



International Center for Conciliation

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ICfC: Year 2010 in Review

Executive Summary: Thanks to the generous support of foundations and individual donors, International Center for Conciliation (ICfC) was able to make great strides in 2010. ICfC strengthened its core operations and launched new programs in Israel and Cambodia. In both countries, our efforts in developing new leaders were bolstered by translating ICfC’s training manual in Historical Conciliation, our framework for conflict transformation, into Hebrew and Khmer. Furthermore, ICfC built a solid relationship with a reputable Israeli NGO, Ossim Shalom, one of the largest networks of social workers in the country. Together we launched a powerful Training of Trainers seminar in Historical Conciliation last May in Nazareth that led to dialogue workshops in four mixed communities in Israel. Similarly, in Cambodia, we revitalized our Justice History and Outreach program with a new Training of Trainers seminar and began the process of turning our Cambodia office into a local NGO, a true touchstone for our vision of capacity building at the local level.



Children in Prey Veng province, Cambodia, Fall 2010



Ossim Shalom facilitators at Training of Trainers session in Nazareth, Israel, May 2010

Along with the expansion of ICfC programs overseas, we were also able to strengthen our core domestic operations in support of activities in Israel and Cambodia. In the fall of 2010, ICfC conducted a public education “Glimmers of Hope” tour to inform our constituents and concerned citizens during parlor conversations or meetings in community spaces (universities and religious institutions) about the positive impact of our work at the grassroots level in Israel. Last summer, we also engaged our international Fellows who traveled through Boston to share their on-the-ground experiences through our “Voices from the Field” program. To further improve public outreach, we launched a new online

database system to improve donor and supporter management and revamped our website to communicate the work of ICfC more simply and effectively. These serve as important and critical administrative tools to firmly ground the organization before we replicate our programs.

While the programs have scaled new heights this past year, we experienced a real challenge in garnering new resources. Continued economic downturn has hampered our sustainability and future growth. We carry on our programs with urgency and resolve but are exploring new avenues that will keep our activities blossoming and galvanize our supporters to rally behind the organization.



Members of the “Hajar” group in Beersheva, Israel, at their final session, February, 2011

Report on Programs: ICfC believes that the mediated sharing of collective memory, history, and identity can lead to positive changes at the individual, communal, and, eventually, societal level. Our conviction is made possible by Historical Conciliation, an innovative approach to conflict resolution. Through the shared exploration of painful memory and personal narrative, participants begin to re-imagine their construct of the “Other” in more humanizing and less dichotomous terms. Over the course of six months, participants from embattled groups engage in 8 to 10 dialogue workshop sessions. As a result, history becomes less monolithic and diverse



Ossim Shalom facilitators at Training of Trainers session in Nazareth, Israel, May 2010

perspectives are validated as new relationships form among group members. Former enemies start to transform hatred into empathy.

Israel: Last year, with the help of the generous grants from The Sigrid Rausing Trust, The Gould Foundation, The Rose Family Foundation and other private donors, we launched a promising partnership with a nonpartisan Israeli NGO, Ossim Shalom (OS), Social Workers for Peace and Social Justice. Like ICfC, OS identifies dialogue as the most basic and effective tool of social work. Since OS has a network of some 1600 Arab and Jewish social workers, it brings extensive connections at the local level to the partnership. Last May, we formalized our training manual and trained 26 OS social workers in

the method of Historical Conciliation. They helped to carry out workshops in four “hot spot” communities and plan to initiate six more in the coming year.

In partnership with OS, we carried out 8 dialogue workshops in Jaffo, 16 workshops in Haifa (in 2 different groups) and 8 workshops in Beersheba. The results from these deep dialogue sessions have been encouraging and they give us “glimmers of hope” in that troubled region’s otherwise bleak landscape. The 4 community groups in Israel that engaged in these workshops have expressed their commitment to taking joint action by embarking upon a community project. The planning and implementation of collaborative projects reinforces their new, positive relationships as well as channels this beneficial energy back into the larger community. Furthermore, this experience provides an opportunity for group members to step forward as new leaders. These citizens who emerge as new leaders – the “barefoot conciliators” – become key actors in ensuring the sustainability of the peace-building process at the local level once ICfC-OS facilitators move on to other communities in conflict.



Group of municipal workers from the Haifa Youth Authority at final session. February 2011

Cambodia: Thanks to The Sigrid Rausing Trust, Open Society Institute and German Development Services (DED), ICfC in Cambodia was able to sustain its 3-year-old Justice and History Outreach (JHO) project as well as begin its Training of Trainer (TOT) program last year. We worked extensively with villagers in 11 different villages, facilitating dialogues about history and memory between different groups of Cambodians, including young and old, victims and former perpetrators, and different ethnic groups. ICfC has gained an invaluable ground-level experience that has reaffirmed our conviction that Cambodians need to address and validate their own memories of the brutal past in order to recover from mass atrocity and to move forward.

Last year, ICfC offered villagers training in conflict resolution, non-violent communication, and the dialogue process. This Training of Trainers is further empowering villagers to take control of their own healing, while also



Workshop participants visiting Toul Sleng prison in Phnom Pehn, Cambodia, January 2010

giving ICfC the opportunity to scale its methodology at the grassroots level. So far, a total of 36 people have participated in our training, including villagers, commune and village chiefs, teachers, and the staff of our partner community-based organizations (CBOs). By offering this training, ICfC hopes to decrease the level of antagonism by helping villagers understand the roots of conflict, increase the confidence of villagers as they take ownership over their problems, and enhance social relations among nearby villages.

