

IMAGINE COEXISTENCE:
ASSESSING REFUGEE REINTEGRATION EFFORTS
IN DIVIDED COMMUNITIES

Submitted by

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**IMAGINE COEXISTENCE
RESEARCH STUDY
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “Imagine Coexistence” initiative was launched in the spring of 2000 and began operation in spring 2001. It is funded by a grant from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. The initiative was conceived as a pilot project, with the hope of expanding as knowledge was gained.

The Imagine Coexistence Initiative included two major components. The first was a **field** component, implemented in two countries (Bosnia and Rwanda) and five regions (Drvar and Prijedor in Bosnia; Butare, Ruhengeri, and Umutara in Rwanda), in partnership with three implementing partners (Genesis in Bosnia, Oxfam GB and Norwegian People’s Aid in Rwanda). The Initiative spawned 26 projects in Bosnia implemented by 19 NGOs, and 40 projects in Rwanda implemented by three NGOs and 20 local communities. Such diversity allowed for very rich comparisons within and across countries, across approaches taken by implementing partners, and across projects.

The second component was a **research** study designed to capture the learning from these pilots and to present findings to UNHCR for use in further development of the Imagine Coexistence Initiative. The mandate for the research was to: help UNHCR strengthen its ability to support coexistence in areas where refugees are returning to divided communities, by (1) evaluating current UNHCR-funded coexistence efforts; and (2) based on this analysis, making recommendations to UNHCR on ways to focus their future efforts in order to make coexistence a more explicit and systematic element in their work. This research was carried out by a team from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, USA, directed by Professor Eileen F. Babbitt.

In conducting the research, we have focused on the processes used to arrive at the final results of the projects, as well as on project outcomes. We’ve assessed the processes by using “process tracing,” a method of “thick description” that allows us to identify patterns and track important themes throughout the development of the initiative in our five communities. Using this process tracing method, we have compared three sets of data: the context of the five pilot communities; the approaches used by the three implementing partners; and the activities the communities chose to implement. Data sources have included documentary research, surveys, interviews, conference proceedings, and observation.

Our Findings are grouped into seven categories: conceptualizing coexistence; the role of the implementing partners; analyzing the context within which coexistence work is done; developing a strategy for launching the community efforts; implementing the activities; evaluation; and UNHCR’s role. Our Recommendations follow, grouped in the same categories.

Some of the most significant findings concern the strategy that UNHCR should follow in implementing coexistence initiatives. The choice of an implementing partner is the most significant step in that strategy, and we have identified several important qualities that implementing partners should possess. Once chosen, the implementing

partner should be given substantial time, resources, and independence to: conduct an extensive coexistence assessment; plan a coexistence approach that takes the local context and existing programs into account, ideally with local participation; identify worthwhile activities and projects to support, again with local participation; plan and deliver appropriate training as needed for local participants; and design effective evaluation criteria and tools to collect data about the progress of the initiative as it unfolds and the impact of activities on the communities in which they take place.

A second set of findings concerned UNHCR itself and its role in coexistence work. Our overall assessment is that UNHCR can be a constructive catalyst for coexistence in divided communities, if it is attentive to improving the quality of its relationship with implementing partners, is creative in finding ways to support multi-year initiatives, and is willing to make the staffing and organizational commitments outlined in our recommendations. UNHCR's credibility as such a catalyst was undermined to the extent that personnel and policies failed to model the values and behaviors they were encouraging in others, so it is important that UNHCR staff themselves receive training on the elements and strategies of coexistence work.

Finally, coexistence work is, by definition, a long-term undertaking. In order for any coexistence initiative to be effective, sufficient time must be given for assessment and planning, before implementing any activities or projects on the ground. Even in a catalytic role, this means a minimum of 36 months' commitment to any area in which coexistence work is to be undertaken. In addition, UNHCR should seek ways of working with other international agencies, to make the most of scarce resources by building alliances. This can increase UNHCR leverage in designing strategies that target the larger political and economic issues that are barriers to coexistence.

II. BACKGROUND ON COEXISTENCE INITIATIVE

In the transition from war to peace in a divided society, there are often difficulties when refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) return to their home communities. If they are not of the dominant identity group in that community, they may be unwelcome and subject to violence, or they may experience discrimination in housing or employment that makes it impossible for them to support themselves or their families. In such instances, sustainable return and reintegration is severely compromised.

In light of such challenges, the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, sought to better understand what is required to support tolerance and the rebuilding of relationships in such divided communities. Her goal was to see what could be done to bring communities to a point of “coexistence,” rather than reconciliation, with the notion that coexistence is a way-station to reconciliation, and a more attainable goal in countries where incredible violence at the community level has occurred.

Called “Imagine Coexistence,” the initiative was launched in the spring of 2000 and began its operation in the spring and summer of 2001. It is funded by a grant from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. It was conceived as a pilot initiative, with the hope of expanding into other areas as knowledge was gained. It has been enthusiastically supported and continued by the current High Commissioner, Mr. Ruud Lubbers.

There are two major components of the Imagine Coexistence Initiative. The first is a **field** component, implemented in two countries (Bosnia and Rwanda) and in five regions (Drvar and Prijedor in Bosnia; Butare, Ruhengeri, and Umutara in Rwanda), and in partnership with three implementing partners (Genesis in Bosnia, Oxfam GB and Norwegian People’s Aid in Rwanda). The Initiative spawned 26 projects in Bosnia implemented by 19 NGOs, and 40 projects in Rwanda implemented by three NGOs and 20 local communities. Such diversity allowed for very rich comparisons within and across countries, across approaches taken by implementing partners, and across projects.

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In addition our research team had three additional goals: to do this in a way that (1) was culturally sensitive and appropriate in the two countries chosen for pilot study; (2) involved UNHCR staff, local implementing partners, and project leaders in the design; and (3) resulted in recommendations for UNHCR that take into account the realities of replicating these approaches in the future, at both Headquarters and Field levels.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In designing the research study, our team from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy built our analysis on (1) our knowledge of the literature in conflict analysis and resolution, trauma and healing, systems/organizational theory, political/economic development, and evaluation; and (2) field data from both countries, provided by: our own field visits to directly observe and interview members of the UNHCR field staff, implementing partners, and project leaders and beneficiaries; interviews conducted by local researchers at our request; and reports collected from these organizations and others over the last 12 months.

We have focused on both the processes used to arrive at the final results of the projects, as well as on project outcomes. We've assessed the processes by using "process tracing," a method of "thick description" in which we are tracing patterns and themes to create a chain of causal inference, leading to a credible explanation of results of the projects implemented in our five communities.

Using this process tracing method, we have compared three sets of data, looking at the context of the five pilot communities, the approaches used by the three implementing partners (IPs), and the activities chosen by the communities to be implemented. In these data, we were looking for:

- (1) quality of relationships (UNHCR-IPs-Projects-Authorities-Community)
- (2) changes in relationships
- (3) decision points and reasons for decisions made
- (4) process used to make decisions
- (5) who is included/excluded in these decisions
- (6) how is conflict managed, both within and between groups
- (7) what priorities are set, and how is that done
- (8) when/if/how self-reflection occurs
- (9) when/how leadership is exercised, and the impacts
- (10) how history and external environment have effected the current context

To assess project outcomes, we've developed a set of "criteria for effectiveness," building on the work in other evaluation studies and on the process elements outlined above. These are attached in Appendix I. A full collection of the existing studies on evaluation that we reviewed for this project is contained in Appendix III.

Research data

We have collected data from many sources in order to do justice to the complexity and richness of the comparisons we are seeking to understand.

1. *Survey of coexistence projects being done throughout each of the two pilot countries.*

This helped us in three ways: it gave us a broader picture of how coexistence is being defined and what kinds of interventions exist in each country; it told us something of how coexistence is being evaluated by other organizations on the ground; and it

allowed us to see if there are identifiable impacts of projects that have been in operation for a long period of time, especially those which are similar to the ones in our pilot communities.

In Bosnia there were 100 respondents and in Rwanda there were 50. In Appendix I are the questionnaires used in the surveys, and in Appendix II are the survey responses, translated into English. The surveys were conducted by local research teams in each country, who consulted with us on the survey design and on the wording of questions. An analysis of the survey results is attached in Appendix I.

2. *Baseline interviews and studies*

In Rwanda, Oxfam GB had already done an extensive assessment in the two communities where they would be working, Ruhengeri and Umutara, focusing on conflicts in the communities and how these were being handled. In Bosnia, no comparable study had been done, so we retained a local research team to conduct interviews in Drvar and Prijedor. See Appendix I for interview format. No comparable study was done in Butare, due to lack of time and capacity on the part of the implementing partner.

The purpose of baseline study was to map the range of attitudes, perceptions, and emotions that each identity group holds of the “other,” in each of our pilot communities. This then gives us some basis for assessing how “mainstream” each of our pilot project participants are, in relation to the broader community in which they live.

3. *Documents*

These include the sub-agreements signed by each of the implementing partners; project proposals; monthly reports of IPs and some project leaders; analysis and planning documents from IPs; meeting minutes from the Coexistence network in Rwanda; and journal entries from IPs and some project leaders, providing assessments of how the projects were developing. These documents are included in Appendix I, with the exception of the journal entries. These were collected under agreements of confidentiality with respondents, so the Appendix contains only the questions that were used to elicit the responses.

4. *Context studies*

These are extensive background reports on each of the pilot countries and communities, compiled by the Fletcher team with data from human rights reports, NGO studies, UNHCR studies of our five communities, interviews, and field visits. A summary of these reports is provided in Appendix I.

5. *Rwanda conference proceedings*

A very detailed set of notes was produced by the rapporteur at the April 2002 conference on coexistence, organized by Laura McGrew at UNHCR Kigali, the Center for Conflict Management at the University of Butare, and the University of Maryland.

6. *Interviews and observations, Fletcher team field visits*

The Fletcher research team visited the pilot sites in August/September 2001; November/December 2001; March 2002; and April/May 2002. The team conducted

many interviews with UNHCR, IPs, project leaders, and beneficiaries; visited project sites; observed trainings and community meetings; and spoke with officials and NGOs in the community to get their assessment of the Imagine Coexistence initiative. See Appendix I for Mission Reports of these site visits.

Definition of coexistence

At the outset of the project, we drafted a working definition of coexistence: A relationship between two or more communities living in close proximity to one another, that is more than merely living side by side, and includes some degree of communication, interaction, and cooperation.

Hypotheses at the start of the project

We also began the study with a set of hypotheses, some of which were generated when we launched the Imagine Coexistence project in 1999, and others that evolved as the research progressed. Although our data collection went way beyond these original hypotheses, they reflect some of the implicit and explicit assumptions at the launch of the project and because our findings do not support some of them, it is important to document them here:

- (1) It is important to explore the definitions of coexistence that members of divided communities hold, in order to frame this initiative in ways that will resonate with local participants.
- (2) It is also important to explore the way outside “helpers” define coexistence, to find out what kinds of predispositions and biases they might be bringing into their work.
- (3) Bringing IDPs or people from returnee groups together with the domicile population for activities of various kinds is a good way to help them develop relationships with each other.
- (4) Because of the lack of economic opportunities in divided communities, income-generating projects are the most effective type of activity to foster coexistence.
- (5) All activities should be augmented with conflict resolution training, to improve skills in communication, negotiation, and problem-solving.
- (6) Since many of the people in these divided communities have been traumatized by the violence in their country, encouraging people to talk about their past experiences is a good way to humanize relationships and promote healing.
- (7) Activities should be especially targeted for women and youth, as women are more likely to be the “bridge builders” in their communities and youth are the hope for the future.

(8) Leadership matters in coexistence activities, and the way in which projects are managed should model the kinds of values that coexistence seeks to foster.

(9) The larger context within which coexistence work is done has a significant impact on the success of the activities in each location.

(10) Evaluation of project successes should focus on the process by which results are achieved, as well as the results themselves.

(11) Sustainability of the impacts will result from the relationships that are built during this initial one-year investment.

(12) UNHCR can be a change agent in these communities, by providing the resources and the initial institutional support to jump-start coexistence efforts.

IV. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Based on one year's implementation, we can provide some guidance and some caution for next steps. These findings, however, need to be tested in continuing implementation efforts in the five pilot communities, and in other sites with different characteristics than the pilots.

A standard assessment of impacts emphasizes tangible outputs that can be counted; e.g., number of refugees returned; number of houses built; number of protective laws passed, etc. These are critical aspects of implementation that must be carefully documented, and in most of UNHCR's work, they are sufficient for assessing results. In the Imagine Coexistence initiative, however, they do not present the whole picture. In fact, in many cases, the emphasis on quantifiable data misses much of the important impacts that coexistence work produces. Because the focus here is on establishing and repairing relationships, much of the data we have found important is qualitative in nature.

Our Findings section, therefore, expands the notion of impacts to include the process/procedural steps that occurred as the initiative unfolded and progressed. Based on our experience and on the evaluative literature in conflict resolution, development, and trauma recovery work, the *way* things are done is as important as *what* is done. This is primarily because people are explicitly and implicitly learning about relationships *as they interact with each other*. The result is that these interactions – between UNHCR, implementing partners, project leaders, beneficiaries, local authorities, and the larger community – are a key component of coexistence work.

We have divided our analysis into several categories, and for ease of reading, they follow a roughly sequential order. However, it is important to stress that coexistence is *not* a linear process. Steps that are taken early on may have to be repeated or re-evaluated as more information is uncovered or as the situation on the ground changes.

The categories are the following:

1. Conceptualizing coexistence
2. The role of the implementing partners
3. Analyzing the context within which coexistence work is done
4. Developing a strategy for launching the community efforts
5. Implementing the activities
6. Evaluating impact
7. UNHCR's role

Conceptualizing coexistence

Findings:

1. UNHCR's assumptions at the outset of the Initiative framed the pilot study by encouraging activities that supported their assumptions and discouraging those that did not.

These assumptions included the following:

- a. It is important to focus on grassroots-level activities

- b. Bringing people together will jump-start relationships
 - c. An activity that generates income will be the most powerful draw to bring people together
 - d. Coexistence work must be done in mixed identity groups rather than with people from one identity group.
 - e. Although income generation is the highest priority, there are many other activities around which people from different groups might find common interests.
 - f. UNHCR is already engaged in activities that could be called “coexistence;” now the approach needs to be made more explicit and systematic.
2. In choosing countries and communities for the pilot projects, preference was given to those who were at least two years post-settlement, and where violence had occurred during the repatriation and reintegration process. This time lag was thought to be important because sufficient time had elapsed since the violence to believe that coexistence was now a realistic goal.
 3. The conception of coexistence did not explicitly take into account the root causes of tensions, and therefore shied away from activities that would have addressed the structures and institutions that perpetuate conflict.

Data and Discussion

The “imagine” aspect of Imagine Coexistence assumes that how one conceives of coexistence, or whether one can conceive of it at all, is fundamental to how it is translated into reality. From the literature in the social psychology of conflict, we know that underlying beliefs and values color the way one views the world, allowing certain information and ideas to gain priority over other data. From systems dynamics, we also know that existing mental models of how the world works creates the template used for everything from setting priorities to decision making. To understand why a person or a group is doing something a certain way, it is necessary to uncover these underlying beliefs. We therefore began our study with an inquiry into UNHCR’s concept of coexistence. What is their vision of coexistence? What beliefs and assumptions does the organization carry into their coexistence work?

There are two very significant sets of decisions that UNHCR made early on in the Initiative, based on their assumptions about the nature of coexistence. One was their decision to locate the pilot projects in Bosnia and Rwanda; more specifically, the Bosnia communities of Drvar and Prijedor and the Rwandan province of Butare were chosen.

