



## **Strategic Plan 2009-2011**

Preparing the Ground for Peace

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Students debating at CR's Security Analysis School, Sierra Leone. © Rosalind Hanson-Alp/ Conciliation Resources

## Global context

We live in a world of conflicts, heavily armed and unequally violent. Where you are born strongly influences your opportunities and vulnerabilities.

There are at least 60 ongoing conflicts globally with 28 suffering an intensity of violence of 100 or more battle-related deaths. In Iraq there have been an estimated one million civilian casualties since 2003. More staggering, there have been an estimated 5.4 million deaths in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1998. Battle-related deaths, however, are only one measure of the many costs of conflict. Women have suffered disproportionately the violence of conflict in recent decades; it is estimated that at least half of women in Sierra Leone endured some form of sexual violence during the 10-year period of civil conflict there. The poorest of the world also pay the highest price with the greatest incidence of armed conflict located in the poorest countries in the world. Moreover, in 2007, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated there to be 11.4 million refugees worldwide and another 26 million people displaced from their homes as a result of armed conflict.

The nature of international conflict has also changed dramatically over the last century. Currently, conflicts are primarily waged within rather than between states, with governments and armed factions' disputes fuelled by geo-political interests and aggravated by economic disparities and identity-related concerns. All too often, local, national

and international governance systems are failing to offer effective responses for prevention and resolution. The human and institutional resources as well as the necessary political commitment to prevent, resolve and transform conflicts are in short supply in stark contrast to government investments in military security.

The good news is that the number of armed conflicts is reportedly in decline, and while civilian deaths continue to be proportionally higher than combatant deaths in most contemporary conflicts, total war deaths are lower than ever before. The number of attacks that tend to be defined as 'international terrorism' have also decreased. No one can clearly show the trail of attribution for these trends – but positive factors include the end of the Cold War and a mounting wave of conflict response work by governments, the United Nations, regional organizations and of course civil society including international NGOs. Thus, the original vision for Conciliation Resources, as contributing to a field of competent local and international non-governmental organizations and activists sometimes working alongside officials for the nonviolent transformation of armed conflict, is starting to be realized, but the work ahead is still vast and daunting.

There are many global conflict issues competing for the attention of politicians, other policymakers and the concerned public: poverty and its many manifestations, human rights, control of limited natural resources and the related challenges of climate change, HIV/Aids, the international drugs trade and the threat of nuclear proliferation and war.



CR's strategic planning workshop in London, July 2008.

## Key challenges for Conciliation Resources

Conciliation Resources (CR) believes that sustainable peace results from locally owned solutions to violent conflict, complemented by strategic international support.

International responses to armed conflict tend to be crisis-driven, elite-focused and short-term. The dominant peacemaking paradigm gives scant attention to the concerns of communities caught up in violence. Additionally, the asymmetrical nature of many armed conflicts presents a challenge to the state-based international system to find appropriate forms of engagement with non-state actors.

Localized and regional conflict dynamics are rarely comprehensively addressed, and violence is sometimes "contained" without dealing with conflict causes. Peace agreements, where reached, are also notoriously vulnerable. The challenges of implementing agreements and building sustainable peace after the guns fall silent continues for many years after the international spotlight has moved on. And while local people are often best placed to respond to the specific dynamics of conflict in their societies, they are frequently the worst equipped, and operate in extremely difficult circumstances.

CR has chosen to respond to these challenges in three ways:

- Supporting local civic partners in a limited number of specific conflict contexts to play effective roles in peacebuilding and peacemaking initiatives.
- Improving global peacebuilding practice by all actors involved in responding to conflict.
- Influencing policymakers to adopt more effective conflict policies and increase their support for peacemaking and peacebuilding.

A combination of our competencies, strategic decisions and a certain amount of opportunism and serendipity has led us to work in specific conflict-affected regions. We currently have long-term programmes in Sierra Leone and the Mano River sub-region of West Africa, Uganda and Sudan and the South Caucasus. CR is also engaged in more modest or emerging projects in Fiji, the Philippines, Colombia and in India and Pakistan on the disputed territories of Kashmir.

We publish *Accord: an international review of peace initiatives* to create an accessible inventory of peacemaking experience. We engage in a variety of initiatives to bring these resources to the attention of people involved in peace processes, enabling learning from past and comparable experience.

Our efforts to influence policy and practice have focused on working with our donor governments, particularly the UK, as well as with intergovernmental bodies and other key state and non-state actors.

