



Peace Counts on Tour

Peace Education in Conflict Regions

Station Colombo / Sri Lanka, February 2007
Documentation and Report

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Impress

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Peace Counts on Tour – Peace Education in Conflict Regions

Organizations

- Institute for Peace Education Tübingen e.V.
- Peace Counts project

Partners

- Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
- Bread for the World

Approach

- "How to make peace": Best-Practice examples of worldwide peacebuilders as a source of inspiration

Goals

- To promote peace education and peace journalism in conflict and war regions
- To strengthen local peace groups and alliances
- To create an impulse for finding new methods in conflict management

Successful start: Colombo, Sri Lanka; February 2007

- Opening event with one hundred guests
- Peace Education: workshops with fifty multipliers as participants

- Over 100 journalists and journalism students visited workshops for peace journalism
- Groups from all parts of the country visited the exhibit, facilitated by trained multipliers
- Even after the end of the exhibit, workshop materials will continue to be used and distributed by participants
- The program strengthened existing peace alliances and expanded networks

Methods

- Exhibition and opening event as a platform for dialogue
- Peace Education: workshops for multipliers, NGOs, mediators and peace groups
- Peace Journalism: workshops for journalists
- Sustainability: materials in English and in local languages for continuing work in this area

Support

The project "Tour de Paix/Peace Counts on Tour" is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, zivik Project.



Peace Counts Exhibition, Colombo 2007

Peace Counts on Tour – Peace Education in Conflict Regions

Over the course of a three-year international peace-reporting project (from 2002 to 2005), the journalists' network Peace Counts project has documented countless Best Practice examples of successful peacebuilding from different regions of the world. The project is supported by the German Auswärtiges Amt and the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa). The resulting publications have reached at least one million people.

Journalistic and didactic "Best Practice" examples have, until now, not been fully employed as a source of inspiration for conflict parties in crisis regions around the world. This is where "Peace Counts on Tour" can play a role. Together with experienced local partners, the Peace-Counts team of journalists and peace education specialists started a dialogue about "How can individuals make peace?" It includes three related parts:

1. The Exhibit

The experience of the exciting exhibit "Successful Peacebuilders around the World" offers the audience insights into ten peace projects in different conflict regions. The opening of the exhibit serves as a platform for meeting. Peacebuilders and the audience talk about possibilities for peace work and peace education in the opening podium discussion ("Peace Counts Forum").

2. Workshops

To complement the exhibit, the Institute for Peace Education Tübingen offers workshops for multipliers. Teachers, mediators or NGO representatives talk about the basics of peace education, address experiences of other conflict groups, and together discuss approaches for peacebuilding.



Opening of the exhibit and the Peace Counts Forum on February 19, 2007 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI), Colombo

3. Work with the Press

On location, the exhibit and workshop can also become an event for the press. Journalists have the opportunity to discuss peace journalism with their colleagues from the Peace Counts project.

Peace Counts on Tour 2007–2009

In February 2007, the pilot project "Tour de Paix: Station Sri Lanka" could be carried out successfully due to financial support from the German Auswärtiges Amt and the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen. Further stations are planned and are currently being prepared. The Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and "Bread for the World" are partners of "Peace Counts on Tour."

Sri Lanka: Pilot Project of "Peace Counts on Tour"

One of the first reports of the Peace Counts projects was dedicated to the peace work of Rohini Narasingham ("Singham") in northern Sri Lanka. Considering the tense conflict situation in his country, the idea to have a "Peace Counts on Tour: Station Sri Lanka" met with his immediate approval. In 2006, Sri Lanka was chosen as a pilot project.

Worryingly, Sri Lanka's readiness to engage in military violence has risen sharply in 2007, compared with previous years. The ceasefire, which was agreed upon in 2002, is being broken by conflict parties more and more frequently and intentionally. The government of Sri Lanka and particularly President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was elected in 2005, are openly advocating a military "resolution" of the conflict with the LTTE.

In the North of the country, the violence has become part of everyday life. Many people have had to flee. Bomb attacks increasingly kill civilians – also in the areas surrounding the capital Colombo and in the South of the country. Arrests and kidnappings of "suspicious" Tamils are also daily events in Colombo; the city is like a fortress.

Peace work by foreign and domestic non-governmental organizations is becoming increasingly difficult – and increasingly important.

Considering this situation, it was of utmost importance to find local and experienced partners with access to journalists and multipliers. Through existing contacts, the organization FLICT (Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation) was chosen as a primary partner. Two preparation meetings in Germany and Sri Lanka showed that the approach of "Peace Counts on Tour" also stirred up great support from FLICT, and they also



Developing ideas together through discussion: the basics of peace education

showed that those responsible hoped for a significant contribution to supporting their own institutions, the partner organizations and peace efforts in general.

