

THE POWER OF DIALOGUE



“Once opponents meet in a genuine dialogue setting, they will never return to the same positions or levels of awareness that they had before. It is as if they have joined a new society. ” ---- Dr. Abu-Nimer

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Abstract:

Amongst all the troubling deficits that our society struggles with today, we often think of financial and economic deficits primarily but the one that concerns this study utmost is *the deficit of dialogue* --- our ability to address conflicts as they are, to go to the source of what they are about, to understand the key players and to deal with them at a deeper foundational level. This research project suggests that we have an “opportunity” rather than a “problem” to resolve conflicts in a sustainable way. Our opportunity is to utilize the process of dialogue to not just resolve conflicts but also to promote peace. The purpose and methodology of this study is two-fold: (1) theoretical: to demonstrate how the approach of dialogue is refined and developed over time to meet new challenges in conflict zones (2) practical: to utilize the process of sustained dialogue as a long-term solution of engaging destructive relationships, such as those involved in a brief case-study of the Kashmir conflict, and to transform them with a real-life example.

Introduction

“We grow like trees - that is difficult to understand, like all life! - not in one place, but everywhere, not in one direction only, but upwards and outwards, as well as inwards and downwards. At the same time our force shoots forth in stem, branches, and roots; we are really no longer free to do anything separately, or to be anything separately.... Such is our lot, as we have said: we shed our old bark, we shed our skins every spring, and we keep becoming younger, fuller of future!¹”, these words of Friedrich Nietzsche, a renowned German philologist and philosopher awakened me to see how human beings grow together in multiple directions. We share not only smiles and laughter together but also tears, sorrow, pain and suffering! The art of dialogue takes our “multiplicity” into account and engages in a distinctive way of communication. “It is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn²”. Each person makes serious effort

¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The gay science*. Dover ed. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2006. Print.

² Saunders, Harold H.. *A public peace process: sustained dialogue to transform racial and ethnic conflicts*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

to take others' concerns and worldviews into her or his own picture even when disagreement or difference persists. The entire process of dialogue takes place over time to unravel multiple layers of issues. Why multiple layers of issues? Because our individual identity and subjectivity is formulated with a wide-range of inter-related topics such as race, socio-economic class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality and many other domains. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims so that he or she can start to act with deeper respect towards the other. "Dialogue is no more --- and no less --- than a conceptualization of what individuals in conflict do in a safe space created for them to meet over a period of time³". The authenticity of the process lies in the depths of this human experience, a critical part of which is trial and error in learning how to talk and to relate productively especially when relationships are tense.

Amongst all the troubling deficits that our society struggles with today, we often think of financial and economic deficits primarily but the one that concerns me utmost is the *deficit of dialogue* --- our ability to address conflicts as they are, to go to the source of what they are about, to understand the key players and to deal with them at a foundational level. In fact, politicians and diplomats also acknowledge the lack of deeper dialogues in their respective communities. Norway's foreign minister, Jonas Gahr Store, reminds us that resolving any current conflict is no longer limited to political or foreign actors but in a certain sense- "it is everybody's dilemma":

"We, who are diplomats, are trained to deal with conflicts between states and issues within states. And I can tell you, our agenda is full. There is trade, disarmament, cross-border relations....But the picture is changing and we are seeing that there are new key players coming into the scene who represent social, religious, business, culture, military realities. And we struggle with how to deal with them: the rules of engagement: how to talk, when to talk and how to deal with them⁴".

³ Ibid

⁴ "Jonas Gahr Store: In defense of dialogue | Video on TED.com." TED: Ideas worth spreading. http://www.ted.com/talks/jonas_gahr_store_in_defense_of_dialogue.html (accessed April 10, 2013).

Another acknowledgement that is visible during recent years is that none of these conflicts can be solved militarily. “They may have to be dealt with military means, but they cannot be solved by military means. And we, therefore, have a problem because they escape traditional diplomacy⁵”. I suggest that we have an “opportunity” rather than a “problem” to resolve conflicts in a sustainable way in our respective space and time at present--- the opportunity to utilize the process of dialogue to not just resolve conflicts but also to promote peace. The purpose of this essay is two-fold: (1) theoretical: to demonstrate that the process of dialogue is rigorous yet flexible; it is constantly being refined as it is used by reflective and sensitive practitioners to meet new challenges (such as those in conflict zones). (2) practical: to utilize the change process of sustained dialogue as a creative way of engaging destructive relationships, such as those involved in the brief case-study of the Kashmir conflict, and to transform them at a deeper level.

Literature Review

David Bohm, commonly seen as a founding thinker of dialogue process, shares a philosophical approach towards dialogue and emphasizes that the knowledge we are searching for exists collectively and unless we, as individuals, plug into it collectively --- we won’t gain this tacit knowledge that exists in the deeper level⁶. He also starts without a specific agenda to embrace the process of dialogue fully by transcending boundaries and learning about the seemingly “other” who are in fact the same as “us”. On a slightly different path, *William Isaacs* who claims to be building on Bohm’s work goes into possible techniques and skill sets to enhance dialogue in bigger settings. In other words, he applies dialogue to an organizational background and highlights the building capacities for a holistic dialogic process such as listening,

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Bohm, David, and Lee Nichol. *On dialogue*. London: Routledge, 1996.

respecting, suspending and voicing⁷. He suggests that dialogue enables us to see people in a different light and we should ask ourselves questions such as: what do I most long to create in the world? And why do I long to create it? Good questions, rather than specific answers, bring us closer to productivity in the process of dialogue. Dialogue creates space to enable what the poet Rilke speaks of as uncontrived words, “I believe in all that has never yet been spoken. I want to free what waits within me so that what no one has dared to wish for may for once spring clear without my contriving⁸”. Furthermore, for Isaacs, dialogue explores the gap between what people intend to do and what they actually do. In institutional structures, he views dialogue as a balance between advocacy and inquiry. Advocacy means speaking what you think from your point of view. Inquiry means looking into what you do not yet know and seek to discover what others understand or see from a different point of view. Thus, compared to Bohm’s approach wherein dialogue helps us overcome our communication blocks to merge with shared knowledge, Isaacs’ approach looks at dialogue as a space to reflect on the unspoken or other tensions to create new openings and bring structural changes. More scholars come along to examine dialogue in a variety of other contexts such as social identity and race relations, namely: *Schoem* and *Hurtado* address various paradoxes involved in dialogue such as theory versus process, individual versus group identity and they reconcile and eventually interlink these dualities⁹. They build upon *Paulo Freire’s* words, “dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s ‘depositing’ ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants¹⁰”. Finally, *Harold Saunders* channeled the process of dialogue in the field of international conflict resolution and peace-building. I will utilize his approach in greater depth in

⁷ Isaacs, William. *Dialogue and the art of thinking together: a pioneering approach to communicating in business and in life*. New York: Currency, 1999.

⁸ Isaacs 174

⁹ Schoem, David Louis, and Sylvia Hurtado. *Intergroup dialogue: deliberative democracy in school, college, community, and workplace*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

¹⁰ Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 30th anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.

addressing the Kashmir conflict later in this essay. Let us look at the four scholar's lenses on dialogue in the sections below in order to build the foundations of this essay.

Understanding dialogue through the lens of Bohm:

According to Bohm, thought is actually a subtle tacit process. "Tacit" means that which is unspoken and which cannot be described¹¹. It is the actual knowledge which may or may not be coherent. Thought seems to emerge from the tacit ground and any fundamental change in thought is possible through its roots in the tacit ground. In dialogue, we are communicating at the tacit level and in doing so we are also changing the roots of our thought. The tacit process is common and shared by all. The sharing is not merely the explicit communication and the body language (which are all a part of it) but there is also a deeper tacit process. We have to share our consciousness and energy vibrations in order to transform whatever is necessary¹².

Our thoughts produce results in actuality but this thought doesn't realize any of the repercussions or effects of its own thinking. For example, our thought produced the nation, religion, culture, recreation, and other categories in our society. Bohm says that we can think of two kinds of thought: individual and collective¹³. A great deal of thinking is what we do together, not alone. Language is collective! Most of our basic assumptions come from our society, including all our assumptions about how society works, about what sorts of person we are supposed to be, and also about our relationships, institutions and so on. Plus, it is a matter of culture because there are a vast number of opinions and assumptions which help make up our overall culture and subcultures. In fact, our feelings of "us" versus "them" often originate based on the assumptions our cultures make in order to create unity amongst some which may directly or indirectly result in division amongst others.

¹¹ Bohm 1996

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

Different models exist to help us think through the most appropriate underlying architectural structure of a dialogue process. For example, Bohm introduces us to one of the models of a transformative dialogic approach which is of divergence and convergence¹⁴: (1) the divergent phase of a dialogue process is a time of opening up possibilities and themes as well as generating alternatives, gathering diverse points of view, allowing disagreement and suspending judgment. The greater the divergence, the more is the freedom of voicing wild ideas and possible innovative outcomes. (2) The convergent phase is about arriving at and making explicit the key conclusions, insights and next steps of the process. These two movements of divergence and convergence can take place multiple times during a process and can also occur as one pattern. However, dialogue processes often include a “grey zone” situation in the middle where everything is a little too chaotic, unclear and unstructured. It is said to be here that innovation and breakthrough have a real chance of occurring. Similarly, we come to realize that we should not undermine our silence, body cues, expressions because they are all a part of our language and communication mechanisms not just with others but also with ourselves. We may be able to summarize the divergence and convergence into words but it is somewhat complex to put the chaotic “grey zone” to words because it is something (almost like an energy) we feel deeply. Hence, in dialogue, we communicate not just with words but also with silence which seems to be inter-linked with the process of unfolding our thoughts along with those of others around us.

