Peace in Action: Episode 3 - Philippines

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Welcome to the Peace in Action podcast from Conciliation Resources. I’m Jonathan Cohen, Executive Director of Conciliation Resources. In this series to mark our 30th anniversary, I’ll be talking with some of the people involved in the diverse work of peacebuilding around the world. We’ll hear stories from a range of guest speakers and uncover how dialogue and mediation support can help to create more peaceful societies and bridge divides.

JONATHAN COHEN: Joining me for today’s episode of Peace In Action is Ciaran O’Toole, and Iona Jalijali. It’s great to be with you both, and to be here in Manilla. Ciaran, you’re Conciliation Resources’ Director of Southeast Asia and Pacific Programme, based in Melbourne. And Iona, you're the Senior Programme Manager for the Philippines Programme for the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue. Great to be with both of you. I've known you both a long time. Ciaran, you've worked with us at Conciliation Resources since 2010 and Iona, we first met way back 15 years ago or more, and since 2016 you've been working with the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue. We'll probably call it HD, as it’s known in the field, and it's a real pleasure to have both of you here to share the experience of two NGOs. Conciliation Resources is marking our 30 years of working in peace building and mediation support and the Peace in Action podcast series is looking at dialogue in various forms, how it has shaped our experience of working alongside people who experience violent conflict, and the ways in which dialogue can bring about change. I think we're all very conscious that dialogue won't solve violent conflict in its totality, but without dialogue, it's very hard to envisage how those enmeshed in the violence of conflict can transform broken relationships or engage in the give and take of negotiations, with or without mediation, to reduce violence and to create the possibility of peace.

Today, we are here to explore the experience of the peace process in Mindanao in the Philippines. A long-running conflict, complex history, and what I'd like to do is to ask you, Iona, if you can start off by giving us a little bit of a flavour of what the conflict is about and how we got to the really important Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro

in 2014. We live in an era where there's a lot of scepticism about peace agreements and the possibility of reaching peace agreements, but I think that was quite a seminal peace agreement, and maybe you could share with us how we got there and what the conflict is about.

IONA JALIJALI: Yeah, um, so I always have to take a, you know, a few seconds whenever I'm asked this question, because it's really complex, and it's sometimes, you know, like it's hard to think about what to leave out. Because it's, like you said, it's a very complex story which really deserves to be told actually, which deserves to be more known and understood, not only globally, but actually by many Filipinos. Because, even personally, I grew up in Manila, I was not aware of the roots of the conflict in the southern part of my own country, so sometimes it's hard to expect other people to know about it. The way I understand it, and I feel that it's the most maybe accurate description of what the conflict is about, is that it's about lost sovereignty.

So it's a conflict that has roots in colonialism, in the colonial period that the Philippines went through. Hundreds of years ago, there were sovereign Sultanates in the southern part of the Philippines, which somehow settlers began to occupy. And during the time that our Spanish colonisers left, they had entered into a treaty with the United States, which basically, I think that's the instrument that included Mindanao, included those sovereign areas in this idea of what the Philippines is, that was ceded by Spain to the United States during that time.

JC: And this was roughly about when?

IJ: Around at the beginning of the 1900s. And then in the 60s and the 70s, it was also because of, I think, neglect, you know, the centre, the usual centre-periphery story where there was a lot of, not only neglect actually, but continued displacement, oppression as well. Like, there were many stories of massacres and human rights abuses against the Muslim Filipinos in that area which created the liberation fronts, beginning with - of course, there were precursors - but I think the most known ones would be the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which had also entered into a peace agreement with the Philippine government. And then later on, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which actually was a breakaway group from the MNLF. They weren't satisfied with the agreement that the MNLF had entered into with the Philippine state.

JC: And that was an agreement in 1996…

IJ: In 1996 yes, the final, at least. There were several agreements with the Moro National Liberation Front happened in 1996, but even before that, in the 80s the MILF

had broken away from the MNLF and pursued their own armed struggle against the Philippine government. And it was that process, that formal process between the MILF and Philippine government that our organisations have been able to work together on, in accompanying that formal peace process between the government of the Philippines and the MILF.

JC: That's great. Thanks ever so much Iona. And that accompaniment essentially began as part of the work of the International Contact Group (ICG). And Ciaran, maybe you can say a few words about that trajectory of the International Contact Group as one component of the architecture of the peace process here in Mindanao and the southern Philippines.