The second was the project description that was given to the field offices in Bosnia and Rwanda, which laid out the structure UNHCR was seeking in its initiative.¹

¹ From the UNHCR Project Description:

A. Methodology

The project focuses on a ground-up methodology, building on UNHCR’s and the contractor’s existing connections within local communities following repatriation and emerging links with local projects and activities. Because finding

These decisions framed the Initiative, and contained the following assumptions about coexistence:

A. Working at the grassroots level: The first principle that guided the coexistence Initiative was its grassroots, community based focus. The assumption here was that to change relationships one needed to begin with the people themselves, not legislate such change from above. Therefore, all of the activities commissioned for the Initiative were to be “bottom up” rather than “top down” in design.

B. Bringing people together will jump-start relationships: This is a form of the well-known “contact hypothesis,” in which the key assumption is that simply putting people together in some way will create change; i.e., they will talk, drink coffee, laugh, and find out that they have interests in common and that they are all human beings rather than monsters. Based on this hypothesis, projects were sought that created conditions for people to meet together around some kind of activity. Conflict in return communities would then be reduced by “normalized” contact with the “other.”

C. An activity that generates income will be the most powerful draw to bring people together. The countries most in need of coexistence work are coming out of conflicts in which the economic infrastructure has been devastated. Therefore, after the initial emergency has passed, jobs/livelihoods are the most urgent need of the people. What better way to bring people together than to create income-generating activities that employ people from all identity groups in the community? Even if they don’t want to be together at first, they will be enticed to participate because of the needed income. Once they start working together, the contact will create the benefits discussed above.

a reason, an incentive, to come together is vital for people who otherwise distrust, fear, or hate one another, the projects and activities should offer something that directly enriches the lives of returning refugees. Economic opportunities may do this, but the chances for promoting coexistence increase if those opportunities encourage members of different groups to work alongside one another. Those work settings can also deepen chances for coexistence if they are coupled with or paralleled by other enriching opportunities.

B. Domains

The Imagine Coexistence Project will use the concept of “cluster activities” normally focused around an income generation project which includes the possibility of working in the following domains: income-generating businesses, micro- and larger entrepreneurship assistance, and job creation; education; media; psycho-social activities; religion and spirituality; art and culture, including literature, theatre, dance, visual media; sports and recreation; the Internet; mothers’ and women’s groups; fathers’ and men’s’ groups; activities for children and for youth; memorial/ ritual activities; environmental protection and efforts to claim or reclaim public spaces; health.

Criteria for Selection of Projects:

Projects will be selected based on the methodology described above, using the criteria below... Criteria for the selection, include that the projects:

- * Exist, or be created at the community level with local existing partners or groups already formed.
- *Involve skill and capacity building.
- *Contain an economic development dimension.
- *Include joint activity among conflicting groups at both the staff and beneficiary level.
- *Create a context where relationships can be built and where trauma healing can occur.
- *Embody the principle of non-discriminatory treatment.
- *Be capable of replication/adaptive form.
- *Have a ripple effect including the potential for systemic impact.
- *Possess sustainable effects and impact beyond the life of the project.
- *Use variable points of entry upon which coexistence activities can be structured.

D. Coexistence work must be done in mixed identity groups rather than with people from one identity group. Following on many of the previous assumptions, if you are trying to build relationships across group divisions, it makes sense to construct activities in which both/all such groups in a community are represented. This will increase the likelihood that people will make contact with members of the “other” group, whom they might otherwise never see or speak to.

E. Although income generation is the highest priority, there are many other activities around which people from different groups might find common interests. There is ample anecdotal evidence that activities such as sports, music, and dance are good ways to bypass difficult conversations and share enjoyable time together. Also, professionals such as journalists, educators, and counselors from different identity groups can find common ground when sharing the work that they do. Therefore, the Initiative sought to utilize its resources in a variety of domains in an effort to increase participation and also see if any data could be gathered about which activities might be more effective in fostering coexistence.

F. Many activities that could now be categorized as “coexistence work” are already being done by UNHCR; therefore, the primary goal of this new Initiative is to make its approach to this work more explicit and systematic. At the country level, there are many programs and projects initiated by UNHCR that bring people from different groups together for joint activities, some of which are income-generating. Existing mechanisms for project design and funding have been used to support these programs, and therefore the pilot projects for this Initiative should rely upon existing structures, such as the QIP mechanism and competitive proposal review for projects.

G. Countries with the most problematic return of refugees, where violence has occurred during the repatriation and reintegration processes, are most in need of coexistence work, but not until after the violence has been brought under control. Using these criteria, UNHCR decided upon Bosnia and Rwanda as the pilot countries. Within Bosnia, Drvar and Prijedor were chosen because it was important to have one site in each of the two entities, and because these were communities that had presented huge challenges for refugee return. In Rwanda, Butare had been a region of particularly heavy casualties in the genocide and therefore became a priority for the coexistence work.

Collectively, these assumptions also led UNHCR activities away from a focus on root causes or larger structural/institutional forces that could perpetuate conflict or constrain coexistence efforts.

In the sections that follow, we will see the ways in which these “concepts of coexistence” were reflected in the process and substance of the Initiative. We will also be able to track which of these assumptions proved true, and which will have to be reassessed in future efforts.

Defining the Role of Implementing Partners

Findings:

4. The implementing partners were the pivotal link in the initiative; they integrated UNHCR's concept of coexistence with their own, and also with the definitions of coexistence implicit in the pilot communities.
5. The role and approach taken by each implementing partner were determined not only by the mandate given by UNHCR, but also by their previous skills and experience, and by their own theories (both implicit and explicit) about how coexistence is fostered. This greatly strengthened the impact of the Initiative and provided very valuable additions to UNHCR's original concepts.
6. The strengths of the local NGO were its considerable experience in coexistence work, and the trust it had earned from UNHCR in previous contracts. The two international NGOs were able to bring their own resources to the table to augment UNHCR's funding; this also made it possible for one of them to set its own agenda more strongly, and for both to make an ongoing commitment to their respective projects after the pilot period ends. All three contributed an in-depth understanding of local culture and the legacies of war.
7. The implementing partners promoted coexistence as much by example as by the particular projects managed. The attitudes of the implementing partners towards coexistence as demonstrated by their own staff relations, their ability to understand the target community, their manner of communicating and interacting with people in the community, their desire to build trusting relationships, their own explicit commitment to engage in self-reflection and self-criticism, and their ability to incorporate the ideas and aspirations of others provided a powerful force of example within the target communities.

Data and Discussion

The implementing partners were the most crucial element in the success of the coexistence work. It was the single most important decision taken by UNHCR field staff in launching this initiative. In collaboration with the UNHCR field staff, they determined the strategy to follow in each implementing community; they provided the front line of oversight and support to the coexistence activities; and they were looked to as a model for the coexistence attitudes and behaviors the initiative hoped to instill in the target communities. They also provided an important lens through which to see and interpret local events, issues, attitudes and perceptions that were critical for coexistence efforts.

Genesis

Because of the preference in UNHCR for this initiative to be at the grassroots level, the field offices in each country began looking at local NGOs as implementing partners for this initiative. In Bosnia, several organizations near Banja Luka were vetted as possible choices. Criteria included their credibility with all three national groups; a track record of high quality, professional community work; a capacity to manage both the substantive and financial demands of the implementation; and an ability to work well with the UNHCR staff on the project. Genesis was chosen as the most qualified along these dimensions, with the added benefits that their previous work with UNHCR had earned them the trust of the office staff; also, their own staff was multi-national and therefore well aware of the challenges of multi-ethnic work.

Many project leaders and beneficiaries noted their relationship with Genesis as a key element of project success. Genesis was described, for example, as an “ally” and a “good neighbor,” modeling exactly the kind of relations the Imagine Coexistence initiative was trying to promote. Energy, good will, persistence and good humor ameliorated many difficult situations encountered in project implementation. Genesis’ psycho-social experience and expertise allowed it deep insight on the challenges each community was facing and what might be done to address them. This had broad impact across project mix, project leadership selection, training design, and ongoing project evaluation.

Genesis built its credibility by constant presence in and commitment to the target communities. While Genesis began as an “outsider” to both Prijedor and Drvar, it built acceptance of itself as an organization and its ideas around coexistence through a slow process of communication and relationship-building.² While UNHCR often saw the initiative as “delayed” (likely because it conceptualized the projects as “beginning” when the target activity took place, rather than when the community was first engaged around the idea of coexistence), significant time proved to be necessary for the implementing partner to establish its credibility and key relationships in the target communities.

Because the UNHCR staff had previously work with and trusted Genesis, the project benefited from UNHCR Bosnia’s ability to delegate significant discretion to them. The mix of projects, for example, shifted away from income generation and towards a broader mix in light of Genesis’ analysis of the situation on the ground. This likely could not have been anticipated in advance and would not have been possible without a close and trusting relationship between UNHCR Bosnia and the implementing partner. Unlikely people also emerged as credible project leaders, including an elected member of a nationalist Serb party in Prijedor. Again, it would have likely been hard to “profile” such project leaders in advance, and successful selection depended on the implementing partner being able to make such decisions in the field as appropriate. Close consultation with UNHCR was beneficial to the implementing partner, but all reported that significant discretion and delegation was a factor in project success. This reportedly required more trust and more discretion, as well as less ability to specify exact project parameters, than might have been expected for other UNHCR projects with other implementing partners.

Genesis adopted and slightly expanded the definition of coexistence offered by UNHCR: more than living side by side; engaging in communication, interaction, and

² Less so in Drvar than in Prijedor, because of its more insular character.

cooperation *and trust building*. As will be shown in the strategy section, this definition guided their design of training programs for project leaders and also the advising and monitoring process they used with project leaders.

Oxfam GB

In Rwanda, the circumstances were different than in Bosnia. UNHCR felt that there were no local NGOs with the capacity and experience to carry out the implementing partner role in such a short time period, so the UNHCR office turned instead to the international NGOs based in Kigali. In part because of the very tight time constraints on getting the initiative launched, Oxfam was a very desirable partner. Some time before, in the summer of 2000, they had launched their own coexistence initiative, after a long internal review process of their entire program in Rwanda. The results of that review were a reorientation of their focus in Rwanda to community-based decision-making and conflict management. Their thinking is summarized in their original Project Proposal submitted to UNHCR in June 2002:

The fragmentation of Rwandan society -- manifested by a myriad of social divisions often competing for scarce resources -- coupled with the continuation of conditions that facilitated past violence, has lead Oxfam GB to consider that Rwanda is actually existing in an environment of *negative peace*: although the formal cessation of visible and open hostilities occurred with the RPF's victory in 1994, the potential for violent conflict still remains. As long as the conditions that perpetuate an environment of negative peace are not addressed, the chances for a durable positive peace³ remain slim.

Thus, Oxfam believes that there is a need to focus on the current issues that perpetuate divisions and conflict within Rwanda while working towards transforming this environment into one where sustainable peace can be fostered. As outlined in the conditions leading to the geno-politicide, one of the key factors that still exists in Rwanda is the prevalence of centralised leadership structures that do not allow for participation in decision-making. In the past, this disenfranchisement lead to abusive power relationships, as well as highly inequitable resource distribution resulting in a deepening of the level of poverty and frustration for the majority of Rwandans - with disastrous consequences.

Although a high degree of centralisation devoid of participation has characterised government in Rwanda, the current government has begun implementing a decentralisation process, which if implemented appropriately, could create an enabling environment for participatory decision-making institutions to take hold...Although gaps still exist to making decentralisation effective, Oxfam GB believes that the decentralisation policy, if appropriately practised, will allow for an environment where conflict can be addressed and managed in a participatory way. Effective decentralisation will ultimately allow Rwandans to determine their own futures, one where the full development of human potential can be fostered.

Thus, Oxfam GB in Rwanda is the only organisation to specifically propose reinforcing decentralisation structures for the dual purposes of promoting participatory decision making in the pursuit of community development *and* managing destructive conflict in a way that is inclusive of all community members. While positive impact in participatory decision making and conflict management will initially be sought at local levels, Oxfam

³ Oxfam GB has defined peace which is "positive" to be a dynamic, participatory process that aims to transform existing or potential destructive conflict into sustainable peace built upon justice, equity, trust and tolerance that fosters the full development of human potential.

will use lessons learned during the project's implementation to create links to national and regional structures, with the ultimate aim of supporting peace building in a way that is inclusive and gender sensitive.

Oxfam GB in Rwanda has defined coexistence to mean "...more than peacefully living side by side, as it involves communication, interaction and cooperation. By coexistence, we mean the skills and determination that individuals and communities require, in light of an experience of trauma or history of division, to recognize each other's status and rights as human beings; develop a just and inclusive vision for the community's future; and implement economic, social, cultural or political development across former community divides." Oxfam's conception of coexistence, therefore, varied to a great degree from UNHCR's. These differences will become more apparent when we discuss strategy in a subsequent section; but suffice to say here, the differences created conflicting goals and expectations between the two organizations.

Oxfam agreed to participate in the UNHCR coexistence initiative on the basis of being able to continue the project as it had originally been conceived and designed, even though not strictly in line with UNHCR's criteria and guidelines. This worked for some time, but eventually the divergent approaches caused Oxfam to sever its relationship with UNHCR on this project, in the spring of 2002. The projects in Ruhengeri and Umutara, however, are continuing with Oxfam financial support.

Norwegian People's Aid

One of the geographic regions that UNHCR had targeted for coexistence work in Rwanda was Butare province. Here the genocide included not only many Tutsi, but moderate Hutu as well. Relations in the province are now very complex, which is explained further in our Context Analysis of Rwanda in Appendix 1. It is also home to the University of Butare, which has recently launched a Center for Conflict Management (CCM). There was some talk in the early months of this initiative to use the CCM as an implementing partner, but they are very new and UNHCR felt they did not yet have the capacity for take on this role in such a short time frame.

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) expressed interest in joining the initiative, even though they had no previous experience in coexistence work. It was, however, an area they wished to pursue, so they were willing to climb the steep learning curve that Oxfam itself was in the process of scaling. NPA also had no experience in Butare, so they were handicapped on two important fronts.

The objectives they set for their participation were modest: "to initiate coexistence pilot projects in Rwanda in order to develop the requisite skills and criteria to design, implement and evaluate sustainable income-generating and capacity-building activities at the community level." They therefore followed the UNHCR guidelines quite directly, and as the strategy section will show, also drew upon UNHCR relationships in Butare in choosing project partners. Their lack of familiarity with the community proved difficult and in many ways has hampered the successful implementation of the projects there.

The director of the NPA project explained the situation in this way: "We were forced to be in Butare. UNHCR decided that the project had to stay in Butare. Why? If we had a choice we could have gone to a place that we were familiar with, that we are working in; it would have been much easier...(It was) very difficult to come into a

project half way through when expectations have been already raised amongst potential beneficiaries. Very difficult to come and try to do this work in a new area. We needed time to know the social issues; choosing partners has been a lengthy process so that now there is a big rush to come up with project proposals quickly. This in itself is a negative process for doing coexistence work with the tight deadlines imposed on the process. Due to time constraints, we had to choose organizations that had clear coexistence objectives.”

Analyzing the context

Findings:

8. Coexistence activities cannot be isolated from the historical, political, economic, and social context, both local and regional, within which they are developed. To understand the context, from a coexistence perspective, requires gathering information about relationships over time – power dynamics, trauma, ways of managing conflict and competition, role of authorities vis a vis average citizens, etc.—which is very delicate and time-consuming work. It is also difficult data to confront, because it may be at odds with the politically acceptable perspective or be personally painful to explore.
9. The contexts in Bosnia and Rwanda created opportunities and constraints for UNHCR and the implementing partners. Opportunities included the decentralization process going on in Rwanda, and the political normalization in Croatia and Serbia; constraints included the continuing strong presence of extreme nationalist political parties in Bosnia, and fear of government repression in Rwanda.
10. The timing of the analysis mattered. In some cases, it followed project design and caused difficulties with implementation. In other cases, where it preceded design, the results were more integrated and could better take the local situation into account.
11. Both countries may be post-settlement, but they are NOT post-conflict. Power asymmetries are still profound, and in some communities, there are still uncertainties about “who rules.” These dynamics make coexistence much more difficult to establish, as each group is still trying to secure its dominance in a winner-take-all culture. This creates a constantly shifting mosaic, making it critical to update the context analysis periodically.