Understanding dialogue through the lens of Isaacs:

Isaacs looks at the process of dialogue holistically while portraying it as a progression and evolution, rather than a linear succession. In his words, “the notion that dialogue is *conversation in motion* can greatly liberate our concepts of what is required to have it¹⁵”. He

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Isaacs 1999

encourages a dialogic approach to bring change in organizations and large systems for effective communication and to create space for new perspectives or ways of thinking. For him, dialogue occurs in a *field* which is the quality of shared meaning and energy that can emerge among a group of people¹⁶. We can create conditions under which a rich field for interaction is more likely to appear. These conditions are part of the *container* of dialogue, a setting in which the intensities of human activity can safely emerge. For example, in our development dialogue group (DDG) sessions, the container is the circle that holds all of us; it is a symbol of wholeness in which creative transformation can take place. Dialogue sets out to clarify and expand this container in which a genuine conversation takes place. In fact, in a dialogical framework, it is possible to create containers that can hold the pressure or fire of creation. The entire evolving motion of dialogue pushes us to quickly empty ourselves of any expectations if we want anything new to happen; we start to look for what has not happened yet, for what might be unexpected or different. Thus, dialogue helps us overcome a common cultural assumption of hierarchical learning wherein knowledge is generated from one person who has all the information that others need. In dialogical conversations, people come to realize that knowledge arises because of the shared experiences of the collective. Each of us also learns that “I am not my point of view”, I do have a point of view but that is not what I am...there is more to “me”.

Isaacs introduces us to Bohm’s “implicate order” which is the idea that underlying the physical universe is a sea of energy that unfolds into the visible, explicate world that we see around us¹⁷. To ensure a peaceful future, we all need to march together towards new levels of possibilities, interactions and ways of being. Many times, individuals are striving to achieve unity or harmony with the implicate order of the universe. Some individuals assume that

¹⁶ Isaacs 292

¹⁷ Ibid

harmony is possible if they live in their memories or imaginations of the past or future and often tend to avoid their present. Dialogue helps these individuals in self-reflection, evaluation of cause-effect patterns, questioning of assumptions, bringing awareness of the present moment and inventing unprecedented possibilities or insights. Individuals recognize that all perspectives (similar or different ones) are part of the underlying whole in the universe. “Dividing things up is not the problem. Forgetting the connections is¹⁸.” Embracing each other’s perspectives also enable individuals to strengthen connections and bonds with others. In fact, “me” versus “them” duality ceases to exist in favor of an inter-subjective identity such as “us” together.

According to Isaacs, "respect is looking for what is highest and best in a person and treating them as a mystery that you can never fully comprehend. They are a part of the whole, and, in a very particular sense, a part of us¹⁹." These words further shed light on the observation that when we respect someone fully then we accept that they have things to teach us. He develops principles and analyzes certain organizational patterns similar to Bohm’s notion of the implicate and explicate order (mentioned above) -- the nature of “unfoldment and enfoldment” wherein reality unfolds from a patterned invisible level into the visible world that we can see and then folds back again into the invisible world. We tend to become aware of this potential waiting to unfold through and around us and recognize the magic in our words: *abracadabra*, that is, “I create as I speak²⁰!”

Understanding dialogue through the lens of Schoem and Hurtado:

Schoem and Hurtado address identity paradoxes such as: are we individuals or are we members of some social groups? For them, intergroup dialogues work towards moving beyond this question into an understanding of how we as individuals affect and are affected by our group

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Isaacs 117

²⁰ Isaacs 160

affiliations²¹. Dialogue needs to be facilitated in a way in which these multiple and conflicting truths of diverse identities can co-exist and be heard. Our goal, as practitioners of dialogue, is not to establish a single interpretation of truth --- there are pluralistic truths and perspectives that make the process of dialogue such a rich learning experience. Thus, any response or argument introduced into the dialogue scenario needs and deserves attention. It is only by fully incorporating all aspects of the individual and group struggle that the paradox of the identity issues can be revealed and resolved. In a dialogical process, individuals gain new encounters with others and proceed through widening and deepening spiral of new experiences which contribute to making a shared identity of this person. Schoem goes on to say that “intergroup dialogue is a positive and powerful process in which different groups come together to discuss issues of community and conflict²²”. Thus, with Schoem and Hurtado lenses, dialogue becomes a form of intergroup understanding and conflict resolution.

Understanding dialogue through the lens of Saunders:

Dialogue has increasingly become recognized as a method and process within the International Conflict Resolution field. “The human dimension of conflict must become central to peacemaking and building peaceful societies. Only governments can write peace treaties, but only human beings --- citizens outside government --- can transform conflictual relationships between people into peaceful relationships²³”. These words of Saunders reveal that the search for peace requires human beings and nations to pursue fresh and responsible relations over a given time and space. Often, deep-rooted hostile relationships are not ready for formal mediation or negotiations and require a process of sustained dialogue to restore or create new and fresh

²¹ Schoem and Hurtado 248

²² Schoem and Hurtado 2001

²³ Saunders, Harold H.. *A public peace process: sustained dialogue to transform racial and ethnic conflicts*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

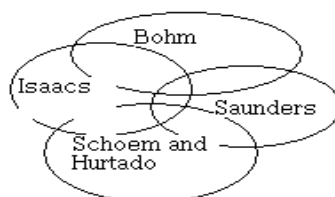
relationships. For example, people do not feel comfortable to negotiate fear, identity, personal security, historical grievances or other human needs. Often, governments cannot change structural or other fundamental problems unless citizens change their behavior or relationships and resolve misperceptions, stereotypes and assumptions.

Saunders recommends *sustained dialogue* which is an interactive process designed to change conflict-related relationships over time. Rather than focusing on the problems, it focuses on the dynamics of the underlying relationships that cause the divisive problems²⁴. Ultimately, it focuses on changing those relationships in the long term. Often, the parties in stalemate tend to resist dialogue because they think of it as “just talk without purpose or destination” and prefer mediation, negotiation or arbitration to make decisions faster. Sustained dialogue is more structured than a casual conversation or discussion and less structured than a mediation or negotiation. It is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn²⁵. Basically, each of us internalizes the view points of the other to enhance our mutual understanding. For example, instead of saying “you or me”, we start saying “you and me”. We start to actually feel the feelings of the other person and recognize the connection that Bohm refers to in dialogue when he observes how fundamental change can take place at the tacit level. Dialogue enables a different kind of consciousness amongst us, a participatory consciousness where we can partake in creating shared meanings. It is no longer us versus them, it’s we! Furthermore unlike negotiations, dialogue requires participants to reveal to others their deepest interests, hopes and fears which can make them vulnerable. Hence, dialogue requires us to give up some of our human defenses that define our identity and to share it with others. This openness of risks in dialogue makes it dangerous in

²⁴ Saunders 81

²⁵ Saunders 82

a good way. In this essay, I plan to merge these four lenses (as seen in the mini info-graphic below) to apply the overall theoretical understanding of dialogue to a practical framework of promoting peace building in the contexts of hostile relations, such as in the Kashmir conflict.



Assumptions and blind spots

With the use of dialogue in Western conflict resolution approaches, a set of underlying assumptions become apparent. “These assumptions may not represent all Western conflict resolution techniques or approaches. Nevertheless, they reflect the general nature of the emerging field of conflict resolution in the United States²⁶”. These words of Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer shed light on how the process of dialogue can involve different assumptions depending on the context. What are ‘assumptions’ after all? Often, our assumptions seem to protect us from our own blind spots or limitations; they may even help us defend our opinions. For example, when the Europeans first ventured into Africa (approximately before the 19th century), then they created an assumption: Africans are savages²⁷. This assumption was so powerful that it lasted for more than 500 years (until the 1950s)²⁸. Western civilization inherited this assumption from the European colonizers who initially seemed to have formed this assumption for their own survival. In other words, the assumption curbed and mitigated the wild animal instincts of human beings in order to create and survive in a safe and predictable

²⁶ Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. "Conflict Resolution Approaches: Western and Middle Eastern Lessons and possibilities." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 55, no. 1 (1996): 35-52.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxyau.wrlc.org/stable/3487672?seq=5> (accessed April 4, 2013).

²⁷ Chidester, David. *Savage systems colonialism and comparative religion in southern Africa*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996.

²⁸ Ibid

environment. The capability to predict the behavior of “others” gives us security; thus, generally assumptions help us develop our own aptitude of predictability. We, as individuals, tend to put things under certain categories and labels because we strive for clarity and certainty while processing information. However, these categories are often problematic because we all might have different interpretations of our own categories. The categories and boundaries may be originally created for security, safety, predictability or efficiency but it might lead to other outcomes because of the lack of taking into account other categories or worldviews. Dialogue helps us recognize the underlying processes of thought to understand the roots of these worldviews, categories and assumptions. The process of dialogue even goes beyond these fragmented categories or binary correlations such as cause and effect to embrace the gaps, spaces, multiple factors that may underlie between these categories. Dialogue leads us into the path of not just seeing our assumptions but also overcoming them. Over time, with the practice of dialogue, we learn to suspend our assumptions – not suppress them but rather observe them and understand them at a deeper foundational level²⁹.

“The assumption in Western society is that every behavior is calculated according to rational measures. Therefore, there are generally between 5 and 12 major steps to solve a conflict. These steps are pre-determined and fixed for disputes in the different areas of conflict resolution. This structured model provides the third party with rules and guidelines for behavior. These guidelines include norms such as ‘behaving according to professional codes,’ ‘maintaining a business image,’ etc., which legitimate the third party's intervention in public policy, community, interpersonal, or international³⁰”. Based on these assumptions, we can see how the language of emotions and values is perceived as an obstacle in the Western societies to reach an agreement.

