

Building Trust: civil society, trade and cooperation in Cyprus

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Background

INTRAC and the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE)¹ organised a two-day event for civil society organisations, policymakers, international donors, researchers and other stakeholders. The event aimed to facilitate dialogue and local feedback on EU-funded work in Cyprus. Discussions centred on the role of civil society in peacebuilding in Cyprus and the relevance of economics in building sustainable relations of trust and cooperation across communities.

The event was based on the work of three EuropeAid projects:

1. [Reconciliation and Peace Economics in Cyprus](#) (University of the West of England, Bristol, UK)

This project aimed to promote improved relations between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots through applied social research which will lead to a better understanding of the issues affecting trust and perceptions of mutual interests.

2. [Developing Trust and Cooperation: Research to Improve Civil Society Practice](#) (INTRAC, Oxford, UK)

This project examined how civil society in the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities has worked, and is working, to promote trust, cooperation and reconciliation across the island. This project seeks to make very practical recommendations for future civil society engagement.

3. [Social Capital in Cyprus: Social Assets, Community Infrastructure and the Building of Trust](#) – (Cyprus Sociological Association, Nicosia, Cyprus, with the Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast, Northern Ireland)

The results of the three research projects reflect existing research (for example, CIVICUS Civil Society Index: Cyprus 2011) which observes a lack of trust between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities in Cyprus. Trust in the Cyprus context has been investigated in these projects by considering, for example, trust both between and within the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

The projects made recommendations as to the way forward. International speakers Prof Diana Chigas from Tufts University, USA and Dr Robin Wilson, independent researcher from Northern Ireland (who has advised the Council of Europe on intercultural dialogue), also gave their own perspectives on the situation in Cyprus, drawing on their expertise and experience in conflict zones.

¹ The event was project managed by Dr M.K. Flynn, UWE and Zoe Wilkinson, INTRAC.

Introduction: civil society's role in divided societies

Prof Diana Chigas

Prof Diana Chigas opened the event with a reflection on the role of civil society in divided societies. This drew on her research in different contexts, the latest of which is the *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*. She stated that civil society is crucial in creating bridges across divided communities, but at the same time the real challenge is to see how individual activities can scale up to have greater societal impact. What is needed, she suggested, is to involve both *more* people and *key* people in the peace process. Efforts should be made for the peace process to be as inclusive as possible so as to move beyond the 'usual suspects'. The lack of trust between communities undermines the peace process and the ideal of co-existence.

Although trust building is observed at the personal level, the question is how do we achieve trust at the community level? Responding to critics who claim that conflicts such as those in Cyprus and Lebanon are political, not personal, conflicts, she suggested that, while this is true, personal relationships are also needed to tackle political challenges. The crucial thing then is to work both on trust building at a personal level and connect it to other drivers of conflict. But sometimes we need to work indirectly because touching only the 'dangerous issues' could reduce the effectiveness of the peace work. Finally, she noted that in Cyprus civil society links to Track 1 negotiations (i.e. the official political peace talks) are very limited. If civil society is to have any real input and impact on the peace process, these links need to be developed and strengthened, including links with political parties in each community.

INTRAC's, UWE's and CSA's project findings and implications for the international community

This session focused on the preliminary results of the three research projects. The presentations were shaped to address international policy makers, and included potential implications for their action and involvement in the peace process in Cyprus.

1. Reconciliation and peace economics in Cyprus

Dr Tony King, UWE

The University of the West of England has conducted research on 'Reconciliation and Peace Economics in Cyprus', which aimed to promote a better understanding of issues affecting trust and perceptions of mutual interest between the two communities.

The project had five stages:

- A general household survey (sample = 600 on each side. Total: 1200) (summer 2010)
- Crossing point surveys (sample = 1000 on each side. Total: 2000) (summer 2010)
- Ten focus groups (five on each side) for discussion and feedback (February and March 2011)
- Symposia (two on each side) discussion and feedback (May and June 2011)
- Workshop sessions in October 2011 and a preliminary report

Sampling methodology

The sampling methodology for the research was:

- Stage 1 :Stratification of urban and rural areas based on Republic of Cyprus 2001 census and northern Cyprus state planning organisation's 2006 geographical distribution percentages
- Stage 2: Random selection of primary sampling units

- Stage 3: Random selection of households
- Stage 4: Selection of individuals within household based on last birthday

The general household survey addressed questions of trust and has shown that the general levels of trust within the community are low, with Greek Cypriots having lower levels of trust than Turkish Cypriots (80.9% vs. 56.8% respectively said that other people would definitely or probably try to take advantage of them). Trust between the communities is also very low with about two-thirds of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots both responding they do not trust the other community.

The project also looked into research participants' perception of international actors. Responses showed that both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are wary of the UK and USA, although the first are considerably more negative. Perceptions of Russia diverge, with Greek Cypriots having positive impressions, scoring 35%, while its acceptance levels in the Turkish Cypriot community remain low at approximately 6%. The UN, despite its long presence in Cyprus and active involvement in the peace process, did not attract very positive evaluation from the respondents. Only around 20% of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots view it positively. Conversely, the EU seems to be the only international actor that more respondents in both communities view more positively than negatively, with 45% positive view amongst the Greek Cypriot community and 35% amongst the Turkish Cypriot community, with negative views at 8% and 27% respectively.

Dr King suggested that, with the UN set to downgrade its presence in Cyprus within the foreseeable future, the EU could and should take a more active role in the peace process. He also cautioned to be aware of Russia as an international player given its influence within the Greek Cypriot community. At the same time, however, he noted a divergence between the two communities in their perception of who is directing the political peace negotiations, with 79% of Greek Cypriot respondents replying that it is either mostly or solely foreign powers, and 56.8% of Turkish Cypriots replying that the political leadership of the two communities is the sole or principal director of the negotiations. These findings confirm the difficult context within which international actors work towards peacebuilding, where the local population has come to view them with suspicion. This would be an additional reason for an enhanced role for the EU community as a neutral and more positively regarded agent.

