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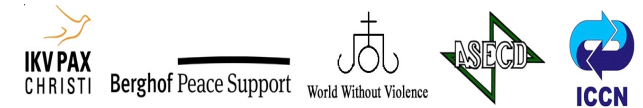
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Engagement Through Dialogue

Dialogue and Study Visits for the
Transformation of the
Georgian-Abkhazian and
Georgian- Ossetian Conflicts



This project is funded by the European Union

Summary

IKV Pax Christi and **Berghof Peace Support** in partnership with:

Agency for Economic, Social & Cultural Development

International Center on Conflict & Negotiation

World Without Violence

are conducting a **series of four Abkhazian-Georgian and four South Ossetian-Georgian dialogue** and study-visit workshops in Chisinau and Tiraspol between late January 2010 and the end of March 2011.

The workshops bring together young leaders and activists from across the conflict divide, combining a **study-visit dynamic with dialogue workshops**. This project is funded by the European Commission under the Instrument for Stability.

Context

The wars over Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the early 1990s have created significant grievances on all sides. Large communities of people were affected by different forms of violence that have profoundly influenced their lives for many years.

After a period of relative stagnation, in recent years the conditions for encounter and dialogue across the Abkhazian-Georgian and South Ossetian-Georgian conflict lines have deteriorated. Since the summer of 2004, movement across the South Ossetian-Georgian boundary line has been significantly restrained. In the Abkhazian-Georgian context, too, opportunities for dialogue have deteriorated since the summer of 2006.

The August 2008 war over South Ossetia has had a significant impact on opportunities for peaceful

interaction in the region. It has further closed down communication channels and intensified suspicion between people living in all affected communities.

The international community has not supported Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia following the August war. This partial recognition has however had significant consequences on the conflict dynamics. Official negotiations, halted in 2006, and the Geneva process after August 2008 so far have shown only limited points of conversion between all parties involved.

Aim and principles

The partner organisations in this programme share the conviction that it is crucial to broaden the space for dialogue through "people-to-people" contact. In particular, this project aims to deepen understanding of political processes in the communities affected by conflict and the perceptions of these processes on different sides of the conflict divides. It also intends to build the capacities of young leaders and engaged open-minded young professionals to think about complex solution models to the challenges their societies face. At the same time, they will be challenged to explore the possibilities and limitations of trust-building processes.

Methodology

Based on study visits to both Chisinau and Tiraspol, the programme seeks to develop participants' capacities to address a situation that shows similarities to their everyday environment, looking at this from a range of different perspectives. Participants will meet analysts, scholars, journalists and politicians, as well as representatives from civil

society and public institutions, in both Chisinau and Tiraspol.

The study visit approach is a proven and effective methodology for deepening participants' analysis and understanding of issues relevant to the Abkhazian-Georgian and the South Ossetian-Georgian contexts. It is not seen as a blueprint, but rather as a source of inspiration and a basis for dialogue and creative reflection.

Based on this inspiration, the dialogue project seeks to explore options for how the conflicts can be peacefully addressed. It is a sharing process in which participants are invited to use their creativity for generating a confidence-building dynamic that is not threatening to anyone.

Each workshop will host 12 participants for 6 working days. The workshops are facilitated by a team of international and local partners from the organisations responsible for the project.

Organisations

The project 'Engagement Through Dialogue' is conducted jointly by IKV Pax Christi and Berghof Peace Support, in partnership with the Agency for Economic, Social & Cultural Development, the International Center on Conflict & Negotiation and World Without Violence. All of the partners are widely recognised and experienced peacebuilding organisations that have been engaged in community peacebuilding for a number of years throughout the region.



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