²⁹ Based on Isaacs and Bohm's ideas on dialogue

³⁰ Abu-Nimer 1996

The conflict resolution models in the West often call for a direct method of communication. This ‘direct communication’ or lack of non-verbal forms of expression also transfers to dialogue settings in the West. Race dialogues in the U.S serve as good examples to clarify certain culturally embedded assumptions in the West. For example, in an article about race dialogues in Richmond Virginia, Karen Elliot Greisdorf explains, “black participants tend to be put in the position of telling their stories, whites tend to intellectualize the issue and react with either sympathy or disbelief³¹”. Thus, in many race dialogue settings with a group of racially mixed participants, white people often benefit most from the conversation as their awareness of race and the implications of racialized structures deepens. Whereas, “the people of color face the implications of racism on a daily basis and they leave the conversation feeling as though yet again, they occupy the role of educator or not being met at the same level of emotional vulnerability. The participants of color gain little (compared to the white participants) in deepening their own understanding of race and anti-racism³²”. In these settings of dialogue, we can see that an imbalance of power and information is involved wherein some people benefit from the process more than the others. People of color in the U.S. tend to know more about white culture (because of the structural and institutional dominance of white culture) than white people know of communities of color. Thus, we cannot pretend that all the participants are on the same page.

“When viewed from a non-Western and/or from a non-white lens, dialogue may take on very different structural foundations: non-verbal forms of communication, moving together in dynamic space as opposed to being stationary and static (seated), loudly expressive as opposed to

³¹ Griesdorf, Karen Elliot. “An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility: Hope in the Cities.” *Intergroup Dialogue: Deliberative Democracy in School, College, Community and Workplace*. Eds. David Schoem and Sylvia Hurtado. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press: 2001.

³² Nagai-Rothe, Elli. Interview by author. Personal interview. Washington D.C, March 25, 2013.

quiet and polite³³”. Accordingly, based on the approaches of many non-Western practitioners, dialogue has room for improvement because the process of relationship building in dialogue continues in tri-fold phases: before, during and after the dialogue session. To overcome these assumptions and challenges, we need to take the tri-fold phases into account. Ultimately, how can we adjust the model and frame of dialogue? My suggestion is that by practicing more of dialogue, we can find new paths to improve it through our own practices. In dialogue, we need to “trust our intuition!”³⁴ I propose that every time we use dialogue through our own open and creative lens, we are transforming the process over time which in turn can help improve and strengthen it.

“Although there are basic differences between the Middle Eastern and Western approaches of settling conflicts, some principles can be exchanged and adopted by both sides. While a complete adaptation of Western models in non-Western cases is inappropriate and ineffective, it still appears that there are several points of intersections when comparing the different approaches in the two contexts. The strengths of each approach can be combined to encourage the development and expansion of the conflict resolution field in both societies³⁵.”

Inspired by Dr. Abu-Nimer’s words, I think that to utilize dialogue processes in the context of different conflicts and disputes, we need to become more open and creative to shaping the intersections of the process. We need to recognize that perhaps the answer to the obstacles or limitations of dialogue lies in engaging with more dialogue! In practicing more dialogue, we indirectly will also have the opportunity to reformulate, refine and improve the process of dialogue in unexpected and constructive ways.

Challenges facing dialogue

“Creating a safe space for dialogue in Iraq is much harder than creating one at American University. You are dealing with traumatized people and their safety and concerns need to be

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Abu-Nimer 1996

addressed first and foremost³⁶”. These words of a practitioner Maria Jessop from United States Institute of Peace (USIP) sensitized me to recognize the deep rooted emotions involved in conflicts and disputes. Furthermore, she raised questions on whether the way we write and speak about dialogue domestically can be applied in the same way internationally. Her experiences portrayed that the theory and practice of dialogue needs to focus more sensitively on the dramatic effects of conflicts, especially in the non-Western context. She highlighted, “with certain caveats, dialogue needs to be adapted to the local culture. I say with ‘caveats’ because often in some authoritarian cultures – tension exists in what is referred to as dialogue because it is dominated by those in power. Hence, in such contexts, intragroup dialogue has proved to be more fruitful and genuine rather than intergroup (wherein, government or political leaders are involved)³⁷”. In the words of a dialogue facilitator from the International Institute of Sustained Dialogue (IISD), “elites and powerful groups are often ‘enchanted’ by the process of dialogue and look at it as a luxury. Thus, it is easier for us to get elites on the table to engage in dialogue but what about people (such as women and minority actors) who do not voluntarily participate in the process because of lack of time, motivation and other barriers? In many cases, people who would benefit the most from dialogue are the ones who often cannot commit themselves to it. How do we get such people into the practice of dialogue?³⁸” Along similar lines, Jessop reiterated,

“In societies where there is great stratification, how do you as a practitioner overcome the barrier? Often, these barriers are looked as an excuse for people to engage with elites rather than the civil society. Dialogue is about breaking barriers to communication and building understanding and relationships in the community -- so it is a simultaneous duty of breaking down barriers and building new connections. We need to find ways to involve the multiple actors into the process of dialogue³⁹”.

³⁶ Jessop, Maria . Interview by author. Personal interview. USIP, April 1, 2013.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Fitzgerald, Rhonda. Interview by author. Personal interview. International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, March 25, 2013.

³⁹ Jessop, Interview 2013.

In Ambassador John McDonald's words, "you have to learn how to listen to people's needs"⁴⁰. Thus, we need to practice dialogue by embracing new spaces for the process to touch the hearts of different individuals. I will further discuss these aspects of dialogue when I address how dialogue in the Kashmir conflict is operating on the political and elite level.

"In the contexts of practicing dialogue in conflict zones, we need to be careful because some people can use the techniques of dialogue to gather information from vulnerable populations"⁴¹. Thus, we need to be very cautious as not only participants but also facilitators leading dialogue sessions in scenarios of trauma. We need skilled and genuine practitioners who are aware of these complexities to lead the process of dialogue. In Jessop's words, "Dialogue is not about me as a facilitator but it's about the group and being of service to that group --- you need to consider your own limitations, diagnose yourself as well as the issues you will be dealing with; lastly, only engage with people as a facilitator if it is going to be in their best interests and if you have the access to the resources to do so. Also, remember that your worldview plus the worldview of the donors (or those who sponsor the dialogue) influence how the resources are used in the process"⁴². Often, in leading dialogue, the facilitator tends to bring his/her own bias into the process and it is very important for him to be aware of it.

Some facilitators who shared their dialogue experiences told me, "it is very hard to get people to open up, take risks, feel safe and above all – it takes time to build trust. Over time, we can see a shift and transition in the participant's intentions, understanding, and comfort level with each other but it is very hard to measure a clear impact and result of dialogue"⁴³. A common factor reported in my interviews with diverse facilitators was that the genuine measure to

⁴⁰ McDonald, John W. Personal interview. IMTD, 1 Apr. 2013.

⁴¹ Jessop, Interview 2013.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Nagai-Rothe, Elli, Interview 2013.

evaluate dialogue is based on examining the transformation in the participant's heads (thoughts) and hearts (emotions) over time. We can see an example of this in a survey by the IISD: (1) before dialogue- 92% of students said that their campus is welcome to all and (2) after dialogue- only 20% said that their campus was welcome to all. Finally, this survey also revealed that after learning the process of dialogue, participants expressed a greater need to talk about their issues on campus such as race, gender, power and socio-economic relations.⁴⁴ Hence, dialogue is a process of enabling deeper change in each of us but it needs to be utilized and channeled in careful and sensitive ways. In spite of all the challenges and barriers facing dialogue, *why* should we resort to it? Also, *how* should we channel the process of dialogue to utilize it fully? We will explore these questions in the next sections of this essay.

Why dialogue?

"The only way to solve a conflict at any level of society is to sit down face to face and talk about it⁴⁵". These words of Ambassador John W. McDonald inspired me to recognize the power of dialogue hidden in every moment of our lives. The approach of dialogue presents us with a paradox: it is both something we already know how to do and something about which there is much to learn⁴⁶. In this process, we do not merely solve problems or reach agreements; we rather try to consider the context or field in which the problem arises and wherein new agreements can be made. We open ourselves to new options, re-think underlying assumptions and explore amongst creative alternatives. The intention of dialogue is to form a new basis from which we can think, act and reach a new understanding not just with others but also with ourselves.

⁴⁴ Fitzgerald, Rhonda, Interview 2013.

⁴⁵ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013.

⁴⁶ Issacs, William. "A Conversation with a Center, Not Sides." *Dialogue and the art of thinking together: a pioneering approach to communicating in business and in life*. New York [u.a]: Doubleday, 1999. Print.

The concept of dialogue has held a central place in Western views of education ever since the teachings of Socrates. The back-and-forth form of question and answer, challenge and response, has been viewed as the external communicative representation of a dialectical process of thinking based on mutual understanding, reciprocity, and reconstruction of ideas⁴⁷. In this traditional or prescriptive approach, different forms of dialogue expressed deeper assumptions about the nature of knowledge, the nature of inquiry, the nature of communication, the roles of teacher and learner, and the mutual ethical obligations thereof⁴⁸. For example, the role of the teacher was to explore a problem through reciprocal questions and answers and to learn along with the student. The purpose of dialogue was to pursue knowledge or wisdom and the process was considered intuitive and natural. This tradition of dialogue focused more on “why” certain concepts exist the way they do but over time with the rethinking of dialogue the tradition shifted towards a descriptive analysis of “how” these concepts affect us⁴⁹. Thus, the prescriptive tradition was the initial space wherein we formed multiple layers of rules, perceptions, assumptions, ideals, and opinions of good or bad. Furthermore, we also developed laws, institutions, structures or even myths and stereotypes to protect our ideas and reinforce them through the future generations. The prescriptive tradition has often neglected the ways in which the idealized forms of interaction either may not be feasible in certain circumstances, or may have effects contrary to their intent. Now, in the discursive traditions, we have to deal with moral or political tensions or other problems passed on from our previous traditions. Thus, we re-invented dialogue and rechanneled it from the contexts of our previous traditions to specifically

⁴⁷ Burbules, Nicholas C., and Bertram C. Bruce. *Theory and Research on Teaching as Dialogue*. College of Education Faculty | College of Education | U of I. <http://faculty.education.illinois.edu/burbules/papers/dialogue.html> (accessed March 31, 2013).

