follow-through required, the former peace negotiators and facilitators commented that they were not surprised in retrospect that negotiations with the Maoists had been unsuccessful to date. They expressed a willingness to assist the Peace Secretariat in building on their experiences, and to succeed where previously they had failed.

Fostering Collaboration with Key Actors

Another significant outcome was that the extensive range of the activities—the survey, the dialogues with civil society in Kathmandu and the regions, the dialogues with political parties and the public meeting—created a new energy and momentum within the civil society networks. The Dialogue on a Constitutional Process in Nepal brought the largest networks of NGOs together to advance common agendas. Some of them had been engaged in these processes independently, and the dialogue provided them with a space to come together, to pool resources, and thus to advance their objectives. Although this was not an explicit objective of the programme, these national civil society networks now have independent access to international resource persons and have developed confident relationships through which they can consult those individuals directly and seek their advice.

The organizers of the dialogue process were unable to make direct contacts with the Maoists (except during the survey research) and secure their official engagement in the dialogues, although some proxies and former Maoists attended the dialogues and public meetings. Nonetheless, all the material was made available to the Maoists electronically and they have acknowledged receipt of it. The organizers were also unable to gain access to influential sources from the palace, beyond what they learned from the media coverage, which was a severe constraint on the accomplishment of project goals.

Opening Spaces for Discussion and Debate

By the conclusion of the project, the political context in Nepal appeared to have changed. The project partners became extremely vocal and publicly critical of human rights violations by both the security forces and the Maoists, and they called for the restoration of democracy. Civil society was openly debating, even challenging, the role of the monarchy. It became more self-confident and vocal in assessing the root causes of the political and constitutional crisis, and in demanding political negotiations with the Maoists and the convening of a constituent assembly. There was a broader acceptance that the existing constitutional structures are inadequate and that the processes by which they were developed were not inclusive. The project had provided opportunities to discuss alternative ways to restructure the state and polity on the basis of greater inclusion, and the debate was now wide open.

These developments did not cause the ensuing events in Nepal, but undoubtedly they were contributing factors. In early 2005, the political situation took a dramatic turn against constitutional democracy when King Gyanendra dismissed his appointed Prime Minister and assumed the authority to govern directly, vowing a new assault on

the Maoist insurgency. Declaring a state of emergency, he placed a number of former prime ministers under house arrest and imposed strict censorship on the press. Other political leaders fled the country.

Within a little more than a year, however, this situation was completely reversed. An alliance of political parties reached an agreement with the Maoists to work together towards a multiparty democracy. During the early months of 2006, a wave of protests, violently suppressed by government forces, grew into massive public demonstrations. In April 2006, the King bowed to these public demands and restored the parliament, calling on the alliance of political parties to form a new government. In May, the Maoists declared a ceasefire and entered peace talks on the basis of an agreement with the government to form a constituent assembly for constitutional reform.

Appendix 1: Overview of Dialogue Initiatives

One of the main commitments of the institutional community of practice from which this Handbook comes was to pool their efforts to ‘map’ the field of dialogue practice as represented by their collective work. The goal of this exercise was to establish a foundation for common learning about what the work is, in what situations it is valuable and how to do it effectively. For the mapping exercise, institutions developed brief case write-ups, using a common format to facilitate comparison.* The table below provides an overview of this broad-ranging dialogue work. It includes the categories of context, purpose and results in order to convey why the organizers undertook to use dialogue and what they think they accomplished with it.

* The full set of topics included: Name of dialogue and country; Brief history and major actors; Political context; Challenges faced; Major breakthroughs; Purpose; Scope; Results; Follow-up work and commitments; Conveners and facilitators; Venue; Timeline; Methodology; Lessons learned. The complete set of cases is available in the Learning Library at <<http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>>.

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Argentine Dialogue 2002–2003 Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>Deep political, institutional and social crisis following an economic recession of more than three years, resulting in a sudden rise in poverty and unemployment. Almost half of Argentina's families were unable to afford basic services. Institutions and authorities, at all levels and in all sectors, lacked credibility and stability. The society had become fragmented and disoriented; the population was deeply polarized and turned to open confrontation and rioting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To engage political, corporate, labour and social forces to confront social dislocation and polarization – To define a sustainable national project – To overcome resistance to dialogue from various social sectors – To promote widespread social involvement – To construct a legitimate dialogue environment in the society – To contribute to consensus-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recovery of dialogue as a consensus-generating instrument in the country – Breaking down cross-sectoral tensions and recovery of a commitment to common welfare – Development of social reform policies – Government ministers praised the achievements of the dialogue and pledged to work with the dialogue methodology

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Argentine Roundtable on Justice Reform 2002–2003</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>As above</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To strengthen the Argentine Dialogue by drawing up proposals from the Justice Board to be integrated into the National Agenda of Governance, to guide the actions of future governments – To create a space in which all relevant sectors can meet, discuss and learn from one another – To devise lines of consensus that allow for the sector's reorganization and reform – To create a shared vision of a more effective, efficient and trustworthy justice system – To reflect on and repair the relationship between the justice system and the rest of society – To train local facilitators to replicate the Civic Scenario methodology – To generate proposals to be applied immediately at the national and provincial levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A change in the participants' consciousness of the need for reform and their potential role in transforming the judiciary – Development of consensus and closer relationships between the participants
<p>Bolivia Towards the 21st Century 1997–1999</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>The recognized problem was the need to establish trust between the government and civil society as a basis for working towards poverty reduction. Bolivia has a large and comparatively sophisticated civil society sector with a capacity to research the issues and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To reach consensus on the implementation of a programme of social and economic development based on four pillars: equity, opportunity, institutionalization and dignity, all aimed at serving the central objective of poverty reduction – To establish working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of the participants' capacity for dialogue – A report, 'Proposals Against Poverty' (October 1998), outlining possible public policy responses to poverty – Mobilization of donor resources, improved donor coordination for the early years of the government

<p>Bolivia National Dialogue 2000 April 2000</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>engage in public policy formulation. Through the Law of Popular Participation, there was a commitment to and history of closer collaboration between decentralized government and civil society on public policy issues. However, rising tensions within the government's own coalition made for a challenging political context.</p> <p>Social unrest and protests on issues concerning poverty reduction during the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process consultations imposed important constraints on the PRSP's preparation. These external factors, combined with the decentralized character of the participatory process and the presence of influential umbrella groups and associations, created sources of tensions and unresolved conflict, even after the PRSP was prepared.</p>	<p>– To produce a report outlining possible public policy responses to poverty</p>	<p>and successful negotiations on international debt, based on consensus on the four pillars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Creation of a foundation for the National Dialogue II, which started in May 2000
		<p>To develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy with ample participation of state and civil society representatives, focusing on the allocation of World Bank/IFC Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) II debt resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy that addressed four strategic components and three cross-cutting issues. Under these components, more than 40 pro-poor targeted measures were identified – Agreement on the allocation of HIPC II debt relief resources – Legal institutionalization of the dialogue process in the Dialogue Law, requiring that such a process take place at least every three years – Descriptions of the 'Government Listens' workshop included in the PRS presented to the World Bank and the IMF – Recognition that economic opportunities for poor people are crucial to poverty reduction – Inclusion of concepts of gender equality as strategic actions in the PRSP – Creation of means of direct contact between government and society – Broad, deep debate on poverty in Bolivia

