

Building Trust and Reconciliation in Cyprus: a civil society toolkit

This toolkit provides practical ideas for planning and carrying out activities aimed at promoting trust and reconciliation between divided communities. It is based on the specific issues facing civil society in Cyprus, but the ideas will also have relevance for other similarly divided societies.

Contents

Promoting trust building activities	2
The possibilities for peace	3
Working for peace	3
Tips for taking action	4
Planning trust building activities.....	5
Implementing the strategy	6
Getting people on board	6
Formulating a monitoring and evaluation process	7
'Useful contacts' and more information.....	8

Promoting trust building activities

In the Cypriot context, trust is of paramount importance as both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots share aspirations that cannot be realised without the trust and cooperation of the other community. These aspirations include achieving a solution that both communities can accept. Trust is a key element of successful conflict resolution, including negotiation and mediation, as it is associated with enhanced information sharing, cooperation, political progress, and social interaction and cohesion. Trust building is a process that can help the two main communities to develop mutual respect, openness, understanding, and empathy. It can also help to develop enhanced communication and joint approaches to common problems and difficulties. Civil society plays a key role in this process which is crucial for the resolution of the Cyprus problem.

INTRAC's research in Cyprus has identified three main types of trust building activities.

Bicommunal dialogue

This refers to discussions, debates, seminars, workshops, and conferences, etc. that involve representatives of the two main communities exploring various aspects of the communal divisions and how these might be resolved. Examples include:

- Events organised through the ENGAGE project on topics such as federalism and sustainable development [see 'Useful contacts' section, [Case Study 1](#), and [Case Study 2](#)]
- Discussions on historical dialogue and research [see [Case Study 4](#)]
- Discussions on the role of the media in the context of a divided society. [see [Case Study 5](#)]

Bicommunal activities

This refers to people from both communities working together in order to address common problems or topics such as health, the environment, or cultural heritage. Examples include:

- Groups of young people working on issues of environmental concern. [see [Case Study 7](#)]
- The current Turkish Cypriot and former Greek Cypriot inhabitants of a village working together to preserve cultural heritage. [see [Case Study 6](#)]

Monocommunal activities

This refers to engaging representatives of one of the communities in activities that promote an understanding of separation and interdependence, including learning to appreciate the culture and aspirations of the other community. It is a key building block for bicommunal engagement through addressing fears, suspicions, and concerns. Examples include:

- Turkish Cypriot women from isolated rural areas learning about the common concerns they have with Greek Cypriot women in similar situations [see [Case Study 3](#)]
- Confidence-building measures (capacity building) as a precursor to cross-community initiatives [see [Case Study 1](#), [Case Study 2](#), and [Case Study 3](#)]

Key causes of a lack of trust such as divisive education systems and the lack of a shared/ independent media can also be addressed through civil society initiatives in monocommunal settings. [see [Case Study 4](#) and [Case Study 5](#)]

The possibilities for peace

Whilst there has been an absence of armed conflict in Cyprus in recent years, the island and its two main communities remain physically divided. However, a number of international and local factors suggest that an end to this division and an agreed settlement can be achieved.

International factors:

- There has been a global decline in civil wars in recent years.
- There has been a decline in armed conflicts generally.
- The end of the Cold War has created a more favourable international climate for peace and addressing issues of separation.
- Former arch enemies in deeply divided societies such as South Africa and Northern Ireland are now working together to cement peace and build more inclusive forms of democracy.

Local factors:

- The two main communities in Cyprus have demonstrated that they want a peaceful agreement.
- The political leaders and major political parties of the two main communities have indicated that they wish to achieve an agreement.
- Key NGOs and NGO networks are well placed in Cyprus to provide linkages between Track 1 (official) and Track 2 (citizens') processes in the peace negotiations.
- The current economic climate both internationally and in Cyprus has highlighted the wastefulness of resources in a divided society and the economic benefits accruing from an agreement.
- The EU is keen to resolve the Cyprus Problem and EU institutions play an important role in promoting more inclusive forms of democratic participation.
- Other international bodies – including the UN – wish to see an agreement being reached.
- Hundreds of international, regional, and local NGOs have been supporting an agreement and are active in addressing the causes and effects of communal division.

