

# Time to Learn: Expanding Organisational Capacities in Conflict Settings

A Response by Ulrike Hopp & Barbara Unger

[www.berghof-handbook.net](http://www.berghof-handbook.net)

77

## 1. Stop – and then what?

When Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina's initial *Open Letter to Peacebuilders*<sup>1</sup> reached us, we were excited: finally somebody had raised the questions we have been struggling with, expressed doubts which we have experienced ourselves, and called upon us to do things differently! We were inspired by the questions and concerns and immediately agreed that we would like to contribute to the debate. We were glad that our colleagues from the Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series had offered this opportunity. But something strange seemed to happen: whenever we went through the refreshing article, we felt that something was missing. At first, each of us thought that maybe we had not read thoroughly enough, or that our reaction to the painfully accurate diagnosis was led by self-criticism, guilt and withdrawal. Then again, another explanation could simply be that the path from where we are to where we would like to be has still to be traced, and maybe in more detail than one single article can do.

We take Fisher and Zimina's ideas for an "agenda for transformative peacebuilding" (in this volume, 28-31) as being one of many necessary contributions to a discussion which is far from finished. We will not attempt (despite being tempted) to go into all the inspiring and sometimes provocative thoughts, but rather focus on one aspect in which we have become increasingly interested in our work

<sup>1</sup> *Editors' note:* the lead article in this volume is based on *Just Wasting Our Time? An Open Letter to Peacebuilders* which Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina circulated widely in March 2008.

as practitioners: the observation that, as Fisher and Zimina put it, creating change requires “a high degree of reflexive learning and adaptability, at personal and institutional levels [which] calls for a willingness to learn from the work of peacebuilding and other sectors, and bring those insights back into practice” (ibid., 31).

Fisher and Zimina ask us to stop and think together about what change we would like to see. They go on to outline an agenda for transformative peacebuilding with six intertwined areas. We would like to refer to three of them here: their ideas for improving networks and linkages, delivering change and action learning. Fisher and Zimina offer suggestions on how to connect isolated project approaches to the wider context through building alliances and networks; they ask how to craft truly transformative interventions that require creativity, finesse, long-term engagement and collaboration with others; and, lastly, they suggest investing in specialized education and engaging in action learning in order to take peacebuilding work to a new and innovative level.

We will use the opportunity of the rhetorical pause which they call for to reflect specifically on how to improve our learning, i.e. the *way* in which we are learning.

## 2. Why We are Interested in Learning

Both of us joined Berghof Peace Support (BPS)<sup>2</sup> after roughly 10 years of practice in development, human rights and peacebuilding, working in different – also governmental – organisations (and thus, incidentally, we have difficulties with Fisher and Zimina’s dichotomy of practitioners working in peacebuilding vs. those employed by government). In Berghof, we found an organisation with a unique appetite for learning from research and practice and were excited to be, among other things, part of the development of a systemic approach to conflict transformation – something we consider more an attitude than a tool or a new school (Wils et al. 2006; Koerppen et al. 2008).

At the heart of this systemic approach lies learning – by individuals and organisations, as part of the system – since the learning process will enable actors to become peaceful agents for change, or the “critical yeast” as John Paul Lederach would call them (Lederach 2005, 91). However, both of us have come to realise in our work with civil society organisations and stakeholders in different conflict settings that we do not know enough about how these learning processes really work. How can we, in fact, best support civil society organisations in reflecting on their work? How about our own learning?

We do not agree with Fisher and Zimina’s assessment that values are generally missing in peacebuilding work today, but we do agree that we do not sufficiently reflect on our explicit and implicit theories of change. According to Susanna Campbell, “organizational learning determines the degree to which an organization is able to identify and assess the relevance of its theory of change. Regular assessment of the relationship between theory of change (intention) and the impact of the resulting programs on the conflict (outcome) is [...] essential for successful peacebuilding” (Campbell 2007, 6).