In a discussion that went on for many months, the first station of the tour was proposed, prepared and implemented in February 2007.

Local Partners

FLICT was the main partner for implementing the exhibit and the related program in Sri Lanka. FLICT (Colombo) was responsible for organizing the location of the exhibit and the opening event. In addition, FLICT, ESC and SLPI helped to reach many multipliers for the workshops. The multipliers conducted some of the workshops for Tamil and Sinhalese-speaking groups. The FLICT representatives in Colombo, as well as participants from the Coaching for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding Initiatives (CCPI) played a central role in this. CCPI is an eight-month program implemented by FLICT. Another partner was the National Institute of Education (NIE).

(See page 5)

"Peace Counts on Tour": Sri Lanka – Overview and Evaluation

1. Exhibit and opening with a large audience

Around one hundred invited guests from the areas of politics, journalism, education and the community took part in the opening event at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI) in Colombo on 19th February 2007. The exhibit was open for particular groups until 1st March 2007, and then it was accessible for the public for several days.



Peace journalism as a challenge for one's own career

2. Peace education workshops reached around 500 people

Under the direction of Uli Jäger and Ana Mijic from the Institute for Peace Education Tübingen (ift), peace education workshops took place for one week and included around fifty representatives from different organizations (FLICT, CCPI, NIE, ESC, GTZ, Berghof Foundation) as well as interested members of the public.

The workshops were conducted in English.

The multipliers immediately passed on their knowledge and experiences to "their own" groups. In their own workshops, they led four hundred participants (e.g. teachers training at the National College of Education) through the exhibit and through deeper impressions and experiences. These participants had traveled from all parts of the country to come to Colombo.

The workshops were in local languages – Tamil or Sinhala.

3. Exciting discussion about peace journalism

Michael Gleich, Paul Hahn and Tilman Wörz from the journalists' network Peace Counts project led the four whole-day workshop for around forty journalists and photographers from all parts of the country. In addition, around eighty students from the Sri Lanka College of Journalism (SLJC) took part in tours of the exhibit.

The workshops and the tours were in English but were also translated into Tamil and Sinhala when necessary.

National media was interested in the Peace Counts stories. There was a report about the exhibit on television, and a lengthier report was published on the internet (www.groundviews.org). The newspaper "The Nation" has printed four reports about the peacebuilders.

4. Sustainability

The participants reported that the lasting results of the workshops for them include: a sensitivity to conflict escalation and different forms of violence, the promotion of creativity, the search for solutions to conflict or the strengthening of local peace alliances. The CD-ROM "Peace Counts. Success Stories from Peacebuilders Worldwide" gave the multipliers the possibility to continue to work with the Peace Counts materials even after the end of the exhibit.

Local Partners

Education for Social Cohesion (ESC)

The GTZ supported the Education for Social Cohesion (ESC) programme of the Ministry of Education that began in January 2006. It builds upon the extensive and comprehensive work that GTZ has been doing in the field of education in Sri Lanka for many years. The ESC project envisages that children and young people live in peaceful and responsible coexistence in a multicultural and multiethnic Sri Lankan society. Its main components are Peace and Value Education, Second National Language and Remedial Education activities along with Psycho-social Care and Disaster Risk Management. ESC is an integral part of the Education Sector Development Framework and Programme of the Ministry of Education.

FLICT

Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation envisions a democratic and pluralistic Sri Lankan society in which the needs of all communities are met, and one which is able to resolve its conflicts non-violently. FLICT supports Sri Lankan civil society to address cultural, behavioral and structural causes of violent conflicts. The assisted initiatives celebrate Sri Lankan diversity and challenge long held cultural stereotypes. They also promote ethnic and religious linkages and encourages citizens' participation for good governance. Since 2003 over 80 initiatives across the island have been supported with long term assistance towards peace building and conflict transformation within their communities.

FLICT is supported by the governments of Germany, Great Britain, Australia and Denmark and is implemented by GTZ. The Ministry for Constitutional Affairs and National Integration is the counterpart Ministry for FLICT.

SLPI

The Sri Lanka Press Institute (SLPI) came into being in 2003 and strives to develop a professional, unbiased and independent media, in both the print and electronic field. SLPI is an organization created and administered by journalists, editors and publishers and a meeting point for journalists of all ethnic and religious backgrounds. The SLPI offers training, advocates self-regulation and actively promotes change in media for the greater good of the public. It has organized several training programmes, and both local and international events. It works in close collaboration with the Sri Lanka School of Journalism and The Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka to achieve its goals.

