

CITIZEN PEACEMAKING IN CYPRUS

The story of
co-operation
and trust across
the Green Line



UN
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and trust across the
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If you want to make peace with your enemy,
you have to work with your enemy.
Then he becomes your partner.

*Nelson Mandela,
Former President of South Africa*

We cannot change the past, but we can change
our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt and plant
forgiveness. Tear out arrogance and seed humility.
Exchange love for hate - thereby, making the
present comfortable and the future promising.

*Maya Angelou,
African-American Poet and Civil Rights Leader*

True peace can rarely be imposed from the
outside; it must be born within and between
communities through meetings and dialogue
and then carried outward.

*Jean Vanier,
Philosopher and Writer*

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Extract from UN Security Council Resolution 2114

(30 July 2013)

Agreeing that active participation of civil society groups, including women's groups, is essential to the political process and can contribute to making any future settlement sustainable, *recalling* that women play an important role in peace processes, *welcoming* all efforts to promote bicomunal contacts and events including, inter alia, on the part of all United Nations bodies on the island, and *urging* the two sides to promote the active engagement of civil society and the encouragement of co-operation between economic and commercial bodies and to remove all obstacles to such contacts.

Chapter 1

AN INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

“A SOCIETY BASED ON GOVERNMENT BY DISCUSSION REQUIRES A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY THAT PLAYS AN ACTIVE ROLE IN POLITICAL DEBATE.”

Civil paths to peace: A report of the Commonwealth Commission on respect and understanding¹

The world is changing. Today citizen-led organizations play a leadership role in all walks of life; social, political and economic. Many of these organizations work as legitimate and often much needed partners to government, the private sector and international organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union. The key role played by civil society in fostering social change and economic development has expanded in the 21st century as governments seek partners to manage the complex challenges of globalization. At the same time the power of modern global communications has emboldened civil society and encouraged citizen participation and opened up an international public space for debate and action. These same forces have also informed and influenced public opinion on an unprecedented global scale, creating a cosmopolitan set of values and expectations on the part of the general public that transcend national boundaries and are now shaping the political agenda.

As long ago as 1969 the Republic of Cyprus ratified the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)², a groundbreaking document which established the right of citizens to influence public affairs wherein “every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without (...) unreasonable restrictions: to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives”. Nearly forty years later the concept of citizen-led democracy has radically changed, so much so that in 2004 the [Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations - Civil Society Relations \(The Cardoso Panel\)](#)³ argued that civil society is as much part of today’s global governance as governments. In the past few years the international community has sought to further consolidate the role of civil society, efforts which are reflected in commitments

“I have been involved in peace-building work across the divide for decades. I have had the opportunity through this work and face-to-face contacts to enrich my knowledge about the Other’s reality, concerns and needs as well as form many friendships based on trust and desire to work together. I have also seen many changes in (mis)perceptions of my students when they met the other and the acknowledgment that the dominant national narrative gives limited and selective information compared to the richness of experiences and personal stories which citizens from both communities and others share.”

Maria Hadjipavlou,

Professor of Social and Political Science, University of Cyprus.

made by heads of state at the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in December 2011 in Busan (Korea), where it was recognized that civil society organisations play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights: in promoting a rights-based perspective; in shaping development policies and partnerships; and in overseeing their implementation. One year later the UN General Assembly adopted the recommendations contained in *The Future We Want*⁴, the document which arose out of the Rio+20 Conference held in June 2012. As a result UN member states endorsed the Rio+20 commitments which articulated an “inclusive approach to development, through which broad public participation and the voice for citizens can be secured in the processes that underpin the decisions that affect the lives of people, with special emphasis on women, youth and marginalised groups in society”.

Since the events of the “Arab Spring” and other popular action movements worldwide, the need for constructive citizen action to help manage societal change has become even more starkly evident worldwide. In response to a series of global crises, popular demand for political and developmental solutions rooted in economic and political inclusion has increased. Transitions in the Arab states in particular are reminders both of the power of civic participation and the need for continued support to governments and societies if they are to sustain democratic transition. Concerns about the legitimacy and transparency of governments are on the rise worldwide, and have catalyzed a new “accountability agenda” involving mobilization of both public and private actors on the issue of accountable governance, gender-responsive institutions and the need for a new contract between state and society.

The ramifications of many of these socio-political changes have been noticed particularly keenly in Cyprus since they have taken place in neighbouring countries. Cyprus experienced its own economic turmoil in 2013 – the year the global financial crisis came to the Greek Cypriot community – the Turkish Cypriot community was already experiencing the consequences of decades of economic stagnation. These events and their fallout require a rethinking of policy and approach, both at national and international levels, while the need for Cyprus to engage fully in the regional and global policy debate on the management of democratic transition is self-evident. One of the many contributions the Cypriot people and their leaders can make to this debate

is their long and extensive experience of civil society activism in the management of the socio-political challenges of conflict. It is a story which demonstrates the power of multi-dimensional partnerships involving local civil society and the international donor community, and which manifests in itself the profound and inspirational values of citizen-led change.

UNDP AND USAID COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION IN CYPRUS

There was virtually no independent civil society movement in Cyprus prior to 1974 and it is perhaps not surprising that there was no citizen-led peace movement in the immediate aftermath of the events of that year. There were certainly very few bi-communal meetings between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots for the next 15 years. Indeed the de facto partition of the island meant that civil society sectors on either side of the divide developed independently from each other, and it was not until the early 1990s that individual Cypriot civil society activists and academics began to find creative ways to start a dialogue on how they could support a solution to the Cyprus question. At the time many felt they were operating in an unfavourable environment, and until 2003 contacts between civil society organisations (CSOs) across the buffer zone were almost impossible, save by some pioneers who found ways to meet by attending workshops abroad, or, very occasionally, in the buffer zone itself.

“In the early days you needed to be brave to get involved as anyone from the other community was considered the enemy. There was no easy way of meeting and the authorities had to grant us permission to enter the UN buffer zone.”

Michalis Avraam, Cypriot civil society pioneer.

“It was very exciting to be part of a meaningful action that had to do with the future of Cyprus. However external forces were continuously discrediting our work.”

Bulent Kanol, Cypriot civil society pioneer.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) began providing support for small-scale bi-communal efforts in the 1970s. The low-profile endorsement of bi-communal contact changed in 1998 when the two organisations agreed to establish the Bi-communal Development Programme (BDP). The BDP was the first concerted effort by the international community to solicit and fund civil society initiatives that brought Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots together to work on issues of common concern. Although the organizations working on activities focused on ‘neutral’ issues such as health care and the environment, cross-community civil society work was unheard of and the motivations of those participating in the initiatives were regularly questioned. In spite of this the BDP had a huge impact on changing the practicalities of bi-communal work, because it was the only mechanism available for supporting structured bi-communal interaction, and by 2004 70% of BDP projects had succeeded in achieving some form of face-to-face contact (either on the island or off-island) between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Although the BDP was successful in breaking many of the taboos associated with bi-communal contact, it could have been bolder in its attempts to foster an inter-communal civil society sector, to spark policy dialogue and support advocacy. The [2005 CIVICUS study for Cyprus](#)⁵ reiterated the weakness of civil society in both communities and the inability of CSOs to have an impact either on policy or prevailing social norms.

It was against this background that UNDP and USAID launched the [Action for Cooperation and Trust programme](#)⁶ (ACT) in 2005. The programme led the way in the advancement of inter-communal relations in a less than favourable climate. Its work was facilitated however by the relaxation of crossing restrictions between north and south by the Turkish Cypriot authorities in 2003. For the first time face-to-face contact between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots became possible – enabling the scope of ACT’s work to be far more extensive. Despite challenges and the continued division of

the island, the ACT programme helped establish a solid foundation for communication, co-operation and reconciliation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Over eight years, dedicated individuals and organizations from across the divide succeeded in bringing about dramatic changes in societal attitudes towards co-operation between the two communities. Working against a backdrop of fear, mistrust and prejudice the Cypriots who were part of the ACT programme chose to listen and learn, discuss and debate and, ultimately, to negotiate and compromise.

From the start USAID and UNDP utilized consultative processes to ensure that stakeholder aspirations and concerns were understood, beneficiary needs addressed and feedback shared. Public consultations were held at the Ledra Palace Hotel to discuss the state of trust between the two communities based on poll results and surveys. This public outreach exercise helped the ACT programme to align its priorities in accordance with political developments and assess the strategic needs of the emerging inter-communal civil society sector. The ACT programme helped to demonstrate the value of co-operation by exploiting opportunities to work on areas of common interest and mutual benefit such as economic development, cultural heritage and youth. Between 2005 and 2008, the programme funded 120 projects, involving 70,000 Cypriots in bi-communal activities, while developing the skills and knowledge of 370 CSOs. While each project had its own focus and expertise all were geared towards the programme's overall peace-building goal. In 2009 the ACT programme responded to the resumption of negotiations between the island's leaders by working with key civil society partners to design projects which would bring Cypriots closer to the process of making peace.

**BRINGING CIVIL SOCIETY
PEACE-BUILDING APPROACHES
TO THE WIDER UN**

The UN presence in Cyprus is not formally an integrated mission, but in practice it operates like one. Each of the major UN organisations – the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the Office of the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General (OSASG) otherwise known as the UN Good Offices

Mission, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) plays a role that reflects its global remit. While UNFICYP focuses on monitoring the ceasefire between the two sides and maintaining the security of the buffer zone, the Good Offices Mission is charged with facilitating the official peace process and UNDP supports the wider peace-building and reconciliation efforts on the island.

Traditionally UNDP and UNFICYP worked closely in Cyprus, even when there was no ongoing peace process. From its inception ACT helped its partners to access facilities and places to meet in the UN buffer zone, which is under the jurisdiction of the UN blue berets. This involved obtaining permission to hold bi-communal events at the island's key crossing points, along with providing logistical support to ensure access across the Green Line when necessary. In 2007 UNFICYP facilitated access to the grounds of the Ledra Palace Hotel (home to the British UN contingent which monitors the ceasefire line in Nicosia) to allow 500 UNDP invited guests to attend a screening of films made by young people about various social issues. Earlier that year UNFICYP helped UNDP and its partners organize the island's first civil society fair which attracted over 2,000 participants to the buffer zone.

