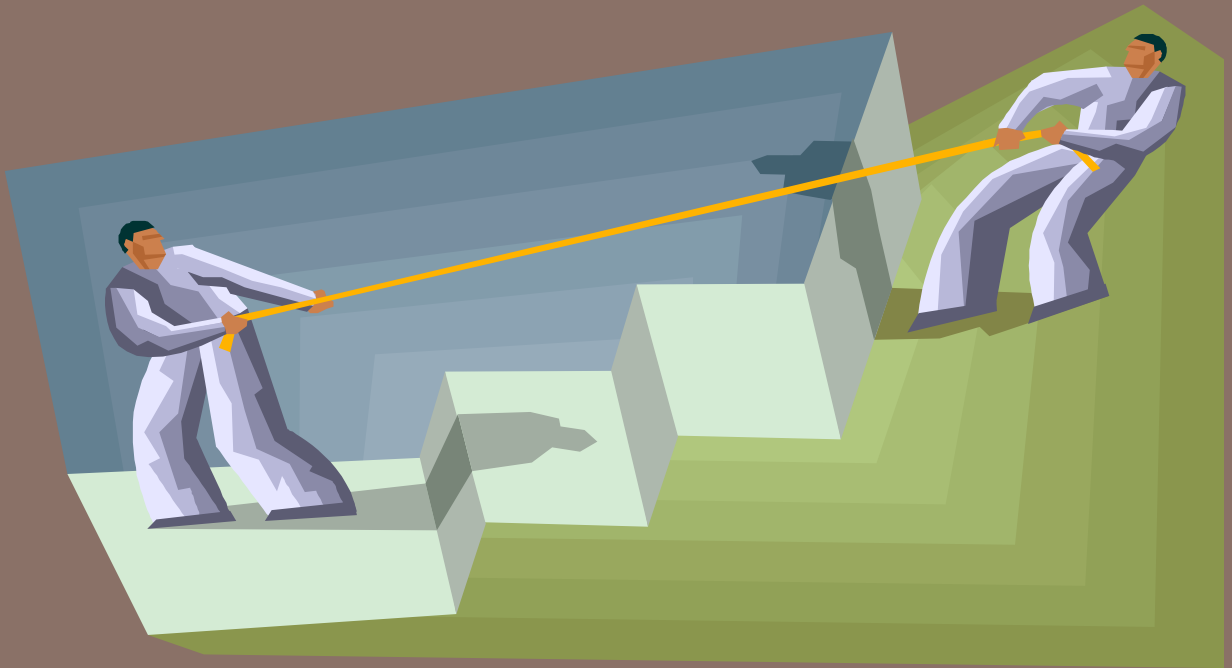# Conflict Sensitive Reporting

Presented by Carol Daniel Kasbari

Sponsored by US Embassy's Bicommunal Support Program

October 26th – 27th, 2007

Table of Contents

Introduction

- The idea to hold this workshop for Cypriot journalists was first discussed in March 2007 during the Athens Journalist Symposium, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy's Bi-communal Support Program in Cyprus. The Symposium brought together journalists from both sides of the "Green Line" as well as from Greece and Turkey in order to have an in-depth discussion on issues of mutual concern such as: questions of objectivity when covering conflict, representation of the Cyprus issue in the media, as well as the importance of maintaining meaningful collaborations among journalists working in the region. The need to establish a forum for conflict sensitive reporting was also discussed at length.

- Carol Daniel Kasbari, Coordinator of the UNESCO-sponsored Israeli-Palestinian Media Forum, was one of the keynote speakers at the Athens event. Her discussion of the role of the media in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and subsequent establishment of the Media Forum was inspirational to many of the participants who expressed the desire to see a similar forum set up in Cyprus.

- Thus, with the goal to work towards establishing such a forum, the Embassy's Bi-communal Support Program invited Kasbari to Cyprus to begin working with journalists from across the divide and the political spectrum.

"COVERING CONFLICTS: CAN IT BE DONE DIFFERENTLY?"