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Burkina Faso 1997 and continuing</p> <p>Case contributed by International IDEA</p>	<p>The dialogue arose from conflict. Tensions were high between the majority and opposing political elites regarding the way to manage democratic transition, and democratic institutions suffered a lack of legitimacy. The opposition had boycotted the presidential elections following adoption of a new constitution in 1991 and threatened to again boycott an election process it deemed unfair. The situation was in danger of degenerating into violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To increase opportunities for dialogue, consultation and consensus-building in order to invigorate the democratic movement, analyse challenges for democratic consolidation and promote sustainable democracy – To help build and restore confidence among political parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adoption of consensual electoral reforms by the government and National Assembly – Major concessions by the President that brought the moderate opposition into the government – Establishment of a committee to make recommendations to end the crisis and endorsement of some of the reforms that arose from the dialogue by the committee, government and political parties – Greater understanding: actors developed an appreciation for democratic dialogue and the virtue of mutual respect in discussions – Creation of the Center for Democratic Governance to carry on the dialogue process – Publication of reports on democracy and reform of the electoral system
<p>Colombia</p> <p>Destino Colombia 1996–2000</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>The dialogue was formed in response to a general demand to address the consequences of the civil war. The prolonged armed conflict had resulted in daily political upheaval, a fragmented democracy, social polarization, corruption and violence. The economy was in a precarious state, lagging behind the rest of Latin America and on a global scale, and internally causing unemployment and inequality. The</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To generate a process of reflection and stimulate discussion of the country's possible futures – To collectively formulate a vision and sense of responsibility for the country's future – To support the process of peace-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding: a deeply human experience generated personal reflection, learning and analysis; participants were forced to change individual mental maps, open eyes to different options, rethink concepts and actions, reconsider paradigms and acquire new capabilities – Greater trust, tolerance, respect, consensus and optimism; new channels for communication – Generation of collective knowledge of the country's circumstances, and greater sensitivity to diverse visions

	<p>drug trade remained prominent and controversial.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of four possible scenarios for the country's future – Improved quality of long-term thinking – Collective understanding of the importance of creating spaces for dialogue in the future – Potential to contribute to the Colombian peace process
<p>Colombia Pasto Participatory Budgeting 2001 and continuing Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>Mayor Eduardo Alvarado of Pasto in Colombia defined the three main problems of the municipality as unemployment, corruption and insecurity, and set out to encourage participation, education and productivity in an effort to respond. This move can be considered part of the decentralization process emerging from the 1991 national constitution, which paved the way for tax redistribution among municipalities, the popular election of mayors, and decentralization of education and health services. In addition, a culture of participation had gradually been developing in the region, especially in rural areas, as space was opened up and strong logistical support was provided by the mayor's office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To make progress in the formation of public culture – To create and consolidate a local participatory planning system and strengthen the formation of social capital – To strengthen channels of communication between different social sectors and between these sectors and the municipal administration – To adopt a model for public administration based on citizen participation, the primacy of general interests, trustworthiness, service, efficiency, equity and creativity – To promote development of the municipality and the building of the region on the basis of collective effort – To renew and strengthen community leadership, a sense of identity with the municipality, and citizen commitment to the process of local and regional development 	<p>Specific agreements to be followed by implemented policies, for which the local administration took responsibility</p>

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Georgia</p> <p>Democratic Assessment through Dialogue Program 2001–2004</p> <p>Case contributed by International IDEA</p>	<p>The need for an assessment of the country's fledgling democracy was felt for many years, as the challenge of engaging citizens in politics and fostering their participation in reform processes, societal changes and the resolution of conflicts remained. In a context where 'democracy' tended to be associated with mass privatization, social injustice and 'façade reforms', it was essential to engage wider circles of the population—including various social groups and movements—in an in-depth assessment of and dialogue about the local relevance and meanings of democracy in post-communist Georgia, and the substance and direction of reforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To advance democracy by facilitating a serious and comprehensive reflection on political, social and economic problems, by articulating a democratic reform agenda, and by generating solution-oriented thinking and actions – To enable the rural population to interact with the elite from the capital and raise their concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contribution of stimulus and support to the reflection and dialogue process regarding democracy-building in Georgia – Enhancement and encouragement of communication among the diverse participants at the national level – Contribution to regional cooperation, essential for stable sustainable democracy in the region – Development of 12 discussion papers in Georgian and English – Development of an agenda for debate in Georgian, English and Russian
<p>Grenada</p> <p>Constitutional Review Project 2002–2003</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>The dialogue was initiated to address latent problems with Grenada's 1973 independence constitution. Since the constitution focused on independence, it was not adequately equipped to deal with the issues of governance and development. In view of the imperative demands of social and economic development, it was thus undergoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To consider, examine and inquire into the Grenada Constitution Order 1973, taking into account all laws, policies, conventions and practices – To address the basic question 'Is the constitution of Grenada resilient enough to meet the challenges of the present and the foreseeable future?' – To carry out 'fair and fearless' consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Distribution of a document as a teaching tool to provide citizens with a functional introduction to the constitution – Extension of the Constitution Review Commission to include one female commissioner, a display of flexibility that underscored the participatory goals of the project

	<p>real strains. The constitution also failed to provide adequate mechanisms for addressing issues such as regionalism, globalization and trade liberalization, or for promoting good governance, public accountability and grass-roots democracy. Citizens felt a strong sense of exclusion from the governance process and a lack of capacity to become involved. Civil society organizations lacked networking capabilities and capacities to contribute meaningfully to the country's democratic governance processes. There was an acute need to build constitution awareness across the entire sub-region.</p>	<p>and deliberations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To develop a new culture of citizens' awareness and active civic engagement with national constitutions – To enhance democracy in Grenada 	
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Guatemala</p> <p>War-Torn Societies Project 1995–1998</p> <p>Case contributed by Interpeace</p>	<p>Guatemala was just emerging from its 36-year civil war and finalizing the peace accords. There was a recognized need in the country to overcome the legacies of its authoritarian and confrontational history: political and social polarization, exclusion, distrust in public institutions and a weakened state that was unable to undertake the necessary political, economic and social development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To rebuild trust, respect, security, solidarity and confidence in order to achieve national reconciliation – To foster local capacity to facilitate collective reflection, analysis and problem-solving, and to incorporate all sectors and regions in the reconstruction of society – To identify and analyse common values and interests, and the country's main problems – To reach consensus on operational policy recommendations for social, economic and political recovery, with wide participation that would confer legitimacy and sustainability on future policies – To create a space for dialogue and to generate a peaceful and inclusive political culture – To contribute to the consolidation of the peace accords and a democratic state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding: opened up a non-hierarchical, neutral space for dialogue, inviting the participation of organizations normally excluded from discussions of public issues. This process resulted in greater trust, confidence, tolerance, solidarity, collective identity and respect between sectors and regions, and helped generate a democratic culture. – Achieved consensus on challenges facing the country and made recommendations
<p>Guatemala</p> <p>Dialogue for Democratic Development 1996–1998</p> <p>Case contributed by International IDEA</p>	<p>Important social and political forces appeared to be losing interest in complying with the recently signed peace accords. Progress was modest in consolidating the country's peace process and its democracy. The country suffered from a weak democracy, marked by low levels of political</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To develop a strong sense of country ownership of the peace process and engage all active forces in the country in making the implementation of the accords a joint project for society – To gauge the status of the peace accords and the democratic system to implement them – To produce a widely shared consensus on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding and trust among the actors involved – Establishment of a dialogue space in Guatemalan society – 'Democracy in Guatemala: The Mission of an Entire People'—a report that diagnosed the situation, identified priorities and presented a minimal draft agenda based on the peace accords.

