

**all different**  
**all equal**

**REPORT OF THE PARTICIPANTS FROM THE SEMINAR:**

***Volunteering in Conflict Areas***

***2<sup>nd</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> May 2008***



***Ohain Lasne, Belgium***



**COUNCIL OF EUROPE**    **CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

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## ***Information about the seminar***

### **Background information**

Service Civil International is an international voluntary organization that has been actively involved in peace work since 1920's. The 43 SCI - branches and groups (in Europe, Asia, USA and Australia) promote peace through short and long-term voluntary projects and educational activities. Each year they organize in total around 500 workcamps and send/receive around 6,000 volunteers all over the world.

In 2003 SCI adopted Strategic Plan (2004-2009), where the idea of peace work, including focusing on conflict and post conflict areas has been strongly emphasized. Especially within the frame of Strategic Objective 1: 'to stimulate pro-active peace-work within SCI' in the *Specific Strategic Objective 1.2.*: "SCI organises international voluntary service activities in violent or potentially violent conflict areas in order to contribute to non-violent conflict resolution as well as to increase international awareness of such conflicts".

It requires SCI branches, activists and international management and co-ordination bodies to focus on the possible work on this area.

Some key-questions of the seminar were:

1. What are (pre-, post-) conflict areas where SCI should work in?
2. What can SCI do and what can SCI better leave to other organizations?
3. How (in what way) should SCI work in conflict areas to build peace in an effective way?
4. How should SCI prepare volunteers to work in conflict areas?

### **Participants**

The seminar gathered about 20 participants representing European and Asian branches of SCI as well as guest participants coming from like-minded movements such as Youth Action for Peace. The seminar participants have been involved in their organizations in various capacities - as project organizers, board members, staff, trainers, active members etc. they were selected on the basis of a written application, where they presented their motivation to take part in this activity as well as their plans on how they want to use their knowledge back in their organizations and projects.

### **Preparatory Team**

Preparatory team consisted of 6 volunteers coming from the European branches of SCI and taking up various roles during the preparation phase and during the event. One of the prep-team members was the coordinator of the Strategic Objective 1.

### **Acknowledgements**

The preparatory team appreciates a lot the effort of participants involved in writing the report as well as for active participation during the event.

We want also to thank SCI Belgium for resource and logistic support and last, but not least - to Aline Fernande who was a good spirit caring about participants' arrival and departure ;)

Day 1, 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	Day 2, 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Day 3, 4 <sup>th</sup> May	Day 4, 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Day 5, 6 <sup>th</sup> May
9:30 opening of the day				
GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER HOPES AND FEARS PRESENTATION OF PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION AND PRACTICALITIES	CASE STUDIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sri Lanka</li> <li>Palestine</li> </ul>	SAFETY AT THE PROJECT CULTURAL DIMENSION	SCI MANDATE	OPEN SPACE
<b>13:00 - 14:30 LUNCH BREAK</b>				
STRATEGY AND AIMS OF THE SEMINAR PEACE EDUCATION PACIFIST VOLUNTARY PROJECTS (PVP) REFLECTION ON THE WORK DONE	HOW TO ORGANISE A PROJECT IN CONFLICT AREAS <i>sharing experience</i>	FREE AFTERNOON TRIP TO THE FOLON EXHIBITION	NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION SHARING THE EXPERIENCE	PLAN OF ACTION - PREPARATION OF CONCRETE STEPS WRAPPING UP EVALUATION
Reflection groups at 18:30				
<b>19:00 DINNER BREAK</b>				
PRESENTATION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPANTS: Projects in Balkan region Projects in Nepal	INTERCULTURAL EVENING	Free evening	Free evening	Projects in Bangladesh Official closing FAREWELL PARTY

Day 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> of May

Seminar started with getting to know each other, presenting programmes and its objectives as well as sharing expectation related to this event.

In the afternoon there was a big focus related to the work done in the conflict areas (please check attachment: A1) and how it is related with the Strategic Plan of SCI (please check attachment: A2).

It was followed by the presentation of Peace Education concept implemented in SCI and PVP: Pacifist Voluntarily Projects (please check attachment: A3).

### **How to organise a Pacifist Voluntary Project: Guidelines relating to the adopted PVP-criteria within SCI**

Some steps to make it easier for you:

- Make a working/prep meeting within the body in your organisation, which is responsible for organising workcamps.
- Make sure that everybody is familiar with the PVP-criteria adopted at ICM 2004. Initiate a discussion on organising more peace camps. Read, clarify, and discuss the PVP criteria paper and make your own local version of it.
- Make sure that you are able to reach a common understanding of the criteria within your branch - some parts of it can be taken differently from different people, so it is very important to unify within your team, so that you can work on the same level. It might be necessary to adjust the criteria a bit. The main goal is to have more workcamps with a clear and specific focus on peace education.
- After clarifying the starting points, start discussing potential project partners for PVP camps, places, new projects, media contacts etc. Most likely you also have existing projects that could fit under Pacifist Voluntary Projects. Perhaps you can develop the study part of an existing camp in such a way that it becomes a real "peace camp". So don't forget to discuss which ones of your existing or already planned projects could fit into the PVP criteria.
- Since organising more Pacifist Voluntary Projects is a goal set at the international level it is important to report back to the international movement about the improvements we make, the shortcomings etc. Therefore it would be good to appoint a person responsible for PVP within your branch. This person can do the follow up of the projects, preferably together with a team of people, and report to the international PVP co-coordinator.
- When finally deciding to go for a PVP-camp make sure that the project covers the criteria and, more important, your vision of it. Try to set specific evaluation criteria and foresee in which way the evaluation will be carried out. Inform everybody in the branch of this special effort your branch is making. Also inform the placement officer!
- Bring "PVP" to the TEM: make sure that your pacifist projects are labeled "PVP" on your overall workcamp list you are going to present at the TEM.
- If necessary, put some extra lines in the application form for this project - for instance Motivation, Language Skills (if there are profound Study parts on Peace it is important that all of the participants are able to understand each other, communicate on more or less the same level, and definitely in the same language).
- Inform the participants. Before sending out the infosheet, check whether the pacifist character of the project is mentioned as well as the specific objectives for the study part.

In the evening there were presented projects realised by SAVA international working group and SCI Nepal.

