



Practitioner's Guide:

Peace Zones



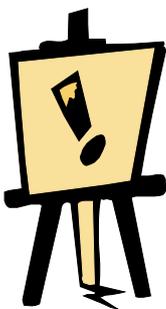
Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
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Deutsche Gesellschaft für
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Peace Zones

Brief Description



Peace Zones are community-based, people-led initiatives in local geographical areas which residents themselves declare to be off-limits to armed conflict primarily to protect civilians, livelihood and property. Furthermore, Peace Zones are designed to contribute to a more comprehensive peace process through peace-building measures addressing the roots and manifestations of the conflict. The method draws on different elements of conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict transformation and development theories and is usually applied at the grass-roots level in the context of protracted intrastate conflicts.

In some cases Peace Zone strategies have been supplemented by development programs or were embedded in a larger sustainable development plan framework.

The prime importance of the formation of Peace Zones (PZ) is an attempt to mitigate violence in an ongoing conflict or to assist in the process of ending the conflict (in addition to others such as peace negotiations, etc).

The idea of sanctuaries or places where individuals or communities are immune from arrest, attack and other forms of violence dates back to Egyptian civilization and passed through classical times to Medieval Christendom. One prominent example for early concepts of Peace Zones is the sacred sites in classical Greece that afforded protection for local populations fleeing from the effects of war. In the last two decades of the twentieth century the practice of establishing recognized local sanctuaries in the midst of violent and protracted intrastate conflicts saw a major revival. This development has been illustrated recently by the United Nations efforts to establish so called 'safe heavens' where inhabitants are immune from attack.

Peace Zones are often based on local people's perception of themselves. This can be fundamentally different from the parties engaged in violent conflict. Peace Zones is an initiative pioneered in several countries including the Philippines. The generic term "Peace Zones" also covers other similar efforts known as "zones of life" "sanctuaries of peace" "spaces for peace" as well as "neutral zones" and the like where there is a declared will of the people and a commitment of conflicting armed forces not to make their communities a battleground.

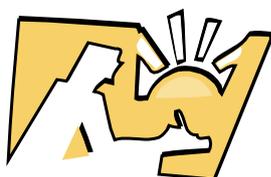
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Proposed Main Users

Communities that are targeted, affected by violent conflict, Community Organisations; Peoples Organisations; Civil Society Organisations; Grass-roots Peace and Development Organisations; Peace Zones Movement; Local Government Units.



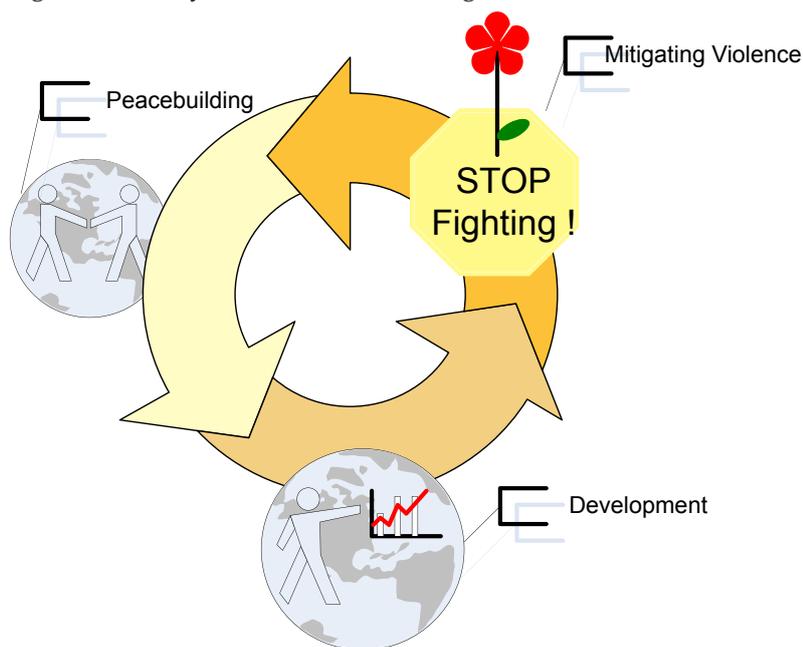
Purpose of the Method



The creation of Peace Zones is usually an act of empowerment and self-determination of communities affected by violent conflicts. By means of moral persuasion and negotiations with the conflicting parties a declaration is agreed upon and monitored by the community in cooperation with assigned neutral bodies such as peace councils, task forces, NGOs and other support groups. One common feature of all Peace Zones is the desire for an end to armed violence within the zone (negative peace), while some Peace Zones also attempt to create social change or social justice and to expand the principles of what Galtung referred to as "positive peace" (1969) beyond their limited borders.