<p>and electoral participation and by ethnic and gender discrimination and exclusion. The window of opportunity and momentum opened by the signing of the peace accords could have been lost if a vast, collective effort on behalf of all Guatemalans was not directed towards fulfilling the accords.</p>	<p>priorities and proposals, with the eventual aim of designing a concrete minimum public agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To continue the momentum of the peace accords, consolidate peace and strengthen democracy 	<p>It is a source of analysis and ideas for continued dialogue in Guatemala</p>
<p>Guatemala Mesa de Cobán: Negotiation Roundtable for Land Conflicts in Alta Verapaz 1997 Case contributed by the OAS</p>	<p>The Guatemalan province of Alta Verapaz was renowned for a high level of land-related violence. The conflicts were usually between communities of indigenous peoples, but disputes between indigenous communities and private landowners also abounded. Impoverished Mayan communities would frequently occupy lands to plant crops to feed their families, or simply to harvest planted crops. The costs for landlords to evict these ‘invaders’ could be considerable, and the process often resulted in violence and loss of life. In addition, it was not uncommon for lands to be ‘reinvaded’ shortly afterwards, either by the same group or by another community. These confrontations often resulted in large losses for both sides, especially when the crops went unharvested.</p>	<p>General understandings and, at times, specific, non-binding agreements, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Resolution of a ‘land invasion’ with an agreement in which a landowner allowed <i>campesinos</i> who had planted crops on land they did not own to harvest the crops and leave peacefully, and provided funds—a fraction of what he would have paid in legal fees if the dispute had gone to court—to help them settle elsewhere – Agreement by a landowner to pay the back wages of <i>campesinos</i> in land rather than money – Project ‘Participation and Democracy’, a national, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary group with its own domestic board, chartered to follow up on the recommendations established in the report ‘Democracy in Guatemala’, continues to function on its own

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Guatemala</p> <p>Towards a Security Policy for Democracy 1999–2002</p> <p>Case contributed by Interpeace</p>	<p>The project arose from a conflict. High levels of political and social polarization blocked the necessary reform of a security sector previously built according to the needs of a repressive, counter-insurgent and authoritarian government. Throughout the century, the armed forces had been a key political actor, intervening continually in politics and at times directly exercising political power. The 1996 peace accords identified basic transformations required to begin adapting these institutions to the needs of the new peaceful and democratic context. But by 1999 the level of implementation of the accords was very low, and more formal than substantive because of institutional resistance by the military and conceptual and political weakness on the civilian side.</p>	<p>– To mobilize the authorities' political will to undergo needed reform, promote conceptual understanding of the problem and the development of concrete policy proposals, and promote the active participation of civil society in such policy formulation</p> <p>– To address the following problems: persistence of distrust between sectors and within the military; the weakness of civil society institutions to conceptualize the problem, because of from scant training and little information; and the weakness of the civilian political leadership to design, negotiate and implement the policies required to reform the security sector</p> <p>– To investigate six specific subjects related to security policy within a democratic framework: the conceptual framework of democratic security; a security concept and agenda; the function of the army in a democratic society; a military doctrine; the intelligence system; and civilian intelligence</p>	<p>– Construction of trust and mutual recognition that surmounted prior prejudices</p> <p>– Production of inter-sectoral synergy, alliances and consensus</p> <p>– Contribution of a new conceptual and analytical baseline for security policy formulation</p> <p>– Production of a group of civilians and military officers better equipped to confront the society's security-related issues</p> <p>– Agreement by working groups on four proposals: basic concepts and recognition of the pending tasks in the matter of security; reform of the security system; reform of the intelligence system; redefinition of the military's role</p>
<p>Guatemala</p> <p>Intersectoral Dialogue Tables 2002–2003 and continuing</p>	<p>The dialogue responded to a general demand to address the return to polarization and distrust, confrontation, and political and social instability following the signing of the peace</p>	<p>– To generate a wide and open process of reconciliation and dialogue between the state and diverse social sectors, and to instill a culture of dialogue, tolerance, consensus and planning</p>	<p>– Intersectoral Dialogue Table—Culture of Peace and Reconciliation: approval of the 'Declaration on Social Principles and Values in a Culture of Peace' to serve as a basis for the development of a new and democratic coexistence in the framework of a</p>

<p>Case contributed by the OAS</p>	<p>accords that ended Guatemala's civil war. The context was also marked by widespread negative perceptions of the reliability, effectiveness and legitimacy of fundamental political institutions, political parties and civil society organizations, and of their capacity to fulfil the peace accords.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To generate the conditions of mutual trust needed to help create an appropriate atmosphere for good governance, and to strengthen efforts to fulfil the accords – To carry out a productive exchange of visions to construct an agenda for each of the themes – To achieve substantive and, when possible, binding agreements on problems related to the themes of the dialogue tables; and to identify actions to be taken by the state and participating actors 	<p>culture of peace; to be disseminated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Progress reports of each table presented to the consultative group in May 2003
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Guatemala Multiparty Dialogue Program 2002–2003 Case contributed by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy and UNDP</p>	<p>The dialogue responded to a recognized problem—the need to reinforce the political party system in Guatemala, in keeping with the peace accords, and to overcome the fragmentation and lack of confidence existing in the country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To promote the strengthening of political parties with a view to building solid and coherent democratic political institutions – To support political parties in the creation of a shared national agenda, which would identify the country's main problems and the main lines of action to resolve them, taking into consideration the basis provided by the peace accords and <i>UNDP Human Development Report</i> – To help develop electoral programmes and the formulation of government plans and political agendas for the opposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deep and shared understanding of Guatemala's current circumstances based on delegates' discussing and identifying the country's main political problems and how to solve them – Establishment of interpersonal communication networks based on trust, respect and tolerance, and enabling political dialogues outside the context of the programme – Establishment of inter-party communication networks that opened opportunities for multiparty alliances and coalitions, joint activities – Personal enrichment of the participants through their interventions – A Shared National Agenda: a set of minimum accords to transform Guatemala's future. Addressed political and economic matters, the peace process, and socio-environmental issues, while taking into account cross-cutting themes (inter-ethnic relations, gender and ethics). Also identified a series of themes for future debate. Constitutes a long-term vision for the country and a long-term commitment to it on the participants' part – Definition of a basic route to achieving national development
<p>Guyana</p>	<p>The critical national issue of establishing a development strategy remained pending as the division among</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To produce a national development strategy that would enable Guyana to secure further aid flows and strengthen the justification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government inclusion of non-state actors in a long-term policy-making exercise for the first time – A national development strategy that enjoyed

<p>National Development Strategy 1995 and continuing</p> <p>Case contributed by the Carter Center</p>	<p>the country's two main political forces and corresponding ethnic communities was growing. The Indo-Guyanese community, which enjoys a numerical advantage over the Afro-Guyanese, backed the ruling party. The Afro-Guyanese community backed the main opposition party. Political divisions were exacerbated by economic segmentation: the Indo-Guyanese population is largely tied to agriculture and the rural economy; the Afro-Guyanese live in urban areas and are prevalent in the public service sector. The interplay of ethnicity and politics with a winner-take-all electoral system was proving inherently unstable and left both communities feeling insecure. The results of the 1997 election were contested by the opposition, throwing the country into a protracted period of political tension and uncertainty for most of 1998. Political relations again deteriorated between the ruling party and the opposition after the 2001 elections, resulting in a 13-month boycott of parliament by the opposition.</p>	<p>for its preferred policy approaches with the international community (government)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To create greater stakeholder consultation and participation in decision-making processes in the light of the previous decades of dictatorship, the new demands of democracy and the bitter experiences of structural adjustment (government) – To promote greater government willingness to engage and accommodate civil society and the opposition in the country's governance (civil society and the opposition) – To develop a shared vision and solutions to Guyana's governance dilemmas (all sides in Guyana) – To promote greater country ownership of development strategies, increase the participation of civil society in governance and policy-making, and facilitate effective international cooperation and partnership (the Carter Center) 	<p>broad support, seen as a document of Guyanese civil society—the first development policy created exclusively by Guyanese, with the input of external consultants and advisers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A consensus-based national development strategy that helped strengthen Guyana's relations with the international financial institutions – Consolidation of civil society and an increase in its capacity to influence policy, thereby strengthening democratic institutions in Guyana – A promising example of how civic leaders from across Guyana's social and political spectrum can play an influential and moderating role in divisive political situations
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Guyana</p> <p>Constructive Engagement 2003</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>Following the violently disputed elections of 1997, the leaders of the ruling party and the opposition engaged in a UNDP-supported dialogue with three Caribbean Community (CARICOM)-appointed facilitators. This process resulted in the joint signing of the Herdmanston Accord, which proposed an audit of the disputed elections, a process of constitutional reform, a moratorium on public demonstrations and the development of a sustained dialogue process between the parties. Among other things, the agreement defused post-election tensions and launched a process of constitutional reform in time for the 2001 elections. But it failed in several respects. A sustained dialogue never materialized; public demonstrations, disturbances, violence and looting continued; and failed agreements led to greater bitterness and polarization between the parties. The media were continually involved in the 'constructive engagement' dialogue process; press conferences were</p>	<p>– To advance needed constitutional and institutional reforms in order to consolidate the role of the parliament and to further democratic governance in the country</p>	<p>– Creation of much initial optimism, helping to dilute social tensions and enhance stability</p> <p>– Contribution to breaking the political impasse, with more consensus-building and inclusiveness at all levels</p> <p>– Movement towards resolution and implementation of outstanding constitutional reforms from 2000–2001</p> <p>– Agreement on need for parliamentary and constitutional reforms vital for democracy</p> <p>– Setting up assemblies, committees and commissions</p> <p>– Progress in areas such as improving physical facilities in the National Assembly, presentation of an interim report by the Disciplined Forces Commission, and tabling electricity sector agreements in the National Assembly</p>