Data and Discussion

Coexistence work does not happen in a vacuum. It is done in a highly charged political environment, in the aftermath of civil violence/war, with traumatized

populations, and often in the wake of historical events with strong impacts on the current perceptions and emotions of the communities being targeted.

It is not necessary to chronicle the entire social, political, and economic past and present of each community in which this work is done. It is crucial, however, to understand which *parts* of the past and present are likely to have an impact on coexistence efforts. It is also important for this understanding to *precede* the planning of coexistence activities, in order to develop the most effective strategy tailored to each specific location. As stated previously, coexistence work involves support for changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of individual members of contending groups. In order to decide how to do this, the factors that impinge upon those perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors must be identified. This means expanding upon the normal assessment parameters in very specific ways.

For example, in our target communities we examined the following elements:

In the country as a whole (and regional data where appropriate):

- *Relevant historical data about intergroup relations before the violence
- *Non-UNHCR coexistence efforts by local and international NGOs

In the communities where the initiative was implemented:

- *Activities during the war
- *Current causes of conflict
- *How the community manages conflict
- *How power relations are structured
- *Levels of trauma and its possible current impacts
- *Current attitudes/perceptions/behaviors between groups
- *Current economic conditions
- *Tone and tenor of daily life (e.g., places where people congregate, who congregates with whom, symbols on display, where/which buildings are being repaired, who speaks to whom when entering a room, etc.)

A complete text of our context analysis and of the country-wide surveys we conducted in both Bosnia and Rwanda are included in Appendices 1 and 2, respectively. When reading these, the richness and importance of this information to our understanding of these communities becomes obvious. In both countries, the dominant theme is that these are NOT post-conflict societies. They are post-settlement, but not post-conflict. There are significant tensions just below the surface that are continuations of the war, and in some cases (e.g., Drvar), they are visible.

It is also important to note that the potentially violent divisions within the communities are NOT solely ethnic in nature. We found that age, gender, social status, time of return, and place of asylum were also differences that mattered greatly in some communities.

Some of the context elements that stand out are the following:

In Rwanda:

1. Of the three target communities, Butare was hard hit during the genocide of 1994, when Hutu were killing Tutsi and moderate Hutu; in Ruhengeri, the violence escalated during the civil war period of 1997-99, when the predominantly Tutsi government was fighting Hutu insurgents with a significant impact on the local population.

2. Not all conflict is ethnic; there is considerable tension and conflict WITHIN ethnic groups as well as between them. In Ruhengeri, which is predominantly Hutu, there are ongoing conflicts stemming from different groups' identification during the civil war; in Umutara, which is primarily Tutsi, there are strained relations between groups returning from different countries of asylum, with the attendant differences in length of time outside the country and socialization while in exile. There are also jealousies and gender conflicts within and between families in the same community that can lead to death threats and murder.

3. One of the major coexistence challenges identified by the communities is between people and the authorities, particularly central authorities. In both Umutara and Ruhengeri, for very different reasons, people said they felt distanced from and discriminated against by the central authorities.

4. The tensions and structural inequalities (e.g., distribution of land, wealth, political power) that existed prior to the genocide are still present. The government's suppression of any ethnically explicit language or affiliation is seemingly creating more tensions, as it requires a level of surveillance and repression that creates great fear and anxiety for everyone. It also prevents dialogue on these issues.

5. Coexistence efforts that are currently underway focus to a large degree on women and youth, targeting widows, wives of incarcerated men, teenagers and young adults.

In Bosnia:

1. Return itself is at least in part a continuation of the conflict, rather than solely a product of the conflict's end. At least some Serb returnees to Drvar, for example, continue to see themselves as "reclaiming" the town from the Croats, having returned under harsh and almost combat-like conditions. At least some Drvar Croats see themselves as protecting the Croat "victory." In Prijedor, at least some Muslims/Bosniaks returned because they "refused to be driven out" by the Serbs, even though they had more comfortable options elsewhere. It therefore cannot be assumed that people who return are naturally proponents of coexistence, or that they will be seeking better relations with the "other." The coexistence initiative takes place in the context of an ongoing political and social conflict.

2. Many people now remember pre-war relations as strained and "falsely" harmonious. Minorities and those most affected by the war in particular will remember examples of slights by the majority ethnic group. They will remember examples of separation, favoritism, and lack of relations beyond a "superficial" or "transactional" level. Whether this is objectively "true," or whether it represents distorted memory in light of traumatic experience, is not terribly important. For these people, a frame of

coexistence as “returning to pre-war relations” will not be attractive or inviting; they are not anxious to pursue “normal” relations with the “other.” The entire coexistence initiative may be suspiciously viewed as an attempt to “return” the minority population to their position of disempowerment or oppression.

3. Powerful forces actively opposed to coexistence infect and undermine attempts to “normalize” relations in the Imagine Coexistence target communities. From organized violence to political opposition to discrimination, both Drvar and Prijedor are rife with examples of powerful forces against coexistence. In Prijedor, for example, public services such as the telephone are provided on a basis that discriminates against predominantly Muslim/Bosniak communities. In Drvar, even with a reduction of organized violence against Serb returnees, Croat-controlled enterprises refuse to hire Serbs, and the Croat-controlled Canton government actively opposes “mixed” social activities. These forces have a powerful affect on the perceptions of “ordinary” citizens in their day-to-day lives.

Developing a strategy for launching the community efforts

Findings:

12. The implementing partners chose diverse ways to engage the community in the design of the projects. Some worked with the community as a whole, while others focused on local NGOs or associations. The strategy of working with the community as a whole resulted in greater overall impact, because it not only involved larger numbers of people and built more cohesive networks, but also integrated the micro-projects into a larger coordinated strategy with more sustainability.
13. Where a competitive process was used to design and select projects, it may have encouraged the kinds of conflicts the Initiative was meant to reduce. Where joint planning and cooperation were part of the plan from the beginning, such conflicts were largely avoided or mitigated by problem solving and discussion.
14. Local and regional authorities were taken into account in different ways. Some were included, some excluded intentionally, and some ignored. Where it was possible to include them constructively, they became important allies in promoting coexistence. Where they were ignored, they undermined success.
15. Training was an integral and very important part of every strategy. However, the content and timing of the training component differed, depending on the overall goals, approach, and capacity of each implementing partner. All were done well and contributed not only to skill building, but also to improving the QUALITY of contact between

project participants. The conflict management training, in particular, created the opportunity for personal, and sometimes community, transformation.

16. Income-generating projects were neither necessary nor sufficient for coexistence efforts to be successful. They require significant investments of time and money to be launched on a sound business footing, and additional attention must then be devoted to the coexistence component; it does not simply evolve from working together.
17. Every implementing partner and both UNHCR field offices reported that there was insufficient time for both planning and implementation of projects. This adversely affected the quality of projects and undermined efforts at relationship-building between project partners and with the communities.

Data and Discussion

In response to the parameters laid out by UNHCR, and building on their own skills and assessments, each implementing partner developed a strategy for pursuing coexistence work. The important elements of these strategies included:

- *Engaging the community
- *Establishing criteria for project selection
- *Working with the authorities
- *Formulating a training component
- *Managing time

Engaging the community/establishing criteria for project selection

Each of the implementing partners approached community engagement in a slightly different way. In Bosnia, Genesis brought potential applicants in each community together, to introduce the project and explain their definition of coexistence (communication, interaction, cooperation, trust). They invited community leaders, heads of existing NGOs and other community organizations. Those in each community who were interested in applying for a grant then attended a second workshop, in which Genesis helped them to develop their ideas, encouraged/clarified the coexistence elements in each proposal, and worked to weed out overlapping ideas. Also at this stage, Genesis began to assess who were the “real believers” in coexistence, in their words, rather than those just wanting to get funds. In addition, they were looking for applicants who could set realistic goals within the time frame allotted, who could clearly demonstrate a coexistence component in their project, and who had the ability to manage the activity they were proposing.

NPA had not worked in Butare before, so they decided to implement the project through existing local associations that had explicit coexistence goals. They identified several of these, including a few who had been contacted in an earlier phase of the Coexistence project. They then conducted interviews with staff and beneficiaries of these

organizations and finally chose three to work with. They worked with these three organizations to elicit their assessment of community needs and to help them develop project proposals to insure that they contained a coexistence component.

Because Oxfam had developed its strategy separate from UNHCR, their approach was quite different from the other two implementing partners. Their goal, as described above in the “conceptualizing coexistence” section, was to foster skills in community-level decision making. This included managing conflicts that arise when the decisions involve volatile, polarizing issues and working with communities to widen the options from those generally employed for dealing with conflicts. To do this, Oxfam decided to work with whole communities rather than groups within those communities. They questioned the assumption that the best entry point for coexistence work is through projects in established associations, based on feedback from the community and having seen that in certain contexts these associations can themselves be sources of division (i.e., they are generally targeted at a specific group and therefore do not benefit the community as a whole).

Oxfam consulted with the community about how they would choose to spend the grant money, seeing the grants as a means rather than an end in themselves.

The basic tenet of our programme is that we aim to contribute to processes that will help transform potential violent conflict into an environment where coexistence and “positive peace” can be fostered.

During our comprehensive programme review conducted last year, we made an assumption that positive peace building would have a positive effect on development/reduction of poverty in the longer term. We do not, however, aim nor expect to see measurable development/reduction in poverty levels in the immediate future, certainly not in 7 months. For us, the premise is that the *process* of working together on activities chosen by the community, rather than the specific outcome of these activities, will contribute to coexistence.

This goes back to the argument of what is the fundamental cause of conflict. Is it poverty that impedes coexistence and leads to conflict, or is conflict actually caused by other underlying processes? ...Our analysis is that it's not poverty per se that leads to conflict, nor lack of poverty that contributes to peace. When unraveled, we see that fundamental relationships: how people communicate, their attitudes, their beliefs and their practices, (including how they deal with poverty) are what need to be transformed to manage conflict positively. We believe that a grants mechanism would be a useful tool in this process.

Oxfam therefore identified specific cellules within Ruhengeri and Umutara provinces and worked with the Community Development Councils in each cellule to be part of the community meetings. At the meetings they attended, Oxfam staff outlined the project goals and criteria, and told each community that it would receive a set amount of money. The important step was that the community itself, as a whole rather than just the leadership, had to decide how the money would be allocated. As Oxfam noted in its October 2001 report, “Meetings in the targeted communities have demonstrated that they are looking for ways to make the small grants funds work for the community rather than individuals. In Ruhengeri, for example, communities have proposed that rather than implement the grants through associations that focus on specific populations or interests (for example, farmers associations or widows associations), the funds should be provided

for community projects implemented by traditional systems that are designed to benefit the entire community – the traditional “ambulance” system is an example of this idea – it is a structure already in existence that reaches everyone in the community.” Also the fact that the community was made aware that the grants were for the benefit of the entire community contributed to increasing participation in community meetings and in subsequent decision making.

In Bosnia, the strategy of UNHCR Bosnia was not to engage whole communities but instead to work in a variety of social domains. Genesis therefore consciously sought out projects in sports, employment, education, social settings, and therapeutic settings. This had the advantage of demonstrating the possibility of coexistence work in a variety of social interactions, and gave the research team a rich array of material to analyze. It had the possible disadvantage of dispersing the initiative’s resources and focus in ways that prevented any one of these domains from receiving concentrated attention. Thus, while all domains were touched upon, none could be expected to be significantly transformed; the project impact stayed for the most part within the four corners of the micro-projects, rather than impacting a particular social, political or economic domain as a whole.⁴

Likewise, Genesis sought to involve different target groups in the coexistence initiative, including men and women, older and younger people, rural and urban populations, and of course, people of different ethnic backgrounds. Again, the advantage of this approach was the possibility of investigating how different sectors of the population responded to coexistence work. The disadvantage was that no particular population – youth, leaders, educators, etc. – could receive more than diluted attention.

The project selection process in Bosnia followed an apparently typical UNHCR process of soliciting proposals that would then be competitively evaluated. This process had the unintended consequence of pitting community members against one another in a competition for funding. Community groups clearly exhibited competitive rather than cooperative behaviors in the selection process. The selection process itself seemed to undermine trust, cooperation, communication and interaction, rather than to promote it. Notably, once a core group of community groups and individuals had been selected as project leaders, their level of cooperation and interaction markedly improved, the “us and them” dynamic of the selection process having been removed. While the selection process was “efficient” in bringing forward proposals for joint activities that might promote coexistence, it tended to undermine rather than support coexistence goals.

While both Genesis and NPA incorporated some community input, and generated good proposals and viable projects, neither optimized the impact on the community as a whole. The protection officer of the UNHCR Banja Luka sub-office aptly described their strategy as a “sprinkling of salt approach” to a society-wide problem, noting that it was hard to see how the individual experiences of dispersed project beneficiaries would aggregate into changed communities.

⁴ This can be contrasted with the work of Mercy Corps in Kosovo, in which only agricultural projects have been chosen for such coexistence work. In this context, participants share not only the learning in coexistence but also the learning in agricultural project management. For further information on the Mercy Corps initiative, please see: Chigas, D. and Ganson, B. (forthcoming) “Grand Visions and Small Projects: Coexistence Efforts in Southeastern Europe.” In Minow, M. and Chayes, A. (eds). *Imagine Coexistence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Also, “Eastern Kosovo Stabilization Program: Year One Final Report” (2001) Unpublished report by Mercy Corps to the Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration of US AID.

In addition, NPA felt compromised by UNHCR's insistence that they work in Butare. One of the biggest factors identified by the implementing partners in a successful coexistence process is the importance of having relationships with communities that they are attempting to do coexistence work in. If NPA had had more freedom they would have done the project in the areas where they have been working for a number of years, in Cyangu and Gisenyi. There they were familiar with groups that were already operating jointly and they would have naturally built upon this base, rather than starting fresh in communities that were unknown to them. Genesis expressed the same concern about Drvar, in which they had no previous contacts and were expected to learn about the community as they implemented the project. Oxfam, in contrast, had been working in Ruhengeri and Umutara for several years and had built credibility and relationships through its water projects.

The approach used by Genesis and NPA to choosing coexistence activities was opportunistic rather than geared to optimize community impact. Since project proposals were required to come forward from the community, the portfolio of coexistence projects was developed through the simple aggregation of a variety of community members' preferred activities and projects, rather than by any in-depth analysis of root causes of conflict, barriers to coexistence, or most effective strategies for dealing with them. Both were under significant time pressure from UNHCR to find potentially viable projects that would in some way provide positive interaction between people of different ethnic groups, the stated goal of UNHCR. They were not tasked with or provided the necessary resources to determine what activities or portfolio of activities would most effectively impact the overall climate of coexistence in the target communities. There was therefore little strategic analysis of what the most important leverage points for changing attitudes towards coexistence might be, or where the "tipping points" towards a climate of coexistence might lie.

Oxfam's approach provided the most extensive local input and participation, and therefore had the greatest potential for having a community-wide impact. However, it rested on the two important preconditions: an existing community structure that could be mobilized; and sufficient time to engage the community, through that structure, in a lengthy decision making process. If a shorter time commitment is necessary, or if there are no pre-existing forums in which the whole community can participate, "targets of opportunity" may be the best strategy instead. However, the total impact of the effort will be fragmented, as has been noted above.