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

deal with our current-day problems ranging from religious, cultural, race, gender, conflicts and other deep-rooted issues.

Scholars, some of whom we will come across in this essay, started to re-think why certain types of communicative interactions serve as dialogues while some others do not. Until recently, we were all caught up and often grounded to certain roles or structures of interaction in our society that make us feel, often unconsciously, as if we have to continue to relate to others in the ways that we have earlier. Such structures persistently guided us to stick by the standards of what counts to be acceptable norms, habits or behavior. However, today the use of dialogue has helped us enlarge the contextual realm of the so-called “acceptable behavior” and enables new kinds of interactions as well as innovative flow of ideas. This paradigm shift allows us to not just liberate stuck or blocked structures of interaction but also promotes free energy and space for us to think and work together. If we learn how to unlock the doors of our inner space, then we will notice how within each person there is a peaceful space for human connectedness⁵⁰. In Dr. Abu-Nimer’s words, “our greatest challenge lies within our own minds and hearts!⁵¹” Dialogue helps us overcome this challenge; it asks us to listen for an already existing wholeness and creates a new kind of association in which we can deeply re-focus all of our own views along with those of other individuals.

In dialogue, we notice that for us to perceive something --- it must already somehow be within us or else it literally would not have connected to anything in us. In Isaacs’ words, “even something that we feel is an enemy is connected to an image or perception in us of that enemy⁵²”.

Thus, from personal experience in dialogue sessions, when members in a group speak about

⁵⁰ "Professor Mohammed Abu-Nimer, American University School of International Service." *50 Interviews with Spiritual Leaders by Tuula Fai*, *Seek The Lover Within: Lessons from 50 Spiritual Leaders by Tuula Fai* (Foreword by Penny Peirce). <http://spiritual.50interviews.com/2010/professor-mohammed-abu-nimer-american-university-school-of-international-service/> (accessed April 1, 2013).

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Isaacs 1999

something that might seem to not connect with me initially then I realize that I need to listen more consciously and try to find the same feelings as that of the group within myself. For example, one of my group members in the DDG session was talking about insecurity and resentment; however, I could not connect with that feeling because I was feeling neither unsecured nor resentful at that given point of time. Thus, I decided to think back and reflect on times when I felt those emotions in other contexts of my life. This reconnection of my feelings with my old memories in turn instantly also connected me to her (the group member). In other words, I connected and clicked with her feelings within myself when I gave myself the opportunity to acknowledge and understand my own thought process. In dialogue, we learn how to manage our thought processes with effective and productive methods as we will learn in the next section.

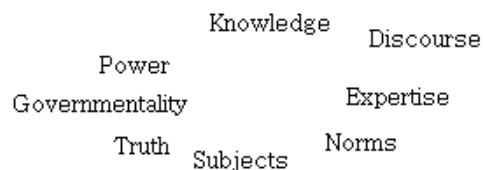
How dialogue?

In the present era, we know that we already live in an environment with rules and laws so the question is more about how do we operate within these structures efficiently and serve as role models to improve and transform our reality. We are moving from the question of “why” to “how” to understand the intricacies, dynamics, miracles and the power of the process of dialogue. In ordinary contexts and everyday lives, the flow of thoughts in our society often seems to be incoherent because it is going in all sorts of directions: many times, with thoughts conflicting and canceling each other out. However, if people were to think together in a coherent way, such as during a dialogue process, they would have tremendous power because of the coherent movement of communication⁵³. In the contemporary world, international and national leaders attempt to resolve conflicts with mechanisms that have engaged thoughts. However, usually the attention has been focused on the content of our thoughts and not so much on the process.

⁵³ Based on Bohm’s idea of implicate order.

Perhaps we need to look back and think about where do our myths and opinions come from?
How do different community integration zones such as those of education, religion, media, recreation, jobs, health, etc... influence our thought process?

Michel Foucault, a well-known postmodern philosopher, lays out the following domain grid to unfold a complex set of inter-relations of the various networks, practices and functions of the domains. These domains of power, knowledge, norms, truth and expertise show us how things that are operating within the domains initially came into being:



In the beginning, things within the domain set may seem to be completely unrelated and may even inter-conflict but then over time they all begin to come into contact, intersect, intertwine in unexpected ways. Practices of power in this domain grid help us figure out how we operate within several networks and contexts such as in educational setups, religious institutions, political structures, business settings, household spaces, etc. We may be limited by the practices that we are a part of but we also have the imagination, creativity to develop more spaces and fields that can generate new possibilities and innovation. Objects and ideas from one network can be shifted and put to effect in another network but this would lead to power sharing between the two networks⁵⁴. For example, in terms of individuals and the way they live their lives, an identity of a person X includes certain goals, specific means, and particular situations and relationships in which these can interact with each other. For example, the “heterosexual female” is expected to desire men, but more specifically, to desire a limited number of men, and ultimately, to desire only one man and also to have children with that one man. In fact, once

⁵⁴ Foucault, Michel, and James D. Faubion. *Power*. New York: New Press ;, 2000.

married, women should desire that one man so exclusively that they are not interested even in having a friendship with another man. This social construct is the reason why it seems odd for married women to have close male friends, even to the point of it being considered unethical. Thus, a violation of any one of these imperatives specific to her identity constitutes a perversion of nature, a violation of the natural order, and sometimes a transgression against the ethical law, which entails punishment. So, natural identities not only entail natural extensions of those identities—in the form of desires, normal activities, and normal relationships to have in those activities—but also imply established power relations that bind the necessary extensions to the identities and exact punishment on anomalies and violators. Thus, as we can see in this example, our meanings are an effect of the discourse that we find ourselves in at any given point of time and space⁵⁵.

Our interactions in these networks and domains lead us to feel more closely associated to certain opinions to such an extent that we almost start to define ourselves with those opinions. Our assumptions and opinions even translate into certain “truths” in our thoughts and we tend to identify with them or even react to defend them. Furthermore, certain ‘regimes of truth’ are results of scientific discourses and institutions, and are reinforced (as well as redefined) constantly through the education system, the media, and the flux of political and economic ideologies. Ultimately, we are limited by our opinions and assumptions but we also have the strength to open up the space for new possibilities and transformation to overcome these opinions. One unique way to unlock this new space is through the process of dialogue; it has the power to go into all the pressures that are behind our assumptions and opinions. Thus, dialogue goes into the process of thought behind the assumptions, not just on the assumptions themselves.

⁵⁵ Ibid

Foucault's genealogical investigations show that we can rediscover multiple connections between various practices and events, often by shaking away our superficial self-evident postulations and making visible the complex interconnections⁵⁶. Historical changes and shifts in power also prove that things which constitute the actions and practices at present are different from those in the past and can change over time. Power makes us think that change is not possible or that things cannot be in any other way in these networks; however, if we attempt to test the limit of this above claim then we realize that we can change the power relations and dislodge the appearances of inevitability⁵⁷. Subjects and practices interact within a given domain to create power relations and the outcomes of these relations vary for each subject based on the practice they create for themselves. What is this "power" that is so powerful for Foucault? Power is the energy and magnetic field that enables things to interact and transform into networks and domains⁵⁸.

Power for Foucault is everywhere! It is what makes us "what we are" and it operates on a relatively different level from other definitions of "power" in alternative theories--- "Foucault's work marks a radical departure from previous modes of conceiving power and cannot be easily integrated with previous ideas. For him, power is diffused rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them⁵⁹". His approach to power transcends politics and relocates power as an everyday, socialized and embodied phenomenon. Power can also be seen in the 'battle for truth' wherein: not some absolute truth is discovered and accepted, but it is a battle about 'the rules according to which the true and false are separated and specific effects of power

⁵⁶ Foucault, Michel, and James D. Faubion "Questions of Method." In *Power*. New York: New Press , 2000. 225.

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Gaventa, John, *Power after Lukes: a review of the literature*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies 2003.

are attached to the true'. Basically, it is a battle about 'the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays'⁶⁰. In this sense, the 'battle for truth' is leading away from the analysis of actors who use power as an instrument of coercion, and even away from the discreet structures in which those actors operate, toward the idea that 'power is everywhere', diffused and embodied in the discourses of knowledge, our domains and interactions.

In Foucault's words, "we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and everyday interactions. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production"⁶¹.

Thus, Foucault shifts our ideas about power from a hierarchical structure to an empowering one wherein power is not extrinsic to us --- *we are power!* Along similar lines, the art of thinking together in a dialogue invites us all to recognize and acknowledge the magnet of power and knowledge that we all share collectively to make a productive change possible. Thus, the method of dialogue supports the project of transitioning from fragmentation or divisions in our thoughts towards a wholeness and inclusiveness of our synchronized and intertwined thoughts. Overall, we can see above that Foucault works to change and shift the flow of power and energy in the multiple domains and structures. Likewise, dialogue also attempts to bring a change in the flow and process of our thoughts at a deeper, underlying and tacit level⁶². In dialogue, two or more people are making something in common; that is, they are creating something new together. Imagine: in a dialogical approach, something powerful and new is created constantly!

