Pre-Conditions for Peace

A Civil Society Perspective on the Cyprus problem

Zenonas Tziarras

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Cyprus Problem has dominated much of Cyprus's contemporary history. The country's past experiences under the rule of the Ottoman Empire (1571-1878) and British colonialism (1878-1960) complicated communal relations on the Island and gave rise to rival ethno-nationalisms, i.e., Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot. The declaration of Cyprus's independence in 1960 only made things worse, with ethnic strife breaking out in 1963 and continuing on and off until 1974. After a coup by the Greek Junta, which took place with the support of the Greek-Cypriot nationalist organization EOKA B′, Turkey, in the summer of 1974, responded militarily, forcefully dividing Cyprus and gaining control of 37% of the island's north, a situation that exists to this day. In 1983 Turkish-Cypriots unilaterally declared their independence but were recognized only by Turkey. On the other hand, the Republic of Cyprus, the only internationally recognized government on the Island, has been controlled only by Greek-Cypriots since 1964.

As such, the country has been *de facto* divided with almost no contact between the two communities since 1974. In April 2003 this changed when the first crossing checkpoint was opened across the Buffer Zone (or the "Green Line") in the heart of Nicosia, the capital city. This was one year prior to the referenda for the United Nation's (UN) peace plan (the "Annan Plan")[1] and the Republic of Cyprus's accession to the European Union (EU). The opening of the first crossing raised expectations for a more peaceful future and heightened prospects for reconciliation between the two communities through the increase of inter-communal contact. Inevitably it also strengthened the role of pro-peace civil society, not least because of the expected referenda and the prospects for peace.

To be sure, pro-peace and reconciliation civil society initiatives existed before as well. However, they were mostly "focused on offering opportunities to members of the communities to develop face-to-face communication and conflict resolution skills."[2] Since the

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[1] The Annan Plan was voted for by the Turkish-Cypriots with 64.9 percent and was rejected by the Greek-Cypriots with 75.8 percent.

[2] Bülent Kanol and İlke Dağli, "Civil Society Active Dialogue Networks in Cyprus: Peace-Ing It Together at the Grassroots "in *Contemporary Social and Political Aspects of the Cyprus Problem*, ed. Jonathan Warner, David W. Lovell, and Michalis Kontos (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 270-71.

1990s and more so in the 2000s and 2010s, the importance and role of civil society in relation to the Cyprus peace process increased to a great extent. However, one could argue that civil society mobilization in this respect remained in many ways limited and, therefore, without much impact, be it in terms of Track I negotiations, inter-communal reconciliation, or the development of what is often called a "culture of peace."

Against the background of civil society's growing role since the early 2000s, this report aims to track the progress or lack thereof, and identify the limitations and prospects of pro-peace grassroots mobilization in Cyprus. It does so by looking at rather recent – structured as well as decentralized – civil society initiatives. At the same time, the analysis also takes into account public opinion polls and events that took place over the past few years. Subsequently, the report proceeds to propose ways through which these limitations could be overcome, both at the grassroots level and with the involvement of official political actors.

The report starts by briefly conceptualizing the role of Track II Diplomacy and civil society in the context of peace-building and conflict resolution in general and the Cyprus Problem in particular. The section that follows focuses on three contemporary case studies of pro-peace civil society in Cyprus: The *Home for Cooperation*, *Cyprus Dialogue Forum* and *United Cyprus Now*. Each case study provides a different perspective of pro-peace civil society mobilization. The *Home for Cooperation* (H4C) is looked at as one of the older and main initiatives given that it functions as a meeting space that hosts other pro-peace civil society organizations and initiatives as well. The *Cyprus Dialogue Forum* (CDF) is examined as probably the biggest, most ambitious and most structured platform of multi-segment inter-communal dialogue thus far. As analysed below, the CDF could be also seen as a Track 1.5 initiative as opposed to a more traditional Track II one, which is an important particularity. The *Unite Cyprus Now* (UCN) initiative is quite different to the previous two in that it emerged rather spontaneously at the grassroots level, with extensive use of social media, and it still remains largely decentralized.

The report then assesses the success, limitations and potential of those pro-peace initiatives and, in the final section, lists a number of pre-conditions that need to be pursued at the grassroots and official levels for a more impactful approach to peace-building and reconciliation.[3] It is ultimately argued that, in addition to efforts that should be made by civil society towards a more inclusive and effective grassroots movement, Track I has the important responsibility to provide the space to civil society that allows it to be empowered and be part of the solution, both in term of improving everyday inter-communal relations as well as supporting the official peace process.

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3   It should be clarified that the report's focus on the role of civil society does not suggest that there are not any other factors at play when it comes to the resolution of the Cyprus Problem. A holistic approach to the resolution of the conflict should take into account intra-communal dynamics, international politics and the role of external powers, such as Turkey, Greece, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States, as well. However, no settlement can be achieved or sustained unless the two communities work together for a common future – and civil society can play a central role in this process.

TRACK II DIPLOMACY AND
PRO-PEACE CIVIL SOCIETY IN CYPRUS

Second-Track Diplomacy (or Track II Diplomacy) constitutes one of many conflict resolution (or conflict management) methods, especially in complex conflict settings that involve non-state actors – i.e., identity or other communal groups. According to John Davies and Edy Kaufman,[4] Track II Diplomacy can be defined as:

> the bringing together of professionals, opinion leaders or other currently or potentially influential individuals from communities in conflict, without official representative status, to work together to understand better the dynamics underlying the conflict and how its transformation from violence (or potential violence) to a collaborative process of peace building and sustainable development might be promoted.

In short, Track II Diplomacy is about the role of civil society. It is the unofficial, grassroots level, which nonetheless aspires to establish linkages with the official level and thus influence Track I opinions. As Edward Azar notes, "The participation of individuals in their personal capacities, and yet with access and potential to influence decision makers, is a useful supplement to the work of professional diplomats and political leadership, while also facilitating discussion at the grassroots level."[5] International organizations and states, not to mention the academic community, have been attributing increasing importance to the role of civil society in peacekeeping, peace-building and conflict resolution.[6]

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[4]   John Davies and Edy Kaufman, "Second Track/Citizens' Diplomacy: An Overview," in *Second Track/Citizens' Diplomacy: Concepts and Techniques for Conflict Transformation*, ed. John L. Davies and Edward (Edy) Kafuman (Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 2.

[5]   Edward Azar, "Protracted Social Conflicts and Second Track Diplomacy," ibid., ed. John Davies and Edward (Edy) Kaufman, 23.

[6]   Tamara Kool, "The Role of Civil Society in Peacekeeping Missions," *UNU-Merit* (2016), https://www.merit.unu.edu/the-role-of-civil-society-in-peacekeeping-missions/; John L. Davies and Edward (Edy) Kaufman, eds., *Second Track/Citizens' Diplomacy: Concepts and Techniques for Conlict Tranformation* (Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford:: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003).