Income Generating Projects

Income-generating projects were of particular interest to UNHCR, as it was one of their operating assumptions that the best strategy would be to use such projects as an incentive for people from different identity groups to come in contact with each other. They would thus achieve two important goals at once – that of coexistence and of economic development. We were therefore interested in testing this assumption. We found that, in the short time for project implementation, none of the income generating projects attained financial self-sufficiency, although many have some potential to be. In addition, income was neither necessary nor sufficient for coexistence efforts to be successful. It was not necessary for coexistence because there were many non-income projects that produced positive coexistence results; and not sufficient for coexistence to

occur, because the income projects with a coexistence benefit were supplemented with activities other than the work environment itself that created the conditions for improved relationships.

Coexistence Benefits	Income Generating Projects Currently Producing Assets For Beneficiaries	Non-Income Generating	
	+	-	
+	<u>Bosnia</u> Coffee shop <u>Rwanda</u> Livestock Agriculture Micro-credit Bus	<u>Bosnia</u> Greenhouse+ Mushrooms Internet café <u>Rwanda</u> Phone booth Gym	<u>Bosnia</u> *Journalism *Psycho-Social: Children Women Elderly *Handball *Band *Basketball *Folk dance *Newspaper *Judo club *Computer class
-	<u>Bosnia</u> Plastic bags Chickens Strawberries	<u>Bosnia</u> Nails Drying+ Apples+ <u>Rwanda</u> Bricks	<u>Bosnia</u> Pregnancy Video

(+) Projected to generate income in year 2 or 3 of operation

From the chart, it is clear that there were many non-income projects that had positive coexistence impacts, thus demonstrating that income generation is not a necessary component of success. It is also not sufficient, as a closer look at the list of income generating projects with positive coexistence benefits illustrates.

In Bosnia, two of the income generating projects that showed some positive signs of coexistence (internet café, mushroom growers) did so because of the project leaders. In the internet café, the leader took a very hands-off approach to running the café and therefore the staff had lots of opportunity to pitch in. This established much better working relations than other projects in which, as one staff person described, “I’m an employee. I do what I’m told to do.” In the mushroom growing project, the leader (a Croat) was clearly committed to an equal relationship with her employee (a Serb). Both felt comfortable with each other, and the leader is handing over the business to her employee when she leaves Drvar this summer.

In the coffee shop project, coexistence was not strong among employees, but the shop itself attracted a mix of patrons from both Serb and Croat communities, unlike most of the other commercial ventures in the town. In large part, this was due to its identity as a safe, family-oriented environment that drew parents and children. This is in contrast to the other places in town where people can gather, all of which serve alcohol and are rowdy and not child-friendly.

In Rwanda, the livestock and agriculture projects were implemented in Ruhengeri and Umutara, as part of the community-wide decision process put in place by Oxfam. Therefore the projects themselves grew out of a very participatory process and did not stand alone. As the Oxfam director stated, “Specifying the aim of ‘improving livelihoods’ as an expected outcome of the grants would contradict our goal. The goal is to have the community decide on their priorities – be they livelihoods, income generation, building a school, human rights training, or whatever. Our goal is not to decide this for them – actually it is the decision making process that is key – if we insist that the aim be directed at livelihoods per se, we believe that we would be undermining this process.”

The remaining projects in Rwanda, chosen by NPA, were implemented by two existing local NGOs already committed to coexistence work – one a youth group (phone booth, gym, and micro-credit projects) and the other a women’s group (bus project). Both existed before the income generation projects were launched, and the difficulties they encountered in making these successful in fact only strengthened their already strong internal relationships.

In addition to income projects not being necessary or sufficient for coexistence, there are other cautions we have identified, primarily from the Bosnia data.⁵ First is that they can be more expensive, on a per person basis, than non-income projects. In Bosnia, the average cost per beneficiary of the income generating projects was 3469 KM, or \$1734. The average cost per beneficiary of the non-income generating projects was only 589 KM, or \$294, less than 20% of the income projects. Of course, the hope for these income projects is that they will become self-sustaining, making the higher initial investment worthwhile. This premise will have to be tested at a later stage to see if it holds; it was not possible to do so in the four months of project operations.

It will also be important to determine whether these businesses continue to employ a multi-ethnic staff; in Bosnia, some of the project leaders seemed resentful at having to conform to this requirement in order to receive the funding. When/if their businesses become self-sufficient, or even out of the range of monitoring by Genesis, it will be interesting to note whether they retain their diversity. In the Oxfam-supported projects, the crucial question is whether the communities continue to be inclusive in their decision-making and power sharing. With the NPA projects, the associations sponsoring these projects are themselves multi-ethnic, so ongoing assessment would include the extent to which both the projects and the associations remain diverse.

The third caution is that income projects sometimes reach far fewer beneficiaries than the non-income projects. In Bosnia, the average number of beneficiaries for the income projects was 10, with a range from 2-26 and a total of 104 beneficiaries over 10 projects. The non-income projects reached an average of 102 beneficiaries, with a range from 4-730 participants and a total of 1537 beneficiaries over 15 projects. This is also a significant difference. The Oxfam data is a counterpoint, however; because their design encompassed entire communities, the income-generating work reached fairly large

⁵ Most of these cautions are not reflected in the Oxfam projects, as the design of the intervention was quite different than in Bosnia. Each cellule was given a set amount of money, which they then had to decide together how to spend. One could calculate a per-person expenditure by dividing the total amount given to each cellule by the number of people in that cellule, but it would not be comparable data to Bosnia.

numbers. Again, we don't know how sustainable any of this is, which would be better ascertained with ongoing assessment over the next 3-5 years.

Finally, in Bosnia we have observed that income projects can actually perpetuate divisions rather than heal them. It puts UNHCR into the politics of doling out jobs in circumstances where employment is not just livelihood but also connected with political affiliation. In many cases it is also setting up work environments in which a person from one group has sole management control, and basically bribes members of other groups to join as employees. Without longer term follow up on these projects, it is impossible to know if this situation eventually works itself out over time, or simply gets worse. Oxfam and NPA again present an alternative, in which income generation was incorporated into a broader set of activities and/or accompanied by dialogue and joint problem solving. This did not prevent conflict completely, but allowed for it to be managed constructively.

Working with the authorities

Authorities are often gatekeepers to political and economic resources, and they can undermine coexistence work if they don't understand such work or are opposed to it. They can also be very effective catalysts for change, if they support coexistence efforts and truly understand them.

The experiences in both Bosnia and Rwanda bore this out. Oxfam conceptualized their project as a governance intervention that was enabled by and in turn supported the decentralization process being implemented by the Rwandan government. In their baseline research with the communities, they identified relations between communities and authorities as one of the major coexistence challenges currently facing those areas. They therefore developed a very explicit strategy to include local authorities in their project overall and in the training program components; the intention was to orient them to conflict management skills and hopefully build their support for the participatory management of community-based projects in their areas of responsibility. For example, in August of 2001 at the start of the project, they conducted meetings with district leaders to discuss their responsibilities and relationships with the other stakeholders in the development process. These discussions involved Community Development Council (CDC) members at both the sector and cellule levels. In Oxfam's experience, when they later tried to include senior local officials in the conflict management training with community participants, the authorities were not willing to attend such sessions if ordinary citizens were also participating. They were much more likely to come if the trainings were designed specifically for leaders (both national and local); so Oxfam put together separate programs for the authorities and attendance significantly improved.

Initially, some authorities were skeptical of the coexistence concept. As the Oxfam country director stated, "In Ruhengeri – we presented the project to the authorities (one of whom was formerly with Oxfam). We explicitly said that the project was addressing divisions – the authorities said there are no divisions ... There was a whole negotiation process. One of the district mayors took issue with every word of the project – asking do people really want to talk. They did not want to acknowledge that there was any conflict – they said 'we don't have conflict, we don't have divisions.' Oxfam staff noted that they know, but they can't talk about it."

As the project was implemented, however, another of the district mayors became a big supporter of the project. He participated in one of the training sessions, greatly encouraged others, and he reported positive changes in the behavior and attitudes of local leaders and communities toward conflict and coexistence. When we spoke with him in early May 2002, he was very proud of the achievements in his district, and he was referring disputes from neighboring cellules to be mediated by those who had received conflict management training! In his own words, “The authorities have learned how to listen. Normally before someone would come to them with a complaint, telling them who has done what. Then the authorities would find the person that the complaint was about and ask them ‘why did you do that?’ Now they are starting to listen to both sides without blaming, the change is happening little by little.”

More broadly, Oxfam’s strategy is to build support with the grassroots authorities in order to achieve leverage at higher levels. According to the country director, “Oxfam decided to work at the lowest level – here we have freedom and comparative advantage, work is not being done at this level, donors are giving to the decentralization program and to the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC). We want to gather evidence from the poorest people, to gather evidence from the lowest level that we can use at the national level...Oxfam’s aim is to the use projects as an advocacy tool to change practice or policy at the Ministry of Local Affairs and the NURC.”

In Butare, the situation was a bit different. The mayor of the region where the projects were to be implemented was not supportive either, but NPA decided to go ahead without his support. They didn’t conduct conflict management training initially, so there was no forum in which to expose him to the concepts of the initiative. As the projects went forward, there were several points at which authorizations were required (equipment for the phone booth, permits for the gym, etc) and these had not yet come through at the time of this writing. While it’s by no means clear that the authorities were actively blocking these projects, it does seem that official support might have helped clear these roadblocks.

In Bosnia, there was no strategy to include authorities in the initiative, and opposition from them was expressed more explicitly than in Rwanda. In Drvar, one of the major impediments to the implementation of projects is the lack of available space in which to hold events or locate businesses. All public space in the area is controlled at the canton level, from the nearby town of Livno. Cantonal authority is Croat-dominated and nationalist, and since Drvar is now run by a Serb mayor and Serb-dominated city council, the canton is not cooperative in releasing space for coexistence activities. (Parties in Drvar seek power through controlling space, making it one of the ways that the coexistence challenges manifest themselves most clearly here.) Genesis did not take this into account in their strategy, in part because they were unfamiliar with Drvar and therefore not knowledgeable about the political intrigues there. The consequence is that many of the project leaders are paying a large percentage of their allotted funds for rental space, or they are being locked out of space they have been promised.

A more troubling occurrence in Drvar concerned the projects initiated by the Croat organization that advocates for displaced persons. The Croat project leader from this organization had initiated two projects: a factory to produce nails, and an internet café. The factory never got off the ground because of opposition from the Croat nationalists to his hiring of Serbs. The internet café was not making money but was well

used. However, in May 2002 all of their computers were stolen. In following up on that incident, it is our impression that this was meant as a “warning” to the Croat project director not to pursue such coexistence activities, probably from the local hardliners in his own community.

The politics in Prijedor are not quite as polarized as in Drvar, but still problematic. One of the project leaders there is a member of the Serb-dominated municipal assembly, and that has been helpful overall to the project. He has been able to speak positively about the benefits of the project to his peers and the hope is that the city itself will take an active interest in promoting some of the more successful projects. The only major backlash has been with a proposal to open a new city marketplace, for vendors to sell their wares. The project director was denied a permit from the city, and then after a visit from UNHCR and Genesis, the mayor pledged to get it moving. The approval finally came through on 11 July 2002.

Formulating a training component

All three of the implementing partners used training as a component of their strategy. Genesis and Oxfam chose conflict resolution/management as their focus, and NPA chose project management skills.

Genesis took seriously the goals of communication, interaction, and cooperation and designed their training programs accordingly, using a local psychologist who is part of their staff. After projects were chosen, they brought project leaders together in each community for training on identity, prejudice and stereotyping, and communication skills. Each project leader was to bring a beneficiary to the training, from an ethnic group different from their own. This not only helped to diversify the participation in the training, but also helped to begin building relationships within each project. They continued this arrangement throughout the rest of the training sessions.

In their next session, which focused on tolerance, project leaders and beneficiaries from Drvar and Prijedor were brought together for the first time, so there was an opportunity for learning across the two communities. In the third training, again done separately in Drvar and Prijedor, they had each person tell their story of how the war affected them, to concentrate on learning how to listen and understand and how to constructively express emotion. In the last training, which the Fletcher team attended in April 2002, they took the participants one level deeper still, and asked them to role play “in the other’s shoes.” It was very powerful, creating both empathy but also anger in some participants.

In Prijedor, for example, one of the Bosniac project leaders revealed for the first time to the whole group that he had been a prisoner in one of the concentration camps nearby. This was an incredible admission, since the group had not really acknowledged this painful part of their shared past up to this point. No one responded to him publicly, but it was notable that he felt comfortable enough in the group to admit it. In Drvar, one of the Serb participants played the role of a displaced Croat woman. She had said before the role play that it would be “no problem.” But in the discussion after the role play, she got progressively more and more angry about the exercise, because it had obviously awakened in her a realization that her own situation was actually not that different from that of the Croat woman whose identity she had acted out. Such identification with the

“other” can create empathy, but it can also create resentment in someone who is not yet psychologically ready to acknowledge these similarities.⁶

When we discussed the trainings with Genesis, they explained that their strategy had been to start with more accessible, less emotional topics and then gradually go deeper with each succeeding session. The problem, as they themselves acknowledged, is that it left the groups at the final training with some emotional issues exposed but unresolved, and no time to work them through because funding for the projects was ending.

For Oxfam, the strategy was that the training would reinforce the community participation and use of conflict management skills in the grants process, which would in turn reinforce the training and so on in a positive feedback loop. The trainings focused on conflict resolution skills such as facilitation, mediation, and leadership. Like the Genesis training, it helped people to put themselves in another person’s shoes, and to focus on how working together to resolve conflicts might be a better way to achieve your goals than trying to undermine the other person. It was based on models of community conflict resolution and self-awareness developed by the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution, and was conducted by local trainers from Rwanda and Burundi.

To engage the communities in the training, Oxfam asked them to choose the training participants themselves. Before the training was held, Oxfam attended community meetings known as Njyanama (similar to a town meeting in the US, where all residents are able to attend). In these meetings they explained the criteria for participation and let people choose their representatives themselves. The criteria were: to be literate, to volunteer, to be accepted by the community (as someone of integrity) and to come from an area where the Oxfam project was working.

Participants came from multiple categories, which provided the opportunity for exposure to different social groups (teachers, local authorities, church leaders, youth representatives, women representatives, farmers representatives etc.) The participants also came from different cellules, sectors and districts, and the training environment itself was a coexistence experience as it promoted interaction and learning. Each participant attended three one-week training sessions over a three month period, allowing them time to practice the skills in the community and in the grants process between training sessions. The trainers also adapted the curriculum as they went along, in consultation with the participants, to be sure it met the participants’ needs.

A Batwa representative noted in an evaluation interview the positive impact of participating in such a group with other people from the community. “During the training on resolving conflicts we were learning to live together. Before the Batwa knew they were different and lived apart. After the training I came and talked to families and to the community and now they understand better that we are the same as others. We have conflicts between ourselves and now we try to resolve them ourselves.” The participation of the Twa in the training was itself a major coexistence step, given that Batwa are normally shunned by and live separately from the rest of the community.

From the Fletcher interviews with members of the communities in Ruhengeri and Umutara, the trainings for many people were truly transformative. Those who had been trained acquired a new status and felt proud to share their new skills. They soon were being called upon to facilitate community meetings, including those that dealt with the

⁶ When one’s identity is, in part, made up of how much more one has suffered than some other group, it can be difficult/impossible to acknowledge that their suffering is comparable.

grants process, and even settle some community and family disputes. As noted above, the mayor in one of the Ruhengeri districts was very pleased with the outcome of these trainings, because he said the number of disputes being referred to him had dropped noticeably! He also has begun referring people from other parts of his district to those who have been trained, speaking proudly of their new skills as mediators. When asked about the value of the income projects versus the training, he said, "You cannot do the projects without the training." Local authorities in Umutara were also very enthusiastic about the impact of the training and the initiative as a whole, as they saw changes in the way the community was working together and with the authorities. However, these local authorities also emphasized that this will be a long and slow process of change.