Over the years, successive Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) have attached great importance to the work of the ACT programme in the context of the UN's overall mission to build trust between the two communities, repeatedly emphasising the role of civil society. This was reflected in the regular reports made by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the UN's work in Cyprus. The reports commended the work of Cypriot civil society and highlighted the contribution made by UN-supported bi-communal activities and projects. Some of these reports also reflected the need for civil society to have a greater role in the peace process, and the Secretary-General often appealed directly to the leaders of each community to create the necessary conditions for this to happen. In June 2012 the Secretary-General reiterated the value of civil society by stating: "I furthermore encourage political leaders to fully embrace the concept and practice of a more inclusive dialogue which ensures that civil society actors can have a more meaningful role in the [peace process](#)⁷⁹".

On 8th July 2006 the Cypriot leaders, in a meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari, agreed to measures to restart the peace talks which had ended with the rejection of the “Annan Plan” in 2004. As part of this process it was agreed to establish bi-communal technical committees which would seek consensus on specific areas amongst Cypriot specialists in a particular field. The agreement was implemented in 2008, and the technical committees were established in April of that year, followed by the re-establishment of the UN Good Offices Mission and the resumption of direct talks between the leaders. With a strong track record of bi-communal activities and the experience of assisting technical committees during the previous peace negotiations, UNDP was well placed to better connect the civil society priorities of the ACT programme with the formal peace process now underway. UNDP-ACT played a pivotal role in the development and facilitation of the technical committees. Significantly, participants in some of the committees included civil society leaders and technical experts who had worked on earlier bi-communal projects supported by UNDP and USAID; most notably those dealing with the environment, cultural heritage and economics.

In parallel, CSOs were able to implement some of the officially-sanctioned confidence-building measures or CBMs which had emerged through the work of the technical committees with funding and support from the ACT programme. UNDP-ACT’s technical and financial support to the committees allowed for eight leader-approved CBMs to be implemented. In addition ACT supported other CBMs outside of the peace process which proved important in paving the way for increased contact between the communities. One significant example of this type of CBM saw the pooling of USAID and EU funding to open a [new crossing point in 2010⁸](#), which linked two relatively isolated communities that had not had direct contact with each other since 1974.

Confidence-Building Measures supported by the ACT Programme, 2009-2013

Nature of CBM	Technical Committee	Result
Campaign on co-operation for the prevention of wildfires within the buffer zone.	Environment	Raised awareness of the dangers of wildfires in the buffer zone and built the capacity of both communities in a potential fire area near the zone to prevent them.
Asthma awareness initiative.	Health	Increased the knowledge of doctors from both communities specializing in asthma.
Launch of the Joint Communications Room (JCR).	Crime	Improved the sharing of information on criminal matters between the two communities.
Seminars on children at risk and on prevention of drug abuse.	Crime	Allowed for the sharing of information on drug abuse between the two communities.
Campaign on raising awareness of water saving measures.	Environment	Raised awareness of water conservation needs in Cyprus.
World AIDS Day event, Cyprus Against AIDS.	Health	Raised awareness of HIV/AIDS and increased the knowledge of doctors from the two communities working on the issue.
World Diabetes Day event.	Health	Helped doctors from the two communities to exchange information on diabetes.
Topographical study for the Arnavut Mosque and the Church of Archangelos Michael.	Cultural Heritage	Provided the foundation for further restoration work on the two sites.

Technical Committee CBMs supported by UNDP-ACT and other CBMs

Nature of CBM	Implementing Agency	Result
Opening of new crossing point.	UNDP- Partnership for the Future (PFF)	Linked two communities that had not had direct contact since 1974 and created additional opportunities for contact between them.
Fiscal federalism conference.	Management Centre	Provided a forum, outside of the official negotiations, for key players in the negotiations to explore how fiscal issues would be addressed in a federation.
Two conferences on property.	PRIO Cyprus	Provided a “safe space” outside the official negotiations for discussions on the property issue and the introduction of new ideas to key actors, including members of the negotiating teams.
SCR 1325 Conference.	PRIO Cyprus Gender Advisory Team (GAT)	Raised awareness on the lack of inclusion of Security Council Resolution 1325⁹ on women, peace and security in the negotiations.

Chapter 2

CYPRIOTS PROVE THAT CO-OPERATION AND COEXISTENCE ARE POSSIBLE

**“WE MAY HAVE ALL COME ON
DIFFERENT SHIPS, BUT WE’RE
IN THE SAME BOAT NOW.”**

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

What will be the lasting impact of the ACT programme on the search for peace in Cyprus? Programmes supporting peace are all too often judged by movement, or lack of movement, in the political process; and after eight years of supporting projects promoting trust between the two communities, the island still remains divided. Years of work have shown, however, that there is no symbiotic relationship between the politics of the conflict and the social processes which, given the opportunity, may provide the impetus to island-wide reconciliation. Transforming the landscape of reconciliation in Cyprus has less to do with the leaders’ positions at the negotiating table, and more to do with assisting the two communities in navigating different paths which lead to mutual understanding, respect and the tangible benefits of co-operation. The ACT programme provided opportunities for Cypriots to design roadmaps for change which they were then able to share with their leaders and with the public at large.

The conclusion drawn from this work is that Cypriots themselves have demonstrated that partnership and co-operation are not only possible, but desirable.

**CO-OPERATION MAKES
GOOD BUSINESS SENSE**

In one of the most significant areas of co-operation the ACT programme supported the efforts of business leaders from across the island in encouraging initiatives which would revitalise economic relations between the two communities. The Cyprus Chamber of

Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce recognised early on the value of inter-communal co-operation. Following the introduction of the EU's *Green Line Trade Regulation in 2004*¹⁰, business leaders from these organizations chose to work with the ACT programme to translate the regulation into tangible commercial benefits. The *Economic Interdependence*¹¹ project, which the two chambers managed, put in place mechanisms designed to close the gap between businesses in each community. These included the first island-wide business directory and an associated mobile phone application allowing businesses to identify potential industry partners in the other community. The two chambers also produced research which clearly demonstrated the financial benefits of a settlement, and commissioned the production of innovative films to communicate their findings to a wider audience.

“Why should we take the given realities
for granted? It’s not a far-fetched situation;
it’s more of a Back to the Future situation”

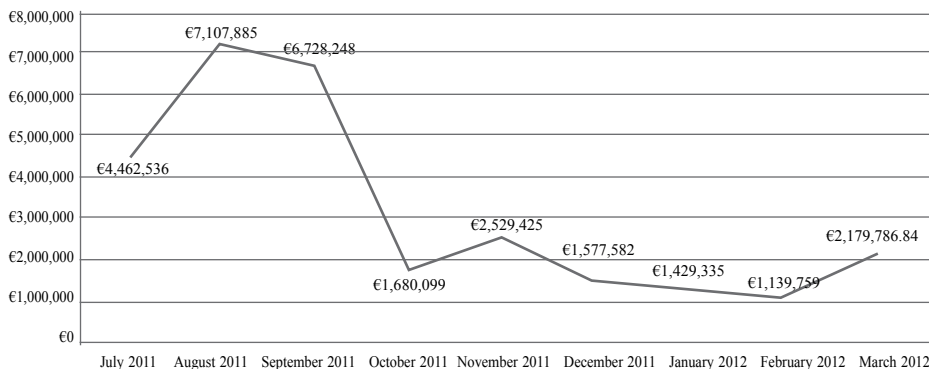
*Manthos Mavrommatis: President of The Cyprus Chamber
of Commerce and Industry (in reference to “The Nine O’Clock
News in the Year 2030” film)*

The *Economic Interdependence* project helped to transform the relationship between the chambers, instituting organizational and attitudinal changes which were grounded in a genuine realization that business-to-business co-operation was a pragmatic form of trust-building with potential for mutual economic benefit. It was this professional relationship that paved the way for one of the most significant episodes in Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot co-operation of recent years. In July 2011 the island experienced a crisis following the destruction of the main electricity generating plant in the Greek Cypriot community. Using the co-operative mechanisms established during the course of the project, the two chambers of commerce negotiated an agreement whereby electricity from the Turkish Cypriot community was transferred to the Greek Cypriot community. This arrangement included a system for channelling funds and for the physical reconnection of the island-wide electricity grid.

On 17th July 2013, in what was described as the worst ever environmental disaster to befall the Turkish Cypriot community, approximately 100 tonnes of oil spilled into the sea in an ecologically sensitive region. The catastrophe was mitigated as a result of the tight co-operation built across the divide through the “Economic Interdependence” project. The same day, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, together with the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, building on their strong relationship, brokered an agreement enabling the transfer of oil-absorbent booms from the Greek Cypriot Community to the site of the disaster. According to Leonidas Paschalides from the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, “The two Chambers have demonstrated once again the crucial role they play in handling crisis situations across the divide through bi-communal co-operation for the benefit of all Cypriots. The focal points established by the UNDP/USAID-funded Interdependence project have proved to be instrumental in this direction.”

Trade in Electricity across the divide

Source: EDGE/USAID September 2012 Green Line trade analysis¹²



This episode showed how the private sector could be at the forefront of reconciliation efforts, irrespective of the state of the formal peace process. Over two years (2010-2011) the two chambers of commerce undertook a joint research exercise to forecast the condition of the Cypriot economy under two scenarios: an immediate settlement, or a delayed settlement. Entitled *Assessment of current economic interdependence between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities and recommendations for reinforced economic convergence*¹³, the report revealed that the level of economic exchange across the divide was far more financially significant than had been previously indicated by official Green Line trade statistics.

“It is enormously important for the business community to do what it can to drive this process and remind people of the benefits of a solution.”

Alexander Downer, Special Advisor of the Secretary General

It also concluded that a Cyprus settlement would remove many of the existing constraints to economic development, allowing Cyprus to better weather the global economic crisis. One major recommendation was that even in the absence of a formal

settlement trade between the two communities should be actively encouraged through the opening of more crossing points, further harmonisation of the Turkish Cypriot community with the EU *acquis communautaire*, the co-operation of professional associations and the implementation of large-scale confidence-building measures proposed by the technical committees. The findings of the report were dramatised in a film which explored the impact which a settlement would have on the island's economy. Screenings of the film, *The Nine O'Clock News in the Year 2030*¹⁴, prompted lively public discussions about the incentives for resolving the Cyprus question.