This role is played by various civil society actors, often called Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). According to OECD-DAC's 2008 Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, CSOs:

> include all nonmarket and non-state organizations outside of the family in which people organize themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain… Examples include community-based organizations and village associations, environmental groups, women's rights groups, farmers' associations, faith-based organizations, labour unions, cooperatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes, and the not-for-profit media.[7]

The Advisory Group acknowledges that "civil society" is a broader concept but specifies that CSOs can be "agents of change and development." Such organizations can play multiple roles that other actors would not be able to in conflict or post-conflict contexts. Their existence alone testifies to a healthy democratic system where civilians can mobilize and freely pursue and advocate for their rights and interests. Thereby they fill the gaps that are created because of state inabilities or unwillingness and exercise bottom-up pressures on their governments. The Advisory Group lists a number of roles that CSOs can play, such as the mobilization of grassroots communities, the engagement in research and policy dialogue, building networks for better civil society coordination and impact, educating the public, and helping to shape social values such as solidarity and social justice.[8]

From this perspective, the role of civil society – and Track II Diplomacy more specifically – is instrumental. Cyprus has itself witnessed significant expansion in civil society mobilization and proliferation of CSOs particularly since the early 2000s. This is the case with regard to pro-peace CSOs as well. Many civil society initiatives have been undertaken since then, aimed at building peace and trust between the two communities as well as promoting communication and interaction to cultivate a culture of peace.[9] The absence of a vibrant civil society and intergroup contact in previous years has been linked to a "democratic deficit" and partially blamed for the limited results of peace-building.[10] Furthermore, much of the CSOs' activities are based, to one degree or another, on Gordon Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory, which contends that increased interpersonal contact reduces prejudice between groups and

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7   Réal Lavergne, ed. *Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness: Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations*, 2nd ed. (Canada: OECD-DAC, 2008), 7.

8   Ibid., 8.

9   Nicolas Stephane Jarraud and Alexandros Lordos, "Participatory Approaches to Environmental Conflict Resolution in Cyprus," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2012).

10 Nicolas Jarraud, Christopher Louise, and Giorgos Filippou, "The Cypriot Civil Society Movement: A Legitimate Player in the Peace Process?," *Jounral of Peacebuilding & Development* 8, no. 1 (2013).

contributes towards reconciliation.[11] The fact that such contact was not possible prior to 2003 had greatly limited the prospects for reconciliation and successful resolution of the Cyprus Problem. After all, it has been argued that without "civic ownership of the settlement and convergence at the grassroots level, then there is no firm ground on which to build a sustainable peace, endangering the very stability and implementation of any peace agreement."[12]

The evolution of Cypriot civil society and the increasing inter-communal contact after 2003 have – generally speaking – had a positive impact on inter-communal relations and, theoretically, on the expectations for a settlement as well.[13] However, a settlement has not yet been reached – despite the momentum that was created in the peace talks between 2015 and 2017 and the boost to grassroots mobilization. In hindsight, one could argue that civil society initiatives have managed to produce at least some positive results on the grassroots level but have not been able to effectively pressure the official level towards a settlement. In what follows, I look at civil society achievements and limitations both on the grassroots and official levels through the lens of the three CSO case studies: The H4C, CDF and UCN.

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11 See, Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 3rd ed. (New York: Perseus Books, 1979); Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," *Annual Review of Psychology* 49 (1998).

12 Kanol and Dağli, 265.

13 Norman Gillespie, Vasiliki Georgiou, and Sevinc Insay, "Civil Society and Trust Building in Cyprus," *Development in Practice* 23, no. 8 (2013).

CONTEMPORARY CASE STUDIES OF PRO-PEACE CIVIL SOCIETY

Against the background of growing inter-communal communication after the 2003 opening of the Ledra Palace crossing, CSOs and pro-peace civil society initiatives gradually multiplied, not least because of international financial support that sought to capitalize on the new dynamic and the prospects for settlement. The CSOs examined in this report emerged during this post-2003 period and they are all of bi-communal character – i.e., they are run by both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. This section aims not to record in detail the history and operations of each CSO case study but rather to provide insight on the context in which they operate, their goals, strengths, weak-nesses and success in order to identify the problems that have restricted pro-peace civil society from having a big enough and decisive impact on the peace process.

Information about these organizations or initiatives has been gathered from publically available primary/secondary sources and personal interviews with key persons within them. As already mentioned, these three civil society initiatives were chosen because of their different operational nature, which allows us to look at grassroots mobilization and effec-tiveness from different perspectives, thus providing a more well-rounded understanding. Moreover, comparing and contrasting the different experiences of the three initiatives will enable us to identify potential gaps and spaces for improvement. The analysis starts with the H4C, continues with the CDF and finishes with UCN.

Home for Cooperation (H4C)

The Home for Cooperation – "H4C" or "The Home" as is often referred to – was created in the aftermath of the 2003 opening of the first crossing. The idea was initially conceived in 2005 by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)[14] and was about "establishing

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14 The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research is comprised of educators and researchers who have an interest in "the teaching and learning of history." Since its establishment in 2003 it has organized several projects and activities; among other things, it has trained teachers and produced supplementary teaching materials. For more information see: http://www.ahdr.info/home.php.

an inter-communal educational centre in the buffer zone."[15] In 2007 the project gained the support of UNFICYP and later, in 2009, it received financial support from the European Economic Area Grants and Norway Grants. In 2010 renovation works began on a building located in the Buffer Zone opposite the historic Ledra Palace hotel, and in May 2011 the Home was officially opened. As H4C's website notes, "The unique four-day celebration marking the inauguration of the Home showcases the collective efforts of civil society organizations across Cyprus, with musical performances, sports events, art exhibitions, a symposium and film screenings."[16]

Today, H4C functions as a community centre or a "hub that facilitates and accommodates" the activities of other bi-communal CSOs as well.[17] According to its website, it is: "A lively community centre providing opportunities to young people, the general public, activists, educators and other agents of change to develop knowledge and critical thinking through diverse and rich cultural, artistic and educational programs."[18] It hosts a number of other organizations that are active on both sides (that is, they have their offices in The Home), while it is also a place where other organizations can hold activities;[19] it is a meeting place for actors coming from the two sides of the divide. From this perspective, H4C aspires to become a catalyst for cooperation between the two communities as well as between organizations – a hub for making introductions.[20]

This approach falls within a broader philosophy and framework of operations based on H4C's aim to contribute to building interaction – as a means to peace-building. "We do not undertake activities for peace as such," Pachoulides remarked and went on to add,

> We undertake activities that provide the opportunity for people from the two sides to interact. Peace activities do not sell. The same persons come. But if you undertake general social activities people will come and build relations. This was the mentality from the beginning. We [AHDR] wanted to develop a culture on teaching history. We developed methodologies for teaching history in an objective and critical way. But we did it in view of building a society of peace. We expanded this understanding to the activities of The Home. We, of course, undertake activities for peace, but we are not limited to that.[21]

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15 History of Home for Cooperation, http://www.home4cooperation.info/history-of-the-h4c.

16 Ibid.

17 Interview with Dr. Kyriakos Pachoulides, Member of the Governing Board of the Home for Cooperation, 25 April 2018, Nicosia.

18 History of Home for Cooperation, http://www.home4cooperation.info/history-of-the-h4c. Among other things The Home hosts conferences, music, theater, dance performances, gymnastics, language classes and adult learning activities that bring together people from the two communities, thus increasing inter-communal contact and advancing peace. See also, Oliver P. Richmond, *Peace Formation and Political Orer in Conflict Affected Societies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 108.