2. Cyprus economic aspects and the peace process

Prof Derek Braddon, UWE

The UWE project also investigated economic aspects and their potential influences on peace-building:

1. Main economic concerns in Cyprus

- Household surveys: these flagged rising unemployment (Turkish Cypriot community); migrant issues (Greek Cypriot community); and prices, declining real wages and increasing taxation. There was little concern, however, with infrastructure issues.
- Symposia: infrastructure recommendations were discussed, such as countering water shortages through desalination, development of a light railway system and joint community action on sewage improvements.
- Focus groups and interviews: some from the Greek Cypriot community saw their community as 'highly materialistic' and 'demanding expensive life-style beyond their means'; others were more concerned with a decline in foreign investment and tourist income and SME competitiveness. The Turkish Cypriot community was concerned mainly about the impact of Turkey's stability programme, which overlooked social

welfare, education and health issues in favour of public spending cuts, higher taxes and privatisation.

A solution to the Cyprus problem was viewed as in the economic interests of both sides with enhanced trade; greater economies of scale and cost savings leading to greater global competitiveness. Cyprus is in a unique 'hub' position between markets in Europe, North Africa and Middle East and some believe that the best future strategy would be to focus more on building this joint economic potential.

2. Personal economic situation

The preliminary results presented included the following:

- Data showed that Turkish Cypriot respondents were generally in a stronger economic position than Greek Cypriot respondents.
- In terms of availing of the opening of the crossing points in 2003, a large proportion of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities reported that they have never crossed or have done so only once.
- When they do cross, Turkish Cypriots are far more likely to consume and spend in the Republic of Cyprus, and on a wider range of goods and services, than Greek Cypriots crossing into the north.
- Of those *not* spending when crossing, 78% of the Greek Cypriot community report they do not spend because they do not want to support the other side economically; only 5% of the Turkish Cypriot community reported the same.
- Of those people crossing who did spend, only one in five Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots spent more than 60 euros each on their last visit.

Ad hoc economic transactions at the micro-level are still limited, while formal, large-scale economic interaction appears virtually non-existent. Limited economic transactions can also be linked to the issue of low levels of trust toward the other community. Lack of trust between communities was also evident in the general population survey which showed that both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot respondents were reluctant to (i) buy goods and services, (ii) have work colleagues from the other community, or (iii) have or, their children have, a manager from the other community. On a more positive note, the views expressed during focus groups were more moderate and positive on the issue of changing employment relationships, as well as on inter-community trade, especially after an agreed solution is implemented.

3. Building a better economic future

The survey results were alarming in highlighting the degree to which the two communities distrust each other, creating real barriers to building a fully-functioning economy for the future. In order to build a better economic future, enhanced trade is needed as is a willingness to work with colleagues and a manager from the other community.

Discussion on the UWE research

Reasons for lack of trust

- It was suggested that lack of trust resulted from, firstly, that the north and Republic of Cyprus are not connected, with lots of myth making on both sides and, secondly, the talks process has been slow with things not moved substantively since 1974.
- A lack of trust is also encouraged by no common civil society between the communities, a divided education system and media.
- Levels of corruption and lower levels of rule of law in Cyprus are also important issues. Many issues additionally centre on the lack of good governance in Cyprus.

Contact and trust

- It was asked whether the check point surveys were misleading in that the results were assuming a lack of trust is related to contact. In response it was stated that the results were cross tabulated to isolate other factors e.g. how many times people cross.
- It was also suggested that opening the check points has had a positive impact. People are not always aware of changing attitudes.
- Were the surveys asking people to be psychologists? In response, there has been increase in contact since 2003. The data from the UWE research does take into account that there are many variables.
- The check points have not lived up to expectations, as not that many people cross. Since 2003 there has been an increase in contact but a decrease in the level of trust between the two communities.
- Is the Cyprus conflict a daily concern to Cypriots? Crossing the Green Line can bring home the conflict. There is a need to be careful about associating crossings with conflict as the conflict may not be there.

Trust in the region

- It is easy to become Cyprus-centric. The level of trust in the region should be considered; for example in Greece and Turkey there are also low levels of trust.

Age differences of those surveyed

- The issue of the age group of the household survey participants was raised. Half of Turkish Cypriot community respondents were under 45, whilst in the Greek Cypriot community survey over half of respondents were 45 and over.
- This may relate to the lower level of formal economic activity in the Turkish Cypriot community and higher unemployment.

3. Developing trust and cooperation: research to improve civil society practice

Dr Norman Gillespie, INTRAC

INTRAC's research aimed to develop and disseminate a greater understanding of the role played by civil society in promoting reconciliation in Cyprus, so that concerned actors (CSOs, civil society support organisations, government and donors) can carry out that role more effectively in the future. This research incorporated three methods: contextual literature reviews; semi-structured interviews with civil society representatives; and case studies of individual organisations, projects or groups.

Key strands to improving civil society practice:

- Strengthening civil society – to enable it to play an effective role.
- Enhancing bridge building – to promote trust and enhance relationships across communities.
- Making connections – developing linkages with policy development, power brokers, resource providers.

3.1. Strengthening civil society

The key challenge is making Cypriot civil society more effective.

What civil society is doing:

- Developing the infrastructure – organising, forming partnerships, developing networks.
- Capacity building – helping other organisations to become more effective.
- Promotion – reaching out to the public, promoting active communities, citizenship.

What international bodies can do:

- Support infrastructural development – support to existing and developing new support organisations.
- Capacity building – provide funding for training in organisational development, e.g. planning, management, administration, fundraising, promotion.
- Promotion – support for community media, public participation events.

3.2. Building trust and bridges

The key challenge here is enhancing engagement between the two communities.

What civil society is doing:

- Providing opportunities for engagement - joint initiatives, activities ,e.g. working on common issues/concerns, cultural and social events, promoting dialogue/discussions.
- Developing the conditions for engagement – promoting understanding and sense of interdependence.

What international bodies can do:

- Support educational initiatives/materials
- Support independent media
- Support community relations strategies
- Support island wide alliances, activities
- Support contact across Green Line
- Influence change in political culture

3.3. Making connections

The key challenge here is changing the political culture.