Our feelings and habits of thinking are part of a complex web that links us all together which is called the "ecology of thought"⁶³. This ecology is the living network of memory and

⁶⁰ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: the birth of a prison*. London, Penguin 1991.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Bohm 1996

⁶³ Isaacs 1999

awareness which is not limited to any single person but is rather held collectively. Just like this ecology, dialogue re-introduces us to the collective atmosphere in which we all live and work together. Human beings are social animals and although each individual might think alone, these thoughts are intertwined with those of other creatures (living or non-living) in the world. Hence, dialogue constructively channels our interconnected thoughts, actions and energy towards directions which have remained non-ventured until now. In fact another way to define dialogue, according to Isaacs, is a conversation in which people think together in relationships with each other⁶⁴. Moreover, thinking together implies that we no longer take our own position as final but rather relax our views in order to listen to other alternatives that result from simply being in a relationship with others. Often, our relationship with others in a dialogical process may not provide us with accurate or permanent answers towards life but rather might lead us towards more questions. Meanwhile, dialogue will also provide us with tools such as the capacity to recognize the forces operating below the surface of our conversations as well as the holistic space to generate new answers to our powerful questions.

Applying dialogue to the context of conflicts

“During the last decade, we’ve been in a mode where dealing with violent groups was conceptually and politically dangerous. After 9/11, either you were with the West or against it. It was black or white. And groups who were against the West are often labeled terrorists. And who would talk to terrorists? The West, as I see it, emerged weakened after that decade because we did not even attempt to understand the ‘other’ groups. We have spent more time on focusing on why we should not talk to others rather than finding out *how* we can talk to others⁶⁵”.

Thus, as seen through the words of Norway’s Foreign Minister above, we still have a large deficit in dealing with and understanding contemporary conflicts. What are contemporary conflicts? The character of conflicts since 1946 until today has comprised more of intrastate

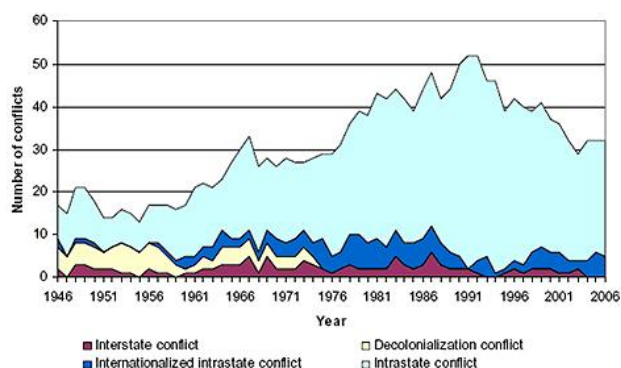
⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Jonas Gahr Store, TED Talk 2013.

conflicts (within the same state) rather than interstate ones (between two or more states) as we can see in the graph below:

ARMED CONFLICT TYPE TRENDS

Figure 1: Armed Conflicts per Type, 1946–2006.



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Over time, we are progressing towards the awareness that we need to find better ways to talk and resolve tensed or hostile relationships. “Now as we are preparing to ‘talk’, we understand how little we know about how to talk ... but at least we are learning the art of talking together⁶⁷”. For example, let us look at the Arab Spring to witness how for the first time in the history of the Arab world – a ‘bottom-up’ or a people’s revolution conquered reality. “We find out in the West that we know very little about what is happening because we never talk to the people in these countries. Most governments followed the dictate of the authoritarian leaders to stay away from these different groups because they were terrorists. Now the discussion in the Western countries have shifted to: should we talk to the Muslim Brotherhood or the Hamas? If we talk to them then would we legitimize them?⁶⁸” Thus, we can see a rise in the strategy of engagement and structured talks (ranging from mediation, negotiation, problem-solving towards dialogue) not only between states but also within states. The question now is about how are we going to engage in genuine dialogue unless we are able to make the civil society and people, not part of

⁶⁶ "Global trends in armed conflict " regjeringen.no. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Apr. 2013.

<<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/kampanjer/refleks/innspill/engasjement/prio.html?id=492941>>.

⁶⁷ Jonas Gahr Store, TED Talk 2013.

⁶⁸ Ibid

the problem, but part of the solution? How are we going to settle and build a bigger “We” to deal with the present-day issues if we don’t improve our skills of communication? The magical response to all these questions is: learning the art of dialogue!

In one vocabulary, we can say that we are no longer confined to “conflict prevention, transformation, or resolution” but are also embracing “peace building, peacemaking” or in Saunder’s language “the public peace process”. Thus, we are now transitioning into the space of “dialogue, deliberation and public engagement⁶⁹”. Practitioners such as Saunders experimented for over four decades to find sustainable ways to transform deep-rooted human conflicts. Over time, as physical walls such as the German or Russian barricades started to descend, our psychological barriers started to ascend and constituted majority of the obstructions and obstacles in the present-day world. Saunders realized that we needed to learn new techniques together to transform relationships. He evoked that the traditional way of thinking about conflicts and disputes could not deal with emerging challenges. For example, a few American, Soviet and other citizens felt that the world’s future could not be left in the hands of governments alone. These few citizens outside government began reaching across lines of conflict to discover what roles they might play in transforming hostile relationships.

“Their experiments produced citizens’ counterparts to formal instruments of diplomacy, mediation and negotiation --- citizens coming together in dialogue to transform their relationships to solve problems. Governments must do their work --- of promoting general welfare, providing security, enforcing law, organizing trade and conducting diplomatic relationships --- in creative, effective and honest ways. However, only citizens outside government can perform some tasks such as transforming tensed relationships, modifying human behavior and changing the political culture⁷⁰”.

This axiom follows: only governments can negotiate peace treaties but only people can make peace. Over the years, Saunders explored new processes built around dialogue, defined and

⁶⁹ Saunders, Harold H. *Sustained dialogue in conflicts: transformation and change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

⁷⁰ Ibid

tested them through experiences and finally continued to refine them to meet new challenges. He developed the transformative process of sustained dialogue which focuses on relationships --- relationships that may have torn a community apart; relationships that may be dysfunctional because of how they evolved over time; and relationships in which the surface conceals destructive interactions⁷¹. In the next section of this essay, I will examine the Kashmir conflict in greater detail but for now I propose the use of sustained dialogue to transform relationships amongst diverse stakeholders and involved actors (such as the Indian Kashmiri and Pakistani Kashmiri youth and women).

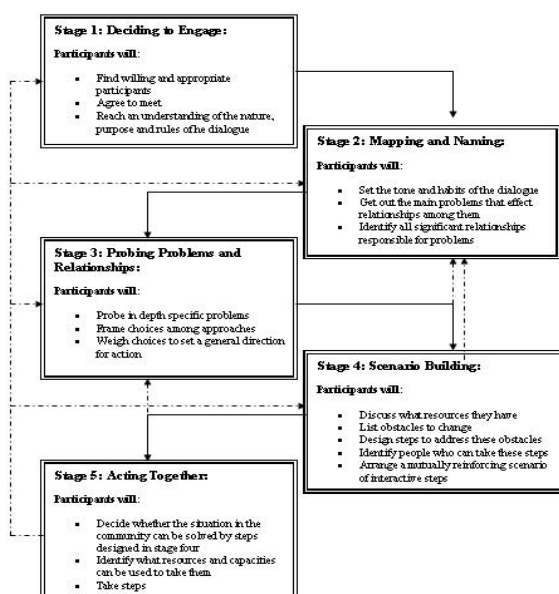
Sustained dialogue works with a dual agenda and framework: (1) Analytical: participants talk about problems and issues that bring them together (2) Operational: the dialogue goes beyond normal problem-solving in simultaneously and explicitly focusing on the relationships that cause problems and block resolution⁷². In describing the difference between sustained dialogue and other approaches, we can see that the former is: the effort to transform relationships in a continuous process that unfolds through a progression of recognizable experiences over time⁷³. The five stages of sustained dialogue reflect the interactions when individuals from adversarial groups meet over time. However, these stages are not linear; participant's thoughts and questions may ponder the group from one stage to another or a back and forth of the different stages⁷⁴:

⁷¹ Saunders Interview, 2013

⁷² Saunders 2011, 24.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Stages are based on Saunder's Sustained Dialogue book and interview.



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- (1) Stage one: Deciding to Engage- Either party on opposing sides of a conflict, such as the Indian Kashmiri and Pakistan Kashmiri youth, decide to reach out to each other or a third party creates a space for dialogue and invites them there together. Often, the decision to engage in dialogue comes from painful and fearful emotions of people who have been traumatized in a conflict and feel a burden to resolve the problems in the future. These participants, such as the youth, are a microcosm of their communities and of the network that may ultimately be woven around the dialogue. This stage (also known as ‘dialogue about dialogue’) ends when the youth participants have (a) decided to engage in dialogue and (b) agreed to address a problem, a situation, or a relationship that concerns them all.
- (2) Stage two: Mapping Relationships and Naming Problems- In this stage, two tasks are to be accomplished: (a) Participants come together to talk, map and name the elements of the problem or situation that brings them together and the dynamics of the relationships responsible for creating and dealing with them. (b) Overcoming natural resistance to dialogue – the fear of opening oneself to listen carefully enough to an adversary to be

⁷⁵ "Sustained Dialogue: Learn about SD." Home. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Apr. 2013.
<http://www.sustaineddialogue.org/learn_about_sd.htm>.

changed by what one hears rather than closing one's mind in self-defense. For example, the Kashmiri youth would examine: to what extent do I have a sense of victimhood? Who is opposing and who is supporting my project of dialogue and interaction? Who are the relevant actors and stakeholders in my community that can help me bring change? This stage ends when we hear participants say "what we really need to focus on is _____".