Generally speaking, there are three interrelated purposes of Peace Zones. The first one is to **regulate movements** of armed parties and occasions for the outbreak of violence within the locality. The second one is the **promotion of dialogue** and the spirit of pluralism within the Peace Zone as contribution to peace building. And the third one is to **foster social and economic development** geared towards sustainable peace and prosperity.

Figure 1: The Cycle of the Peace Building Process



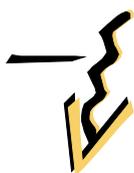
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Advantages



- ▶ The Peace Zone creation holds the potential to facilitate community based peace-building as well as socioeconomic development in the context of protracted intrastate conflicts.
- ▶ Approach for mitigating violence, protection of non-combatants, monitoring of a cease-fire / peace agreement, regulates / encourages bans firing and display of guns, regulates / monitors pullout of armed forces and troop deployment and recruitment by the armed groups, provides a sanctuary for the wounded and allows space for humanitarian assistance.
- ▶ Promotes dialogue and reconciliation activities, enhances local dispute-resolution mechanisms, promotes respect for customs, traditions and rights.
- ▶ Process for promoting greater social interaction or camaraderie between and among the villagers.
- ▶ Institutes and enhances an appropriate protection system for the communities affected by armed conflicts.
- ▶ A peace constituency which can lobby for reforms can be mobilized within the Peace Zone established framework.
- ▶ Community consensus on what is meant by peace and development and its parameters is possible.
- ▶ A good process for monitoring community internal and external conflict and peace factors within the community
- ▶ Development programs can be initiated or continued on safer grounds.

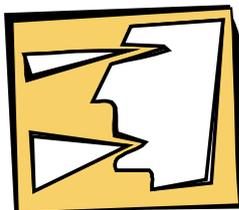
Limitations



- ▶ One opposing group can threaten the success of the entire Peace Zone initiative. The guarantee for success of the Peace Zones is contingent upon the commitment to honor agreement by the different conflicting parties and other stakeholders, thus accomplishments can be relative.
- ▶ Larger and more protracted conflicts such as counter insurgency, and terror campaigns, operating outside of the defined geographical bounds of the Peace Zones pose a continual threat. This could come about despite precautions and elaborate measures to follow procedures and basic requirements for setting up the Peace Zone.
- ▶ The community has limited capacity and power to enforce the agreements of the Peace Zone, therefore, support of the police or army is usually necessary.
- ▶ Peace Zones are limited to one particular geographical area and enforcement of the peace agreement outside these boundaries is limited or not possible.
- ▶ External resources and support groups might create dependencies and threaten the sustainability of Peace Zones.
- ▶ Limited capacity to absorb substantial inflows of development aid assistance can be a cause for misuse of the resources or even internal differences within the community.
- ▶ If the state unilaterally makes declarations of peace as part of a counter-insurgency approach this may lead to distortions in the Peace Zones.

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A. Minimum Pre-conditions:

- ▶ Defined geographical location (village, district, administrative unit etc.)
- ▶ Regulations on armed conflict
- ▶ Limits on the presence of armed combatants within the Zone
- ▶ Community's ownership
- ▶ Initiative by the community to want a declaration of peace
- ▶ Existence of functioning communication and coordination structures
- ▶ Impartiality, neutrality and independence vis-à-vis the conflicting parties
- ▶ Negotiation with all armed groups
- ▶ Building consensus among all stakeholders
- ▶ Adherence to moral, spiritual, cultural values and principles
- ▶ Socioeconomic support
- ▶ Promotion of the culture of peace

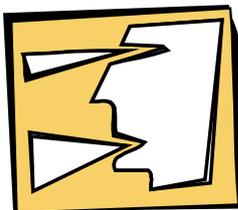
B. Success Factors:

Even though the specific fabric of each individual Peace Zone is defined by a combination of success factors, variations in the individual design of each Peace Zone is important. Some of the success factors include:

- ▶ **Ownership:** Against the background that neither the state governmental nor international agencies including NGOs are going to be able to sustain local and regional security in some areas, Peace Zones are designed as self-organised sanctuaries. A community based approach assures that people within the zones take responsibility for setting up the policies and practices that are supposed to keep them safe from outsiders and insiders. Even though external support measures especially in form of funds are important, the members of the local community must take the lead in all aspects of peace-building and development initiatives.
- ▶ **Inclusiveness:** Participation of all stakeholders should be assured to achieve what the collective will aims to achieve. Relationship building in the Peace Zone communities and the development of a common vision should be an inclusive process. Special effort must be made to involve all individuals or entities into an open dialoguing process, one which acknowledges their dissent and works to establish a common ground of understanding between all stakeholders.
- ▶ **Collective decision making and internal reflection:** Within the community these are important requirements for the successful implementation of Peace Zones and help to determine and design the measure according to particular needs and resources.
- ▶ **Institutionalization and Peace Policy:** In most cases, institutionalization of Peace Zones through local and national policy legislations improves the chances of legitimacy and sustainability. Additionally, all stakeholders should push for a local or national peace policy that addresses conflict resolution, peace-building and development. At the local level, Peace Zones should pursue local government ordinances and resolutions.

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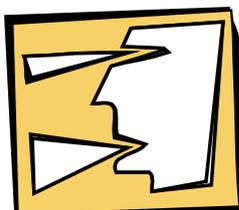
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- ▶ **Commitment and Impartiality:** Local community leaders (elders, religious leaders, charismatic individuals, local community groups, local government representatives) as well as external groups (NGOs, funding agencies) can act as catalysts of the Peace Zone creation process. The role of these stakeholders determine the success of the Peace Zone, since it has been shown that they must be sincerely committed to the goals of the declaration and not only to the development funds that keep on coming as a result of the declaration. Additionally, Peace Zone representatives and supporters should represent impartiality, neutrality and independence from the conflict parties (e.g. Contending government and anti-government forces).
- ▶ **Harnessing Local Capacities for Peace:** Strengthening connections with adjacent communities should be fostered, since such links reinforce peace initiatives both within the community and the entire region as well as help expand the Peace Zone.
- ▶ **Multi-level Approach:** Even though Peace Zones are initially created as a defensive move for survival in the locality, they also have national implication and should relate themselves to the broader peace process. They should contribute to a resolution which addresses both the root causes and the people's relationships.
- ▶ **Leadership and Empowerment:** Strong and charismatic leadership often helps to enable a process of enhancing commonalities and reconcile differences. Community leaders should be enabled to implement programs and to conduct planning and evaluation sessions with their community members with minimal guidance from local NGOs or other stakeholders.
- ▶ **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Peace Zones rely on frequent and legitimate monitoring mechanisms to capture significant developments and changes. Sustainability depends on each Peace Zone's ability to evolve and respond to the community members' changing needs in all sectors. Lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation should be incorporated into the future planning process and can help redirect the focus of future initiatives. The builders and advocates of Peace Zones should strive for some reasonable consensus among Peace Zones policy matters as the Peace Zone concept, or at least its minimum elements or requirements.
- ▶ **Development Orientation:** For sustainability, Peace Zone communities should elaborate their orientation and plans, which, among others, should outline proposed development initiatives. This would facilitate their capability of adjusting to shifting dynamics. Development, both within the peace-building sector and other focus areas help decrease a community's vulnerability to internal or external shocks that may emerge. Therefore, most Peace Zones are designed in the context of a broader development plan or address socioeconomic development and good governance as essential aspects in the Peace Zone declaration.