<p>Honduras Grand National Dialogue 2001–2003 Case contributed by the OAS</p>	<p>held after each meeting between the leaders.</p> <p>Honduras had not had a coherent, long-term development programme since independence and faced several serious developmental challenges. On UNDP <i>Human Development Index</i>, Honduras was placed 30th among the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This was also a period in which the government was experiencing its lowest level of citizen approval. Various social actors’ accumulated resentment with past Honduran governments and the current one for failing to fulfil previous commitments bred widespread scepticism about the viability of a national dialogue. There was a perception that the Grand National Dialogue process would elicit results similar to those of previous dialogue initiatives, and that the implementation of the dialogue’s results would suffer a similar fate, making another dialogue futile. More importantly, the continuation of conflicts (some involving violence and repression) with various social sectors on a variety of high-profile issues (public employees, health care and education) affected the credibility of the government and the legitimacy of the dialogue process.</p>	<p>– To create consensus on a vision of the country for 2021 that could give rise to state policies capable of coping with the challenges the country would face in the future</p>	<p>– A greater appreciation by socio-political actors of the value of dialogue as a tool of democratic governance—the most significant outcome</p> <p>– A national accord expressing a consensus on the long-term goals of the dialogue process and a commitment by the political parties, organized civil society, local authorities, community representatives and the state to respect and implement the agreements reached</p> <p>– A set of guidelines outlining those state policies that could guide the activities of national actors for the long-term attainment of national development objectives</p> <p>– Advancement of long-term social and economic objectives</p> <p>– A programme of internal and external financing aligned with long-term social and economic goals</p> <p>– Follow-up and evaluation mechanisms to verify that the agreement reached was carried out, that policies were executed and that the goals were met</p>
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Jamaica</p> <p>Civic Dialogue for Democratic Governance 2002–2004</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>The gradual weakening of Jamaica's democratic governance was evident in its reduced rating on the democratic index, and a slip, both absolutely and relative to the rest of the Caribbean, in its freedom rating. A stagnating economy, and increased public disillusionment with government and democracy, were problems compounded by a variety of social ills: a breakdown in traditional social structures, values and attitudes; increasing cultural fragmentation; labour insecurity; political rivalry; corruption; and high levels of crime, violence, drugs-related charges, civil disobedience and AIDS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To made progress in three action areas identified as top Jamaican priorities—crime and violence, employment creation, and the fight against corruption – To encourage advocacy, communication and capacity- and partnership-building – To achieve success similar to that of dialogue experiences in Guatemala, South Africa etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of four scenarios and unanimous support for a desired scenario, 'Get Up, Stand Up' – Development of recommendations for the government, the private sector and civil society – Consensus that Jamaica needed to develop a new approach to include community participation in development dialogue, and to establish a mechanism to turn talk into action
<p>Mozambique</p> <p>Agenda 2025 1997–2003</p> <p>Case contributed by the Carter Center and UNDP</p>	<p>In 1992 Mozambique ended a 17-year civil war, but strong political tensions persisted between the ruling party and the main opposition party, leading to violence and loss of life following the 1999 general elections. Despite a consolidated peace and high GDP growth rates, most Mozambicans remained in extreme poverty. Ranking 170th out of 175 countries on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To promote national unity – To establish, through a participatory process, a common long-term national vision – To prepare, through a participatory process, a national development strategy that set out the policies and programmes needed to respond to the goals identified in the national development vision – To increase the capacity of the government, Mozambican institutions and civil society to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agenda 2025 National Vision and Development Strategies document, developed through regional and sectoral workshops, presented to the President, June 2003 – Public debate on the national vision and strategy, producing a final version of the document in 2004

<p>UNDP Human Development Index, it is one of the world's least developed countries. The country's development pattern has been uneven. Urban areas in the southern region of the country have received large inflows of foreign direct investment while rural areas throughout the country suffer endemic poverty. Many in Mozambican society felt that the country—notwithstanding the significant gains that had been achieved since the peace agreements of 1992—had reached a critical juncture and needed to devise a long-term, sustainable and home-grown strategy that would allow for both the consolidation and more equitable distributions of those gains.</p>	<p>define and implement national economic and social policies, programmes and projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To guarantee consistency between short-, medium- and long-term social and economic policies – To increase the government's capacity to take the lead in coordinating and managing development cooperation 	
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Nicaragua</p> <p>Dialogue on Land and Property 1994–1995</p> <p>Case contributed by the Carter Center</p>	<p>The country was in a state of conflict. The issue involved peasants waiting for clear title for land granted under the Sandinista agrarian reform, Sandinista and Contra ex-combatants seeking land in the countryside, and previous owners from Nicaragua and abroad demanding the return of or compensation for houses, factories and land confiscated, expropriated or abandoned in the past. By 1992, roughly 40% of the country's households found themselves in conflict or potential conflict over land tenure issues because of overlapping claims by different people on the same property. The situation was further complicated by many legal uncertainties and an inadequate administrative system. Addressing property disputes and an uncertain legal framework for property rights was critically important, since the resulting problems impeded investment and economic recovery, and generated political polarization, destabilization and conflict, sometimes violent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To resolve the clash between those who had lost and those who had benefited from agrarian reform, since land disputes posed a persistent problem, causing conflict and destabilizing the government – To address debates over whose rights to property should take precedence, administrative and legal impediments to resolving multiple claims to individual pieces of property, and modernizing the titling system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An atmosphere of respect and constructive problem-solving: the forum (and the fact it could take place and all) reflects an important maturing of Nicaraguan society as participants from all sides of the issue were able to discuss their differences. It jump-started the slowly building consensus and galvanized the participants to act rapidly – Broad consensus that the small beneficiaries of urban and agrarian reforms should be protected, former owners should be compensated with improved bonds, recipients of larger properties should pay for or return those properties, and abusers of property laws during the last two months of the Ortega government would be prosecuted in the court system – A new property law was passed, encompassing most of these elements of the agreement
<p>Panama</p> <p>Bambito I, II, III 1993–1994</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>In 1993, the country faced deep political divisions and turmoil following two decades of dictatorship, the US invasion of 1989 and the replacement of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To foster an open dialogue in order to achieve effective political, economic and institutional transition – To generate a commitment to dialogue and consensus, and to work towards consolidating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding; development of consensus, building trust and confidence among actors, reducing political tensions; overcoming traditional positions and sectoral interests – Creation of a climate of calm and confidence,

