

Executive Summary



Victim Empowerment and Peacebuilding

Exploring the role of local foundations in supporting victim empowerment processes in regions of conflict



foreword

In 2006, the grant-making foundations that comprise the Foundations for Peace Network agreed that, in order to make concrete our understanding of the concepts of peace-building and social justice, collaborative work on a common theme of concern was required. All too often abstract concepts can encompass a multiplicity of different approaches and understandings, and while these can be positive at times, they can also give rise to confusion. It is for this reason that the Foundations for Peace Network designed the Victim Empowerment Project in order to share our diverse understandings and methodologies, as well as to validate the role of victims/survivors of conflict in peace-building and social change.

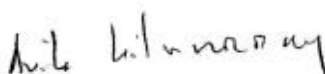
After a year long examination of, and extensive discussion about, our various circumstances and projects, the Network members identified a number of shared points of learning. These include the importance of reaching out to those individuals and groups that are most affected by violence; the ability to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to the needs of victims, as well as the importance of adopting a long-term perspective. In addition to this, the Foundations for Peace members agreed that the task of bringing diverse sections of society together with victims and survivors of conflict, through networking and advocacy was important; as was the ability to encourage local groups and communities to challenge established stereotypes, norms and attitudes. A wide variety of project approaches have been supported, ranging from the use of the arts to help people address sensitive issues in a creative manner, practical support for bereaved and injured people, and the documentation of human rights abuses.

This executive summary of our research publication, and the related conferences and seminars, is seen as a means of encouraging further discussion and reflection on both the supportive role of locally-based grant-makers, and the crucial contribution of victims/survivors of violence to the broader challenge of peace-building in contested societies. The Foundations for Peace Network intends to build on this work in the future. It is grateful to all those that have made this initiative possible, and welcomes ongoing contact with other philanthropic foundations, as well as interested institutions and individuals who might wish to partner with us in developing this important area of work.

Finally, to all those individuals, families and communities across our diverse societies that have suffered both as a result of violence and in the cause of peace-building – our respectful thanks.



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May 2008

acknowledgements

We wish to thank all of those who contributed to the Victim Empowerment Project since its inception in early 2007. In particular, we owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the International Expert Panel who participated in two intensive, but very productive meetings during the course of the project and gave of their time and energy so generously to the production of this publication. The members of the Expert Panel are Shaheen Anam (Bangladesh), Brandon Hamber (Northern Ireland), Martin Macwan (India), Ambika Satkunanathan (Sri Lanka), Sujatha Rita Raj (India), Ali Abu Awwad (Palestine), Robi Damelin (Israel), Slavica Stojanovic and Stasa Zajovic (Serbia) and Oscar Rojas (Colombia). In addition, Foundations for Peace members, Sithie Tiruchelvam, Santosh Samal, Avila Kilmurray and Sheila Richards provided much support, input and encouragement to the project at all stages. Thanks must also be extended to the groups involved in the case studies for sharing their work so willingly. We also wish to acknowledge the initial project research undertaken by Ashley Green-Thompson, who also provided contextual information and case studies from South Africa, and Patrick Canagasingham, former CEO, Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust. Barry Knight, Centris, who facilitated several of the meetings, is also to be thanked for his vision, patience and ongoing support.

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland also wishes to acknowledge the input of its Local Advisory Group (Brandon Hamber, Marie-Therese O'Hagan, Sharon Campbell, William Redpath and Jim Dennison) which provided advice and feedback on the Northern Ireland content of the publication and the design of the Victim Empowerment and Peacebuilding Conference of May 2008. In addition, the Foundation wishes to sincerely thank the contributors of the case studies which were provided by the Conflict Trauma Resource Centre, Relatives for Justice and the WAVE Trauma Centre. Thanks also to our colleagues at the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, Fiona O'Toole, Chris Millar, Ciaran de Baroid, Elaine Canavan and Christina Vint for their vital project assistance.

The following representative of organisations that formed the Local Advisory Group in Sri Lanka Saroja Sivachandran - Centre for Women's Development, Jaffna; Asoka Dayaratne - Association for Disabled Ex-Service Personnel; Wasantha Ranil Kumara and Jayanthi Dandeniya - Families of the Disappeared, and Marcel Smits and Adejo Haruna - Nonviolent Peace Force, were instrumental in sharing and enriching the feedback from Sri Lanka.