Day 2, morning, 3<sup>rd</sup> of May

### Case Study Sri Lanka

Firstly we were warmly invited to Sri Lanka. The presenters promised a lively presentation of the projects going on in SCI SL since 22 years and a taste of traditional seasonal food that tasted delicious.

After a review of the history of the conflict we had the possibility to ask questions about the current situation in Sri Lanka and got some more interesting input:

Matching points (connections) for Singhalees and Tamils:

- Religion
- Tsunami: cooperation of all 3 communities during the Tsunami (after the Tsunami it stopped, as the Sigha government kept all the humanitarian aid)

Differences between Singhalees and Tamils:

- language (English is not common)
- complete separation in all aspects of life (inner borders for travelling within the country), but before independence in 1948 solidarity was big

Authorities of both sides dislike NGOs. The Sighalee government sees NGOs as helping tools of transportation of goods to the (Tamil) "terrorists". Therefore during the Tsunami a lot of containers of NGOs stacked and didn't reach their destination places.

In the Tamil area the authorities as well dislike NGOs, as these want to maintain the situation as it is and to keep out foreign influence. *This was followed by a long talk about worldwide networks interested in maintaining the conflict. Later on Soori Bandara was asked for his opinion on a possible solution. He favours a political solution such as a federation.*

SCI Sri Lanka:

Its big advantage is the mix of all communities within SCI Sri Lanka. So it is seen as neutral and trustful and is doing many cooperation activities to bring the communities together. Typical SCI SL was mentioned such as "signature campaign", workcamps, working in border areas, language classes, bringing people from different communities together.

Report on Ingrid Nystrom project:

She went to Sri Lanka from May to June 2005 to the most affected area by the Tsunami. The area was mostly destroyed and they worked on the rebuilding of a temple, what was regarded as the most important work as the temple would be the starting point for the locals to come back to this place again for living. The project was organized by SCI SL and a local (community-mixed) organization. She enjoyed the time very much. When asked, she said she didn't have any preparation on being in a conflict area but wished to have had it - both predeparture and on-arrival training. Altogether this was almost 9 months long workcamp.

A discussion came up on the general NGO involvement after the Tsunami, which was chaotic without coordination (e.g. there were a lot more orphanages built than orphans who needed help).

SCI Sri Lanka tried to set up cooperation with NGOs instead of competition (e.g. a joint training centre instead of 2 or 3 at the same place).

This was followed by a explanation of the on-arrival-training (orientation) that is now given in all workcamps. It contains background information of the conflict, advise how to be able to help concerning to the exact area of the project. Some participants explained the pre-departure-trainings provided by their SCI branches/groups. The difficulties when returning from a conflict area after such a heavy experience were also mentioned (no one to talk to etc.). A suggestion came up for branches to offer a network for that exchange.

Another question asked for the affects of the recent restart of the war on SCI SL projects. They reduced their activities basically on workcamps. There are less international

volunteers and it became very difficult to send out Sri Lankan volunteers. The local volunteers are not afraid, but their parents are a lot (in Sri Lanka grown up children usually don't act against their parents wishes). When asked about the SCI SL affords to provide security for volunteers the creation of a safe and comfortable atmosphere and integration of the volunteers at the local community (local trust-building) was mentioned as a very important impact on both the volunteers and the locals.

Two more projects were explained. One project already ended with some settlements maintaining and locals left taking care of them. The other action was a letter exchange of school kids. School children were writing letters to pupils of the same age in the other part of the country. Those letters were then read out loud in the other classes. It was a big success.

The last question was about the success of SCI SL to attract people. The SCI SL approach is a long term one: showing local people the idea of cooperation by going into communities and villages with a mixed group (making the locals used to by experiencing it). While the local people are approached rather indirect, a direct advertising approach is possible and done to university students. **Slow going process, but going on 😊**

**Case study: Palestine: the Shabab project (please see attached presentation).**

### **1. Project Partners**

- SCI Germany (Coordinating Branch of SCI)
- Zajel Youth Exchange Programme (partner organization in Palestine and local coordinator)
- SCI Midi Group (Sending of international participants)

### **2. Funding**

- project proposal was submitted to the European Commission (Youth programme) in February 2003 and rejected by June 2003. Reason: they have a policy of not funding workcamp projects.
- to get any support from the private sector failed

### **3. Structure of the camp**

36 international participants, approximately 10 locals

2 young female international campleaders (from Germany and UK, 21 and 22 years old)

1 Palestinian campleader (at the same time director of the partner organisation)

- Palestinian campleader (same as in the 1<sup>st</sup> camp) resigned in the beginning of the workcamp for personal reasons, 2 local Zajel volunteers took over his tasks. They didn't have any experience in leading a workcamp but did a great job. The former campleader remained in charge for safety of the volunteers.
- The changes were communicated to SCI on the same day, approved by the SCI coordinators.

### **4. Recruitment of Volunteers**

Agreement between Zajel and SCI-D in coordination with the Midi group:

- SCI-Workcamp, participants will be recruited from SCI-branches only.
- Planned number of participants: 15 internationals, 15 locals
- Acceptance of single non-SCI volunteers if there are not sufficient SCI-applications (like it was the case in the 1<sup>st</sup> camp)
- If there are many non-SCI volunteers applying directly to the partner organisation through the internet, a third workcamp -not connected to SCI and within the responsibility of the partner organisation only- will be organised.

### **Reality:**

- Zajel published a call for the 2 workcamps on its website and sent it to like minded voluntary service organizations, platforms, and networks.
- This practice also resulted in many individuals applying and being accepted for the camp. The impact on the project was that these individuals were often lacking a proper preparation.

- Difficulty to finalize placements with volunteers: a lot of last minute cancellations of already confirmed participants. Main reasons for cancellation: uncertainty concerning the political situation, fear, parents who didn't allow their children to go to Palestine.
- Difficulty to compile an accurate and complete list of applicants which created confusion for SCI partners and the international camp leaders (it was unclear how many participants were there).

The project began after the second Intifada in 2002, and the first workcamp took place in 2003. Since then, more than 200 volunteers participated.

Two persons from SCI Germany ran the project and took contact with the local partner Zajel. This organization was first involved in another project, then decided to operate under university cover. SCI made assessment with Zajel in 2002.

