



YOUTH

WORK

WEEK

Youth Workers Creating Paths to Peace

A Discussion Guide
November 2015



The Commonwealth
Youth Programme

Written by Brian Belton

Commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat,
2015

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Youth Work Week

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Foreword

This document is a discussion guide for celebrating Commonwealth Youth Week 2015. In line with the 2015 theme for Youth Work Week, *Youth Workers Creating Paths to Peace*, it advocates for, celebrates and strengthens the role of youth workers in working with young people to create cohesive, peaceful societies. It recognises youth workers' roles in becoming conscious of and being actively involved in peace-building in communities, nationally and globally. Youth workers in this way play a strong role in promoting the collective realisation among young people that they can contribute to national, regional and international security and stability by way of taking on positive responsibilities that begin with informed and constructive dialogue.

Defining peace-building

In line with the decision taken during the 2005 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, peace-building, in the context of the Commonwealth, can be understood as a process designed, "...to explore initiatives to promote mutual understanding and respect. The importance of respect and understanding lie partly in their intrinsic value – indeed they are indispensable parts of good living in peace and harmony with each other – but it also lies in their contribution to restraining and removing the group-based violence and terrorism that have become such pernicious features of the contemporary world".¹

1 *Civil Paths to Peace*, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2009, p 5.

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This section provides a background and rationale to Commonwealth Youth Work Week and its connection to the 'Paths to Peace' theme

Section 2: The functions and principles of youth work

Here the role and underpinning purpose of youth work, as a generic, global practice is outlined

Section 3: The Commonwealth context for youth work

In this section the Commonwealth interpretation of youth work is summarised. This has evolved out of continued discussion between member nations, looking at how youth work can best serve the young people of the Commonwealth.

Section 4: Disaffection and extremism

In the context of peace-building, it is important to understand the relationship between disaffection and extremism and in this section this is explained as a scale of response to unexpressed and/or unheard grievances of young people.

Section 5: Some approaches to Paths to Peace

A selection of approaches used by youth workers to peace-building are presented as examples of 'paths to peace' practice in youth work.

Section 6: A one-day engagement programme to action Youth Workers Creating Paths to Peace. Understanding conflict, making paths for peace

This section details a training and facilitation event for youth workers that can be conducted during Youth Work Week as a concrete expression of the role of youth work in peace-building geared to complement Youth Work Week events. It is aimed at strengthening existing peace-building work by youth workers, supporting the exploration of the nature of conflict, and from this, promoting greater consciousness of peace-building through developing strategies that can advance stability and security at grass-roots level.

1. Introduction to Commonwealth Youth Work Week

Commonwealth Youth Work Week (CYWW) is an initiative undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with England's National Youth Agency (NYA).

Youth Work Week celebrates the accomplishments and contributions that youth work makes to the Commonwealth. This week's activities and campaigns celebrate youth workers, and the organisations they work and/or volunteer to support, across the 53 member nations. During this week, young workers and youth workers' associations campaign for greater recognition of the relevance of youth work, as well as for greater investments for youth work.

The Commonwealth sees youth work as being the;

"...personal, social and political education and empowerment of young people within a matrix of care."

This indicates that youth work takes on a holistic approach, contributing to the development of individual young people and youth groups, as they engage in productive and positive activities together, in and with their community, and across the world.

Consistent with the Commonwealth's general goal of promoting global understanding and tolerance, the CYWW theme for 2015 is *Youth Workers Creating Paths to Peace*.

The theme reinforces the essence of the Commonwealth's critical think-pieces, Amartya Sen's *Civil Paths to Peace*² and *Peace and Democratic Society*³. Both are important documents that act to emphasise the role that the Commonwealth sets itself in terms of "...pursuing civil paths to peace" calling for "clarity of thought" while advancing, "...organised policies, programmes and initiatives with adequate reach."

2 A report of the *Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding*, chaired by the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen (2007). *Civil Paths to Peace* was the result of a mandate from Commonwealth leaders to look into the causes of conflict, violence and extremism in Commonwealth countries. It focuses on the problem of group-based violence and its impact on communities, advocating solutions based on individuals' multiple identities. The report argues that the solution to conflicts within the Commonwealth should be rooted in the association's agreed principles of human rights, democracy, gender equality, the rule of law and a transparent and accountable political culture, recommending new forms of political participation, an emphasis on non-sectarian non-parochial education that expands rather than reduces the reach of understanding, and greater support to young people, who represent over half of the Commonwealth's 2 billion citizens.

3 This essay explores organised violence (war, genocide and terrorism) and violence against the individual. It highlights the inadequacies of accepted explanations for violence - including the notion of a "clash of civilisations". The work encourages global, multilateral debate on the causes of conflict, and an understanding of the multiple identities of the individuals involved.

Laying the foundation of Paths to Peace

1. Understand the role of economic inequalities, social humiliations and political disenfranchisement in generating disrespect and hostility.
2. Take concrete steps for making changes in the way the world is organised, in order to remove the sources of hostility.
3. Investigate the linkages between deprivations and the fomentation of disaffection.
4. Civil paths to peace are not confined to governmental activities only; the cultivation of disrespect and hostility can also be resisted by the working of the media, political processes, educational activities and other means of generating mutual understanding.
5. Make use of dialogue and discussion.⁴

This theme will help highlight the ways youth workers, together with the Commonwealth's approximately 1.2 billion youth population, have worked locally, regionally, nationally and globally to generate constructive responses to issues of legitimate and perceived social exclusion, ethnic or religious prejudice/tension and concomitant hostility, aggression and violence. It will also highlight the importance of increasing the breadth and scope of such work through a vision and strategies for youth workers' roles in peace-building.

Youth Workers Creating Paths to Peace was chosen as the theme for Youth Work Week 2015 in order to show how youth work is relevant and important, given the experience and context of young people in conflict situations. It also responds to requests from member governments for the Commonwealth Secretariat to increase its engagement with young people in the face of the potential and actual extremism among young people.