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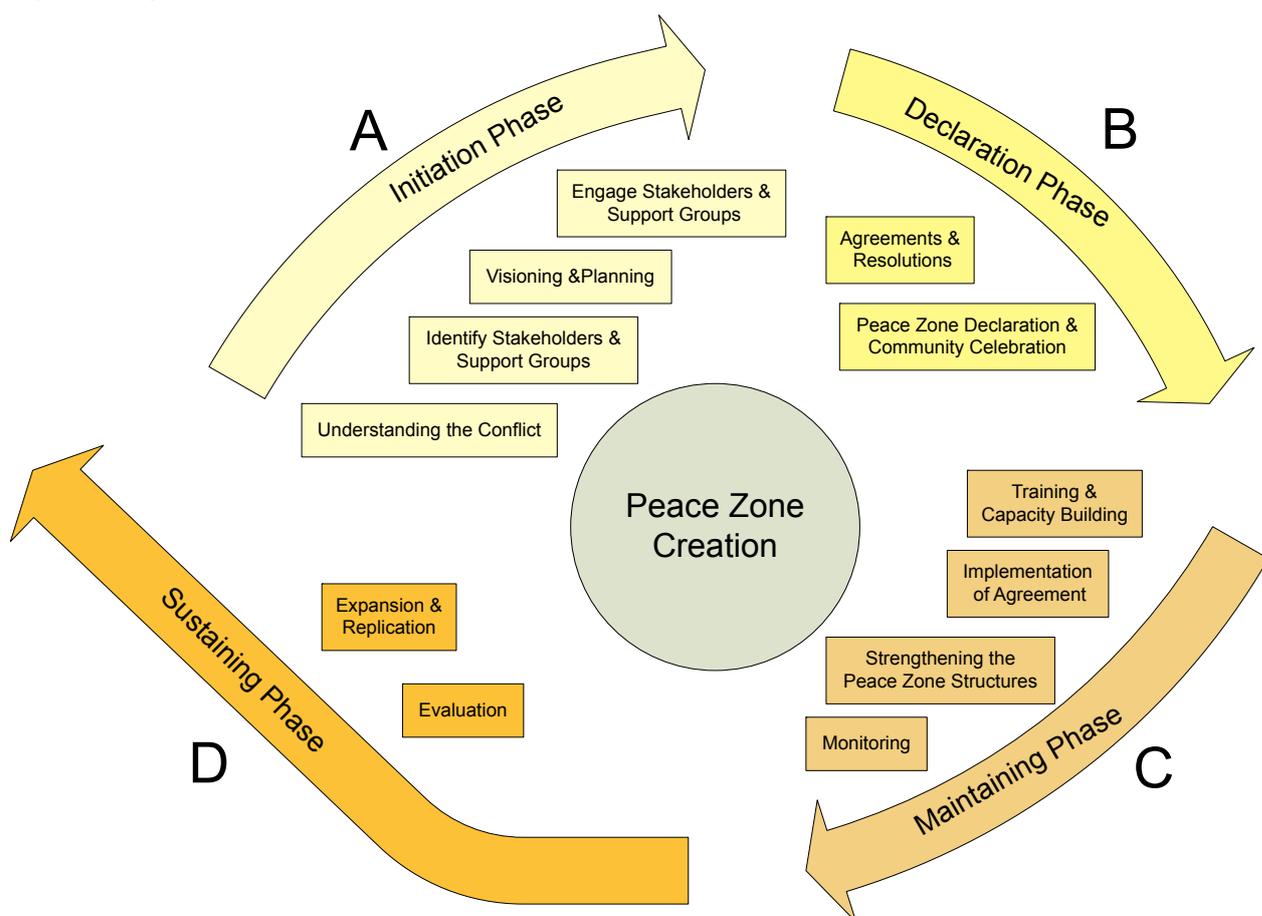
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Phases and Stages of Peace Zone Initiation, Declaration, Maintaining and Sustaining

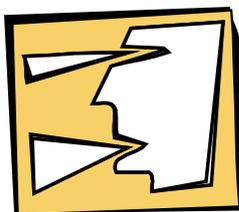
Since protracted, deep rooted conflict does not develop in a linear manner, any intervention cannot be described in a “one size fits all” manner. The following step-by-step approach to the creation of Peace Zones can help to illustrate some general patterns that have proven to be characteristic of the method. Nevertheless, one should be aware of the fact that the different stages and phases are not strictly separated, but overlap and should be seen in a holistic picture. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that this generic framework needs to be adjusted in accordance with particular circumstances in each specific setting. Even though the final phase focuses on sustaining the Peace Zone, sustainability should be considered in every phase and on all stages.

Figure 2: Stages Creation of Peace Zones



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A. Initiation Phase

Stage 1: Understanding the Conflict

A better understanding of the historical-political antecedents and dynamics of a conflict is necessary in order to fully design an effective intervention. An array of tools are developed as aids in understanding these dynamics. Prior to the declaration of the area as Peace Zone, tools like conflict mapping can be used as a initial analysis step. A brief history of the conflict needs to be developed with focus on the parties of the conflict, each party's demands, interests and alliances. A time-line of the history of armed confrontations including clashes between government and rebel forces, tribal wars, inter-ethnic conflicts, forced evacuation, various acts of aggression as well as the gradual cessation of hostilities should be elaborated. A short inventory of the casualties and damages of the conflict, which highlights who were affected in what ways helps to shed light on the nature of the conflict. The assessment of the impact should be differentiated according to ethnic group, gender, economic groups etc.