Press Release: Peacebuilders Around the World

A photographic exhibition which displays successful peace projects undertaken by ordinary people in different parts of the world will be held from 19th February to 4th March, at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI, 100, Independence Square, Colombo 7). The photographs have been shown throughout Europe. Colombo is the starting point of a tour around the world.



"We were delighted": Evaluation letter from the Sri Lanka Press Institute, a media partner.


A ship cruising the oceans serving as neutral ground for parties in conflict to talk; villages on the Southern Philippines which declare themselves weapon-free areas; former enemies in Northern Ireland who now engage in youth work to prevent new outbreaks of violence – it sounds incredible: but in every conflict zone, there are examples of

people who have discovered methods to resolve conflict by peaceful means. On a worldwide unique expedition to over thirty countries, the Peace Counts project has documented the efforts and successes of these peace-builders, through photographs and texts.


The opening ceremony of the exhibit will be held at the SLFI on 19th February at 4:00 pm. Several photographers and journalists of Peace Counts will come from Europe to discuss their photos and texts. From 20th February to 1st March, a series of workshops will be held to understand methods of peacebuilding drawing from the successes of people in different countries. This is organized by Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation (FLICT) and the Education for Social Cohesion (ESC) projects, which are implemented by the GTZ, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), together with the Institute for Peace Education Tübingen and the Sri Lankan Press Institute. From 2nd to 4th March, the exhibition will be open to the public.

"Getting to know the people who build peace in one country might be inspiring for people in another," says Michael Gleich, founder of Peace Counts project. "We had the chance to travel to all these places and now want to share the lessons-learned." One of the most impressive ones, according to Michael Gleich, is the courage of peacebuilders to continue their work although weapons have not been laid down. "Peace can arise whenever bombed-out people have a roof over their heads again; when orphans find families again; when enemies speak to each other. When enough people are convinced by these local efforts, hostilities will stop all over the place."


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Peace Counts *project*



COOPERATION
SRI LANKA
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANY





Institut für Friedenspädagogik
Tübingen e.V.

You are cordially invited for the launch and a discussion on



Peace Builders Around the World

An exhibition of the Peace Counts project and the Institute for Peace Education

On the 19th of February from 4 - 6.30pm
At the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute
Colombo 7

Ministry of Education

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இலங்கை பத்திரிகை அகாடமி
Sri Lanka Press Institute

RSVP 011-2555247/8

On the invitations, the wide-ranging sponsorship is obvious.

Opening of the Exhibit

After weeks of intense preparation, the Peace Counts photography exhibition was opened in the presence of around 100 invited guests on February 19, 2007 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. After the traditional lighting of the oil lamp, Michael Gleich, the founder of the Peace Counts project, summarized what the project has achieved thus far. His speech was entitled: "How can individuals make peace?" Two experienced peacebuilders from Sri Lanka answered questions from the audience: the 79-year-old Sinhalese Kamala Peiris, who is active in the area of peace education and human rights, and the Tamil Rohini Narasingham, whose project called SEED was documented in Peace Counts (www.peace-counts.org). The ceremony was led by Sharmini Boyle, chief editor at Young Asia Television.

A Successful Beginning

The place cards on the tables made it clear that the hosts were brave enough to try unusual methods for Sri Lanka. Photos from the exhibit were used as entrance tickets, and the guests recognized their tables based on their photo from the reports. In this way, mixed groups were formed from the very beginning. FLICT chose this method, and it proved to be very beneficial for the development of the group and plenum discussions during the evening.

Dialogue: Peacebuilders and the Audience

How do I define peace? What about peace work? How can I measure my own success? Can everyone be a "peacebuilder?" These questions were at the heart of the roundtable talks as well as the audience's contributions in the following discussion.

The Courage to Live

Singham, who lives in the North of the country, believes working for peace means, first and foremost, giving hope. This can only be successful if we approach people, speak with them, recognize their basic needs and support them in building a new life. Living in a conflict region means living together with people who have lost their lives – in many aspects. We are successful when we are able to help these people attain a new life and give them the courage to not only recognize their rights, but also to stand up for them.

Taking Responsibility

According to Kamala Peires, the first necessary step towards peace is the insight that peace is not the opposite of war. The 79-year-old Singhalese, who has been active in this area for decades, sees education as crucial. It starts with children and young people, although parents and educators

cannot be forgotten. These are the role models for children and young people. Firstly, it is important to promote certain values and to show children and young people that there are always at least two sides to a story. Applied to the situation in Sri Lanka today, we have to take into the account the problem that the people in the South do not know what is happening in the North. They must recognize what conditions people in other parts of the country have to live with, and they have to take responsibility for this.