19 Resident CSOs participate in the management of The Home as well.

20 Interview with Pachoulides.

21 Ibid.

The Home has a number of strengths and comparative advantages. To begin with, it has been around for more than seven years. In 2018, H4C managed for the second year to work with almost zero funding. This has been made possible because it has developed procedures that render it self-sufficient and sustainable. Given the history of pop-up CSOs that quickly faded away when funding dried up, H4C's continuity thus far sets it apart from other initiatives. Moreover, one could argue that The Home is "too big to fail," because it has material substance, an actual presence that increases its prospect of survival, and because no one – among pro-peace civil society at least – wants it to fail. Indeed, its "bridge-building" role and function as a community centre and hub have rendered it an essential pillar of bi-communal relations and pro-peace activism; its absence would leave a huge gap at the grassroots level.[22] In this vein, Oliver Richmond argues that the establishment of H4C "represented a third stage in the development of peace formation in Cyprus," and adds that "it is now an unwritten rule that everyone cooperates with the Home, from both sides and all political persuasions.[23]

There are, however, a number of limitations as well. One of them is the fact that H4C has not yet been able to attract and convince more people (especially young people) to become voluntarily involved. As things stand, there is more of a recycling process of the same people rather than renewal and "new blood" – which seems to be a general problem in such CSOs in Cyprus.[24] This lack of interest has been "structurally affecting" The Home's activities as well as its sustainability prospects.[25] The lack of funding is another related problem. Self-sustainability is a goal and ongoing struggle for H4C and, therefore, funding would make things easier and help in the expansion of activities and increase of impact.

Despite the challenges and limitations, H4C claims success. From its people's perspective, success is often understood as something revealed in the long term. For example, The Home collaborates with schools and it has become a place where students from both sides meet. Within a year, a thousand children will meet; they and their families are influenced as well. In this sense, there is an impact that will be best seen in the future. Moreover, many people go to The Home in order to meet people from the other side. "We would like to be more and have more," Pachoulides said, "but the society is an important factor. If society doesn't care, The Home has limited results."[26] It is likely that disenchantment with the unproductive peace process over the years might have had some negative impact on this grassroots momentum. And yet, it is possible that H4C's presence and operations sometimes serve to slow the backward slide when obstacles occur at the official (Track I) level of the peace process.

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22   http://www.home4cooperation.info/what-is-the-h4c. Also, Interview with Pachoulides.

23   Richmond, 107.

24   It is possible that persisting mistrust among certain parts of the society has something to do with this. See, Yiannis Papadakis, *Building inside a Cease-Fire Line: The Home for Cooperation in Divided Cyprus* (EEA-Grants2011).

25   Interview with Pachoulides.

26   Ibid.

Overall, the understanding of H4C's staff and CSOs is that they exist regardless of whether or not a settlement to the Cyprus Problem is reached, because their main aim is to foster co-existence and subvert political tension and violence before or after a settlement. There is, of course, a broader criticism concerning H4C, but also pro-peace civil society more generally, that "outreach to the wider public" has only been limited and that "the bi-communal movement is becoming self-congratulatory" and rather constricted within the Buffer Zone. As Zinovia Foka goes on to argue,

> H4C has evolved into a home of bi-communalism, a space safe for its users, characterized by (also architectural) *privateness* (as opposed to *publicness*), which allows their ideas to grow and mature but obstructs their communalization, their opening to the wider Cypriot publics. Initiatives are limited in the Buffer Zone, which despite the restored mobility, still functions as a border between communities, in spatial, political, and social terms.[27]

This criticism – which reflects reality at least to a certain extent – is evident in the other two case studies as well. However, limitations in outreach and effectiveness do not always depend on the CSO in question but also on other structural factors such as developments in the Track I process, political power relations and narratives, ideological loyalties and so on. The next case study concerns an organization (Cyprus Dialogue Forum) that, among other things, has tried to address and overcome these obstacles.

Cyprus Dialogue Forum (CDF)

In March 2015, Cyprus Dialogue Forum (CDF) was established and its declaration started as follows:

> We as Political Parties, Trade Unions, Business Associations and NGOs from both communities have joined our efforts to create the Cyprus Dialogue Forum. The Cyprus Dialogue Forum is created as a response to a need for an inclusive and permanent space for structured dialogue and knowledge- sharing in which issues and challenges of common concern can be addressed. Through joint reflection and consensus building we believe this dialogue will address issues related to the Cyprus problem, by focusing and strengthening the flow of information between the wider society and the leaderships.[28]

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27 Zinovia Foka, "Shared Space in Conflict Areas: Exploring the Case of Nicosia's Buffer Zone " *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 53.

28 "Declaration of the Cyprus Dialogue Forum," *Cyprus Dialogue Forum* (12 March 2015), http://www.cydialogue.org/images/Declarations/DECLARATIONOFTHECYPRUSDIALOGUEFORUM.pdf.

It is clear that CDF is different to other civil society initiatives for two main reasons: a) it offers a platform for a structured and multi-segment, bi-communal dialogue; b) it includes political actors in the process. From this perspective, CDF can be seen as a Track 1.5 initiative. In summing up Tracks I and II and defining Track 1.5 diplomacy, Susan Allen Nan notes,

> If track-one diplomacy is the official interaction of representatives of states, and if track-two diplomacy is unofficial interaction of unofficial people, in which category do the unofficial interactions of the official representatives of states belong? Track one-and-a-half diplomacy refers to unofficial interactions between official representatives of states.[29]

The CDF manages to play this role to a certain extent by bringing to the negotiating table political party members (i.e., representatives of the official level) from the two communities. Between 2014 and March 2015, around 44 stakeholders, including political parties, became part of the CDF and held over 80 meetings to design the process by which the platform would work. During those first meetings they decided on things such as their values, principles, goals, mandate, agenda, structure, management, participation criteria, etc.[30] These were all recorded in CDF's "Single Text" – a joint and agreed text by stakeholders, just short of a statute.[31] After 2015, more organizations were invited; today, around 104 organizations participate in CDF.

Member organizations are divided into four main categories (or segments): NGOs, Business and Professional Associations, Trade Unions, and Political Parties.[32] Representatives from these segments participate in CDF's six thematic and cross-segment Task Groups; they set the agenda and discuss generating options regarding their thematic areas. The six Task Groups are: Labour Market, Economic Development, Culture and Memory, Political and Security Concern, Education, and Human Rights.[33]

According to the Single Text, the stakeholders' purpose and objectives are: a) providing support to formal negotiations towards a mutually agreed federal solution through suggestions; b) informing the public and preparing the two communities for a solution; c) creating common understanding, multi-perspectivity, a shared vision of the future and building a culture of co-existence; and d) creating space for citizens to raise and address issues

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29 Suzan Allen Nan, "Track I Diplomacy," *Beyond Intractability* (2003), https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/track1_diplomacy/.

30 Data provided by CDF's Secretariat.

31 For more on the Single Text method see, M. Shane Smith, "Single-Text Negotiation," *Beyond Intractability* (2005), https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/single-text-negotiation.

32 One could see the participating organizations here: https://www.cydialogue.org/index.php/2017-04-19-08-12-16/member-organizations.