“As someone who has lost faith in the peace process,
this film has moved me for the first time in many years.”

Comment on a social media site.

PRESERVING A SHARED NATURAL HERITAGE

Environmental co-operation has long been seen by the UN as having the potential to make a major contribution to the advancement of reconciliation. The UN-wide partnership for Environment and Security (ENVSEC¹⁵) is based on the premise that “working together on solving environmental problems is often the simplest way to longer-term, more systematic and fundamental co-operation. Where conflicts occur, environmental co-operation may pave the way to **broader solutions**¹⁶.” One of the most visible examples of this phenomenon was the re-connection in the late 1970s of the sewerage system in Nicosia, which subsequently laid the foundation for the creation of the **Nicosia Master Plan**¹⁷, a bi-communal structure, which continues to strive to develop a common vision for the island's divided capital.

Many of the environmental experts who participated in this field of bi-communal activity concluded that the protection of Cyprus' fragile natural resources depends on a single coherent approach to the sustainable development of the island as a whole.

The ACT programme used this pragmatic assessment as the basis for a number of projects illustrating the mutual benefits of environmental co-operation. In 2006 a poster campaign at the Ledra Palace crossing in the buffer zone, entitled *Nature Without Boundaries*, highlighted potential areas of co-operation, such as the prevention of wildfires, biodiversity, and public health; all areas that some years later were addressed by the Environmental Technical Committee.

“It’s wrong to distinguish between north, south, east and west, because there are no such boundaries as far as nature is concerned.”

Tuğberk Emirzade, COAG member.

Some of the earliest inter-communal networks emerged through environmental concerns about the island’s farming practices. As Green Line trade became a consideration for business people, interest grew among Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in developing common environmental standards across the dairy and organic farming industries. The Madison Dairy Advisory Group (MADAG) and the Cyprus Organic Advisory Group (COAG¹⁸) were created in 2003 and 2005 respectively to provide vehicles for this form of co-operation at a time when the concept of corporate environmental responsibility in Cyprus was in its *infancy*¹⁹. The COAG and MADAG efforts paved the way for a range of environmental CBMs led by the private sector as Green Line trade developed, with a MADAG proposal for inter-communal co-operation *whey management*²⁰ finding a place in technical committee discussions on confidence-building during 2012-2013.

Civil society participation increased as a result of these efforts and took the form of hybrid projects in which technical leadership was provided by appropriately qualified experts, but where CSOs took charge of the ensuing public awareness campaigns. One project which illustrated this approach was entitled “*Innovative Biological Approaches for the Reforestation of Environmentally Stressed Sites*” (IBARESS)²¹, and involved reforestation experts, academics and environmental NGOs from both communities. In another case, teams of scientists collaborated on a bi-communal

research project to map the biological diversity of the de-militarised UN buffer zone²². The project, which received international media attention, uncovered the natural treasures of the buffer zone, which had remained hidden for over three decades, thus demonstrating the value of co-operation and how the natural heritage of the island could not be protected by one community alone. Emboldened by the success of this work, the scientists broadened their collaboration to include other initiatives, such as the first ever joint [survey of water birds](#)²³ across the island since the 1970s and a series of environmental awareness campaigns.

“...nature and the environment can bring the two communities together and contribute towards building co-operation and trust.”

Costas Kadis, member of the CESF and team leader of the Environmental Technical Committee.

Environmental co-operation under the ACT programme demonstrated the necessity of public participation in environmental decision-making; this is already a well-established principle in international law, as specified in the [Aarhus Convention](#)²⁴ and the [EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)²⁵. More importantly, it corresponds to a strong desire by Cypriots to be consulted in decision-making, especially as regards the peace process. In response to a 2008 survey²⁶ which showed that most Cypriots felt they were not being properly informed or consulted on important environmental issues, the ACT programme supported a range of public consultations in towns and villages across the island. This culminated in a study (conducted by the *Cyprus 2015* project), which led to the proposal of a set of CBMs to ensure the sustainable development of the island based on common concerns; these included the development of an eco-city and the installation of a photo-voltaic facility in the [buffer zone](#)²⁷ to generate solar power for island-wide use.

ACT's support eventually led to the formation of the Cyprus Environmental Stakeholder Forum (CESF²⁸) the first inter-communal environmental advocacy network bringing together academics, journalists, civil society leaders and others to demonstrate the importance of an inter-communal vision to protect the island's shared natural heritage. Launched in 2007, with the support of the Cyprus Technical Chamber (ETEK) and the Union of the Chambers of Cyprus Turkish Engineers and Architects (KTMMOB), the network became an advocacy success when its representatives participated in a major policy-making event. The CESF became the first bi-communal group to address the [Commission on Sustainable Development](#)²⁹ at the United Nations in New York in 2007. This opportunity for a direct input into the formulation of global environmental policy demonstrated the power of co-operation and the potential of civil society and academics to pioneer reconciliation efforts. One year later members of the CESF were appointed to the newly-formed Environmental Technical Committee.

KEEPERS OF EACH OTHER'S CULTURE

Cypriot culture is among the oldest in the world. The first signs of civilization date back to the 7th millennium BC. The island's rich cultural landscape includes hundreds of archaeological sites. The ACT programme invested in preserving this heritage through projects which were designed to ensure the integrity and protection of culturally important sites whilst serving to bring the two communities together within a framework of concrete collaboration. This combined approach constitutes a unique contribution to the preservation of the rich cultural heritage of all communities in Cyprus.

The shared objective of the cultural heritage restoration projects was to give all communities on the island a chance to take pride in the rich and diverse cultural heritage around them while gaining first-hand experience of how co-operation across communal lines can build interpersonal trust. The tangibility of restoration projects helped local communities to re-imagine the physical spaces around them and gave a meaningful context in which participants could pursue contact with members of the other communities. The departure points for these journeys were often professional – with architects, engineers and planners working together – but through the process of collaborating on the design and implementation of projects, individuals came to trust their counterparts in the other community, first as fellow professionals and later as friends. Close interaction with the other community often compelled people to revisit their own prejudices and in many cases individual attitudes were changed.

The ACT programme was courageous enough to experiment with cultural heritage initiatives and the most successful projects were those which embraced the participation of local people and allowed community-based organizations to take the lead in project design and implementation. The *Cultural Heritage Preservation Circle project*³⁰, implemented by the Kontea Heritage Foundation and the Union of the Chambers of Cyprus Turkish Engineers and Architects (KTMMOB), is one of the best examples of how this worked in practice. The lessons learned from participatory cultural heritage projects like this were used to develop other similar initiatives seeking to reconnect Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots around *shared spaces*³¹.

Cultural heritage sites restored through support from UNDP-ACT, 2006-2012

Name	Description
Grand Turkish Bath.	Built on the ruins of a Latin Church by the Ottomans between 1571 and 1590, this building has historically been of great symbolic importance in Cypriot cultural life.
Prophet Elias Church and Monastery.	The Holy Maronite/Catholic Church of Prophet Elias is both a major religious monument for many Cypriots and a spiritual and educational centre. Basic repairs and fencing of the site were carried out.
Ayios Neophytos Chapel.	Located in the buffer zone, this listed monument was restored to its former state by the Department of Antiquities. In co-ordination with local residents and the UN access was made possible for occasional visits and for maintenance.
Favierou Day Care Centre.	The restored Favierou Day Care Centre provides rehabilitation and educational facilities for people with a range of disabilities. Located near Paphos Gate, the centre serves both communities. Its operational philosophy is based on understanding, respect, friendship and mutual acceptance, making it unique in the field of specialised care.
Multi-purpose Community Centre.	This traditional mudbrick building was built in the early part of the last century. Since its restoration it has been used as a cultural and environmental centre.
Cultural Heritage Preservation Circle project.	The project included the construction of a peace park and the restoration of a village courtyard. The project continues to provide opportunities for many inter-communal gatherings and to inspire other villages.
Armenian Church and Monastery.	Located in the Arabahmet neighbourhood, this 14th century Gothic monument was restored to its former glory. The project involved the Armenian Cypriot community and experts from the local community in Cyprus and overseas.
Centre for Visual Arts and Research.	This old flour mill will be restored as an arts and research centre, and will provide a space for the <i>Sharing History, Art, Research and Education</i> project (SHARE).

Through the *Cultural Heritage Preservation Circle* project, UNDP-ACT supported the work of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots committed to restoring a set of cherished cultural heritage sites, some of which date back to the 12th century. The project adopted an inclusive approach to public consultation with town meetings, exhibitions, networks for conveying information and receiving feedback and was structured around joint decision-making by parallel Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot management committees. These mechanisms enabled the project to pioneer a locally owned participatory decision-making model to foster reconciliation and instil confidence in the prospect of reversing the island's division. Designed jointly by local leaders in the communities, the project demonstrated how combining reconciliation and citizen participation in decision-making around tangible assets of common significance can transform the conflict dynamic into one of mutual respect and shared values.

Chapter 3

CITIZENS PLAY THEIR PART IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

“I THINK THAT PEOPLE WANT PEACE SO MUCH THAT ONE OF THESE DAYS GOVERNMENT HAD BETTER GET OUT OF THEIR WAY AND LET THEM HAVE IT”.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

When the community leaders Dimitris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat restarted negotiations to resolve the Cyprus conflict in 2008, UNDP and USAID decided the ACT programme needed to reflect the new political climate if it was to provide optimum support for civil society in the reconciliation process. At the time, the programme’s work was considered important for the creation of a societal climate which would facilitate official negotiations, including the implementation of mutually agreed CBMs. In 2009 the ACT programme adopted a policy of assisting civil society to prepare for engagement both in the peace process and in a potential post-settlement phase. UNDP and USAID agreed to work with civil society organizations to help facilitate the full engagement of all Cypriots with the peace process and to feed citizen opinions into that process through formal and informal mechanisms. To succeed, this required an approach which emphasized policy dialogue, advocacy and the pursuit of good governance, all elements inherent in participatory peace-making. Embarking on this stage of the journey UNDP, USAID and their Cypriot partners developed a consensus that a durable solution to the Cyprus question must be Cypriot-owned; but that ownership must lie as much with the people of the island as with the politicians who would broker a deal.