Peace Activism

In addition to the system of education, the media can be given a central function here. Nevertheless, according to Michael Gleich, we still need a free and high-quality level of reporting. People have to be supported in realizing the whole situation, and to raise their voices in order to change this situation. According to Michael Gleich, as long as no



Active group discussions at the opening event.

one takes responsibility and everyone sees themselves as victims, we cannot live together peacefully. Everyone has the possibility to be a peace-builder. If we can encourage people to develop certain capabilities like empathy or perseverance, then everyone can contribute to peace, regardless of their personal and professional background. Just as it is possible to learn to live in peace, it is also possible to learn how to build peace.

Forming a Network

In workgroups as well as plenum discussions, the participants of the event confirmed the need to form new networks and alliances. One participant said: "It is a really crazy that we need this opportunity to sit together and discuss."



"Talking Peace in times of war is a difficult endeavor. In Sri Lanka it is like walking a tightrope. The exhibition 'Peacebuilders Around the World' has been found the appropriate tone. In a calm and discreet way the exhibition drew a colorful picture on how peace work is done on the ground.

Journalists managed to promote Peace as an exiting topic. May Sri Lanka be impressed by the heart-rending performance."

Cornelius Huppertz, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany – Partnership Office, Colombo, Sri Lanka



Opening forum with Sharmini Boyle, Rohini Narasingham, Kamala Peiris and Michael Gleich.

Exhibit: A Journey around the World

Ten reports from the Peace Counts project were chosen for the exhibit, and the stories were made into display boards.

- Colombia/Peace through Soccer
- Japan/Peace Boat: Open Minds on the Open Sea
- Brazil/Viva Rio
- Philippines/Islands of Peace in a War-Torn Land
- Northern Ireland/From Prison to Youth Center
- Mali/Ambassador in Indigo
- Israel/Talking Beats Fighting
- Sri Lanka/Reconstructing the North
- South Africa/Gentle Words for Tough Guys
- Bosnia-Herzegovina/A Bridge for Schizopolis

These examples portray individuals and organizations' work towards peace in different conflict regions and backgrounds. They also show approaches for constructive conflict management in post-conflict societies.

How does the exhibit work?

- An informational panel at the beginning gives an overview of Peace Counts

- Each exhibit board corresponds to one of the ten countries
- The captions are in English. Translations can be provided on separate sheets
- The exhibit boards can be moved freely in the room
- A permanent projector presentation of pictures, which are animated like a movie, displays a broader selection of pictures

Requirements:

- 100 to 300 m²
- No hanging system needed
- If available: TV-screen or wide-screen for beamer presentation
- Some chairs/sofas for resting
- The exhibit is delivered in three flight cases
- One person to help the Peace Counts coordinator to install the exhibition

Time frame:

- Half a day to set up the exhibition
- Preferred time frame for the exhibition: two weeks
- Inauguration conference on the first day of the exhibition with participation of a peacebuilder



The team from Young Asia TV filming during the opening event



A visitor in front of the display board about building peace in Mali



Intensive workshops with representatives from FLICT and other partner organizations. Interpretations of the photos form the basis for the discussion about different interpretations of the word "peace"

Peace Education: Workshops for Multipliers

Place: Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo

Time: 20th to 24th February, 2007

Duration: 10:00–17:00 for each workshop

Facilitators: Uli Jäger, Ana Mijic/Institute for Peace Education Tübingen in cooperation with Monica Alfred and Shyamika Jayasundara.

Learning Peace – Building Peace

"Which photo in the exhibition best symbolizes for you the motto 'Individuals can make peace'?"

Focusing on this picture, how do you interpret the word 'peace'?" With this challenge, the participants began the peace education workshops in Colombo. The visual introduction proved itself to be very productive. The photos from different conflict regions around the world inspired participants to rethink their personal opinions and visions about peace. Is

peace simply the absence of war? How do security, justice or human rights affect peace? How can we achieve peace? How can people promote the peace process in a country? Each country has to develop its own "Roadmap for Peace" in a significant inner-societal dialogue and can learn from the experiences in other regions. This was one of the main messages of the intensive introductory discussion.

The Participants of the Workshop

Four groups included experienced multipliers. They came from all different parts of the country. Some were almost finished with an eight-month CCPI course, others were experienced in teaching, others in youth work. In their everyday professional life, they were confronted in different ways by the problems of different cultures and religions living together in Sri Lanka. Whether they were Tamil or Sinhalese – dealing with open and hidden forms of violence was a prominent topic for everyone.