2. The Functions and Principles of Youth Work⁵

What is youth work? Given the range of voices, approaches, views and functions of youth workers world wide, how could a claim be made that youth work might be one, or any single, consistent thing over or between contexts, throughout time?

However, we need to agree on the general principles of youth work if we are going to build and develop the practice. So, with this in mind, this section offers a 'place to stand' (for now, for a moment), but the hope is that this will be developed and altered (by way of context) rather than adhered to in any regimented way; such ossification of youth work would be a contradiction in terms and practice – ours is an evolutionary project – if youth work is anything, unfailingly it is a 'growth business'.

With regard to young people framing and accomplishing their aspirations as well as gaining a stake and/or achieving a direction within their social situation, Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2002) relate to Lakota culture wherein the young are perceived to be 'sacred beings'.

A global and historical perspective of youth work clearly shows it to be a relentlessly developing range of responses to a persistently moving, growing and shifting range of phenomena, issues and directions presented by, and to, societies and the young people of, and in, those societies. This is very probably its strength and the reason it proliferates and endures. Here we present a set of responses in the face of, and from within, that shifting field that can generically be called 'youth work'; we do this in this time, from many places and a diversity of identity, but it is hoped that all who read the following pages will be able identify with what we agree to be youth work.

On an international level, it is hard to argue that it is not part of the mission of peoples and governments, from an earliest point in national development, to establish within populations the advantages and values associated with the promotion of **equity, human rights** and **good governance**. Throughout the world these qualities are fostered by youth work. Broadly stated, this has historically involved adults working with and alongside young people, providing them with opportunities to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour and deal with the consequences of their actions. This might be understood as the foundation of adult attitudes that youth workers have traditionally presented as a model for young people to evoke responsible, humane and ethical conduct, as a means to improve their lives and society.

⁵ This section is informed by *Professional Youth Work: A Concept and Strategies* (2012) published by the Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia Centre (India).



In many societies, youth is a term that is extraordinarily flexible. In many traditional cultures a young mother will not be expected to look after her child alone; an extensive family network will support her: an African saying has it that “it takes a village to raise a child.”

The field of youth work (variously labelled and in a range of forms) has been integral to participatory nation building. Youth workers can play a dynamic role in addressing young people's wellbeing and rights in a responsive manner, and in providing an interface between young people and decision-making processes at all levels. Throughout the world, youth workers have taken socially important steps in professionalising youth work, which have included (and continue to encompass) a vast range of educational and training initiatives in the field.

Now, globally, governments and NGOs continue to consolidate these processes, helping advance a responsive approach to the requirements of young people and their expectations. The best of this activity reflects the principles and purpose of youth work, while adhering to and promoting Human Rights conventions.

Youth workers, worldwide, can be found working in clubs, community and detached (street based) settings, within social/welfare services, sports/leisure provision, schools and, over the last decade or so, in museums, arts facilities, libraries, hospitals, leisure and sports centres, children's homes and young offenders institutions.

The central purpose of youth work could be defined as working with young people so that they are able to play an assertive and constructive role in the strengthening and regeneration of their immediate communities and wider society. **Historically and socially the function of youth work has been to adapt and change according to social, economic and political needs and exigencies.** Indeed, in places like the UK where there has been an ongoing pressure for youth work to become 'informal education' or latterly identify a 'core' competence or function, such as 'social

pedagogy', a move towards specialisation threatens to effectively deskill youth workers whilst transforming them into mobile class room assistants, homework tutors or surrogate remedial teachers.

In a number of global regions, including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, youth workers can be found working directly for and in national and/or local governments, often involved in community development and community learning situations, capacity building and providing forms of accredited and non-accredited learning. In these contexts, and increasingly in Europe, youth workers are also deployed by voluntary organisations (via a range of funding arrangements, including direct and indirect state resources) in issue-related work (drugs, sexual health, homelessness, parenting etc.). Many such organisations, particularly faith-based groups, will concentrate more or less on non-directive and informal practice, although most youth work will be set within formal institutions and include forms of guidance and instruction from time to time. Like a good teacher, a skilled youth worker will blur the rather false dichotomy of informal and formal learning.

Looking at the above it can be understood that youth work needs to adopt a distinctly empowering philosophy in keeping with the principles and mandates of the Commonwealth, which regards young people as stakeholders in society, while placing a positive emphasis on youth, seeing this stage of life as a well of human resource with enormous potential. The Commonwealth understands young people to be the custodians of all possible futures and the section of society that can preserve the best of the past.

Central to the youth work response is the acknowledgement of the need for the youth worker to be able to listen to, and be taught, about the wants and needs of young people by young people. This is led by an understanding that the motivations, desires and passions of young people will likely be the richest seams of their future accomplishments and social contribution. In this approach, young people take the lead in learning. It is the job of the youth worker to respond to this in an appropriate and adequate manner. This stance allows the young person to enable and empower themselves. Such an approach proceeds from the presumption that young people have, in the form of their integrity as human beings, potential, ability, influence, authority and power; it gives them credit as whole (if growing) human beings, rather than being taken to be something less than whole. Conversely, the youth worker who sets out to direct or promote others relies on inherently dominating attitudes and assumptions that groups of young people somehow lack the power and ability to enable and empower themselves. **The youth worker who can work with young people to empower themselves has grasped what youth work is.**

3. The Commonwealth Context for Youth Work

Generally speaking, youth work reflects the values and principles enshrined in the ethos of Human Rights, which affirms the promotion of international understanding and a shared belief in:

- The liberty of the individual.
- Equal rights for all regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief.
- The inalienable right of the individual to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live.