THE EMERGENCE OF A PEACE-BUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR

The ACT programme supported civil society peace-builders who wanted to make the debate on peace a part of the popular discourse across the island. Over time Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot CSOs graduated from being the managers of discrete interactions between like-minded proponents of bi-communal co-operation, to become proactive advocates of island-wide reconciliation. By 2013 a relatively mature debate on the role of civil society had become rooted in the mainstream media on the island; something which 10 years previously would have been thought improbable. As a result, civil society organizations came to be viewed as one of the most important voices in the promotion of inter-communal reconciliation. However, while their work could be seen as supporting the traditional political peace process, as practised by the political elite, it is neither defined by that process nor dependent upon it.

“Without grassroots dynamism and support, it will be difficult to reinitiate talks, let alone bring about their successful conclusion. A more participatory framework will allow multiple processes to progress in parallel, leading to cumulative progress in internal and international substantive dossiers while simultaneously building societal trust. Building trust in the process and in each other is as important as brokering a deal.”

Erol Kaymak, Senior Researcher, The Center for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD)

The ACT programme helped lay the foundations for a more coherent and vocal peace-building civil society sector through a series of capacity development initiatives.



Members of The Elders Group were the guests of honour at the official opening of the Cyprus Community Media Centre.



The ENGAGE project expanded public discourse on the current peace process by organizing a series of discussions on the concept of federalism attended by the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General.



The Power of One inter-regional conference brought together 200 participants from 28 countries to discuss citizen-led innovation and social change.



UNDP-ACT solar panel installation in the UN Protected Area.



Multicultural youth camps helped young people to challenge stereotypes and build trust.



With the slogan “Where there’s a will there’s a way” the 2007 Civil Society fair attracted media attention with its message of co-operation.



The 2007 Civil Society Fair brought together thousands of civil society activists in the Buffer Zone.



Celebrating the completion of a cultural heritage restoration project.



The fully restored Home for Co-operation in the UN Buffer Zone.



Invitation to the launch of “The Studio” – Cyprus’ first inter-communal island-wide broadcasting facility.



The two leaders plant olive trees donated by civil society in support of the resumption of peace talks in 2008.





Internal view of the restored Armenian Church and Monastery.



External view of the restored Armenian Church and Monastery.



Φεβρουάριος / Şubat / February 2012



Φεβρουάριος / Şubat / February 2012



Νοέμβριος / Kasım / November 2012



Νοέμβριος / Kasım / November 2012

Cultural Heritage Preservation Circle project: before and after photos.



The newly restored Grand Turkish Bath.

10 tactics

for turning information into action

Guerrilla Mediamaking 101 Workshop & Screening of '10 Tactics'

Date: Thursday, 27 May 2010

Workshop: 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Screening & Discussion: 6:15 PM - 8:00 PM

Place: Cyprus Community Media Centre

Contact: +357 22662269 / +90 392 2280654

RSVP: beran@cypruscommunitymedia.org

Learn more: www.informationactivism.org

TACTICAL TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

CCMC UNAFI

Training poster for Cyprus Community Media Centre.

Cyprus

youth dialogue project

family politics religion
health education
europe work
love gender sexuality

Are you **18=24?**

Join the Youth Advisory Board

Make Your Voice Heard

The Youth Advisory Board will consist of 30 young Cypriots (aged 18-24) who will be actively involved in creating an award-winning Youth Advisory Survey.

Successful applicants will also have to present the findings of the survey, their thoughts and ideas will be incorporated & implemented upon approval by the newly elected 1st award-winning Youth Council.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Youth Advisory Board please complete the Application Form available at: www.unafp-vict.org

For enquiries and application form please contact:

Education: unafp@unafp.org / 00357 22662269 / 00357 2280654

UNAFI: unafp@unafp.org / 00357 22662269

Deadline for Application: **Monday 23rd 2010**

The project is funded by the UNCF through Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT)

Sponsored by:

Youth Dialogue Project calls young people to action.



"Together Anything is Possible" Youth Camp by KAYAD.



Increasing the media skills of civil society at the Cyprus Community Media Centre.



The first prize winner receives his award at the 'Shooting Reality' Film Festival.



Members of the Gender Advisory Team launch their recommendations for improving gender perspectives in the peace process.



Members of the Youth Advisory Board proudly launch the first Human Development Report on Youth in Cyprus.



Invitation to first event for Mahallae.



The Cypriot Puzzle exhibition travelled to cities around the island.



The Cyprus Critical History Archive gives access to digitized articles relating to inter-communal relations in Cyprus.



Shooting Reality young filmmakers competition announcement.



Cyprus Organic Advisory Group at the State Fair.



Poster from the Youth Power celebration event.



Youth Power small grants gave local youth NGO's a chance to celebrate and collaborate.



World AIDS Day event, Cyprus Against AIDS by the Technical Committee on Health Matters.



The Civil Society Awards gave recognition to the work of grassroots organisations working across the divide in Cyprus.



Youth Power partners took part in the global Earthdance event in 2009.



Behind the scenes during the filming of "Voices of Tomorrow: Youth in Cyprus".



"Gardash" youth camp participants interacting through theatre.



Children celebrate the first birthday for the Home for Co-operation in 2012.



Celebrating Cypriot culture under the Future Together project.



The two leaders join officials from the UN and the donor community to celebrate the opening of a new crossing point in 2010.



Greek Cypriot and Turkish civil society leaders address the British House of Commons on 15 May 2012.



The opening of the 'Nature without Boundaries' outdoor exhibition in 2006.



Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots celebrate World Water Day 2011.



Opening of the Peace Park as part of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Circle project.



A UN soldier looks on as the two leaders officially open the Home for Co-operation.



Invitation to the screening of the 'The Nine O'clock News in the year 2030'.

One of the major milestones was Cyprus' first *International Civil Society Fair: Open Voices – Active Citizens*³² (2007). The fair took place in the Çetinkaya football pitch in the UN buffer zone and attracted over 2,000 participants. It was hailed as the biggest bi-communal event on the island at that time. The fair's slogan "Where there's a will there's a way" expressed the aspirations of civil society activists who sought to reach out to their peers from the other community and together to find ways of raising the voices of citizens through civic participation and engagement. Many of the civil society organizations taking part had already experienced some bi-communal contact before the fair, but UNDP-ACT recognised that there was a common desire amongst civil society actors to bring some coordination to their work. The fair marked the beginning of the creation of a public space for the expression of solidarity between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and allowed CSOs to position themselves as part of an inter-communal social movement that could speak collectively for the public interest of both communities.

At the same time UNDP-ACT launched its \$1.8 million *Civil Society Strengthening Programme (CSSP)*³³. Implemented by a consortium led by the International Training and Research Centre (INTRAC UK) in partnership with two Cypriot CSOs – the *Management Centre of the Mediterranean (MC-MED)*³⁴ and the *NGO Support Centre*³⁵ – the two-year programme engaged over 200 CSOs in a series of structured capacity building activities which focused on enhancing the effectiveness of participating NGOs. At its conclusion UNDP-ACT identified a core network of well-structured CSOs which had demonstrated the institutional knowledge and capacity to lead the sector into an area of rapid growth and impact. A major success that arose directly from this experience was that a number of the inter-communal partnerships forged under the auspices of the CSO Fair and CSSP went on to successfully mobilise additional resources from other donors including the EU.

The success of these initiatives helped civil society leaders understand the value of reclaiming the geographical spaces which had historically defined the island's division. For years, the only venues for bi-communal collaboration and dialogue had been the UNFICYP-controlled Ledra Palace Hotel along with the Goethe and Fulbright Centres in Markou Drakou Street. But after 2009 this area began to open up, transforming

the crossing point into a hive of peace-building activity. Today, the [Home for Co-operation](#)³⁶, the [Cyprus Community Media Centre](#)³⁷(CCMC), and the [EU Meeting Point](#)³⁸ offer Cypriots from all walks of life physical shared spaces where the communities can meet and collaborate. The ACT programme played its part in changing the buffer zone's geography by establishing the CCMC facility and entering into an agreement with the [Association for Historical Dialogue and Research](#)³⁹ (AHDR) and the Norwegian government to support projects which would be managed from the rehabilitated Home for Co-operation. Indeed the ACT programme often used the convergent spaces along the Green Line to bring the two communities together around a variety of people-to-people contact events including workshops, art exhibitions, sports fixtures, film festivals and performances. Providing Cypriots with the chance to reclaim the divided space along the buffer zone became a key driver in the development of a cohesive civil society movement. Another testament to this transformation was the emergence of a number of organizations which became grounded in a Cypriot rather than a Greek Cypriot or a Turkish Cypriot identity. Organizations such as CCMC, AHDR, [Youth Power](#)⁴⁰ and the [Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development](#)⁴¹ (SeeD), played a valuable part in the creation of the foundations for an inter-communal civil society peace-building sector on the island.

“Purchasing and renovating a dilapidated building in “no man’s land” and turning it to the Home for Co-operation was in no way an easy endeavor.