What civil society is doing:

- Building cross-cutting alliances – transcending party political positions.
- Promoting participatory democracy – active communities, citizenship, social inclusion, engagement with local authorities/administrations/international bodies.

What international bodies can do:

- Provide resources for active communities – advocacy, lobbying, volunteering, CSO support.
- Provide linkages with influential international bodies.
- Influence policy in line with international best practice, EU guidelines.. .

4. Social capital in Cyprus: social assets, community infrastructure and the building of trust

Dr David Officer, CSA

The lack of trust is a more general issue that does not only characterise the relationship between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities in Cyprus, but also society within each community as well. This premise is endorsed by the results of the other two projects. This project also used social capital theory as the analytical framework.

Research prompts

- Relative paucity of social research focused on the internal constitution of Cypriot societies, north and south.

- Difficulties confronted in cross comparative research across the Green Line has tended to limit this form of research.
- When research of this sort has been conducted it has been explicitly inter-communal, direct or indirect relationships between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

General research questions

- Given how the level of trust expressed by one major ethnic community towards another is low, how might this relate to what is also recorded as low levels of trust within each of those communities?
- To explore, within local settings, what has been recorded as a relatively underdeveloped civil society on both sides of the Green Line.
- How, and on what basis, collective action is possible in communities marked by relatively low levels of trust and an apparent deficiency in community infrastructure.

Forms of social capital

- **Bonding social capital** involves closed networks and describes strong ties within homogeneous groups, for example amongst family members, close friends and neighbours.
- **Bridging social capital** is connected to diversity and involves overlapping networks where a member of one group accesses the resources of another group through overlapping membership.
- **Linking social capital** relates to the connections between individuals and groups in hierarchical or power-based relationships. It describes social relations with those in authority.

Society centred approaches to social capital formation

- A key question to address is what conditions determines the production or dissipation of social capital?
- Robert Putnam – ‘Making Democracy Work’ (1993)
- Italy – north/south divide and effective governance
- Associational life – as a virtuous practice
- Vertical/horizontal organisation

Research evidence suggests that much associational life in Cyprus tends to be vertically organised, productive of particularised trust within the ‘in-group’, tinged by clientelism and frequently penetrated by party political formations.

Institutional centred approaches to social capital formation

What also comes through from much of the field data is the need to situate community life and the form that associations tend to take in Cyprus within the broader institutional context. This is an approach which links both the generation of social capital in general and social trust in particular with the quality of institutional life as experienced at the intersection with civil society. Where public power is exercised in a partial form, the formal equality between citizens is compromised systematically and personalised relations with those in power determine the distribution of scarce resources, particularised trust predominates, and the public good is compromised.

Policy implications

- Attempts to address the chronic lack of trust between the primary ethnic groups in Cyprus needs to be articulated within the context of a chronic lack of generalised trust within those putative communities.
- Concentrating on strengthening civil society may be important in itself – however, this is necessary but not sufficient in addressing the ‘trust’ problematic.
- That perhaps the primary determinant of the virtuous outcome desired rests not on placing the responsibility of CSOs to deliver this but the reform of states and

administrations on this island to the extent that the exercise of public power conforms to the principle of impartiality rather than being dependent on personalised relations.

Discussion on CSA's research

Has civil society had a positive role in promoting good governance? Dr Officer said it had, but he stressed that the most important transformative moment since 1960 has been EU accession which introduced a standard that did not previously exist in Cyprus. He added, however, that at the same time EU focuses more on whether elections are free and fair than on whether civil society is being treated fairly, which is an issue which needs to be raised and addressed.

On the issue of contact and trust, academic Dr Charis Psaltis said that based on his research in Cyprus, increased contact was always correlated positively with increased trust and reduced prejudice. This is a hopeful result which should encourage civil society to provide further opportunities for meaningful and sustained contact between members of the two communities.

Projects findings and implications for local researchers and the academic community

1. Developing trust and cooperation: research to improve civil society practice

Dr Gillespie focused on the achievements and challenges that CSOs are facing, using the three social capital indicators of bonding, bridging and linking.

Methodology

An initial literature review, followed by 105 semi-structured interviews, identified key aspects of civil society and division for further in-depth investigation using seven case studies of Cypriot CSOs.

Key findings

1. Bonding	
Achievements – Strengthening civil society <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support infrastructure (e.g. MC-Med, NGO SC)• Enhanced media coverage (e.g. CCMC)• Involving underrepresented groups (such as immigrants, women, youth, rural areas)	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Still underdeveloped – lack of support• Lack of coverage/interest• Still underrepresented groups
2. Bridging	
Achievements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing opportunities for engagement (bicultural activity) e.g. ENGAGE Project, thematic and issue groups e.g. young people, women, environment, cultural heritage• Enhancing potential for engagement (mono-cultural) e.g. promoting understanding and mutual respect, sense of interdependence – AHDR, AWA, improved media coverage	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Underrepresented groups• Lack of contact across Green Line• Lack of political support• Unfavourable policy and legislative context• Disincentives – political, geographical, social

3. Linking	
Achievements	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising – strengthening civil society (bonding) • Raising the profile – enhanced media coverage • Engaging with local authorities – local influence • Engagement with international bodies e.g. CYINDEP, AHDR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support for advocacy/lobbying activities • Lack of recognition from public sector/politicians • Unfavourable policy and legislative context • Clientele based political culture • Need to further strengthen CSOs

Discussion on INTRAC's research

How can civil society give voice to under-represented groups? Dr Gillespie gave a number of examples of this, including reaching out to rural areas, various youth initiatives and empowering women.

Were people of Turkish origin included as part of the under-represented groups? Dr Gillespie responded that they were included in bicultural initiatives, but stressed that this is a very sensitive issue in Cyprus.