The whole project started then from the local organization, explaining what was needed.

The workcamp subject would be the reconstruction of the old city of Nablus, with a strong study part. But it happened that the old city was a too dangerous place to work, so volunteers finally did some cleaning work in town, and work in the refugee camp nearby. SCI wasn't involved in defining tasks; it was only careful not to cooperate with military forces and not to take part in the conflict itself.

Because of the situation in the area, they worked only with Palestinian, without any contact with Israeli.

Volunteers hadn't many contacts with local community; however some locals could for example appreciate the work they did in the refugee camp.

The study part runs through presentations and workshops. There were presentations about Palestine and about the participants' countries. There were workshops about the different religious communities. Volunteers met other civil organizations, and Red Cross. They also met refugees who told about their experience.

There was also leisure part when possible (because of curfew), with excursions, local festivals, concerts...

One of the main issues was the safety of volunteers. The local partner was very careful about security and very well informed. Still some of the volunteers were very excited to come and then might be not so careful, for instance by going out during curfew. SCI faced this risk by make them sign a contract saying that SCI was not responsible if they decided to go out anyway.

In fact, the situation is not so dangerous for international volunteers as long as the whole local community is informed that a workcamp is running and those volunteers are neutral: soldiers don't shoot international neutral volunteers. Anyway volunteers should be well prepared; SCI is responsible for the camp and for the participants, and volunteers shouldn't cause any damage to the reputation of the whole movement. Still it is a question to know if the preparation should be 'dramatic'; it is useful to inform volunteers, not to scare them before coming.

Also, the local partner doesn't work only with SCI. That means that even if SCI prepare its volunteers well, other volunteers can be sent without any preparation. Or should SCI propose its preparation to any volunteer??

An important issue is also cultural conflicts. Troubles happened because some volunteers were not informed or didn't take in account some local rules (do not appear without tee-shirt, have shoulders covered for women, etc.) Nablus is a very conservative city so this can cause problems for the safety of the workcamp itself.

Concerning the preparation of the workcamp, there were no specific funds raised for it. International prep team managed to go there and to meet by using money from own or from other travel reimbursements. There were also fees for volunteers (150 dollars for 3 weeks). Accommodation was for free.

It happened that a volunteer needed hospital treatment; he didn't pay because hospital valued voluntary work very much.

The project ran despite of big resistance from SCI branches.

Still the feedback from volunteers was extremely positive so the prep team strongly recommend continuing this work.

Another big issue is the frustration that volunteers can feel when they get stuck inside because of the curfew. But the simple fact to stay with local volunteers is essential, because the point of the workcamp is solidarity, not the work itself.

That's why it is essential to prepare volunteers, to help them as much as we can to face different situations, for instance this one. In other words, they should be flexible. It implies that a selection may be done among volunteers, dealing with their maturity (not only age or experience).

*Day 2, afternoon, 3<sup>rd</sup> of May*

### **How to organize a project in a conflict area**

Before one starts with a project in a conflict area and (later) send volunteers to this project, it will be good to plan the project well in advance, in relation with a conflict assessment. In this article you will find a thorough 12 steps plan to do this, the information comes from a Transcend training in Romania, see [www.transcend.org](http://www.transcend.org)  
One can take as long as needed for carrying out this plan; remind that the first steps can already take days or weeks!

#### **Step 1: Map the conflict**

In this phase the conflict will be thoroughly mapped. First phase is to mention all involved actors in this conflict. A conflict is seldom a conflict between two parties; in the contrary many actors are involved. So, The Nepalese conflicts is not only about Maoists, the King, the opposition and foreign countries, but also mention students, media, doctors, local NGO's, foreign aid.

Each actor has its own issues, goals and interests; it is good to mention them as well.

After this combine the actors and the issues. Last phase is to mention the relations between the different actors, is it positive, negative and why? As one can see, this can take a while (also on local scale), but it might be necessary to have a better understanding and overview of the conflict, and a better starting position to plan your project.

#### **Step 2: Map related conflicts/tensions**

Consider what is besides or near the conflict. In the example of the conflict in Ruanda, mention the tensions in the neighboring countries (Congo, Burundi), but also 'move on' versus 'justice', tensions in priorities in foreign aid, etc.

#### **Step 3: Forgotten actors/Potential actors**

Look once again to your map and think about actors, you might have forgotten and about actors, who can play a role in transforming the conflict.

#### **Step 4: What can be done?**

A brainstorm about your possible project, include all possibilities, in first instance nothing is weird or wrong...

#### **Step 5: How to do it?**

In this phase ideas are being developed and a plan made how to carry out a project.

#### **Step 6: Impact/risk assessment**

What will be the impact of your project and the risks. For example, when the harbor in Mogadishu (Somalia) was destroyed after the attack of the US, the World Bank made an assessment about rebuilding the harbor. As such not a bad plan... In this analysis it was however forgotten that citizens had meanwhile started their own small harbors, and that the rebuilding of the big harbor in Mogadishu would negatively affect the way of living of those citizens.

#### **Step 7: What has been done before?**

Many people would say that this step and the following step have to be before step 4 (what can be done). But it will lose the sense of creativity in finding a transformation project, as people will react on a proposal: that has been done before, and it did not work

The purpose of this step is to see if your future project (s) has been carried out before and what the conclusions were of this project in the past. In a lot of cases you will return to step 4 and/or step 5 again....

#### **Step 8: What are others doing?**

As peace worker you are seldom alone in a conflict area. So, it is important that you look around what others are doing, to avoid double work, but also to look if cooperation is needed or desirable.

#### **Step 9 and step 10 Do it and repeat it**

The actual carrying out of the project, followed by mid-evaluations and hopefully repeating your project again (and in a better way)

#### **Step 11: Evaluate, lesson learnt and breathe**

Evaluate your project thoroughly and make conclusions. The lesson learnt you can use in another project again. But meanwhile, take a rest, do not rush into other peace-project!

#### **Step 12: Share :-)**

It goes maybe without saying, but often forgotten. Other peace-workers can learn from your experiences!

Day 3, morning, 4<sup>th</sup> of May

## Safety and cultural dimension

### **Safety:**

From the points of view of the sending organization, the host organization and the volunteers, in 3 discussion groups.