<sup>2</sup> Berghof Peace Support (also: Berghof Foundation for Peace Support) was established in 2004 with the aim of making a practical, hands-on contribution to transforming violent conflict. Its mission is described as threefold: (1) advocating and applying a systemic approach to conflict transformation; (2) supporting peace processes by enhancing networks of internal and external organisations in both politics and civil society; and (3) fostering creative, effective and durable peace initiatives. BPS was set up with the vision of being a complementary sister organisation to the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management (as of November 2008 Berghof Conflict Research), which was established by the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies in 1993. For more information on BPS, see [www.berghof-peacesupport.org](http://www.berghof-peacesupport.org). For more information on the Research Center, which also publishes the Berghof Handbook and its Dialogue Series, see [www.berghof-center.org](http://www.berghof-center.org). Both organisations are located in Berlin, Germany.

Yet there seems to be something in the growing ‘project mentality’ and the ever-urgent work in the context of crisis and violence that hinders us from moving beyond technicalities and makes us stop short of transformation. To break this invisible barrier we will have to look more closely at how individuals work and learn, how change and learning happen within organisations and how this can lead to change in large systems. Considering these links, we believe that our field should look closer at two questions: *where* does change need to happen, and *how well* are we – and our organisations – *equipped* to inspire that change?

We have found that planned, built-in learning loops have enriched our own thinking and development, our organisation(s) and our work. For example, during the engagement of the Berghof Foundation in Sri Lanka,<sup>3</sup> we had the opportunity for repeated self-reflection processes which we linked to our evaluation and planning cycles. These facilitated spaces for reflection, and – not to be neglected – the glass of wine or cup of tea with colleagues in the evening, to revisit our personal and the organisation’s commitment and to check those against the quagmire of practical every-day decisions, proved indispensable. And we wonder: is this something that can be developed further, as an on-going learning process and as a recommendation for other organisations?

### 3. Learning about Learning

Thinking outside the box of daily routines is one of the main challenges for anyone who has a busy schedule – but peacebuilding requires exactly that. Lederach captured the challenge well in his call for peacebuilders to continuously “have one foot in what is and one foot beyond what exists” (Lederach 2005, x). This challenge goes far beyond effective time management; it is not only about finding time and resources for reflection. It is more about getting the process right so that reflection is followed by action – this is when learning really happens. In the tradition of Gregory Bateson (an anthropologist and linguist, among other things, and co-creator of the science of cybernetics), as well as Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schoen (who have written extensively on organisational learning and ‘the learning organisation’) we define learning as adaptation to external change. Learning in organisations is thus not only about acquiring knowledge, but about changed practice. New insights have to bring about changed action and new routines.

There is a vast body of expertise and literature on organisational learning, the learning organisation, change management and organisational development. Some of it resembles ‘how to ...’ management bestsellers. Some of it also seems too narrowly focused on private-sector experiences to be instructive here, as many authors and practitioners have found that learning in non-profit organisations differs from that in business: it is more value-driven, has other accountability references and works in highly complex contexts (Roper et al. 2003, 8ff.).

However, many of the insights are based on concepts and theories that seem closely aligned with peacebuilding values and can be very useful. A summary of the underlying thinking guiding Peter Senge’s *Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (Senge et al. 1994), for example, characterizes the findings so far: “Organizations are products of the ways that people in them think and interact. To change organizations for the better, you must give people the opportunity to change the ways they think and interact. No one person, including a highly charismatic teacher or CEO, can train or command someone else to alter their attitudes, beliefs, skills, capabilities, perceptions, or level of commitment. Instead, the practice of organizational learning involves developing and taking part in tangible activities that will change the way people conduct their work. Through these new governing

<sup>3</sup> The project Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Transformation (RNCST) was established in 2001. Co-funded by the Swiss and German governments, it ran until the end 2008. For more information, see *Space for Peace* (2008).

ideas, innovations in infrastructure, and new management methods and tools people will develop an enduring capability for change. The process will pay back the organization with a far greater diversity and intensity of commitment, innovation, and talent.”<sup>4</sup>

In this context, it is useful to make the distinction between first-, second- and third-order learning. First-order learning, the most widely known, refers to learning from the ‘gap’ between expectation and outcome. It is also called ‘incremental learning’ which happens, for example, when an organisation changes its programme agenda. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) often bring about first-order learning.