2. Social capital in local communities in Cyprus

The organisation and delivery of social care in local communities

Dr Yiouli Taki, CSA

Dr Taki gave an overview of the development of the voluntary/non-profit sector in Cyprus since the establishment of an independent state in 1960. Social provision and social care were centralised and thus not developed at a community level. The state established the Pancyprian Voluntary Council whose purpose was to oversee voluntary councils in local communities. Thus a partnership between the state and local civil society in the field of social care developed. As a result of these historical circumstances whereby social care groups dominated civil society, there is still confusion at the state level today between civil society and voluntarism, whereby the first is often collapsed into the second. Professional non-profit organisations in Cyprus find it hard to communicate with state bureaucrats who are unclear as to what non-profit organisations do, and at times may be wary of their work.

This project was implemented by the Cyprus Sociological Association and the Institute for Conflict Research in Belfast. It involved the in-depth study of six local communities in Cyprus (three on each side of the Green Line) in terms of social assets, community infrastructure and the building of trust. Dr Taki argued that although it is difficult to study the dynamics of trust, nepotism, and social capital at the political or societal level, these dynamics are reproduced in local communities whose study is more feasible. What is interesting is that local community councils consist of political party members, church committee members, and other CSOs such as hunter's and trade union members (which are attached to political parties). Therefore the political culture whereby everyone is identified on the basis of their political ties permeates all levels of society.

The constitution of the 'Turkish Cypriot' community

Tanyel Oktar, CSA

Tanyel Oktar focused on the 'Turkish Cypriot' community, arguing that its constitution is much more complex than the term would imply. Three dimensions are crucial in claiming or assigning

identity in this community: location, ethnicity and class.

Location is important in terms of identifying '*buralı*' (the person who is from here) believed to be 'originally from Cyprus' and *Turkiyeli*, 'the one from Turkey', assigned to people who have emigrated from Turkey. The first category of people can be further broken down according to whether people have relocated from areas in the south and from which part. Age is a relevant dimension here, as older people have more emotional ties to the place of their origin compared to young people who lack this personal experience and ties. According to the research, the category of '*buralı*' has a large middle class who are represented through trade unions.

The second category of people who emigrated from Turkey can also be broken down according to whether their arrival was before or after the 1974 war. Similarly with the above, the city or area where they come from, their cultural and religious background (Sunni, Muslim, Alevi) and their first language (Turkish, Kurdish) are important factors in terms of identification. The large majority of the families in this category are working class. There is also more recent economically driven immigration which further complicates the situation, while at the same time raising the issue of undocumented migrants. Civil society could assume a role in generating trust across these communities. However, the role of civil society is undermined as it becomes part of a political culture which favours political party centred participation in the community, and civil society develops strong dependency ties with political parties.

An assessment of civil society in Cyprus: focus on trust CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report Cyprus 2011

Dr Bulent Kanol, director of The Management Centre of the Mediterranean, and Lorraine Marriot of the NGO Support Centre presented results from the CIVICUS 2011 report which the two centres carried out. The speakers explained the importance of the Civil Society Index (CSI) research in terms of allowing for the comparison of the state of civil society both within a country across time, and across countries, having been implemented in more than 70 countries. The CSI study in Cyprus differs in that it was conducted separately in the Greek Cypriot community and the Turkish Cypriot community, albeit with close cooperation and coordination of the two implementation teams and a joint publication of results. The research consisted of the following surveys: a population survey, an organisational survey, a key stakeholder survey; case studies to highlight country specific issues; and a focus group with CSO professionals for further reflection and comment.

The discussion focused on the aspect of trust, the key common feature across the three projects, as well as on the perceived impact of civil society in Cyprus on policy making. What was evident was the low levels of trust in both communities. A high percentage of Turkish Cypriot respondents in the population survey (91.8%), on the question 'Can most people be trusted?' replied that 'they need to be very careful'. A similar picture emerges in the population survey in the Greek Cypriot community (85.5%). In terms of who they would not like as neighbours, 30% of Greek Cypriots and 50% of Turkish Cypriots responded that they would not want as neighbours 'people from the other community'. While these may seem high, they are lower than other categories such as 'drug addicts' and 'heavy drinkers'. When it comes to trust toward institutions, both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot respondents favoured the armed forces, charitable organisations and the courts, while both distrusted political parties . Furthermore, Turkish Cypriots seemed to have more confidence in the media than Greek Cypriots, who ranked them at the bottom of the list. The UN also seemed to inspire little trust in both communities, a finding confirmed in the UWE project.

This research has shown that civil society in both communities is perceived to have limited impact on policy making. Greek Cypriots seemed to be slightly more positive with 12% of respondents stating that civil society has high impact, against only around 5% in the Turkish Cypriot community. However the percentages are very low and in the Turkish Cypriot community 70% of both external stakeholders (e.g. policy makers and experts) and CSO people responded

that civil society had ‘very limited’ or ‘some tangible impact’, with the latter being more optimistic (10% vs. 30% said it has ‘some impact’). In the Greek Cypriot community there was a similar picture, whereby 82% of CSO participants responded either ‘limited’ or ‘some tangible impact’.

The issue of trust: conclusions

The following recommendations for building trust within and across communities were suggested:

- The principle core values of civil society need to be strengthened and promoted
- Increased training for CSOs on themes such as democratic culture, volunteering and accountability
- Young people should be encouraged to become members of non-traditional CSOs
- Diversity and tolerance rates need to be actively encouraged and increased.

For a better engaged civil society

In terms of working toward a better engaged civil society, the following are needed:

- Enhanced CSO profiles: visibility, transparency, accountability and representation of public interest.
- Increased organisational/institutional cooperation
- More effective lobbying and advocacy activities.
- Better channels of communication established with decision makers.
- Multi sector partnerships
- Increased international links
- More institutional and long-term strategy and finance

International perspectives

Building peace: universal norms, impartiality and NGOs – Dr Robin Wilson

Dr Robin Wilson

Robin Wilson is an independent researcher based in Belfast. He represents the Irish think tank TASC on an EU-funded project run by Index and the Cyprus Policy Centre, conducting a democratic audit of the two jurisdictions on the island, following a similar exercise in Ireland led by TASC. He advises the Council of Europe on intercultural dialogue, being one of the principal drafters of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue launched by the member-state foreign ministers in 2008 and being actively involved in the follow-up project with the European Commission, Intercultural Cities. He is the author of *The Northern Ireland Experience of Conflict and Agreement: A Model for Export?* (Manchester University Press, 2010), challenging the idea that the region offers a guide other divided societies should follow.

