



*Associations and Resources for Conflict Management Skills*

# **Improving and Assessing Skills for Civilian Peace Missions**

**Marly le Roy, France  
2-6 July 2006**

## **Executive report**

Organising partners:

Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-violente (MAN)

Peaceworkers UK (PWUK)

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP)

With the support of the Comité ICP



PeaceworkersUK

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## 1. Background of the seminar

The seminar organized in Marly le Roy by MAN, Peaceworkers UK and Nonviolent Peaceforce is an element of the ARCA project. A product of the co-operation between 3 major peace organizations in Europe, the seminar on Improving and Assessing the Skills for Civilian Peace Missions aimed at presenting and sharing training and assessment methods amongst participants and organizers.

### A. ARCA project

ARCA aims at the improvement of the quality, content and methodology of peace education and training in conflict transformation across Europe through the gathering together of best practices, exchange of methods/curriculum, development of resources and guides and establishment of a European-wide data-base of peace educators and peace education resources.

To this end, a series of outputs has been planned, amongst which a needs analysis, the publication of a website to pool training resources, the creation and publication of a guide to peace education, the setting up of a network of peace educators and crucially, a series of events combining the expertise of 3 ARCA partner organizations, and the participants' experience.

### B. Objectives of the seminar

Given the overall objectives of the ARCA project, the 3 organizing partners decided to focus on **the link between training, assessment and recruitment**. The rationale is that to improve the quality of the work in peace missions, the trainings should be adapted to carefully selected participants, who then would be assessed and selected for specific projects.

Given the resources and expertise of the organizations working in the field of training in Europe, or deploying peaceworkers, the assumption was that we could compare our methods for selecting, training and assessing potential field workers, in order to increase the quality of our activities. The choice of the three broad themes **training, assessment and recruitment** was also convenient for the plurality of organisation represented at the seminar, as these issues are common and essential to both training and deploying organizations. Moreover, this focus has an element of novelty to it as it introduces assessment as a specific area of activity, while this was sometimes overlooked or simply ignored.

The Seminar would fit into the ARCA project by pooling the experience of MAN, Peaceworkers UK and Nonviolent Peaceforce and facilitate the exchange of experience between those three partners, as well as by making recommendations to the other ARCA partners. Concretely, the seminar was designed to come with a common understanding of the qualities and competencies of a peacemaker which an organisation could enhance through training, assess and base its selection procedures on.

### C. Partners

- The **Movement for a Non-violent Alternative-MAN** aims to put forward the specific contribution of non-violence in the everyday life, education and social and political issues. MAN promotes the principles and the methods of non-violent strategy to support a positive resolution of the interpersonal, intercommunity or international conflicts.

MAN coordinates the **French Committee for Civil Peace Intervention**, which promotes the development of civilian intervention in international conflict management. This committee is committed to:

- Raising public awareness and making policy makers aware of civilian peace missions
- Training peaceworkers and supporting them on missions
- Conducting research into crisis management

François Lhopiteau, director of IFMAN Normandie and responsible of the CPI Committee training, and Chloée Foyer Albaret came to represent their organization. François Lhopiteau was to lead the training sessions, Chloée Foyer Albaret was in charge of the coordination of the seminar for MAN.

- **Peaceworkers UK** focuses on raising standards in the field of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding through an integrated programme of **research, training, assessment** and **recruitment**. Tim Wallis, director of Peaceworkers UK, and Aurélien Tobie came to represent their organization. Tim Wallis was to lead the training sessions. At Peaceworkers UK, he is responsible for the design and the delivery of a number of trainings and assessment programmes.

- **Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP)** is an international nongovernmental organisation, based in Bruxelles and made of more than 90 member organisations from all over the world. They joined together to form a nonviolent peacekeeping force in conflict areas supporting local population. NP assesses, trains and deploys peace experts teams. NP launched its first project in Sri Lanka and began working on another project in Philippines.

Christine Schweitzer, Program Director, and Alessandro Rossi, European Coordinator were in charge of the coordination of this event for NP.

## 2. Logistics

### A. Preparation and Coordination

The coordination team was made of 3 persons, representing the 3 organising partners. MAN was responsible for the overall coordination. When working on the content of the seminar, the coordination team was assisted by 2 trainers (one from MAN and one from PWUK) and NP Program Coordinator.

6 months were necessary to organise this seminar, divided into 2 phases. Between the Rome meeting in December 2005 and the Barcelona meeting in March 2006, the organising partners fixed the logistical and financial aspects of this event and its general objective. The concrete preparation of the seminar was made between March and July 2006. In June, a preparation meeting was organised in Paris between the 3 coordinators and the 3 trainers in order to work on the content, fix the programme and define the profile of the participants.

The seminar lasted 4 days. It took place at INJEP in Marly le Roi, close to Paris, France, and was residential.

The working languages were English and French. All the documents were translated in both languages and two translators<sup>1</sup> were present during the whole seminar.

The seminar was co-financed by the European Commission-Socrates Programme through the ARCA project budget (70%), MAN (21%), the participants fees (5,5%), PWUK and IRNC support (3,5%). The overall budget was 11297 € including staff costs, travel and accomodation costs, translation costs, material and administrative costs. The price by participant per day for accomodation and subsistence was 33,3 € (133,2 € per participant for the 4 days). A participant fee of 75 € for individuals or 100 € for people representing an organisation was asked.