Here, the use of "we" is significant because it shows the sense of a shared concern about problems. Thus, at this stage, the quality of the talk changes as the youth would talk less *at* each other and more *with* each other about a shared problem.

- (3) Stage three: Probing Problems and Relationships to set a direction- Participants probe a range of problems in order to – (a) to deepen the definition of the problem they agreed to focus on (b) to uncover the relationships underlying these problems (c) to identify possible ways to change these relationships (d) to weigh those possibilities and crystallize a sense of direction to guide next steps (e) to weigh the consequences of moving in that direction against the consequences of doing nothing (f) to decide whether to try designing action. This stage will end only when the youth on the two sides (Indian and Pakistan Kashmiri) internalize the other side's deepest concerns and work with them collaboratively.

- (4) Stage four: Scenario building- After having come together around a shared sense of direction, participants design a scenario of interacting steps to be taken in the political arena to draw elements of the community. Some of the questions the Kashmiri youth may ask would include: (a) What resources do we have to deal with this problem? (b) What are the obstacles to moving in the direction we have chosen? (c) What steps could overcome these obstacles? (d) Who could take these steps? (e) How do we generate momentum and sustainability to broaden the participation?

(5) Stage five: Acting together- Participants devise ways to put their scenario into the hands of those who can act on it. The main purpose is to use the action plan to build a more coherent and interactive community --- to activate the relationships that, in themselves, become a resource in enabling the community to function more effectively, reliably and peacefully.

Due to the limited use of any structured dialogue amongst the diverse groups in Kashmir, I struggled with the questions of: What factors need to exist in order to make dialogue successful in this situation? What scope is present to strengthen the use of sustained dialogue in Kashmir? How can practitioners overcome the resistance to dialogue? What are the factors behind the proliferation of the unofficial dialogues recently within Indo-Pakistan communities? For the purposes of this paper, I am not able to expand on concrete ways to apply sustained dialogue between civil actors involved in the Kashmir conflict; rather, I attempt to provide strategies, examples and tactics to open up more space and possibilities for the process of a holistic dialogue. My aim is to contribute to the ongoing dialogue in Jammu and Kashmir by placing women, youth and minority groups into the framework.

Brief Case Study: Exploring dialogue in the Kashmir conflict

Kashmir has been divided, since the religiously motivated territorial partition that led to the formation of Pakistan in 1947⁷⁶. The State of Jammu & Kashmir was at this time majority Muslim but with a Hindu ruler, and it was unclear whether it would accede to Pakistan or India⁷⁷. Its partial accession to India became a matter of dispute between the two countries, with both India and Pakistan claiming ownership of Kashmir. Today, around one third of the territory has

⁷⁶ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013.

⁷⁷ "Kashmir | United States Institute of Peace." United States Institute of Peace. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.usip.org/countries-continents/asia/kashmir>>.

been administered by Pakistan, with the remainder administered by India, including Kashmir Valley, which has a strong Muslim majority. The India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir is considered by most to be intractable as it has remained unresolved for over 65 years following the partition of the subcontinent⁷⁸. Traditionally, both countries have pursued policies that revolved around their own concerns regarding territoriality and sovereignty over Kashmir. Two wars and numerous violent skirmishes over the years have reinforced ethnic tensions, and there has been limited interaction between Hindu and Muslim, and Indian and Pakistani Kashmir citizens⁷⁹. As a result, the area has not developed its full economic, social, and political potential⁸⁰. However, in the last few years of the dialogue process, initiated in 2004, after a ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) in November 2003, both countries are moving slowly to a people-centric approach encouraging movement of people, goods and ideas across the LoC. One of the most pragmatic approaches endorsed by the governments on both sides is to “make borders irrelevant” wherein instead of redefining or removing borders --- the solution is to soften the borders to allow movement of people, goods and services⁸¹. The Composite Dialogue Process in 2004 included a number of confidence-building measures (CBMs), such as the return of diplomatic missions to full strength, restoration of sports ties (such as cricket), resumption of travel links, and exchange of visits by parliamentarians, businessmen, journalists, writers, artists, academics and students⁸². Also, various non-state elements such as the business community, media, and prominent citizens like entertainment and Bollywood celebrities have increasingly interacted with each other in various manners. In 2005, Ambassador McDonald’s idea of “People's Bus” came to fruition between the Indian- and Pakistani-controlled parts of Kashmir

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013.

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Chari , P. R. , and Hasan Askari Rizvi. "Making Borders irrelevant in Kashmir." *USIP Special Report*. www.usip.org/files/resources/sr210.pdf (accessed April 7, 2013).

⁸² Ibid

(as we can see in the cover photo of this essay)⁸³. Lately, the rail link between Khokhrapar in Pakistan and Munnabao in India was revived after a break of four decades⁸⁴. The Indian and Pakistani governments recently held talks on the proposed Iran–India gas pipeline project which would further the process of trust-building between the two sides⁸⁵. Thus, overall there appears to be a change in the official postures of India and Pakistan after decades of hostility.

With the rise in popular exchanges across national boundaries, the citizens of India and Pakistan are starting to reacquaint themselves with each other. People-to-people contact has facilitated the partial and gradual erosion of old stereotypes between Indians and Pakistanis. For example, when IMTD conducted inter-Kashmir dialogue at Nepal in 2004 between Indian and Pakistan Kashmiri women then one of the Indian woman walked up to the Ambassador and exclaimed her shock “I am surprised that not all Muslims in Pakistan are terrorists. They are not all so bad after all. I wish my Hindu friends and family members could see this for themselves⁸⁶”. Another woman spoke to the Ambassador and told him to maintain confidentiality about this dialogue process because otherwise her Indian community and the government would shun her for talking to the “terrorists”⁸⁷. Thus, we can see that stereotypes, myths, assumptions and even distrust can be overcome to a great extent through dialogue and increased contact. Unfortunately, the Indian and Pakistan political systems and power structures prohibit this interaction. In fact, Indo-Pakistan dialogues are shaped by strong structural dynamics of asymmetry, which is a significant obstacle to the conclusion of any stable and durable agreements. India has generally enjoyed a position of advantage in Indo-Pakistan dialogues, especially in the case of Kashmir. The advantage relates to the possession of more than half of the contentious area of the disputed

⁸³ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013.

⁸⁴ Faiz, Asma. *India Pakistan dialogue: bringing the society in*. Colombo: Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, 2007.

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013.

⁸⁷ Ibid

territory by India⁸⁸. The structural dimensions of symmetry/asymmetry of power deeply influence the process and outcome of dialogue. The two states differ from each other due to the diversity in their size, resources, wealth, status, and power. Thus, the historical context of India and Pakistan in Kashmir often seemed to be unfavorable for sustainable dialogue and long-term reconciliation because of some of the following structural problems and challenges:

Asymmetric power relations

A core principal of dialogue is that all parties must come willingly and of their own accord. While participants may be encouraged by others to attend a meeting, or they may come because they are curious, they cannot be forced or required to attend. However, in situations in which there is a drastic imbalance, the majority in power often does not have any incentive to engage in dialogue⁸⁹. People usually decide to participate in dialogue when they believe that the outcome they will obtain through dialogue will be better than if they do not engage. If an individual or a group is enjoying majority status, and the group is not in any way dependent on the group with which they are in conflict, there is usually no incentive to change the status quo. In India, not only do Hindus enjoy a numerical majority (Hindus make up over 80.5% of the population and Muslims are around 14.6%) but they also hold institutional power⁹⁰. The overwhelming majority of positions of power and influence in the state are held by Hindus, including government positions, the courts (both lawyers and judges), industries, and so on. Often, Hindus in India are not interested in engaging in dialogue with Muslims not only in India but also in Pakistan and consider reconciliation a waste of time⁹¹. I am not referring to all Hindus in India, it is a very diverse country, but I am attempting to highlight a general trend. Dialogue

⁸⁸ Faiz, Asma. 2007.

⁸⁹ Based on notes from our class discussion (2/25/2013)

⁹⁰ The Economist. "India's Muslims: Growing, and neglected." *The Economist - World News, Politics, Economics, Business & Finance*. <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21572785-steadily-rising-muslim-population-continues-fall-behind-growing-and-neglected> (accessed April 8, 2013).

⁹¹ Ibid

can happen in cases of power imbalance, but to want to engage in the first place, the majority has to benefit from it as well⁹². In some cases, the majority realizes that it needs the minority in order to function, and therefore they choose to engage. I think that this previous point shows the shift in the positions of India and Pakistan in the recent years. In other words, unable to impose their preferred solution, both India and Pakistan have become flexible regarding their traditional positions on Kashmir, without officially abandoning them. Subtle changes in their positions have stimulated creative ideas such as informal dialogue for managing the conflict⁹³.

Withholding of Information

Another challenge to facilitating sustained dialogue in Kashmir has to do with the limited flow of information amongst the involved stakeholders. For example, Hindus (such as myself) in different parts of India are unaware of the reality on the ground in Kashmir. We are withheld from information about the Hindu soldiers committing rape on Kashmiri women⁹⁴. In fact, Kashmir has the highest concentration of military in the world, that is, 700,000 military troops are present in the Indian-Kashmir⁹⁵. At present, second and third generation military officers inhabit Kashmir and often these soldiers “do not know what to do with so much free time and end up committing violence in the form of rape and abuse⁹⁶”. The Indian government not only conceals this information from the rest of the country but also covers it up with stories such as “the Muslim Kashmiri’s are responsible for this and not the Indian military⁹⁷”. However, often times it has been very difficult to gather information regarding the rape situations in Kashmir with a lack of formal complaints of cases/incidents. On the other hand, some research shows that

⁹² Fitzgerald, Rhonda. Interview 2013.