And yet, this was just the very first step of a long lasting and demanding journey towards the realization of an ambitious vision: to question the current use of the so called dead zone, through its transformation into a space of co-operation, a forum of contact and dialogue, based on solidarity, and the promotion of mutual respect and understanding, amongst all people in Cyprus”

*Kyriakos Pachoulides, President,
The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research*

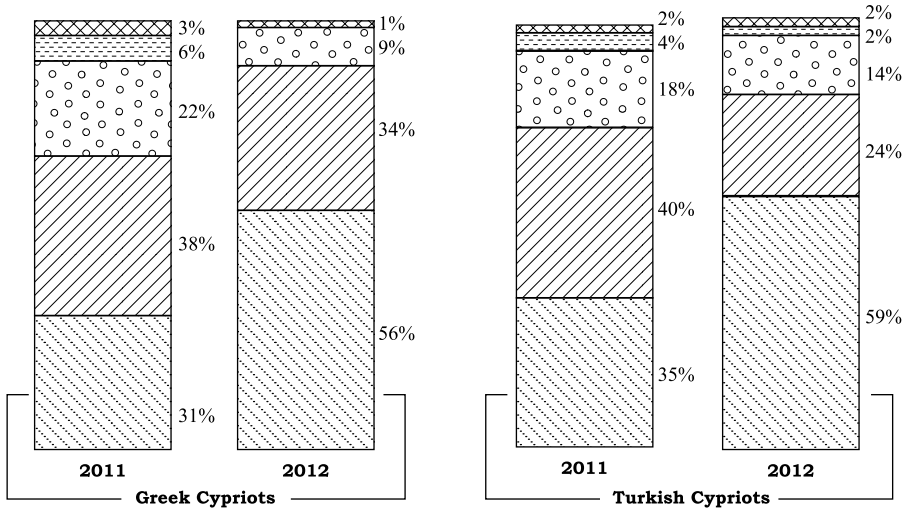
BRINGING PEOPLE INTO THE PEACE PROCESS

UNDP and USAID’s policy of creating opportunities for citizens to make their voices heard on the island’s future was endorsed both inside and outside Cyprus. The call for citizens to be partners in the Cyprus peace process was championed by successive United Nations secretary generals, who made direct requests to the island’s leaders to fully involve civil society in the peace process. Recognizing that civil society in Cyprus, as in many parts of the world, needed to be a legitimate partner in decision-making and policy formulation, the ACT programme sought to be as inclusive as possible and invited people from all walks of life to join in the development of policy options for reconciliation between the two communities. As a result, for the first time, creative avenues for addressing the Cyprus conflict were opened up, allowing ordinary people to be part of the debate of the future of the island. The effect was to deepen the quality of democracy in Cyprus as the agenda for building cooperative structures across the Green Line broadened beyond professional negotiators and traditional peace activists.

Previous unsuccessful attempts to reach a settlement on the island had convinced many that Cyprus needed to emulate successful peace processes in other parts of the world which had emphasised public participation in negotiation, trust building and socio-political transition. In 2009 UNDP-ACT launched projects aimed at helping civil society to bridge the gap between citizens and the policy-making elite. One vehicle for this was the *Cyprus 2015*⁴² project, which used “peace polling” and [participatory action research](#)⁴³ approaches to measure public opinion towards the negotiating positions of the two leaders, and to enable them to make informed decisions based on this knowledge. Over four years, the project built a very concise picture of citizens’ attitudes towards what they felt would make a settlement work for the people of the island. In addition the wealth of survey data and public polling confirmed the widely held belief that the Cyprus peace process was detached from the concerns of the general public, with the overwhelming majority of Cypriots in both communities believing that the leaders ignored their opinions on the negotiation process, despite a widespread desire to be consulted on such major [policy decisions](#)⁴⁴.

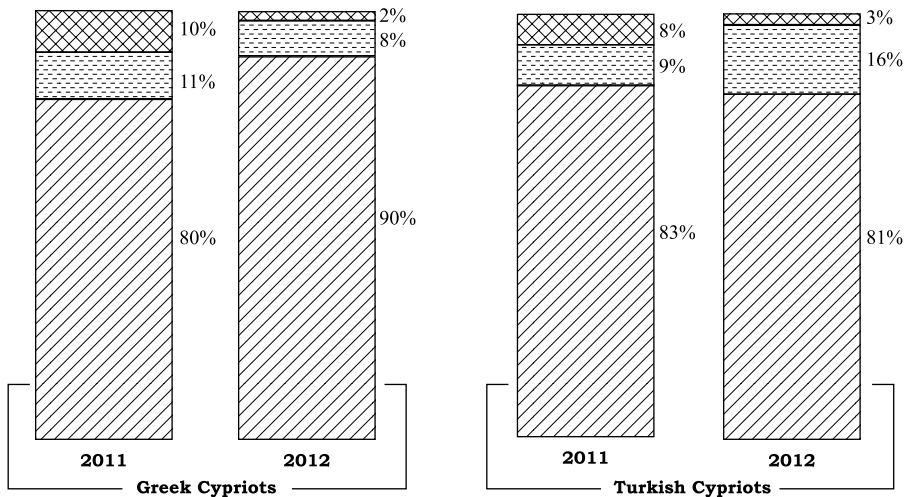
Extent to which the voice of citizens is heard by the leaders in the negotiation process - Source: Cyprus 2015, 2012⁴⁵

Not at all
 To an extensive degree
 To a limited degree
 DK / NA
 To a moderate degree



Opinion on whether citizens should be consulted on major policy decisions - Source: Cyprus 2015, 2012⁴⁶

Yes
 No
 DK / NA



The results of these surveys were utilized to produce periodic high-level policy briefs that were given directly to the negotiating teams. In January 2012, the *Cyprus 2015* team produced a brief, entitled “[Negotiating the Core Issues](#)”⁴⁷, which was discussed by the leaders at the “Greentree II” meeting in New York. The project became the only genuine gauge of ordinary Cypriots’ opinions of their leaders’ management of the peace process, and while negotiations were taking place, it was the only channel providing the leaderships with evidence-based analysis of constituents’ reactions to their respective negotiating positions.

UNDP-ACT used several other mechanisms to help expand the arena for citizens’ exposure to, and participation in, the peace negotiations. One of these was a set of public debates on a federal solution based on the [High Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979](#)⁴⁸, which form the current basis for the negotiations between the two leaders. The meetings involved the Special Advisor of the UN Secretary-General and were intended to inform Cypriot citizens about the implications of a federal solution and the way it would affect their lives. The forums highlighted the need for political leaders to discuss the meaning of a federal solution with their respective constituents. The two representatives of the leaders were invited at different times to support and participate in civil society-led events and discussion forums. In February 2012 the [ENGAGE, Do Your Part for Peace](#)⁴⁹ project invited the Leaders’ Representatives, George Iacovou and Kudret Özersay, to discuss the important role played by NGOs in informing the public about the challenges and opportunities for a comprehensive settlement. After several years of civil society activity, bi-communal projects and advocacy the event helped to formally recognize the role of CSOs in bridging the gap both between the two communities and, mono-communally, between the political elites and the general public.

The *ENGAGE* project launched its Active Dialogue Networks (ADNs) in 2011 with the aim of bringing the reconciliation process to local communities around the island. The project focussed on towns and villages not usually associated with bi-communal activities, and encompassed a number of rural areas in both communities. The ADNs provided opportunities for communities to connect their local realities with a broader perspective on the implications of a political

The conference “Women’s Peace: Applying the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to Cyprus and the Region” held in December 2012 highlighted the importance of women’s participation in peace processes.

“I think that the UN needs to advocate for a quota system for women that will actually have a greater chance of delivering a demilitarised peace in Cyprus.”

Olga Demetriou, PRIO Cyprus Centre

“UN women should recruit a representative to represent Cyprus as soon as possible with appropriate resources to support the inclusion of gender perspectives into the peace process and women’s political engagement.”

Biran Mertan, Gender Advisory Team

“We would like the UN to encourage and support specific training for men on gender equality and to raise awareness of the importance of women’s political participation.”

Nadia Karayianni, NGO Support Centre

settlement. Structured around local community dialogues, activities involved civil society representatives, academics, business people, journalists and local officials discussing a number of core issues related to gender, peace and reconciliation, sustainable development and civil society. The open dialogue methodology encouraged consensus on a series of local development priorities – subsequently written up in the form of advocacy papers – which *ENGAGE* later discussed with local leaders and decision-makers.

The open dialogue format enshrined in the ADNs was also adopted as a useful way of working by Cypriot women who wanted to engage the leaders on the application of [Security Council Resolution 1325](#)⁵⁰ (2000) to the negotiations and to the larger issue of reconciliation between the communities. Security Council Resolution 1325 requests UN Member States to protect the rights of women and girls in armed conflict and “ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.” For the Cypriot civil society peace-building movement a public debate about SCR 1325 offered opportunities to urge the leaders to embrace gender considerations as part of the official peace process, while at the same time creating entry points for a more public approach to the management of the process itself.

The ACT programme responded to these developments by supporting an initial assessment of the role of gender in the peace process and wider reconciliation efforts. This led to the formation of a [Gender Advisory Team](#)⁵¹(2009) of local women activists who collaborated on ways of foregrounding gender issues in both formal and informal peace processes. The GAT collaborated with UNDP-ACT and the [Peace Research Institute of Oslo](#)⁵² (PRIO) to develop a series of recommendations on incorporating gender concerns into the governance chapter of the negotiations; these were disseminated at a conference in Nicosia in December 2012 called “[Women’s Peace: Applying the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 to Cyprus and the Region](#)⁵³”.

Chapter 4

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IMAGINE NEW NARRATIVES OF THE FUTURE

“ALL OF US IN CYPRUS, GREEK CYPRIOTS ON ONE SIDE OF THE DEAD ZONE, TURKISH CYPRIOTS ON THE OTHER, ARE OBSESSED WITH ONE QUESTION. WHO IS TO BLAME?”

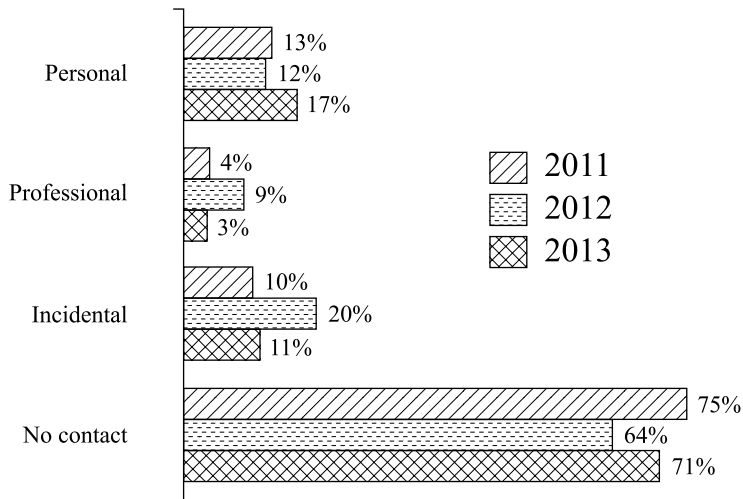
YIANNIS PAPADAKIS,
ECHOES FROM THE DEAD ZONE

The physical separation of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is underpinned by a psychological division rooted in two irreconcilable narratives of the past. The language of the Cyprus conflict consolidates the dominant socio-political positions of the communities and is the currency which governs their day-to-day relations; founded as it is on a principle of mutual non-recognition. Despite the existence of seven crossing points along the Green Line and a steady stream of Cypriots crossing from one side to the other since 2003 (over 20 million crossings have been recorded), the level of trust between the two communities remains low, while the quality of people-to-people contact has improved little over the years. Surveys show that only 17% of Greek Cypriots have personal contact with Turkish Cypriots while 32% of the numerically smaller Turkish Cypriots have personal contact with Greek Cypriots. In terms of openness to the principle of coexistence, just over half of Greek Cypriots would accept having neighbours or colleagues from the other community and would be willing for their children to attend mixed schools. The majority of Turkish Cypriots, however, reject these models of coexistence, and both sides overwhelmingly reject the possibility of having a boss from the other community and disapprove of mixed marriages for their children/siblings⁵⁴. The psychology of division translates into limited social interaction and in each community the assumption is that the other side is to blame for the conflict and its consequences.