CIARAN O'TOOLE: Yeah, I mean, I got involved in the Philippines since 2018 but the International Contact Group was a product of, gradually, both parties wanting more international involvement in the process. So you had the International Monitoring Team, and then, in a lot of ways the process got used to having international mediation and mediation support. And that led to the creation of the International Contact Group. It's made up of international NGOs like ourselves, Conciliation Resources and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, along with a number of other organisations. For example, the Asia Foundation was involved. Muhammadiya from Indonesia is included and then a number of states, so Japan, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Turkey. So that group essentially accompanied the negotiation process that was taking place in Kuala Lumpur, chaired by the Malaysian government, a facilitator from Malaysia. And the group really provided mediation support: so back-channelling, comparative examples, working with both sides to find solutions, and worked quite well as a team, and really contributed to the formation of the peace agreement that was signed in 2014.

JC: And we're now 11 years on from the signing of the peace agreement, and I'd like to go on in a moment, to talk about the experience of implementing it, and the roles that we, as international NGOs, working with the Parties, with the facilitator and with civil society here in the Philippines, the roles we've played in supporting that. But before we delve into that, I'm also very interested in the two of you, and how it is the two of you have come into these roles. And Iona you, you started off by talking about your understanding of the situation, as someone who grew up in Manila, a long way from Mindanao in a way, and so a very Filipino identity. And you came to an understanding of what this was about in an interesting way, I think. So you want to just share a little bit about how you got into this?

IJ: So very centre. The point of view that I had growing up was really very centre even. I mean, this is a story I frequently say, but growing upgoing to school in a Catholic school,

that part of our history is not something that is common knowledge, sadly. So how I got into it? 2010, I was in law school, and at the time, the Dean of our law school was appointed as chief negotiator for the Philippine government. And I had the experience of working with him, not because he was my professor, but because I was also previously working for a congressperson, and I think we were consulting some of the legislative measures that we were working on with him as Dean of the Law School. So I don't know why, because at the time, I didn't have a job. I was jobless. But when he was appointed as chief negotiator for the government panel, he just invited me to be the head of the Secretariat for the panel, and I really didn't know why he thought of me. He just said, when I asked him, “Why are you asking me to try? I have no experience in this field. I know nothing about the peace process.” When I was working in Congress, I was a very junior officer. I had no project management experience at the time. And he said, “I just need somebody I can trust.” So why he thought he could trust me? I don't know, but hopefully I deserved the trust that he did kind of give me.

JC: But in a way, I mean, it’s fascinating because trust is such a precious commodity in peace processes.

IJ: Correct. Yes, very, very much, trust and confidence and yes, many other you know, like the what, you know, what is essential, is not visible, right? So, yeah, you're very right about that. But yeah, so he invited me to be, to head the Secretariat for the peace panel, and that was in 2010 and I've not managed to escape peace work since!

JC: But you made an interesting transition, having worked as part of the government peace panel into a role with a non-governmental organisation that is very well known for its often quiet back-channel contributions to peace processes. How did that transition happen?

IJ: So in 2016 again, I found myself out of work. I mean, that's the most honest thing I can say right now. But I guess because of that process where, you know, we were working the formal negotiations and organisations like yours, and obviously the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, became known to myself and I also became, you know, they were familiar with me as well and my work. So it was just a transition into that organisation that became quite naturally, I guess.

JC: One more question for you … one more question for you before I turn to Ciaran. I think it's very interesting moving from government into an NGO, but also moving from a position where you were essentially supporting the role of one of the parties, the government of the Philippines, to having to play a role that required you to build

relationships of trust across the spectrum of parties involved. How did you navigate that?

IJ: Um, so yeah, I've often described that transition from like being the mediated to becoming the mediator. So I think it wasn't difficult, in the sense that a lot of what you were, you started to talk about, like the trust, right? The other thing, I think that's essential for mediators is to have some degree of like empathy, right? And sympathy for the parties that are being mediated. Like we often, I think in the negotiation theory, we talk about positions and interests and needs. And I think to sum that up, that's just about empathy, right? Understanding where the, you know, the party, the other is coming from. So because through that process, through six years that I was involved directly in the negotiations, I did not only have a grasp of what the Philippine government's position is and how it viewed the issue at hand, how it viewed the problem, but I also developed a very, I think, deep understanding of where the MILF came, was coming from, what their point of view, what was at stake for them, and what they were aspiring for. So I think that helped me in, you know, being able to establish that new identity, I guess, as something, you know, as somebody kind of being in the middle and outside, rather than on one side and internal to the process.