NPA's approach was different from the other two implementing partners. Rather than focus on conflict resolution concepts and skills, they chose instead to provide training in accounting and project management, albeit with a coexistence lens: they brought the three associations in Butare together for the training, so that youth, rural women, and town leaders were participating as equals; and they included not only project leaders but also members from all levels of the organizations. The project participants were grateful for these skills and the interaction together, although it has not been possible to fully evaluate their impact because most of the projects in Butare have not been fully implemented. However, NPA noted the positive effect of the training experience on the youth who were sitting down together with adults and being treated as equals.

In our discussions with all of the implementing partners and many of the project leaders in both countries, it was very clear that the consensus going forward is that BOTH kinds of training are useful. Participants who got the conflict resolution training would now also like the technical project management skills, and vice versa. The implementing partners also now see the benefits of providing both, and all said they would do it that way in the future.

Managing time

The time constraints on the Imagine Coexistence initiative came from two directions. One was the normal one-year budget cycle at UNHCR, which requires that money be both allocated and spent within that time frame. The second was the donor, who agreed to one extension of 6 months but no more. The entire project, including the research, therefore had to be completed in 18 months. In both Bosnia and Rwanda, the money was made available to the field offices in the early spring of 2001. In both countries, the selection process for projects did not begin until that time, and many of the projects did not receive their funds until September. The scheduled finish of the projects was December, so in many cases there was only 4 months of implementation.

The Oxfam projects followed a slightly different time line, because they had already done their baseline assessment before linking up with UNHCR, and because the project selection process was the MAIN goal and was allowed to take as long as was necessary for the communities to come to agreement. Oxfam knew it would stay involved in these communities for a long time, and "...they would not start throwing money at projects before they were ready." Therefore the implementation did not begin in Ruhengeri and Umutara until late in 2001. In spring 2002, in part because of the time

constraints being imposed,⁷ Oxfam decided not to renew their contract with UNHCR but to continue their initiatives with their own funds. This would give their projects a longer time to develop, and also allow them to proceed with the projects as developed by the community decision-making process.

While significant change in perceptions and attitudes is typically measured across seasons and years, the Imagine Coexistence projects were expected to finish in a few months. No one in the projects – beneficiaries, project leaders, implementing partners or UNHCR staff – was satisfied that the length of intervention was optimal for facilitating changes in the coexistence climate, or even for seeing and evaluating such changes.

In Bosnia, for example, the insistence on finishing UNHCR's intervention within one budget cycle had a number of detrimental effects. First, there was insufficient time for networks of community actors engaged on behalf of coexistence to gel. This seemed particularly true at the project leader level, where conversations about the key issues of coexistence in the target communities were only beginning to emerge at the end of the project cycle. There was a strong sense that the project leaders might have coalesced into an important voice or force for coexistence in their communities, but this emerging network could not be nurtured or supported within the project timeframe.

In addition, project support from UNHCR ended long before projects could become truly self-sustaining from either a practical or an emotional standpoint. Many of the projects will be unable to survive on their own at all; even most of the income generating projects will not be able to provide their beneficiaries any real measure of economic security, at least not any time soon. Furthermore, in Bosnia the communities feel abandoned after having invested significant personal investment and risk in the coexistence venture. In Rwanda, the two implementing partners have committed to continuing their work with the coexistence communities, and they have the resources to do so. This is not the case in Bosnia, where Genesis as a local NGO does not have the funds to continue on without additional outside funding. Therefore, the sustainability of the projects in Bosnia is open to question. The EC has been approached as possible follow-on funders, if projects meet their criteria and funding goals.

Implementing the activities

Findings:

18. Projects in which space was created (both physical and psychological) for dialogue and joint decision-making allowed for the coexistence elements of the projects to develop more fully.
19. There was a need in both countries for the implementing partners to spend considerable time with community members, both in training and in launching the coexistence activities. Rather than being a reflection of inefficiency, this time investment was a critical component of coexistence effectiveness and success.

⁷ There were also disagreements over the approach to coexistence and to project approval criteria and procedures.

20. In the income generating projects, the selection of project leaders mattered greatly. Within the time frame and resources available, we didn't see "transformed" leadership in most cases; those who were motivated leaders of good will before going into the projects created some measure of coexistence with the others in their team; most of those who were not committed to coexistence before the projects began were not changed by their experiences in these projects.
21. Oversight of projects was very labor intensive, by necessity. This placed an immense staffing burden on some of the implementing partners.
22. Transparency in project management, including setting up systems of clear accountability, can increase trust between individuals in the projects, and between communities and authorities.
23. Projects that failed or are not yet secure from a business or sustainability point of view may not have been failures from a coexistence perspective. The link between technical success and coexistence success is complex and needs to be examined more extensively.

Data and Discussion

One of the most notable elements of project implementation was its labor intensity. For all three of the implementing partners, it required multiple visits to each project or community (sometimes 2-3 times per week), coaching and support for project leaders, planning and preparation for each training program, troubleshooting of any difficulties or problems, and handling the paperwork and finances according to UNHCR requirements. For many of these tasks, it was not only the time but also the skills of the implementing organizations that were stretched to their limit. All three were operating in new terrain, both substantively and procedurally, so each step required more preparation than under normal circumstances. In addition, each organization participated in our research component, which required further commitments of their time and attention.

Oxfam was probably the best equipped to deal with these burdens. They had designed the implementation process carefully beforehand, and even when they encountered unanticipated problems, they had enough staff and financial back-up to handle these with relative ease. It was more difficult for Genesis, with a small staff and no independent means to fill in with other help when necessary. It was also difficult for NPA, whose program director was expected to carry two other major administrative responsibilities in tandem with this project. For all three implementing partners, the very tight time line for implementation, as discussed above, only served to exacerbate these problems.

However, all three agreed that a large time commitment was essential to make the initiative a success. Many of the project leaders needed considerable help in formulating their projects, writing their proposals, and keeping their projects going. For some, it was a big step to participate in a multi-ethnic project, and the support and encouragement of the implementing partners was a key factor in shoring up their resolve. This function that

the implementing partners played is EXACTLY what it means to facilitate coexistence, and therefore the time involved was not wasted but was in fact essential.⁸ In some cases, this meant that the projects were not launched as early as was hoped, but the reality of doing coexistence work is the need, within reasonable bounds, to let things take longer in order to produce the goals of enhanced communication and relationships across conflict lines.

The implementing partners were not the only important element in project implementation. The project leaders and implementing organizations also played a significant role, often determining whether projects would succeed or fail. In Prijedor, for example, the Imagine Coexistence initiative had the luxury of working with organizations, including Lighthouse and Don, who already had substantial expertise and experience in the realm of coexistence. UNHCR in this case provided important funding that permitted an extension of services to new beneficiaries or new geographies. Such projects were notable for the professionalism of their staff, their ability to bring psychosocial resources to bear, the ease of their relationship with Genesis and UNHCR, and the general satisfaction of their beneficiaries with the projects. These organizations had unambiguous goals, a clear methodology, their own network of resources, and experience dealing with barriers to coexistence in their communities.

In Bosnia, the organizations that were new to coexistence work had more problems in planning and implementing their projects, and had less ability to anticipate and cope with barriers to coexistence. This seemed particularly true of the organizations, such as Lasta in Drvar, whose prior role was as an advocate for one ethnic group; these project leaders and organizations seemed most bound by their prior world view.

Also in Bosnia, the typical leadership structure of a micro-project was a project leader of one ethnic group being tasked with the involvement of other ethnic groups, either as participants or employees. In at least some cases, this created a power dynamic that mimicked the larger social conflict. In more than one case where the employer was of one ethnic group and the employee of another, for example, we heard from the employees that they go to work, keep quiet, and do their job— indicating a feeling of general powerlessness within the employment situation that was not conducive to the building of deeper relationships of trust and open communication, and which seemed to engender a greater degree of cynicism towards the particular micro-project and the Imagine Coexistence initiative as a whole.

This dynamic was less visible in projects where the participants came in on a more equal footing – for example, as partners in a venture (the video or musical instrument projects in Drvar, or the strawberry producers in Prijedor), as co-leaders of an activity (the youth council at Lighthouse in Prijedor), or as equal participants in a psychosocial exercise (the Genesis training for project leaders). Again, the leadership structure of projects was from one perspective “efficient” – one employer of one nationality, for example, could more quickly set up an enterprise than could partners of differing nationalities who would have had to struggle through issues of planning and implementation – but was probably sub-optimal from a coexistence perspective.

In both countries, one of the most valued contributions of these projects was the “space” they created for dialogue. By “space,” we mean the physical and psychological

⁸ There was some impatience expressed in both Geneva and the field offices when projects did not roll out in the time frame that was expected. This finding was based on an investigation of that concern.

room to meet and talk with people from across the various conflict divides. In order for such space to be created, there must be: *transparency* as to who is included, their motivations for participating, roles and identities of third parties, identities of sponsors and funders; *safety*, both physical and psychological, for participants; *equality* in terms of how people are treated when they come together; *inclusion*, so that discussion is not undermined by who is NOT there; and *expert assistance* in the form of facilitators who are knowledgeable about how to plan and conduct such discussions.

Some of the projects and especially the conflict resolution training sessions provided this kind of space for participants, which they said is otherwise not available to them in their communities. In such a setting, people are much more likely to take risks and open their minds and hearts to the “other.” This was certainly beginning to happen in a constructive way in Prijedor, Butare, Ruhengeri, and Umutara. Even in Drvar the training sessions opened up some discussions that would otherwise not have happened. But the necessity to curtail the projects after only a few months may slow or stop that process. Further study is needed to determine how sustainable this early progress has been.

In part, sustainability is a function of the participants’ sincere interest to keep the coexistence dimension of these projects alive. We have certainly found that some people will opportunistically support the theory and practice of coexistence to meet their own interests, under the conditions and circumstances they are facing. It is somewhat obvious to suggest that some people will, without real conviction, say what they believe an international funder wishes to hear in order to garner support, especially when no other means of earning a living are available. All of the implementing partners appear to have been largely successful in screening out such “insincere” applicants for funding; the project leaders appear to have entered into their projects with honest intent, at least to honor the letter of their agreements. What may be less obvious is that people’s real attitudes towards coexistence may demonstrably shift as the political and social landscape around them changes.

Serbs in Drvar, for example, were the more ardent supporters of coexistence in that community at the beginning of the project. At that time, they were the besieged minority in the town, and would have been the greater beneficiaries of an atmosphere of coexistence. By the end of the project, however, Serbs constituted a majority of the Drvar population, and the Croats were beginning to feel significant pressure, about housing eviction in particular, but also more generally as the social landscape changed. As they became the new primary beneficiaries of coexistence, Croats became more articulate supporters of the concept. Serbs, in contrast, began to feel that coexistence was “forced” and “unnatural” as the value to them of an atmosphere of coexistence diminished. These appeared to be honest changes in attitude and perception, rather than any original deceitful intent.

A last word is important to add about the implementation of the income generating projects. As was noted in the Strategy section, it was difficult to generate projects that were both financially successful and also created coexistence benefits. In Bosnia, only the coffee shop project in Drvar demonstrated some financial success as well as some coexistence benefits in the community. Interestingly, it did NOT create coexistence benefits within the staff of the project itself, at least not so far. In Rwanda, many of the Oxfam projects were able to do both because success in terms of wealth

creation (e.g., the purchase and care of livestock) was only possible if the communities found a way to work together; otherwise they wouldn't get the grants. In Bosnia, UNHCR's approach was to look for project leaders with interests in coexistence, even if they had no previous business experience. Their thought was that it would be easier to teach business skills than to instill coexistence values into someone with lots of business expertise but no interest in coexistence. Our research did not investigate whether this strategy worked, and it would be an important question to include in future studies.

One thing we did learn from the projects in Butare is that there must be a sound process for evaluating the viability of income generating projects before they are funded. The bus and gym projects were both creative ideas with some major flaws in their design. A more careful analysis beforehand might have helped to correct the deficiencies in the planning, which might have made them more financially viable.

In the income-generating projects in particular, transparency in project management was an important key to the emergence of coexistence. There is a great deal of suspicion in both countries that people who manage projects keep a lot of the money meant for implementation for themselves, and the beneficiaries never see it. If there is no transparency or accountability about the way decisions about project resources are made or about how project funds are managed, it can exacerbate distrust and undermine coexistence goals. The Oxfam projects, for example, as well as the projects run by Ceculongo and Equipes de Vie, were high on the coexistence dimension in large part because of the management structure and the equal participation of all beneficiaries. This created the required transparency and accountability, and made everyone involved feel equally responsible for success or failure.

Evaluating Impact

Findings:

24. Because coexistence projects are primarily about building and sustaining relationships, the evaluation focused as much on the WAY in which projects were implemented as on WHAT the projects produced.
25. A large part of the evaluation function during the field visits was not simply gathering data from others; it was helping the implementing partners think about what data to collect, and how to develop processes for analysis.
26. Because coexistence requires changes in perceptions and attitudes, as well as in behaviors, it is a long-term process. The length of time allocated to the pilot study was therefore too short to get definitive data on the impacts of the projects.
27. Small project work, even if done excellently, is NOT by itself a bulwark against future violence. Broader structural change is needed in both

countries to ensure the safety and security of their citizens -- returnees and others alike.

Data and Discussion

Building and repairing relationships, especially in the aftermath of significant violence, is a long-term process. In the short amount of time that was available to plan and implement activities in the five pilot communities, we expected to see only modest progress. We were looking to track how far these communities had come from where they had begun at the start of the intervention, NOT whether they had reached some pre-determined end point. To do this, we relied upon a list of 15 “criteria for effectiveness.” These are:

1. It increased the number of people actively working, or speaking out, for coexistence (or reduced the number of people actively engaged in or promoting conflict).
2. It influenced community leaders to act on behalf of coexistence.
3. It promoted activities/networks/organizations that, when violence worsened or threats were made, were able to sustain their efforts and maintain their membership.
4. It established links between leadership and the general public that made it possible for them to communicate more effectively about how to foster coexistence.
5. Specific acts of violence stopped or specific causes of conflict were resolved.
6. The project made progress toward/achieved its stated goals.
7. The leadership, implementation, and management of the project were shared by people from different identity groups.
8. The project was perceived as a joint endeavor by the project staff.
9. The project staff perceived that the project was valuable (worth their time and effort to work together)
10. The project broadened social connections among the beneficiaries.
11. A shift occurred towards a more positive perception of members of groups towards other groups.
12. The project has hosted or helped to generate other joint activities.
13. The project has been used as a resource/ support for others wanting to engage in joint activities.
14. Project staff and/or beneficiaries developed problem-solving, planning, or communication skills.
15. Project staff and/or beneficiaries developed an increased level of trust in their relationships with each other.

The first five were adapted from the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project, directed by Dr. Mary Anderson of Cambridge, MA, USA. This project is examining an extensive set of case studies that document peacebuilding work as it is practiced by non-

governmental organizations world-wide. From these cases, the RPP research team has culled a set of six criteria used in the field to evaluate effectiveness, and we in turn have used five of these. We have adopted the RPP terminology of “criteria for effectiveness,” as opposed to “indicators of impact.”⁹ We found, as did they, that *indicators* should be very context specific, whereas *criteria for effectiveness* could be framed more generically.¹⁰

This point is worth elaborating, as it has been our experience that “indicators” are used extensively by UNHCR for evaluating their field operations. This is appropriate, but our finding is that Criteria for Effectiveness provide the *categories* in each coexistence project within which locally relevant *indicators* should then be developed. Ideally, the indicators should be developed in partnership with the implementing partners and with the communities themselves. This assures that success is measured in terms that are locally meaningful, and the community can see the progress that is being made in ways that make sense to them. Attempting to develop and use generic coexistence indicators could actually jeopardize UNHCR’s attempts to promote coexistence and understand the impact of its projects, as generic indicators would quite possibly have no relevance to the community being evaluated.