We also wish to acknowledge the support provided by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council which provided enabling support under the European Union's PEACE II Extension Programme (Measure 2.1). Our particular thanks go to Duncan Morrow, Jim Dennison, Elizabeth Corrigan and Deirdre McKenna of the Community Relations Council.

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1 Introduction >



1.1 Foundations for Peace Network

The Foundations for Peace Network is a global network of independent, indigenous funders working to advance equality, diversity and interdependence in areas of entrenched and persistent communal conflict, with a history of, or potential for, violence. One of the three strategic objectives of the Foundations for Peace Network is to draw lessons from the practical work of its members, and to share grant-making models of good practice, that are designed to promote peace-building, human rights and equality work.

It is the FFP Network's view that peace-building must come from within the community, society or country affected to ensure its longer-term sustainability. International political interventions may help peace processes and international aid interventions are often critical in times of crisis but the embedding of peace must come from within, and local processes need support and resourcing.

1.2 Victim Empowerment Project

In June 2006, 'Victim empowerment' was identified as a key priority area for the Network and it was agreed that a joint working project which would support the sharing of good practice across the diverse contexts should be actively pursued.



Foundations for Peace Network members. Network launch, New York, 2006.

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland secured a grant from the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, under the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties to undertake an 18-month project on victim empowerment and peace-building. The award was made under a specific funding measure entitled 'Outward and Forward Looking Region' with the stated objective:

'To contribute to making Northern Ireland and the Border Region a more outward and forward looking region by developing networks of co-operation on a cross-sectoral basis and encouraging a structured approach to participation in wider European and international networks.'

1.3 Project Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the victim empowerment project is to identify, document and showcase good practice initiatives from a variety of settings, which can facilitate the process whereby victims/survivors of violent conflict can be empowered to make a contribution to peace-building. More specifically, the three key objectives of the project are:

- To identify a specific issue that the members of the FFP network can focus on in order to draw out and share learning and expertise;
- To document and share good-practice strategies and methodologies for successfully supporting victims/survivors of conflict so that they too are empowered to make a contribution to social change and peace-building within their own context;
- To explore the added-value role of indigenous grant-makers and highlight the importance and significance of locally-based and locally-led foundations in spearheading change within their own contexts.

1.4 Project Methodology

The project established an International Expert Panel on victim empowerment issues, drawing on the expertise which exists within the FFP Network membership, at staff and board level, and those who have worked collaboratively with them on victim support strategies. Case studies demonstrating how the local foundations employed or supported diverse methodologies to support victim empowerment were collated and the FFP members reviewed common themes, methodologies and issues emerging. They also reflected on the outcomes of this victim empowerment project and the resultant contribution that victims/survivors, when empowered, made to their wider peace-building context.

FFP members also took time to reflect on the unique role which local, independent foundations can play in addressing challenging issues such as victim empowerment, over and above that played by international foundations, states and development agencies.

2 What do we mean >



As with so many issues related to societies in conflict, even the meaning of certain terms and phrases is contested and challenged as a result of differing political or social perspectives, cultural differences or linguistic roots.

2.1 Contested terminology?

The Foundations for Peace Network recognises the importance of context-specific understandings of terminology and the value of exploring local understandings of frequently used, yet often undefined, words and phrases. It has no interest in standardising language or definitions, which it views as counter-productive.

2.2 Comparing theory and practice

Within the disciplines of social justice, community development and peace-building, significant attention has been paid to the theoretical underpinnings of particular concepts, such as conflict and violence, victim/survivor and empowerment. These reflections are a valuable contribution to the general understanding of key concepts. Yet, as with any theory, they should not become a tool for limiting interventions by way of rigid parameters. Local understandings of key terms highlight the context-specific nature of concepts and remind us to constantly interrogate theories and methodologies proposed for their appropriateness to any given circumstance.

