



SECTION TWO

TOOL KIT FOR COMMUNITY WORKERS

This section contains discussions, ideas and techniques on community research, organizational development and youth's participation in community peacebuilding. It is based on lessons we have learned from our work.

This section contains three main parts:

1. ***Minding the Shop:*** Organizational structures and team building.
2. ***Analysis of the Situation:*** Effective peacebuilding begins with a strong understanding of the situation: the needs and views of other young people; the history and current status of the conflict; the power dynamics; security concerns and opportunities for youth work.
3. ***Trust building:*** Trustbuilding is an important issue for all youth peacebuilders. If the community does not have faith in your intentions or credibility in your organization, it is impossible to work effectively.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

ESTABLISHING & MAINTAINING YOUR GROUP

There is no one perfect way to set up and maintain your organization. Some groups prefer an independent youth-only organization while others function best inside an adult run NGO. Many youth prefer to be independent from adults as they feel that this will give them more freedom to do what they want. They believe that youth's voice is more authentic if there is no adult involvement. Others seek the partnership of adults, as this provides them with opportunities that they might not have if they worked on their own.

Every group must make their own decision as to what is best for them. Of course, for youth peacebuilders there are other considerations because of the conditions and needs of our situations. The conflict situation; nature of your peacebuilding work; security issues; the skills and interests of your group, and the scope your culture allows for youth involvement in peacebuilding are just some of the variables that need to be considered.

As peacebuilders we are working for the restoration of our communities. We must always gauge how our efforts will help to reconcile differences and bring the community together in a positive way. If working apart from adults is a good way to bring youth's messages for peace, this should be our choice. On the other hand, if we need the credibility and security provided by a church or NGO, then this is the option we should choose. In some cases, wars have so destroyed civil society that young people have had little or no experience of working in groups – we need to honestly assess our capacities and ask for support from adults when needed.



This unit provides background information on many of the issues we believe you need to consider.

Because there are many opinions on youth organizing and team building issues this section is offered as a collection of debates and examples. We hope you find this information useful.

Organizing Your Group: In CAP every group is organized differently. We provide information on the pros and cons of our different arrangements as background for your decision on how to organize your group.

Levels of Involvement: This provides examples of different types of youth groups. Not all young people are interested in peacebuilding or social justice activities but many can benefit from connections with other youth.

Team Building: Organizations require maintenance if they are to stay strong. This transcript is based on a discussion held by Colombian youth following a team building game called “Blocks”.

LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

TYPES OF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

1. FIRST CONTACT: YOUTH SPORTS GROUPS, SPECIAL EVENTS AND CULTURAL MEETINGS.

Many youth have little or no experience of meeting in groups. This first step is an important way to make contacts, build credibility and trust and also encourage further levels of involvement in youth community work.

2. PEER GROUPS AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

Many young people have been hurt by war. For some, it is useful to meet with others to share experiences. This helps them gain confidence and self-esteem. Through this, they may begin to place their personal situations inside an overall analysis of how war is affecting young people's lives. In some cases this may result in youth wanting to become involved in social justice work.

3. WORKING INSIDE ADULT ORGANIZATIONS

Adults can act as mentors and guides. They can provide support and advice when needed. They also can provide security and credibility for youth work. The level of involvement can vary from a group that is totally run by adults to one where youth report on a regular basis.

4. AUTONOMOUS YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

In these groups youth are totally independent. They create their own by-laws, mission statement and methods of operation. They can operate as a collective or have elected positions and responsibilities.

5. YOUTH COALITIONS

Youth coalitions provide the opportunity for groups to work together. These coalitions can be organized on a temporary basis where groups work on joint issues. They can have a formal structure for the sharing of information and resources as well as the development of joint projects.