The initial Imagine Coexistence research team developed criteria No. 6-14 in 2000,¹¹ and the current team added No. 15. The list can be further grouped into two categories: those criteria that reflect behavior/perceptions/attitudes within the *projects* themselves (Criteria # 6-10; 11, 14, 15); and criteria that capture behavior/perceptions/attitudes of the *broader communities* within which the projects sit (Criteria 1-5; 12, 13).

These criteria reflected our assumptions, based on the literature we have cited, that important elements in the coexistence process include:

- (1) Perceptions and attitudes as well as actions
- (2) Communication, problem-solving, and trust building
- (3) Networks and connections between individuals and groups

⁹ Since the writing of this report, RPP has released a revised set of Criteria for Effectiveness, very different from the list we used for this study. Their new criteria are much more open-ended than these five we have used, based on feedback from many focus groups convened worldwide to discuss drafts of their findings.

¹⁰ RPP Issue paper on Criteria for Effectiveness: Difference between Criteria of Effectiveness and Indicators of Impacts:

It is important to distinguish between the Effectiveness Criteria above and impact indicators. An illustration will make the point. If a criterion of effectiveness is that the numbers of people engaged in peace-making increases, how would we know this was happening? What impacts would we look for and find credible to know that a specific effort was increasing the numbers of people involved in promoting peace? From the case studies, we have many examples of outcomes, two of these are:

Over 5000 people came to a three-day convention where they identified themselves as supporting peace (where it was dangerous to do so) and entered into agreements with former enemies.

A project that began with only a few dialogue groups expanded to over sixty such groups in a year. These two examples of outcomes indicate that more people are involved in specific activities, and thus show that this effectiveness criterion was being met. These two examples could be contrasted with other efforts where organizers report that there is a growing number of requests for training. If people are asking to be trained, does this represent working or speaking out for peace? In some instances, it might (if coming to training itself takes courage in the face of threats). In others, it might represent a way of not taking action and of postponing any significant involvement in actual peace promotion. The criterion would hold; the impact indicators would have to be judged in context for their validity. [<http://www.cdaine.com/rpp/rpp-effectiveness.htm>]

¹¹ This group consisted of Prof. Martha Minow; Prof. Antonia Chayes; Prof. Eileen Babbitt; Dr. Sara Cobb; Dr. Carlos Sluzki; and Lauren Guth.

- (4) Leadership and relations with officials
- (5) Activities that bring people together under carefully planned circumstances
- (6) Both micro and macro-level impacts

Many of the project outcomes have been discussed in previous sections, but it is worth reiterating several points here, with a significant caveat: **because coexistence requires changes in perceptions and attitudes, as well as in behaviors, it is a long-term process. The length of time allotted to the pilot study was therefore too short to get definitive data on the impacts of the projects. So these outcomes are provisional, and should be tested in longer-term study.**

From the projects we reviewed, we can say that such projects probably cannot create trust, meaningful communication, or cooperation among people beyond the direct project beneficiaries, unless this is designed for as part of a community-wide intervention. The only interventions that had this larger impact were those done under the sponsorship of Oxfam, whose strategy was explicitly designed to reach the community as a whole.

Also, within the projects themselves, meaningful communication and interaction among project beneficiaries was greatly enhanced when space for dialogue was consciously created and supported. This is demonstrated by many of the non-income generating projects in Bosnia and the community decision-making projects in Ruhengeri and Umutara. It is also illustrated by the projects in Butare that are an outgrowth of existing associations (Equipes de Vie, Ceculongo) who are committed to coexistence, and provide such space for dialogue as part of their larger organizational structure.

The way in which projects were managed by the project leaders and beneficiaries also had an impact. For example, where such management addressed power asymmetries and established processes for equity and shared control, the project avoided reinforcing hierarchy and exclusion and thereby had an impact on coexistence – allowing for changes in the nature of interaction, cooperation and communication between people. This was true in all of the Rwanda projects, and in many of the non-income projects in Bosnia.

In terms of positive coexistence benefits, all of the sports projects (handball, basketball, judo club) and many of the youth projects (micro-credit, musical instruments/band, journalism project, folk dance, newspaper, computer classes) figured prominently. We did not specifically study why this might be the case, but that should also be a question for future research to address.

In both countries, it was also clear that micro-projects alone cannot address the underlying drivers of ongoing conflict and inter-group tensions in communities. There are larger structural forces at work, and activities would have to be specifically designed to tackle these forces in order to have an impact on them. In addition, the micro-projects themselves might be eroded by these larger forces, as evidenced by the undermining of several projects in Drvar, Prijedor, and Butare due to lack of political cooperation. In both countries, we asked implementing partners and project leaders if they thought their activities had created relationships that could withstand the pressure if violence were again to escalate. All of them said no -- it would take much more for relationships to progress to that point. One person in Bosnia said that even 45 years of living together had not prevented the Yugoslav wars, and that this extended period of “enforced coexistence” was actually what led to the conflicts of the 1990s. Clearly, more than time is needed now as well.

Design of the study

We also analyzed the overall design of the study, and whether the approaches we have used to evaluate the initiative have been effective. We found the following:

(1) The country-wide surveys were a good effort in a short span of time, but would have elicited much more useful data with a larger sample, more randomly determined, with a longer period for training and working with the researchers. Also, follow-up was needed to fill in more information in many cases, and there was insufficient time to do this. The questions worked well, but the interviewers needed more orientation on the techniques involved in semi-structured interviewing. It is clear that on sensitive issues such as coexistence a structured survey may well not be the best tool for eliciting information. More time was needed to train the researchers and develop appropriate tools for gathering information.

(2) The baseline study in Bosnia was done too far along in the process to be a valid “before” measure. Also, we used existing studies in Rwanda that asked different questions than the ones we designed; although they provided very useful information, we did not have consistency of baseline data across all of the pilot communities. We therefore need the same instrument administered in each location, and probably with a larger sample.

(3) We asked project leaders and implementing partners to keep journals, in order to trace their personal learning process throughout the implementation phase. These were not very successful. Genesis staff did a great job in keeping journals, but the project leaders did not. In Rwanda, the implementing partners tried to incorporate their reflections into their monthly reports, but it was not as extensive as we would have liked. In both countries, committing thoughts and feelings to writing is not commonly done. In Bosnia, there was reluctance to have any such information documented in writing; and in Rwanda, many of the project participants were not literate and there was a fear of documentation and what it may be used for. We hired our Bosnian research team to conduct interviews with project leaders, but the results were not very illuminating. In Rwanda we worked with Oxfam to help them develop techniques for tracking and gathering information on changes in coexistence in the communities; that process is still continuing so we don't yet have definitive results. We therefore need to continue developing effective ways to capture the interim perceptions and attitudes of project leaders and beneficiaries.

(4) We would now modify the Criteria for Effectiveness in several ways. First, we would change those that presume activities have to be “joint” to be coexistence work (i.e., we would exclude #7 and qualify # 8 and 12); under some circumstances, coexistence work might be better done separately with identity groups before bringing them together. This would become apparent during the initial assessment phase, and might occur when one or both parties are still too angry or hostile toward the other to even agree to come together. It could involve projects with refugees still in countries of asylum before they return, and/or with the communities to which they are likely to return.

Second, we would revisit the first five criteria supplied by the RPP project. As our report was being prepared, RPP released a revised set of criteria and we would seek to incorporate their revisions.¹²

(5) When our mandate was drawn up in May 2001, it was envisioned that we would not be designing any interventions, but only assessing what UNHCR was implementing through its partners. However, we did learn that, in the process of collecting data, we were also providing an educational function in helping the implementing partners in particular to think about what data to collect, how to collect it, and how to develop processes for analysis. The feedback that we received from the three partners is that this educational component was extremely useful for them, and we would want to incorporate this element much more systematically in any future research effort.

UNHCR's Role

Findings:

28. UNHCR staff in Bosnia intervened directly with local officials, to try and clear roadblocks to project implementation. This illustrates the important role that UNHCR can play, as a large international organization, in running interference for local groups and using their leverage with official parties.
29. UNHCR staff used their convening power in Rwanda to organize a first-ever, extremely effective network of organizations and individuals working on coexistence around the country, which all participants want to see continue. This is an excellent example of another role for UNHCR, as a convenor in circumstances in which local groups are not seen as sufficiently powerful or unbiased.
30. UNHCR's credibility as a catalyst for coexistence was undermined whenever they failed to model the values and behaviors they were encouraging in others. In addition, UNHCR was challenged in staking out

¹² RPP's evidence to date suggests that peace programs are more effective, i.e. able to make an impact on peace writ large, if:

1. The effort is marked by participants' sustained engagement over time. The involvement of people is not one-off, and is sustained in the face of difficulty or even threats and overt pressure to discontinue.

2. The effort has a linking dynamic. It links upwards (to bring in people with existing influence on the political process or support new alternative leaders) or downwards (to bring in larger numbers of people and build public support at the grassroots level). It links key people to more people, or more people to key people.

3. The effort does something substantive about root and proximate causes of conflict. It does not represent simply talking about peace, but also seeks and finds solutions to the key problems driving the conflict.

4. The effort is geared towards creating institutional solutions. It is not sustained only by ephemeral personal relationships or ad hoc initiatives, but is institutionalized, and enduring.

5. The effort causes people to respond differently (from before) in relation to conflict. This can involve increasing people's ability to resist manipulation or to undertake proactive efforts. This can occur through increased skills for analyzing, managing, and responding to conflict or changed values and attitudes.

The experience gathered through RPP to date suggests that these criteria are additive. If a single effort meetings all five, it is more effective than one that accomplishes only one.

a credible role as a neutral advocate for coexistence by its other activities, in which it often takes sides in major political battles (e.g., in property return in Bosnia) or is seen as favoring a particular group with its assistance.

31. Organizations engaged in coexistence work do better if they are self-reflective and open to learning and input from their partners and beneficiaries. UNHCR has made good efforts in this regard, but further development of their reflective and learning capacities is needed.
32. In the absence of a political settlement to ethno-national conflict, UNHCR's engagement on behalf of coexistence is inherently political – it is a stand on behalf of a particular political vision. Coexistence interventions are therefore not neutral and some who benefit from the lack of coexistence may be threatened.

Data and Discussion

UNHCR is a big player in the international arena. It channels large sums of money from its international donors to 120 countries around the world. It employs about 5000 people, many of them locals from the target countries. It provides a crucial function for international peace and stability, and it is one of the international organizations that is first on the ground during crises. This combination of characteristics provides UNHCR with both opportunities and constraints as it undertakes coexistence work.

In Bosnia, one of the projects proposed in Prijedor was a marketplace, in which local merchants could gather to sell their goods. The existing marketplace had been closed because of health concerns, and this project would have replaced the dysfunctional space with something more up to date and sanitary. However, the local licensing agency required so many conditions to be met that it would be impossible for the project to go forward. The UNHCR office in Banja Luka, along with members of Genesis, met with the mayor of Banja Luka and explained the problem, and this helped open the way for a more reasonable set of criteria for obtaining a permit. One role, therefore, for UNHCR to play in this coexistence work is for the field offices to assist local groups by using their leverage with official parties to clear roadblocks to project implementation.

In Rwanda, UNHCR played a different role. As the UNHCR staff began the country-wide survey process and gathered information on who was involved in coexistence activities, they recognized the lack of any communication between the various NGOs in the country that were working on coexistence-related programs, and decided to launch an effort to provide information sharing and a meeting place for discussion. This demonstrates another of the constructive roles for UNHCR – that of convener. It would be impossible for any of the local NGOs to have either the credibility or the resources to host an ongoing series of meetings. UNHCR, however, had both the standing in the community and the ability to commit both staff time and finances to organizing and maintaining the new “Coexistence Network.” Also, UNHCR staff allowed the Network to develop its own agenda for discussion, and by not imposing its own agenda, facilitated the Network in achieving its own identity and standing. As the

Imagine Coexistence pilot comes to a close, the Network will continue under the auspices of Care, a transition that is built upon the desire of the members to have it continue and on the very successful foundation that has been laid.

Many of the qualities that allow UNHCR to be a constructive contributor to coexistence also lead to constraints. It must respond to the expectations and requirements of its donors, even as resources are sharply declining. It must retain working relationships with host governments in order to continue operating within sovereign boundaries. And it must initiate changes and innovation in the context of a large, unwieldy international bureaucracy.

In the context of the coexistence initiative, a major challenge was for UNHCR to stake out a credible role as a neutral advocate for coexistence, when its other activities require it to take sides in major political battles. In Bosnia, for example, while the Imagine Coexistence initiative was largely compartmentalized within the UNHCR organization, it could not be within the minds of project leaders and beneficiaries. Among domicile populations, UNHCR is perceived by some to favor refugee and returnee populations at the expense of members of the domicile population who might be experiencing similar needs, e.g., for housing reconstruction. UNHCR monitors housing evictions to make sure local authorities implement their legal obligations to facilitate return. For good or bad, this appears to be taking sides in one of the most politically charged issues in the country. Among returnee populations, UNHCR is implicated in some minds in the international community's perceived indifference to official and unofficial discrimination against minority communities in, for example, the provision of employment and government services. Again, UNHCR's actual actions and their justifications in this context are less important than the perceptions of UNHCR and its role by affected populations.

In Rwanda, UNHCR for many years supported the refugees in the camps surrounding Rwanda. From these camps, infiltrations were launched into Rwanda. There was therefore a perception among some that they were helping one group (the Hutu refugees and possibly combatants) and not doing enough within the country for the survivors of the genocide. Conversely, UNHCR is now seen by others as being too close to the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan government. In both cases, the perception is of UNHCR "taking sides," and therefore there is suspicion of their motives when they ask, for example, for an accounting of the ethnic make-up of funded projects.

With this as a backdrop, UNHCR often undermined its credibility as a catalyst for coexistence when it failed to display the values and behaviors it was encouraging in others. One problem was created by the one-year budget cycle. While acknowledging that coexistence is a long-term process, UNHCR was nonetheless driven by standard procedure and donor pressure to impose a short time frame for implementation; this meant that little planning was possible and that many projects were cut off from UNHCR funding before they had a chance to make real headway on coexistence goals. Those that are continuing are doing so because Oxfam and NPA are willing to fund them; the future of the rest is in question. This obvious paradox is puzzling to both implementing partners and project leaders in the field, and it undermines UNHCR's credibility.

Another difficulty occurred in Rwanda in the nature of the relationships with the implementing partners. This is due to the tension between the kind of organizational values and behavior that are required to do coexistence work and the way that UNHCR

normally functions as an institution and how it understands partnership. The kind of partnership that the implementing partners have fostered with their communities has been very important to doing effective coexistence work. These relationships are based on respect, listening, dialogue, and participation, which are reflected in how the processes have been organized. The implementing partners have also undertaken internal work as institutions to change their own attitudes and behaviors around conflict and coexistence. This kind of partnership and self-reflection should have also taken place between UNHCR and the implementing partners, and within UNHCR, but this didn't happen to a great extent during the pilot.

An indicator of this is the fact that a number of major international NGOs in Rwanda refused to participate in the project precisely because of their experience of the difficulty of working as an implementing partner with UNHCR. Another indicator is that Oxfam decided not to extend its partnership with UNHCR on this project because it felt that UNHCR did not respect their judgment about project choices and continually tried to impose their own conceptions of coexistence onto project design.