Working for peace

In working for peace it is important that groups are prepared to engage with the international community, civil society support organisations, and explore what other groups are doing.

Engaging with the international community

International bodies can:

- provide a neutral space for airing important issues
- create safe spaces for people to meet across the divide
- increase participation
- provide comparative contexts and learning from other countries
- provide resources, or help civil society organisations (CSOs) to access resources
- bring international attention to an issue.

[see 'Useful contacts' section for the websites of [EU](#), [UNDP-ACT](#), [Peace Players](#) and [PRIO](#)]

Engaging with civil society support groups

Civil society support groups can provide:

- capacity building programmes to enhance effectiveness
- advice and support
- information

- signposting to other sources of support or information
- linkages with other organisations
- linkages to international bodies and donors.

[see 'Useful contacts' for websites of [MC-Med](#), [NGO SC](#) and [CCMC](#); see also [Case Study 1](#), [Case Study 2](#) and [Case Study 5](#)]

Exploring what other groups are doing

Knowing what other groups are doing:

- promotes learning which enhances effectiveness
- avoids duplication and misunderstanding
- identifies areas for collective action – and enhancing influence with politicians, public agencies, policymakers, international bodies, and the public
- can increase participation by getting more people involved or interested
- enables a wider range of people to be reached, such as including marginalised sections of the community and/or those not usually interested or involved in peace building initiatives.

You can get information about what other groups are doing from Cyprus CSO Directories, and [Case Study 1](#) and [Case Study 2](#).

Tips for taking action

Three key things to consider when planning trust and reconciliation activities:

- What it is you want to do?
- Who you want to do it with (see above)?
- Why do you want to do it?

INTRAC research in Cyprus has identified a number of cases of good practice for implementing trust building strategies. These include ways in which organisations or projects were able to address specific challenges, make the most of available resources and plan for future sustainability.

- **Identifying the problem** – This will enable you to create a targeted and effective approach based on the nature and scale of the problem.
- **Setting the goals** – All trust building initiatives involve raising awareness of the other community in different ways that will change the attitudes or behaviour of your own community. However, it is important that you set out exactly what types of attitudes or behaviour you wish to change. For example:
 - changing people's misconceptions about the origins or contribution of the other community to society [see [Case Study 4](#)]
 - changing people's willingness to work together for mutual benefit [see [Case Study 6](#)]
- **Identifying your partners** – There are excellent networks of organisations working on trust building initiatives throughout Cyprus. These can help you find suitable partners and valuable sources of support.
- **Identifying your target group** – Through accessing appropriate networks and partners you can ensure that you target your efforts where they are most needed. This will enable you to identify more accurately who your target group should be, ensuring that you don't duplicate, or compete with, what someone else is already doing.

- **Evaluating your resources** – The next step is to consider what resources you will need (including expenses, human resources, skills, materials), and where to get them. In Cyprus there are specialist organisations and networks of organisations working on different aspects of peace and reconciliation building [see the Cyprus NGO Directory and all the case studies, in the ‘Useful contacts’ section].
- **Understanding the regulatory system** – If you are setting up a new organisation, you need to be registered. If you are planning on working across the Green Line, make sure that you are aware of the restrictions and regulations in place. The NGO SC and MC-Med can help with this.

Planning trust building activities

It is crucial that you plan trust and reconciliation activities in a systematic rather than haphazard way. This is called strategic planning and it need not be an overly complex process. In fact, it can be achieved quite easily through following a number of simple guidelines or approaches.

As with any type of strategic plan, there are a few basic elements that are found in every successful project or intervention. Here are three of the most common approaches that appear in advice given on planning activities.

Being **SMART** about your project is one way to ensure that you are creating a solid foundation for your activities.