Dr Robin Wilson is known for his consultancy to the Council of Europe on intercultural dialogue and his experience of divided societies, including Cyprus. Dr Wilson rejects the ‘realist’ model of international relations often adopted in peace negotiations – because it perpetuates essentialist notions about ethnic communities. He offered an alternative model for peace negotiations and a solution in Cyprus which is based on:

- universal norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law
- the impartial treatment of persons belonging to different ethnically defined communities
- the encouragement of cross-communal NGOs.

Is *Realpolitik* realistic?

Internationally sponsored peace negotiations tend to be based on a ‘realist’ model of international relations. Just as states are supposed to be driven entirely by ‘national interest’, ‘ethnic groups’ are believed to behave likewise. This wrongly assumes one can define ‘interests’ of states outside of ethical considerations. It also wrongly assumes one can treat imagined communities as if they were homogeneous collective actors. In fact the best antidote to war is democracy. The statist projects of communal leaders—couched in the language of ‘sovereignty’ versus ‘recognition’—represent a zero-sum game.

Consociationalist model

Realpolitik lies behind the ‘consociational’ model of power-sharing. It assumes that ‘high fences make good neighbours’ and elites are best left to make private deals. But in Bosnia this has led to a dysfunctional state. The various negotiations on the ‘Cypriot problem’ have been premised on mutual communal vetoes. This problem entrenches the ethnic mindset in talks, even between sympathetic partners (Christofias and Talat) and in the constitution (hence the 1963 collapse).

Entrenching division

Lacher and Laymak (2007) contend: ‘The burgeoning field of conflict studies, for instance, tends to take ethnic identities and interests as given. These approaches accept the essentialist representations of the will and interests of political communities of the contending parties, and their definition of what the conflict is about.’ According to Constantinou (2008), ‘the inherited bicultural system of governance has had adverse political effects in Cyprus, not least of which was the homogenisation of ethnic groups and the rise of rival ethno-nationalisms and intercommunal competition. Thus, ‘it helped to solidify ethno-religious identities and naturalise ethno-nationalist claims’.

Universal norms

An alternative to mutual veto is to ensure that the state is seen as acceptable to all. It must therefore be based on universal norms: democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

This is a product of the post-war western European reckoning with the aggressive nationalism and intolerance that led to the Holocaust, which consigned ethnic conflict to the continent’s margins of Cyprus, the Basque Country and Northern Ireland. The goal is a state to which citizens feel they can show ‘constitutional patriotism’ (Habermas) and which promotes ‘constitutional tolerance’ regardless of nationality (Beck).

Impartiality

The key principle is to substitute state neutrality for the ‘politics of recognition’. Rather than the state being a site of contest of competing nationalistic claims, it can act as impartial arbiter. This explains the high levels of trust in Nordic welfare states. There are problems in both communal jurisdictions of clientelism, shading into corruption, exclusion of members of minorities and xenophobia. The argument over unification is bedevilled by the competing projects of extension of the Republic versus a minimalist confederation. There needs to be a reconceptualisation as a civic state guaranteeing equality of citizenship to Greek-, Turkish- and other Cypriots.

Encouragement of NGOs

Nationalism is premised on the separation of, and antagonism between, the collectivised ‘self’ and the ‘other’. Civil society, premised on the individualised citizen, is weakened by a party-dominated system. But bicultural exchanges have a prefigured way of reconceiving the ‘Cyprus problem’.

Anastasiou (2008): ‘In these encounters, a shift slowly occurred whereby a dialogic model of communication replaced the traditional pattern of interaction based on reified and objectified images of the other. A pattern of communication based on relational empathy began to take effect.’

Conclusion

Rather than continuing fruitlessly to pursue the consociational model to solve the Cyprus problem, the goal should be progressively to construct elements of a neutral, impartial federal state, no longer conceived in terms of protecting ethnic communities' perceived interests but rather as an emergent civic state guaranteeing equality of individual citizenship to Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots and others living on the island on the basis of international human-rights norms

From the 1960 agreements to the 2004 Annan Plan, the same communitarian paradigm was applied to Cyprus—recalling Einstein's claim that madness was doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome. The intervening period, moreover, saw dramatic changes in the wider international context, with globalisation, European integration and the growing individualisation of society. Dr Wilson argued that it was time for a new paradigm for a unified state in Cyprus, which was *not* dependent on a utopian commitment to a Cypriotness supposed to replace ethnic loyalties, but which promoted 'constitutional tolerance' regardless of nationality (Beck) and towards which citizens felt they could show 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas).

Discussion

- The difficulties presented in the Cyprus context were highlighted, where NGOs are underdeveloped and where many changes in legislation are driven only by EU regulations rather than political leadership.
- The approach of 'one person-one vote' has been used by sections of the Greek Cypriot community because, being the majority, it suits their interests. Turkish Cypriots have concerns about this as their views and interests are underrepresented. A solution based on a bicultural bizonal federation is what most democratic and progressive people in Cyprus would support. Therefore, what Dr Wilson proposed as an alternative model might scare off supporters of a bicultural bizonal federation and certainly Turkish Cypriots. It is possible to have a federation based on a consociational model and have safety clauses which permit its functioning.
- While the proposition of an impartial state is attractive it is difficult to implement in Cyprus given the political culture and entrenched interests. The processes for systemic changes are slow and the peace process needs to move faster.
- It was asked how an impartial state in Cyprus can be built given that the model presented by Dr Wilson is viewed by nationalist sections in the Greek Cypriot community as violating human rights and the rule of the majority. It was suggested that the way forward is finding a way to make a future agreement flexible enough to allow movement and settling of more minor issues after the agreement.