This table begins to explore from our findings some of the characteristics that are required for an organization to do effective coexistence work and then compares those with the characteristics that NGOs have reporting in their dealings with UNHCR¹³:

	TO DO EFFECTIVE COEXISTENCE WORK – VALUES/AWARENESS THAT ARE NEEDED	UNHCR
Strategy for dealing with conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *See conflict as normal, even potentially healthy *Explore different ways of dealing with it *Structures and systems in place for dealing with conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Conflict avoiding *Absence of clear structures for dealing with conflict
Management style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Transparent *Consultative *Participatory *Gives acknowledgement *Trusting *Flexible *Attempting to understand the other *Respectful *Provides a holding environment for dialogue *Open to reflexivity and internal change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Traditionally very closed – holds tightly to information *Hierarchical and autocratic *Controlling *Untrusting *Using power tactics *Avoiding dialogue *Unreflexive and defensive *Indirect in addressing problems; using back channel rather than open communication

¹³ The data on UNHCR was collected from focus groups with local NGOs in both Bosnia and Rwanda, and also in personal interviews with NGO officials and regional experts in both countries.

These are, of course, generalizations about the organization, and there are several examples in the relationships with implementing partners in this project that contradict these observations. Genesis, for example, was quite satisfied with the trust and level of participation they shared with UNHCR Banja Luka. There clearly are institutional reasons why UNHCR, as an organization, functions in this way; it has been an effective coping strategy for the institution under many difficult circumstances. As one Resident Representative commented, “We have a reputation as being fire fighters. This kind of work (i.e., coexistence) requires a more methodical, systemic way of working...not molded to the traditional mode of programming and implementation.” However, individual staff members can make a difference; for example, a program or protection officer can find a way to implement standard operating procedures in a more flexible manner. The issue is the extent to which UNHCR can modify its behavior *more systematically* as it undertakes coexistence work.

This brings us to the questions of self-reflection and institutional learning. In analyzing the approaches taken by the three implementing partners, we see that where an intense reflective process was evident, the Imagine Coexistence projects appeared better tailored to local conditions and more soundly based on a clear theory of intervention. The Oxfam intervention started with a comprehensive self-examination of the biases and assumptions that Oxfam was bringing to their work, as well as an analysis of root causes and conditions on the ground. The substance and the process of their intervention was designed in a deliberate way to address particular causes of conflict and barriers to coexistence. In contrast, the framework for the Imagine Coexistence initiative in Bosnia and in the NPA projects of Rwanda – that there would be multiple micro-projects; that they would be implemented by select project leaders; that there would be a “competition” for project selection; that there would be a bias towards income-generating projects; that the projects would be explicitly ethnically mixed, etc. – was “received” by the implementing partners from UNHCR, apparently leaving them less latitude to design an intervention to address the barriers to coexistence in a particular community.

Unfortunately the Oxfam intervention, which was based on the strongest reflection and analysis and which was the most strategically designed, was not congruent with the intervention model anticipated by UNHCR HQ in Geneva, causing significant friction and compromising project implementation. This is an indicator that UNHCR itself has to engage in further self-reflection about its own definition of coexistence, and about the way it interacts with its implementing partners in this process. It must also be open to learning from its implementing partners. We know that UNHCR is engaged in improving its learning capacity in general as an organization, but further development is needed as it relates to this coexistence work. As expressed at one meeting of NPA, Oxfam and UNHCR in Rwanda, “The team itself needs to experience the process of coexistence work to be able to transmit this process to the community.”

The last issue for UNHCR to consider in terms of its role is the explicitly political nature of doing coexistence work, in that this work seeks to create changes in the relationships, and often the power dynamics, between contending groups. As previously noted, both Bosnia and Rwanda are post-settlement, but NOT post-conflict; in the absence of a stable political settlement to ethno-national conflict, engagement on behalf of coexistence is a stand on behalf of a particular political vision. Coexistence

interventions are therefore not neutral, and some who benefit from the lack of coexistence may be threatened.

Not surprisingly, UNHCR is reluctant to fully embrace this reality. For example, UNHCR Bosnia put an emphasis on the de-politicization of the Imagine Coexistence initiative. Potential project leaders, for example, were reportedly taken out of consideration because they were “too political.” A bias in project leader selection was shown towards “fresh voices,” rather than towards those who were already influential or powerful in the community. UNHCR noted that they did not have the “specialized expertise” necessary to doing political work. Yet politics seeped back into the initiative: a construction permit was denied to a Bosniak-led project in Prijedor, and public space was restricted for a Serb-led project in Drvar, apparently on an ethnic basis. Also, the computers were all stolen from the internet café in Drvar, apparently as a strong message to the Croat project leader from the nationalist members of his own community.

People also brought the political conflicts they encountered in their lives – over jobs, housing returns, and education most visibly – into their interactions in the Imagine Coexistence projects and activities. Politics underlay much of the ongoing conflict in the Imagine Coexistence target communities, but was not noticeably addressed by the initiative (the notable exception was the Oxfam work, which sought to strengthen the community capacity to function effectively in the new decentralized political arrangements in Rwanda).

UNHCR, therefore, must accept these political realities and factor them in to their planning for coexistence work. As a major actor, they can have an impact if they choose to do so. This means not only understanding the structural and other root causes of continuing conflict, but also the points of leverage that might be used to create the needed changes. As Oxfam stated, they believed their best leverage was at the grassroots level, so they designed their intervention accordingly. But UNHCR might find that it can have an impact at other levels as well, and will often be at a comparative advantage to exercise that power.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe, based on our Findings, that UNHCR can usefully and effectively be a catalyst for coexistence work in many areas of the world. Even though constrained by limits on their length of stay in a given locale, UNHCR can still provide the necessary leadership and funds to launch coexistence initiatives, which can then be taken up in the longer term by other organizations and actors.

However, to provide such leadership and to lay the foundation for effective coexistence work, the following recommendations **MUST** be part of any UNHCR approach.

CONCEPTUALIZING COEXISTENCE

1. **UNHCR's concept of coexistence should be expanded to include:**
 - * **Community input into defining the parameters of coexistence**
 - * **Consideration of activities beyond micro-projects**
 - * **Coexistence as a lens through which to review other UNHCR activities**
2. **UNHCR's concept of coexistence should include attention to the root causes of conflict, some of which may not be at the community level.**
3. **UNHCR's conceptual knowledge of coexistence work should be enhanced by further training of UNHCR staff.**
4. **We do not have sufficient data at this point to determine the optimal time period in a conflict when UNHCR can/should begin coexistence work. More comparative analysis should be done, ideally during this upcoming year when activities will be launched in countries that are much earlier in the conflict cycle.**

UNHCR should engage the community early on in the planning process, so that the entire effort is a partnership, not just with the implementing partner but also with communities as a whole. In this engagement, UNHCR should learn what is really driving conflict within communities, and be open to addressing those core issues as well as the secondary effects. This may mean focusing on structures and institutions, as well as on grassroots activities, and UNHCR should be open to this possibility.

In order to enlarge the thinking about coexistence, UNHCR staff need more knowledge and comfort with the ways in which coexistence can be framed and facilitated. As will be elaborated below (Recommendation #27), this requires launching a training program for all those staff members working on coexistence projects, both at Headquarters and in the field.

Because both of the pilot programs took place in countries several years out from settlement, we were not able to assess the viability of coexistence work at other conflict phases. We hope that research can be put in place in the countries where UNHCR is planning to launch such initiatives in this next year, as two of these countries (Sri Lanka

and Afghanistan) are in a much earlier phase and will provide very useful data on this timing question.

THE ROLE OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- 5. Choose an implementing partner according to the following criteria:**
 - a. familiarity with and trust of the local community**
 - b. strong commitment to and/or good track record in coexistence work**
 - c. ability to be self-reflective and creative**
 - d. comfortable working in a participatory way with the community**
 - e. able to set a positive coexistence example for the local community**

- 6. Give the implementing partner the flexibility to be creative in responding to community needs. This may mean UNHCR taking risks to try something new, or to modify initial goals as more information or experience in a given community is obtained.**

The primary partnership for UNHCR is with the implementing partner; this relationship is key to effectiveness in coexistence work and should be given the utmost attention by UNHCR staff. It provides the opportunity for UNHCR to demonstrate its commitment to the values it espouses that others should follow, and therefore increases UNHCR's credibility in the community. Of course, this also hinges on choosing excellent implementing partners for this work, according to the criteria we have outlined above.

We are aware of the difficulties of managing a large bureaucratic organization, and the need for established procedures such as those extensively catalogued in Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Manual. But we think that some measure of discretion should be allowed the UNHCR field personnel who oversee the coexistence program, which can then be passed along to the implementing partners in the form of increased flexibility to be innovative in designing appropriate interventions. As one of the implementing partners said to us, facilitating relationships is not the same as setting up feeding stations. It requires different kinds of strategies, many of which are just now evolving, and the implementing partners need the room to be creative if these projects are to thrive.

ANALYZING THE CONTEXT

- 7. Before developing a strategy, UNHCR and the implementing partner should conduct a “coexistence” assessment, to include both an historical and current analysis of the following elements in the community, country, and region in which activities will occur:**
 - * Identities of contending groups**
 - * Power dynamics between and among these groups**
 - * Key actors, both official and non-official**
 - * Interests and needs of key actors and groups**

- * **Role of authorities, and relationship of authorities to population**
 - * **Ways in which the communities currently manage conflict (formal and informal)**
 - * **Levels of trauma and how it is being addressed**
 - * **Attitudes and perceptions that identity groups have of each other**
 - * **Risks for group members to engage in coexistence activities**
 - * **Extent to which coexistence activities are already functioning**
 - * **Receptivity to developing coexistence**
 - * **Perceptions of UNHCR, based on its other activities in the country or region**
- 8. To the extent possible, the communities to be involved in the activities should be partners in the assessment process.**
- 9. This analysis should be updated at various intervals during the course of the coexistence work, as many of the parameters will be changing in the context of a political and social transition.**

In Appendix I, we have included our version of a context analysis, which can be useful as a guide. This assessment is a critical step in the planning of a coexistence intervention and should not be skipped over or abbreviated. At regular intervals, not to exceed one year, an update should be done to determine what parameters have changed, as this can dramatically affect the success of coexistence work. The initial assessment and its updates could be part of the mandate of the implementing partner, or could be sub-contracted to an appropriate research group.

The community itself will be a valuable source of information for the analysis. As partners in this effort, they will have ideas about and interests in the kinds of information to be gathered for their own planning purposes. If they see the data collection as being beneficial to them as well as to UNHCR, they will be much more willing to cooperate with the sharing of information. The implementing partner will know what kinds of local organizations and individuals to involve in this effort and should be encouraged to do so.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

- 10. Decide, with the implementing partner, what can/should UNHCR do that would most promote coexistence in the target communities. In addition to/instead of the funding of micro-projects, this could include designing training, providing space for dialogue, providing opportunities for joint planning and decision-making, convening a network of like-minded organizations, etc. It involves assessing not only where opportunities exist or are needed, but also where UNHCR might have the most leverage/comparative advantage.**

- 11. Consider the possibility of single-identity work (i.e., with one party in a conflict) in addition to joint work (with two or more parties). In some circumstances, where polarization is extreme, it is necessary to prepare groups SEPARATELY before bringing them together, so that their work together is more productive. Such activities should be explored.**

As we described in the Findings section, UNHCR began this initiative with a very clear idea of the kind of intervention it wanted to do. This was fine for the purposes of the pilot program, but in subsequent efforts, such preconceived ideas should be suspended. Instead, with the implementing partner, a range of options should be explored. These will be determined by the context analysis and by UNHCR's capacities in a given locale, including those of its implementing partner. The key is to strategically plan an intervention that will (1) optimize the impact on coexistence; *and* (2) take advantage of UNHCR's leverage and stature.¹⁴ This could mean the funding of small projects, as in the pilot; or it could entail community-wide consensus building, advocacy with authorities for coexistence-supporting institutions and policies, or single-identity work (i.e., projects/activities with groups separately) to prepare groups to meet/work together.

- 12. PREFERRED TIMING OPTION #1: Adapt the current project cycle to allow for longer implementation**

- a. Allow one year for choosing implementing partner, doing community assessment, and choosing activities. This will include bringing the community into the planning process, providing initial training, designing an integrative strategy.**

- b. Begin implementation of integrated plan in the second year.**

- c. Allow the implementing partner considerable flexibility and independence in designing a strategy, and in choosing and monitoring activities.**

- d. The strategy should include a plan for involving the community in the decision-making on the mix of activities. Income generation is one of the choices, but not the priority. Again, the emphasis should be on the PROCESS used rather than focusing solely on the CONTENT of activities.**

- e. If there is no existing forum in the community for making such decisions, the implementing partner should explore the possibility of creating such a forum. This must be evaluated for its feasibility and safety, and requires an additional assessment of the barriers to collective efforts in a particular locale.**

- 13. TIMING OPTION #2: Keep current project cycle and implement quickly.**

¹⁴ If the context analysis finds that UNHCR's reputation in a given locale is less than stellar, than accommodation must be made for this in developing a strategy.

a. In order to do anything productive in a very short time, choose existing NGOs to implement any activities, ones with experience and capacity to move quickly and ones that are perceived as credible and effective in the community.

NOTE: We do not recommend this option, as it short-circuits the assessment and planning processes, which we consider critical to the successful impact of coexistence work.

The Findings of this study clearly point to the problems inherent in the one-year project cycle. While we are aware that changing this policy is challenging, we strongly urge UNHCR to consider ways of adapting the one-year cycle to accommodate multi-year initiatives. This would most likely mean getting a commitment from donors for a phased project, in which the completion criteria for each year are spelled out but that builds in: extensive planning time (phase 1); at least 18 months of implementation, but ideally 2 years (phase 2); and adequate evaluation (ongoing). We don't, however, want to construct another inflexible structure for the implementing partners! So the criteria for completion for each year should also allow for some flexibility if the implementing partner judges it to be necessary.

If, however, there is absolutely no way to adjust the project cycle, then our Findings show the best strategy is for UNHCR and its implementing partner to choose NGOs for implementation who already have a successful operation up and running, with the qualities outlined above. In a short time, it is impossible to generate new ventures from scratch that adequately address coexistence goals.

14. The implementing partner's strategy should include providing training BOTH in conflict resolution skills and in project design and management. The timing of such training should be decided upon by the implementing partner, according to the assessment findings as outlined above; however, we have found that training works best when interspersed with implementation activities, and the integrated plan should reflect this mix.

Trainings should be conducted by experts who understand the need to create "space for dialogue" as part of the training process, and who are competent to facilitate such dialogue. Training should include not only project leaders but also as large a part of the beneficiary community as possible, to expand the impact of the Initiative considerably.

Training is a key component of any coexistence effort. The optimal blend is a combination of conflict management and project management skills, based on a thorough assessment of community needs and capacities. The contribution is not only to provide skills, but also to improve upon the "contact hypothesis" (i.e., bringing people together in the same room will create relationships) by attention to the QUALITY of that contact.

It's possible that, during these training sessions, this space may be volatile, not peaceful – but that is okay! Often it is necessary to have emotional exchange to get at the

real issues dividing people. But it is essential that the trainers be skilled and experienced in order to manage such sessions constructively.

In addition, if activities include the generation of projects with inexperienced project leaders, management and technical training are crucial to project success.

Ideally, training should take place at intervals over an extended time period, with breaks in between sessions for participants to “practice” what they have learned. In addition, it is crucial that trainers have a deep understanding of the local culture so that training methods and materials are culturally appropriate.