The beginning of the workshop included walking through the exhibit and answering a series of questions

New Ideas

As a team leader of one of the development projects in Sri Lanka supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) I have attended some of the activities your "peace counts" team has conducted in February 2007 in Colombo. I would like to thank you for all your efforts made to contribute to peace building and conflict mitigation efforts. I believe that the exhibition coupled with workshops on those topics have come very timely and from the feed-back I got from colleagues of mine and other participants of the various activities can sensitise a society embedded in conflict. In our own work with various stakeholders within public administration, we are currently developing a conflict transformation strategy which is a cross-cutting strategy operating through all our activities with key stakeholders. Conflict transformation for us stands as part of "Good Governance," so that Governance would include the issues of transparency, leadership, etc. as well as gender, conflict sensitivity, peace building / conflict mitigation. In this context we have got new ideas of what can be done to further this, admittedly very difficult task. Your work and activities need to be commended. I wish you all success and hope that many more people in different countries will have the chance to get exposed to "peace counts."

Walter Keller, Colombo, 9th February, 2007
Senior Advisor, German Development Cooperation,
Performance Improvement Project (PIP)
Trincomalee / Sri Lanka

Therefore, everyone wished to discuss the basics of peace education and to learn from the experiences of the Peace Counts reports. Many participants had very practical expectations. For them, the most important thing was to prepare their own workshop in order to teach other groups (in their own language) about the exhibit.

Basics of Peace Education

Excited by the reports of the exhibit, there was great interest to reach a consensus about terms like violence and non-violence, conflict escalation and conflict management. Despite the short amount of time available, this interest could be met using the picture boxes "Culture of Conflict" and "Stories of Conflict" from the exhibit. The participants greatly enjoyed applying the drawings and photo stories to Sri Lanka and discussing how these picture boxes could be used in their own educational work.

Paths out of Violence

How can people and societies escape the spiral of violence? To deal with this central question, the reports of the Peace Counts project turned out to be of great importance. The photos and the short article from the exhibit wakened the interest and offered the participants a first impression of the project. In the plenum, the CD-ROM "Peace Counts. Success Stories from Peacebuilders Worldwide" helped to delve deeper into the topics. This CD-ROM contains ten multimedia reports with background information. The participants were presented with a selection of the reports. In small groups, they discussed paths out of violence and described how this related to their own situation in Sri Lanka.

The exhibition was a platform for me to understand what does peace means. (...) The photos of the exhibition spoke louder than words for me. Those pictures explain a lot. Behind each picture I can see a story.

Sr. Christobel, Familian Counselling Centre, Mannar

I think from a trainer's perspective it is good to get stories from the outside. If you are just talking about the conflict in your country you could be preoccupied. Sometimes it is helpful to get stories from the outside, to discuss these stories and then to come back to the own case. It is actually a danger here because people are involved directly in the conflict – it is easier to be objective when you are talking about different conflict regions.

Shyamika Jayasundara, Flict – Advisor Conflict Transformation and Capacity Building



Getting deeper into the topic using cards from the picture box "Culture of Conflict" from the Institute for Peace Education

Three examples:

- In the report "Colombia/Peace through Soccer," the question was addressed how sports can be used as an approach for violence prevention for young people in Sri Lanka.
- The report "Philippines/ Islands of Peace in a War-Torn Land" gave examples about how villages can become peace zones. This proved to be inspirational for the situation in northern Sri Lanka!
- Using the report "Northern Ireland/From Prison to Youth Center," participants intensively discussed how people with a violent background can change their lives and how they can be supported in doing so.

In order to go into more detail about the contents of the exhibit and in order to create a platform for an open discussion about the topic "How can individuals make peace," different one-day workshop sessions were developed and implemented:

Topics

- Conflict, Violence, War and Peace
- Conflict Escalation
- Paths to Violence / Paths away from Violence
- Peace Strategies

Materials

- Exhibition
- Photos from the exhibit in A-4 format
- Sinhalese and Tamil texts from the exhibit
- The complete reports in English

Additional materials

- CD-ROM "Peace Counts. Success Stories from Peacebuilders Worldwide" ift
- Picture Box "Culture of Conflict", ift
- Bilderbox "Konfliktgeschichten", ift (Picture Box "Stories of Conflict")



Visualizing and Contextualizing: with their own scenarios, participants of the workshops use pictures to make a story about moral courage in violent situations in Sri Lanka



Michael Gleich talking with journalists from northern Sri Lanka about experiences and approaches to peace journalism

Peace Journalism: Workshops for Journalists and Photographers

Place: Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo

Time: 20th to 23rd February, 2007

Duration: 10:00–17:00 for each workshop

Facilitators: Michael Gleich, journalist; Tilman

Wörz, journalist; Paul Hahn, photographer.