Stage 2: Identify Stakeholders and Support Groups

The roles and relationships as well as the interests of different stakeholders and support groups (peace advocates, armed groups, government, NGOs, POs, donor agencies) initiating, declaring, maintaining and sustaining the Peace Zone need to be defined. Further, one needs to describe the capacities and constraints of each of these actors and participants and to identify specific characteristics according to their position in the community (e.g. as rebels, as minorities, as women, as NGOs, etc.).

Stage 3: Visioning and Planning

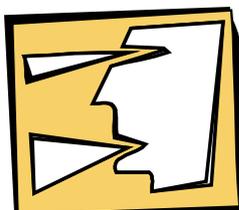
To guide the planning process, the community needs to develop and agree on its vision of peace and development and Peace Zone creation. It is of prime importance to define who initiates the cease fire or peace dialogue and to envision the process of resource and community mobilisation for peace. Moreover, major factors and forces that lead to the creation of the Peace Zones and their means of influencing their fabric have to be identified. Necessary inputs such as funding, human resources, stakeholders, resource persons, facilitators and logistical support are to be included in the plan.

Stage 4: Engage Stakeholders

Community leaders involved in conflict resolution and the management of the Peace Zone and their respective roles are to be identified. One of their main tasks is to initiate and facilitate negotiations and dialogue between all stakeholders (including representatives of armed groups) in the initiation phase as well as during the following phases so that a consensus will be agreed on. At this stage inclusiveness regarding the engagement of stakeholders is of prime importance, since one opposing group alone could threaten the success of the Peace Zone.

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B. Declaration Phase

Stage 5: Agreements and Resolutions

In order to ensure accountability of the stakeholders, agreements and resolutions have to be drafted and implemented. The agreement should explicitly state the objectives, expectations, roles, policies, responsibilities and commitments of the stakeholders. The documents are essential in pushing the process for creation of Peace Zones. During the process of forging the agreements, the organizations will also develop relationships and become more knowledgeable about each other. However, it is also imperative to periodically review or update the agreement and resolutions when the actors and/or the context change.



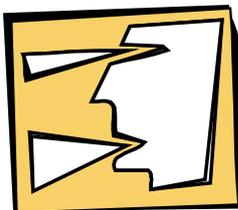
Photo 1: Signing the Peace Zone Agreement



Photo 2: Getting all involved

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Stage 6: Peace Zone Declaration and Community Celebration

One important document to be drafted and signed by all stakeholders is the Peace Zone declaration. A decision has to be made on who takes part in the process of writing this unified statement, and what the contents of the declaration are. By means of consultations with community members consent about the content of the declaration has to be reached. Moreover, decisions have to be made on who signs the declaration, how and where.

After the signing session, the newly declared Peace Zone should be celebrated in an informal setting with all parties and stakeholders participating. Such a community celebration functions as symbolic act and facilitates bonding experiences as well as the exchange of opinions and attitudes on a personal level. Culturally appropriate and inclusive ways of celebrating are supposed to enhance mutual respect and understanding.



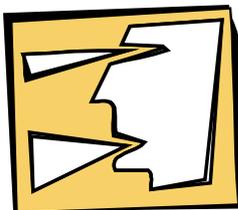
Photo 3: Formalities prior to celebrating



Photo 4: All benefit from peace, especially the children

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C. Maintaining Phase

Stage 7: Continuous Capacity Development

Different sets of skills, knowledge and attitudes should be enhanced among the local leaders and the community members as well. It is in this line that capacity development should be part of the continuing processes of maintaining the Peace Zone. Furthermore, a network of support should be established so that local initiatives can be carried out to strengthen the peace-building mechanisms in the Peace Zone. Participation, leadership roles and interest representation are to be defined according to gender, ethnic group, economic status, in the process of capacity building and the setup of support networks. Although the steps have been defined sequentially, in reality many steps run in parallel, in particular the monitoring step 10 defined below has to commence early as part of the overall process.

Stage 8: Implementation of the Agreement

To effectively implement the agreements of the Peace Zone, community leaders and their support groups should move on from being 'brokers of peace' to managers and implementors of conflict settlement mechanisms. The organizational body of the Peace Zone can be a peace council, tribal council, task force, local coalition or council of stewards, or a combination of some of the groups. Existing structures and systems in the community can be utilized or revitalized, rather than setting up new additional ones. Such existing structures and systems could be local government units like regional councils, traditional tribal councils or religious organizations. In contexts of inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflicts, specific policies or accommodations are to be made to ensure equal voice and participation in the peace body. Culture-based and culturally-appropriate mechanisms need to be applied.