- **Specific** – The objective of the project should be as specific as possible.
- **Measurable** - Will you be able to determine when the objective is met?
- **Achievable** – Is it possible to achieve the goal on your own or will you need to team up with another group?
- **Realistic** – Ensure the goal is realistic in size and scope and don’t be afraid to scale it down if you feel it is not.
- **Relevant** – Ensure your activities are relevant to the people you are targeting. Ask yourself whether the public will be able to identify with your activities.
- **Timebound** – Have an achievable timeline in mind for the duration of the activity and plan what could be done if more time is needed.

You can also use a **SWOT** analysis to evaluate your project’s ideas. This can help make sure your ideas are realistic and achievable.

- **Strengths** – assess the strengths of the ideas.
- **Weaknesses** – consider what parts of the project may be conceived as weaknesses and if it is possible to strengthen these areas
- **Opportunities** – assess what outside factors may be able to benefit the project and how these might be used to your advantage
- **Threats** – Keep in mind what external obstacles may arise and try to conceive back-up or contingency plans to get around these problems.

Securing resources – most activities involve some sort of financial outlay. Even when people are prepared to give their time freely, it is good practice to cover their expenses. You may also need to hire premises, equipment, buy stationery or provide refreshments for activities. Local support organisations can give you some advice about where you might access small grants for your activities. Network membership is the best way of finding out about funding opportunities and accessing them. If the identified activity also has a developmental function for the local area, you should also try your local authority/municipality, e.g. a community festival promoting Cypriot-wide culture or an island-wide approach to addressing local environmental concerns. Attaining

appropriate resources will make your work more effective and this will instil confidence in your initiative or organisation from the local population and those with influence.

All planning processes should keep the **KISS** principle in mind. **Keep It Simple and Specific**. [see [James \(2011\)](#)].

Implementing the strategy

What you do obviously depends on your target group. For instance, young people may be interested in different types of activities than business people. Whatever you decide, there are a few general guidelines that should be followed:

- **Be proactive** – Proactive measures are often more successful than passive actions. This means getting the targeted population involved in the activities in a way that will give them a sense of ownership. If people feel that your message is theirs also they will be more likely to remain committed and spread it to others.
- **Maximise participants** – Try to use activities that will bring in a large audience or maximise participants who are likely to share experiences with others.
- **Vary approaches** – Use different types of activities/approaches to promote your message – this will help the targeted audience to internalise the message.
- **Be relevant** – Keep in mind that actions should fit your immediate goals as well as your organisation's overall purpose, agenda, and values.

These are all processes that can be enhanced through utilising your partners or network members. [see all case studies in the 'Useful contacts' section]

Getting people on board

You should also think about how to get information about your activity out to a wider audience. This involves developing an appropriate message about your activities, working with the media to get it across, and ensuring you address any language barriers there might be.

- **The message** – The first step in this process involves developing a specific message that you want to get across. This should be easily expressed in one core sentence in a way that will make it appealing to your targeted group. This could involve focusing on their aspirations (what they might hope for as a result of peace) and linking your message to this, perhaps through giving it a human face, for instance a poster of children from different backgrounds playing together.
- **Identify messengers** – You need to determine who will deliver the message. You may have multiple messengers for different audiences who can spread the word about your activities quicker by making many people aware of what is going on at one time. People with local credibility through involvement in civil society activity (youth groups, community development) can often be the best messengers. [see [Case Study 3](#) and [Case Study 7](#)]
- **Working with the media** – This is a critical component of what you need to do as it ensures your message gets across to a wide audience. Positive media exposure also gets attention from influential bodies, agencies, and individuals. It also raises your credibility. You can substantially raise your profile in these respects through getting support with how you work with the media, e.g. through the Cyprus Community Media Centre. [see 'Useful contacts' section, and [Case Study 5](#)]

- **Address language barriers** – Finding a common language when trying to reach a wider bicomunal audience is not easy in Cyprus. It should never be assumed that everyone who might be interested in trust building activities speaks good English. You should always endeavour to have documents, etc. translated and provide translation services for bicomunal events.