Presented by Carol Daniel Kasbari

Friday October 26, 2007

The presentation covered the issue of journalism in conflict areas, challenges journalists are facing in performing their work, and ways for improving the coverage of war and conflict. Following the presentation, Ms. Kasbari facilitated an in-depth and highly productive workshop on covering violence using examples from the Israeli Palestinian context.

Review of Topics Covered:

- A discussion took place on how a Peace/War journalist covers conflicts and violence. The discussion was enhanced by the use of Johan Galtung's Table, which describes differences between war and peace journalism.

- The participants also viewed the film "News from the Holy Land" on the coverage of a suicide bombing attack in Jerusalem in the summer of 2003, which was produced and directed by Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick. This educational film illustrated two distinct ways of covering the event, leading to an in-depth discussion and debate on the questions of objectivity and biases in the media.

- Ms. Kasbari also provided participants with a handout on fundamentals of Conflict Coverage that helps journalists to encourage dialogue rather than promote violence.

# Group Discussions During the Workshop

Open Space workshop

Cyprus 2008: What is and might be the role of journalists? What can we do to practice Journalism that matters?

Facilitated by Carol Daniel Kasbari

Saturday October 27, 2007

- On Saturday, by means of the highly interactive process called **Open Space Technology,** Ms. Kasbari facilitated an exploratory workshop for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot journalists and media professionals, which aimed to bring together the energies and ideas of all invited participants. Based on the belief that all participants already know the issues and challenges they are facing , the process provides the means to explore what is important to them, inviting them to work with each other on topics of mutual interest. In a wide variety of situations, OS has demonstrated its ability to create the conditions for breakthroughs and focused action. The participants had the opportunity to lead and attend discussion groups on the burning topics that they chose and which they wanted to influence around the theme: "**Cyprus 2008: What is and might be the role of journalists? What can we do to practice Journalism that matters?**
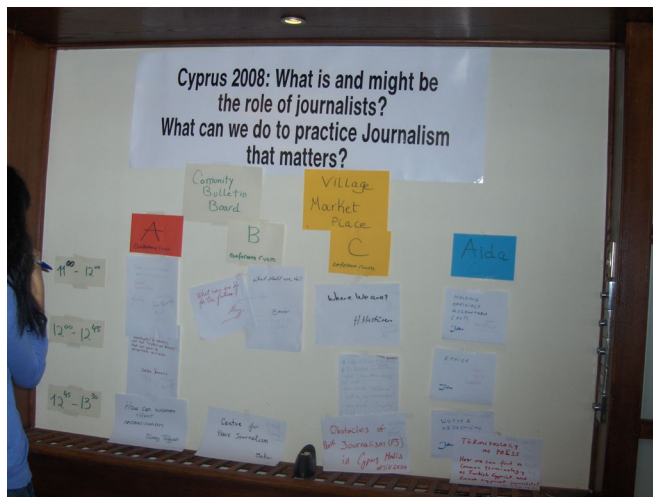
A Description of Open Space Technology

By Carol Daniel Kasbari

Open Space Technology (OST) is a transformative facilitation practice that was created in the mid-1980s by organizational consultant Harrison Owen. OST events have no keynote speakers, no pre-announced schedules of workshops, no panel discussions, no organizational booths. Instead participants create their agenda together, host small group discussions and produce a set of proceedings, all using principles of self-organization and the power of passion, invitation and personal responsibility.

Through an intentional combination of order and chaos, OST resembles the creative act of a mind moving from confusion and frustration to assimilation and discovery, but OST achieves this transition not in one mind, but simultaneously in several. Intense, focused discussion leads to mutual recognition of areas of agreement and disagreement, and thus lays the ground for knowledgeable participation in the action program that concludes with the publication of a full report on the group's findings.

The process creates a unique spirit of community and introduces new possibilities for organizing work in communities and organizations through invitation. This tool can be utilized by groups of 5 to over 2000 and the dynamics and results are always the same: input from stakeholders at all levels, new ways of thinking and working, large amounts of work done rapidly, bringing perceived competitors together on issues and projects, organizational flexibility, interdepartmental or intercommunity teamwork, a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of passion and energy for the challenges ahead.