World-wide, youth workers have challenged all forms of unjust, undemocratic domination and racial oppression and have consistently committed to upholding human dignity and equality. This has been achieved by the encouragement of self-reliance, overcoming poverty, international cooperation, co-operation based on discussion, the sharing of knowledge and views on a range of issues and subjects.

Alongside the above the values of youth work recognise:

- Human rights as the foundation of democracy and development.
- Self-reflection and self-empowerment, pursued through education, personal and joint freedom of expression and participation.
- Equity and/or fairness in the relationships between nations and among generations.
- The protection of vulnerable groups within an approach that sees the young as potentially active, if developing, citizens.
- Democracy - facilitating opportunities for the expression of opinions and promoting participation in decision-making.
- Social and personal development based on principles of sustainability.
- Diversity of views and perspectives in both national and international forums.
- Dialogue and co-operation, building common ground and consensus.
- Peace, without which the above values are unobtainable.

This list, in terms of language and direction, has, and continues, to evolve and change with circumstances and over contexts. For it not to do so would be self-contradictory. However, it is certain that over recent decades, youth work has acted to facilitate and provide forums tasked with essentially decolonising initiatives, via the continued focus, in spirit and action, on the principles and values that underpin humane practice. This has strengthened the contribution of young people in peace-building, democracy and development worldwide.

From a Commonwealth perspective this can be achieved by:

- **Facilitating:** creating the conditions in which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than relying on other people, in particular professionals, to do things for them.
- **Empowering:** putting democratic principles into action in the fullest sense, so that young people can play a constructive part/role in decision-making that affects them at different levels of society.⁶
- **Confirming:** operating in accordance with value systems that give a sense of purpose and meaning to how young people use their skills and knowledge.

Putting the emphasis on the youth worker's role in **facilitating, empowering and confirming** demonstrates the commitment to work with young people so that they might take action. As such, youth workers are involved in individual and group liberation. This includes concerns about the wellbeing and education of the young people (their developing understanding of the world). Such considerations are important if they are to become active and useful citizens. Therefore, youth work involves balancing core values with the personal and collective potential of those they work with and amongst, while bearing in mind the practical limitations and possibilities of context. This might be understood as a thoughtful but assertive seeking out of 'paths to peace.'

This above has offered a paradigm of facilitating, confirming and empowering youth work practice that can be tailored to specific contexts over time, place and culture. Being able to say what youth work is and what it might do is necessary to lay the ground for the instigation and development of practice, as one cannot do that which one has failed to define and reach agreement on. In short, this section is an attempt to put the horse before the cart. It might be the purpose of writers, academics, practitioners and young people to refine and reach consensus in relation to the character and function of youth work in respective countries, and on this foundation, move on to develop appropriate practice, building a vibrant and consistently evolving/adapting response as befits situation and context.

The emphasis is on young people taking action, *but action is not the starting point of youth work*. As Amartya Sen in *Peace and Democracy* states (p6):

"A focus on action is ultimately what we need but there is a prior necessity of understanding why and how we face the adversities that we do face. We also have to separate out what we can clearly understand and what is not entirely clear as our intellectual engagement stands at present. We have to sit back a little and take our time when the problems we face are complex and ill-understood. As Buddha said more than 2,500 years ago, the solution to most problems lies ultimately in clearer understanding, and that demands intellectual engagement, and not merely prompt action."

It is the practice of youth work and the dialogue that it promotes between young people, and between adults and young people, that can be the means of this 'intellectual engagement'

6 As a process empowering youth requires adult-youth interdependence when this is judged to be in the best interest of the young person. We understand autonomy not to be something gained immediately just by an act of will, but an ongoing (life-long) process that is realised between forms of interdependence.

4. Disaffection and Extremism

There has, throughout the world, been huge concern over the last couple of decades about young people finding themselves increasingly unable to identify with and/or engage in the life of their communities or nation. This has caused many to make alliances with alternative, often immoderate, anti-social or even negatively activist groups.

The *Paths to Peace* report has it that terrorism, extremism, conflict and violence are; *"...in ascendancy in the contemporary world and afflict Commonwealth countries as well as the rest of the world."* (p.10)

It goes on to argue that

"While the cultural influences are among the forces that can contribute to disrespect, misunderstanding and violence, they are not the only causal factors, nor are they immutable or irresistible. Indeed, much can be done to prevent the violence that may be thrust on us by promoters of belligerent agendas. For this we need a departure from old ways of thinking about the centrality and the alleged inviolability of cultural confrontations." (ibid.)

However, part of the problem of grasping the root and nature of considerations such as terrorism, extremism and organised violence, is that we often analyse them **as if they come into the world as fully formed responses, with no root cause.** This, to some extent is seeking to address the symptom of negative social situations rather than the source. Violence and aggressive agitation do indeed appear to be endemic in the world, perhaps particularly among young people, but to take this as a sort of lightening strike, that it incarnates itself 'out of the blue' would be incorrect.

There are any number of policy and academic definitions of disaffection and extremism; however to most experienced youth workers the apparent two positions are points on the same continuum.

Straightforwardly, to be disaffected is a result of dissatisfaction, but simple feelings of dissatisfaction do not automatically give rise to behaviour associated with disaffection, which is seen to be anything from problematic to anti-social.

If a young person is continually dissatisfied, finding no way to achieve or even express personal aspiration, it is not surprising if she might become hostile and rebellious towards those forces or authorities she understands to be preventing her from voicing and achieving those ambitions and desires.

However, if this young person is unable to find the means to communicate her hopes or grievances, it is likely she will experience frustration. This frustration would logically be made worse when no one responds to that frustration when it is actually expressed.

At this point, when the mutinous, disruptive, non-conformist or delinquent behaviour associated with disaffection proves to be insufficient to address apparent injustice, or simply to draw attention to the plight or the troubles of young people

and/or their communities, regions or nations etc., all that is left for the aggrieved person is to become more extreme. Then 'they' (those in authority) will be obliged to hear; then 'they' (those seen as relatively powerful) must respond.