Conflict and Violence

Direct violence is the most understandable and instantly recognisable form of violence which creates victims of conflict – through death, injury and psychological damage. However, according to peace researcher Johan Galtung, there are also hidden forms of violence which can have equally devastating effects on societies, communities and individuals. In order to articulate the more hidden forms of violence, Galtung created a ‘violence typology’, based on this broader understanding of violence. In 1993, he wrote:

*I understand violence as the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible. The threat of violence is also violence.*¹

This understanding of violence goes far beyond direct violence which is inflicted physically on another. Galtung introduced the concept of *structural violence*, which is violence which is not carried out by individuals but is hidden to a greater or lesser extent in structures. Structural violence is entrenched in the psyche of a society and results in the enforced powerlessness of victims, be it an individual, a community or an organisation. This type of violence is often characterised in political terms as ‘repression’, ‘social injustice’ and the unequal distribution of power. In economic terms it becomes ‘exploitation’. More specifically, Galtung was concerned with structures that allow violence, inequality and injustice to occur vertically, administered

¹ Johan Galtung, Kulturelle Gewalt; in: Der Bürger im Staat 43, 2/1993, p. 106

from the top downwards. Developing the concept further, Galtung later supplemented his typology of violence to include the concept of *cultural violence*. Cultural violence describes the ideologies, convictions, traditions and systems of legitimation, through which direct or structural violence is made possible, justified and legitimated.²

The FFP Network members clearly subscribe to this broad understanding of the nature of conflict and violence and see the impact of violence as going well beyond that which is visible and physically-manifested to include that which is often hidden and structural in nature. Therefore, the Network members aim, in their grant-making and associated activities, to go beyond addressing the consequences of conflict to addressing its root causes and associated structural inequalities, in order to prevent their future repetition.

Peace-building

Peace-building is about exactly what it says – building the peace. It recognises that there are multiple elements in any peace process, which will include the protection of human rights, issues of equality and equity, provision for the victims and survivors of the conflict, recognition and inclusion of minorities, the reintegration of ex-combatants, agreement over political structures and consideration of social and economic issues. However, the concept of peace-building is also used in the context of process. It has been described as involving a broad base of participation and responsibility within a society and a commitment to a change in both attitude and perception.

Foundations for Peace understands that peace-building is rarely a task that can be completed in the short term, but instead demands investment, imagination and commitment in the longer term in order to embed new understandings and political settlements effectively.

Victim / Survivor of conflict

In more recent years, the impact of violence and conflict on the lives of individuals, communities and societies has been given increasing attention by theorists and practitioners alike. Understanding of who is a victim of conflict has ranged from very narrowly defined parameters (those who have been bereaved or injured as a consequence of violent conflict) to much wider and more inclusive (anyone whose life has been affected either physically, psychologically, socially or economically as a result of either direct, cultural or structural violence directed towards him/her). Professor Luc Huyse, an expert in post-conflict reconciliation wrote:

*Violent conflict creates all sorts of victims: those killed and tortured, those bereaved and maimed, those assaulted and raped, those injured in battle and by mines, those abducted and detained, the banned and the homeless, those intimidated and humiliated.*³

Regardless of official definitions of ‘victim’, such as those issued by the United Nations bodies⁴ or other legal entities, Foundations for Peace believes that individuals reserve the right of victims to self-define, as the imposition of labels can itself be a disempowering experience. When the term ‘victim’ is used in this report, this should be taken as shorthand for ‘victims and survivors’.

Empowerment

‘Empowerment’ can be understood in various ways: as a process or as the result of a process. Some interpretations see empowerment as an intrinsic process of an individual which cannot be imposed, while others would include professional support leading to increased autonomy of individuals as an act of ‘empowerment’.⁵

Foundations for Peace which views empowerment as the process by which individuals gain greater control over their individual and collective lives and futures and have the ability to effectively contribute to the shaping of the society in which they live. It is about opening up choices and facilitating better opportunities.⁶

² Galtung, Johan. Peace by Peaceful means: Peace and Conflict Development and Civilization, London, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, 1996.

³ Huyse, L (2003) ‘Victims of Conflict’, In D Bloomfield, T Barnes and L Huyse (eds), Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, p54

⁴ See United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, General Assembly Resolution 40/34, 29 November 1985; Declaration on the Right to Restitution for Victims of Gross Human Rights Violations, UN document E/CN.4/2000/62; International Criminal Court, document PCNICC/2000/1/add.1

⁵ See <http://www.empowerment.de/grundlagentext.html>

⁶ Adapted from YEPP <http://www.yepp-community.org/downloads/empowerment/Empowerment%20AK.pdf>

Victim Empowerment

Surprisingly little accessible research has been undertaken into the concept of victim empowerment as it relates to social justice and peace-building and the FFP members each define this slightly differently.