After the JHO project was recognized as having a critical impact on Cambodian society, many civil society actors recommended that ICfC become a local NGO. Because of this encouragement, ICfC registered as a local NGO under the laws of the Kingdom of

Cambodia in October 2010. This is an important and exciting step in the history of ICfC Cambodia as the organization must now strongly make efforts that sustain its local identity while also maintaining the sustainability of the organization in the midst of the obstacles that come with localization.

Public Engagement in the US: In order to increase awareness and garner greater support for our work overseas, ICfC held various events in the US throughout the year, including “Voices from the Field,” “Parlor Conversations” and the “Glimmers of Hope” tour. In late fall of 2010, Kher Albaz, a leader of the Bedouin community in the Negev region of Israel and Senior Fellow and International Trainer of ICfC, came to the U.S. to deliver “Glimmers of Hope” in Boston, New York, and Washington, DC. Mr. Albaz reiterated a clear, critical message – **“the time is now”** – about making peace between Jews and Arabs in Israel. He made 12 inspiring presentations in a variety of venues, from private receptions held at the



Kher Albaz, speaking at a private reception in New York City, December 2010

homes of supporters to university round-table discussions. He spoke about ICfC’s recent work in Israel and its partnership with Ossim Shalom, highlighting the importance of grassroots peace-building and sharing personal stories of his life as a member of a minority population. He relayed to audiences the miraculous transformations that he has witnessed as a facilitator in conciliation workshops between Jews and Arabs.



Arab and Jewish workshop participants, Beersheva, Israel, Fall 2010

One such transformation occurred in one of the workshops between a Russian Jewish woman and a pious, veiled Muslim Arab woman. Touched and bonded by each others’ experiences of racism as “outsiders” from the majority population in Israel, these two women developed a strong friendship and were able to move beyond the hostility not only between Arabs and Jews, but specifically between Muslim Arabs and Jewish Russians. This bond truly represented to Mr. Albaz what peace can look like if the work of ICfC is expanded: *“To see a Russian Jewish woman and a religious Arab woman*

working through their own painful memories, to see them empathizing with each others’ vastly different

experiences with racism, and to see them coming together as friends and colleagues, was one of the most heartening experiences I have seen. Peace CAN be achieved if we can help to get rid of bad memories, move from hatred to empathy and build deeper trust.”

Mr. Albaz also spoke of his own experiences as a Bedouin growing up in the Negev, the southern desert of Israel.



Kher Albaz presenting on the “Glimmers of Hope Tour,”
December 2010

He shared with audiences about a particular experience he had as a young boy – witnessing the destruction of his tin home, built by his father – and spoke of how, at that moment, he made a conscious choice to abandon the intractable, endless cycles of violence and instead head down the path of expressing his pain, trying to understand the other, and collaborating with his neighbors to seek solutions. It is this empathetic and problem-solving spirit that Mr. Albaz carries with him at all times and imparts upon those he works with. This optimism and dedication was validated at each and every

speaking engagement throughout his tour thanks to hundreds of event attendees. He was able to return to the Negev with a sense of gratitude and renewed purpose for his peace-building work at the grassroots level.

Report on Organizational/Administrative Activities: ICfC was able to not only expand our domestic and international work, but also to build critical organizational capacity to help us achieve our programmatic goals. We launched a new website and developed a more technologically advanced and efficient database system for tracking and communicating with our supporters and donors. ICfC brought its international Fellows to the Israel Training of Trainers and reconnected with their activities in their countries of domicile and reaffirmed their commitment to the organization. Working with these Fellows, ICfC leadership also developed ideas about future strategies to offer trainings to organizations in Israel, Cambodia and the Netherlands, where ICfC had conducted several workshops between majority and minority populations, working with the former mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen.

Challenges: While ICfC is proud to have solid programs in the field, vibrant partnerships with local NGOs, and an engaged network around the world, the downturn in the global economy has seriously hampered our ability to meet the ongoing needs of our partners. After training 26 facilitators in Israel, we have an excess capacity to expand our activities but we are finding it hard to continue our dialogue workshops in the 6 communities that are keenly interested in bringing our model to them. We continue to seek new ways to build the financial base of the organization.

We hope you will consider sustaining your support of ICfC as we continue to embark upon building pillars of pluralism in conflict prone regions through our Historical Conciliation methodology. At a time when leaders in Europe are questioning the very foundations of pluralism, it would be unfortunate to reduce the good work that we have been doing for years in places like Cambodia and Israel as well as new possibilities for impact in the Netherlands, where the polarization incited by the political parties is creating serious tensions between the majority and minority populations. Having established our expertise in these matters, we have special opportunities. They include expanding the work that we have been doing in Israel and to bring together members of the majority and minority societies in countries of Europe where democracy and tolerance are being undermined. Please continue to support us as we break down the ethnic and religious divides so that we may allow peace to flourish and prosper in all corners of the globe.



Children in Kampong Chham province,
Cambodia, January 2010