33 For more information on the Task Groups see, https://www.cydialogue.org/index.php/committees/task-groups.

that might not be included in the official process.[34] It is worth noting that, precisely because of its structure, CDF cannot be seen as a traditional CSO with its own institutional hierarchy and functions; it has, rather, a facilitating and supporting role with the end-goal of bringing together the various parties from the two communities in structured and productive dialogue. This role is undertaken by CDF's Secretariat.[35]

In terms of CDF's activities and successes, Erbay Akansoy, one of the Secretariat's coordinators, explained that the easiest way to look at CDF's advantages is to look at it in comparison to the formal process and look for the added value. The formal process is seen as a non-inclusive process where there is lack of mutual understanding, and which is characterized by conflicting narratives. "It is a competitive space, a zero-sum game," Akansoy noted and continued:

> it is a process that has always been top-down, non-transparent… and there is a very narrow-minded focus on the outcome – i.e., a political settlement. They have tried to overcome this through the technical committees but they, too, are very political and highly dependent on the formal process. If the process collapses they do as well.[36]

The non-formal dialogue, on the other hand, is not competitive because it is not about the parties' positions as such. It is more collaborative and has no timeframe, no deadline. It helps to deconstruct the assumptions that have existed for many years, even between business and trade unions, and even at the intra-communal level.[37] And because no (political) decisions are actually made, the dialogue allows for the development of a common understanding. As Maria Zeniou added: "It is not about getting to a decision but about the options we could explore as solutions to a problem. It aims to create common and genuine understanding, thus enhancing the chances of reaching mutual accommodation."[38]

The CDF Secretariat offered several examples of their success:

■ The Human Rights Task Group managed to put together contributions for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) asked the CDF to provide this information and it was considered a major breakthrough as civil society was involved in providing information about the Turkish-Cypriot community.

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34 CDF, *Single Text* (Nicosia: Cyprus Dialogue Forum, 2015), 5.

35 For the services and support that the Secretariat provides see, https://www.cydialogue.org/index.php/2017-04-19-08-12-16/secretariat-support.

36 Personal Interview with Erbay Akansoy, Secretariat Coordinator, Cyprus Dialogue Forum, Nicosia, 21 March 2018.

37 Ibid.

38 Personal Interview with Maria Zeniou, Secretariat Coordinator, Cyprus Dialogue Forum, Nicosia, 21 March 2018.

■ The CDF is contributing to a federal understanding. "When stakeholders design actions jointly, they are jointly designing the future of Cyprus." And even individually, these organizations will design actions/projects in their own communities according to this joint understanding – which brings them even closer together. In this sense, it is believed that CDF counters – to some extent – the divisive narratives and actions that might be followed at the official level in the two communities.[39]

■ The CDF has been working on developing shared values for education and ways in which the educational systems in the two communities can be shaped in order to meet those values and be more inclusive rather than exclusive. It also works on proposing coordination mechanisms in the context or in spite of a solution.[40]

■ During the first visit of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to Cyprus, the organization will help CDF stakeholders in a technical way to create relevant datasets, identify the problems and find solutions. This support is provided both because of CDF's bottom-up approach as well as because thus far, according to CDF's Secretariat, international organization reports (such as World Bank) lack the interaction with civil society stakeholders (e.g., trade unions and business associations). They get the data that the state provides. CDF has the opportunity and potential of filling this gap, especially when it comes to data in the Turkish-Cypriot community.

■ Turkish-Cypriot institutions often ask CDF for data. The Gender Equality Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus has done the same.

■ The bi-communal organization Relatives of the Missing has been incorporated into the Culture and Memory Task Group. They have been having regular meetings with CDF since May 2015. They are jointly exploring ways of having a Truth and Reconciliation process, even in the absence of formal negotiations, and looking at issues such social transformation and transitional justice.

■ Regardless of the collapse of negotiations at the official level during the Crans Montana conference in the summer of 2017, dialogue within CDF has not lost momentum. By April 2018 the stakeholders had held 21 Task Group meetings, a testament to the commitment and resilience of the Task Groups.

■ After the collapse of the negotiations the CDF was also asked to support the Track I Technical Committee on Culture, which wanted to keep meeting even though it could not do so formally. It met twice with CDF's support and even made an announcement saying that it would continue to work; "this shows the impact of the CDF and that the formal track understands the non-formal process and seeks its support," Akansoy remarked.[41] As such, it is CDF's view that at times it has managed to work as a "back channel" and a de-escalation mechanism.

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39   Interview with Erbay Akansoy.
40   Interview with Maria Zeniou.
41   Interview with Erbay Akansoy.

Despite its successes, CDF faces a number of challenges and limitations as well. One of the struggles of the stakeholders has been to define the ways in which they could contribute to the formal process but without overstepping it. In addition, it took CDF a while to identify its role in the periods before, during and after a possible solution as well as to make sure that it had a continuous momentum regardless of the formal process. Until the Task Groups were set up and work became more specific and productive there were ups and downs in participation and momentum. Because of its operational character, CDF's process is very long and takes time. It took the forum a year to design the agenda and then another nine months to set it up practically, e.g., the methods of discussion, etc.[42] Moreover, dialogue fatigue is also an issue; it tired the stakeholders and it took time to reach the point where they were more focused and better understood their role.[43]

Another situation that CDF has to face is its sensitive position when dealing with international organizations such as the UN or the ILO. The Republic of Cyprus as the only recognized state on the island wants to make sure that it is taken into account in this process. For its part, CDF wants to strike the right balance, addressing each side's concerns without creating or contributing to any antagonistic relations. The newness of such non-formal processes and the fact that Track I "does not yet know how to deal with them" pose a host of challenges to CDF's efforts to create links with formal institutions.[44]

Lastly, another challenge comes from participation and CDF's capacity to mobilize and include certain (political) actors in the process. On the one hand, you have Task Groups such as Culture and Memory, Labour Market and Education, where you have relevant participants from the whole spectrum. The main problem arises in the participation of political parties, and particularly the Greek-Cypriot parties. The only Greek-Cypriot parties participating at this time in the workings of CDF are the main left-wing and main right-wing party, which are also the biggest. Other parties participated in the beginning but withdrew in the course of time because they had disagreements with the process, did not see much value or prospect in the project, or because they thought it was too time-consuming. This problem has been partially mitigated by the participation of party-affiliated organizations.

As a result, the Political and Security Concerns Task Group is the only one that starts and stops. The reason has to do with the developments in Track I, or lack of common understanding on issues such as Security and Governance. Ideally, CDF would also like the rest of the Greek-Cypriot parties to participate as well. The goal would not be for those parties to

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42 Ibid.

43 Interview with Maria Zeniou.

44 Ibid.

agree on something, but to engage in constructive dialogue and be clear as to what they want to achieve. But there are issues that these parties consider non-starters; the challenge, therefore, is for CDF to create an inclusive space for them as well.[45]

This is of course an important challenge – which CDF acknowledges – that limits the ability of the dialogue platform to be inclusive enough with regards to different ideological currents and to achieve results on the most sensitive issues. It also hinders its Track 1.5 capacity given that its impact on the political domain remains restricted and, therefore, largely ineffective. Not least because of the fact that the non-participating parties are the ones with the most objections in terms of the peace process – its content and methodology.