JC: You use the word identity, and I think that's really important, because as people who play a role in supporting peace processes, we bring our own identity into this, and that has to interact with the parties. So your identity was as someone from inside the conflict to evolve from working in government to working with an international NGO. Ciaran, on the other hand, as you said, you've been leading Conciliation Resources work in the Philippines since 2018. But your journey into this role, I think, has been a fascinating one that very much speaks to your own identity.

CT: Yeah, you know, I grew up along the border in Northern Ireland. So I grew up in the 1980s - 70s, 80s, and then lived in Derry and Belfast for the first half of the 1990s. So I suppose I lived through the peace process, you would say, in Northern Ireland, and ceasefires. I suppose war, peace, war, peace, and then finally a peace agreement. And I suppose, you know sometimes I describe like, what do you do in an average evening when you're living in in Derry or Belfast, when you're catching up with your friends, you talk about the peace process, and you analyse and you strategise, and you're trying to figure out how to get round the barriers that you see; political, social. So it was something that I suppose you become fixated on, or you spend a lot of time thinking about, in your sort of late teens, early 20s. But of course, I didn't hear of, I'd never heard of the word peacebuilding at this time. Never really heard of mediation support. So off I went as a normal person from that part of the world, entered into the private sector,

became a manager, travelled the world quite a bit, lived in the Middle East for a while, ended up in Australia. It was one of those… one day realising that, you know, I'd rather be doing something I'm interested in. And ended up in Fiji, and that's where I met Conciliation Resources. I was really volunteering for a peacebuilding human rights-focused organisation. Became involved in constitution development, at one stage, started to pick up our work in in Papua New Guinea, in particular, in Bougainville, and then became involved in the work in the Philippines.

JC: Thank you both. I think you've given us a really interesting feel for your motivations and the journeys you've been on into this work. And as I said, the signing of the comprehensive agreement in 2014 was a really huge landmark. This had been a conflict that had been ongoing for a couple of generations. Hundreds of thousands of people displaced, tens of thousands, if not more, people, killed over this period of time, and at the same time, it was a conflict that evolved during a period of political, a particular political system here in the Philippines. We got to the signing of the comprehensive agreement in 2014. And there's often this sense that peace agreements get signed, and then everyone goes home and forgets about how complex it is. And I think 11 years on from the signing of the agreement, we're deep into the implementation phase, and we see the ups and downs. We see the progress, the fallback and very real political processes about how you move towards a sustainable peace. And I'd be really interested to hear from you, given that the ICG has played this support role, the International Contact Group, it's played this support role very intensely leading up to the agreement. It continued to exist after the signing of the agreement, but perhaps became less pertinent, less relevant, and then, I think, over the last couple of years, as some of the tensions in the agreement have become more apparent, the ICG has had to re-energise and re-envision what its contribution can be. And I think it's fair to say that HD and CR have been at the heart of that. And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how this hybrid mechanism for states, for NGOs, has played a role in trying to support dialogue in this difficult phase, in encouraging the MILF and the government panels to look at how they work together and how they overcome some of the obstacles that they find in their pathway.

CT: When I started to work in the Philippines in 2018, there was this sense that, well, the ICG had run its course in 2014. What is its use in the implementation phase? But I think, like with any implementation of an agreement, misunderstandings, you know, the working relationship between the MILF and the government began to fray over a long period of time. And I think it's very natural. Different priorities, different people are involved in the process. So after, as you say, 10-11, years of implementing the peace agreement, certain areas in implementation began to stall, and there were difficulties in,

in a sense, in the relationships between both parties, but also some of it around understanding of the technicalities of the peace agreement itself… what the peace agreement meant, and the importance of the peace agreement in implementing aspects of the peace agreement. Then, really about two years ago, so we were called upon as an ICG to sort of reinvigorate the ICG, and this was a request from both parties to reinvigorate the ICG, to be able to work with both parties to overcome these difficulties. And that's the work we've been doing, really, in the last couple of years. And I think what we've succeeded in doing is initially enabling both sides to understand the challenges that each other has in working with each other, if that makes sense. So why each party struggles in understanding each the other party. That was really the very initial work we did with the parties.