Guidelines for an Open Space Meeting

The rules are simple, although setting up the parameters for a meeting or conference in Open Space is based on the theories of complexity, self-organization and open systems. Do you know how sometimes when you go to a conference or a meeting, the best ideas, networking, brainstorming and deal making happen during the coffee breaks? Open Space Technology is designed to simulate that natural way people find each other and share ideas in all different cultures and countries. It is also based on the understanding that there is a great amount of wisdom and experience in any gathered group of people - that we are all 'experts' and can all contribute - a true democratic process.

It all starts with a circle of chairs, without a pre-designed agenda. The group sets their own agenda by identifying issues and topics that have heart and meaning for them; topics for which they have passion and interest and for which they are willing to host a discussion group. Small group discussions happen throughout the day, with participants moving from group to group whenever they feel that they can no longer learn or contribute to a discussion, or when they feel drawn to another topic.

There are four simple guidelines:

1. Whoever comes is the right person.

☐ Rather than wait for the 'expert' on a given issue, realize that whoever is moved to come to your discussion group has been moved by his or her passion for the issue, not just his or her organizational role. The best and brightest are convening to discuss something they really care about - across departmental or hierarchal lines.   And what if nobody comes to your session? It may be that either you are a visionary ahead of your time, or that there are so many great topics to choose…either way you have the choice to either join in another discussion or spend the time writing your thoughts down to enter into the meeting proceedings.

2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.

☐ Don't try to control the discussion - even if it goes off on a tangent -- that may be exactly the direction for the breakthrough of new ideas. Follow the energy of the group. By the way, the only time that Open Space does not work is when somebody in charge feels they must control the outcome of the discussion or the event.

3. Whenever it starts is the right time.

☐ Don't wait for some specific person to arrive; begin with whoever is drawn to the discussion. It's a reminder that creativity does not happen according to a schedule but starts when it starts

4. When it's over, it's over.

☐ You may settle the problems of the world in twenty minutes; on the other hand, you may wish to continue your discussion for longer than the allotted time. Creativity and intuitive thinking do not happen according to a schedule - take it where it wants to go. If you're done early you can join another group; if you take longer, just move your discussion elsewhere to make way for the next group scheduled.

There is only one law: **The Law of Two Feet (also be called the Law of Motion and Responsibility):**

- If you feel you are neither learning from nor contributing to a discussion, you are required to get up and move to another discussion, without waiting for the group to complete its conversation. Your fresh insights and creative thoughts are needed elsewhere. Whereas in some cultures this may be seen as rude and disrespectful, in Open Space it would actually be disrespectful to the process and to the greater group to sit and stay in a discussion for which you felt you were not being useful. The result is a room alive with movement and animated discussion as people travel from group to group to use their best energy and thinking where it is most needed.

This Law creates two animals: **Bumblebees and Butterflies**

- Bumblebees are those who sign up for many things at the same time; it's possible to be in multiple places at once.

  Butterflies: they look very delicate and they're deceptive in their impact. In open space everyone is valued, and so there are not guilt feelings.

The final guideline is to **Be Prepared to Be Surprised.**

- If you carry your preconceived agenda into a conversation, you may never receive the greater results and more intuitive thinking that can come from a group of diverse and passionate people taking a conversation where it can go.

Who is in control here?

How can OST be productive without a pre-designed agenda or outcome and little or no intervention by a facilitator? Won't that create chaos? Won't chaos lead to catastrophe? Where is the structure? Actually there is very specific structure to the OST process -- just not the structure people usually create in meetings. The result is a new way of working, thinking and communicating, and the results are innovative, concrete, positive, and substantial.

Four Principals and One law in the OST

Whenever it starts is the right time

Başladığı zaman doğru zamandır.