Sharing an Island – Documentary screening

The day ended with the screening of the documentary film 'Sharing an Island' by Danae Stylianou. The documentary has attracted a lot of attention in Cyprus and has received a Civil Society award by the bicultural project ENGAGE, as well as a financial award for bicultural cooperation from Sir. Stelios Hadjioannou, as part of the annual awards he gives for bicultural business ventures and initiatives. The film follows six young Cypriots who have never met before, three Greek Cypriots and three Turkish Cypriots. They are invited to share a house for five days and travel together across Cyprus in an attempt to explore their identities as Cypriots and reflect on aspects of the division. A trailer for the film is available at <http://vimeo.com/25312497>.

Building trust – international perspectives: Prof Diana Chigas

Prof Diana Chigas

Diana Chigas is a Professor of the Practice of International Negotiation and Conflict Resolution at the Fletcher School, Tufts University and co-director of the Reflecting on Peace Practice program at CDA Collaborative Learning Projects in Cambridge, MA, USA. At CDA she has worked with non-governmental and inter-governmental agencies to improve the impact of peace programming and development and humanitarian assistance on conflict. She has worked with OECD-DAC to develop an approach to guidance for evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding and with the United Nations on issues of evaluation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. She is currently co-directing an action research effort on understanding cumulative impacts of peacebuilding efforts. Prior to joining CDA, Diana worked as a facilitator, trainer and consultant in negotiation, dialogue and conflict resolution, at Conflict Management Group, a non-governmental organisation founded by Harvard Law School Professor Roger Fisher (and now part of Mercy Corps). Her work has included development of strategies, training and advice on preventive diplomacy in the OSCE, 'Track two' discussions in El Salvador, in South Africa, Ecuador and Peru and in the Georgia/South Ossetia peace process, and facilitation of inter-ethnic dialogue in Cyprus.

Prof Chigas spoke about her experience in the 'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP)', a cross case study of peace efforts in different contexts in order to search for patterns of success, and explain the reasons behind success and how different strategies work in different contexts. One of the case studies is bicultural work in Cyprus.

Contributions of civil society to peacebuilding

1. Bridging and preparing political space

Prof Chigas spoke about the crucial role of civil society in preparing political space, giving examples such as South Africa where NGOs worked closely with the church; Mozambique where civil society worked with political parties on codes of conduct; and Burundi where civil society worked with the media. In Cyprus, civil society played an important role in talks between 2003-04, engaging in advocacy and initiating political debates. Civil society is successful in bringing together people, however CSOs are not always included in political talks and the political space is polarised. The work of civil society should involve getting the hard-to-reach to contribute to the peace process, she argued, and gave examples of Northern Ireland (Quakers and church leaders), Mozambique (Protestant and Catholic churches brought together), and similarly in other places such as in Burundi and the Solomon Islands.

2. Defining and shaping peace agendas

In Aceh the way out for the rebels was devised by civil society not political parties. Civil society organised a forum for the military, police and politicians to come together. The civil society role involves doing advocacy and bringing the 'undiscussable' to the table. They act as the starting points for political debates.

3. Outreach and advocacy

Civil society involves the hard to reach and spoilers (those opposed to the peace process). In Northern Ireland, the Quakers and church leaders were brought together; in Mozambique, the Protestant and Catholic Churches are being brought together.

4. Relationships, trust and attitudes

There is less evidence of the cumulative impacts of civil society activities. Participation in activities has a profound impact on individuals but is not able to reach everyone.

Why has the impact been limited?

Prof Chigas reiterated that peace efforts do not automatically add up to bring about desired change and that, while participation in activities has a profound impact on individuals, they are not able to reach everyone. Wider societal impact can therefore be limited. In fact, long-term inability to bring about change can lead to the disappointment of active civil society members.

Prof Chigas offered some insights into how the impact of civil society can be increased and the following factors were raised:

1. Relevance of civil society activity

At present there are lots of examples of 'Nicey, Nicey' peacebuilding. These activities work in communities but do not go to a bigger scale and they do not challenge the status quo. This raises issues of what role civil society should play in peacebuilding and what role it should play in changing political power. There is an assumption that building trust leads to peacebuilding. Can civil society build peace or are we expecting miracles? It is clear that civil society cannot build peace on its own. There needs to be more engagement of civil society with the socio-political environment. How do we connect civil society to socio-political changes? There is a fuzziness of goals/theories around trust and cooperation. For instance, what does trust look like? Scaling trust to societal level generally happens when there is activity at different levels, including political levels.

2. Coalitions, coherence and effectiveness

Civil society actors working in coalition add up to more impact. This is not just the case with NGOs but also other actors, for example, the media, churches and trade unions. In Israel/Palestine the lack of a coalition process resulted in the left peace camp being marginalised, and this also occurred in Sri Lanka. Working together stops competitiveness and there is a connection with each other's work. Coalitions bring in more constituents and enhance synergy between activities.

3. Linkages

A. Between Track 1², Track 2³ and Track 3⁴

When disconnected, the peace process is in trouble. There is a need to include civil society in Track 1 (political process). Examples of this linking include:

- In Northern Ireland civil society working at grassroots level (with EU funding) engaged many people.
- In South Africa TV and workshops engaged people as part of the process and they had an acknowledged role

We need to consider what different types of civil society contributions exist.

B. Inter-community and intra-community work

There are lots of forms of inter-community peacebuilding work but intra-community divisions can restrict this work. There is a need to link civil society with the government/political parties. We need to get beyond government equals 'the bad guys' as this does not help engagement. More people, including more key players, need to be included in the process. It should not just be the politicians involved but reach out to wider sections of society. For example, in Kosovo many

² Track 1 refers to official governmental diplomacy, [which] is a process whereby communications from one government go directly to the decision-making apparatus of another

³ Track 2 refers to diplomacy via unofficial interactions, which may involve conflict resolution specialists, private citizens, non-governmental organizations ([NGOs](#)), or businesses.

⁴ Track 3 refers to unofficial third parties work with people from all walks of life and sectors of their society to find ways to promote peace.

CSOs were not working with key stakeholders such as the church and veterans as it was seen as too difficult.