Making guidelines and recommendations (do's and don't's)

### **Sending organization:**

We recommend to:

1. communicate with the hosting organization (or partner organization on the terrain) on:
  - possible preparative safety advice (example: airport)
  - requests about the volunteers they need from host to sending and the way they should be prepared
  - up-dates of the conflict
2. inform the volunteers about insurance coverage, regulations, etc.
3. make the volunteers well aware about the risks
  - in order to guarantee the quality not quantity of the volunteers
  - pass all the infos you have (get them from the host org)
4. offer the volunteers tools for additional preparation for example: non violent communication sessions

The information about safety should come from the host organization but the sending organization has to make sure to pass all of it to the volunteers.

The importance of trust between the host and the sending organization.

### **Hosting branch or local partner**

Before the workcamp:

- Send updated info
- Clear rules about mental and physical safety
- Insurance

At the workcamp:

- receive
- accompany
  - to ensure the personal mental health of the volunteer: the need of someone with whom they can speak regularly to ease the mental load caused by the conflict
  - making clear in the preparation to look at each other, everybody is everybody's mentor
- for long term programs: a mentor, one focal point
- be aware that volunteer can always do something unexpected
- clear do's and don't's
- flexible and clear division of responsibilities

it's important to establish a link with the local community, inform them about the workcamp, the organization, the goals and the volunteers.

### **Volunteers:**

Requirements:

- be well informed about the situation in the conflict area\*
- learn about the culture and habits\*

\* *These first points should happen in the sending organization or by experienced volunteers.*

- make contact with the host organization before going

- read the infosheet really carefully
- take care of travel insurance ( complex rules, sometimes the volunteers has to arrange it with his personal insurance company)
- follow the rules of the local organization!! Even if they seem useless to you for in case the rules aren't being followed properly, a procedure in SCI's to talk with the sending organization, a different procedure for conflict areas than normal workcamps
- remember that you're going on your own responsibility
- be aware that tasks and resources are limited, concerning the possibilities to work, don't expect to "change the world" and be aware that you are a guest
- avoid being alone at any time to prevent the kind of situations that were explained on the cheets, in order to not face dangerous situation, always stay with a local volunteer
- contact former volunteers
- have a contact person
- be flexible and expect the unelectable (all kinds of changes in the program due to a changing situation in the conflict area)

### **Cultural dimensions**

There were proposed some games for the participants after which there were expressed different conclusions as the following:

- You see some things happen but you don't get them, like it is the case when you go to another culture. This can cause frustration - can you be prepared for that? And especially prepare for openness? Yes, you can be prepared by some basic rules but not for the complex issues.
- This is especially important in cultural conflicts

A culture is constituted by **different layers**:

- there are the things you see on the outside
- but these actions that you see on the outside can be explained by invisible attitudes, beliefs and values.
- the attitudes, values and beliefs can be explained by some historical happenings and education.

### **The cultural dimensions of Hofstede**

All cultural differences can be brought back to these dimensions.

The difference between a conflict situation and a normal workcamp is that in a conflict situation there is less flexibility for accepting the faults made by an international volunteer. In order to not create even more conflict the cultural features should be more perfectly communicated to the volunteers. There has to be a good communication so that the volunteers are even more un-biased. Volunteers have to be even more aware of their own prejudices and the way they see thing in order to be able to deal with them and don't let them jeopardise the relations with the local community.

**Geert Hofstede's idea about culture is based on one of the largest empirical studies ever done on cultural differences.**

In the 1970s, he was asked by IBM (already then a very international company) to advise them on the fact that in spite of all attempts by IBM to establish worldwide common procedures and standards, there were still vast differences in the way the plants in e.g. Brazil and Japan were running. Hofstede researched the differences in how IBM was running.

In several stages, including in- depth interviews and questionnaires sent out to all employees of IBM worldwide, he tried to put his finger on the differences that existed in the various plants. Since the educational background of IBM's employees was roughly the

same everywhere, and since the structure of the organisation, the rules and the procedures were the same, he concluded that any difference found between the different locations had to be based on the culture of the employees in a particular plant and by that, largely on the culture of the host country.

Hofstede describes culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of the human group from one another”.

After several rounds of research, he reduced the differences in culture to four basic dimensions. All other differences, he stated, could be traced back to one or several of these four basic dimensions of culture. The four dimensions Hofstede identified were what he called power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. After some additional research, he added the dimension of time orientation.

- **Power distance** indicates the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organisations is distributed unequally among individuals. Power distance is about hierarchy, about, for instance, what is considered a normal decision making process in a youth organisation. Should everybody have a say on an equal level? Or is the chairman of the board considered to be able to make decisions by him/herself, when necessary?
- **Uncertainty avoidance** indicates the extent to which a society feels threatened by ambiguous situations and tries to avoid them by providing rules or other means of security. Uncertainty avoidance relates e.g. to the extent in which people like to take risks, or how much detail members of a prep-team would like to discuss in planning a training course. How much roomies there for chance, improvisation, or things just going the way they go (and then maybe wrong)?
- **Individualism/Collectivism** indicates the extent to which a society is a loosely knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care only of themselves and their immediate families, instead of a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups and expect their in-group to look after them. In collectivist cultures, for example, people feel strongly related and responsible for their families, and preferably look at themselves as member of various groups.
- **Masculinity/Femininity** indicates the extent to which gender determines the roles men and women have in society. Is there, for instance, an almost “natural” division of tasks between the male and female participants in a seminar that demands some household tasks should be taken over by everybody?
- **Time orientation** indicates the extent to which a society bases its decisions on tradition and events in the past, or on short term, present tense gains, or on what is perceived desirable for the future. How important, for example, do you think is the history of your region for today, and for the future? When people try to show off with where they come from: Do they talk about the past, the present, or the future?

Hofstede provides for several grids in which he places different societies (nations) on values along these dimensions. These values are based on the evaluation of the questionnaires and repeated research on the basis of this model. Hofstede’s model has been praised for its empirical basis; hardly any other study or theory of culture can offer a similar quantitative support.

On the other hand, the model gives no explanation why exactly there should be only five dimensions, and why only these dimensions are the basic components of culture. Furthermore, the model implies culture to be static rather than dynamic, why or how cultures develop cannot be explained within the model.