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<sup>1</sup> provided by the European translators network coordinated by Aurélien Tobie

## B. Participants

In order to guaranty a high-quality exchange during the seminar, the participants were selected on the criteria that they were involved, in various ways, with the process of training, deployment or assessment of Peaceworkers in Europe.

In addition to the representatives from the three organising partners, many European organisations were represented in different ways. The group of participants included trainers, past trainees, representative from deploying organisations and researchers in this field. This allowed for a variety of perspectives and very rich exchanges during the debates.

18 people participated to this event, plus 2 translators (see participants list in annex).

They came from the following organisations:

- MAN – France
- Nonviolent Peaceforce Europe – Belgium
- Peaceworkers UK – United Kingdom
- Norwegian Peace Association – Norway
- NOVA – Spain
- PATRIR – Romania (ARCA coordinator)
- CCFD – France
- IRNC – France
- PBI International – United Kingdom
- University of Jyväskylä – Finland

## 3. Content and follow up

The seminar was organised by broad themes. These were decided amongst the organising partners, and a possibility was left for participants to give some inputs in each of those days

### A. Main themes and structure of the sessions

To allow for some clarity, we decided to dedicate each day to a different step in the selection of potential peaceworkers, with the first day focusing **on training**, the second on **the impact of training**, and the third on **the assessment of the peaceworker**.

This division of the themes facilitated the presentation of the expertise of the three organising partners, while maintaining the coherence of the event, and would be completed by a final day dedicated to a synthesis of the findings of the previous days. For each day, MAN, PWUK and NP were given responsibility for some sessions, while some time slot were left for participants to present their own activity and a generous part of the day was open for discussions.

The last day was left to group work and plenary sessions, to forge the conclusions of the seminar, and agree on our common findings.

This type of planning for each day, and for the seminar in general, allowed for different points of view and backgrounds to be presented in each session, while still maintaining a coherent whole.

While we had planned a programme for each day, we also made sure the schedule and the topic of each session was flexible, to allow for a best suitability of the content to the expectations of the participants. The sessions mixed presentations with group work, discussions in plenary, and practical examples of training and assessment methods.

Each session has been reported in the minutes, which you can read in annex.

## **B. Summary of the minutes and outcomes**

The seminar did not provide us with concrete proposals for implementation, but it allowed us to realise the compatibility of our methods and understandings on training, assessment and recruitment processes.

It was clear that **training** was to be reviewed regularly to adapt it to the changing situations and needs on the ground. While we acknowledged that feedback from former trainees was essential to this aim, we also recognised that a common method to collect feedback was still a long way ahead, as it would not suit the variety of different models of organisation. Somehow, however, training content and methods should be fed by feedback and comments from field peaceworkers.

Equally, the **assessment** of peaceworkers is a great tool, as it gives us a guaranty that the competencies have been acquired during the training. The method should be to put the participants into a practical situation, and assess their behaviour. However, we need to coordinate our understandings of what can and what cannot be assessed.

Finally, the question of the basic skills which can be enhanced through training is still debated, but we also discovered that much of the misunderstanding was due to the use of terms which are not common between the organisations, but that a practical demonstration of training methods and content can solve much of the misconceptions and increase the potential for cooperation.

At the end of the seminar, **we adopted two documents, and suggested they could be a base for bilateral discussions between the participants or other ARCA events and outputs (the guide for exemple).**

We have presented a **summary of our common understanding in the field of assessment** (see annex). While many of us had different opinions on the most appropriate assessment techniques, or on what qualities or skills we are indeed able to assess, we all agreed that assessment was critical to the training and recruitment process. We also agreed on the importance of the practice-oriented emphasis of our assessment methods.

**We presented a map of the existing steps of the training process in Europe** (see annex). Such a map could be a tool for practitioners to put their own training course (as planner, donor, trainer or trainee) in the right context within the path bringing the future field officer of a civilian peace mission from the basic skills to a proficient deployment. This could show overlapping with other steps of the training/recruitment process as well as gaps.

The seminar has certainly triggered some potential for cooperation between the organisations represented in Marly le Roy. In spite of the differences in our approaches to training, a vivid interest in discovering new training and assessment techniques arose, and the conclusions to the seminar can be considered a common, accepted ground for future co-operation.

### **C. Evaluation**

This first ARCA event was globally positive, both in terms of organisation and content. Some aspects could have been reinforced.

- Preparation of the seminar

The coordination between the three organising partners was very good. We clearly shared role and responsibilities and had regular and efficient communication on the different activities (logistics, budget, communication, content).

- Content and programme

The mix between practical exercises, presentations, discussions in working groups and plenary was dynamic and positive. The programme has been adapted as far as

possible to the participants needs. This flexibility in the programme gave also the participants the opportunity to present their work and share their expertise.

It was good to open up so much to non-ARCA organisations and to have participants from so many countries (which was possible thanks to low participant fees). The languages difficulties were easily overcome (thanks to translators and translation material) and we had very interesting exchanges due to the diversity of backgrounds of the participants. It also contributed to make the ARCA project more visible and to have external contributions on this project.

We realized that the focus of the seminar was too large. More clarity in the actual focus would have allowed us to come with more precise points to put under discussion, rather than trying to solve lots of training-related issues.

More than trying to reach concrete agreements or proposals, we focused on exchange of experience and methods, analysis of the general training process and identification of possible sectors of cooperation.

- Logistics

The venue was pleasant and appropriate to this kind of event. The possibility to work both inside the building or in the park was appreciated by the participants and the trainers. The disponibility of the coordination team was appreciated by the participants.