# About Conciliation Resources as an organization

Conciliation Resources (CR) is an international, non-profit, and non-governmental organization dedicated to delivering our mission and furthering our principles.

We were founded in 1995 and are registered in the UK as a charity (no. 1055436) and have our headquarters in London. Our staff come from all across the world, with deep experience in conflict transformation, specific regional expertise and organizational management skills. CR is supervised by a governing Board of voluntary charity trustees experienced in conflict transformation who appoint the Executive Director, agree overall direction and hold the organization to account.

We are funded through grants from governments, independent trusts and foundations.

## Our vision

CR's vision is one where people affected by conflict and their leaders are able to work effectively with international support to prevent violence, to resolve their armed conflicts and to build more peaceful societies. We believe conflicts can be transformed peacefully and that peacemaking and peacebuilding are essential in helping to lay foundations for more just and inclusive societies.

## Our Mission

Conciliation Resources works to prevent violence, promote justice and transform conflict into opportunities for development.

## Our approach

We work towards our mission by:

- **Supporting people** – working at local, national and international levels to develop effective solutions to social, economic and political problems related to violent conflicts.
- **Providing opportunities for dialogue** and improved relationships within communities and across conflict divides at all social and political levels.
- **Influencing governments** and other decision makers to employ conflict transformation policies that promote alternatives to violence.
- **Improving peacemaking** practice and policies by promoting learning from peace processes around the world.
- **Challenging stereotypes** and increasing public awareness of human rights, conflict and peace issues in divided societies.

CR's three-pronged approach to peacebuilding is what makes us distinctive: we do practical work with an emphasis on the primacy of local ownership; we promote new thinking on conflict transformation; and we engage in dialogue and advocacy to influence better local, regional and international policy responses to conflict.



Launch of the Accord issue on "Incentives, Sanctions and Conditionality in Peacemaking" in London.





*CR staff visiting partners, Totto Chan, in Southern Sudan.*

## The shared understanding that guides our work

### 1. People-centred peacebuilding

- People working together can find their own solutions to the conflicts affecting or threatening them – making themselves less vulnerable to violence - sometimes with external support and sometimes without.
- We work both with elements of society who are 'on message' as well as with potential 'spoilers', and other stakeholders who may or may not share our aspirations for change.
- Providing opportunities for inclusive and constructive dialogue processes can help those in conflict reach and sustain settlements.

### 2. Multi-level and international engagement

- Conflict transformation initiatives need to take account of the reality that both state authorities and non-state armed groups are often agents of armed violence and human rights violations, and fail to protect civilians in conducting wars.
- Because conflict transformation involves work across a range of issues (such as security, governance or challenging hostile stereotypes) and in a range of social and economic spheres, (such as rights and reconciliation) – it is essential that civil society plays active roles, and that other actors, including politicians and officials, are also involved.
- National, regional and international interests and structures affect the dynamics of locally experienced conflict; response strategies need to take account of these dimensions.

### 3. Challenging stereotypes and building understanding

- Confronting prejudice, challenging stereotypes and promoting a deeper understanding of 'the other' is essential to promoting reconciliation.
- Conflict is not gender neutral and our responses must be attuned to the roles women are playing, both in conflict and in its transformation.

### 4. Comparative learning

- While every conflict is unique, opportunities to reflect on comparative experiences can inspire and enable people to find new ways to influence change.
- Policies that promote peace can benefit from evidence and experience of how challenges have been addressed elsewhere.
- As institutional, social and economic changes occur over different time-spans and often over the long-term, efforts to influence them must respond to both immediate and long-term challenges.

### 5. Respect for human rights

- Rights (human rights and locally defined civil liberties) and their violation lie at the heart of conflict. Unmet social, political and economic needs may provoke popular unrest and opposition to governments, ultimately making people more vulnerable to internal and external threats. Developing processes and institutions that protect and promote rights and peoples' 'human security' are an integral part of conflict transformation.

# Making strategic choices for the next three years (2009-2011)

CR has agreed to set the following objectives for the next three years:

**(a) We will deepen and widen our impact in our current and new geographic regions**

We will aim to extend the influence and impact of our work in our current conflict regions and ensure that our programme responses are becoming more nuanced. We will also work in new geographic contexts.

**(b) We will have greater influence on national and international policymakers to adopt effective strategies that support peace processes**

We will better integrate the thematic and geographic strands of our policy work and engage new audiences of political decision-makers. Our programmes will develop an explicit advocacy voice in their regional contexts.