Όποτε και αν αρχίσει είναι η σωστή ώρα
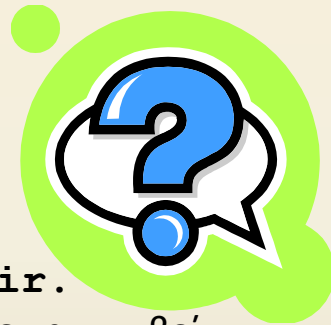
Whoever comes are the right people

Gelen kişiler doğru kişilerdir.

Όποιοι έρθουν είναι οι καταλληλότεροι

Whatever happens is the only thing that could have

Her ne olursa olabilecek tek şeydir.

Ότι κι αν συμβεί είναι το μόνο πράγμα που θα μπορούσε να συμβεί

Whenever its over its over

Bittiği zaman biter.

Όποτε τελειώσει, τέλειωσε

The law of the two feet
İki ayak kuralı.
Ο νόμος των δύο ποδιών

Passion and Responsibility
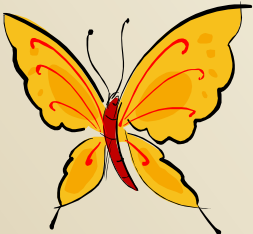Tutku ve Sorumluluk
Πάθος και Ευθύνη

Be prepared to be surprised
Şaşırmaya hazır olun.
Να' στε προετοιμασμένοι να εκπλαγείτε

Butterflies and Bumblebees
Etrafta kelebekler ve yaban arıları vardır.

Υπάρχουν πεταλούδες και μέλισσες

Conveners Reports

On the following pages, you will find the summary of the conveners reports that were written by each group after their discussion concluded.

Conener's report / summary

Topic: Commission of Truth

Convener: Costas Yennaris

Participants List: Hasan Hasturer, Metin Ersoy

The need to establish such a Commission was stressed by everyone, its value in creating a different environment both during a process of finding an agreed solution and during its application was appreciated.

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

•Is historical reference to the dispute accurate?
•Can real facts that sustain the conflict be established?
•To what extent distortions of these are used to "justify" policies?
•The manipulation of events so that the dispute is sustained.
•Would true facts make a difference?
•Would such a process improve the environment on the leader's level and on the people's level?
•Are we afraid of the truth?
•Cooperation with universities in establishing the truth.
•Study the S/A – South Africa case
•Give the facts without comments. Are we describing the fact without comments or perceptions?
•Secure that there will be no prosecutions.

Convener's report / summary

Topic: _____ Ethics _____

_____

Convener: _____

_____

Participants List: John, Michele Kambas, Bekir Azgin

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

•No newspaper has book of ethics – there are general principles which do not go into details. Journalists left with own conscience and then left with material unrelated to ethics
•There is no principle of ethics in Cypriot journalism – EMU has class in ethics – fairness – gifts economic pressures
•One of the biggest problems is emotional pressure
•Ethics in writing a story – ethics attributions
•Goes out of the door that moment
•No sourcing
•Manipulates stories – use 'bad' stories in reports about the community
•People as a result lose respect for media
•Some newspapers are run just as an issue of prestige
•No rules on invasion of privacy
•Need for body to help accountability

Convener's report / summary

Topic: **Self Criticism of Journalist**

Convener: **Hasan Kahvecioglu**

Participants List: Hasan, Akay, Metin, Emir

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

 *There is no self criticism among the journalists.
They acting in a way that they have the right to accuse every institution or individual (Government, opposition, trade unions, politicians) but not themselves.
*Every journalist; while reporting on bi communal issues, should look at his/her job in the frame of "balance"
There is very important question to be asked, regarding other side… The question is: Do I have "stand" with my community?
Generally; journalists taking "stand" with the official line of their own communities. This prevents them to be neutral and do proper job.
*Journalists should do "empathy"
They have to be in the shoes of the others, whom they accuse or mention in their stories.
*Journalist, should be free in accusing those who are doing wrong. But, all accusations should be evident-based. Journalist shouldn't form limitations for himself. And this question to be asked:
Am I writing in accusing format or understanding format?

*After every report the journalists should check its work with the other versions being published by the other media institutions.
This check, must include basic principles of reporting.

