



Concept Note & Call for Applications:

3rd Asian Peace Practitioners' Research Conference, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 5-6 December 2014

Peace Infrastructures in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges

Contemporary conflicts in Asia are characterized by a high degree of complexity and rapidly shifting dynamics. These conflicts necessitate different strategies and creative approaches to peace building across different levels of society. Given the systemic nature of these conflicts, approaches to peace building must not be considered in isolation. Rather, they must be linked, with cooperation and communication between the involved actors, to build a solid and lasting foundation for peace in the region.

This year's conference will look at **peace infrastructures** - understanding peace infrastructures to be part of a "dynamic network of interdependent, [...] mechanisms which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peace building in a society."¹

In the field of peace building, scholars agree that peace infrastructures have the following core characteristics:

- 1) Multi-sectoral: engage all levels of society
- 2) Domestic foundation²: rooted in local practice
- 3) Building local capacity: reflect commitment to building internal capacities for conflict transformation
- 4) Organisational structure: create and develop necessary institutions and structures to support more effective and sustainable peace-building practices
- 5) Long-term approach: address the root causes of conflict

Under these common characteristics, peace infrastructures may take a number of diverse forms including peace committees, national ministries, early warning mechanisms and contact groups³.

The conference aims to contextualize peace infrastructures in Asia and seeks to contribute to a better understanding of what kind of mechanisms and initiatives effectively and sustainably strengthen Asian peace infrastructures. Furthermore, the conference will analyze best practices for the future.

OBJECTIVE

- To reflect upon, compare, discuss and extract lessons learnt and successes from peace infrastructure initiatives and raise awareness about how to build sustainable, locally rooted peace building programs.

¹ Kumar 2011, 385, cited by Ulrike Hopp-Nishanka in Berghof Handbook, "Giving Peace an Address?", p.3.

² Ulrike Hopp-Nishanka, Berghof Handbook, "Giving Peace an Address?", page 4.

³ An example for a top-down national-level peace infrastructure institution would be OPAPP in the Philippines. An example for a bottom-up mechanism would be liaison offices in Myanmar.

We encourage peace practitioners and scholars to reflect upon the following:

1) Existing experience:

- 1) In your specific context what are the unique mechanisms, initiatives or local practices that strengthen the existing peace infrastructure?
- 2) Why are existing mechanisms/initiatives/institutions strengthening the foundation for peace in your country? Why are they not? How may they be improved?

Please analyse strengths and weaknesses; think of what is missing, and what should have been done differently (this should be feasible and should be reflecting contextual reality, not just be looking at theories)

OR

2.) Analysis of types of mechanisms needed

If there is no existing peace infrastructure, what are good entry points that could lay the foundation for a solid PI?

- 1) What are your ideas? What are the best new entry points? What is feasible? Why? How? At what level? (Community, national/ bottom up or top down);
 - Whose capacities have to be strengthened and where should resources go?
 - How would these new mechanisms help to build trust and foster cooperation between different actors working for peace?

What needs to be taken into account to get a comprehensive understanding of the situation, including key actors, dynamics, issues and other circumstances such as social, political and economic, etc.?

Rationale

CPCS' annual Peace Practitioners' Research Conference aims to provide a space and opportunity for reflection on and exchange of successful peace building theory and practice in Asia. The Conference is intended to serve as platform for networking, collaborative learning and for promoting new, innovative and home-grown approaches to peace building in Asia. Given CPCS' emphasis on peace building in Asia, the conference caters to peace practitioners, researchers and scholars from Asia and working in the region.

The goal of this annual conference is to contribute to the enhancement and increased sustainability of peace work in Asia. Its objectives are to learn from action research and local peace building practices initiated by peace practitioners across the region, to identify, consolidate and share best peace building practices, to extract theory from practice and to test existing peace building theories' applicability to practice.

Eligibility

- Peace practitioners, researchers and scholars **must be from Asia and working in the region.**
- **Participants must be over 25 years**

Submission of Papers

We invite submissions of papers addressing the subject of peace infrastructures in Southeast and South Asia. Research Papers must be new and original research or analysis that is not yet published. Practitioners and researchers interested in participating in this year's conference should send the following to Inanna Boesch cpcspprc@gmail.com:

- 1) Completed application form
- 2) Research paper **abstract of maximum 300 words**
- 3) Short bio (name, profession, organization, field of work, motivation to participate in the PPRC- 100 words)

This should be sent to CPCS **by Friday, 29 August 2014.**

A limited number of scholarships is available.