	<p>with a transitional government in 1989. The challenge of making the complex transition to democracy was compounded by the urgency of forming transitional arrangements to ensure the smooth handover of the Panama Canal from the United States to Panama on 31 December 1999. The country was also dealing with corruption, social polarization and institutional insecurity. By the time of Bambito III in 1994, the political context was significantly different. A government had been democratically elected and there was little perceived need to call for a national dialogue.</p>	<p>democracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To establish the main lines of state action and priority areas before the elections (Bambito I) – To create an agreement among presidential candidates to reiterate their commitment to the Bambito I declaration (Bambito II) – To institutionalize political dialogue and produce agreements for social policies (Bambito III) 	<p>which contributed to the holding of fair and transparent elections in 1994 and, more generally, to the transition to democracy and the return of the Canal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identification of priority topics and development of related programme proposals (Bambito I) – Confirmation of the spirit of détente, boost in confidence, reiteration of the commitments of Bambito I
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Panama</p> <p>Coronado '2000 Panama Encounters' 1995–1996</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>The country faced an urgent need to produce agreements to ensure the smooth takeover and administration of the Panama Canal and Canal Zone, to be handed over to the country by the United States on 31 December 1999.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To create a new space for dialogue and consensus on the fundamental themes of the country, focusing specifically on the future of the Canal – To address the handover of the Canal, its future and its governability (Coronado I) – To study, discuss and seek agreement on draft bill on the Canal Authority (Coronado II) – To discuss the General Land Use Plan of the Inter-oceanic Regional Authority (Coronado III) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding; contribution to the culture of transparency, participation and trust – A visualization from different perspectives of the implication of having the responsibility of administering the Panama Canal and the benefits that that represented for the country – Overcoming ideological–political differences and sectoral interests to work collectively; demonstration of a genuine potential for dialogue and capacity for consensus in the country – An agreement and vision, 'Visión Nacional Panamá 2000 ... y Adelante', consisting of a long-term vision to achieve the objectives of development and democratic governance, and a commitment to the effective administration of the Canal, separate from partisan and sectoral interests
<p>Panama</p> <p>National Vision 2020 1997</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>There was a general demand felt in Panama for the political divisions, social polarization and institutional insecurity still present as a result of decades of dictatorship to be addressed, in order to complete the complex transition to democracy and effectively assume ownership of the Panama Canal from the United States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To complete the country's transition to a sovereign, multicultural, modern, democratic state by addressing five key elements: democratic institutionalism, self-determination, economic development, justice and sustainability – To achieve dialogue and consensus between national actors – To develop a long-term vision and the operational goals and objectives to achieve it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding; developed common values and collective long-term thinking; visualized the future from different perspectives; achieved consensus, overcoming political and ideological bias – Demonstration that democratic governance can be strengthened by the will of all sectors – Creation of the scenario 'Una Estrella en el Apagón': a vision of the future provides hope and light to the present – Endorsement of a final document by 14

<p>Visión Paraguay 2000–2002 Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>The need for institutional change in Paraguay was generally acknowledged. More than a decade after the end of dictatorship, the authoritarian culture of fear and a conservative and fatalistic mentality still predominated. Political, social, judicial and economic insecurity reigned. Political crimes, persistent corruption and a succession of unstable governments had created a politically passive citizenry and challenged the effective institutionalization of democracy. Low productivity and economic recession resulted in intense poverty, negative socio-economic indicators, social dislocation and widespread disillusionment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To develop a space for consensus and construct a shared vision to help overcome societal divisions (sectoral, cultural, socio-economic and so on) and influence the country's development – To disseminate results widely – To produce a group of national leaders with shared mental maps and plans for change 	<p>representatives of civil society, the Catholic Church, all the political parties and the government in May 1998</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improvement of the capacity for dialogue between these participants – Greater understanding: participants accumulated some degree of empathy, tolerance, respect for one another; benefited from listening/learning, thinking of their country from others' perspectives; had a chance to express themselves honestly; and gained capacity for reflection – Initiation of a short-term collective effort to define the future by learning about the present – Reflection by leaders about the need for future social and political action <p>Construction of three scenarios: 'Bad Night', 'Uncertain Dawn' and 'Luminous'</p>
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Peru National Accord 2001–2003</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>The country was in the midst of a triple crisis: of political legitimacy, government credibility (caused by corruption and human rights violations) and the economy. Former President Alberto Fujimori had fled Peru a year earlier as a result of a dramatic corruption crisis that resulted in high tension, political confrontation and distrust, and street disturbances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To create a shared national vision for the future and formulate state policies to achieve it – To affirm a national identity, shared values and responsibilities – To encourage citizenship participation and a space of consensus to change the anti-political climate – To help reduce poverty, increase the country's competitiveness and establish the stability required for sustainable development – To consolidate the democratic transition and the legitimacy of the political system, by creating a culture of transparency, dialogue and consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding: development of tolerance, respect and learning between sectors, without sacrificing natural and political differences – Generation of long-term strategic thinking and consensus – 30 state policies; 268 sub-policies; 817 indicators; 747 goals
<p>Tajikistan</p> <p>Inter-Tajik Dialogue 1993–2001 and continuing</p> <p>Case contributed by the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue</p>	<p>The civil war that broke out in the former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan following its independence in 1991 was at its peak. In 1992, the main question once central Soviet governance collapsed was who would govern Tajikistan. In 1992 an effort to form a coalition government failed. A group representing people close to the former system then took over the capital and the government to form the base of what ultimately became the government. A vicious conflict raged,</p>	<p>To see whether a group can be formed during a civil war that can design a peace process for their own country</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contributions of participants in the dialogue to the peace process in Tajikistan – Formation by the dialogue participants of the Public Committee for Promoting Democratic Processes, based on the deep personal conviction that they could make a contribution to the democratization of Tajikistan by creating pockets in the country where citizens could experience their capacities as political actors to accomplish results that are beyond the reach of governments

<p>Trinidad and Tobago National Strategic Plan for an Expanded Response to HIV/AIDS 2002 Case contributed by UNDP</p>	<p>with atrocities on both sides. A reported one of every seven citizens had fled their homes. The immediate challenge was to end the civil war and produce agreement on how the country would be governed. Beyond that, there remained the question of what the roots of a Tajik identity are. The Tajiks had been part of a Central Asian Khanate and then under Soviet rule for 70 years, and they were groping for a sense of identity.</p> <p>HIV/AIDS is among the leading causes of death among young adults. Increasing numbers of young women are at risk of contracting the virus. While the national prevalence rate for HIV is 1.3%, for young persons aged 15–19 years the rate is estimated at 7%</p>	<p>To develop a National Strategic Plan to guide Trinidad and Tobago's expanded response to HIV/AIDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Creation of conversation and consensus-building among critical players and stakeholders in the private, public and community sectors in Trinidad and Tobago, who were knowledgeable about issues related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic – Creation of broadly-based 'buy-in' to the national strategic planning process and, by extension, commitment to a national plan – Development of sufficient information to augment and support the situation and response analysis – Identification of the broad strategic areas for action as a foundation for creating a framework for a National Coordinating Mechanism, which was eventually adopted by the government and funded by UNDP
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Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
<p>Uruguay Agenda Uruguay 2001–2003</p> <p>Case contributed by UNDP and the University of Peace</p>	<p>The country faced a difficult economic and social situation, and was dealing with an economic recession that had begun in 1999. It was also facing the prospect of greater integration in an increasingly complex and uncertain international system, with numerous obstacles, discriminatory business practices and asymmetrical benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To include a wide array of societal actors in a collective effort to identify common interests and achieve national consensus, collaboration and cohesion – To foster a space for dialogue and deep reflection, and to envisage the conditions needed for modernization – To formulate state strategies and policies to tackle the country's fundamental challenges: public services, energy, telecommunications, education for a knowledge society, international insertion and the role of political parties – To help deepen the state reform process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater understanding: achieved consensus despite the presence of diverse political outlooks – Establishment of an open and pluralistic environment for dialogue – Creation of an informal but permanent dialogue network between the political parties, changing the conventional relationships between the parties and between these and the government. This new network provided a forum to plan and negotiate medium- and long-term government programmes
<p>Venezuela Negotiation and Agreement Table 2002–2003</p> <p>Cases contributed by the OAS and the Carter Center</p>	<p>For much of President Hugo Chávez's term in office (since 1998), the country had been struggling with economic volatility, escalating poverty and corruption. Tensions had been increasing since 2001 and reached a peak in April 2002, when a coup was attempted against the President. A new President was inaugurated but rapidly removed. It was in this climate of high mistrust and polarization that the Chávez government decided to set up a dialogue. As the process proceeded,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To win time and avoid higher levels of social unrest (the government) – To find a rapid but democratic solution to the crisis through mediated agreements with binding results (the opposition) – To look for an agreement to resolve the crisis via the electoral system. – To address the following themes: strengthening the electoral system, disarming the civilian population and installing a functioning Truth Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Negotiation of a 19-point agreement assuring respect for human rights, freedom of expression, the right to petition for recall referendums of all elected officials—including the President—and the establishment of a follow-up commission – Reiteration of the participants' commitment to reject violence and follow the principles of various democratic charters, including disarming the civilian population and creating a climate conducive to electoral processes