It is very important that the Peace Zone declaration and the development plans including budgetary allocation are adopted and mainstreamed in the local government unit plan. Resources and financial commitments by each participant and support group (including NGOs, INGOs, religious organizations, Peoples Organizations (POs) and so on, have to be enforced and materialized. Additionally, local policies or laws enacting the Peace Zone declaration are to be implemented and utilized.

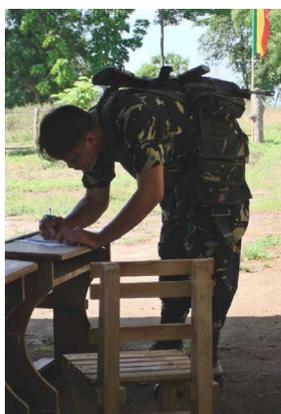
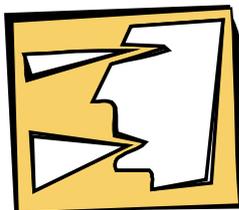


Photo 5: It is important is that all participate, including the army

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Stage 9: Strengthening the Peace Zone Structure

Once the Peace Zone has been established, additional mechanisms and instruments such as additional peace education and formation of peace volunteers should be utilized in order to further strengthen the Peace Zone. The organizational structure can also be improved through the establishment of committees with specific responsibilities and tasks (e. g. management, finance, peace-building, and education committees among others).

An umbrella or a network of organizations among the different Peace Zones can be useful to strengthen arrangements.

Stage 10: Monitoring

A monitoring scheme must be established to ensure the successful implementation of declarations, as well as additional peace agreements and resolutions. This is a continuous process that has to be undertaken from the very start. Initially, minimum requirements as parameters for success are to be defined. The scheme has to be capable to monitor violations and breaches in the peace agreement and to assess by what party they were conducted. This should also include approaches on how to address and deal with the violations. Additionally, reasons for the violations, as well as other problems in the use of local conflict resolution mechanisms should also be subject to monitoring.

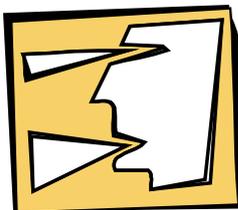
The role of the government is another area of concern, when it comes to monitoring. It is of particular interest, whether local governments have passed formal resolutions recognizing the Peace Zone. Furthermore, government policies and laws which have an impact on Peace Zones and conflict transformation in general are to be monitored.



Photo 6: Monitoring the peace process

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D. Sustaining Phase

Stage 11: Evaluation

The successes or failures in reaching the goals of the Peace Zone declaration have to be evaluated in order to inform the community and their leadership on how to move the Peace Zone forward.

The following points should be addressed during the evaluation process:

- ▶ Background of Peace Zone establishment
- ▶ Objectives of those who established the Peace Zone
- ▶ Perceived advantages of the Peace Zone
- ▶ Process of establishment (initiated by the community or outsiders?)
- ▶ Role of support groups (advantages and limitations)
- ▶ Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms
- ▶ Attempts of expanding the Peace Zone
- ▶ Mechanisms of dealing with problems and obstacles
- ▶ Impact of the Peace Zone on the people living in the zone and on the conflict (the overall social system)
- ▶ General lessons learned

Stage 12: Replication and Expansion

Based on lessons learned from the evaluation process, recommendations for the future design of the Peace Zone can be derived. In order to do so, factors for success of community-based Peace Zone management and peace-building practices have to be identified. Recommendations should lead to improvements regarding all initiation, declaration, implementation, and sustaining components of people-initiated Peace Zones.

These lessons learned as well as recommendations for future improvements should be shared with other communities that are confronted with similar conflict situations in order to enable them to create their own functioning Peace Zone. Such attempts of replication could result in the expansion of the original Peace Zone, if neighbouring communities create a similar peace framework under the same umbrella organisation. Methods for replication would include: publications, films, flyers, etc.

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Santos, Soliman M. Jr (2005); **Peace Zones in the Philippines: Concept, Policy and Instruments.** Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute in cooperation with the The Asia Foundation.

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Links to related Methods and Examples

Conflict Sensitivity and Risk Management Strategy:
<http://www.methodfinder.net/method85.html>

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment:
<http://www.methodfinder.net/method60.html>

Conflict Analysis:
<http://www.methodfinder.net/method59.html>

Do no Harm (Local Capacities for Peace):
<http://www.methodfinder.net/method57.html>