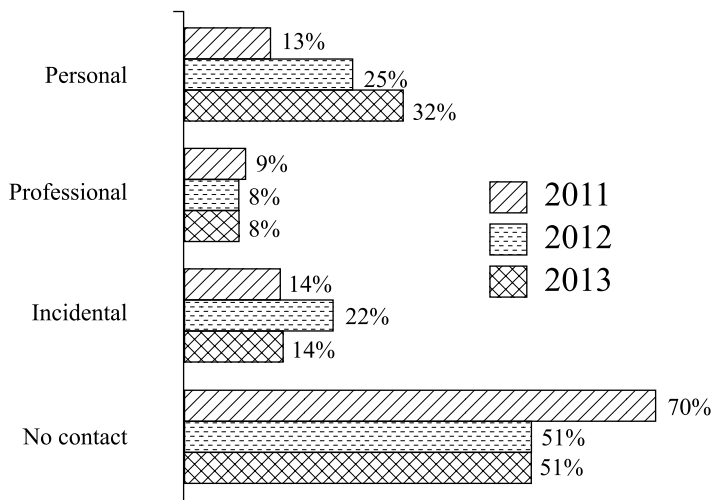
Types of contact with people from the other community

Source: UNDP-ACT 2013 Trust Surveys

Greek Cypriot Community



Turkish Cypriot Community



This reality is reflected by the media in both communities, which perpetuate the dominant narrative of mistrust. Journalists' reliance on the services provided by press offices and news agencies means that both print and broadcast media stories rarely transcend the dominant rhetoric of each community and give minimal space to alternative voices. The use of two different languages (Greek and Turkish) further contributes to a lack of understanding, and many media outlets marginalise stories on peace-building, civil society activities, diversity and multiculturalism, while social, economic, and environmental issues that concern both communities are given virtually no coverage.

CREATING ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC DISCOURSES

The ACT programme responded by helping civil society partners to create physical and virtual spaces where people could explore the relationship between the two communities without being tied by the constraints of the dominant narrative. Starting in 2007 UNDP-ACT funded several large-scale initiatives which attempted to reverse the psychology of division by giving Cypriots the freedom and resources to imagine and articulate a future vision of the island without the conflict. These initiatives went some way to expunge many of the negative associations linked to bi-communal activities and to promote the role of civil society as a partner to the public and private sectors. The effort paid dividends as inter-communal dialogue has since become widely accepted. According to a majority of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, participation in bi-communal events has had a positive impact on the level of trust while the majority of Greek Cypriots (74%) and Turkish Cypriots (69%) credit bi-communal activities with having helped the two communities come closer together⁵⁵.

A major achievement was the establishment in 2009 of the [Cyprus Community Media Centre](#)⁵⁶ (CCMC). This arose through civil society-led communications initiatives which had been supported by UNDP-ACT over several years. CCMC quickly became a one-stop-shop for inter-communal media collaboration and a resource for civil society-led advocacy. The organisation helped to institutionalise an alternative discourse on the

Cyprus conflict by changing the language used to articulate inter-communal relations, and dispelling many of the myths and misapprehensions that had built up around that relationship.

“Getting 22 different organisations to agree on a vision was no small task and involved all our skills of patience, negotiation and communication. Since then we have grown to 43 organisations we call our members, and this growth signifies the belief in our work and the good that can come from working together.”

Larry Fergeson, General Manager of Cyprus Community Media Centre

CCMC was able to collaborate with mainstream media in the co-production of television and radio programmes, as well as regular columns in major newspapers. CCMC focussed on citizen journalism and enhanced media literacy, empowering CSOs to create and distribute their own media content. As a result, it also changed the way civil society communicates with an expanded audience, by generating a more inclusive and better informed public dialogue. In 2013 the ACT programme financed CCMC’s bi-communal internet broadcasting facility based in the UN buffer zone, the first of its kind in Cyprus. The Studio produces programmes which provide Cypriots with a neutral source of news and information on issues to do with peace and reconciliation, and other developments in the two communities. It also broadcasts *MYCYradio* - Cyprus’ first multilingual web radio funded by the European Commission representation in Cyprus.

The partnership with youth organisations reflected a long-term emphasis on young people which ran throughout the ACT programme. Empowering the young to create new discourses on the future of Cyprus in schools, colleges, universities, clubs and among friends was considered essential to the creation of a conducive climate for reconciliation. The ability of people-to-people contact to break down barriers and reverse prejudices was more evident among youth participants in ACT's peace-building projects than with any other constituency. Surveys showed that of the 1,600 active participants in the ACT-supported youth peer learning programme between 2006-2008, the vast majority (90%) made friends and exchanged contacts with someone from the other community, and of these over 80% maintained that contact after the end of the project, either through internet chat, phone contact or meeting socially. Young people were involved in projects which addressed youth delinquency, sports for personal development, road safety, special needs education, multicultural education, inter-communal arts and culture, and explorations of the aspirations of Cypriot youth.

Another area where the ACT programme was able to diversify public discourse was in the approach to history teaching. UNDP-ACT worked closely with the *Association for Historical Dialogue and Research*⁵⁷ to support professional educators from both communities in modernizing the education system. Through the *Multiperspectivity and Intercultural Dialogue in Education*⁵⁸ project, AHDR developed supplementary educational materials on the *Ottoman period*⁵⁹, *traditional games*⁶⁰, and *mixed villages*⁶¹ as well as encouraging new methodological approaches with publications such as *Learning to investigate the history of Cyprus through artefacts*⁶², and *Thinking historically about missing persons*⁶³. The project introduced several hundred teachers to more balanced ways of history teaching in their respective communities and the possibility of adopting perspectives which accommodated the perceptions and realities of the other community. In 2010-2011 AHDR ran a public awareness campaign with televised public service announcements promoting the values of critical thinking and carrying the slogan ‘Question, Examine, Think Critically’⁶⁴. Today AHDR manages the Home for Co-operation, where the organization is undertaking ground-breaking work to digitally archive primary source material on inter-communal relations.

“I personally am proud of being part of a team of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots working together towards a common goal and setting a very good example to our leaders, our communities and future generations.

We interact on a day-to-day basis and yet we showcase how preconceptions of the so-called ‘others’ can be overcome in time and space. Each day I am excited about going to work, I do what I believe and I am confident that by doing this I am influencing young people and beyond.”

Alev Tuğberk, AHDR-MIDE Educational Director

Youth projects have demonstrated the energy which young Cypriots can bring to reconciliation. In an attempt to harness that creativity and enthusiasm opportunities were created for young people to participate in leadership skills training so they could

become ambassadors for peace, using their personal experiences to influence a broader public debate. Within this context Cyprus' main youth NGOs and youth-affiliated organizations decided they would have greater impact if they worked together under the common umbrella of the 'Cyprus Network for Youth Development,' subsequently renamed the [Youth Power Network](#)⁶⁵. Youth Power emphasised the needs of young Cypriots and gave rise to a series of small grants programmes. The project was characterised by innovative approaches to peace-building, and reached out to young people who had never previously been involved in bi-communal activities.

The [2009 Cyprus Human Development Report](#)⁶⁶ on young people showed that a majority of young Cypriots believed they had a responsibility to help find a peaceful solution to the island's division, however many did not know how to get involved, or believed opportunities for them to become active were limited. The report also demonstrated that young Cypriots felt they have little chance to influence decisions which govern their lives, and a large proportion believe that young Cypriots are insufficiently represented in politics. On the other hand almost half of Cypriot youth admitted that they do not actively participate in any socio-political or public good organisation. Original research was conducted through extensive polling of young Cypriots across the island, while a Youth Advisory Board made up of 24 young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots met regularly to discuss the research, ensuring the genuine opinions of young people were foremost in the themes, analysis and recommendations of the final report. The 2009 Human Development Report led to the creation of a Cyprus Youth Charter which, for the first time, articulated a coherent set of ideas on the changes young people believed would improve their lives. Designed by the Youth Advisory Board the charter addressed: family, education, employment, leisure activities and health, freedom of speech, socio-political participation, and peace and reconciliation. Among other things it appealed for the demilitarization of Cyprus, the use of modern technologies to support reconciliation, the promotion of multicultural principles in education and the adoption of a common Cypriot civic identity which recognised that the term "Cypriot" refers to both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

Youth Voices:

“We already became friends, went out a couple of times, exchanged phone calls and emails. It is always helpful to know a journalist in the other community. It gives you the chance to double check what is being broadcast on the other side.”

Young Journalists Project participant.

“I don’t have Greek Cypriot friends but I want to have [some], whom I can meet in common activities. I really want to learn more things about them.”

Human Development Report respondent.

“To start with, there should be no dividing line; the two communities should be mixed.”

Human Development Report respondent.

DESIGNING POLICY OPTIONS TO STIMULATE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RECONCILIATION

The notion of a “Cypriot-led, Cypriot-owned” peace process was quickly embedded in the style of negotiations which started with the Christofias-Talat talks in 2008. International experience has shown that the more democratic peace processes have yielded the best results. According to one international organization:

“While democratic compromise produces the solutions regarding the issues in conflict, then, reconciliation addresses the relationships between those who will have to implement those solutions. It is important to point out, though, that this applies not simply to the politicians and the deal-makers who are engaged in the compromise. It applies to the entire population. The relationship which must be addressed is not simply that between parliamentarians or leaders, but between whole communities. It is entire communities who have to begin to reorient themselves from the adversarial, antagonistic relations of war to more respect-based relations of co-operation⁶⁷”.