Second-order learning (or ‘double loop’ learning) introduces another level, namely reflection on the rules and values that guide our action. In peacebuilding, this would refer to the reflection of theories of change that are guiding our work. Our M&E can bring about reflection on that level, as long as it is well conceived.

The third-order (or ‘triple loop’) learning refers to learning how to learn. Also called ‘transformational learning’, it aims at changing underlying patterns and designing new learning processes.

Within this framework, our interest centres less on what our field still has to learn with regards to ‘content’ – the *what* to do – but on *how we learn to learn* and adjust our action accordingly, specifically in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In our experience, this learning about learning is crucial, since even our best efforts in transformative peace work might be ineffective if we fail to learn lessons offered to us.

While neither the learning theories and nor the discourse about learning organisations are particularly new in the peacebuilding world, it seems to us that they have not been fully used. A recent research project of the Global Public Policy Institute looks into learning within the UN and appears to arrive at similar conclusions (Benner/Rotmann 2008, 44). Therefore, we are asking ourselves: firstly, whether we have sufficiently valued the insights from all the volumes written on organisational development and learning; but secondly, and more importantly maybe, whether there might be specific challenges for organisational learning and learning organisations in the context of conflict transformation that we need to consider in order to improve our effectiveness?

## 4. Challenges of Learning

During the last few years, we have seen the development and testing of various planning, assessment and evaluation tools and guidelines. Many of them are very useful and inspiring for our work and they are based on a growing body of practical experience. Ministries and multilateral agencies have been engaged in learning within their organisations, deploying personnel and creating new structures. The extent to which ‘mainstreaming’ efforts of peace and conflict related work have taken root in the development world is illustrated, for example, by the recent debate on aid effectiveness in fragile states and conflict situations on the occasion of the high level forum on aid effectiveness in Accra/Ghana, however ‘technical’ these discussions may seem.

Also, in the conflict transformation and peacebuilding field, collaborative learning exercises have provided us with stimuli and results. The Reflecting on Peace Practice project of the US-based organisation CDA – Collaborative Learning Projects and other processes have broadened our understanding and have called for more focus on peace writ large, beyond the project horizon.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Source: [www.fieldbook.com](http://www.fieldbook.com) [accessed 3 November 2008].

<sup>5</sup> *Editors’ note*: see also the contribution of Chigas/Woodrow to this Dialogue (47-57).

However, many of us find it difficult to integrate the knowledge provided by these collaborative learning efforts into our own day-to-day work and to accompany it with internal learning.

In our own work, we have repeatedly confronted a number of challenges and questions, and we wonder how other practitioners have experienced the following six interrelated aspects:

### 1) What is specific about learning in conflict?

Since any organisation in a conflict situation is part of the conflict system, intra-organisational dynamics are shaped by the conflict context and thus affect learning. How teams communicate and work together, how they deal with problems and how they react in order to adapt their action is informed by the team members' individual and collective experiences in the conflict. We therefore propose that learning and change in organisations in conflict need to consider the team dynamics and individual background of team members much more than this is done in current practice. This, of course, begs the question: what does this imply for the guidelines and toolboxes in use, which often are modelled on organisations in peaceful environments? We believe that we need to invest more into tailor-made approaches to team-building and learning within our organisations in conflict.

Most peacebuilding organisations unite individuals with different political, gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Some of the colleagues are nationals, others not. We find that in conflict, there is much more insecurity around what issues can be raised, how criticism can be expressed or how personal opinion is influenced by group affiliation and loyalty. How can this diversity and sensitivity be used constructively for peacebuilding, and what pitfalls have to be avoided? Team-building, we suggest, is becoming much more important in order to enable and empower the team for joint learning and for advocating peace and reconciliation in the society. This consumes considerable time and energy, yet “efforts to deal with internal dynamics *is* the work as it prepares a multicultural group to address the deep social divisions in their society” (Woodrow et al. 2008, xi). It thus, in fact, enables them to carry out their peacebuilding work.