Appendix 2: Process Options and Process Tools—An Overview

Throughout this Handbook, we emphasize the importance of adapting the design and implementation of a dialogue process to its context and purpose. In this overview of process options the reader will find an array of processes and process tools for dialogue and deliberation to support the task of adaptation. Drawing mainly on the two sources noted in the shaded area, we provide here a brief description of each process and an Internet source for further information.

We present the processes in groups, according to the role that each is best suited to play in a dialogue initiative: exploration and awareness raising—sharing knowledge and ideas; relationship-building—working through conflict; deliberation—working through tough decisions; and collaborative action—multi-stakeholder, whole-system change. We also indicate what size of group each process is designed to accommodate, using this scale:

- small (intimate): 8–12 participants
- standard: 15–40 participants
- large group: 40–4,000 participants.

In addition to these basic distinctions, the reader will find that these processes originate in different places and cultures—many from the global North, but some from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. In some cases, this may be an important selection criterion. Moreover, as the authors of *Mapping Dialogue* note, most of these processes and process tools ‘have a set of principles attached to them, and this is a significant part of what makes them work’. The examples they provide are: ‘rotate leadership’ (Circle); ‘access the wisdom of the minority’ (Deep Democracy); ‘explore questions that matter’ (World Café); and ‘whoever comes are the right people’ (Open Space).²⁰⁴ These core ideas can also help practitioners determine whether a particular process is right for their specific needs.

The website (<<http://www.democraticdialoguenet.org>>) contains a rich array of case material and related reports contributed by the members of the institutional community of practice. It also offers an expanded resource for readers wishing to pursue further the stories, ideas, practices and tools presented here.

For further reading

The two sources from which our list is adapted are ‘Well-known Processes for Dialogue and Deliberation’, created by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), available at <<http://www.thataway.org>>; and Marianne Bojer, Marianne Knuth and Colleen Magner, *Mapping Dialogue: A Research Project Profiling Dialogue Tools and Processes for Social Change* (Johannesburg: Pioneers of Change Associates, 2006), available at <<http://www.pioneersofchange.net/research/dialogue>>.

Both these sources provide a comparative analysis of the processes they profile, offering guidance on which processes are relevant for different goals and contexts.

Exploration and Awareness-Raising: Sharing Knowledge and Ideas

World Café

Group size: large, up to hundreds

World Cafés enable groups of people to participate together in evolving rounds of dialogue with three or four others while remaining part of a single, larger, connected conversation. Small, intimate conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas and discover new insights into questions or issues that really matter in their life, work or community. For further information see <<http://www.theworldcafe.com>>.

Conversation Café

Group size: single group or several small groups

Conversation Cafés are hosted conversations that are usually held in a public setting like a coffee shop or bookstore, where anyone is welcome to join. A simple format helps people feel at ease and gives everyone who wants to speak a chance to do so. For further information see <<http://www.conversationcafe.org>>.

Open Space Technology

Group size: from standard to hundreds

Open Space Technology is a self-organizing practice that invites people to take responsibility for what they care about. In Open Space, rather than beginning with a predetermined agenda, a group creates a marketplace of inquiry wherein participants identify the topics they feel passionate about and want to work on together. The agenda emerges from the group. It is an innovative approach to creating whole-system change and to inspiring creativity and leadership among participants. For further information see <<http://www.openspaceworld.org>>.

Circle Process

Group size: small

The Circle Process is a small group dialogue designed to encourage people to listen and speak from the heart in a spirit of inquiry. By opening and closing the circle with a simple ritual of the group's choosing, using a talking object, and inviting silence to enter the circle, a safe space is created wherein participants can be trusting, authentic, caring and open to change. These are also referred to as a council process, wisdom circle, listening circles or talking circles, common among indigenous peoples of North America. For further information see <<http://www.wisdomcircle.org>> or <<http://www.peerspirit.com/htmlpages/circlebasics.html>>.

Lekgotla Process²⁰⁵

Group size: small to standard

This is one of two African village circle processes described in the *Mapping Dialogue* report. The authors caution that their research into these African dialogue traditions is just beginning, but it is important that the field as a whole becomes more informed about them. The authors write: 'it is in some ways absurd to import dialogue processes from the West into Africa, where conversation is so deeply ingrained in the indigenous culture.' The name 'Lekgotla' comes from Setswana, a language spoken widely in Southern Africa, and means a public place where consultation and judicial proceedings are conducted. This form of an African council process is always held in the open air, because the outdoors belongs to no one. This provides a sense of freedom, openness and invitation to people to attend and speak honestly. There is also no time limit to the process. It may continue for days or weeks until the issues being addressed have been resolved. This freedom from time restrictions enables participants to suspend judgement and to be willing to listen to someone's point of view and story in context, without rushing them. The Lekgotla meets in a circle. The circle represents unity and the participants are aware that only if they are whole and united can they address their problems. The circle also ensures that they face each other and speak honestly to one another. As they gather, they greet each person around the circle. They make sure that those who really matter to the process are present. Though they may be seated by rank and speak in order of a hierarchy, the emphasis is on every voice being heard equally. For further information see <<http://www.pioneersofchange.net/library/dialogue>>.

Theatre of the Oppressed²⁰⁶

Group size: small to standard

The Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is a method developed in Brazil that uses the language and techniques of interactive theatre to engage the public on key issues related to the core social problems and power structures of their particular communities and society at large. The method involves using theatre to pose a dilemma to the group that ends with a negative outcome. Participants are asked to assume the role of one of the actors in order to try to change the outcome. They are invited to imagine new possibilities and solutions, and to try to make them happen in the moment. As a result of the group problem-solving, highly interactive imagining, physical involvement, trust, fun and vigorous interpersonal dynamics, the participants learn how they are a part of perpetuating their own problems and how they can be the source of their own liberation. For further information see <<http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org>>.

Relationship-building – Working through Conflict

Sustained Dialogue

Group size: small

Sustained Dialogue (SD) is a process for transforming the relationships that cause problems, create conflict and block change. SD is not a problem-solving workshop

but a sustained interaction that develops through a sequence of meetings over months or years. The process moves through five recognizable phases: deciding to engage; mapping relationships; probing problems and relationships; scenario-building; and acting together. For further information see <<http://www.sustaineddialogue.org>>.

Public Conversations Project

Group size: small

The Public Conversations Project (PCP) helps people with fundamental disagreements about divisive issues to develop the mutual understanding and trust essential for strong communities and positive action. The PCP dialogue model is characterized by a careful preparatory phase that maps old, ‘stuck’ patterns of conversation and explores times when ‘new’ conversations have taken place. Potential dialogue participants are involved in designing the process at an early stage. PCP has used this model, mainly in the United States, to facilitate dialogue on deeply polarized issues such as abortion, sexual orientation, faith and the environment. There is a comprehensive handbook on how to use this process. For further information see <<http://www.publicconversations.org/pcp/index.asp>>.