For generations, youth workers have worked to an ethical value base that includes listening and responding to the views, perspectives, wants and needs of young people, but in truth, this has had limited impact. This is because the extent that any one youth worker (or group of youth workers) can respond is restricted by the limitations of their authority. Youth workers are subject to organisational, regional, national and international policy and legislation. At the same time, no matter how attentive or active a listener one might be, the simple act of giving an ear, while helpful to a point in terms of disaffection, will be insufficient with regard to addressing the anguish and frustration that might lead to extremism.

Positively speaking, extremism might be understood as an effort to change the world (something disaffection cannot achieve) and it would be untrue to say it does not have a track record of doing this; many anti-colonial movements for instance were interpreted in their historical contexts as extremist. However, meeting extremist regimes with extremism has been a terribly wasteful habit of humanity, firstly in the terms of direct human suffering, but also with regard to general social resources.

If you shout at someone you are inviting that someone to shout at you; this is fairly predictable all things being equal, but this does not translate to shouting being the best way to proceed in a debate or argument. Likewise, because counter extremism has undermined extremist regimes doesn't mean extremism is a 'good thing' generally; in fact the cost of such extremist dynamics shows them to be utterly counterproductive. The initial extremism will always result in (at least) equal and opposite extremism – one is the logical progeny of the other – extremism has proved not to be the midwife of peace.

This is discernible at the micro level of youth work; for example, the bully is punished for their bullying by the youth worker. The bully, who has already shown themselves to define the world in terms of 'might is right' experiences the condemnation of the youth worker as bullying (the youth worker has the 'might' to enforce the 'right'). The bully, and the bullied, have learnt (effectively) that bullying 'works'.



Given this, how do youth workers engage young people in the contexts of disaffection and extremism (without becoming one of the sources of disaffection)? Well, we can see that disaffection is a stepping stone to extremism; it is hard to see how one might jump from being satisfied to an extremist point of view. Thus extremism can be understood as the wayward child of disaffection and it is at this source where youth workers can be most effective with regard to 'short-circuiting' extremism.

But how is this to be done? The cycle begins with dissatisfaction. If this remains unexpressed or unexamined it invites people (not just young people) to look for 'convenient' or quickly identified causes (blame). We know that there are groups with interest in directing dissatisfaction towards those they see as their rivals and often young people with unspoken or unexamined discontents are easy prey for such factions.

Youth workers can address this above cycle at its very source by working with young people to:

- a. Voice and examine, explain their thoughts and feelings;
- b. Explore how they might address any issues, looking to themselves, their peers and society as a resource (rather than a source of blame);
- c. Consider what interests particular groups have when looking to place responsibility for personal or social problems on rivals, while directing others to take action against (scapegoat) these people.

The same process might be initiated at any of the three points in the cycle. However, it is likely that young people who have become disaffected or taken on extreme views will demand much more intensive and longer term interaction.

The next section looks at what can be understood as youth work responses in highly disaffecting, or post-extreme situations (those who survive the cycle of dissatisfaction, disaffection and extremism might be the most likely to repeat this cycle). These responses go beyond merely listening, they involve energetically supported **dialogue**, a resulting **dialectic** and **action** that is capable of instigating perceivable social change and concomitant personal and social development of self. The proposal is that the antidote to disaffection is the generation of the means to address dissatisfaction, thus circumventing extremism.

5. Some Approaches to Paths to Peace



South Africa/Canada: Circles of Courage

Former South African President Nelson Mandela presided over the institutionalisation of the "Circle of Courage" concept (following discussions with Native American peacemakers) in the transformation of services to children and youth.⁷

Ubuntu (a term that, broadly speaking celebrates our common being) is an approach that leading anti-apartheid activist Archbishop Tutu promoted. This might be thought of as the basis of the idea of the 'Circle of Courage'. The latter can be used to create an ethos in line with the direction and principles of *Paths to Peace*, applicable to the social and personal development of young people and non-violence. Such an approach can provide definite and positive responses to disaffection, the kernel of young people's resort to extremist ideas and actions.

According to Desmond Tutu:

*"We must look on children in need not as problems but as individuals with potential to share if they are given the opportunity. Even when they are really troublesome, there is some good in them, for, after all, they were created by God. I would hope we could find creative ways to draw out of our children the good that is there in each of them."*⁸

7 See *The Circle of Courage and RAP Training: The Evidence Base* by Larry K. Brendtro. The Circle of Courage Institute
<https://www.reclaiming.com/content/sites/default/files/Circle%20of%20Courage%20&%20RAP%20Evidence%20Base.pdf>

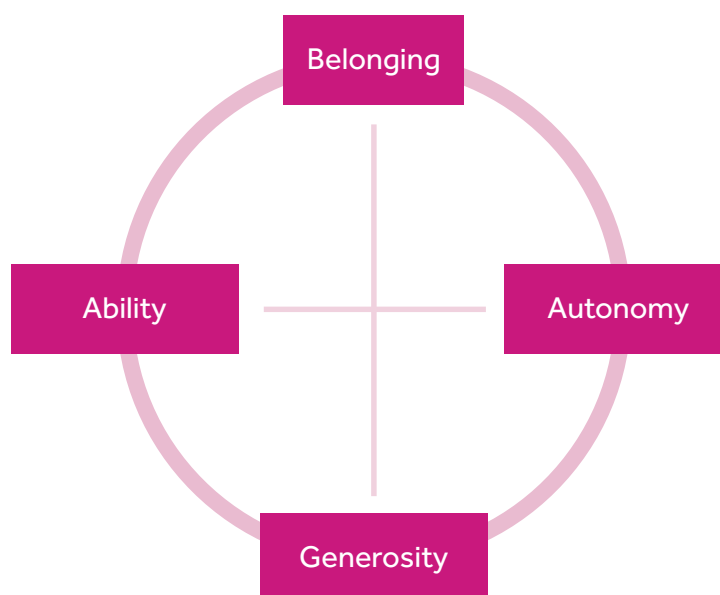
8 Tillich, P. (1952). *The courage To Be*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Tutu, D. (2002). "Our Hope for the Future". In L. Brendtro, M. Brokenleg, & S. Van Bockern, *Reclaiming Youth, at Risk* (Rev. ed.). Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Circles of Courage (or circles of peace) as used by Native American, First Peoples (of Canada), were thought to be useful in addressing recidivism, violent crime in South Africa and to help young people combat the experience of disaffection.