### 2) How to integrate learning into the project cycle...

When trying to inspire change in organisations, we face a dilemma. We have learned that peacebuilding has to be as well planned as any other activity, and this requires analysis and strategic planning exercises bound to timeframes – however flexible these might be. Often, we therefore tend to slot in ‘reflection’ around specific dates: the monitoring midpoint, the board meeting, an external evaluation – which allows us to integrate what we have discussed directly into new planning. Many of us organise workshops and retreats with the assistance of external resource persons, or serve in this way as external facilitators ourselves, thus again scheduling reflection to a fixed time slot.

While scheduling time for reflection is important, such cordoned-off periods should not be seen as sufficient nor should they restrict other, rather ad-hoc forms of reflection and learning. Have we not all heard it said, or said ourselves: “too bad, this good insight should have informed our work plan or change process design; but we just finished it two weeks ago...”? We must not only allow for learning every couple of months or years, at the end of a project or programme cycle – we have to find ways to adjust our technical frameworks, logframes, etc. so that seeds of insight can be nurtured and can inspire our action all the time.

In practice, this means systematically allocating specific times for learning, for example regular debriefings after each activity, team retreats, participation in learning projects and exchange within the peacebuilding community, but also leaving room for ‘the spark of the moment’.

### 3) ... and how to foster an understanding of learning as ‘the work’?

Often, we face constraints in allocating the extra time for learning and feel a stronger urge to return to our peacebuilding activities instead. It seems that there is a fundamental misunderstanding regarding what opportunities for learning in our organisations are about. They are not a distraction from work – we believe they are ‘the work’.

This misperception does not only occur in peacebuilding organisations, but an environment of violence and conflict creates even greater pressure on individuals and teams to make a difference in daily life and not ‘waste their time in reflection workshops’. Partly, this notion of unnecessary ‘navel-gazing’ might stem from workshop design that does not tackle the ‘real’ issues. However, we believe that there is more to this phenomenon. It might also be related to our way of dealing with cognitive dissonances: when insights from workshops and discussions are contrasted with our routine activities, we may notice rather painful gaps and tensions, and instead of dealing with them, we just push those dissonances aside. The same phenomenon might be another reason for something that has occurred time and again in meetings and discussions with colleagues: an interesting thought emerges, but we move on according to schedule and the momentum is lost.

It seems that a bit of free time, or a little-longer-than-usual chat ‘at the watering hole’ with a like-minded colleague, is all it takes for a spark of insight to fly. We need to be flexible enough to allow for this – something that probably cannot be captured by rules but in effect reflects an attitude.

### 4) How to translate external stimuli into internal practice?

Often, a stimulus from outside the organisation is needed to start reflecting on our own peacebuilding practice. As peacebuilders we read reports, we participate in learning projects and we invite external support to help improve our work. Bringing resource persons to a workshop or conducting seminars with trainers from abroad is also a task which many peacebuilding organisations undertake for local partners in conflict regions. Often, the live experiences from other conflict contexts and the fresh views add value to the topical contribution in question. However, this ‘parachuting’ of resource persons also has its shortcomings, since the stimulus provided often seems short-lived and translating it into ‘real life’ and changed routines proves difficult.

Change depends on sustained action within the organisations themselves. Only sufficient resources, motivation and energy can make change happen, and for that, more commitment is required than for the initial consumption of provided input. An effective learning opportunity will prepare its participants and their organisations for these requirements and help the transition. In the same way that we include reflection and transfer modules when training individuals (Schmelzle 2006), we can also help to support learning in our organisations. Although this insight, again, is not new, in practice we still find a lot of capacity-building focusing on content only. Yet in our experience – and to use the Sri Lanka example again – supporting effective institutional capacity-building in peacebuilding organisations is often more about helping them to design their own learning and change process, rather than about assisting the content-related learning.