Deep Democracy²⁰⁷

Group size: small

Deep Democracy, which originated in South Africa, is a facilitation methodology based on the assumption that there is wisdom in the minority voice and in the diversity of viewpoints, and that this wisdom has value for the whole group. The approach helps to bring to the surface and give expression to what is otherwise left unsaid. It ensures that the minority’s views and concerns are genuinely addressed. In turn, this allows for decision-making to proceed having taken account of the insight or wisdom of the minority view. This insight will be pertinent to the direction and decision made by the majority. Deep Democracy is most useful when things are unsaid and need to be brought into the open; people are stuck in roles and conflict may be arising; there is a diversity of views in a group, and different sides to an issue must be considered; power differences are affecting people’s freedom to act; there is a need to win the acceptance of a minority; and/or people are being ‘labelled’ by others. For further information see <<http://www.deep-democracy.net>>.

Intergroup Dialogue

Group size: single or multiple small groups

Intergroup Dialogue is a social justice approach to dialogue. It focuses on both societal power relations of domination–subordination and the creative possibilities for engaging and working with and across these differences. Intergroup Dialogue aims to move people beyond the point where they see these differences as divisive—for example, by generating ideas for new ways of being powerful without perpetuating social inequalities. This approach coincides with core social work processes of empowerment—building

connections with others, increasing critical consciousness about social inequalities, engendering commitments to social justice and developing competencies to interrupt social injustices and engage in social change. For further information see <<http://www.depts.washington.edu/ssweb/idea>>.

Israeli–Palestinian School for Peace²⁰⁸

Group size: small

The School for Peace is a process developed in the Middle East by Arabs and Israelis together. It involves encounter groups structured to bring participants together, not just as individuals but as representatives of their group identities. In this way the process aims to get at the sources of conflict that are based in deeply rooted beliefs, and that do not change simply as a result of connections made at the individual level. This approach assumes that (1) the beliefs and outlooks on which a person's identity and behaviour are constructed are deep-seated and stable, and generally resistant to change; (2) the conflict rests on an encounter between two national groups, not between individuals; the group is seen as having an essential importance, beyond the sum of its individual members; (3) the group is a microcosm of reality and thus offers an avenue for learning about the society at large; and (4) the encounter group is an open entity, linked to and influenced by the larger reality outside. For further information see <<http://www.sfpeace.org>>.

Participatory Action Research

Group size: standard

Participatory action research (PAR) has its roots in the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. At its core is the idea that ordinary people can be empowered to take charge of changing their circumstances by inquiring into the underlying causes of the events that shape their world. The inquiry and the actions that result from it comprise the 'action research', which is always conducted jointly by the researchers and the subjects of the research. Since Freire first put forward the idea in 1970, PAR has been widely adopted as an intervention strategy for agencies and institutions seeking to support human development in various regions of the world. From its inception as the War-Torn Societies Project, Interpeace has used this process for conflict prevention, peace-building and strengthening democratic governance in societies emerging from violent conflicts. In this process, 'dialogue and research are used together to help participants identify options for policy formation and priority setting ... building consensus among the main actors involved in post-conflict rebuilding through regular meetings in a neutral setting'. For further information see <<http://www.crdssomalia.org/crd-background.shtml>>.

Deliberation – Working through Tough Decisions

Citizen Deliberative Councils²⁰⁹

Group size: small

Citizen Deliberative Councils (CDCs) are made up of ordinary citizens reflecting the diversity of the population from which they were drawn. They are convened on an ad hoc basis to serve as a microcosm of a community, state or country and report on the views and concerns of that community, state or country in an interactive setting. Participants may be selected randomly, or scientifically, or by a combination of both methods. But they differ from the participants in most other forms of citizen deliberation in that they are not chosen as representatives, stakeholders or experts. They take part simply as themselves, citizens and peers. In their role as a citizen council, however, they may consult representatives, experts or other stakeholders, so as to improve their understanding of the issues they are exploring. There are many varieties of CDCs (citizen juries, citizen assemblies, wisdom councils, planning cells and consensus conferences) but they all share one general purpose: to inform officials and the public of what the people as a whole would really want if they were to think carefully about the matter and discuss it with each other. For further information on various models of citizen councils see <<http://www.co-intelligence.org/CDCUsesAndPotency.html>>.

National Issues Forums²¹⁰

Group size: several small groups to hundreds

National Issues Forums (NIF) is an independent network of civic and educational groups that use ‘issue books’ as a basis for deliberative choice work in forums based on the town meeting tradition. Many people can participate, but the conversations take place in small groups. NIF issue books use research on the public’s concerns to identify three or four options or approaches to an issue (they never produce just two alternatives). Presenting issues in this way invites citizens to confront the conflicts among different options and avoids the usual debates in which people lash out with simplistic arguments. The term ‘National Issues Forums’ refers both to a network of organizations and to a deliberative process (see *Choicework* below). For further information see <<http://www.nifi.org/>>.

Citizen Choicework²¹¹

Group size: several small groups to hundreds

Too often, ‘community forums’ are merely panels of experts telling people what is good for them. Or they are public free-for-alls, where the loudest voices prevail. In contrast, Citizen Choicework is based on a deep respect for the public’s capacity to address issues when circumstances support, rather than thwart, dialogue and deliberation. Given the right conditions, the public’s ability to learn, get involved and make decisions is far greater than most people realize. This process is based on a commitment to helping citizens—individually and collectively—confront tough choices in productive ways. By

doing that, people work through values conflicts and practical trade-offs, and develop a sense of priorities and direction. Key principles include non-partisan local leadership, inclusive participation and unbiased discussion materials that ‘start where the public starts’. For further information see <http://www.publicagenda.org/pubengage/pe_citizen_choicework.cfm>.

Study Circles

Group size: several small groups to hundreds

Study Circles enable communities to strengthen their ability to solve problems by bringing large numbers of people together in dialogue across divides of race, income, age and political viewpoint. Study Circles combine dialogue, deliberation and community organizing techniques, enabling public talk to build understanding, explore a range of solutions and serve as a catalyst for social, political and policy change. For further information see <<http://www.studyircles.org/en/index.aspx>>.

AmericaSpeaks 21st Century Town Meeting²¹²

Group size: hundreds to thousands

The 21st Century Town Meeting focuses on discussion and deliberation among citizens rather than speeches, question-and-answer sessions or panel presentations. Diverse groups of citizens participate in round-table discussions (10–12 people per table), deliberating in depth about key policy, resource-allocation or planning issues. Each table discussion is supported by a trained facilitator to ensure that participants stay ‘on task’ and that each table has a democratic process. Participants receive detailed and balanced background discussion guides to increase their knowledge of the issues under consideration. Computerized note-taking and voting transform the individual table discussions into synthesized recommendations representative of the whole room. Before the meeting ends, results from the meeting are compiled into a report, which is distributed to participants, decision-makers and the media as they leave. Decision-makers actively engage in the meeting by participating in table discussions, observing the process and responding to citizen input at the end of the meeting. For further information see <<http://www.americaspeaks.org>>.

Deliberative Polling

Group size: standard to hundreds

Deliberative Polling combines deliberation in small group discussions with scientific random sampling to provide public consultation for public policy and for electoral issues. Members of a random sample are polled, and then some members are invited to gather at a single place to discuss the issues after they have examined balanced briefing materials. Participants engage in dialogue with competing experts and political leaders on the basis of questions they develop in small group discussions with trained moderators. They are then polled again to track how this deliberative process has affected their opinions. For further information see <<http://www.cdd.stanford.edu/polls/docs/summary>>.

Collaborative Action – Multistakeholder, Whole-System Change

Future Search

Group size: 60–80

Future Search is an interactive planning process that brings the ‘whole system’ together in a 16-hour retreat of three days and two overnights. The process centres on common ground and future action, while treating problems and conflicts as information, not action items. The group moves from discussing the past, to identifying present trends and common ground, to imagining future scenarios and planning joint actions to bring the desired future. For further information see <<http://www.futuresearch.net>>.