2.3 Reflections on terminology

The FFP Network members have been engaged in risk-taking and challenging activities with individuals, groups and communities, that have experienced the often devastating effects of political conflict and social injustice, manifested through direct, structural or cultural violence. All are working in diverse contexts – some supporting those who experience the consequences of deeply embedded structural inequalities (such as the Dalit Foundation, India), while others are supporting communities affected by the direct violence perpetrated during an armed conflict (such as Fundación AlvarAlice, Colombia). The foundations are also based within contexts in which the stages of conflict vary, from active conflict stage (such as the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust, Sri Lanka) to a post-agreement stage (such as the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland). Some work with specific constituencies, such as women (Nirnaya, India and the Reconstruction Women's Fund, Serbia). What they have in common is an understanding of the complex nature of victim empowerment work and the need to maintain a flexible approach to both the concept of peace-building and its practical implementation, in ways which are locally understood and accepted and can evolve and adapt to the changing context in which they find themselves.

3 Country-specific contexts >



The FFP Network members are each working in distinct contexts, in which the conflict has taken a variety of forms, and its consequences have been felt in diverse ways. In order to provide a context to the support provided by the foundations to victim empowerment projects, a brief synopsis of the dimensions of the conflict, the main parties involved, and the regional form of each conflict is detailed in the related research report which is available from the Foundations for Peace Network members.⁷ [See contact details at back of report]

⁷ Also downloadable at www.foundationsforpeace.org

4 Foundation for peace network members work on victim empowerment ›



The FFP Network members⁸ are currently engaged in a range of grant-making and associated activities to support victims/survivors of conflict within their various arenas. Some specific examples are provided in Chapter 4 of the full research report but it should be said that these examples are only a small flavour of the ongoing work and more detail is provided on the FFP website wwwFOUNDATIONSforpeace.org. Their interventions are wide-ranging and in some instances encompass very varied methodologies to meet contextual needs, from lobbying/advocacy work to the provision of alternative therapies, counselling, listening-ear services, self-help support groups, creative arts projects, education programmes for individuals or groups, awareness-raising, socio-economic projects, reparations work and legal support. This demonstrates that many potential avenues of intervention are possible to support victims/survivors and provide opportunities for them to contribute to peace-building and social change.

5 Approaches to victim empowerment work internationally ›



Supporting and encouraging the empowerment of victims/survivors of conflict takes many forms and requires various levels of intervention, from grassroots support to advocacy and policy change. The approaches adopted are dependent on the needs of the victims themselves, the context in which they are located and the objectives to be achieved. The Foundations for Peace Network members have identified four distinct strategies which have been utilised to support the empowerment of victims/survivors of conflict, namely:

- Working with victims/survivors at grassroots level
- Connecting victims/survivors to wider society
- Connecting victims/survivors from diverse sides
- Linking victims/survivors to the policy environment

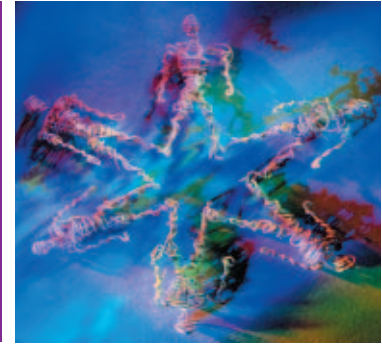
The research report contains indicative case studies for each of the above which have been provided by the FFP Network members⁹ demonstrating the broad range of approaches which have been taken to contribute to the empowerment of victims of conflict and provide them with the skills, confidence or knowledge to make contributions to peace-building and social change within their own neighbourhoods, communities or societies. Although context-specific, they represent a range of approaches to working with a diversity of target groups and provide inspiration for the future development of projects aimed at victim empowerment in societies affected by conflict.¹⁰

⁸ With the exception of the Abraham Fund which is not currently providing grant support on the theme of victim empowerment.