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JC: In a way, it's partly about a deeper analysis, encouraging the parties to engage in a deeper analysis of one another's needs and fears, and about helping them stand in one another's shoes; to understand the obstacles they're facing with their own constituency and in engaging with the other side.

CT: Yeah, yeah, very much so. Enabling both parties to understand, what are the what are the underlying problems in the in in the implementation process.

JC: And were there any particular ways in which you did that, any particular types of exercises or processes?

CT: There was a sort of a critical moment in the process where we brought both parties together, and there was a moment of enabling both parties to look into the future and come up with a joint vision for all the different elements of the peace agreement. So looking through all the different from decommissioning, amnesty, truth and reconciliation, look forward, you know, to 2028 or thereabouts. What do you both envision is the end result, you know, in the implementation? And then enable both parties to sort of step outside of the current and past grievances, in a sense, to be able to work together in a room to create a joint vision. And from that joint vision, what are the next steps and roadmaps and pathways towards achieving that vision? That was sort of like a key moment in the current process.

IJ: Maybe just to add to that, of course, we wouldn't be able to do that if we weren't invited in by the party. So it was, you know, it's credit to them that they wanted and you know, they were able to acknowledge that maybe there's space for the ICG, you know, for third parties to come in and try to help ameliorate, you know, the relationship a little

bit during that time. And I just, because I feel that it's important to stress that, because it doesn't mean that they are also unable to do it themselves, right? I mean, they do have a relationship with each other, and they do talk to each other to a certain extent. And, you know, the support of organisations like HD and CR when it's, I think the important thing there is to be there when they need you. And that's, I think, how the ICG was, designed. It's really a group, an ad hoc group of organisations that should be ready to assist the parties if and when they need it. But, and I think I'm a bit more conscious of that as a Filipino as well. And we were, yeah, we're talking about this also. But I think international organisations like ours should also be very conscious of ownership, you know, the ownership of these processes that they should belong, you know, primarily and entirely to the parties themselves.

JC: So It's been the four NGOs, Muhammadiya, a social movement, and the four states. And of course, the Malaysian facilitators played the critical role in supporting the process and our mandate has been to work in support of the Malaysian facilitator and then to support the parties as well. And I think it's been an interesting evolution with the facilitator, the way you engage and support the facilitator as well.

IJ: Yeah, I mean, though, I think what we're trying to accomplish is a very informal process. There haven't been, you know, technically, there haven't been changes to our mandate as the ICG nor… and there haven't been any changes to the mandate that's received by the third party facilitator. And we don't want to give the impression that we're kind of supplanting and over what… I'm not sure, what the proper term is, replacing maybe that process, because that is really the Malaysian facilitator's position, is really the formal role that's supposed to kind of help the parties come to an agreement whenever that is needed.

CT: It goes back to, really, to the original mandate, and a lot of ways, the original culture and the relationship between the facilitator and the ICG. So the ICG is that, as you mentioned, informal side of the process. Working on the trust and relationship of both parties at their invitation. Working towards sort of more informal solutions and options to support the facilitator in their role pretty closely with the Malaysian facilitator in this process.

JC: So two components of the process that I think are also important to think about. Iona, you spoke about ownership, and I know when Conciliation Resources became involved in the process, back in 2009, -10, -11, it was the invitation of a group of civil society organisations here in the Philippines who put us forward to be a member of the ICG. And I know both CR and HD engage with civil society in the Philippines, in

Mindanao. What's the relationship between our organisations and civil society actors here in the Philippines?

IJ: Well, I think the Philippines and Mindanao is known to have, you know, a very, very healthy and active civil society. And in HD's case, we have been trying to really work towards local ownership and localisation, especially if the mediation works. So maybe, just as an aside, one of the things that HD does in the Philippines is support local mediation, community-level mediation, and most of the civil society organisations that we work with are involved in that kind of work, resolving local, violent, community-level conflict. And I think it's very key for us to be aware that, number one, we won't be here forever, as you know, foreign international organisations, and it's essential for us to ensure that the local partners we have, in our case, in HD's case, and mediation organisations that we work with find their way and are, and learn to navigate this ecosystem, including the donor ecosystem, if I may be honest, right? Independently of organisations like ourselves. It's no secret that, you know, funding for our line of work is getting scarce, especially, I think, for the Bangsamoro peace process international funding. So we're also coming to a time where support to civil society organisations, whether through in organisations like ours or directly, is becoming scarce. So that is, I think, a real problem that we have right now in the Philippines and in the Bangsamoro civil society community that we somehow need to figure out.