Appreciative Inquiry²¹³

Group size: standard to thousands

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is very different from the traditional problem-solving approach that focuses on diagnosing what is wrong and then developing strategies to fix it. Instead, it involves the systematic discovery of what gives ‘life’ to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological and human terms. AI centrally involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate and heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry by devising the ‘unconditional positive question’. AI follows a process of discovering the best of what is, dreaming and identifying what could be, and designing to bring the desired reality into being on the basis of existing positive seeds for success. For further information see <<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>>.

Scenario Planning²¹⁴

Group size: small to standard

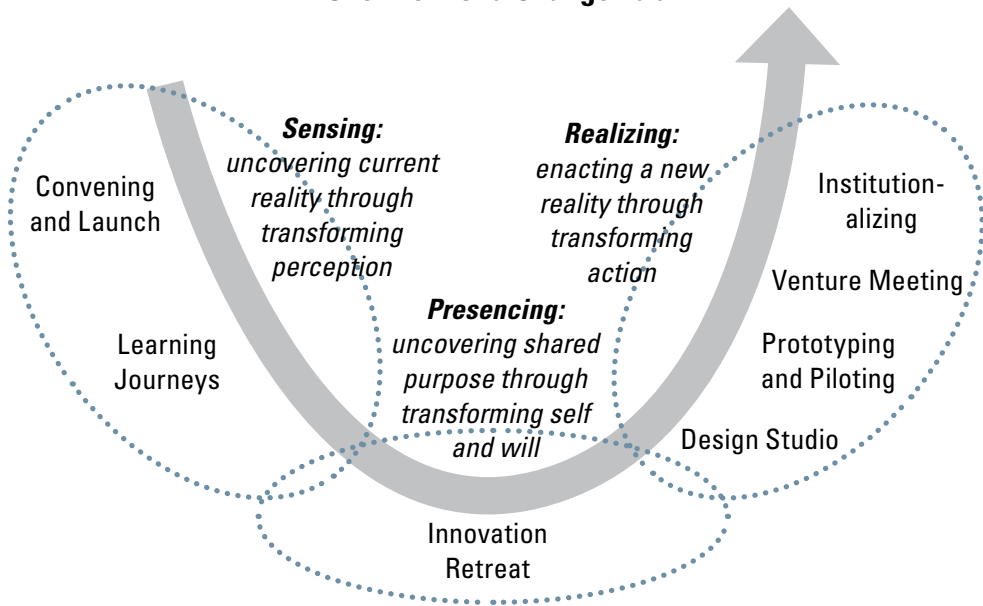
Scenario Planning builds on the notion that the world is inherently uncertain. Scenarios are used not so much as a tool for predicting the future but rather as a process to challenge the assumptions, values and mental models of various stakeholders about how uncertainties might affect their collective futures. By encouraging scenario-planning processes at different levels of an organization or community, old paradigms are challenged and innovation is encouraged through surprising possible stories of the future. Scenarios therefore help develop new and valuable knowledge. By bringing many perspectives into a conversation about the future, a rich and multidimensional variety of scenarios are created. Scenarios encourage story-telling and dialogue between people who would not necessarily share their perspectives with each other. For more information see <http://www.arlingtoninstitute.org/future/How_to_change_the_world.pdf>.

Change Lab²¹⁵

Group size: standard

The Change Lab, a multi-stakeholder dialogic change process, is designed to generate the shared commitment and collective insight needed to produce breakthrough solutions to complex social problems. Each Change Lab is convened around a particular societal problem to which no obvious solution is in sight. It is convened by one or more organizations that are committed to effecting change and aware that they cannot solve this problem alone. The convener(s) bring(s) together 25–35 key stakeholders of the issue who represent a ‘microcosm’ of the problem system. These people must be influential, diverse, committed to changing the system and open to changing themselves. The process that they move through together in the Change Lab draws inspiration from the ‘U-Process’ co-developed by Otto Scharmer and Joseph Jaworski (see figure below²¹⁶). For further information see <<http://www.synergos.org/partnership/about/uprocess.htm>>.

Overview of a Change Lab



Source: © Generon Consulting 1999-2004. Adapted from Joseph Jaworski and C. Otto Scharmer, "Leadership in the Digital Economy: Sensing and Actualizing Emerging Futures" (Cambridge, Mass.: Society for Organizational Learning and Beverly, Mass.: Generon Consulting, 2000), <<http://www.dialogonleadership.org>>.

Other Tools

Learning Journeys²¹⁷

In a learning journey, a dialogue group visits an organization or community and is invited to sit down one-on-one or in small groups in empathetic dialogue with local stakeholders in order to understand their circumstances. Before such a visit, learning journey participants clarify their own intentions and questions; often, they receive training in how to ‘suspend judgement’ and listen not only with an open mind, but also with an open heart and open will. After a visit they hear each other’s perspectives and, through conversation, attain a deeper understanding and a more complete picture of what they have experienced together. They become aware of what others saw that they themselves may have been blind to, and discover the value of broadening understanding of what it means to see. For further information see <<http://www.pioneersofchange.net/research/dialogue>>.

Story Dialogue²¹⁸

The Story Dialogue technique builds on traditional, oral communication and learning techniques. The process is structured so that valuable personal experiences are used to draw out important themes and issues affecting the community, and then action can be planned around these insights. This process uses a mixture of story and structured dialogue based on four types of question: ‘what?’ (description), ‘why?’ (explanation), ‘so what?’ (synthesis), and ‘now what?’ (action). Open questions are asked of the story-teller by the other members of the group and this generates dialogue, but with a particular set of objectives in mind: to move from personal experience to more generalized knowledge (insights) and action. For further information see <<http://www.evaluationtrust.org/tools/story.html>>.

Graphic Facilitation and Information Design

Graphic Facilitation involves the work of a ‘graphic recorder’ who captures the essence of the conversation on large sheets of paper, using colourful images and symbols as well as words. An information designer also captures dialogue content but renders it in diagrams, tables and models. Both these processes support the dialogue by enabling participants to reflect together on the ideas and themes emerging in the conversation. For further information see <<http://www.visualpractitioner.org>>.

Listening Projects and Dialogue Interviewing

One way of reaching people who may never participate in an organized dialogue event is through one-on-one interviews conducted by individuals trained in active listening and dialogic interviewing. Interviewers take time to build trust and understanding so that interviewees can go deeper into their fears, distress, hopes, needs, feelings and ideas.

Web-Based Tools²¹⁹

In recent years, more and more groups have been using innovations in collaborative technology as a way of extending their practice in dialogue and deliberation. Many tools and venues for online conversation and decision-making have been created, for use in the public realm, that help people engage in meaningful conversations about public issues. For instance, AmericaSpeaks is a pioneer in using collaborative technology to enhance and connect face-to-face deliberations involving large numbers of people. In addition to creating forums for online dialogue, deliberation and discussion, high-tech, collaboration tools can be used to enhance face-to-face dialogue and deliberation in a number of ways:

- by enabling groups to vote quickly on options or opinions
- by mapping out a discussion visually for all to see
- by enabling facilitators of large groups to gather and share demographic and other factual information quickly with the group, enabling participants in large-scale programmes to feel more connected to others in the room
- by more effectively gathering the notes, themes and decisions made by each small group in large-scale programmes
- by giving participants an added sense of importance or ‘officialness’ (having their discussion and outcomes immediately submitted elsewhere can create a greater sense of value for the discussion)
- if face-to-face dialogue happens either before or after an online component, the tools can enhance the process by providing participants with another means of expressing themselves and by allowing people with busy or conflicting schedules to interact for a longer period.

For a review of many of the online tools and services available, see the website of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation at <<http://www.thataway.org/resources/practice/hightech/intro.html>>.