### 5) Can the donors be blamed for everything?

Fisher and Zimina argue that our field’s actions and development are determined to a significant extent by the fact that our work is funded by few and mostly government donors. And, clearly, this situation also affects how we learn – or that we often do not allow ourselves to learn, i.e. interrupt and change our ongoing action as agreed in the funding proposal. This poses a great challenge, especially in a situation where our field seems to have to prove its value added and potential for impact in a world of turmoil and destabilization. However, in our work in Sri Lanka

we found that donors could be engaged not only in more flexible planning but also in joint learning processes. This was made possible through extensive reporting and documentation, relatively frequent and regular meetings on both the embassy and the headquarter levels, participation of the donors in all evaluation missions and generally open and trustful communication. Such cooperation required clarity of roles and expectations, and an understanding that peacebuilding is a young field of work in progress.

Often, profound learning happens out of the experience of crisis. We found that openness in dealing with difficulties and ‘failure’ both in ourselves, within the team and with our donors was key. When the Sri Lanka project was attacked in the local media, it was exactly the joint reflection and learning from that tense situation that helped us to adjust our strategies and adopt joint responses with the donors. Conceptual learning – for example on systemic approaches to conflict transformation – was also inspired by difficulties experienced in our actual work, and facilitated by sponsors and donors also wanting to learn and therefore allowing an open, explorative approach.

We are encouraged to see that this thinking has already developed strong roots during the last few years, both among private and governmental donors. As the Berghof Foundation expressed it recently: “support for peacebuilding work must span generations. There is no quick fix, no certain formula for success, when it comes to making peace. But people can and do learn. Through this, they change. And learn to make more change” (McGuinness/Zundel 2008, 66).

However, we also see it as our responsibility to engage with our donors and to draw new funders, e.g. philanthropic entrepreneurs, to the field who understand that peacebuilding work has to be based on learning. This will include long-term engagement to identify the ‘champions’ among and within the donors who are ready to explore, for example, more learning-orientated funding arrangements. In this area, too, the task is to inspire change and to operationalise our requirements so that donors can relate to them.

## 6) How to operationalise learning as a collective process?

An African proverb says, “none of us knows as much as all of us know”: reflection and learning among and between organisations is often most successful in the company of others and when facilitated in a systematic manner. However, Fisher and Zimina draw our attention to the fact that we indeed operate in a competitive environment and that rivalry often hinders joined-up work. While we personally are lucky to have experienced open exchange and collective learning, be it with local partners, other INGOs or donors, we also know of situations where the actors have failed to collaborate and learn together.

Particularly in conflict environments, mistrust and rivalry seem to stand in the way of a lot of collaboration that, from the outsider’s perspective, would appear so easy. The experience of the Berghof Foundation in Sri Lanka shows that, sometimes, an outsider perspective and role can help to overcome this obstacle and bring local peacebuilders to one table. While much of our facilitation work obviously focused on joint problem-solving and dialogue, it could also be used to offer learning opportunities for actors that otherwise did not communicate or share their experiences. It seems that in that situation we were seen as an honest broker who could enable and inspire collaborative processes.

Sometimes, these moments of sharing just happen by surprise, for example when a workshop is ‘hijacked’ by the participants who want to discuss their theories of change much more extensively than planned. If there is, then, maybe much more appetite for sharing than expected, how can we use this to inspire more collective learning?

We suggest that trust and confidence for joint efforts can be built more easily when starting an exchange among staff on topics of mutual interest, without much institutional involvement. Avoiding the institutional politics of engaging the heads of organisations until a later stage can help to make the initial and crucial first steps, as we learned when supporting a civil society network for information sharing in Sri Lanka. In this case, a few staff members of some organisations went ahead with the networking and others joined later, when they saw the benefits of the collective. In our own professional experience, small informal groups of trusted individuals, sometimes friends, across organisations (governmental and non-governmental, on the donor and on the receiving side) have been able to openly discuss dilemmas and to further individual thinking as well as inspire organisational changes.