*In addition, Hofstede has been criticised for focusing only on culture as a trait of nations, and having no eye for the cultural diversity that prevails in most modern societies, for sub-cultures, mixed cultures, and individual development. The description of the*

*dimensions, at times, has the danger of implicitly valuing some cultures as being “better” than others.*

Still, for many readers, the model’s five dimensions seem intuitively very relevant to the make-up of societies.

#### Mandate of SCI and direction for future SCI action

- serving volunteers in general or additional version of conflict intervention?
- goal of this session: 1) SWOT analysis to make up strategic objectives to formulate a mandate in future

1) Mandate definition: task that an organisation defences for limiting its scope of action -> identity, define your own limits and your way of cooperation with other organisations; ALSO important for the volunteer to see who am I going with; mandate is NOT a methodology but follows from it, means rules of engagement YES but not details of action; mandate used to define Mission, Vision etc. Statements with the overall strategy

#### 2) Question to consider in SWOT Analysis:

how are we addressing conflict? Why are we addressing conflict (solving, easing)? How to deal with complexity and dynamic of conflict? Limits to actions under a mandate? How to make critical choices (involving certain actors, exit-strategies?) How to balance between local and international community focus (connections, do we make a difference: added value to local coping mechanism? Focus of SCI in Conflict Prevention or Conflict prevention or Conflict Accommodation -> parallel or one for all branches, what do we understand as Peace -> human security! First Priority human needs! Second needs Conflict itself -> how to deal with this

#### 3) Getting idea on mandates of other organisations

Peace Corps; PBI: space for peace to protect human rights (only for PBI: flexible to methodology change on request), principles of non-partiality, non-intervention etc. -> SCI not only of direct intervention; international SOLIDARITY Movement : direct confrontation with the opponents, unarmed resistance that is taking direct sides, but direct contact ! While SCI avoids military -> Problem SCI contact to military sometimes needed; Violence reduction Teams: observation of militaries, after preparation trying to reduce violence.

#### 4) In order to make our mandate SWOT analysis in 4 groups addressing all 4 issues

- Strength analysis (volunteers versus professionals) (Strength that are helpful to reach the goals **from within** SCI)
- Opportunities (Opportunities are strong points that support to reach our goal but are coming **from outside** SCI)
- Weaknesses (negative contribution to goals **from within** SCI)
- Threats (negative contribution to goals **from outside** SCI)

#### **Starting sentence**

That SCI organizes international voluntary services activities non violent or potentially violent conflict areas in the order to contribute to non-violent conflict resolution as well as to increase international awareness of such conflicts

## SWOT analysis

	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shared vision/beliefs conc. Peace (SCI spirit)</li> <li>- bottom up approach (grassroots)</li> <li>- internationally recognized neutral NGO at the same time always already present in the area (represented by local group/branch)</li> <li>- independence (financial, experience)</li> <li>- big worldwide network</li> <li>- well developed intercultural competences (we can work well internationally and nationally)</li> <li>- long traditional experience</li> <li>- flexibility/ variety of themes</li> <li>- neutral positions of vols (volunteers as facilitators between parties)</li> <li>- workcamps and study parts as main developed tool in SCI)</li> <li>- turn over-&gt; dynamics of constantly HR (human resource) flow -&gt; motivations, ideas =&gt; new projects (s=W same time)</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high vol. turn over dynamics: double work risk, decision making time, bureaucracy, loss of knowledge and skills, lacking continuity for HR and projects</li> <li>- grass root level approach: often lack of coordination - competences of volunteers in org. cause loss of knowledge due to staff turn over</li> <li>- internal organisational level maybe not bottom up approach</li> <li>- communication and coordination between partners and branches</li> <li>- lack of coherence (e.g. methods, preparation of volunteers only on branch level)</li> <li>- no competence in dealing with and preparing for psychological stress</li> <li>- goals are abstract / long-term (how to put in practice? How to motivate volunteers?)</li> <li>- Lack of added value of practical work</li> <li>- Lack of financial resources</li> <li>- Insufficient awareness and promotion of SCI as peace organisation</li> </ul>
	<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- complementing professional workers contribution (e.g. PTSD professionals + vol. Easing minds with games)</li> <li>- non-professional background helps for close contact to locals</li> <li>- solidarity work (filling niche)</li> <li>- raising awareness of the conflict in other countries</li> <li>- being an example to other org.</li> <li>- cooperation with like-minded org.</li> <li>- following trends as a tool to attract people and funds (e.g. CR<sup>1</sup>, NVC<sup>2</sup>, solidarity work)</li> <li>- linking with companies creating interest for working in c.a. (promotion)</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- too many NGOs in Conflict Areas</li> <li>- one-sided information</li> <li>- wider estimation of the c.a.</li> <li>- reliability on local partners</li> <li>- unpredictable situation / politics</li> <li>- impressions of volunteers a priori</li> <li>- reaction and behaviour of vols in danger</li> <li>- negative image of int. volunteers</li> <li>- lost of vols after project</li> <li>- replace/ interfere with local org. professionals</li> <li>- CIMIC (Civil Military Cooperation)</li> </ul>
<i>External</i>		

### Working objectives from opportunities:

Niche:

#### Work in conflict area

- Working on local level WITH the locals (not only for the locals) including all groups of the conflict (bringing locals together); reconciliation work
- Solidarity work (“good will” to commit oneself and interest of the volunteers show that you don’t need a lot of resources)

#### Work everywhere:

- Raising awareness of the conflict in other countries
- Include returning vols in follow-ups like presentations etc
- Lobbying on organization level (national / regional)

<sup>1</sup> Conflict resolution

<sup>2</sup> Nonviolent Communication

### **Funding of our work:**

- Take advantage out of the actual situation that conflict resolution, non-violent communication etc. is trendy and people are aware of that (use those contents to approach funds)
- Where to ask for funds is another question, e.g. linking with companies

### **Working objectives from threats**

- Competition with other NGOs (also for funding)
- Duplication of work
  - Using the knowledge of local branch/group to carefully choose the local partners to guaranty the volunteers will contribute in useful way (not duplicating) serving the needs of the locals
- Including the hosting org. in preparation of the vols (to prevent one-sided information)
- Unpredictable situations/politics
  - Set up of a communication structure that will be used in case of change of conflict/situation/politics
- Proper preparation of the volunteers
- Take care that the general outcome of our work (done on individual level) doesn't harm
- Avoiding replacing of work that could be done by local workers

*Day 4, afternoon, Monday 5th of May*

**NVC non violent communication** [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)

Observation

You observe what's happening

Feeling

Describe how you feel when you are in the situation

Need

Say, what needs of you are connected with these feelings

Request

Formulate a request to inform other person what you want from him/her

One thing is missing in the theory:

Give time for reaction

Discussion

I am frustrated/disappointed could offend someone. You take your own responsibility to express, what you feel and you are not responsible for others people feelings.