But by 2012 the initial enthusiasm surrounding the talks had been replaced by widespread cynicism, with many attributing the deadlock in the negotiations to a deficit in public involvement in building a consensus around the talks. For some the “vertical communication gap” between the leaders and their constituents had dealt a blow to the participatory ideal which Cypriot ownership of the process had promised. The ACT programme ultimately believed that a Cypriot-led process necessarily involved providing the whole of Cypriot society with the opportunity to engage with the peace process in a way which would support the leaders to reach a just settlement. Dialogue with policymakers thus became important in order to introduce new narratives and new ideas – something ACT supported through civil society and academia.

The *Cyprus 2015*⁶⁸ project provided a series of recommendations which helped inform a wide-ranging dialogue with the leaders and their teams as well as the wider international community. In 2012 the team produced a policy paper entitled *Beyond the Deadlocks: Re-designing the Cyprus Peace Process*⁶⁹. It included proposals to establish a civil society consultative body, which would link public concerns and priorities to the formal negotiations; the structured participation of party leaders enabling them to connect their constituents to the negotiating process; and the creation of a Joint Development and Reconciliation Commission to promote trust and confidence-building activities, with the support of international development organisations. The project also proposed that a working group on women's issues should be created to address the specific fears of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women on issues such as post-settlement economic failure, identity erosion and the possibility of *conflict renewal*⁷⁰. Policy recommendations supporting a more inclusive peace process from groups such as Cyprus 2015 and ENGAGE laid the foundation for the *Participatory Peacemaking Initiative*⁷¹, and led to the establishment of a consultative body consisting of political, business and civic leaders of the type proposed by *Cyprus 2015's* research. In 2013 senior representatives from these three groups participated in a series of mono-communal workshops based on the experiences of participatory peace-making models from Northern Ireland, South Africa and the Balkans.

In the area of educational reform the Association for Historical Dialogue has proposed a range of policy options to educational experts in both communities. The 2013 AHDR policy paper, *Rethinking Education in Cyprus*, emphasised the need for a more holistic educational approach incorporating human rights, peace studies, the environment and multiculturalism. One of the major needs highlighted by the paper is the provision of pre-service and in-service training to prepare educators to deliver a multi-cultural and multi-lingual education. Educational reforms should offer every teacher opportunities for professional development that take into consideration their professional needs and interests and enhance their autonomy, self-confidence and leadership skills.

“History today does not have to be changed. We simply have to choose what we put in it, and instead of choosing to put in only what suits us and makes us look good and the others bad, we must put in our good and their good, our bad and their bad.”

Greek Cypriot, 19 years old

Teacher training institutions urgently need to adapt their curricula to accommodate these priorities. AHDR recommends teachers avoid stereotyping and discrimination while approaching controversial historical issues through a critical and empathetic lens. Educational policymakers are encouraged to allow Cypriot children first-hand experience of other cultures and to support schools which promote the integration of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students.

The Cyprus Community Media Centre set out several important policy options to address the island’s polarised and often provocative media. Its main premise was that collaboration between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot journalists and media organisations need not wait until the settlement of the Cyprus question. It was felt that increased [bi-communal media collaboration](#)⁷² would play an important role in generating an overall environment which would facilitate the pursuit of a settlement. Some of CCMC’s most significant policy proposals included the creation of an inter-communal Advisory Committee on Media to work on media policy and legislation; the establishment of a common public service broadcaster; improved access to information in line with the Council of Europe’s *Convention on Access to Official Documents*⁷³ (2009) and the adoption of legislation to support community media.

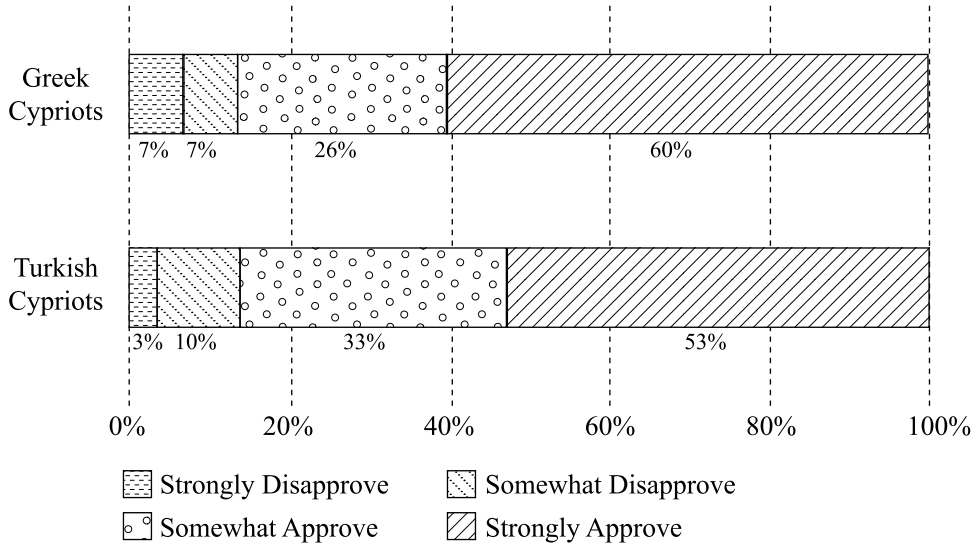
“In April 2011 CCMC organised a two-day bloggers’ conference which brought together young people from across the island. Bloggers, activists, students, and academics all gathered at the Centre to discuss the social media revolution taking place across the region. Part of the event was a live web panel link with Egyptian bloggers and journalists, and Cypriots had the chance to talk directly to them about their experiences. With their courage and integrity, such brave people inspire us to keep doing what we do. For me, this was key to what CCMC was all about - making connections, bringing people together, and using the free tools at our disposal to encourage free expression for positive change.”

*Sarah Malian, Outreach Officer,
Cyprus Community Media Centre*

The ACT programme and its partners consistently advocated a policy of public participation in the resolution of the Cyprus conflict. It is a policy which stems from the views of the Cypriot people themselves. For example, citizens of both communities strongly support the idea of a series of town-hall meetings involving the negotiating teams to enable the peace process to be discussed directly with the public. Similarly, both communities strongly support the use of technology to inform the public on progress in the peace process and to provide a mechanism for public participation. Finally, most Cypriots agree that whenever there is convergence in the peace process details should be made available for public review, even while the remaining dossiers are being discussed.⁷⁴ This transparent and open design would require a wholesale reformulation of the relationships between the leaders, their aides, political parties, influential civic leaders, the international community and the voting public.

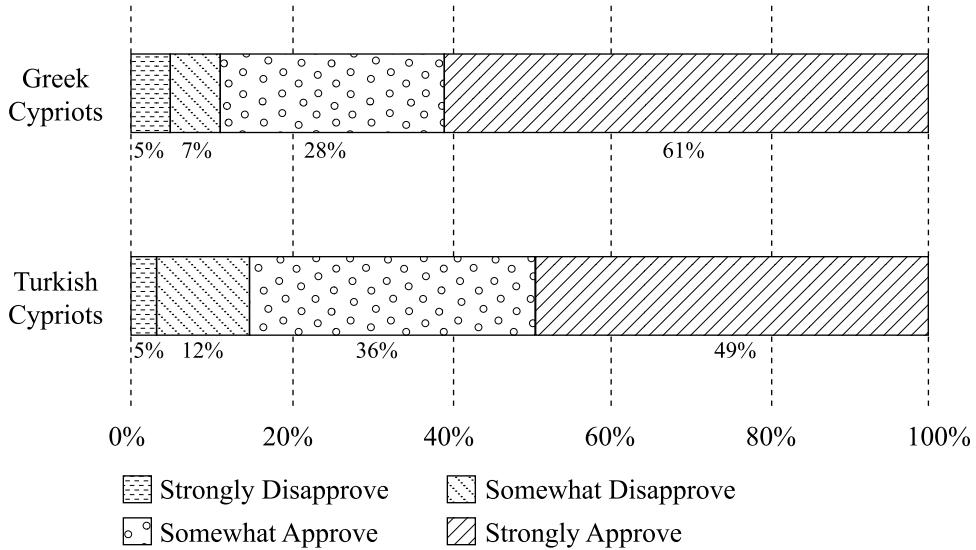
Those who participate in the actual negotiations should spend time visiting municipalities and villages, in order to discuss the peace process with the citizens directly

Source: Cyprus 2015, 2012



The leadership should set up a system, using technology such as the internet and social media, to inform the public directly about the peace process and seek its opinion

Source: Cyprus 2015, 2012



The policy of public participation in decision-making as a route for the promotion of inter-communal reconciliation was put into practice in the village of Potamia, through the *Future Together* project⁷⁵. In response to a request from the village’s Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot mukhtars (local community leaders), the ACT programme facilitated a community consultation process, as part of a project run by residents to restore an old Turkish Cypriot house and convert it into a museum. UNDP-ACT helped to identify experts with experience of participatory planning and budgeting to help the villagers to make the project as inclusive as possible. The scheme brought together the best practices of participatory action in local decision-making, enabling members of the community to make decisions about the restoration, use and management of their museum. One of the project’s most significant achievements was the bold decision to

involve former Turkish Cypriot residents, who today live in villages in the Turkish Cypriot community. The project established a heritage board, a democratic structure for channelling local people's plans and visions, and within a few months over 90% of the villagers had contributed ideas on the restoration project. Ultimately the participatory processes which underpinned the involvement of the ACT programme became a vehicle for building trust between current and former residents.

“Have you ever felt goose bumps when you were just simply seeing two people from two different communities getting along so well? I have – when I first visited the village to see what kind of projects we can get involved in with the community there.”

*Suna Evran, Project Coordinator,
Future Together project*

During the project relationships between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were governed by the discipline of participatory decision-making. Participants realised that the rules of “government by discussion” created a space where the need to cooperate and afford respect to others to achieve a practical consensus superseded all other differences.

These experiences would strongly support the case for a formal policy of inter-communal reconciliation, one that is moulded around participatory decision-making projects that are capable of reconnecting current and past residents of formerly mixed regions of the island. Such a policy could be adopted by both leaders to provide local socio-economic incentives for encouraging Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to collaborate on restoring physical spaces of shared value.