⁹ In addition, case studies of the work of the Parents Circle-Families Forum in Israel/Palestine and two examples of victim empowerment work in South Africa have been included to provide geographical spread and a wider range of examples.

¹⁰ For extended versions of the case studies, including additional background details and methodologies adopted, see wwwFOUNDATIONSforpeace.org

6 Lessons learned ›



Foundations for Peace Network members learned that while their country contexts were very diverse, their approaches to the work were remarkably similar and that victim empowerment work is essential to peacebuilding. Alongside this, issues like truth, justice, reparations and dealing with the past were important to victims/survivors but could be very divisive and required wider, supportive political will in order to progress. Challenging the state was also very difficult and risk-borne in many regions. Documenting human rights abuses and violent incidents were also important as conflicts re-ignited.

Individual members of the Network have learned much about how to effectively encourage victim empowerment and support victims' overall contribution to positive social change and peace-building.

6.1 What Works?

Reaching out: Reaching out to those directly affected by conflict is critically important but often a challenge, particularly if they are the most marginalised in society.

Supporting innovative approaches: The utilisation of a range of diverse approaches, tailored to the specific needs of the target group, provides the most empowering context in which victims' can be supported and peace-building enhanced.

Facilitating networking and advocacy: Bringing diverse sectors of society together to discuss common themes related to the impact of both direct and indirect violence can play a significant role in building trust and creating new relationships.

Acting swiftly: The ability to react rapidly to the urgent or changing needs of vulnerable groups, such as victims of conflict, can prove just as valuable as longer-term strategic interventions.

Encouraging and challenging: Grant-makers have a role to play as positive enabling forces, supporting and encouraging communities to develop new initiatives, take new steps and challenge existing norms.

6.2 What Challenges Exist?

Working on victim empowerment in a conflict-affected society places enormous challenges on any organisation in terms of resources, staff and management. More importantly, foundations can be pressured by the state for supporting victim empowerment work and giving a voice to victims who may then raise human rights and social justice issues. Alternatively, they can be pilloried for taking a non-judgmental stand in relation to defining 'victim' or refusing to accept a hierarchy of victims.

Changing Political Context: A common challenge to the work of supporting victim empowerment projects lies within the political context - with its associated tensions, biases and pressures - in which the foundations and the projects operate.

Working with barriers to access: In addition to the contracting intellectual and social spaces, in which dissent and alternative views can be supported (or at least tolerated), the challenge of supporting victim empowerment work to the point at which peace-building becomes a key goal may be further frustrated by physical and structural problems in divided societies.

Managing internal tensions: Those affected by conflict and structural violence do not necessarily speak or act with one coherent or cohesive voice. Indeed, the very nature of conflict has the effect of creating tensions and divisions within, and between, families, communities and societies. These tensions can be compounded by the politicisation of victims' issues – particularly in the midst of negotiations – whereby political parties seek to use groups of victims in order to promote a particular point or argument.

Ensuring sustainability: Victim empowerment initiatives rarely attract significant long-term national or international funding streams, given the political, social and cultural tensions and sensitivities with which they are often associated. It is counter-productive if a project, which aims to empower victims, has the effect of disempowering them again through the termination of financial assistance when it is most required.

Balancing diverse grant-making priorities: Grant-making in regions affected by conflict requires a multi-pronged approach if it is to effectively address the root causes of conflict and respond to the many consequences which emerge.

Funding and retaining the right staff: Maintaining skilled and culturally competent staff is crucial to victim empowerment work as it impacts directly on the quality of grant-making and the level of support available to projects working on victim/survivor issues.

Dealing with hard to change issues: Tackling the root causes of conflict, which result in the creation of victims, requires the transformation of systems and structures that have perpetrated divisions (such as class or caste systems) and ingrained attitudes (such as sectarianism, racism or sexism). Changing mindsets requires generational strategies and involves the targeting of broad sections of society to make substantive change possible.

6.3 What Have We Learned?

As with all independent organisations working on challenging issues of social justice and peace-building, indigenous foundations must learn as they go, take calculated risks, and challenge existing or accepted norms where necessary.

The learning can be categorised in two ways: namely Organisational Learning, and Contextual Learning.

6.3.1 Organisational Learning

Group dependency: Providing grant-aid to community-based groups, while important, can have the contradictory effect of creating dependency on financial support which can run counter to the overall long-term objective of victim empowerment.