Unite Cyprus Now (UCN)

The third case study, Unite Cyprus Now (UCN), concerns a very different initiative to both H4C and CDF. It is more of a decentralized, grassroots movement than a traditional type of CSO. And it all started with a post on Facebook by Turkish-Cypriot journalist Esra Aygin:

> Tens of thousands of Turkish and Greek Cypriots are out on the streets in every city across Cyprus to protest the failure in the negotiations to unify the island.

> The two leaders, who met for the last time today to determine the fate of the stalled negotiations, failed to take the process to the next final level.

> Both leaders had come to power with the promise of solving the Cyprus problem and unifying the island.

> "They don't have the courage to make the final decisions," said an angry Cypriot. "They kept us hoping for two years, and gave us nothing."

> The size of the demonstrators chanting slogans "We will not accept," and "solution now," and waving olive branches is multiplying by the hour.

> Panicked UN forces are unsure about how to prevent the huge crowds from entering the buffer zone.

> The sweeping demonstrations throughout the island are expected to unsettle the leaderships on both sides and even lead to the postponement of presidential elections in the south, political analysts say.

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45   Interview with Maria Zeniou.

"We are not going home" shouted a demonstrator. "We are on the street until they announce the agreement." ...NOT

This should have been the story I am writing right now... We deserve this treatment... We deserve worse...[46]

Aygin wrote her post on 17 May 2017, just after the last of a series of meetings between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot leaders aimed at restarting the negotiations that had been interrupted two months earlier. After the final meeting there was no announcement and each leader tried to put blame on the other side. "As a journalist I felt very frustrated – because they negotiated for two years and made a lot of progress and all of a sudden they found obstacles and gave no explanations. They did not even feel accountable," Aygin said.[47]

Her Facebook post reported what she felt should have happened given the developments of that day – that thousands of Cypriots would take to the streets and pressure the leaders. Aygin's post was very well received by other Facebook users and people started contacting her agreeing that some sort of popular mobilization was necessary. The next step was the creation of a Facebook Event for a meeting on Ledra/Lokmaci street – a crossing point between the two sides in the center of Nicosia. This location was chosen because it is easily accessible and has a lot of pedestrian traffic. The turnout was around 80 to 90 people, "known and unknown faces." After that, it developed into a daily occurrence as people wanted to keep putting pressure on their leaderships for a settlement of the Cyprus Problem. Participants made a lot of noise to demonstrate their frustration over the state of things at the official level.[48] People started brainstorming about how to bring Cypriots together using poetry, music, dancing, etc.; according to UCN members, the whole thing developed into a celebration of what unites Cypriots.[49]

Then a volunteer graphic designer stepped in and created placards – everything happened through volunteers. Although the movement started out of negativity at the lack of progress in the peace talks, the announcement that the two leaders would meet in New York in early June 2017 boosted UCN's momentum and turned it into a positive movement of support to the official process. At its peak, UCN mobilized around 350-400 people but when certain political parties got involved in support, "thousands of people showed up."[50] UCN also managed to get support from the Stelios Foundation, which agreed to cover tickets and

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46   For Esra Aygin's Facebook post see, https://www.facebook.com/esra.yalgin/posts/10155451183514467.

47   Personal Interview with Esra Aygin, initiator of Unite Cyprus Now, Nicosia, 23 April 2018.

48   Ibid.

49   Personal Interview with Kemal Baykallı, core Unite Cyprus Now member, Nicosia, 6 March 2018; Personal Interview with Andromachi Sophocleous, core Unite Cyprus Now member, Nicosia, 6 March 2018.

50   Interviews with Kemal Baykallı and Andromachi Sophocleous.

accommodation for 10 people to travel to Crans Montana, Switzerland, where a crucial peace conference took place in July 2017.[51] UCN participants were upset with the fact that ordinary people were not involved; that it was all left to the political elites, and that leaders did not engage civil society.[52] "This is what we wanted to represent at Crans Montana,"[53] Aygin noted and continued, "we don't care so much about the technical aspects of the solution but about the future of our children, democracy, human rights, freedoms, respect for everyone regardless of identity."[54] This inclusive and rather "apolitical" approach was shared by other UCN members as well: "UCN wanted a solution – an agreement, nothing else," Kemal Baykallı remarked.[55]

Indeed, because of its spontaneous character, UCN did not have a defined constitution or organizational structure and, therefore, no specific political or ideological framework. Its sole purpose, at least during the initial stages, was to apply pressure on Track I in support of "a Bizonal Bicommunal Federation (BBF) with political equality." The main "ideology is unite Cyprus," Aygin added.[56] The beginning of the Crans Montana peace conference and its subsequent collapse had a multidimensional impact on UCN. As Andromachi Sophocleous noted,[57]

> When Crans Montana collapsed, we realized the burden that fell on our shoulders. Until then it was politically acceptable to support the solution… After Crans Montana we found ourselves in the middle of a blame game. We also realized that everything was vested in two leaders trusting each other. Many members started to disappear.

There was a "huge loss of momentum and people felt that it [UCN] was not making any difference, they felt that they didn't matter."[58] In addition, there were many people from the party in government, DISY, who participated in UCN prior to the collapse of the talks. Because of the government's involvement in the peace conference, when the talks collapsed, those people distanced themselves from UCN. As a result, the movement was left with more liberal

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51   Antonis Michael, "Bicommunal Movement Seeks to Raise Islanders Profile in Geneva," *Cyprus Mail* (28 June 2017), http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/06/28/bicommunal-movement-seeks-raise-islanders-profile-geneva/.

52   Interviews with Esra Aygin, Kemal Baykallı, and Andromachi Sophocleous.

53   UCN's presence at Crans Montana was widely covered in international media as well. See e.g., Helena Smith, "Cyprus Reunification Talks Collapse Amid Angry Scenes," *The Guardian* (7 July 2017), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/07/cyprus-reunification-talks-collapse-amid-angry-scenes; "Cyprus Reunification Talks Enter Critical Phase as Leaders Submit Plans," *The Guardian* (3 July 2017), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/03/cyprus-reunification-talks-enter-critical-phase-as-leaders-submit-plans.

54   Interview with Esra Aygin.

55   Interview with Kemal Baykallı.

56   Interview with Esra Aygin.

57   Interview with Andromachi Sophocleous.

58   Interview with Esra Aygin.

and left-wing participants, though they often shared different understandings of the UCN's role. Moreover, it should be noted that the Turkish-Cypriot right wing never got involved in the movement.[59]

Despite the challenges that the Crans Montana collapse brought about, it also ushered UCN into a new period. A vision and mission[60] started developing after participants managed to "collect their pieces;" "we had to find something to keep people motivated but also have a pro-peace voice – there was none other. If we disappeared there would be no one calling for solution," Sophocleous said.[61] UCN realized that it could not advocate for a united Cyprus for all Cypriots (i.e., the movement's vision) unless Cypriots on both sides were connected and jointly mobilized. Social Media remains central to UCN's campaigning and mobilization efforts.[62] Social Media has also allowed UCN to continue to exist during the times of crisis while reassuring participants of the movement's transparency regarding its goals and activities.[63]

Thus, after the collapse of the talks, UCN focused on the grassroots level and on exercising pressure on the leaders towards making a difference on the ground. The vision for a comprehensive settlement never went away but the focus shifted towards people's daily lives and issues such as "education, the crossing points, language teaching, cooperation, and the lifting of psychological barriers."[64] A UCN delegation met with both leaders after Crans Montana and made their suggestions, telling them to work on day-to-day things. In terms of its positions regarding the official talks, UCN remains committed to BBF based on UN parameters; it also believes that the "Guterres Framework"[65] is well balanced and prepared and that it sheds light on the thorny negotiation issues. According to Aygin, none of UCN activists has any objection to this framework.[66] The mere fact that UCN members managed to meet the two leaders is important and demonstrates the role they acquired. This

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59 Ibid.