4. Financial dependence on external donors

External donors funding peacebuilding projects can impact on the effectiveness of activities. Cascading effects of international donors e.g. counter-terrorism measures can restrict the activities of many projects. Donor timelines and accountability structures can also add extra pressures. Aid modalities can result in a project society not a civil society. Many projects have very short timelines— how to extend this? With the politics of aid there are a lot of orphans as the donors shift their agendas.

Implications

There is a need for more robust analysis and look at theories of change. Overcoming fragmentation and identity leverage is also required.

Discussion

External funding

- There is a potential negative impact of external donors on local civil society, since long-term external funding can create dependency and stifle creativity and the development of healthy sustainable organisations which are focused on long-term impact rather than individual projects.
- The existence of only external funding can lead to civil society engaging more with the international community rather than with local stakeholders.
- Prof Chigas noted the difference that it makes when international funders are based in the community they fund, in terms of building relations and sustaining civil society work.
- External funding can be used as an excuse by politicians not to seek further engagement with civil society, either because they might argue that the need for civil society support is covered or because they might not want to be associated with foreign money.
- In the absence of a genuine interest in reconciliation, external funding may result in a dialogue dividend rather than a peace dividend which would create further resistance to a political settlement.

Fragmentation of civil society

The issue of fragmentation in civil society was another concern raised by several participants, because it was felt that it undermined the impact of civil society.

Linking civil society with political and private sector

- Civil society needs to engage with the private sector as well as political sector.
- However, it was observed that civil society in Cyprus is not yet strong enough to attract the attention of businesses and trade unions, which have their own interests.
- We need to bear in mind the power dynamics in each community in a context where there is widespread mistrust toward the other community, but also a lack of a sense of urgency to reach a settlement.
- Prof Chigas stressed the need for a civil society strategy which aims to create or strengthen links between civil society and business, unions, political parties and political authorities. Overall she stressed the importance of thinking:
 - About the potential impact, the actual impact and how civil society initiatives can add up to bring about change
 - What are civil society and international funders doing to resolve the issues
 - Who are the key stakeholders – how can civil society engage with them?

Trust within and between Cypriot communities (Civil Society Stakeholder Session)

1. Trust within and between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities

Dr Norman Gillespie, INTRAC

- High levels of distrust *within* and *between* the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities
- Within – 85.5% of Greek Cypriots and 91.8% of Turkish Cypriots very careful about trusting people (CIVICUS)
- Between – 35% Greek Cypriots trust Turkish Cypriots and 17% of Turkish Cypriots trust Greek Cypriots (UNDP-ACT)

Trust and civil society

Although the overall population surveys carried out by CIVICUS have shown that people trust CSOs more than politicians and political parties, the latter are still very powerful and many functions of civil society are still largely subsumed by political parties and politicians. The explanation for this apparent paradox is that it reflects a democratic deficit in Cyprus in the sense that the linking social capital – connections between civil society and power brokers, policy development and resource providers – is underdeveloped. Developing such linkages is a challenging task but nevertheless an essential one if civil society wants to contribute to changing the prevalent political culture by building active communities, citizenship and increasing social inclusion. There is therefore a pressing need for promoting participatory democracy, which involves cultivating engagement between civil society and local authorities, administrations and international bodies.

Research has shown a positive correlation between trust and bonding social capital, which refers to the ties, links and networks within a community and the norms, values and expectations that support them, so that a stronger civil society can increase levels of trust within a community and possibly toward other communities. Indeed, the CIVICUS study in Cyprus has shown that individuals who are active in CSOs are more likely than others to state that most people can be trusted.

How does civil society build trust with the community?

Active CSO members are more likely than non-active to feel most people can be trusted (CIVICUS). People trust CSOs. CSOs build trust. A stronger civil society results in more trust. This is supported by positive correlation between bonding social capital and trust.

The role of CSOs in strengthening civil society

INTRAC's research indicates numerous ways in which CSOs strengthen civil society and build trust both within their own community and between communities

- **Developing the infrastructure** by organising, forming partnerships, developing networks etc.
- **Building capacity** by supporting other organisations to become more confident and effective in planning, management, administration, fundraising, volunteer support etc. More effectiveness and transparency = more trust.
- **Promotion** – reaching out to the public (engaging with mainstream and developing independent media), organising events/activities, delivering effective programmes, promoting active communities.
- **Engaging with other sectors** – building relationships between the public and power brokers, policymakers, planners, public agencies etc. (still underdeveloped).

How does civil society build trust between communities?

Trust can be built through:

Building bridges – providing opportunities for engagement (bicommunal)

Working together on joint initiatives/activities, including cultural and social events. Promoting dialogue and discussion

Developing pre-conditions for engagement (mono-communal)

This involves building capacity and confidence for engagement, promoting understanding and a sense of interdependence.

Discussion on INTRAC's research

Social media

Is social media (Facebook and Twitter) a useful tool to engage people? Research shows that young people do engage with new technology. CCMC are involved with this. In Cyprus people spend a lot of their time watching television. There is not much interest in civil society. One exception to this was in northern Cyprus where there was a mass demonstration against austerity measures imposed by Turkey.

Engaging with all sections of society

Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots do not trust each other. Many projects only bring 10% of the population together, what about the other 90% of society? Civil society should be society and community building. Participatory democracy could be encouraged by campaigning.

Before you build trust between communities you need to build trust within each community. This could be encouraged by more networking within the communities. A more multicultural approach is needed that does not exclude groups of people.

Legal constraints

The major obstacle to a collaboration between Turkish and Greek Cypriots centres around Greek Cypriots who do not want to legalise the situation in the northern part of Cyprus.

Can local authorities collaborate in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities? Legal constraints can impact on civil society. Some CSOs have worked with a parallel structure in both communities, with two organisations with one focus in two separate communities e.g. Engage, MC and NGO Support Centre – this transcends political and legal boundaries. The local authorities do not recognise each other, except in Nicosia.

Trust building as a process

To get trust within communities there is a need to build confidence and capacity within the communities. This needs to be done in a non-threatening way. Before building the bridge there is a need to build the support, for instance through civil society and political relationship building. It is also essential that human rights are met. There are examples of trust building activities, and best practices which can be adopted by similar projects to sustain motivation, and there is need for time and testing of different strategies to bring the two communities together.