Convener's report / summary

Topic: **Where we are? What shall we do?**

Convener: **Emir Ersoy/ Akay Cemal**

Participants List: **Akay Cemal, Costas Yennaris, Hasan Hasturer_, Emir Ersoy, Metin Ersoy, Hasan Kahvecioglu**

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

 Where are we?
•Stalemate – No cooperation between two media institutions of two communities
•No common terminology between journalists. How we find our place?
•We couldn't set up joint perceptions? On a community level
•No common priorities, no common vision
•We are very close, but at the same time we are very far. We have no common perceptions, priority, vision
•There is not enough discussion
•We don't have enough contact between journalists
•We are not open to criticizing ourselves
•Empathy?
What shall we do in future?
•We can create a common forum/venue (To give a chance to those who want to work together
•Common activities – Common education and terminology
•Educate the young journalists(training) and in a common language
•Peace journalism- set up common forum of journalists
•Must find common priority, road and set up common perceptions

Convener's report / summary

Topic: Joint Publication

Convener: Resat Akar

Participants List: Sami, Nicolas, Mashoed, Tumay

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

•All participants agreed to establish a joint publication

•We discussed how we can finance it. In the end all agreed not to depend on advertising alone. That we should apply for EU finds

•Content of publication should not be political at the beginning. It can be environment, health, social life and education and culture

Convener's report / summary

Topic: <u>Accountability</u>

Convener: <u>John</u>

Participants List: Michele, Bekir

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

• 'Clients' / relationship between editors – publishers – politics – businesses
•Training required
•Journalists with easy access, get briefings and others are ignored
•Business and journalism intertwined
•Cant write articles with "wrong" terminology
•Presidency on G/C side manages to manipulate media outlets
•Journalists censor themselves and they also face censorship by bosses – G/C side
•Accountabilities weakest link to journalism – basic problem
•People don't care – complacency has set in
•Lacking investigation and proofing

Convener's report / summary

Topic: How can women effect reconciliation

Convener: Tumay Tugyan

Participants List: ____Tumay, Sami, Resat, Mashoed, Nicolas

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

 We discussed three projects

•A joint magazine where the owners and editors will be women but the writers will be both men and women. Write about everything except Cyprus issue.

•A joint program broadcast at the same time on a Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot channel. The program will be prepared and presented by women and the guests will be ordinary women of both communities

•A documentary which will show women's approaches from education levels (a joint documentary)

Convener's report / summary

Topic: _____ Terminology in Press _____

Convener: _____ Sami Ozuslu _____

Participants List: Sami, Metin,Tumay,Resat, John, Masoed, Bekir, Hasan, Akay_____

Discussion notes, outstanding questions, observations:

As a group we tried to discuss and find a common language on press, instead of what is used now. But unfortunately we could not agree on any
 specific words:
Republic of Cyprus
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
1974
1963
Mr. Papadopoulos
Mr. Talat

Ministers
But as the convener of the team I still believe we can find a common terminology to use in the media. We have to!

Participants Closing Comments:

- I loved the approach, it's non hierarchal, and that why we had a very good dialogue

- We have to stop being part of the Cyprus problem and start dialoging mainly as professionals in the media

- I started to exchange experiences in a very unpredictable and Spontaneous way. It was very comforting. We didn't have to agree. We just listened very carefully and respected each other's different views maybe for the first time. It is a very encouraging sign for me as we recognized that there can be certain objectives that can be common to both sides. Actually it was a step forward.

- I learned a lot this day. It's a new and helpful workshop for us. Although I'm not hopeful at all, as the differences are big and I believe that grassroots organizations have to speak about ethics and accuracy in the Cypriot journalism besides all their other activities.

- It was a very useful workshop. We have sit face to face and dealt with our issues in a courageous way. I think we have to establish a forum in order to organize our common perceptions. We should also organize activities such as teaching English to our younger generations in order for them to be able to communicate in the future.

Closing Comments (cont.):

- I found out that the problems on both sides are very similar, as if we are looking at two halves of an apple.