Suggestion might be to start communication with formulating less strong feeling you have/had, a "softer" one and give the real feeling later in the discussion as starting with very strong emotions may be difficult.

Exercise

Think of a situation that bothers you. Try to formulate a message according to NVC.

1. when I see/think of...
2. I feel
3. because I need
4. I would like you to...  
would you like to do so?

This pattern can be used in everyday conversation - be aware that non-verbal communication plays a role. If you have to rely on written communication, you can go through the three steps, before you start the e-mail/letter.

NVC = giraffe language

The giraffe is a big-hearted animal that can kill with one kick. Which expresses the philosophy that using NVC is not meant to hurt people using giraffe language.

It's not somebody else who controls your feelings, it's you.

The report from the seminar in Poland is free to download from spaceforpeace as well as list of feelings and needs:

### **What can vols do after a project in a conflict area? What can SCI do for them?**

Discuss the four following topics using the three points

1. Experience
  2. Input host & sending organisation
  3. Role of SCI on the international level
- Reassimilation  
it's difficult to make people understand why the experience has changed you so much. People don't want to listen to you talking about the experiences. People think you consider yourself as the "smartest/best" person and they don't listen to your suggestion you make from what you have learnt.
  - How can volunteers digest/deal with the experiences? Experience could make a person question her whole life and make her change completely and set other goals.
  - Alumni group, mentor for volunteers coming back evaluation programme in host country may encourage volunteers to make an exhibition/presentation on the country visited, offer opportunities for that best practices for receiving returning LTVs.
  - Joining SCI
  - Preparation of new volunteers: speak about possible situations like curfew, getting the feeling it might be too much, it also raises the question to what extent should SCI brief former volunteers to be objective on the project? Talk about positive and negative aspects, but do not stress one side too much. Returning volunteers being appointed to be a mentor for an incoming LTV or a new volunteers getting prepared.
  - Share reports between branches. Working group coordinating this? Put the reports to the protected part of the website to make them accessible to other branches.
  - Follow up

**Emilie Van Laer report from the project she was involved.**

### **Sailing camp "Samen op Zee" between Dutch, Belgian, Israeli and Palestinian youth for one week 2006**

"Children of Palestine" was own initiative for a solidarity action to go to Palestine later in the same year raising money and bringing warm clothes to children of Palestinian school. There were many things matching, so that the action went on and the Israeli and Palestinians involved now work on their own.

Amazed by so many people helping to organise - preparation during the sailing camp gave them extra motivation.

There were small problems with a trainer dropping out one month before the sailing. The biggest challenge was connected with the personal aims of trainers. Israeli had a total other view of what they wanted to achieve than the Palestinians which was also different

of the one of the preparation team. Experiences like these give hope to “hopeless” situation.

### Solidarity Action “Children of Palestine”

Songul Cengiz, Emilie Van Laer and Mohammed Reyad Shehada in collaboration with Taawon4youth.

#### 1) Introduction

This action is a **short-term, private initiative**.

The first step was the decision of Songul (24 years old, teacher) and Emilie (22 years old, lawyer), two **Belgian** friends, to visit their friends in Palestine and Israel and see the situation there with their own eyes.

This visit was a consequence of their participation in a peace-and sailing camp this summer, in the Netherlands, where they met Palestinian, Israeli, Dutch and Belgian youth.

#### 2) Aim of the action

Due to the difficult financial situation in Palestine and the importance of access to education, they decided to collect school material and some money in their local communities, in order not to come with empty hands to Palestine. Due to the short time-limit (only three weeks left), the action had a limited scope of action, but eventually reached an unexpected scale.

Due to the difficult financial situation in Palestine, lots of schools are closed. Therefore the action focused especially on the UNRWA school in **Qalandia Refugee Camp**. In accordance with the local coordinator of the project, Mohammed Reyad Shehada, the **most urgent needs of the children** were examined and taken into account.

As the expect was to raise only a small amount of money and collect some school material, soon the action took the shape of schoolbags for the poorest children, filled with some school material and winter stuff, like gloves, scarves, ...

#### 3) Action in Belgium: September-October 2006

The preparation consisted of contacting organizations, gathering information about the possible ways of bringing material and/or money to Palestine, and thinking about the steps to undertake in order to reach lots of people.

##### - **collect school material**

This part was done at the Institute Saint-Charles, in Peruwelz, Belgium. This is the school where Songul teaches geography. The children where invited to give some money and/or some school material.

##### - **collect money**

The money was collected through very local and well-focused action like announcements in conferences about Palestine, talking about it to friends and family, sending emails to all the contact addresses and asking them to send money to Songul’s private bank account. The solidarity expanded very quickly. That means that also friends and family started collecting money for the action, and then this money was centralized.

Eventually the amount of money reached the amount of **5275 euros**, or 27430 NIS. An amount that none expected to reach. That allowed us to reach more students than expected. The fact that the main part of the action consisted of money also allowed to buy the stuff in Palestine, in that way benefiting to the local economy.

#### 4) Action in Palestine (Ramallah): September-October 2006

#### 5) Action in Palestine (Ramallah): 30/10- 4/11/2006

Songul and Emilie arrived in Palestine, Ramallah, on 30/10.

##### - **First:**

**Choice of the materials** to put in the bags.

The agreement was about: one bag per child, with scarf, gloves, hat, socks and umbrella.

With the money left there would also be a biscuit and a juice per child.

- Second:

**Agreement about the quantity and the price** with the shop owner, looking after 950 bags to put them in.

- Third:

**Visit to the schools** in Qalandia Refugee camp. Meeting with the manager of the boys' school and the manager of the girls' school. Agreement about the way of distribution.