Managing expectations: Community-based organisations, with low capacity, may become reliant on the financial and developmental support which the foundation provided in the early stages of the grant-delivery process and this may not be sustainable.

Allowing victims/survivors to choose their own strategies: There is clearly an onus on funders to support services and conditions that can promote victim empowerment without any suggestion that victims, because of their experience, must contribute more to peace-building than any other member of society.

Difficult to meet all needs: Even when target groups have been identified by foundations, it is not always possible to reach out and engage with particular individuals, groups or communities.

6.3.2 Contextual Learning

Challenging the state is difficult: Changing state policy is seldom straightforward, and attempting to transform legal and institutional structures in support of victims/survivors is particularly challenging.

Relationships can become strained: It is inevitable that some relationships will become strained as a result of the tensions and divisions which exist within divided societies.

Labelling people as victims can be disempowering: At a contextual level it can be argued that meeting the needs of victims within the context of a local neighbourhood or community of interest (whether political or not) can sometimes be supportive, but at other times can be claustrophobic or can reinforce an individual's identity as a 'victim'.

6.4 What Opportunities Exist?

Despite the challenges faced by those working on victim empowerment processes, local foundations should be encouraged to maintain a positive role in supporting challenging and innovative work with victims/survivors as a contribution to peace-building and social change. So long as foundations understand and accept the complexity of the work, they can become a broker for innovation and change.

Opportunities for change exist: In many contexts in which the FFP members are working, legal and policy frameworks to address the needs of victims/survivors of conflict do exist and can be challenged, improved and built upon by the work of the foundations and the grant-recipient they support.

The skills base has been developed: As a result of years of hard work and experience, the human resources and skills base within foundations has been developed.

Networks have been established: Through their direct collaboration with local communities in developing programmes to address various aspects of peace-building, local foundations have created a myriad of linkages both vertically and horizontally which are vital to their overall success as change-makers in the societies with which they work.

Reputations have been built: As a result of the work in which they have been involved, FFP members have developed a level of confidence and trust within the communities with which they work.

7 The added value of indigenous foundations in supporting victim empowerment and peace-building >



7.1 The Added Value of Indigenous Foundations

The value of independent, indigenous foundations lies in their local knowledge, their understanding of the issues at stake and their commitment to making a difference within a society in which they too must live and work. Locally-based grant-makers differ from large international foundations and development agencies because they cannot leave – they are responsible for the decisions they make and must live with the consequences.

The significance of the FFP Network lies in the opportunities created for the membership to come together to reflect on their work, share their learning and identify opportunities for peer-support and collaborative action. The FFP Network members have identified a number of advantages which result from their local nature, their particular structures, and the methodologies they adopt.

Flexibility: Given their independent and autonomous structures, local foundations have the opportunity to work more flexibly with individuals and communities, at various levels in society, in a variety of geographical settings, and on a wide variety of issues related to social justice and peace-building.

Capacity-building: Foundations based locally and possessing particular expertise that allows them to engage directly and regularly with local communities have the opportunity to provide additional support to target groups which goes far beyond financial assistance and grant-monitoring.

Broker for Innovation: Often less restricted in their grant-programme priorities and timeframes than international foundations, development agencies or governments, local foundations have the opportunity to support innovative approaches and encourage calculated risk-taking in order to empower victims of conflict.

Supplementing, complementing or challenging national and other processes: Indigenous foundations have the opportunity to engage with national or regional processes or policy-development and can address gaps or provide complementary or challenging initiatives to other official processes which are ongoing.

Learning Transfer: Supporting a wide range of projects, at various levels of intervention, enables local foundations to compare initiatives, learn best practice, facilitate shared learning between projects, and promote proven methods of work, based on experience and evaluation.

Cultural Competency: Divided societies, by their nature, tend to comprise communities from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. In this context, indigenous foundations have the advantage of being rooted in the local context and staffed by local people with personal investment in a positive future for their region and society.

