

Shalom-SCCRR's Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding Intervention Methodology and Processes (Synopsis)

Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (SCCRR) is an inter-religious peacebuilding non-governmental organisation that works in Africa; specifically, in the eastern Africa member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Shalom-SCCRR's vision is a society where peace, justice and reconciliation prevail throughout Africa. Its mission is to work for a society free of physical violence and unjust social structures in Africa. Its main objective is to attain conflict resolution for all people in Africa through empowering local communities engaged in inter-ethnic conflict, and/or wherein religious ideological extremism is espoused, to be architects of their own interdependent future of reconciled co-existence. Shalom's inter-faith staff not only have postgraduate qualifications that befit the theoretical and practical demands of peacebuilding but also possess practised skills in building trust between antagonistic neighboring communities and attenuating religious ideological extremism.

Shalom-SCCRR's Entry Strategy to the Conflict Environment;

- i. Shalom-SCCRR's entry into conflict prone areas, considered the locations and/or '*fomenting grounds*' of interethnic conflict, religious ideological radicalization-extremism, violence against women and children, and human-trafficking, begins with being invited by stakeholders (chiefs, elders, religious leaders, women and youth leaders, teachers and other influential opinion shapers), and consultation with relevant state security administrations to obtain official authorization.
- ii. This is followed by developing relationships with significant actors and other key influential opinion shapers in the conflict environments; government officials-chiefs, community elder-leaders, religious institutions, youth and women groups, education officials, political-economy actors, the radicalized, and other relevant personnel.
- iii. During the consultative process, Shalom-SCCRR will attentively and sensitively listen to the perceptions, observations, concerns, vision and suggested interventions of these stakeholders. This consultation is essential for building trust, ensuring security of conflict transformation and peacebuilding practitioners, and establishing the level of physical, psychological, spiritual and emotional traumatic and stress impacts that the problem has had on the affected communities, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- iv. The entry process takes into account the fact that the context and actors in a conflict evolve; dynamics and perceptions are never static. Engaging in quality entry mechanism enhances the success of the next stage of the process which is rigorous research on both the causes and persistence of the problem.
- v. Throughout this process, there will be continual assessment of the security risks and exit strategies for all parties involved in the process.

The conflict environments are impoverished and underdeveloped, characterized by persistent structural and manifest violence. **Bearing in mind the continuums of manifest violence to reconciliation, and terrorism to tolerance**, the following '*Humanitarian \diamond Conflict transformation \diamond Negative Peace \diamond Institutional Infrastructural Development \diamond Conflict Resolution-Positive Peace-Reconciliation-Shalom*' continuum model is a proposal to be reflected in interventions in conflict environments.

The model has been designed, piloted and implemented by the Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (SCCRR) in addressing rural and urban inter-ethnic conflicts, religious ideological extremism-intolerance, violence against women and children and human-trafficking in eastern Africa. Depending on the conflict variables being attended to, the model's logistics and strategic elements of input are fine-tuned accordingly. These conflict situations challenge the progression to a sustainable world where issues of equality, human rights, religious freedom, among others, are legitimized in law and cultural practice.

Shalom's vision, mission, and objectives are legitimated by the sacredness and dignity of all human life, human rights, environmental security, and an appreciation for ethnic and religious diversity. Shalom-SCCRR's peacebuilding work comprised of a set of structured and functionally inter-related initiatives and activities within the purview of inter-ethnic conflict, the need to attenuate/obviate religious extremism, and address violence against women and children. The following are the key components of Shalom-SCCRR's model of intervention that will be contextualized in addressing challenges posed by interethnic conflict, interreligious conflict in the form of religious ideological extremism, and **violence against women and children** in Eastern Africa:

The Project Intervention/Initiatives/Activities are summarized in the following objectives:

1. Conduct research and analysis (**Application of the Paradigms of Realism, Structuralism and Conflict Research**) into the causes of conflict so as to inform local transformation interventions and policy directions for advocacy. Generation of sound knowledge of why/how there is inter-ethnic conflict, religious ideological extremism-intolerance, violence against women and children and human-trafficking, through empirical research on which to base peacebuilding initiatives/activities, and which also lends itself to informing government/IGAD policy practices in the context of localized inter-ethnic/inter-communal conflict occurrences. The authoritative researched voice of the local communities is imperative in this process.
2. Train community leaders - **Key Influential Opinion Shapers** – in conflict analysis and transformation (**Personal, Relational, Structural/Institutions and Cultural levels**), thereby equipping purposively selected locals with analytical skills and peacebuilding techniques for use in conflict problem solving and reconciliation workshops.
3. Influence national development policy towards the region affected by conflict between pastoralist communities, religious ideological extremism, and violence against women and children. Training local government administration and security personnel in conflict analysis and procedural peacebuilding approaches to settle and resolve conflicts.
4. Augmenting the conflict transformation role capacities of religious organisations, civic organisations, and non-governmental organisations.
5. Constructing, rehabilitating and equipping inter-ethnic and inter-religious schools and institutions with requisite facilities, in sync with introducing a peace education syllabus in areas of entrenched violent conflict, for the purpose of countering distrust of ethnic/religious/gender other as well as harbouring or tending to perceive hostile intentions in the behaviour of ethnic/religious/gender other, thereby fostering inter-ethnic/inter-communal/interreligious/gender peaceful co-existence, among other things such as the prevention of human trafficking.