- Fourth:

**Preparing the bags.** In Taawon office, 950 bags were prepared in 2 days, with the help of volunteers.

#### 6) Distribution in the schools

The **distribution** took place in three different schools: Billin primary school, and Qalandia Refugee camp, boys and girls school.

- Friday morning: **Billin.**
- Saturday morning: **Qalandia.**

#### Additional information:

- <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/westbank/kalandia.html>
- Ta'awon Palestinian Conflict Resolution Institute: [www.taawon4youth.org](http://www.taawon4youth.org)

#### **Background**

Ta'awon is a non profit Palestinian youth NGO, established in Palestine / Jerusalem on March 2002 & dedicated to expand the knowledge and practice of conflict resolution, culture of peace, reconciliation and democracy within the Palestinians & the international communities, as a contribution in building a peacefully, justice & equitable world. It is very recognized of its huge number of volunteers and youth administration who were leaders in student movements and popular activities. It's a new established NGO but it is highly involved in the Palestinian community in different fields and it is very well known of its high participation and potential of community building

#### **Their Mission**

To contribute in building a Palestinian civic & democratic society, expanding the knowledge and practice of conflict resolution, culture of peace, reconciliation and democracy within the Palestinians & the international communities achieving peace, justice & equality world for all.

#### **Their Objectives:**

1. To spread tolerance, culture of peace, reconciliation & democracy through the Palestinians in general and between youth in particular.
2. Empowering woman role in the society in order to fulfill equality.
3. Activating serious, responsible, democratic dialogue between all the Palestinian in general and between youth in particular.
4. Encouraging youth exchange & dialogue between cultures, which will contribute to strengthening peace and democracy.
5. To achieve coordination & promotion of voluntarism through the Palestinians & especially between the youth as away for social development.
6. To Spread the means of conflict Resolution within youth particularly and the Palestinian society in general.

#### **Interest & Activities:**

1. Youth projects and programs.
2. Training services
3. Workshops
4. Humanitarian aid

#### **Contact Information:**

P.O.Box: 2462, Ramallah, Palestine. Tel: +970-2-2967930; Fax: +970-2-2967931  
Email: [Khaled@taawon4youth.org](mailto:Khaled@taawon4youth.org); Web site: [www.taawon4youth.org](http://www.taawon4youth.org)

Day 5, *Morning, Tuesday, 6th of May*

### **OPEN SPACE - Conflict Resolution team**

We used the open space to discuss the establishment of a conflict resolution team - it might have a different name, we decided not to discuss this on the spot.

This team is open and happy to accept everyone that wants to help making it work, even if only for a smaller (but not unimportant!) tasks, so please read and see how we imagined it and feel free to add comments, ideas and, most of all, to see where you can contribute ☺

This is how we set our **goals**:

- Establish an »on-line resources centre« - use a part of the Space for Peace ([www.spaceforpeace.net](http://www.spaceforpeace.net)) website to promote volunteering in conflict areas, but most important, to gather relevant information and reports about activities of branches, update the information about trainings and seminars, and start a forum on which several issues concerning workcamps in CA will be discussed.
- Main goal is to provide decentralised branches with relevant information, reachable in one website, and represent some kind of mentors for those who might need information, contacts and help in organizing workcamps / sending volunteers / going to workcamp.
- **Reactivating** the previous CR team mailing list (instead of creating a new one) and invite and encourage previous members to collaborate with us / share ideas, experiences.
- Gather **guidelines** from SCI, YAP, CCIIVS and other organizations, compare them and join them in guidelines suitable for us (selecting and training volunteers, preparing workcamps) - making them available on-line for all the branches and volunteers.
- **Promote** our »CR team« and our work within SCI - on events both on national and international level

We also started to make an **action plan** and divided some tasks already, but there is still plenty of need for volunteers and working force:

#### **May:**

- Reactivating the mailing list of the former CR group (Sabine)
- Creating a web page on [www.spaceforpeace.net](http://www.spaceforpeace.net)
- Creating a forum (Tina)
- Send out a questionnaire to branches
- Starting collecting materials (evaluations, programmes, reports) about projects we can use as our pilot projects

#### **June:**

- Presentation / inauguration of our working team in SCI (using mailing lists and emails of branches) (Emilie and Tina)

#### **August:**

- Presentation of our working team in the Summer university in Austria and on the International Committee Meeting in Zurich

#### **October:**

- Presentation of our working team in the North-South meeting in Belgium

#### **December:**

- Presentation on the ICM in Ireland

As you can see, there is plenty of work for everybody. Gathering and publishing these information and guidelines will represent an important and useful resource for branches and volunteers and this is what makes us even more motivated ☺

## OPEN SPACE - SWOT ANALYSIS

### *Strengths and Weaknesses of SCI to work on conflict-resolution*

Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Volunteers</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Willing to act / v. are motivated</li> <li>2. flexibility / mobility (v. are willing to travel abroad.)</li> <li>3. member skills (v. sometimes bring in useful qualifications.)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. limited preparation of the v.</li> <li>2. not-qualified, untrained, lack of information of the conflict</li> <li>3. work is not continuous</li> <li>4. v. avoid dangerous situations</li> <li>5. disinterest to participate in home countries</li> </ol>
<b>Structure</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. network (international &amp; local networks)</li> <li>2. SCI is independent of parties interest</li> <li>3. local partners/branches provide good access to information</li> <li>4. local partners/branches provide good infrastructure</li> <li>5. international partner structures are build on personal contact and understanding</li> <li>6. SCI has access to certain grants / funding</li> <li>7. SCI's structure is democratic (consensus leads to good decisions)</li> <li>8. volunteer culture/spirit offers an alternative to intercultural structures</li> <li>9. experience in international / intercultural work</li> <li>10. SCI has own training structures</li> <li>11. culture of non-violence</li> <li>12. local partner is part of a conflicting party</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. not partners everywhere</li> <li>7. slow decision making and fulfilling</li> <li>8. without partners we lack information, infrastructure, trust ...</li> <li>9. SCI is dependent on grants (poor)</li> <li>10. consensus sometimes leads to no decisions at all.</li> <li>11. local partner is part of a conflicting party</li> </ol>
<b>Level of action</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grassroots action</li> <li>• small scale interventions</li> </ul>	
<b>Kind of actions</b>	
Workcamps, midterm volunteer, long term volunteers, political campaigns, training, ...	
<b>Next steps:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. working group: how to integrate the idea of conflict resolution in the daily work of SCI; in all sci-branches, local partners, working groups, workcamps and individual volunteers.</li> <li>2. working group: to work out ideas for concrete field action in existing large-scale conflicts ( during pre-war, hot conflict and post-war phases)</li> </ol>	