⁹³ USIP Special Report 2013 (cited above).

⁹⁴ Asia Watch Division. "Rape in Kashmir." *Human Rights Watch*.
www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/INDIA935.PDF (accessed April 9, 2013).

⁹⁵ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013.

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Ibid

the government in Pakistan has masked and hidden information related to militant groups or terrorist camps from Pakistan-Kashmiri civilians⁹⁸. Hence, we can see the withholding of relevant information on the Indian and Pakistan sides of Kashmir. Nonetheless, increased international research is shedding light on this “hidden information” on both sides and is raising awareness amongst the individuals residing across the borders.

Marginalization of Kashmiris

Kashmiris are central to the reconciliation of the Kashmir conflict as they are the primary party that has suffered most from India-Pakistan’s prolonged confrontation over Kashmir, yet they remain on the margins of any dialogue process on Kashmir. Furthermore, years of separation and absence of communication and dialogue are reinforced by physical barriers; the dominance of state narratives has contributed in a trust deficit, perception gaps and emergence of separate, competing and even conflicting narratives within different regions of divided Kashmir and across the LoC⁹⁹. At present, there is a broad consensus that aspirations of Kashmiris can be fulfilled through democratic means and they should be involved in India-Pakistan dialogue process.

Is there a possibility for sustained dialogue in Kashmir?

As we can see the progressive shifts in the asymmetric power relations, withholding of information and marginalization of Kashmiris in the sections above --- India and Pakistan have realized that they have no alternative but to enter into a peace process together. India has discarded its traditional stand that the whole of Kashmir belongs to India and has shown signs of departing from its stated policy of negotiating with Pakistan only after cross-border terrorism

⁹⁸ Ogden, Chris . "Tracing the Pakistan-Terrorism Nexus in Indian Security Perspectives: From 1947 to 26/11." *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* - (2013): 35-50.

⁹⁹ Khan, Zafar. "Indo– Pakistan dialogue and the Kashmir conflict: The inclusion of Kashmiri dimension in the dialogue process." *Kashmir Newz homepage*. <http://www.kashmirnewz.com/a0001.html> (accessed April 11, 2013).

ceases¹⁰⁰. Further, India's longstanding policy of shunning international mediation and insisting on strict bilateralism in its dealings with Pakistan has been diluted considerably¹⁰¹. On Pakistan's part, former President Pervez Musharraf abandoned his country's traditional position of insisting on implementing the UN resolutions on Kashmir. Indeed, Asif Zardari, cochairman of the Pakistan People's Party, even suggested freezing the Kashmir issue, although he later had to backtrack on that proposal¹⁰². However, amongst this India-Pakistan political dialogue, what are the roles of not only Indian and Pakistani civilians but also of Kashmiri people? As of now, it seems that the role of the citizens has been to wait and watch or to participate and support the political dialogues of their governments. But is political dialogue enough?

“Peace requires a process of building constructive relationships...in those relationships, nations and peoples are divided not only by differences over rationally definable interests, but also by deeply rooted convictions about what they need to achieve: security, identity, dignity, honor, and justice. The larger process involves a number of mutually reinforcing steps, some of which may produce a dialogue, while others simply help to build confidence that a new relationship is possible¹⁰³”. Thus, we can see that the concept of relationship building and dialogue can apply as much to people as it can to nations because nations ultimately are collections of people. In Saunder's words, solving problems that affect one nation's well-being may not be possible without probing underlying interests to find shared solutions or shared problems of people. We can also recognize that political dialogue is not enough; in fact, we need to find ways to involve people and civilians from India, Pakistan and Kashmir into the process of dialogue.

¹⁰⁰ USIP Special Report 2013 (cited above).

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Saunders 2011, 88.

For citizens “to understand real interests and limits of tolerance requires sustained dialogue and continuity of communication. One conversation must begin where the last left off. When the underbrush of misperception is cleared away in one discussion, the next must begin soon enough so that the underbrush has not grown up again. On the basis of that understanding, minds go to work together analyzing what the relationship requires and where it is going¹⁰⁴”.

Thus, individuals engaged in dialogue can come to trust and understand each other’s victimhood and can build a sense of a new relationship together. India and Pakistan are moving in a direction that seems to create space in the context of the Kashmir conflict to engage youth, women and civilians into a process of sustained dialogue.

Let us look at an example on how we can plausibly engage the civilians in Kashmir into the practice of dialogue: Ever since the resumption of India-Pakistan composite dialogue in 2004, there have been a number of Kashmir-specific Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), especially in the area of travel and trade that have expanded cross- interactions between Kashmiris living on both sides of the LoC. That said, intra-Kashmir dialogue has remained minimal and largely ad hoc in nature¹⁰⁵. On the Pakistani side, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and in Indian held Kashmir (IHK): diverse and even conflicting regional narratives exist within and across the three regions- Valley, Jammu and Ladakh. Despite fractured narratives, in the past few years there has been a strong demand by Kashmiris of all political shades and regions for an intra-Kashmiri dialogue and their involvement in the dialogue process that concerns their lives and the lives of their future generations¹⁰⁶. The dialogue is very important as it would help Kashmiris to develop a consensus for a common position and a shared vision which is essential for bringing their voice in the settlement process of Kashmir along with India and Pakistan. In their discussions, the Kashmiri leaders from both sides rejected permanence of LoC as border and stressed on the inclusion of Kashmiris in the dialogue process. Furthermore,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

they have encouraged sustained dialogue between the Kashmiri leadership from both sides of the divide so that they can evolve shared ideas and strategies to resolve their problems together¹⁰⁷.

Referring to human dimension of Kashmir, Mirwaiz said, “It is now being acknowledged at the international level that Kashmir is more than a political issue. People are divided, families are divided and their pain and agony should end¹⁰⁸”. Thus, the rhetoric in India and Pakistan has elevated beyond the scope of the “people’s bus” service to open up new possibilities for a sustained intra-Kashmir dialogue. We all need to seek these creative spaces for dialogue and embrace it further to transform hostile relationships from a deeper level. We can get an insight into real-life methods to engage Kashmiri civilians (youth and women) in the process of dialogue with the IMTD proposal in the section below.

Real-life example of civilian-based dialogue in Kashmir

How is intra-Kashmiri as well as inter-Kashmiri sustained dialogue possible in reality and action? Ambassador McDonald’s IMTD project proposal below paves a path for us to enable a real-life engagement of youth and civilian Kashmiri actors in the process of dialogue¹⁰⁹:

Project Rationale:

The conflict area of Kashmir has not been able to develop its full economic, social, and political potential. In order to access a broader scope of possibilities, many Kashmir youth have migrated to the United Kingdom. There they pursue academic and professional goals, but do not interface with one another. Since these young people are likely among some of the future leaders of India and Pakistan, and since youth often succumb to extremist ideology --- it is critical to the stability of the region and to the future of Kashmir that its youth have opportunities to enhance their

¹⁰⁷ USIP Special Report 2013 (cited above).

¹⁰⁸ "Expanding Cross-Loc Interactions: A Conflict Transformation Approach To Kashmir." *Spotlight on Regional Affairs*. cpdr.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Spotlight-Jan-Feb-2012.pdf (accessed April 8, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ McDonald, John W, Interview 2013. More information is attached in the appendix.

cross-cultural understanding, learn non-violent conflict resolution methods, and develop experience in peaceful dialogue and cross-cultural cooperation.

Recognizing this need, Sha Ghulam Qadir, Chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) invited IMTD to develop a project proposal to train Kashmir Indian-Pakistan youth residing in Britain, in conflict resolution, and to facilitate a unified dialogue.

Project Design and Description:

Two conflict resolution experts and their assistant from IMTD (Ambassador John W. McDonald and Dr. Eileen Borris) will conduct two, 3-day training workshops, and a facilitated cross-cultural dialogue. (1) One workshop will teach conflict resolution and dialogue skills to fifteen Pakistan-Kashmir youth delegates residing in Great Britain. It will prepare them for a Kashmiri cross-cultural interface. (2) The other workshop will do the same for fifteen Indian-Kashmir youth delegates. A three-week interval between each training event will afford the IMTD staff, time to analyze data from participant interviews, evaluate the quality of the trainings, and to make any necessary project adjustments. (3) A facilitated cross-cultural Kashmiri dialogue among all the delegates will occur three weeks after the second training event and will be the final event in the proposed project. To learn more, please see appendix.

Conclusion

In this essay, I examined the theoretical and practical sides of dialogue to show that the process is not always linear; dialogue can be zigzag, inverted, cyclical and in all types of shapes, forms, and models. However, all these different approaches to dialogue intersect and connect in often sporadic ways; these connections and intersections highlight shifts, transformations, changes and progression in our relationships with ourselves and with each other in profound and deep-rooted ways. Furthermore, in spite of barriers and hindrances in the path of dialogue, we can see how the process is constantly refined as we continue to use it in different contexts such

as that of the Kashmir conflict. The work of refinement in dialogue also reflects how we learn together and develop the capacity to gradually adapt with new problems and challenges. Lastly, I utilized the change process of sustained dialogue as a sensitive way to engage fragile relationships in Kashmir and to create a space for intra-Kashmir dialogue with women, youth and civilians in Kashmir.