Formulating a monitoring and evaluation process

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a very important part of what you do. It will help you determine exactly how effective your activities are. It can also help you improve future practice by assessing what worked well and what did not. There are several different kinds of evaluation tools that can be incorporated into your strategy and it may be appropriate to use more than one of them at once. This will enable you to ensure that:

- you are keeping to your strategy and plan of action and meeting your targets
- you identify what you are doing well and how this can be built on
- you are able to identify what you are not doing so well, and how this might be improved.

Effective evaluation will not only improve your practice, it will also help to maximise your outputs (activities, participants, etc.) and achieve your outcomes (e.g. making a difference in relation to building trust and reconciliation). There are different types of evaluation and different approaches and models. While some evaluations require substantial resources, others may be relatively cheap. You can do your own self-evaluation for no financial cost. Self-evaluation tools are readily available. However, it is advisable to acquire some training in how to apply these. As a general guideline you should establish a timeline for your activities in order to monitor your progress.

The downside to this type of monitoring is that it does not take into account the effects or actual outcomes of a campaign. These are at least as equally important to know. There are many approaches to measuring these; one of the most useful is outcome mapping.

Outcome mapping is a systematic approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation that focuses on behavioural or attitudinal changes. Through outcome mapping you can delineate what direction you are going in as an organisation and review your goals when necessary. It involves designing and planning your actions in a way that will enable you to define what outcomes you would like to see. You may then use a simple evaluation sheet after each activity to ask participants:

- what they got out of the activity
- which aspects they found most/least helpful
- how they might use what they learnt in future.

You should then follow up some participants at a later date to see what they have done as a result of this.

In short, most evaluations should consider four components:

- **Inputs** – resources, including human resources and who does what
- **Outputs** – the extent to which you met your targets, including things like activities held, number of participants
- **Outcomes** – what was achieved as a result of these outputs, including what difference did they make to attitudes and behaviour (building trust)
- **Processes** – how you applied your resources in order to achieve the maximum outputs and outcomes

Useful contacts and more information

INTRAC Cyprus case studies

[Case Study 1 – The Management Centre of the Mediterranean \(MC-Med\)](#)

[Case Study 2 – NGO Support Centre \(NGO SC\)](#)

[Case Study 3 – Akova Women's Association \(AWA\)](#)

[Case Study 4 – Association for Historical Dialogue and Research \(AHDR\)](#)

[Case Study 5 – Cyprus Community Media Centre \(CCMC\)](#)

[Case Study 6 – The Kontea Cultural Heritage Circle Project](#)

[Case Study 7 – Working with Young People \(HASDER and Soma Akriton\)](#)

Websites

Community Development Resource Association	www.cdra.org.za
Cyprus NGO Directory	www.ngosincyprus.org (in Greek) www.sto.medyamerkezi.org (in Turkish)
Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC)	www.cypruscommunitymedia.org
European Commission: Representation in Cyprus	http://ec.europa.eu/cyprus
The Management Centre of the Mediterranean (MC-Med)	www.mc-med.eu
NGO Support Centre (NGO SC)	www.ngo-sc.org
Peace Players International	www.peaceplayersintl.org/locations/cyprus
Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)	www.prio.no/Cyprus
UNDP-ACT	www.undp-act.org

Links to resources

[INTRAC Cyprus Research Project website section](#)

[INTRAC M&E website section](#)

[Introduction to evaluation methodology and tools for NGOs](#)

[ODI Outcome mapping tools](#)

'[People Building Peace II: Successful stories of civil society](#)' – A collection of inspiring cases you could use in your awareness raising efforts.

European Centre for Conflict Prevention (2007) '[GPPAC Awareness Raising Toolkit: A handbook for awareness raising on conflict prevention and peacebuilding](#)'.

Howard, R., F. Rolt, H. Van de Veen, J. Verhoeven (eds) (2002) '[The Power of the Media: A handbook for Peacebuilders](#)', European Centre for Conflict Prevention.

James, R. (2011) '[How to do Strategic Planning: A guide for small and diaspora NGOs](#)', Common Ground Initiative.

Earl, S., F. Carden and T. Smutylo (2001) '[Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs](#)', International Development Research Centre (IDRC).



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