Building Peace – Peace Journalism

Around 100 journalists and photographers from all parts of Sri Lanka participated in the workshops. Peace does not offer any spectacular air raids or refugee evacuations like war. That leads to a focus on "bad news" not only in peaceful Germany, but also to a greater extent in conflict regions. Peace-builders, who work in times of crises despite "common sense", are often ostracized from mainstream media. Peace Counts adopted this hypothesis for organizing the workshops, and it was confirmed in conversations with the participants.

Workshops with journalists

Morning session:

1. Introduction of the facilitators and participants
2. Documenting Peace: The experience of Peace Counts project
3. Presentation and Reading of a Peace Counts story
4. Discussion about the story

Afternoon Session:

1. Journalistic storytelling: How to do it?
2. Discussion of selected picture stories
3. Sri Lanka in the media: Participants present their materials (pictures, texts, radio features)
4. Peace in the media: How to apply the Peace Counts-experience to Sri Lanka?

How can peace be reported about in an exciting and meaningful way? In one-day workshops, instructors from Peace Counts explained journalistic techniques, which helped to make the project successful in the German and European media.

Propositions of the Workshops

The central three propositions of the workshops include:

- Peace is not an event, rather a process, and therefore it cannot be described as news.
- A report, which closely follows the articles and pictures of the Peace Counts peacebuilders, is the appropriate means to carry across motives, causes, answers and developments.
- For this reason, it needs more time, more space and more stylistic accuracy than normal news journalism.



Using some of his own photographs in a workshop, the photographer Paul Hahn explains approaches to peacebuilding in the Philippines

Methods in the Workshop

The Peace Counts instructors use

- the exhibition.
- presentations with a projector with individual picture examples, emphasizing the Peace Counts reports about the peacebuilder Singham in northern Sri Lanka.
- translated sections from the articles.

After a lengthy introductory round, in which the instructors learn about the daily work conditions



Language as a multifaceted challenge: translation from English to Tamil and Sinhala during a workshop

of the participants, they describe the Peace Counts project using the exhibit. The participants were encouraged to comment on the photos. As expected, they were reserved at first. After a few hours, they participated and then initiated an evaluation at the end whether and how Peace Counts reports could be adapted to Sri Lanka.

Organization

Press partners in Sri Lanka included the Sri Lanka Press Institute (SLPI), which is part of a publishing organization, to which the Sri Lanka College of Journalism and the Media Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka also belong.

The SLPI organized a photographers' group with twenty participants for the first day. The Institute put together a reporters' group for the second day (although twenty reporters registered, only five were present). The participants of both groups were full-time employees for newspapers and magazines.

On the third and fourth day, fifteen journalists came from the province of Trincomalee. This is a region, where there was active fighting during the

Participants' Opinions

"We can report about everything theoretically, and also about peace projects. In practice, it all depends on the chief editor. If he is a friend of peace, then he will give us the space. If he is not, then you can completely forget it."

"On my own time, I have already written a report about civilian victims in the North. My boss did not want it. I had even used my vacation time to write this."

time of the Peace Counts exhibit. Half of them worked for state television and the other half for local newspapers. The newspaper reporters were all former teachers. It took eleven hours for the journalists to come to Colombo (the travel time is actually only six hours, but because of many road-blocks, it was much higher). Peace Counts' partner FLICT provided buses and food for the journalists.

Both of the first groups were mostly Sinhalese, and the groups from the provinces were mostly Tamils. All groups were mixed. FLICT provided translators.

Over the course of two days, an instructor from Peace Counts presented the exhibit to forty journalism students from the Sri Lanka College of Journalism each day. In total, 120 journalists and photographers participated in the workshops.

"We are still young. We have grown up with a 20 year-old conflict and have been completely affected by it. For us, it is not bad news is good news – for us, news is strictly bad. But it doesn't have to be like this. We have to open our eyes again to see good news."

"The workshop emphasized what I always wanted to do: report about positive, constructive projects. I now feel strengthened and will set out to tackle such reports."

"I promise to God: I will soon report with new enthusiasm about such grassroots peace projects. After this seminar, I am completely motivated to do this."

"Many of the photos of Peace Counts cannot be understood at first glance. Only through the explanations do you realize the connection to the greater story."

"We traveled here with fear in our hearts. Today is the fifth anniversary of the ceasefire agreement. There was massive propaganda on both sides to topple the agreement. We do not know whether fighting will break out in the next few days."