CT: I think civil society is obviously very, very important. But there is sort of an inherent tension with the work we do and local civil society, because we do work within, quite often, a confidential space where we're working with the trust of both parties who want to keep information and detailed information confidential. Well, then also, we work with our local partners on the ground who desire that information. So I think what we try to do is to explain what we're doing, why we're doing it. This is the process. This is the progress in the process. This is why we can't impart certain pieces of information, and this is the role we play as, in a sense, outsiders, as outside organisations. And a lot of it is just a continuous communication and continuous explaining what we're doing almost, almost step by step. And I think it's an important part of the process so it's not building, sort of, I suppose, suspicion around the process. so, and I think this was very much the case back, you know, in the lead up to the the negotiations around the negotiations for the comprehensive agreement as well.

JC: That's great. Iona, please come in.

IJ: I was just thinking while Ciaran was talking that local civil society, especially in Mindanao and in the Bangsamoro, one difference they have with us is they have more skin in the game. A lot of the civil society organisations in this area have organised

because they are affected by the conflict. You know, they were affected by conflict directly, often. So they are victims, for instance, of violence, whether that was the historic, you know, vertical violence between the state and the liberation fronts or local community-level violence that's still persistent. They're the ones whose families have been displaced, and, you know, compose the diaspora, for instance, from Mindanao to different parts of the Philippines, or even internationally. It's very understandable their need to be included, their need to be heard, their need to have a voice. To say that it's understandable is actually an understatement, right? That's not doing it justice. So to the extent I think that because, I mean, admittedly, peace processes, even this one, as inclusive as people describe it to be, it's still primarily an exclusive process, you know. I mean, sorry, as inclusive as people say it has been, you know, with women on the table and all that, and to that extent, it has been very successful. It's still primarily, it was primarily an elite process and an exclusive process. So to the extent that maybe organisations like CR, I know that you guys work a lot with civil society, I think more so than HD at this point, how we bring those voices onto the table, I think is also a very important part of the work that we do.

JC: And I think this point you make about how to bring a more inclusive perspective into the process, how to give more voices space to be heard, women you mentioned young people have been really important. Are there any thoughts on what's been effective in supporting that inclusion and supporting that wider set of voices to engage and have a stake?

CT: In the current process, hasn't been an avenue for civil society to engage directly in the process. I think what we have discussed with certain members of civil society is the potential of later on in the process. At the moment, it's at a, as I mentioned, it's sort of more in a confidential space, or a lot of it in a confidential space, I think during the negotiations for the CAB, for the Comprehensive Agreement, Conciliation Resources would go and talk to civil society around specific issues that are at the table. Civil society can't be forgotten in a process. When you're involved in a mediation process between two parties, it can easily get exclusive, particularly as parties want to keep information confidential. But I think as international NGOs, we should always strive to find ways to include civil society, or at the very least, as I mentioned that they're conscious of the steps you're taking and the process you're taking and the type of work you do.

JC: One of the questions that for me has been very interesting, and it's great to have the two of you here as a manifestation of this, is that there's often a sense of competition between NGOs in the peacebuilding and mediation space. And yet, for the

15 years of collaboration on the ICG, HD and CR, and earlier on the Asia Foundation, which then moved off to be part of the monitoring process, have worked really closely together, and I'd be interested in your reflections on how you've made that work, because it's not always the case that NGOs collaborate well, and I think this has been an exemplary case in how our two organisations have complemented each other and have worked in tandem.

IJ: Well, maybe I'll go first. But for I have to say, I've enjoyed working with CR as closely as we have been working, quite tremendously. But I think to answer your question is just really a change in mindset. You know, it's just having that openness to collaborate and share information, because, like you said, we could sometimes tend to be very competitive and work in silos and all that, but I think what helped in the Philippines context, at least in the Bangsamoro, is that we are in an implementation phase, and that also kind of, for me, you know, emphasises that this is the time to optimise. This is time to really collaborate and maximise our impact and we can't keep on doing things separately, you now and having results here and results there and no one is really kind of putting it all together in one kind of pot where you can see the collective impact that you have. It's already, as you said, it's 11 years since the signing of the peace agreement. While there's been tremendous progress, there's also, you know, a lot of still unfulfilled promises. And if we… I feel like, if we continue, at least in this context, to work, you know, very independently of each other and without really kind of thinking about who's doing what, and has this been done, and maybe, you know, we can build on each other's successes and learn from each other's failures as well. I don't think we're gonna be seeing the conclusion to this process anytime soon.

