

Social integration / disintegration in post- communist societies

**Reintegrating communities in
the North Caucasus –
successes and challenges**

Achieving progress toward a long-term resolution to the crisis requires not just restoring damaged infrastructure and paying compensations, but also - working with peoples minds, bringing peacebuilding activities down from the conference tables into the field on the level of local communities and to the people directly affected by violent conflict.

Peace dialogue is one of the key techniques for such a task.

Large scale military conflicts in the North Caucasus:

- *Ossetian-Ingush conflict – nearly 12 years*
- *Chechen crisis – will be 10 years soon*

Other cases of violence and terrorist acts are more and more affecting different North Caucasus regions – outside the borders of Chechnya.



If our goal is peace & stability
in the North Caucasus,
relevant policies must be based on 3 pillars:

**Providing
security for the
population and
state, which is
the primary
responsibility
of the state**

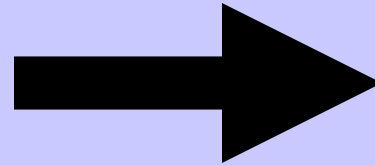
**Ensuring long-
term recovery,
reconciliation,
creating “peace of
the minds”
through dialog:
addressed by non-
state actors better
than by the state**

**Protecting the
conflict-affected
population,
responding to
urgent
humanitarian
needs - addressed
jointly by the
state & the
international
community**

Violent conflict is not always the result of intentional and thought through activities of specific actors. In intrastate conflicts the role of spontaneous and occasional factors becomes more important.

In such a situation both outside actors and especially - local civil society institutions being mobile and capable of immediate intervention can play an important, and sometimes decisive, role. An initiative undertaken in the right place and at the right time may channel a conflict towards a nonviolent form. An ongoing peace dialogue process is a crucial element of success in such a situation.

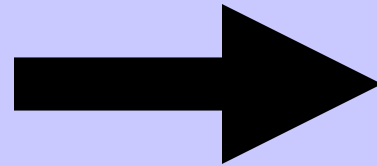
NGO actions



Results

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Working with the local Chechen community, providing an “outside perspective” of their actions and statements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Helping them in preparing statements and taking action which work toward easing tensions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Increasing the influence of the reasonable and moderate local NGO leaders within their community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Previous work on restoring relationships between Chechen and Dagestan villages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Preventing the development of a general negative stereotype toward Chechens.

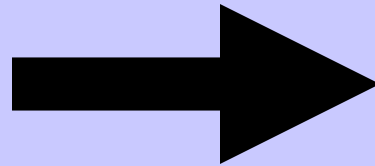
NGO actions



Results

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Appeals to local and federal authorities. – prepared immediately as tensions rose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Drawing attention to the problem.➤ Overcoming the feeling of isolation for the local Chechen community, giving hope a nonviolent resolution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Work in the conflict zones, monitoring the situation “on ground”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Encouraging local authorities to stop human rights violations.➤ Providing objective and up to date information about the situation in the conflict zone.

NGO actions



Results

➤ Work with federal authorities, alarming them about possible negative developments.

➤ Clear position of the Republican leadership regarding the need to prevent an escalation of an inter – ethnic conflict.

➤ Organizing joint work of representatives of various ethnic communities on restoring the devastated villages.

➤ Overcoming the psychological tensions between ethnic communities.

Year

Goal

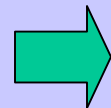
Objective:

**1999 -
2000**

Restoring relationships and communications between the Chechen and Dagestani peoples

- To restore cooperative activities among residents (including women, young people and the elders) of bordering districts in the Republic of Dagestan and the Chechen Republic;
- To reduce tensions among different ethnic groups as well as among the refugees from Chechnya and the receiving community in the Khasavyurt and Novolakskiy districts of the Republic of Dagestan.

For example:



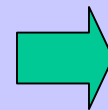
Using traditional forms of citizen diplomacy allows reestablishing and strengthening destroyed ties between different ethnic and territorial communities

Year: Goal: Objective:

**2000 -
2003** Developing
cross-border
cooperation

- To engage local authorities and key professional groups (including police officers, media people, businessmen, teachers, librarians, social workers, farmers etc) in the reintegration process.

For example:



Reestablished ties and communications allow to develop interaction and cooperation between different professional groups and institutions (medical workers and police, educational and cultural institutions, youth and students, religious leaders and civil activists, etc.)

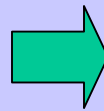
Year: **Goal:**

2004 - 2005 Using cross border cooperation as a tool for strengthening regional stability

Objective:

To develop systemic relations among institutions in neighboring districts (district police precincts, institutions of culture and education, hospitals, newspapers and TV, ministries and agencies, local authorities etc) which result in practical improvements regarding peoples well-being;
To expand the acquired experience of inter-district cooperation to other entities of Southern Russia that border Chechnya.

For example:



Cooperation between professional communities and institutions allows to define common problems and find ways to overcome them, thus leading to tangible improvements in the lives of the local population

**Bordering districts of Chechnya and Dagestan
Locations, involved in civil reconciliation programs:**



Integrated peacebuilding programs provide a new format for civil society activities in the North Caucasus. Their specific features include:

- High level of the goals pursued (not only to assisting victims, but to actually influencing the situation at large);
- Involving different age, gender and social groups of the communities concerned, not just a with small group of local activists;
- Activities carried out “on ground”, directly in the conflict regions;
- Unite efforts of different groups and institutions, and gradually raise the level of the objectives in the projects being implemented;
- Concentrate efforts on certain key problems and key areas, where their effect can be maximized.

Key recommendations:

1. Address not only interethnic but also “ideological” conflicts (conflicts, related to the spread of radical, extremist views, especially among the youth).

- Use “neutral” issues to unite people and engage them in constructive dialogue (such as health, sports, etc.).
- Parallel to working with local authorities, develop groups of supporters on the community level and engage them in continuous ground-level activities.

2. Design programs in a way that influences not only their direct participants, but also the larger community, and leads to sustainable relationships.

- Work with groups, rather than with individuals.
- Allow a group to select “representatives” for participating in key activities through a transparent selection process, based on clear criteria (for example – through some sort of a competition).
- Ensure continuity and follow-up. Relatively small investments in the initial and the follow-up phase of different “peacebuilding” and reconciliation programs may multiply the overall effect of such activities.

3. Encourage more “results-oriented” approaches. Ensure that the programs carried out lead to some, perhaps minor but positive changes regarding the well-being of target groups.

- Develop dialogue within different professional groups to highlight areas of mutual concern and of potential cooperation.
- Arrange professional facilitation during round-tables, seminars and other events to help people develop not only lists of concerns and “wish lists”, but also to seek solutions to some of the problems, through better cooperation and use of local resources.

Expand the pool of actors involved in peacebuilding and reintegration efforts in the North Caucasus

- Develop better cooperation between local activists and representatives of the international humanitarian community, located in the region.
- Inform NGOs of international programs in the region and vice-versa, assisting the participation of local NGOs in joint planning and training with internationals.
- Inform federal, regional and local officials about civil programs and when possible – engage them in these activities.