In Mali for the Bamana, when a person turns 40 they are thought of as a 'junior elder'; someone others look to for advice might and guidance.

The Circle of Courage has four elements:

- Extending a feeling of acceptance/belonging/attachment.
- Providing a sense of personal ability/achievement.
- Encouraging independence/autonomy.
- Promoting generosity/altruism.⁹



Circle of Courage and the role of the youth worker, working with and alongside groups of young people.

Belonging

In Native American tradition, belonging means to foster a sense of interconnectedness with other human beings and the wider environment.

Build a sense of how group members rely on each other and how the group itself is dependent on social structures such as school, welfare provision and even public utilities (for instance water supply).

Ability

Capability is not just about employment-related skills. It also relates to the forming of character. Games are a useful tool for this, while adults emphasise that determination is valued more than rivalry in competition or simplistic 'winning'.¹⁰

The first step might be a straightforward 'skills audit'; a 'what am I/what is s/he good at' game

Autonomy

Canadian Blackfoot Indians customarily value autonomy and the taking of responsibility. This would often involve adults allowing children the space to make decisions and take action without excessively intervening in young people's decisions (unless guidance is legitimately called for).

Building on the preceding interaction, a group might look at what they want to do and how they want to make it happen, identifying what each group member can do (perhaps in cooperation with others) given the skills and capabilities identified previously.

Generosity

Within Native American culture, the giving of gifts (to an extent that would probably seem extravagant to most of us) is habituated.

Find out what the group can and wants to offer to each other and the wider community. Emphasise how willingness to give and care for others is esteemed in many cultures and explore this with the group.¹¹

Belonging, ability and autonomy of action are held together by the idea that everything is connected. This is similar to the principles of *Ubuntu*, which emphasises respect, compassion and discovery of personal capacity. This can be explored with young people and discussion about it can be encouraged

¹⁰ Brendtro *et al* (2002) p46.

¹¹ Brendtro *et al* (2002) p125.

The Community Peace Project has some 400 groups all over South Africa.¹² The majority of these projects, usually organised by volunteers, work in collaboration with other institutions and structures. The phenomenon has been successful primarily because the process offered is largely informal and non-adversarial; it does not replicate western, expert-driven, crisis intervention approaches, but is underpinned by a community-oriented response that implicates family, healers, spiritual guides, teachers and ancestors. This kind of response to relatively traumatic events and situations has also proved to be successful in Native American contexts.¹³

The latter can often be found to implicate peace-making practices which resonate with the *Ubuntu* ethos. **Peace-making circles, or as they have sometimes been called, 'healing circles', focus on resolution of conflict, not forms or measures of punishment.** They create the time, space and potential for people to come together to discuss and analyse the grievances and/or difficulties they might be experiencing with each other or wider situations. Everyone joins the circle of their own accord.

This posits a process of healing, facilitated by the insight and knowledge, and the understanding that action and behaviour is motivated by what makes sense to us. **Retribution is not the point, but heightening our connection as human beings, where each person is understood to have feelings that have a basis in our rational experience.**

The negative consequences of action are considered, not only in terms of 'person-to-person' but with regard to the wider community, nation and the world.

Over a broad social horizon these peace circles have allowed peacemakers to embrace the process in many different ways to successfully address disaffection, violence against youth, and violence by youth.

This approach has been used in South African prison programmes. The Zulu term *Khulisa* ('let the child grow') provides the means, implicating the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, for young prisoners to gain life skills (that encompass visual arts, conflict resolution, music and vocational training). This lays the foundation for self-empowerment via the restoration of respect of self. The adoption of this approach has seen recidivism (the repeated or regular relapse, as into crime) decline.

India: From Me to We

Pravah is an organisation based in New Delhi, India. It focuses on issues relating to social justice through youth citizenship action, motivating young people to take up active leadership for social change. To further this, Pravah works to create learning and life skills programmes via the *From Me to We* Conflict-Positive Curriculum.

Currently, Pravah is working with 3,500 young people in more than 30 schools, mainly in and around Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Karnataka. Personal interaction and facilitation are key elements of the process, with learners taking responsibility for their own learning. As such, theatre, games, simulation exercises, stories, case studies are core components of their work.

Pravah organises campaigns on various issues of social change that are designed by school students, youth groups and teachers.

¹² Cartwright and Jenneker (2005).

¹³ Pepinsky (2000)

Pravah defines active citizenship as follows:

Citizenship is that which makes us participative, proactive and responsible towards society. The core values of citizenship include democracy, social justice, equality, peace, respect. Active citizenship refers to the ability of (young) people to be engaged in social action in every walk of life. Where people take ownership for common spaces and act to make change by addressing important social justice issues.

This citizenship is boundary-less ...not defined by state, caste, religion, language ...

Presentation by Meenu Venkateswaran, CEO, Pravah at Nurturing Active Citizenship among Youth in India: A Consultation

Pravah From Me to We Conflict-Positive Curriculum

(I) The Self to Society Module

This guides and encourages understanding of self in relation to the immediate context and the world. Participants reflect on developing themselves as responsible individuals in their communities. This extends and translates into becoming more conscientious citizens. Social issues are put into perspective, while building social and communication skills. Through games, role plays and other exercises, participants look at and question stereotypes, appreciate diversity and practise tolerance.