JC: Anything to add to that Ciaran?

CT: And, yeah, I mean, is it not doing what we preach? We talk about trust and relationships. We love to preach about these things. Why not do it ourselves? So I think what's worked with this team is that there is a recognition that, you know, we work on other things. You know, we work in the Bangsamoro, we have separate projects. But on this project, it's about, well, it's, it's continuously meeting. I mean, we could get into the technicalities of it, but every week we meet, we make sure we meet, we share all information. We have a group chat.

IJ: Group chat!

CT: We keep, you know, we're I mean, there's things that you know, Exan, the other member of the CR team, will share with the ICG team, before we share with me, you know, and that's the way we work it, you know? It's sort of we, yeah, it's about, and I

think communication is crucial, and as I say, a recognition that we're not the same organisation, but we can do this together, as long as we focus on communication and ensuring there's trust.

JC: I think you've just shared one of the lessons is how the communication and trust in a relationship has enabled greater collaboration. Are there any other key lessons that you'd like to share from this experience? Maybe one or two key lessons from looking back over the 15 years of the dialogue supporting the achievement of the agreement and then the implementation of the agreement.

CT: It's a lesson, but it's more, it's, I suppose it's building on, or compounding lessons from elsewhere as well, or reaffirming lessons, is that people will find commonalities. So it's this, the power of dialogue, getting people together. You know, they will have, you know they can build from fractious moments, right? You know, people will find commonalities. They will find a means to have a level of trust. When I say a level, it can be a low level of trust or a working relationship. But people do seek it out. And I think that's, that's great to have that affirmed every time you enter a process, because sometimes you feel like this is impossible, but get people in a room, under the right atmosphere, and the, you know, obviously the right facilitation, people will find commonalities.

IJ: Maybe, just to add to that, I think one is self-awareness. You know, organisationally, we have to be aware of what we can offer and what we cannot offer, and maybe what other people are better at. Sometimes it's not about doing the same thing, that other people are already doing, but tapping other talent, other resources to produce a certain result. And maybe in addition to that, if you know what has made this work, I think we have gotten along very, very well. And I think a lot of that is just being, you know, human, not forgetting that we're all … sure we could work for different organisations, sometimes competing organisations, but like, if you join our meetings the first 10 minutes is just talking about our families or something like that, or how much sleep we have not had… things like that. So that … sharing that experience, because, I think, yeah, I mean, when I think about it, because we have a very unique or, you know, it's, it's a niche, you know, we call our organisations. I think niche organisations and not a lot of other, I think, NGOs have the same experiences and challenges that we have; the constant traveling, maybe that's common, but, you know, just being on call, you know, for the parties, and being so subject, just subject to their availability, which changes by the hour sometimes. So we share a lot of common experiences, I think in the work that we do, and that the humanity of that, that common experience, I think, is something that

we have managed to use to our advantage to really generate a very good working relationship.

JC: So you spoke about the challenges, and there are many, and this is a very turbulent time in the world, and peacemaking doesn't always get a good press. What gives you hope in sustaining this work, in sustaining dialogue?

IJ: Maybe for me, in this particular process, because the parties haven't given up. There's a lot of challenges, and I think there's also still a lot of, you know, misunderstanding. There are certainly plenty of gaps in the process and still plenty of disagreement, but they haven't given up. So as long as they haven't given up, why should we? I think we should be the last people to give up on them.

CT: So yeah, almost along the same lines. These processes, if your peace processes as a whole – so, negotiation, implementation, etc, etc, etc. truth and reconciliation. These are long term processes. Violence in society has deep ruptures cause deep sorrows in society, and these things take a long time to change, you know, from politics to community. When you reach a stalemate or you reach a problem, you just got to look at it in the bigger perspective. You know, these processes get there, and we're now living through a moment that's difficult, the moment next year will be better, you know. And I think as long as we look at these processes as almost intergenerational, they're decades-long processes, the same way as Conciliation Resources is decades long, it's representative, and we're still working on the same processes, is a good example of how these processes continue, and the need to continue. So yeah, hope from the long-term nature of the work we do.

JC: Ciaran, Iona, thanks ever so much. It's been a pleasure to share your experience and hear your stories.

IJ: Thank you it’s been a pleasure

CT: Thank you.

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