**(c) We will extend good practice and opportunities for learning from comparative peacebuilding experience**

We will pursue this objective through practical programme activities and we will better define and develop our methodologies for promoting learning from comparative experience. Our own organizational cross-fertilization will be improved.

**(d) We will better understand and demonstrate our impact**

We will develop an informed approach to monitoring and evaluation that will inform our programme activities. This will be tested and applied to all of our future monitoring and evaluation processes.

**(e) We will strengthen our organizational capacities to deliver on our mission**

We will improve our standards of personnel, programme and financial management, and invest in further improving our IT infrastructure and systems. We also aim to strengthen our leadership and decision-making processes and secure a more diverse circle of funding partners.

## The strategic planning process

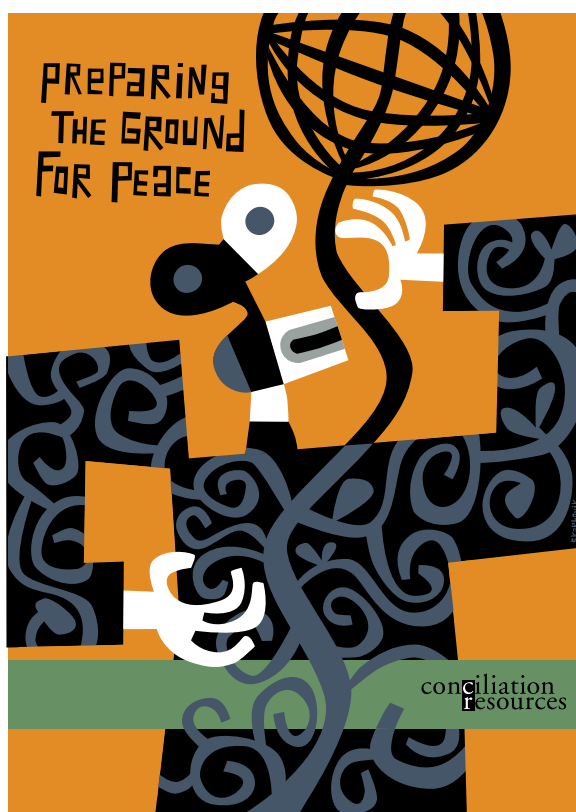
We would like to thank all of CR's staff, Board members, Programme Associates and programme and donor partners who have helped with our strategic planning process. This built on a consultation process, a number of in-house workshops and draft materials and brought these together into a "précis" reader. Everyone then responded to a set of strategic questions, and their answers were compiled in a rich, 34-page feedback document. With the help of John Tierney, our facilitator, all of CR's UK staff met for two days in July in a sunny eco-centre in Lambeth and worked out the substance of this plan. CR's Board approved the current draft in December 2008.

## Purpose of this plan

The purpose of this plan is to set out our specific organizational ambitions and direction for the next three years. It is our intention to remain both transparent and accountable, especially with our programme and donor partners. The process of creating this plan will enable greater organizational coherence and help us to develop collectively as an INGO. We also intend to use this as a tool for measuring and reporting – particularly between the organization and the Board. We have set out three external objectives for the organization and two that we hope will enable the organization to achieve them.

## Resourcing implications

We envisage the organization growing by 20 percent in terms of expenditure year-on-year during the course of this plan. We plan to secure the necessary funding from at least two new institutional donors over the three years and we aim to find new non-institutional donors plus more programme funding. Staffing levels will rise from our current level of 20 staff in the UK by an average of two staff per annum over the next three years to an estimated 26 staff. We aim to have an annual budget of around £4 million by 2012.



Cover illustration for CR Annual Review 2007 by Lasse Skarbovik/Stockholm Illustration.



*Staff at CR's office in Freetown, Sierra Leone.*

## Putting the strategy into practice

Implementation of this plan is part of CR's annual planning and budgeting cycle. Each progress marker is followed by the implementation plan in which it is included and the year in which it will be achieved. By the end of each calendar year we will have in place programme plans and budgets as well as revised communications and fundraising strategies. We will do further work to develop the mechanism for monitoring and reporting against this new framework.