(II) The Conflict-Positive Process Module

Conflict is seen as a positive process. Young people work to enable themselves to recognise different levels of conflict in personal as well as social spheres and to deal with them positively.

(III) Citizenship and Voluntary Action

Young people work together to develop their understanding of citizenship and constitutional issues and human rights. They become involved in social action through projects and campaigns relating to diversity, homelessness, peace, disarmament, poverty, sustainable development, gender, stereotyping and equality.

For more on Pravah, its stance and work see <http://www.icicp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Nurturing-Youth-Active-Citizenship-in-India.pdf>

Pravah encourage participants to develop an 'Action Project'. The following are examples of student-led projects supported by Pravah

- Students collected 1500 petitions in public places in order to support the Green Peace campaign to reduce global warming named *Ban the Bulb*.

See <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/en/press/releases/children-take-action-against-c/>

- A campaign to save the trees being cut in Delhi HCBS project (see <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-delhi-s-trees.html>)

Trinidad and Tobago: Transformation through Theatre and Technology

Transformation through Theatre and Technology (TTTT) is a youth rehabilitation programme that assists vulnerable people between the ages of fourteen and twenty five to turn their lives around. TTTT uses the draw of the entertainment industry coupled with new technologies to work with participants to pursue their goals.

The TTTT process looks to:

- Dissuade youth from involvement in gangs;
- Deter young people from entering or returning to correctional facilities;
- Decrease anti-social behaviour;
- Provide participants with new social and communication skills;
- Provide training, skills and opportunities for gainful and meaningful (income earning) employment;
- Alleviate poverty and the 'poverty mentality' among participants.

Using theatre and technology, TTTT offers young people the means to alleviate crime and poverty. The programme has been included in social work to meet specific demographic needs and the cultural environment of the Caribbean region and has been undertaken in settings such as youth detention centres.

The TTTT programme has shown that many participants have experienced neglect from a young age and as such have missed out on developing some fundamental social values. This motivated TTTT to develop the **Theatre for Tots to Teens** which nurtures children between the ages of three and thirteen years old, who are taught manners, morals, a sense of responsibility, tolerance for others and culture. The latter is realised through dance, theatre and music wrapped in Caribbean traditions and national symbols.

Other projects related to TTTT include *Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other* and *By the Bay*. *Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other* is a digital book that tells a true Caribbean tale. It is the first in a series of digital books that pass on a positive value system to children, using Trinidad and Tobago and by extension Caribbean Cultures. *By the Bay*, a television animated series, which includes acting, puppeteering and animation, has a similar ethos.

The latter are helpful examples of the need and means to address potential disaffection from an early age. This can 'short-circuit' the motivations and influences that effectively cause disaffection, the conduit to extremism.

New Zealand: Urungatanga

Māori youth workers have explored traditional youth development practices and how these might be adapted to their professional/practice role¹⁴. *Urungatanga* refers to the process by which young people achieve new levels of responsibility via their day to day exposure to certain procedures, understanding and knowledge. Within traditional Māori society young people have been expected to acquire the skills and information they need through participation in adult activities¹⁵. From the infant stage, Māori children contribute to adult conversations and are involved in decision making¹⁶ and join their extended family (*whānau*) in most elements of community life.¹⁷

The Māori term for children is 'gift of the gods' (Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, 2002 p137).

Te Ora Hou Aotearoa (a network of Māori youth and community development organisations operating across New Zealand) has adapted the four foundations of the 'Circle of Courage', deploying concepts from *Te Ao Māori* ('the Māori World'): *Whānau* (value for the extended family) *Pukengatanga* (teaching, preserving and creating traditional knowledge; skills, talents) *Mana Motuhake* (autonomy, independence, authority) and *Ohaoha* (generosity).

Te Ai Māori (like Ummah in Islam) can be understood as a sort of ultimate form of social cohesion that logically relies on the deployment of peace making principles (to promote the uniting power of accord in place of the dividing power of discordance). Māori culture (like all group and personal cultures) can either be used to enrich wider society (a form of social solidarity/cohesion) or to create separation from it (friction by way of fragmentation). However, by applying and adapting the cultural concept *Te Ai Māori* as a global response, a philosophy of social cohesion that embraces all of humanity, it can be thought of as a potential underlying precept of peace-building.

Mozambique: ProPaz

In Mozambique the NGO ProPaz has looked to harness young people's potential to contribute positively to the peace-building process. This organisation was founded in 1995 following the protracted civil war that implicated many young people as combatants. ProPaz looked to provide conflict resolution training to young ex-combatants, struggling to reintegrate into the communities they were

14 'Hei Tikiki. Māori Rites of Passage & Youth Development Research Project' (2010)

15 Makereti, (1986); Hiroa, (1950)

16 Elder (1938)

17 Moon (2008)

born in to. The driving idea was that ex-combatants can be key players in the peace-building process, promoting peace and reconciliation, mediating peaceful solutions to conflicts.

In 1995, two organisations serving ex-combatants from FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) and RENAMO (Rebel Mozambique National Resistance), the opposing forces in the conflict, created the 'Promotion of Peace' (ProPaz) programme. It grew out of the dissatisfaction and frustration felt by ex-combatants with the reintegration process and the need to find peaceful, non-violent solutions to conflict.

ProPaz set-up working groups so that youth from both sides of the conflict could talk about their experiences, hopes and needs, and take part in workshops focused on leadership and conflict resolution.

Using the workshops as a foundation, together with other community outreach programmes organised by ProPaz, many young people were taken back into their home communities, ceasing to be perceived as violent. Some of these young people became community leaders, and a number were later employed by ProPaz. Others became official ProPaz 'peace promoters', visiting other communities to offer activities and programmes relating to conflict resolution.