The conflict in Kashmir is complex and multifaceted. As Praveen Swami, an Indian journalist, has noted, “what we call the Kashmir problem is in fact several problems, for which Jammu and Kashmir is only a stage. Among other things, the problem involves irreconcilable ideas about the basis of nationhood, a crisis of religious and ethnic identity, and the still-far-from-spent forces that led to the partition of India. For jihadi groups and their supporters in Pakistan’s establishment, the war in Kashmir is merely part of an even larger war, one between Islam and unbelief¹¹⁰.” Thus, if Kashmir is to stop being an arena within which these larger battles are fought, then the suspicions and tensions that exist within and between the various parts of Kashmir must be addressed and the voice of the Kashmiris on both sides of the LOC must be heard and accorded due weight. In this essay, I portrayed that dialogue is a powerful space where these voices can be shared to form constructive long-term relationships. As we can see, transitions and transformations on multiple platforms have opened up many of the stakeholders, especially Indian Kashmiri and Pakistani Kashmiri civilians towards exploring the process of dialogue. Over time, the respective governments have also recognized that the present borders cannot be changed anytime soon but through dialogue these borders can be made more permeable, interactive and ultimately peaceful¹¹¹. Thus, dialogue can provide a new space to the

¹¹⁰ Praveen Swami, Quickstep or Kadam Taal: *The Elusive Search for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir*, Special Report no. 133 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, March 2005), 9.

¹¹¹ USIP Special Report 2013 (cited above).

untapped energies and capacities of the Kashmiri civilians for overcoming the conflict and challenges to create shared and long-lasting relationships.

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APPENDIX (IMTD Project Proposal):

Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy British-Kashmir Youth Dialogue – Summer 2013

Project Proposal

Summary

- The U.S. based NGO, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD—see www.IMTD.org) in cooperation with the Islamabad based NGO, Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR—see www.KIIR.org.pa) proposes a Kashmiri Indian and Pakistan youth training project.
- The goal of the proposed project is to equip Pakistan and Indian Kashmiri youth, vulnerable to violent extremism, with the skills and experience they need to enhance cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, advance peaceful Pakistan-Indian dialogue, and promote regional stability.
- Delegates for the proposed training ages 18-25, will currently reside in the United Kingdom.
- The training events will take place in London, between June and August 2013. Two IMTD conflict-resolution training experts and their assistant will implement the proposed project events.

Project Rationale

Kashmir has been divided, since the religiously motivated territorial partition that led to the formation of Pakistan in 1947. Two wars and numerous violent skirmishes over the years have reinforced ethnic tensions, and there has been limited interaction between Hindu and Muslim, and Indian and Pakistani Kashmir citizens. As a result, the area has not developed its full economic, social, and political potential. In order to access a broader scope of possibilities, many Kashmir youth have migrated to the United Kingdom. There they pursue academic and professional goals, but do not interface with one another. *Since these young people are likely among some of the future leaders of India and Pakistan, and since youth often succumb to extremist ideology, it is critical to the stability of the region and to the future of Kashmir, that its youth have opportunities to enhance their cross-cultural understanding, learn non-*

violent conflict resolution methods, and develop experience in peaceful dialogue and cross-cultural cooperation.

Recognizing this need, Sha Ghulam Qadir, Chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) invited IMTD (www.IMTD.org) to develop a project proposal to train Kashmir Indian-Pakistan youth residing in Britain, in conflict resolution, and to facilitate a unified dialogue. *With these skills, the project delegates can promote ethnic tolerance, communication, and cooperation among youth in Kashmir on both sides of the Line of Control.*

Background

IMTD is a twenty-year old NGO created by Ambassador John W. McDonald (Ret.) and Dr. Louise Diamond. Under Ambassador McDonald's oversight, IMTD has worked in Kashmir since 1997. From 2000-2003, IMTD staff conducted three workshops with the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), to train 65 cooperative-minded Azad Kashmir parliamentary leaders, enabling them to affect positive change within their political parties and parliament. Also in 2000, Ambassador McDonald proposed a "People's Bus" to facilitate visitation of Indian-Pakistan Kashmiri's. In 2005, the project came to fruition and still operates today. In 2004, IMTD and the Center for Public Policy Studies united twenty Kashmir citizens, (including six Indian and two Pakistan women) in a Kashmir Conflict Transformation Workshop in Katmandu, Nepal. In March of 2006, IMTD hosted its second, five-day inter-Kashmir dialogue and conflict resolution training in the Maldives Islands, to strengthen understanding among the people of Azad and Jammu Kashmir. Thus, the proposed British-Kashmir Youth Dialogue project easily falls within the scope of IMTD's expertise.

Project Description and Design: British-Kashmir Youth Dialogue Project

Two conflict resolution experts and their assistant from IMTD (Ambassador John W. McDonald and Dr. Eileen Borris) will conduct two, 3-day training workshops, and a facilitated cross-cultural dialogue. One workshop will teach conflict resolution and dialogue skills to fifteen Pakistan-Kashmir youth delegates residing in Great Britain. It will prepare them for a Kashmiri cross-cultural interface. The other workshop will do the same for fifteen Indian-Kashmir youth delegates. A three-week interval between

each training event will afford the IMTD staff, time to analyze data from participant interviews, evaluate the quality of the trainings, and to make any necessary project adjustments. A facilitated cross-cultural Kashmiri dialogue among all the delegates, will occur three weeks after the second training event and will be the final event in the proposed project.

1. Timeframe: May 1 – August 9, 2013

- 1.1. Outreach, training research and curriculum development: May 1-31
- 1.2. Training Event I: June 7 – June 14 (*Training days = 3, Travel days =2, Training prep and debrief = 2 days. Total event days 7*)
- 1.3. Training Event I Evaluation: June 17-28
- 1.4. Training Event II: July 5-12 (*Total event days = 7*)
- 1.5. Training Event II Evaluation: July 15-26
- 1.6. Unified Dialogue Event: August 2-9 (*Total event days =7*)

2. Work Activities and outputs:

2.1. Project Preparation: Outreach, training preparation, travel arrangements

- 2.1.1. IMTD staff works with KIIR to identify and recruit 30 youth delegates currently residing in the U.K.: 15 Kashmiri Indian youth and 15 Kashmiri Pakistan youth (month of May)
- 2.1.2. Assistant conducts training related research. Trainers compose curriculum (month of May)
- 2.1.3. Assistant makes travel and training event arrangements (month of May)

2.2 Training Event I

- 2.2.1 Trainers and Assistant travel to London and set up Training Event I (June 8-9)
- 2.2.2 Trainers and Assistant conduct Training Event I, of 15 youth delegates (June 10-12)
- 2.2.3 Trainers and Assistant conduct participant interviews for project evaluation purposes, analyze results, meet with KIIR representatives, and attend to any London-based project administration (June 13)
- 2.2.4 Trainers and Assistant travel back to U.S. (June 14)

- 2.2.5 Trainers and Assistant review Training Event I, make any necessary project adjustments, and follow-up with delegate outreach for Training II (June 17-28)

2.3 Training Event II

- 2.3.1 Trainers and Assistant travel to London and set up Training Event II (July 6-7)
- 2.3.2 Trainers and Assistant conduct Training Event II, of 15 youth delegates (July 8-10)
- 2.3.3 Trainers and Assistant conduct participant interviews for project evaluation purposes, analyze results, meet with KIIR representatives, and attend to any London-based project administration (July 11)
- 2.3.4 Trainers and Assistant travel back to U.S. (July 12)
- 2.3.5 Trainers and Assistant review Training II, make any necessary project adjustments, and follow-up with delegate outreach for Unified Dialogue (June 17-28)

2.4 Unified Dialogue Event (UDE)

- 2.4.1 Trainers and Assistant travel to London and set up UDE (Aug. 3-4)
- 2.4.2 Trainers and Assistant conduct UDE among all 30 youth delegates (Aug. 5-7)
- 2.4.3 Trainers and Assistant conduct participant interviews for project evaluation purposes, analyze results, meet with KIIR representatives, and attend to any London-based project administration (Aug. 8)
- 2.4.4 Trainers and Assistant travel back to U.S. (Aug. 9)

2.5 Reporting

- 2.5.1 IMTD staff prepares a report of its activities and evaluation of the project that it will disseminate to KIIR and to the project donors, within 30 days of the final project event. This report will be complete by September 10, 2013.

3. Beneficiaries and other stakeholder characteristics:

- 3.1. 30 youth ages 18-25 (this age group is the United Nations definition of "youth"): 15 from Kashmir Pakistan, and 15 youth from Indian Kashmir. All currently reside in Great Britain.

- 3.2. Two trainers (one male, one female): Ambassador John W. McDonald (Ret.) who is Chairman and CEO of IMTD; and Dr. Eileen Borris who is on the IMTD Board of Directors.
- 3.3. One Assistant (female): Malala Elston, Master of International Service American University.

4. Assumptions:

- 4.1. Youth delegates are fluent English speakers/writers and have an interest in advancing peace and stability in Kashmir and between India and Pakistan in general, through cooperation and dialogue.
- 4.2. IMTD staff and the project participants will be able to reach their London destination on time and in good health for each of the project events.
- 4.3. There will be adequate funding to implement the project effectively.
- 4.4. Youth delegates will be recruited in time to participate, will participate fully and enthusiastically, will learn the skills taught, will value their experience in the project, and will promote peaceful and more cohesive relations among other Kashmir youth.

5. After Project Follow-up and Evaluation

- 5.1. KIIR staff will contact project participants and conduct a brief interview to assess the impact on whether the project participants have continued their contact with one another, been in contact with other youth from both sides of the Kashmir Line of Control, and what the contact has consisted of.
- 5.2. KIIR staff will share the results of these follow-up interviews with IMTD counterparts and with project donors, in a brief written report.

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