60 For the Vision and Mission of UCN see, https://www.facebook.com/unitecyprusnow/photos/a.1539168596094352.1073741829.1537808686230343/1665663750111502/?type=3&theater.

61 Interview with Andromachi Sophocleous.

62 Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/unitecyprusnow/?hc_ref=ARSLQne6_NSxU-HVtQv7vmzt_qsVS6y0lbWAc1sGXep-rAfqdCvnsF1sve7_KxwkzEM&fref=nf; Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1363645650384999/; Twitter account: https://twitter.com/UniteCyprusNow.

63 Interview with Kemal Baykallı.

64 Interview with Esra Aygin.

65 Refers to UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres's, efforts at the Crans Montana conference to propose "a framework for simultaneously resolving six major outstanding issues at both tables as elements of a final package that… would lead to a comprehensive settlement." See, UN, "Report of the Secretary-General on His Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus," *United Nations Security Council* S/2017/814 (28 September 2017): 5.

66 Interview with Esra Aygin.

achievement could be attributed to the international media coverage that UCN members received during their presence in Crans Montana, to their persisting demonstrations in Nicosia and, possibly, to influential persons that participate in the movement.

After Crans Montana, UCN members also started to think more about their organizational structure and decision-making process, which they sought to determine through a series of meetings even as they tried to avoid a hierarchical model. Despite these efforts, concrete and stable outcomes have not yet been achieved, and participants are still looking for the appropriate model. When asked about their limitations, UCN members agree on the issue of structure and cohesiveness. The lack of an organizational framework, which was in part a symptom of its spontaneity, has always been a significant limitation – one that restricted their influence. The lack of common ideology and the weak structure are also linked to this.[67] Other limitations include: the language barrier, since most of UCN's public activity is carried out in English; the issue of finances, since the more the resources the bigger the impact; and, according to UCN, the fact that Cypriots do not feel empowered – they think that their voice does not matter or have an impact. This is something that the movement is also trying to address. Lastly, UCN members identify the fact that each side tends to disparage the other as a great – and otherwise old – problem that affects them as well: "both sides blame us and ridicule us because we are trying to put pressure on both sides. Some said that Turkey initiated this movement. Even leaders who participate in this process denigrated UCN – not openly, we know where most of the rumors are coming from."[68]

UCN also faces the challenge that is posed by the dependency that the grassroots and civil society actors have on the official process. Despite its success in certain areas, UCN's declining momentum as a result of the collapse of the peace talks brought about great disappointment within the movement. Baykallı's words illustrate vividly this reality:[69]

> We made the right analysis but our biggest achievement was survival. Federation, forgiveness, etc., were outside of our powers. But UCN published announcements on sensitive issues trying to bridge the extreme positions, and change the narrative. We challenged the official narratives without using a segmented language. We provided information to both sides – objectively. But we discovered that civil society is an illusion, a lie. Each segment is focused on its own agenda. It's very difficult to come together for a common goal. Cypriots curse their politicians, but side with them instead of mobilizing in support of the talks. We shouldn't be affected by elections; we should be able to affect them. People are disinterested. Even core persons of UCN use official rhetoric, segmented rhetoric.

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67   Interviews with Kemal Baykallı and Andromachi Sophocleous.

68   Interview with Esra Aygin.

69   Interview with Kemal Baykallı.

Once again it becomes obvious that political affiliations often hinder inter-communal cooperation and bi-communal mobilization. And yet, UCN has not given up. According to its members, it continues to have the means to participate in the public discourse and mobilize masses. And it intends to continue, in any way it can to help – by contributing to the debate, to the official negotiations, to everyday interaction between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, and to shaping a pro-peace political culture.[70]

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[70] Interviews with Kemal Baykallı, Esra Aygin, and Andromachi Sophocleous.

MEASURING CIVIL SOCIETY SUCCESS

Evidence related to inter-communal relations and the bi-communal movement since 2003 has been gathered from time to time, and opinions have varied regarding the impact of the checkpoint opening on Tracks I and II. In a survey analysis first published in 2008,[71] three main politico-ideological clusters were identified in each community: 1) Pro-Reconciliation Critic of Ethno-nationalism; 2) Communitarianism; and 3) Ethno-nationalism. Among other results, the analysis finds that only "the majority of the pro-reconciliation groups in both communities (70.3% of GCs and 75.2% of TCs)[72] saw the opening of the checkpoints as an opportunity for the development of better bi-communal relations in a spirit of furthering trust,"[73] that is, those Cypriots who maintain high levels of contact with members of the other community.[74] The survey also revealed that higher levels of contact predict trends such as more trust and forgiveness towards, as well as lower threat perceptions of, the other community. And yet only 33.4% of Greek-Cypriots and 20% of Turkish-Cypriots fell within the pro-reconciliation cluster.[75]

According to a later (2011) CIVICUS report on Cyprus (Civil Society Index Report), 50% of Greek-Cypriot responders stated that they do not visit the other community at all; 26% responded that they have visited the Turkish-Cypriot community one to four times since 2004 and 13% once a year. Importantly enough, the most common reasons for visiting are: to see their birthplace, pilgrimage, and visits to friends and relatives.[76] On the other hand, more

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[71] Charis Psaltis, "Χαρτογραφώντας Το Πεδίο Των Διακοινοτικών Σχέσεων: Μια Κοινωνιο-Ψυχολογική Ανάλυση [Mapping the Field of Inter-Communal Relations: A Socio-Psychological Analysis]," *Diethnis kai Evropaiki Politiki: Triminiaia Politiki kai Oikonomiki Eptheorisi* 11 (2008).

[72] GCs: Greek-Cypriots; TCs: Turkish-Cypriots.

[73] Charis Psaltis, "Intergroup Trust and Contact in Transition: A Social Representations Perspective on the Cyprus Conflict," in *Trust and Conflict: Representation, Culture and Dialogue*, ed. Ivana Markova and Alex Gillespie (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 97.

[74] Psaltis, "Χαρτογραφώντας Το Πεδίο Των Διακοινοτικών Σχέσεων."

[75] 37.7% of Greek-Cypriots were associated with Communitarianism and 28.9% with Ethno-nationalism; 43% of Turkish-Cypriots were associated with Communitarianism and 37 with Ethno-nationalism. Psaltis, "Intergroup Trust and Contact in Transition: A Social Representations Perspective on the Cyprus Conflict," 91-95.