- 15. Determine how both local and regional authorities will be managed in relation to coexistence activities. This includes deciding which of the authorities to include, and in what ways. It also means assessing the impact of excluding any of the authorities intentionally, and how to mitigate the consequences.**

This should be an explicit part of the mandate for the implementing partner. The wording should be as close to the above as possible, which will allow the implementing partner the flexibility to design a strategy based on the context analysis and any further assessment they feel is necessary.

- 16. Encourage transparent and shared management in all of the coexistence activities that are planned.**

Dealing with conflict openly is part of closing gaps between community members that can lead to conflict, which in turn can facilitate coexistence. It is not only the activities that are essential but also the way they are managed in particular, putting everyone in the group on an equal footing of understanding. This may involve training as well as particular processes of decision making so that people have the knowledge to be able to control the project. Within this transparency, trust can develop. Avoid concentrating knowledge only with a few, which will also concentrate power; rather, seek to place knowledge and decision making in everyone’s hands.

DESIGNING AND MANAGING PROGRAMS

- 17. The scope and number of activities should be carefully calibrated so that the implementing partner can comfortably provide the support and oversight that is required for success. These are labor-intensive activities (in both time and capacity), and it is better to do fewer interventions well than to do many with insufficient resources and support.**
- 18. The implementing partner should be trusted to choose activity leaders, whom they feel are both technically competent and have a sincere interest in coexistence.**

19. Technical support, in terms of management and/or substantive consultation, should be made available to all activity leaders who want it.

These decisions are part of strategy development. They are critical to successful implementation and should be addressed early on in the planning, before commitments are made to specific groups or individuals for funding. As our Findings show, if any group in the community perceives that commitments (even informal) have been given to fund their work, it can cause mistrust and anger toward the implementing partner if they are not kept. Again, the implementing partner is the key determinant in this process.

In addition to training, some project leaders may benefit from technical assistance in the form of expert advice or ongoing consultation. This should be decided upon as needed by the implementing partner and should be included in the budget in case one or more of the project leaders require it.

EVALUATING IMPACT

20. Evaluation should focus on the process as well as the outcome of the initiative. This means doing the following:

- a. **coexistence assessment (see #7 above)**
- b. **broad national or regional survey of existing coexistence efforts**
- c. **documentation of the implementing partner strategy**
- d. **documentation of the community engagement process**
- e. **collection of implementing partner monthly reports and final evaluation data**
- f. **interviews by outside researchers with activity leaders and beneficiaries, once at beginning of implementation phase and once at the end of the project cycle.**
- g. **interviews with implementing partners and with HCR staff by outside researchers: at beginning of strategy development, at beginning of implementation, and at the end of the project cycle.**

21. The frameworks developed in this study can be used as the starting point for analyzing these data, to focus on tracking changes in relationships, communication, trust, and the “normalizing” of conflict, i.e., the ways in which relationships change constructively to allow conflict to occur and be managed without violence. Improvements and modifications will be necessary as the context changes.

In conducting this study, we have developed several analytic tools that can be usefully employed in future evaluations. Some of these have been adapted from existing instruments and some have been designed specifically for this project. All are to be found in Appendix I. These should be the starting point for assessing progress in UNHCR’s coexistence work, so that methodologies don’t have to be created anew each time such work is designed.

That said, it is also important (as expanded upon below) that these instruments be reviewed in each case for possible refinement and updates. As new knowledge is available on evaluating coexistence work, and as the context changes, modifications may be necessary.

- 22. Progress in coexistence work should be evaluated based on how far relationships have improved from where they started out at the beginning of the intervention activity, NOT based on whether they've reached some predetermined end point. This means taking the initial coexistence assessment very seriously, as a baseline from which to judge progress.**

This reinforces the important of the initial coexistence assessment, not only for planning purposes but also for evaluation. This is another reason why the assessment should be carried out early on in the launch of any new initiative, and why it must be done thoroughly.

- 23. Carry out the evaluation for one more year in Bosnia and Rwanda, to assess the medium-term impacts of this large initial investment. In addition, follow-up would ideally be done after 3 years and 5 years as well, to assess longer-term outcomes. The implementing partners may be engaged to do such assessment.**

As stated in the Findings, the implementation of these pilot projects was severely truncated because of the restrictions inherent in the design and funding. Because coexistence is a long-term process, UNHCR should not abandon the projects that have good potential, and should be sure they receive ongoing support. Also, UNHCR will learn appreciably more about this work if it can continue to monitor what is happening with these projects over time.

Therefore, more data should be collected in Bosnia and Rwanda over the next year to see if initial findings continue to be valid, and to see what happens with the passage of time. Ideally, follow-up should also occur in 3-5 years as well, to determine the longer-term impacts. It is really only this long-term data that can tell us whether coexistence interventions have succeeded. If UNHCR intends to make a commitment to this work, it must know whether it is having the desired effects.

- 24. Incorporate a research component into any new initiatives, to be sure that the learning continues and the methodologies are tested and refined. This will provide the opportunity to explore the question on timing of intervention, which was not possible in this first study. It should also be designed to maximize learning ACROSS these countries, so that each locale can learn from the other. Ideally, this research should be done by an organization outside of UNHCR, in order to maximize its legitimacy, ideally in collaboration with local researchers.**

- 25. Keep up to date on the continuing research being done in evaluation of coexistence, as it is an area of knowledge just now being developed. It is**

necessary to remain current on new approaches and strategies, to optimize UNHCR strategy and effectiveness.

We strongly recommend that UNHCR not abandon the research component of coexistence work. It not only provides the crucial information about impacts and effectiveness, but also can provide ongoing feedback to the implementing partners about needs for mid-course corrections or improvements.

We have found that an outside consultant, teamed with local researchers, is a strong combination for doing this work. The outside consultants can bring to the table their knowledge and insights from other countries and communities. The local researchers can provide the necessary context-specific knowledge that is crucial for design and interpretation of data.

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF COEXISTENCE EFFORTS

26. Do not abandon the work that has been started in Bosnia and Rwanda. Follow up with the implementing partners and/or the field offices in both countries to assure that worthy projects continue to receive support.

The implementing partners and some of the projects leaders/staff have put enormous effort into launching these activities. They are feeling short-changed because of the abbreviated time for implementation, for some even before their activities have had the time to bear fruit (literally, in the case of the apple and strawberry growers!)

Therefore, we think it is critical for UNHCR to see how it can provide some ongoing support for these projects, whether directly or by diligently looking for other funders. This would not only provide help for the projects themselves, but would also demonstrate UNHCR's understanding of coexistence as a long-term process and its commitment to making this process a priority in its dealings with the community.

27. Provide training for all UNHCR staff who are working with this Initiative, in:

- * conflict resolution and transformation**
- * psychosocial dynamics of conflict, including impacts of trauma**
- * coexistence assessment and evaluation**

This training is essential in order for both Headquarters and Field staff to make the necessary judgment calls in fundraising, policy development, planning, and evaluation of these efforts. For example, if UNHCR staff have low comfort levels with conflict, then coexistence work (which does not avoid conflict but seeks to transform it) can appear threatening. Such training is also crucial in preparation for choosing a strong and competent implementing partner, so that an in-depth assessment can be made of their skills and limitations.

We have talked with the UNHCR Training Department in Geneva, and we understand the constraints in shoehorning this kind of training into existing programs. We would recommend, therefore, that a new training program be developed in a contract

with an outside vendor. This can be done centrally from Geneva, or can be part of each country's coexistence plan. If it is implemented in a decentralized way, however, there should be standardization in how the training is done. Optimally, one vendor should be given the contract for the training of the next tranche of the initiative, to ensure consistency across the skill development in the new locales.

28. Assess the ways that the coexistence “lens” can be applied in other areas of UNHCR work; i.e., how contracts are allocated to local companies; etc.

UNHCR's primary activities, both in protection and in program, touch scores of people in many countries and bring large sums of money to bear on social and infrastructure issues. UNHCR could therefore leverage their ability to facilitate coexistence by looking at ways to “do” their other work with a coexistence perspective. This might include building coexistence assessment into other kinds of project work, where appropriate (e.g., where/for whom/to build houses; peace education work in refugee camps and elsewhere; how/to whom contract work is given; how legal reforms are framed; employing a diverse local staff, etc.) **THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN MAKING CHANGES IN WHAT IS NOW BEING DONE.** It does mean being aware of how UNHCR's other activities and decisions in a given context may affect coexistence in divided communities. And it also means interacting with implementing partners, even in other content areas, as a “coexistence” organization; i.e., with transparency, cooperation, communication, and trust.

In doing this, UNHCR can learn valuable lessons from the experience of mainstreaming environment, gender and human rights, which has been going on for the last 20 years; i.e., not to see coexistence as isolated into specific projects but a value across and within work. To draw on previous experience with mainstreaming, however, UNHCR **MUST** learn from what **HASN'T** worked as well as from what has been successful. We were told that “mainstreaming” can mean the “kiss of death” to any approach in UNHCR, and we certainly don't want that to happen with coexistence! So, as we have said continually throughout this report, the **WAY** in which this is done is crucial.

29. Seek ways of working with other international agencies, to make the most of scarce resources by building alliances. This can also increase UNHCR leverage in designing strategies that target the larger structural issues that are barriers to coexistence.

We are suggesting a catalytic role for UNHCR, and that means partnering effectively not only with NGOs, but also with other international agencies (IGOs) who are interested in coexistence. We recommend, in each locale, a strategic audit (as part of the coexistence assessment process) of which other IGOs are working in that region and could be allies. UNHCR should seek to work with those organizations, as equal partners, to examine the comparative advantages each can bring to a coexistence effort. They should also be enlisted as partners in any strategy that targets larger structural issues that are barriers to coexistence (e.g., employment practices, housing allocation, education policies, etc.)

ANNEX A
CHECKLIST OF THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION
OF COEXISTENCE PROJECTS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

1. If possible, adapt the current project cycle to allow for longer implementation
 - a. Allow one year for choosing implementing partner, doing community assessment, and choosing activities. This will include bringing the community into the planning process, providing initial training, designing an integrative strategy.
 - b. Begin implementation of integrated plan in the second year.
 - c. Allow the implementing partner considerable flexibility and independence in designing a strategy, and in choosing and monitoring activities.
 - d. The strategy should include a plan for involving the community in the decision-making on the mix of activities. Income generation is one of the choices, but not the priority. Again, the emphasis should be on the PROCESS used rather than focusing solely on the CONTENT of activities.
 - e. If there is no existing forum in the community for making such decisions, the implementing partner should explore the possibility of creating such a forum. This must be evaluated for its feasibility and safety, and requires an additional assessment of the barriers to collective efforts in a particular locale.
2. Choose an implementing partner according to the following criteria:
 - a. familiarity with and trust of the local community
 - b. strong commitment to and/or good track record in coexistence work
 - c. ability to be self-reflective and creative
 - d. comfortable working in a participatory way with the community
 - e. able to set a positive coexistence example for the local community
3. Give the implementing partner the flexibility to be creative in responding to community needs. This may mean UNHCR taking risks to try something new, or to modify initial goals as more information or experience in a given community is obtained.
4. Before developing a strategy, UNHCR and the implementing partner should conduct a “coexistence” assessment, to include both an historical and current analysis of the following elements in the community, country, and region in which activities will occur:
 - * Identities of contending groups
 - * Power dynamics between and among these groups
 - * Key actors, both official and non-official

- * Interests and needs of key actors and groups
 - * Role of authorities, and relationship of authorities to population
 - * Ways in which the communities currently manage conflict (formal and informal)
 - * Levels of trauma and how it is being addressed
 - * Attitudes and perceptions that identity groups have of each other
 - * Risks for group members to engage in coexistence activities
 - * Extent to which coexistence activities are already functioning
 - * Receptivity to developing coexistence
 - * Perceptions of UNHCR, based on its other activities in the country or region
5. To the extent possible, the communities to be involved in the activities should be partners in the assessment process.
 6. This analysis should be updated at various intervals during the course of the coexistence work, as many of the parameters will be changing in the context of a political and social transition.
 7. Decide, with the implementing partner, what can/should UNHCR do that would most promote coexistence in the target communities. In addition to/instead of the funding of micro-projects, this could include designing training, providing space for dialogue, providing opportunities for joint planning and decision-making, convening a network of like-minded organizations, etc. It involves assessing not only where opportunities exist or are needed, but also where UNHCR might have the most leverage/comparative advantage.
 8. Consider the possibility of single-identity work (i.e., with one party in a conflict) in addition to joint work (with two or more parties). In some circumstances, where polarization is extreme, it is necessary to prepare groups SEPARATELY before bringing them together, so that their work together is more productive. Such activities should be explored.
 9. The implementing partner's strategy should include providing training BOTH in conflict resolution skills and in project design and management. The timing of such training should be decided upon by the implementing partner, according to the assessment findings as outlined above; however, we have found that training works best when interspersed with implementation activities, and the integrated plan should reflect this mix.
 10. Trainings should be conducted by experts who understand the need to create "space for dialogue" as part of the training process, and who are competent to facilitate such dialogue. Training should include not only project leaders but also as large a part of the beneficiary community as possible, to expand the impact of the Initiative considerably.

11. Determine how both local and regional authorities will be managed in relation to coexistence activities. This includes deciding which of the authorities to include, and in what ways. It also means assessing the impact of excluding any of the authorities intentionally, and how to mitigate the consequences.
12. Encourage transparent and shared management in all of the coexistence activities that are planned.
13. The scope and number of activities should be carefully calibrated so that the implementing partner can comfortably provide the support and oversight that is required for success. These are labor-intensive activities (in both time and capacity), and it is better to do fewer interventions well than to do many with insufficient resources and support.
14. The implementing partner should be trusted to choose activity leaders, whom they feel are both technically competent and have a sincere interest in coexistence.
15. Technical support, in terms of management and/or substantive consultation, should be made available to all activity leaders who want it.
16. Evaluation should focus on the process as well as the outcome of the initiative. This means doing the following:
 - a. coexistence assessment (see #4 above)
 - b. broad national or regional survey of existing coexistence efforts
 - c. documentation of the implementing partner strategy
 - d. documentation of the community engagement process
 - e. collection of implementing partner monthly reports and final evaluation data
 - f. interviews by outside researchers with activity leaders and beneficiaries, once at beginning of implementation phase and once at the end of the project cycle.
 - g. interviews with implementing partners and with HCR staff by outside researchers: at beginning of strategy development, at beginning of implementation, and at the end of the project cycle.
17. The frameworks developed by the Fletcher School evaluation study (2002) can be used as the starting point for analyzing these data, to focus on tracking changes in relationships, communication, trust, and the “normalizing” of conflict, i.e., the ways in which relationships change constructively to allow conflict to occur and be managed without violence. Improvements and modifications may be necessary as the context changes. Copies of these frameworks are available in electronic form from Headquarters in Geneva.
18. Progress in coexistence work should be evaluated based on how far relationships have improved from where they started out at the beginning of the intervention activity, NOT based on whether they’ve reached some predetermined end point.

This means taking the initial coexistence assessment very seriously, as a baseline from which to judge progress.

19. Incorporate a research component into any new initiatives, to be sure that the learning is captured and the methodologies are tested and refined. It should also be designed to maximize learning ACROSS implementing countries, so that each locale can learn from the other. Ideally, this research should be done by an organization outside of UNHCR, in order to maximize its legitimacy, ideally in collaboration with local researchers.
20. Provide training for all UNHCR staff who are working with this Initiative, in:
 - * conflict resolution and transformation
 - * psychosocial dynamics of conflict, including impacts of trauma
 - * coexistence assessment and evaluation
21. Assess the ways that the coexistence “lens” can be applied in other areas of UNHCR work; i.e., how contracts are allocated to local companies; etc.
22. Seek ways of working with other international agencies, to make the most of scarce resources by building alliances. This can also increase UNHCR leverage in designing strategies that target the larger structural issues that are barriers to coexistence.