- I would like to thank everyone here especially the facilitator who brought us to this circle. The process we have been through has multiple effects and it can be very helpful in our future dialogues. We had this kind of atmosphere where debating could take place without fear.

- We need a big power to bring us together, to discuss things with a mediator. It's good to speak about everything without hiding.

- We can't solve the problem of Cyprus in this gathering, that's clear to us. But how can we come together without the American assistantship.

- It was great, short and useful but not enough time.

- We all agreed to be part of the solution, but we don't know how to do it. We need more information about Peace Journalism. We need to use common words and language in our reporting and not being afraid of suggesting solutions.

- This new technique is very helpful to us, to bring us to this dialogue. I believe if we have more dialogues of this kind we could turn our dialogues into cooperation. The general mood during this process is very positive and it lead us to have lots of ideas. And wouldn't have happened without our teacher "facilitator", who is a really great person.

- We practiced deeper discussions more than we had since years. Thanks to the American sponsorship of this workshop and for the facilitator who lead us to this situation.

Participants Contact List

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Costas Yennaris	Phileleftheros Newspaper	Yennaris@cytanet.com.cy	99-626493
Paris Potamitis	CyBC TV	nene@spidernet.com.cy	99442894
Marios Manousopoulos	Simerini Newspaper	manousopoulosm@simerini.com	99-669966
Sami Ozuslu	Yeniduzen	ozuslu@europe.com	0533-8686854
Ali Baturay	Kibris	alibaturay@yahoo.com	0542-8552729
Metin Ersoy	EMU	metin.ersoy@emu.edu.tr	0542-8536388
Anil Isik	Kibris Newspaper	anilisik@yahoo.com	0533-8668383
Jean Christou	Cyprus Mail	jchristou@cyprus-mail.com	99-666657
Mashoed Bailie	EMU	Mashoed.bailie@emu.edu.tr	
Nicholas Nicoli	University of Nicosia	nicoli.n@unic.ac.cy	
Hasan Kahvecioglu	Radio Mayis	hasan@ikah.com	

Participants Contact List

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Menelaos Hadjicostis	Cyprus Weekly Newspaper	menhadji@cytanet.com.cy	99-472450
Michalis Pavlides	Mega TV	mikepav@logosnet.cy.net	99-614841
Mete Tumerkan	BRT	metetumerkan@superonline.com	0533-861-T1864
Hasan Hasturer	Kibris Newspaper	hasan@kktc.net	0533-864-0090
Michele Kambas	Reuters	michele.kambas@reuters.com	99-611034
Resat Akar	Cyprus Dialogue	durum@kktc.net	0090-542-8810882
Bekir Azgin	EMU	Bekir.azgin@emu.edu.tr	0533-841-2728
Tumay Tugyan	BRT	Tumay.t@gmail.com	
Emir Ersoy	TAK News Agency	emirersoy@yahoo.com	0542-8571555
Akay Cemal	Halkin Sesi Newspaper	halkinsesi@superonline.com	053353-8670777

Participant Contact list

Tom Miller	US Embassy	MillerT@state.gov	22-393810
Juliette Dickstein	US Embassy	DicksteinJ@state.gov	22-393909
Carol Daniel Kasbari	Consultant and coordinator of IPMF/ UNESCO	Carol@kasbari.net	972-52-2383225
Athos Sophocleous	US Embassy	SophocleousAA@state.gov	99-437682
Ipek Uzunoglu	US Embassy	Uzunogluin@state.gov	00542-855-0360
Karen Stephanou	Amideast	kstephanou@amideast.org	22-451860

After the workshop finished the decision was made to produce this booklet and distribute it to all participants in hopes that the momentum achieved over the two days would continue .

This booklet was prepared by The US Embassy's Bicommunal Support Program and could not have been possible without the support and guidance of Ms. Carol Daniel Kasbari who facilitated the event. We would also like to thank all of the participants who took part in the program and made it the success that it was. We hope to have your continued support for the follow up to this program that will take place in 2008.