[76] Michalis Avraam and Bulent Kanol, eds., *An Assessment of Civil Society in Cyprus - Civicus: Civil Society Index Report for Cyprus* (Cyprus: UNDP-USAID, 2011), 113-14.

than 40% of Turkish-Cypriots have never visited the Greek-Cypriot community while only about 18% stated that they visit regularly (at least a couple of times a month); leisure and shopping were recorded as the most common reasons for visiting.[77]

CIVICUS notes another important reality: that even though CSO participation in bi-communal activities since 2004 increased from 40% to 70%, "the enthusiasm of civil society in this regard does not seem to be matched by the general public;" not only that, but the public seems to be much more skeptical with regards to the impact bi-communal activities have on the peace process.[78] The statistics are from 2011 but the reality has not changed much. All three case studies analyzed above point to the same, persisting challenge: the difficulty of mobilizing the greater public to the end of providing input to, pressuring or supporting Track I. Increased contact between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots evidently works but its results are limited precisely because of this challenge – communication and contact exists primarily between those Cypriots who are already positively inclined towards reconciliation and the solution of the Cyprus Problem. To be sure, movement between the two sides has also increased, but that does not in itself predict more meaningful contact between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots or more common attitudes towards the kind of the settlement,[79] especially if the main reasons for visiting are shopping and leisure. It should be added that, though smaller, the Turkish-Cypriot civil society is proportionally bigger and more active than the Greek-Cypriot; the former evolved to a great extent in response to the social, economic and political needs that exist within the community because of the particular *status quo*.[80] Moreover, (bi-communal) peace and reconciliation CSOs constitute only a small part of civil society in the two communities. The small number of this kind of CSOs is another factor that limits their impact.

A series of surveys conducted between 2013 and 2016 by SCORE Index showed that the propensity towards reconciliation has not changed significantly (see Table I). Likewise, the variables of Cultural Distance and Quality of Contact, which are also indicative of the relations between the two communities, have also remained at rather low levels especially in the Greek-Cypriot community. What is even more interesting is that during 2015 and 2016, a mostly positive period for the Track I peace process, the quality of contact decreased significantly, a fact that goes very much against the basic premise of the Contact Theory. One could argue that for the Greek-Cypriots this was partly due to the interruption of negotiations in late 2014 until well into 2015, due to Turkish violations of the Republic of Cyprus's sovereign

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[77] Ibid., 114.

[78] Ibid.

[79] George Psyllides, "TCs view GCs far more positively than 10 years ago, surveys show," *Cyprus Mail* (6 January 2018), https://cyprus-mail.com/2018/01/06/tcs-view-gcs-far-positively-10-years-ago-surveys-show/.

[80] Ibid.

rights in its Exclusive Economic Zone.[81] It is also possible that, for Turkish-Cypriots, the repercussions of a solution to the Cyprus Problem posed a challenge, especially when it came to the Territory and Property chapters of the negotiations. For example, the lowest values of intergroup contact among Turkish-Cypriots were found in areas such as Karpasia and Morfou.[82] In the context of the negotiations and with the prospect of a settlement, the latter would have been returned to Greek-Cypriots, while it is possible that many Turkish settlers who currently live in Karpasia feared that they would lose their properties to their Greek-Cypriot owners.

Table I: Variables of Inter-Communal Relations in Cyprus

Greek-Cypriots towards Turkish-Cypriots				
Variable	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Reconciliation	6	6.2	6.8	N/A
Cultural Distance	6.1	7.0	5.8	N/A
Quality of Contact	6	5.6	2	2.6
Turkish-Cypriots towards Greek-Cypriots				
Variable	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Reconciliation	6.9	6.2	5.0	N/A
Cultural Distance	5.4	6.4	6.3	N/A
Quality of Contact	7	9	2.5	3.4

Created with data from SCORE Index, http://scoreforpeace.org/ [83]

The poor multiplying effect of intergroup contact can be also seen in the case of women and youth in the two communities. For example, a survey conducted in the Greek-Cypriot community revealed that young people distance themselves emotionally from the Cyprus Problem while most of the respondents never had any contact or visited the Turkish-Cypriot community citing religious, cultural and language reasons.[84] Similarly, even though women

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81 Elias Hazou, "Eide: No Prospects for Resumption of Talks," *Cyprus Mail* (14 January 2015), http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/01/14/eide-should-brief-unsc-objectively-says-the-government/.

82 http://scoreforpeace.org/?country=1&year=29&dimension=Other%20indicators&indicator=Intergroup%20contact&of=TCs&towards=GCs

83 The values are based on a 1-10 scale. The bigger the value the bigger the propensity towards Reconciliation, the bigger the Cultural Distance, the better the Quality of Contact.

84 Ioanna Christodoulou et al., "Investigating the Roots of Political Disengagement of Young Greek Cypriots," *Contemporary Social Science* 12, no. 3-4 (2017).

are in principle more pro-reconciliation and "key to ending violent conflict and to the estab-lishment of lasting peace,"[85] a recent survey found that in the case of Cyprus less than 10% of women are in contact with people from the other community.[86] From the perspective of the above-mentioned data, one could go so far as to argue that, in Cyprus, higher levels of interaction between the two communities and higher prospects of settlement may create a negative effect in perceptions about the other community, probably out of fear at the changes that the alteration of the *status quo* would bring about. Furthermore, it is worth noting that, apart from the challenge of mobilizing people for peace, the problem of the limited ability of CSOs to influence decision-making at the policy level has not changed over the past decade or so.[87] As this report has shown, Track I remains largely dissociated from Track II and even Track 1.5.

[85] Anna Koukkides-Procopiou, "Gender and Inclusive Security: A New Approach to the Cyprus Problem within the Framework on Security Dialogue," *Berghof Foundation & SeeD* Security Dialogue Project - Background Paper (2017): 8. And, UNSC, "Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security," *S/RES/1325* (2000), http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/#resolution; Olga Demetriou, Umut Bozkurt, and Yiouli Taki, "Women's Peace in Cyprus: Recommendations of the Gender Advisory Team (GAT) on Implementing UNSCR 1325 Provisions on Women, Peace and Security," *PRIO Cyprus Center Report* 3 (2012).

[86] Marilena Evangelou, "Ελάχιστο Ποσοστό Γυναικών Έχει Επαφή Με Την Άλλη Κοινότητα [Only a Small Percentage of Women Have Contacts with the Other Community] " *Politis* (19 April 2018), http://politis.com.cy/article/elachisto-pososto-ginekon-echi-epafi-me-tin-alli-kinotita-webtv.

[87] UNDP, *Participatory Civil Society Assessments - Experiences from the Field: Cyprus, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mozambique, Uruguay, Viet Nam* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2011), 14.