*Day 5, afternoon, 6th of May*

### **Objectives**

S-1. Project should be based on local needs and involve local volunteers (solidarity work)

S-2. Improving the image of SCI as a peace organization

S-3. Improve coherence in organizing volunteering in conflict areas

- a) maintaining information and knowledge on a continuous base
- b) building trust (sending org. - hosting org. - project partner)
- c) preparation of volunteers

S-4. Raising global awareness on current conflicts

S-5. Stay focussed on solidarity work (fit the niche)

NB. -> position to like-minded org. [still has to be discussed]

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### **Draft Plan of Action (+Involvement of CR-Team/preparatory team)**

1. preparing assessment of local partners needs and NGO-interventions (potentially CR)
2. information activities
  - connecting CR-team and PVP-people
  - enhancing PVP camps
  - providing of examples during workshop
  - presentation of SCI as a peace organization in internal meetings
3. establish a central body of info-sharing (CR-team?)
  - preparation
  - evaluation of projects
  - evaluation of sending and hosting orgs

## VCA: Volunteering in Conflict Areas

### The Results of the Evaluation by Participants

#### Reflection on personal expectations

All volunteers mention that their personal expectations were met. Most of them even state that the outcome, that is the formation of the CR-group, is beyond their expectations.

*"I learnt a lot but the best point the result is over my expectations."*

Furthermore it is stressed by many participants that they appreciate all the experiences that have been exchanged and that they have learnt a lot. One participant mentions that not all expectations were met, without explaining in what were they weren't. However, the same person states that s/he is happy with the final outcome. Finally, some participants mention explicitly that the group atmosphere was very good, which had a positive effect on the whole experience.

#### Unanswered questions

9 participants state that they do not have questions at the moment. One states that if questions may rise later, s/he is sure that they will be answered successfully. 2 questions that are put forward refer to potential work for SCI in the Caucasus region, which indeed was not addressed during the seminar. Investigation of such possibilities will be conducted by the CR-group. Other people ask for a concise overview of the work that had been done before to not double or work. Also in this regard, the CR-group will collect all guidelines and evaluations that have been published before and will publish this on the CR-website.

*"Would be nice to know whether there are still people in SCI interested in volunteering in Chechnia/Northern Caucasus region."*

Finally, a remark was made that we should focus on practical work to. The

seminar was aimed to share experiences, and from there strategic discussions were held. We take this comment seriously, since SCI rather does practical work than talk only.

#### The objectives of the seminar

In general, all participants state that they believe the objectives are fulfilled. Again the surprising result of the formation of the CR-group is mentioned. Some participants however hesitate to fully answer this question; one states

*"The objectives are fulfilled, but we need to prove it!"*

that it is up to the prep team to answer these questions. Another person states that indeed we reached our objectives, but that we have to prove ourselves by putting them into practice. Remarkable is the statement of one participant who says that s/he does not try to have huge expectations concerning objectives, since decision making processes in SCI take a long time. This is indeed a relevant issue; strategic decisions have to be taken during the International Committee Meeting (ICM), our annual meeting. However, working

groups and seminar are able to define objectives and strategies to be ratified during the ICM.

### **The programme vs free time**

Superlatives are used to express the balance between programme and free time; people mention “perfect”, “well-decided”, “well done” and “very good”. It is noteworthy that many participants mention that they appreciated the amount of free time to have informal talks and discussions and to not get too much exhausted by the end of the seminar. This

*“Very good that evening program was usually free, made more space for discussions, get to know each other and digest the day.”*

has unmistakably contributed to productive sessions during the formal programme. A single participants

mentions that the free time “wasn’t enough”, but concludes that it was “not so bad”.

### **The methodologies**

The fact that we have split up in smaller groups during workshops, is appreciated by all participants. One states that the groups could have been smaller for everybody to be able to share opinions. In the same vein, a participant mentions that more attempts could have been made to involve the Asian participants from the beginning. During the group evaluation we discussed that there are differences between communication styles of European and Asian participants; the latter state that they prefer to observe and share their opinion after the discussion. At the same time, some European participants argued that they could have given

more space to the Asian participants to share their

*“I liked the grade of interactivity of the seminar - working in groups and then discussing contributed to faster and better results.”*

opinions. This is something future preptteams should take into consideration. Finally, the interactive structure of the workshops is experienced as very positive and promoted two-sided communication.

### **Logistics of the accommodation**

The fact that the accommodation was located in a calm environment and surrounded by nature, is very much appreciated by the participants. Although the place was rather isolated, the participants state that the transport by means of the cars was well organized. Furthermore, from the reactions of the participants it becomes clear that in fact nothing could have been improved. No one mentions that the lac internet facilities caused a

*“Great environment for concentrating on the topic.”*

problem. Lastly, the cooking and sleeping facilities are

regarded from sufficient to excellent.

### Group dynamics

The participants describe the group atmosphere as very positive and that they felt part of the team. However, some people stress that some people had quite strong opinions, leaving not much space for others to participate in the discussion. Consequently, one participant thinks that the most out-spoken people might have strongly influenced the

*“I felt really good. It makes me happy to be among people who have common ideas and are committed to work for them.”*

outcome. As a prep team we tried to involve many people in the discussion by splitting up in smaller

groups, which indeed was appreciated by the participants. However, prep teams should indeed consider how group dynamics influence decision taking processes.

### Other comments

Participants took this opportunity to thank the prep team for the organisation, the support and the room that we have left in the programme for participants to give input. Suggestions refer mostly to communication; in the future, we could pay more attention introducing

*“Congratulations! I am amazed by what I achieved personally during this seminar. You gave a lot of space to us.”*

ourselves prior to the actual seminar

e.g. by e-mail. In the same vein, to local participants supporting the prep team, it was not always clear whom to speak to. Apart from that, participants are positive, thankful and hoping to continuing working together in the future.