In one community, dialogue participants discussed what peace might be (how would it be recognised) in terms of their community. It was agreed that peace would be a safe space, a place where children could play without fear of landmines. As a consequence, former soldiers voluntarily told the police where land mines had been laid and also let them know where a store of small arms could be found. The ex-combatants went on, collaborating with local officials, to make the community safe from landmines.

Armando Messitera Muharu was kidnapped by militants in 1980 at the age of 11. After he was demobilised in 1993 (aged 24), he spoke of his involvement with AMODEG (the demobilised soldiers organisation) and ProPaz:

"I decided to go to Quelimane and there I became vice co-ordinator of AMODEG. It was practical work, not political. After all, all those who had been demobilised had the same rights. And through my work in AMODEG I was able to convince my colleagues in Re-namo that the war was truly over. You could do that by getting together with the Frelimo soldiers and exchanging our experiences. That worked, it helped overcome fear. People were very afraid; they were fearful of coming out of the bush. Talk, that is what you need to do. Never stop talking.

"It is the same with ProPaz. We do palestras (a combination of lecture and discussion), we talk, we debate, and we educate people about peace and talk about ways to solve conflicts, about the dangers of having arms hidden in communities. We do this in the entire province. We have trained others to do the same work in the districts, and we have also worked with Handicap International, an international NGO that helps landmine victims."¹⁸

18 Armando Messitera Muharu was 37 years old in 2006, when this report was published. Posthumous, "Struggles in Peacetime."

ProPaz has trained more than 150 ex-combatants as peace promoters since 1995. It has involved more than 1,000 people in peace-building activities. These peace promoters work in a hundred communities in six of Mozambique's ten provinces and are organising more conflict resolution teams.¹⁹

Dialogue is used to help the team members identify problem issues and develop solutions for moving forward. The teamwork by ex-combatants from each side of the civil war offered evidence to communities struggling with conflict that there is an alternative to violence.

The ProPaz programme quickly expanded to address conflicts and promote peace in the broader community. Now, the wider mission of ProPaz has adopted is "to promote peace, human rights, gender equality, unity and reconciliation through training programmes in conflict resolution at the community and national levels."

ProPaz peace promoters work with local leadership when attempting to establish a new peace project. Their first step is to approach local leaders to explain the programme, its goals, and methodology.

Once the leaders agree, the team holds a public meeting to explain the concepts of conflict resolution. These meetings use theatre, poetry, and question and answer sessions to present the message. The goal is to educate the community about the need for peaceful conflict resolution and identify individuals to be trained in mediation skills.²⁰

19 InterAct, "Action Plan for Children in Armed Conflict," Newsletter no. 4, Nov. 1999, www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Newsletter/InterAct/InterAct4.html (accessed 05/15); Lynette Parker, "Organising Ex-Combatants for Peace in Mozambique," Restorative Justice Online, 2007, www.restorativejustice.org/editions/2007/april2007/mozambique (accessed 05/15).

20 See 'Mozambique: The "Poster Child" for Reconstruction' in Schwartz, A. (2010) *Youth in Post-Conflict Reconstruction. Agents of Change*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press

6. A One-day Engagement Programme to Action Youth Workers Creating Paths to Peace



The following is formulated around the concepts inherent in the ethos of *Civil Paths to Peace*. It seeks to provide youth workers (including peer youth workers) a tool to engage with young people in socially/culturally tense communities as a means of celebrating Youth Work Week 2015.

The *Civil Paths to Peace* and the Commonwealth's draft guidelines for ethical standards are key guiding documents for what follows. This report has it that:

"...young people are the inheritors of global change. This recognition has two different implications. First, it is important to understand the contribution of young people which is already enriching contemporary politics and social practice... Second, the understanding that today's young people will have serious responsibility for the future, which in turn has implications for policies that try to help the young people of today to acquire the skill, efficiency and inclination to play active roles in shaping solutions to problems that they will have to deal with in the future. Nothing perhaps is as important here as making young people appreciate each other's dignity, despite their diversity, and also the importance of the creative functions of dialogue and discussion" (p.81).

With this in mind, it seems logical and appropriate, given the evidence of the previous section, that the following pages will accommodate the precepts of *Ubuntu* and the 'peace circles' approach as a means to elicit and interpret young people's complex thoughts and feelings, and enable youth workers to engage with these.

Understanding conflict, making Paths to Peace

The following draws on the understanding that paths to peace, as indicated in *Civil Paths to Peace*, will arise out of young people, for themselves, by their own efforts, finding their voice; expressing themselves in such a way that will enable them to enter decision-making processes of their societies. This is likely to be usefully established on a platform of understanding the nature of conflict and its connection to violence and so facilitating constructive, peaceful means of social development and personal growth.

We have established that youth workers can facilitate this, within the protective corral of human rights, by working with young people to address their dissatisfactions to avoid disaffection, and so, the route to extremism. We have seen how this starts with listening, but that discussion and dialectic are necessary to the formation of ideas and positive action that can arise from the honing of thought and intention.

The session outlined below can be tailored to a whole day or a shorter time (perhaps an evening or afternoon) according to resources and need. The overall task is to introduce the foundational practices of discussion, debate, personal and group expression working towards generating dialectical relations. **We want young people to be able to act on the world, which cannot happen just by being heard, but by being in a position to articulate their perspectives so that they might formulate positive and peaceful action to achieve their considered aspirations**, meeting the needs of their communities, regions, nation while being conscious of their shared stake in all creation.