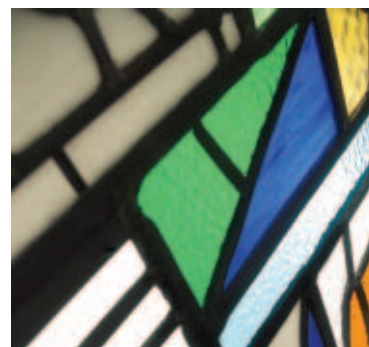
Networking and advocacy: Due to the particular space they occupy within civil society, local, independent foundations have the opportunity to develop a wide network of contacts at community, institutional and policy levels.

Development and identification of local leadership: Locally-based foundations with a long-term strategic vision of social change have the opportunity to undertake extended planning and develop leadership opportunities within communities, which can bring forward sustainable individual and community empowerment.

7.2 Acknowledging challenges faced by indigenous foundations

Despite the added-value of indigenous foundations, as described above, some challenges cannot be ignored. There may be instances in which the principles of the foundation and the work it funds, can pose a risk to its own staff and partners, if the interests of those who wield power - either democratically or through force - are threatened. A further challenge to foundations is to remember that grant-making is a powerful process and the relationship between grant-maker and grant-recipient is not equal. Many indigenous foundations rely on external funding support to enable them to deliver grant programmes at the local level – this is a grantor/grant-recipient relationship which creates a degree of vulnerability.

8 conclusions and recommendations >



8.1 Conclusions

The Foundations for Peace Network members involved in the Victim Empowerment Project believe that victims/survivors can play a critical role in any conflict resolution process and need to be included, supported and empowered to do so. Victim empowerment is part of a progression that contributes to peace-building and long-term stability. It is about moving beyond crisis-management or the provision of crisis aid to dealing with the impact of direct, structural or cultural violence. In relation to victims/survivors of political violence, this work is often undertaken in a post-conflict context when victims/survivors feel safer to tell their stories and seek support.

The nature of victim empowerment work during violent conflict can differ to that of a post-conflict phase, as priorities are often crisis-driven and focused on more immediate needs and supports, including the documentation of atrocities and human rights abuses. However, further learning is needed on how to address the needs of victims in periods of intense conflict and FFP Network members must assess if, and how, further victim empowerment processes can be implemented while direct violence is ongoing.

Work on victim empowerment in the context of structural violence happens both during and following conflict but often with the potential for further violence as a backdrop. The empowerment processes are similar, but there is a greater focus on raising wider awareness and working to change structures and practices that perpetuate victimhood and exclusion.

At the micro-level, all of the FFP members engage in capacity-building work and encourage creativity and innovative approaches which recognise the need for flexibility and accessibility. They invest in both individual and collective empowerment processes using a wide range of methodologies. At the meso-level, they support networking and advocacy processes, connecting groups with each other and with policy-makers, key stakeholders

and states. At the macro-level, some have connected with governments and international agencies to broker change and implement solutions.

All three levels combine in an evolving empowerment process and create a dynamic-change and learning environment. All of the FFP Network members' operating contexts are different and yet the issues, approaches and support responses appear to cross borders and boundaries and hence offer many lessons to other regions experiencing conflict. In conclusion, the FFP Network members are of the firm belief that victim empowerment processes should be locally developed and led. The need to find and support indigenous solutions that promote longer-term sustainability and stability is paramount. The lessons arising should be shared with a range of audiences on an ongoing basis.

8.2 Recommendations

The recommendations have been structured so as to address victim empowerment processes at local, national and international levels, while taking into account the targeting of recommendations to individual foundations and the Foundations for Peace Network itself.

8.2.1 Inclusive victim empowerment processes at the local level

Individual foundation level:

The approach: Effective and accessible victim empowerment processes should be multi-level and multi-constituency, involving all sides to the conflict where possible, and engaging both men and women. In particular, they should encourage women's leadership at all levels of society. They should have a wide geographical spread, be prepared to take risks and take a generational approach, and include work with young people. Self-reflection and learning should be part of this process and should result in maintaining a progression from victim to survivor to empowerment and peace-building.

The support: Flexible, small grant-making programmes can lead to the development of innovative and creative solutions and should be part of a local victim empowerment strategy. Developing supportive relationships with groups is necessary as is the need to source longer-term core funding to ensure that generational work is possible. Creating space for discussion and networking, leading to advocacy work and policy change, should also be part of the support provided.