"It would be great if the workshops could be held in the North near these regions where there are conflicts, and not just in the capital."

"I move neighborhoods a few times a week. One of my colleagues was shot after he photographed five Tamil young people in the morgue. They had all been shot in their sleep. The military prevented an autopsy and claimed that the young people had played with bombs. The photo was proof that they had been executed."



The journalist Tilman Wörz coordinated the Tour de Paix and led workshops with journalists.



The workshops were characterized by many questions, open discussions and harrowing reports from the journalists' experiences.

Enabling People to be Peacebuilders: A Partner's Report

Dr. Wijaya Jayatilaka, Director FLICT
Dr. Stephanie Schell-Faucon, GTZ Senior Advisor
Conflict Transformation

The Peace Counts Exhibition as a learning experience was quite a novelty for Sri Lanka. Exhibitions are usually seen and associated with science and technology and used extensively as "infotainment." Peace Counts gave us a new opportunity in "edutainment." The exhibition was organized in coordination with training and reflection on the dynamics of conflicts and the challenges of peacebuilding for specific groups invited for the occasion. The workshops were offered to journalists, teachers, university students, youth networks and many peacebuilding activists of all walks of life. They were facilitated by Sri Lankan groups who were trained for two days by the resource persons from the Institute for Peace Education and the Peace Counts project.

Considering that one of the main root causes of the Sri Lankan conflict is the language divide,

manifested especially in the education and media system, it was a great pleasure to see how facilitator groups were trained in English and afterwards used their freshly achieved skills and knowledge to work in their local languages with mixed groups of Tamil and Sinhalese speaking participants. Altogether, nineteen local facilitators trained around 400 persons who all have great potential to further share and multiply their learning from the one-day training workshops.

The participants of the training workshops found the pictures and the stories behind them fascinating and inspiring. It was interesting that each different group related more closely to one or another of the pictures whose context was similar to their lives and work. Thus, school teachers related to the story related to the school linking Palestinians and Israelis. Those working with communities found the story from South Africa most interesting and participants coming directly from the conflict areas were inspired by the story from the Philippines. Many felt akin to the situation in countries with long-drawn-out conflicts like in the Philippines, lessons from there had direct relevance. The most popular was the story from Colombia.



Dr. Stephanie Schell-Faucon



Dr. Wijaya Jayatilaka

Many felt that sports in Sri Lanka offer an excellent entry point for peacebuilding. In times where political discussions and statements get more and more difficult and dangerous, we need to urgently find less political, less controversial ways and alternative safe spaces for people to stay connected across the divide.

For FLICT (Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation) and all its partners, the experience and knowledge gained has been tremendous. The great effort it took FLICT to coordinate the work with groups from all over the country was definitely worth it. We had the opportunity to share with our partner organisations new inspiring and innovative methods how to constructively engage in a larger discourse with the public through exhibitions. The different materials (CD, pictures, stories, case studies etc.) used for the training workshops were given to the trained facilitators for future use. There was immense interest in adaptations and developing local material but more importantly using the approach and methodologies to train and mobilize peacebuilders around Sri Lanka.



Rohini Narasingham (Singham), Sri Lanka

Reporting in Sri Lanka

Bad news is good news: The notion that disaster and despair are more newsworthy than peace and harmony is widely known. Countries like Columbia, Israel, Northern Ireland and the Philippines have had their fair share of disaster and despair, but this is not what the Peace Counts project focuses on. The photographic exhibition arrived in Colombo last week for the beginning of an international tour. Peace Counts portrays the work of people from all over the world who have successfully pro-

moted peaceful co-existence in their community, often in unusual and creative ways. One of the images tells the story of how deadly gang warfare in Cape Town prisons has been drastically reduced as a result of a project encouraging inmates to engage in drama, song and dance together. Another depicts the improved relations between young Israeli and Palestinian women after participating in an initiative where they locked themselves into a room for three days to voice their opinions and concerns in a constructive way. Then there is the Peace Boat, where students are taught about conflict resolution at sea whilst sailing to areas plagued by political or social unrest.

Michael Gleich, journalist and founder of the Peace Counts project, stressed that there is a need to showcase the work of doctors, priests, human rights activists and countless other members of civil society who have managed to build bridges and create a peaceful environment against all odds: "Normally their work is not covered by the media. You know very well the slogan that bad news is good news, but people who have a positive approach and who stand for the solution of a conflict; they are very rarely seen in the media and the spotlight in the camera."