Aims:

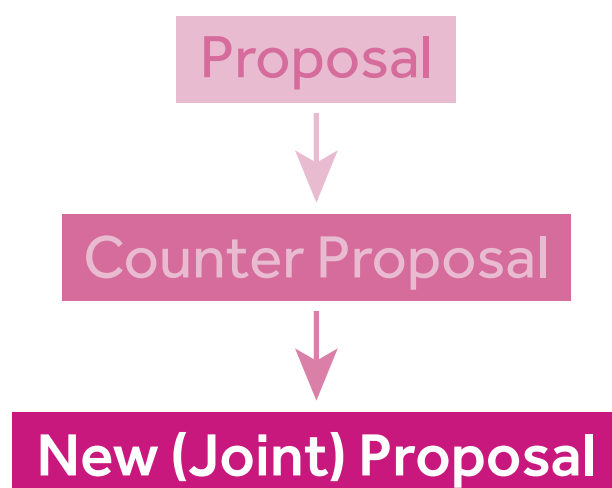
- Promote understanding of the differences between conflict and violence
- Provide space and time for consideration as to what peace is, so laying the ground for how it can be achieved.

Process.

1. Ask pairs of participants to find a window. They need to look out of the window in silence for two minutes (the facilitator will let the participants know when the ten minutes starts and ends).
2. When the group comes back together, the facilitator asks one person from each pair what they saw. Then they ask the other person in the pair what they saw, highlighting any differences. Allow any open discussion to develop.

The facilitator should explain to the group that we all see things differently like seeing the world from the window in different ways and how we see social and political situations differently according to our backgrounds and/or culture.

Differences of perspective and understanding are inevitable and often enriching. Varying perspectives and objectives are often seen as posing difficulties that might only be resolvable when we all agree to see things the same. However, the peace builder transforms conflict by seeing **differences as resources** that can lead to a wider understanding issues, problems or questions and so improve to the current situation.



3. Discuss the above image. This should provide you with a straightforward way to provide an understanding of 'dialectic'; when one idea or perception is explored by way of another perspective or way of thinking then it is possible to create a 'super-idea' that 'synthesises' the former two points of view. However, when the 'super-idea' is questioned by another 'super idea' we get a sort of 'mega-idea'. This is the playing out of dialogue to produce *dialectic*.

Ask the group to work in smaller groups and come up with 'differences' that can become, subject to dialogue, dialectic. For example:

- people should do as they are told
- and
- everyone should make up their own minds

Asked the group to come up with such statements and find a statement that **everyone sees as an improvement on both statements.**

4. Divide the participants into (different) smaller groups and have them discuss the following Swedish proverb.

It's not the fault of one that two are fighting

Ask the groups to address the following questions:

- a. What does the above proverb mean to you?
 - b. Does your understanding of the proverb grow when you discuss it with others?
5. In the same small groups discuss the words 'conflict', 'aggression' and 'violence'.

Each small group should present their definition to the whole group.

Following this, the facilitator should relate to the various definitions, gradually developing how these words have different meanings. This should include considering conflict is a relationship between at least two parties (individuals or groups) who have, or believe they have, aims that are at variance.

Violence can be thought of as relating to actions, words, attitudes, systems or structures that cause physical, psychological, social or environmental damage and/or stop us from reaching our potential.

Aggression might refer to a range of behaviours that can result in both physical and psychological harm to oneself, other or objects in the environment. The expression of aggression can occur in a number of ways, including verbally, mentally and physically. But how is it different from violence?

6. The facilitator asks the group the following questions:
 - i. How many conflicts are you aware of at this time?
 - ii. Can you see connections between these conflicts?
 - iii. From your own experience, can you think of a situation where conflict played a positive role? How did conflict result in change?
 - iv. Can conflict work to make necessary change happen?

All participants share their points of view, looking to clarify the differences between conflict, aggression and violence, with the person sitting next to them.

7. The facilitator reads the following Māori proverb:

Ta te tamariki tana mahi wawahi tahā

(It is the job of the children to smash the calabash)

Allow for discussion but the group should be able to work towards seeing that this is not too far from the saying 'boys will be boys'.

"The calabash was a valuable tool for the transportation of food and water and was also used to heat water. A child, being naturally playful, is likely to have a different idea about the importance of this tool (that in the child's hands can be transformed into a plaything) so there is more chance of accidentally breaking it. This is not seen as the fault of the child and as such it is not thought that they should not be punished for the consequence of their nature. Here the calabash is a metaphor for rules and regulations, which from time to time children and adolescents (and others) may over step in order for them to develop themselves (and perhaps the rule)."

8. To end the session divide the participants into groups of four or five, and ask each group to illustrate (in any way they want- sculpture, writing, agreeing on a statement, role play) to show what they think peace is.

Each group should present what they come up with for other participants. Following each presentation the whole group will question, comment on and discuss the presentation.
9. Ask the facilitator to read the proverb one more time, and sum up the session. They should then ask the whole group to spend a few minutes silently considering what they think they have learned from the day. After this the facilitator should ask if anyone wants to share their thoughts about this.

Before the group departs, the facilitator should emphasise that they have gone some way to understanding what peace, for them, might be. The facilitator should also help make the group conscious of the ways in which they might have laid the ground for finding ways to achieve peace; how they have started making their path to peace.

Follow-up action

Work with young people to creatively exhibit the thoughts and conclusions made during this activity by young people to demonstrate the outcomes of Youth Workers Creating Paths to Peace. They can be displayed as part of Youth Work Week.

The above makes visible the part young people can play, working alongside youth workers, within the context of Youth Work Week, to develop insight, skills and attitudes that allow them to see that conflict can be constructive but that aggression and violence can only give rise to a cycle of self damage, and an end-game of national destruction.

Conclusion

This document has shown how youth workers can adopt and develop proven means for young people to divert themselves from the road to disaffection, which can eventually lead to extremism. The processes of peace-building can be used to create security and stability in various national settings and, with vision and good-will, across the Commonwealth. This is made possible by young people, working with youth workers, framing and shaping their own perceptions, expressing themselves, their ideas and feelings.

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