Foundations for Peace level:

The approach: The FFP Network should work to ensure that international donors acknowledge the unique role, contribution and impact that indigenous foundations can make to victim empowerment and peace-building processes, and seek their support to ensure that the work is developed and sustained.

The support: The FFP Network should lobby for funds from international donors to be funneled to local foundation level to promote and develop victim empowerment work. FFP should ensure that the need for unrestricted funding is understood and that such funding is made available, as soon as needed, to locally sensitive initiatives, while ongoing work is developed and supported.

8.2.2 Inclusive victim empowerment processes at the national level

Individual foundation level:

The approach: Recognition of the contribution of victims/survivors to peace-building Foundations should acknowledge the important contribution to peace-building made by victims who have been empowered and the role they have played in the peace-building process by ensuring that.

- Victims' issues are kept on the agenda during the peace-building stage.
- The role of empowered victims/survivors in building peace is valued and that their experience and skills are utilised in the peace process.
- Sustained support for victims / survivors is ensured during the peace-building phase
- The transfer of the knowledge and experience of victims who have been empowered is used to create policy and structural change.
- Following peace negotiations, indigenous funders who have worked at grassroots level on empowerment should ensure that their recommendations are incorporated into the development of a peace-building strategy.

The support: Foundations should work with governments and other agencies to ensure that victim empowerment work is funded, supported and mainstreamed where this is appropriate.

Foundations for Peace level:

The approach: Recognition of the contribution of victims/survivors to peace-building

The FFP Network should ensure that the learning arising from this Victim Empowerment Project is shared with other member regions and other conflict regions with a view to encouraging indigenous foundations to replicate the work. They should ensure that the valuable contribution of victims/survivors to peace-building is acknowledged, understood and incorporated at source into developing programmes.

The FFP Network should also embrace further learning linked to the development and support of victim empowerment work while conflicts are ongoing.

The support: The FFP Network should share Victim Empowerment Project learning with new conflict regions and offer exchanges and placement-opportunities to enable further understanding to be developed. They should connect victim empowerment groups with other regions so that they become ambassadors for the work.

8.2.3 Inclusive victim empowerment processes at the international level

Individual foundation and Foundations for Peace level:

The FFP Network should work to ensure that international philanthropic organisations and aid agencies, and those with political influence, value and support victim empowerment work and processes. These organisations should be encouraged to acknowledge that indigenous foundations are better placed to work with victims during actual conflict situations especially when international support might not be accepted by governments.

International donors should learn from this Victim Empowerment Project, value its importance and be prepared to provide flexible funding through indigenous foundations to ensure that it develops further. They should also consider funding research and joint initiatives, and pilot learning exchanges between regions in conflict, so that victims groups and foundation staff can share learning and provide enabling support. This would support the development of work in regions of conflict and the sharing of risks when undertaking the work in environments of denial.

The FFP Network should ensure that international donors are aware that their current funding to indigenous foundations is appreciated but, more importantly, is critical to their survival and to the work that they deliver on victim empowerment issues. Donors should be committed to resisting government or other pressures to withdraw funds at short notice

from those who are most vulnerable. This is not to say that donors do not have the right to withdraw funding if they feel that quality work is not being delivered but it is a plea for caution and sensitivity to the local culture and context.

The FFP Network should continue to build a knowledge-bank on victim empowerment issues and responses and offer good practice guidance to other regions in conflict. Methodologies should be documented and shared as should work on the resulting impact.

The FFP Network should find the support necessary to enable further joint projects to be delivered, and it should record the learning.

The FFP Network should link with international fora – such as the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission – to encourage such bodies to recognise the role that victims/survivors can play in peace-building processes. It should also ensure that government denial about victims is challenged and that lack of government support is demonstrated to be a further abuse of victims.

Foundations for Peace Network

www.foundationsforpeace.org

Mission Statement

Foundations for Peace seeks to develop a network of independent, indigenous funders that share their unique insights and experience in working to advance equality, diversity and inter-dependence in areas of entrenched and persistent communal conflict. The Foundations for Peace Network is committed to peace-building - believing that peace has to be worked for and invested in.

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The
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Project part financed
by the European Union
Peace and Reconciliation Programme



Project supported by the European Union's Peace II Extension Programme,
(under Measure 2.1) administered by the Community Relations Council.

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