## Performance management implications

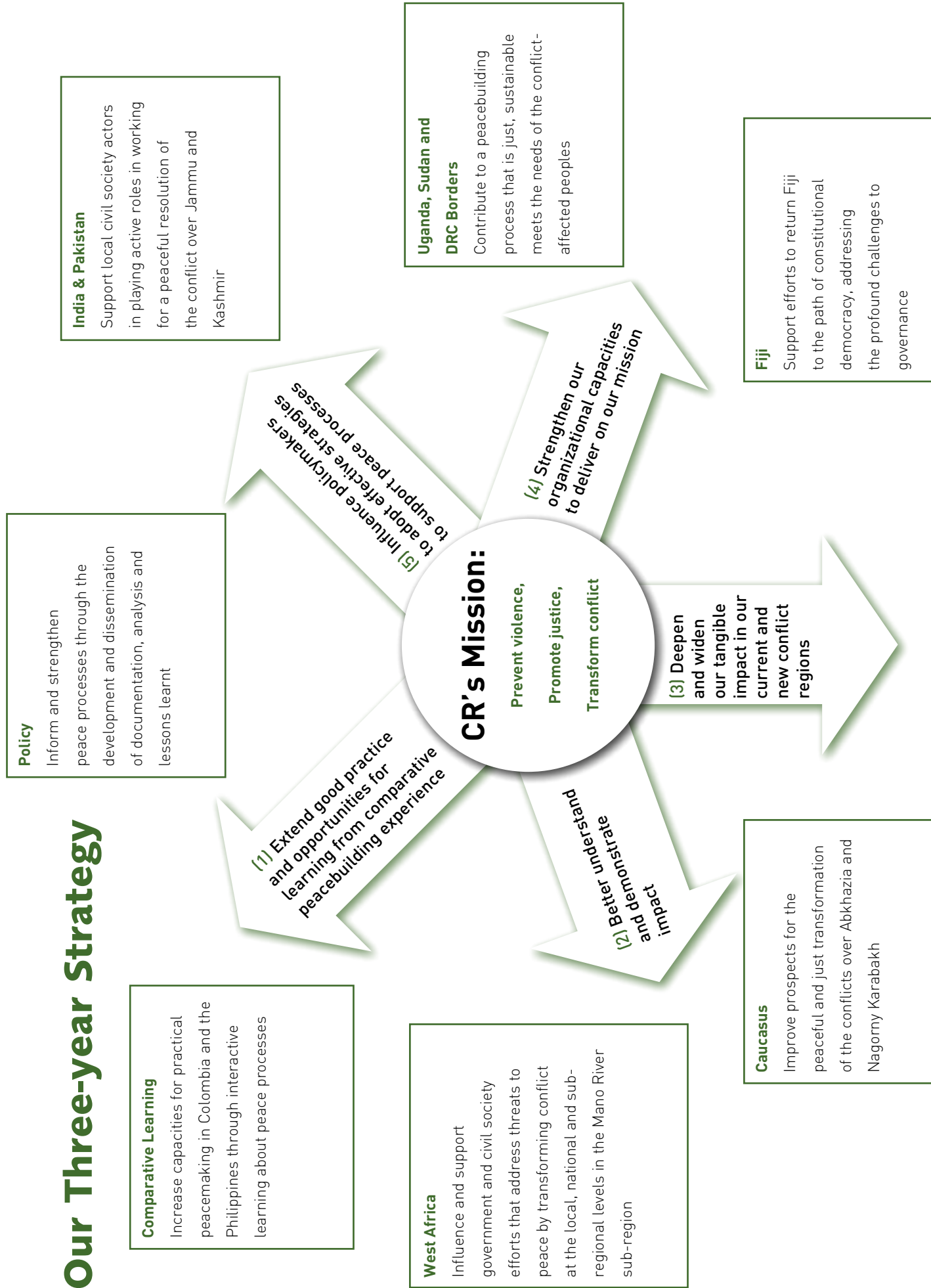
Executive and programme reports will be amended in line with this new framework and a six-monthly reporting framework and process will be developed with the Board to review progress.

## Structure of the objectives diagram

The diagram opposite illustrates our five strategic objectives in relation to our specific programme goals. A more detailed framework, with our planned outcomes and progress markers, has also been developed for internal use and is available on request.



# Our Three-year Strategy



Conciliation Resources is an independent charity with over a decade of experience working internationally to prevent and resolve violent conflict, promote justice and build lasting peace. Our practical work is guided by the needs of people living in countries affected or threatened by war. We currently work in the Caucasus, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Uganda and Sudan, and are involved in projects in Colombia, Fiji and the Philippines. We also publish *Accord: an international review of peace initiatives*.

# conciliation resources

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