Chapter 5

LEGACY

“IT’S THE ACTION, NOT THE FRUIT OF THE ACTION, THAT’S IMPORTANT. YOU HAVE TO DO THE RIGHT THING. IT MAY NOT BE IN YOUR POWER, MAY NOT BE IN YOUR TIME, THAT THERE’LL BE ANY FRUIT. BUT THAT DOESN’T MEAN YOU STOP DOING THE RIGHT THING. YOU MAY NEVER KNOW WHAT RESULTS COME FROM YOUR ACTION. BUT IF YOU DO NOTHING, THERE WILL BE NO RESULT.”

MAHATMA GANDHI

The ACT programme has become synonymous with the evolution of an active inter-communal civil society in Cyprus. Building on the efforts of the first bi-communal pioneers, civil society activists developed the confidence and skills to begin to challenge the status quo of the Cyprus division through an inclusive and democratic public debate. During the ACT programme Cypriot civil society developed its knowledge and networks to claim a partnership role with the politicians in navigating a route towards shared objectives. The global significance of this work is underlined in the 2007 report by the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding, *Civil Paths to Peace*⁶, which identifies the need for inclusive approaches to building peaceful societies:

“A sense of exclusion can arise even in well-established, participatory democratic systems. This is because political inclusion is not only about the form that political systems take (for example the electoral system) but, just as importantly, about how political participation is facilitated throughout the political cycle. Thus, how debate is managed in local and national forums, including parliament itself, will reflect on the extent to which the rules of engagement, written or unwritten, provide a containing environment for expression of conflict. It will also be reflected in a context that does, or does not, also allow members to express their strong concerns and feel that they have been listened to – and thus accorded respect”.

The contribution made by UNDP and USAID to the reconciliation process in Cyprus, and their support for Cypriot civil society peace builders, resonate with a wider international consensus which recommends new forms of political participation, an emphasis on non-sectarian non-parochial education and the expansion of socio-political mechanisms which foster the universality of human rights, mutual respect and dignity.

THE SITUATION TODAY

When the BDP began in 1998, Cypriot civil society was just beginning to take form. Fifteen years later, as a result of sustained, concerted efforts to change perceptions through advocacy, civil society is flourishing across the island. UNDP and USAID, with their civil society partners have utilized a combination of research, public outreach tools and relationship-building with relevant decision-makers, to demonstrate how civil society can serve the public.

The recognition now being afforded by civic and political leaders across Cyprus to the contributions made by civil society towards development and reconciliation is testament to this objective. Today, civil society leaders are able to sit with politicians and decision-makers in Cyprus and Europe to discuss ways of creating a peace process which will finally end the Cyprus conflict. For example, in 2012 a group of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot civil society leaders led a debate in the British House of Commons, hosted by the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Conflict Issues (*APPGCI*⁷⁷). The debate included high-level participation from the UK government, British MPs, Cyprus experts and representatives from the Cypriot diaspora in London. The audience heard the Cypriot group express a common position, calling for a new approach to the Cyprus negotiations: one which required structural reform of the peace process to allow a harmonious collaboration of participants from track 1 (the leaders), track 2 (civil society) and track 3 (the wider public). Through the London event Cypriot civil society articulated a coherent inter-communal position, one which, if applied, would expand participation in the peace process to involve traditionally marginalised groups such as women and youth, while formally recognising the voices and experiences of those groups that have

already found ways of overcoming the island's political and socio-economic divisions.

The success of the London event marked a milestone in changing attitudes towards inter-communal relations, both in Cyprus and among the Cypriot diaspora. Today 63% of Greek Cypriots and 41% of Turkish Cypriots believe that activities which bring the two communities together promote reconciliation. At the same time 54% of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots are in favour of the distribution of jointly produced educational material across the island to promote a multi-perspective understanding of the past⁷⁸. Meanwhile, attitudes to and awareness of civil society as a legitimate presence in the peace process have also changed over time. In general people in both communities believe that civil society activities have a positive effect on changing attitudes towards inter-communal relationships⁷⁹, while the majority of Cypriots – over 80% in each community – said they wished to see a strong civil society playing a more robust role in the peace process, provided it was truly representative of the public's concerns and priorities⁸⁰.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Although the ACT programme concluded its work in September 2013, the assets accumulated by the inter-communal civil society peace-building sector place Cypriot citizens in a strong position to become meaningful partners in the search for a Cyprus settlement. Civil society organizations themselves understand that there is still much for them to do to emulate the strong constituency-based organizations found in other parts of the world, which regularly represent the voices of the general public. However, Cypriot civil society already possesses many of the qualities required to sustain it on this journey and by forging new types of partnerships both inside and outside of Cyprus peace builders will be able to benefit from the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

Indeed a number of organisations are using their Cypriot reconciliation experiences to become connected to the wider international civil society movement, which today addresses global issues such as poverty eradication and climate change. For example

in 2012 the *Cyprus Island-wide Development Network* (CYINDEP⁸¹), organised a civil society symposium and high level panel on the post 2015-agenda. Entitled *The World We Want – Global Civil Society Symposium: Food Security and Nutrition in the Post-2015 Development Framework*⁸², the event created a forum for Cypriot CSOs and experts to think critically about Cyprus’ role in supporting international development. Similarly, the *Peace it Together*⁸³ network of peace-building NGOs, was supported by the ACT programme to host the “*Power of One*” *Inter-regional Conference*⁸⁴, which was held in October 2012. The conference, which attracted 200 delegates from 28 countries from Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa as well as Cyprus, did much to reinforce the island’s position as a crossroads for knowledge exchange on citizen-led innovation and social change practices during periods of transition. It created a space for fostering innovation, sharing best practices and networking, and delegates endorsed concrete inter-regional projects involving partnerships which joined Cypriot, Arab and Eastern European CSOs. In particular it allowed Cypriot civil society organizations to share their accumulated expertise and knowledge in a variety of fields with peers from the countries of the European Neighbourhood region.

Building on this experience, Cypriot CSOs are working to develop a sophisticated online knowledge exchange portal which will be a gateway to Cypriot CSO expertise in social cohesion issues. The “Mahallae” platform (meaning *Neighbourhood* in Arabic, Greek, Turkish and several other languages) will offer civil society activists from Cyprus, the Arab region and Europe a virtual conferencing space to exchange ideas and build inter-regional partnerships to support their work in social cohesion and reconciliation. Mahallae will house a number of interactive learning tools developed by Cypriot CSOs, enabling people to interact, innovate and design joint projects. One of the innovations accessible through the Mahallae platform is the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE). The SCORE is a revolutionary way to measure and analyse progress towards reconciliation. It identifies the most important indicators of social cohesion which need to be addressed in order to extend the scope and efficacy of reconciliation. The tool is a major contribution by Cypriot civil society to practical peace-building, and its results can provide evidence-based policy options for decision-makers and practitioners concerned with advancing a Cyprus settlement, while the potential for replication in other conflict countries is being explored.

An active and energetic civil society in Cyprus has empowered Cypriots to play an engaged role in peace-making. The emergence of an inter-communal civil society identity has given a space for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to think of themselves not just in relation to each other, but also their place in the wider world. The 2013 financial crisis has made many realise that Cyprus is not immune from the forces of globalisation, and resolving Cypriot problems cannot be achieved in isolation from events on the international stage. The connection between the domestic and global has made many Cypriots re-examine their own attitudes to global citizenship and what it means in the world today. The island's proximity to societies burdened with violent conflict and the consequences of socio-political upheaval has forced many Cypriots to question the tenability of the island's division. Those who have taken a central role in building Cyprus' civil society structures recognize that Cypriot experiences in managing conflict and building peace are a transferrable asset, which could help connect the island to a [global social good](#) agenda. Cyprus can exchange experiences of civic engagement with near neighbours, to show how empowered citizenship can furnish ordinary people with more effective tools with which to build mutual trust.

In other words, the positive role played by civil society in resolving problems in Cyprus provides a model that the region as a whole can aspire to emulate. This gives Cyprus the opportunity to become a regional leader in effecting meaningful social transition.

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⁷⁵ For more information visit: <http://potamiaheritage.com/>

⁷⁶ Civil paths to peace. Available at: <http://secretariat.thecommonwealth.org/files/227381/FileName/CivilPathstoPeace978-1-84859-001-4web-secure.pdf>

⁷⁷ More about APPGCI at: <http://www.conflictissues.org.uk/>

⁷⁸ Report on General Population Quantitative Research Project 2013 “Level of Trust between the Two Communities in Cyprus”. Nicosia: UNDP-ACT

⁷⁹ Report on General Population Quantitative Research Project 2012 “Level of Trust between the Two Communities in Cyprus”. Nicosia: UNDP-ACT

⁸⁰ Cyprus 2015 4th poll. Available at: http://www.cyprus2015.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=9%3Apublic-opinion-poll-2012&Itemid=34&lang=en

⁸¹ More about CYINDEP at: <http://www.cyindep.eu/>

⁸² More about the “World we want” event at:
<http://www.beyond2015.org/world-we-want-%E2%80%93-global-civil-society-symposium>

⁸³ More about Peace it Together at: <http://peace-it-together.net/>

⁸⁴ More about the “Power of One” conference at:
<http://peace-it-together.net/inter-regional-conference-2012>





About the cover design

From a critical commodity in antiquity to a symbol of peace at the resumption of negotiations in 2008, the olive tree has been an integral part of the lives of the people of Cyprus since the Neolithic period. As such, it is fittingly used here not just as an iconic symbol of the island, but also as a metaphor for how Cypriots, from all walks of life, have made their contribution to peace. The longevity of olive trees, which can live up to 700 years, mirrors the persistence and commitment of Cyprus' citizen peacemakers who planted the seeds of a peace movement in the 1970s and decades later continue to nurture this work. Just as the growth patterns of olive trees become more intricate and interesting with age, so Cypriots have developed more sophisticated and effective means for addressing the Cyprus conflict over the years. In particular the stories told here clearly show that the job of finding a settlement needs to be shared between politicians and citizens. Finally, the most productive olive trees require nurture and care. Citizen peacemaking in Cyprus is the vocation of deeply committed people who have worked diligently, often in the face of scathing criticism, to nurture social-political change at the grassroots level. This book celebrates the achievements of the many Cypriots who continue to build the vision of a dynamic and diverse society at peace with itself.