CONCLUSIONS: PRE-CONDITIONS FOR AN INCLUSIVE PEACE PROCESS AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE

According to Thania Paffenholz, there are seven functions for civil society in peace-building: 1) protecting citizens against violence from all parties; 2) monitoring human rights violations, including the implementation of peace agreements, etc.; 3) advocating for peace and human rights; 4) socializing people to values of peace and democracy as well as developing the in-group identity of marginalized groups; 5) working for inter-group social cohesion by bringing people together from adversarial groups; 6) facilitating dialogue on the local and national levels between all sorts of actors; and 7) service delivering to create entry points for peace-building.[88]

As seen in this report, civil society in Cyprus has managed to achieve only some of the above functions, and to a limited extent. There have been of course improvements, but there are also fundamental problems that have persisted. Identifying and addressing these problems is imperative so that the pre-conditions for an inclusive, multileveled peace process are formed, as these will ensure that sustainable peace is possible. They could be summarized as follows, in no particular order:

1. *Ideological confines within pro-peace CSOs*
    As demonstrated repeatedly, because most pro-peace CSOs play a primarily supportive role for Track I without particularly challenging the framework, content or methodology of the negotiations, it becomes very difficult for them to appeal to people who see things differently. This by extension precludes the opportunity of addressing and alleviating, if possible, their fears and concerns or the possibility to actually take into account their input. As Aygin of UCN put it,

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[88] Thania Paffenholz, "Civil Society and Peacebuilding," *The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding* CCDP Working Paper no. 4 (2010): 5.

we don't have time to deal with the hardliners. But we want to approach people who don't care. There are people who are scared, for example, because of language. There are people on both sides who feel disempowered. There is also this belief that people don't have an impact – but people can make a lot of difference. We are not excluding anyone but as a grassroots movement, we are limited by a lot of things... Right-wing people won't make the difference. Most people are undecided – this is the group we are targeting.[89]

For H4C it has been easier to play a more "neutral" role due to its bridging character. But its success has been limited outside the pool of people who are already pro-peace, albeit H4C staff expects that they will have an impact in the long run. For its part, CDF has no ideology of its own, and despite its success in getting dozens of civil society and political organizations to dialogue, the absence of Greek-Cypriot centrist and right-wing political parties greatly limits the success and impact that the platform can have – at least in terms of informing Track I. It is essential that pro-peace CSOs listen to and address the concerns behind the – what is often called "hardline" – positions of those who have different opinions.

2. *Grassroots participation hindered by political affiliations and party loyalties*
However, ideological barriers do not exist solely among pro-peace CSOs. External politico-ideological attachments and/or political party loyalties often hinder sustained participation, mobilization and socialization among people with different perspectives and beliefs. This was revealed to be true of both CDF and UCN. Not least, the problem has to do with how many people adhere to official master narratives (i.e., often mono-perspectival and selective views of history and the conflict in question), which "construct a threatened self and generate distrust"[90] towards the other community, especially during times of crisis. Socialization is thus rendered, once again, ineffective. At the grassroots level, the problem can only be addressed by deconstructing official narratives using facts instead of perceptions. At the same time, there is a need for the pro-peace movement on both sides to mobilize outside Nicosia, in an inclusive manner, to reach out and inform people in other cities who are usually indifferent and who find it easier to adhere to official polarizing narratives.

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89 Interview with Esra Aygin.
90 Charis Psaltis et al., "Social Representations of the Past in Post-Conflict Societies: Adherence to Official Historical Narratives and Distrust through Heightened Threats," in *History Education and Conflict Transformation: Social Psychological Theories, History Teaching and Reconciliation*, ed. Charis Psaltis, Mario Carretero, and Sabina Cehajic-Clancy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 98.

3. *Lack of communication-connection between Track I and Track 1.5 or II*
    Perhaps one of the most important obstacles to CSO efforts to be effective is the fact that
    either there are no communication channels between Track I and Track II or Track I does
    not listen and does not take into account what civil society has to say. It is also the case
    that the very methodology of the peace process is by definition little to non-transparent
    – a reality that leaves civil society feeling weak, powerless and irrelevant. Any political
    leadership that truly cares about peace, and sustainable peace at that, should address the
    deeper problems that produce and reproduce the problem within the society.[91] And this
    can only be effectively achieved through open communication links with civil society.
    Such an approach, in turn, presupposes that the leadership has the necessary vision and
    political will.

    Overall, it is evident that there has been very little success at both the official and
    grassroots levels. As Charis Psaltis and Huseyin Cakal write,

    the geographical division and the low levels of contact between members of the two
    communities suggest that Cypriot identity is still not an identity that symbolically
    encompasses both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots for most of the participants in our
    research. In fact, one of the main challenges for the viability of a reunited federal Cyprus
    is the promotion of an inclusive form of civic identity or constitutional patriotism as
    Cypriots irrespective of the ethnic origin of the inhabitants of Cyprus.[92]

Indeed, the emergence of a new Cypriot identity, ethnically speaking, may not be possible. It
might not even be necessary. What would certainly be a requirement is for both communities
to be able to live together under one state. In order for that to happen, and until that happens,
inter-communal relations and contact as well as bi-communalism cannot be marginalized; it
cannot be the exception and it cannot be only about a few Cypriots. Common everyday needs
are calling for solutions. Common needs and common solutions give rise to common interests
and benefits. Common interests and benefits have the capability of removing historical and
ideological barriers to communication, cooperation, development, security and peace. Even
the strongest positions, the respective communal "red lines," can change if the concerns lying
behind them are identified, understood and addressed.[93]

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91 Zenonas Tziarras, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict: Comparing Cyprus and Sri Lanka," in *Contemporary Social and Political Aspects of the Cyprus Problem*, ed. Jonathan Warner, David W. Lovell, and Michalis Kontos (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 223-25.

92 Charis Psaltis and Huseyin Cakal, "Social Identity in a Divided Cyprus," in *Understanding Peace and Conflict through Social Identity Theory: Contemporary Global Perspectives*, ed. Shelley McKeown, Reeshma Haji, and Neil Ferguson (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 241.

93 Emine Eminel Sülün and Zenonas Tziarras, "Federal Cyprus in the Context of Regional Security," *Berghof Foundation & SeeD* Security Dialogue Project - Background Paper (2017).

Civil society feels that Track I should listen, and that CSOs can and should make it listen. On the other hand, officials in Track I often think that they know better. The truth is that a paradigm change in the peace process, and inter-communal relations more generally, necessitates a top-down initiative as well. It is important that inter-communal contact, grassroots mobilization, the cultivation of cooperation in sectors of common interest, and Track I-Track II communication are somehow institutionalized. This could gradually reduce the various obstacles and address the identified problems – not by promoting or imposing any specific political goals with respect to the settlement of the conflict, but by fostering a genuine dialogue between the various levels of society as well as generating solutions to everyday problems with the prospect of a common future and sustainable peace for all Cypriots.

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Against the background of Cypriot civil society's growing role since the early 2000s, this report aims to track the progress or lack thereof and identify the limitations and prospects of pro-peace grassroots mobilization in Cyprus. As such, it focuses on three contemporary case studies of pro-peace civil society in Cyprus: *The Home for Cooperation, Cyprus Dialogue Forum and United Cyprus Now.* Each case study provides a different perspective of pro-peace civil society mobilization. *The Home for Cooperation* is looked at as one of the older and main initiatives given that it functions as a meeting space that hosts other pro-peace civil society organizations and initiatives as well. The *Cyprus Dialogue Forum* is examined as probably the biggest, most ambitious and most structured platform of multi-segment inter-communal dialogue thus far. The *Unite Cyprus Now* initiative is quite different to the previous two in that it emerged rather spontaneously at the grassroots level, with extensive use of social media, and it still remains largely decentralized.

The report goes on to assesses the success, limitations and potential of those pro-peace initiatives and lists a number of pre-conditions that need to be pursued at the grassroots and official levels for a more impactful approach to peacebuilding and reconciliation. It is ultimately argued that, in addition to efforts that should be made by civil society towards a more inclusive and effective grassroots movement, Track I has great responsibility in providing the space to civil society thus allowing it to be empowered and be part of the solution both in terms of improving everyday inter-communal relations as well as supporting the official peace process.