The main objective of the Peace Counts project is to identify role models for peacemaking and to give them broader exposure by creating fascinating features and photo essays. Sri Lanka's contribution to Peace Counts is a photograph of a deaf boy, touching his teacher's throat in order to feel the vibrations of her voice. This moving image was taken at a school for the deaf in the North East, founded by Social Economical Environmental Developers (SEED). Singham Ponnambalam, Political and Social Researcher at the organisation has dedicating his life to working with vulnerable people in order to bring about social change in Sri Lanka: "Where I am mostly working is with

the people who are in the ground level who are affected in different ways: war, economy and all kind of things and what I feel is that it is very important to explain to people who don't have the facilities to understand what is going on."

This exhibition is not only visually stunning, but it evokes a sense of hope that is often difficult to achieve in countries that have encountered years, or in Sri Lanka's case, decades of conflict. Peace Counts also brings home that the concept of "peace" is so much more than simply "no war." It is something that begins from birth, drawn from the role models we grow up with; the education systems that teach us; the relationships and experiences that shape and define us; right through to the politics that govern us and beyond. As part of the project, a series of workshops will be held in order to broaden participant's understanding of what peacebuilding really involves. The exhibition will then be open to the public from the 2nd to the 4th March 2007 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. This is an opportunity to not only see a truly unique collection of photo journalism, but also one portraying that, with dedicated individuals with inspirational ideas, peace is indeed possible.

By Nia Charpentier; www.groundviews.org
groundviews is a Sri Lankan citizen journalism initiative

Reporting in Germany

Tour de Paix, First Station

A Tübingen institute brings ideas of civilian conflict management to conflict-stricken countries.

Ulrike Pfeil, Schwäbisches Tagblatt
16th of March, 2007

Tübingen: Can we build peace in countries which have been plagued by violent conflicts for years and even for centuries? According to the Tübingen Institute for Peace Education, it is always worth trying. For this reason, they decided to go to Sri Lanka.

The Institute's project focuses on "Peace Counts," a program by journalists and photographers, who collected and documented exemplary cases which promote peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation in notorious "hot spots" of the world. The name could be interpreted as "Peace Counts," the number of peaceful acts, instead of "body counts," the number of dead in a war. The term also has a second meaning: "Peace Counts" can also be interpreted as "peace is worth it."

But is it enough for these examples to be shown and worked with in mostly peaceful societies with a good rule-of-law? "We should bring these pictures and reports to the countries where they came from," said Uli Jäger (Director of the Institute) and others from the Tübingen Institute. This is how the idea of a "Tour de Paix" arose – a peace education trip to conflict regions.

The idea was supported by the Programm für zivile Konfliktbearbeitung (Zivik), the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen and the German Auswärtiges Amt. Uli Jäger and Ana Mijic from the Tübingen Peace Education Institute on Corrensstrasse traveled to Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, at the end



Photo-place cards at the opening ceremony

of February for ten days. They were accompanied by two journalists and a photographer. Mijic was born in Croatia and studied political science. She is also involved in another project, "Vacation from War", in the former Yugoslavia.

Sri Lanka was chosen as a pilot project because the conflict with the militant Tamil rebels (Tamil Tigers) has recently started again. The Tamil Tigers seek independence of the North. In addition, the Tübingen Institute could build on good local contacts there.



Ana Mijic and Uli Jäger (ift) with representatives from FLICT

To the two visitors from Tübingen, Sri Lanka seemed to be a country "between heaven and hell." On the one hand, it was a country of great natural beauty, in which followers of very different religions live together in harmony. On the other hand, there is a "spiral of violence", which both the rebels and the army under Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa are escalating. The ceasefire agreement of 2002 has not been abided by for a long time. Since Rajapaksa took office at the end of 2005, more than 4000 deaths have been recorded from the civil war.

An exhibit in Colombo which would be a "public event," workshops about the possibilities of civilian management with multipliers from non-governmental organizations, with teachers, youth groups, journalists – that sounds like a very mild program considering the violence that is occurring there: in northern Sri Lanka, people are constantly fleeing between rebels and the army; child soldiers are being recruited from both sides; a suicide bomber

recently exploded a bus in the South; an anti-terrorism law which has been reactivated allows arbitrary arrests.

Uli Jäger was touched by the memory of the workshop participants in Colombo who described a series of pictures, which dealt with an aggressive attack: a white delivery vehicle drove by and kidnapped a young boy – either killing him, putting him in prison, or placing him in the army. "That is everyday life there."

Jäger and Mijic are convinced that the peace trip had an effect: they reached more than 500 people, and there was media coverage. In the workshops, it was clear that people could learn from experiences in other countries – using examples from Northern Ireland, or from the Philippines, where villages established "peace zones." "Your own understanding of the conflict is broadened."

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Peace Counts *project*

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