Trust building takes place over a long time and it is complex, for example Cyprus youth organisations have established good relations and trust between parents and young people through bicommunal work. In this case organisations become a mediator and there are lessons to be learnt about gradual preparation, learning how to respect intercultural differences and creating incentives for cooperation.

2. Trust within and between Cypriot communities Dr Tony King, UWE

The trust between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities has diminished over the years. What are the incentives for trust? Why should there be trust? Does Cyprus need a Mandela to break the deadlock or does it need a De Klerk? In South Africa it took politicians to go against the received wisdom to bring about change. Civil society does not have executive authority – the state does. CSOs are seen as the cherry on top, not essential to the whole thing. This is the context which CSOs have to work in, but their impact is limited as they are left out from decision making mechanisms; only a select few have access to and dialogue with power structures.

A conflict dividend exists in Cyprus as it benefits many people for the island to be divided. For example, regarding the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, it suited enough people who profited from ‘blood’ diamonds for the conflicts to continue. In Cyprus the common perception is that there is not enough to gain from reconciliation. There are sections of the population that profit from the current division which means that, at least in some quarters, there is a lack of will to take necessary measures to address issues rising from separation of the two communities. At the same time, distrust between members of two communities creates real barriers to building a fully-functioning economy in the future.

There also exists a reluctance of Greek Cypriot CSOs and authorities to work with Turkish Cypriot ones out of fear of giving recognition to the authorities in northern Cyprus. This is another obstacle for cooperation which at the same time reinforces dependency of the Turkish Cypriot community on Turkey.

Focus groups show that the two sides are largely hermetically sealed off from each other. There are few links between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Most people said that the Cyprus issue did not play a role in their everyday life. Why was there a need to cross the Green Line? There are no formal government or economic ties, except between the municipalities in Nicosia itself and the chambers of commerce. Where do we go? Civil society is having an inward dialogue and is not reaching the rest of society.

Not only this, bicultural activities are excluding a third of people living on the island. Non-Cypriots number about 350,000 but they are not included as stakeholders.

Critical moments such as natural disasters can provide opportunities to open doors of cooperation between the two communities. For example the Izmit earthquake in 1999 in Turkey led to an improvement in Turkish-Greek relations. The power station explosion in the Republic of Cyprus in summer 2011 could have facilitated cooperation but the Archbishop (from the Greek Cypriot community) said he would rather sit in the dark and sweat than get electricity from the Turkish Cypriots. This was a missed opportunity as it could have been used to break the deadlock rather than maintain the status quo.

3. Economic perspectives

Prof Derek Braddon, UWE

The ‘Cyprus problem’ diminishes if you consider the economic situation. Cyprus plays a hub role as it is strategically placed between the EU and the Middle East. During the UWE research the focus groups were asked why they could not move from the past and go towards the future, for instance, with economic ties. The Turkish Cypriot community had more positive personal ties on the economic situation than the Greek Cypriot community. People do not cross the Green Line that much. The Turkish Cypriot community is more likely to spend in the Greek Cypriot community. The Greek Cypriot community did not want to support the Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part.

Discussion

A tale of two economies

There are differences in the two communities' economies: the Greek Cypriot economy is worsening because of the world economy and the Turkish Cypriot economy is artificially sponsored by Turkey. There are difficulties involved in bringing these economies together. There is a lack of incentives and support for businesses which might be interested in cooperating that would counter balance the fear of being seen to do business with the other community. There is also a limited ability of civil society to influence politics or policy development. In view of this, Dr Bulent Kanol of Management Centre suggested the creation of a think tank to generate and inject ideas at the higher level.

Methodology

Results from the surveys and focus groups showed differing outcomes. This can perhaps be explained by the different dynamics resulting from group and individual questioning, for example in focus groups there is more time to discuss issues.

The way forward for Cyprus

What are the ways forward to break the peace process deadlock?

Politics and civil society

What would a successor to the Annan plan look like if it was drawn up by a group of CSOs? There is a need for an impartial middle perspective involving citizens. Increased education in citizenship would help with this. Dialogue and an entry point for civil society to engage with political parties is also crucial.

Engaging with wider sections of society

All sectors of society need to be included in debates. We need to consider how civil society engages with minority groups. More engagement with the private sector and trade unions is also needed.

Civil society needs to get more connected with cultural heritage and environmental activities. Cultural heritage has been very successful at legitimising work. Bicommunal cultural heritage projects have been carried out without the attention of the press. However, cultural heritage can be very political so there is a need to comply with universal norms to neutralise this.

Economics and legitimacy

There is a need for greater flexibility regarding the unrecognised status of northern Cyprus.

Funding issues

Issues to be considered: Why do all the peace building activities need to be funded by external donors? If internal funding is used how do we ensure neutral agendas are encouraged?

Media

Civil society should aim to reach wider populations through schools and media. There is also a need for independent media in Cyprus.

Education

In the UWE surveys there was a lot of good will towards integrated schools and school books. Education needs a multi-lingual aspect. Educational materials have been developed in Greek and Turkish. The 'Sharing an Island' documentary showed that English language ability varied amongst the Cypriots in the film. It was also evident that there were misconceived notions of what the other side thought. Changing the education system will take over 20 years.

Closing summary – Prof Diana Chigas

Research shows that there are low levels of general trust between the Turkish Cypriot community and the Greek Cypriot community. This is also present intra-communally. There has been a change in trust, and since 2003 bicultural work has had little impact. The micro work is not having an impact at the macro level. There are lots of hidden agendas present in Cyprus. The political culture is present in daily lives, hierarchical structures and divided political parties leave little space for civil society action. This sounds depressing but Cyprus is not a unique case.

Implications

In order for levels of trust to be improved the following factors need to be considered:

- Need a strategy of linking civil society to political parties (maintaining independence)
- Linking civil society with funders. Multi-faceted and longer time frames to stop the competitiveness.
- What's the incentive? Is one side ready to engage, and the other not? Also there are internal difficulties. Economics – is that mutually enticing?
- Involve minorities in the discussions



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