## 5. Outlook

Facing the challenges outlined above, learning to learn more effectively seems an overwhelming task for us as individuals and our organisations. Fisher and Zimina suggest that in order to learn for improving our practice, one important requirement is “a change of culture towards a more proactive and open sharing of successes and failures” (in this volume, 31).

To foster a ‘triple loop’ learning community that addresses specific challenges in peacebuilding organisations and in the wider field, we would like to encourage other practitioners to join us in learning about our learning – the third-order learning – starting with our own individual and organisational experiences and thus reflecting on the peacebuilding community in general. This group – or possibly various sub-groups according to interests, trust and backgrounds – could build on today’s experiences and challenges in a very practical way and look for answers that enrich our efforts in capacity-building and empowerment as much as in creating momentum for peaceful change. This Berghof Handbook Dialogue or the web-platform that Fisher and Zimina have created for discussion of the *Open Letter to Peacebuilders*<sup>6</sup> provide possible forums for virtually meeting interested colleagues and thus form stepping stones for such an endeavour.

We are not envisioning to start with a fixed and stable group that necessarily has to mirror other networks and include all the relevant organisations. What we actually have in mind is a ‘seedling’ group that would begin exploring the issue, believing that individuals can then take strength and inspiration back to their organisations, to help them in learning and reflecting.

Such a group, or groups, would ideally emerge from informal communication, and then decide together on what process and structure would best fit their aspirations and resources. Possible options include interdisciplinary and intercultural workshops, web-based peer discussions, and – not to be neglected – the seizing of informal and ad-hoc moments of sharing and exchange. Thus, this form of learning would be inspired by scholarly teaching and literature as well as by good and not-so-good practice from the field and the headquarters of peacebuilding organisations in many parts of the world. It would produce concrete suggestions on how to improve learning and help participants with their own learning. It would help create inspiration for a difficult job in a daunting environment.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com>.

## 6. References & Further Reading

- Argyris, Chris and Donald A. Schoen 1978. *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bateson, Gregory 1979. *Mind and Nature. A Necessary Unity*. New York: Dutton.
- Benner, Thorsten and Philipp Rotmann 2008. Learning to Learn? UN Peacebuilding and the Challenge of Building a Learning Organization, in: *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 2 (1), 43-62.
- Campbell, Susanna 2007. "Organizational Learning: The Gateway to Peacebuilding Success?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, Feb 28, 2007. Available online at [www.allacademic.com/meta/p180913\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p180913_index.html).
- Fisher, Simon and Lada Zimina 2009. Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation*. (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 11-35. Also available at [www.berghof-handbook.net/std\\_page.php?LANG=e&id=5](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5). [A longer version was published in March 2008 as *Just Wasting Our Time? Open Letter to Peacebuilders* online at <http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com>.]
- Koerppen, Daniela, Beatrix Schmelzle and Oliver Wils (eds.) 2008. *A Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation. Exploring Strengths and Limitations*. (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 6.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available online at [www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue6\\_systapp.complete.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue6_systapp.complete.pdf).
- Lederach, John Paul 2005. *The Moral Imagination. The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McGuinness, Kate and Johannes Zundel 2008. Peace-enabling Philanthropy, in: UBS Philanthropy Services. *Viewpoints 2008: Building Change Communities*. Zurich: UBS, 62-67. Available at [www.ubs.com/1/e/ubs\\_ch/wealth\\_management\\_switzerland/exclusive\\_services/philanthropy\\_services/downloads.html](http://www.ubs.com/1/e/ubs_ch/wealth_management_switzerland/exclusive_services/philanthropy_services/downloads.html).
- Roper, Laura, Jethro Pettit and Deborah Eade (eds.) 2003. *Development and the Learning Organisation*. Oxford: Oxfam GB.
- Scharmer, C. Otto 2007. *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*. Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning.
- Schmelzle, Beatrix 2006. Training for Conflict Transformation – An Overview of Approaches and Resources, in: *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Online Version. Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available at [www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/schmelzle\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/schmelzle_handbook.pdf).
- Senge, Peter 1990. *The Fifth Discipline. The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.
- Senge, Peter, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard B. Boss and Bryan J. Smith 1994. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook. Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.
- Space for Peace. The Work of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies in Sri Lanka, 2001-2008*. Colombo: Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies – Sri Lanka Office, 2008. Available online at [www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/Space\\_for\\_Peace.pdf](http://www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/Space_for_Peace.pdf).

- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) 2007. *SIDA Evaluation 07/11. Collaborative Learning Projects, Final Report*. Stockholm: SIDA. Available online at [www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=32852&language=en\\_US](http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=32852&language=en_US).
- Wils, Oliver, Ulrike Hopp, Norbert Ropers, Luxshi Vimalarajah and Wolfram Zunzer 2006. *The Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation – Concept and Fields of Application*. Berlin: Berghof Peace Support. Available online at [www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/systemic\\_conflict\\_transformation\\_complete.pdf](http://www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/systemic_conflict_transformation_complete.pdf).
- Woodrow, Peter, Christopher W. Moore, Ines Reinhard and Peter Aeberhard 2008. “The Berghof Foundation in Sri Lanka: Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Transformation. Lessons Learned Evaluation Report.” Unpublished document.

[All weblinks accessed 8 January 2009.]

## The Authors

**Ulrike Hopp** has been the deputy director of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies' Sri Lanka office since 2005. For her position at Berghof, Ulrike is currently on leave from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), where she has worked since 1997. There she served as desk officer for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, from 2002 onwards, and authored the ministry's strategy for peacebuilding (*Übersektorales Konzept zur Krisenprävention, Konfliktbearbeitung und Friedensförderung in der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*, 2005). As an economist, Ulrike Hopp integrates both her educational background in management and her professional experience in development assistance. She looks at her work from the angle of organisational learning and takes great interest in building capacities for institutional and social change processes. Contact: [ulrike.hopp@berghof-peacesupport.org](mailto:ulrike.hopp@berghof-peacesupport.org).

**Barbara Unger** is senior coordinator and deputy director of Berghof Peace Support. She coordinates the consulting services of BPS and is responsible for programme activities in Latin America. Her recent activities include, among others, providing training, consultancy services and backstopping for German technical cooperation (GTZ) programmes, as well as lessons learned and practitioners' guidelines. Barbara Unger joined BPS in 2006; prior to that she coordinated zivik, a funding mechanism for conflict resolution activities set up by the German Federal Foreign Office, and was part of the editorial team of the Federal Government's Action Plan *Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building*. She has previously worked as an independent trainer and consultant, as well as a programme officer in several development and consulting institutions. A political scientist focusing on development and gender issues with a specialization from the German Development Institute, her current practice and research interests comprise systemic approaches, peace support structures and dealing with the past. Contact: [barbara.unger@berghof-peacesupport.org](mailto:barbara.unger@berghof-peacesupport.org).

### See also...

This article has been published as part of Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7, *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation* (2009). Hardcopies of the complete version, including the following articles, can be ordered at the Berghof Research Center ([order@berghof-center.org](mailto:order@berghof-center.org)):

- Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle, *Introduction*
- Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina, *Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders*
- Louis Kriesberg, *Making Good Use of the Time: Contributions and Dilemmas of Non-governmental Actors in Peacebuilding*
- Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow, *Envisioning and Pursuing Peace Writ Large*
- Martina Weitsch, *Mobilizing Public Opinion for Peace: The Next Challenge for the Peacebuilding Communities*
- Goran Bozicevic, *Reflections on Peacebuilding from Croatia*
- Ulrike Hopp and Barbara Unger, *Time to Learn: Expanding Organisational Capacities in Conflict Settings*
- Martina Fischer, *Participatory Evaluation and Critical Peace Research: A Precondition for Peacebuilding*
- Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina, *Reflections on the Comments: Responses and More Queries.*

Downloads of all articles are available free of charge on our website ([www.berghof-handbook.net](http://www.berghof-handbook.net)).

*Please note:* An online forum for further discussion has been established by Lada Zimina and Simon Fisher at [www.lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com](http://www.lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com).