

Annual Report
31st December 2007

EPES Mandala Consulting



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General van der Graaf writes about EPES Mandala



The roots of EPES Mandala go back ten years to Timbuktu, where I met co-founders Robin Poulton, Ibrahim ag Yousouf and Tore Rose lighting the very first Flame of Peace with Presidents A.O. Konaré and Jerry Rawlings.

*Mali's weapon bonfire celebrated the end of a Tuareg-Arab rebellion with the disarmament and demobilization of several thousand former rebels. **We realised at once the importance of learning from experience, in order to avoid re-inventing the peace building and DDR wheel over and over again.***

This conviction has been strengthened over the past ten years during subsequent missions across the world.

In Cambodia the European Union's small arms assistance programme (EU ASAC) started with the group who had worked together in Mali. New experts joined the programme - Ad Sprangemei-

jer, David de Beer and Dennis Brennan, each brought his specific expertise. To develop our expertise and preserve our teamwork, we established EPES Mandala. Inside this consultancy we bring together our management, training, legal, security and diplomatic expertise which can contribute to the stability and security of conflict countries.

Our field experience and success makes EPES Mandala a unique consultancy firm where we have learned to work together under stress, and in places where quick reaction is needed.

General Henny van der Graaf

Somalia: the National Reconciliation Congress Initiative

After a long and chaotic period of uncertainty the National Reconciliation Congress finally opened on 15th July 2007. This was the first peace conference occurring inside Somalia since 1996. It was organised and supported by UNDP who appointed EPES Mandala's senior consultant Tore Rose as mission leader.

The "remote control" organisation of this conference was an achievement in itself as Tore Rose and his three EPES Mandala colleagues were constrained to work from Nairobi because of the tense security situation in Mogadisciu.

Its outcome was the adoption of decisions, resolutions, and implementation plans with the potential of building sustainable peace and stability in Somalia.

Among other activities, the 2600

delegates representing major clans in Somalia adopted an 8 point resolution targeting :

- resolution of all Somali clan disagreements/disputes
- clans and armed groups to commit themselves to total disarmament
- return of properties of all types to their rightful owners
- good governance, political reform and democratic transition
- resource and power sharing
- extremism and its effects on the country
- unity of the country and its people
- women's rights

While the International Contact Group welcomed the final recommendations and the optimism of the President, there are many problems

Paving "a new political path that will win the confidence of the Somali people", said President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed

to overcome.

After the Congress, the political situation became, once again, tense, although an important and very positive recommendation of the Congress has been adopted: that (technocratic) Ministers may be appointed from outside Parliament's membership. Looking back from the perspective of the end of the year, the July-August period of the Congress was clearly the most positive recent period in Somalia but unfortunately it was not sustained.

Evaluation of UNDP DDR Program in Afghanistan

Dr Poulton, EPES Mandala's Managing Partner, led the July-September independent evaluation of UNDP's DDR programme known as the Afghan New Beginnings Project.

ANBP was very well run, and was **very successful in disarming 65,000 combatants, and collecting more than 106,000 light and heavy weapons.** DDR has been the most successful part of Afghanistan's SSR. Sadly, the failed counter-narcotics strategies and the International Coalition's lack of understanding of Afghan society may turn the DDR success into an irrelevance.

Most DDR projects have greater

Lessons learned for a successful reintegration:

Disarmament of all armed groups

Destruction of illegal and surplus weapons and ammunition

Demobilization and Reinsertion include health checks, literacy and HR training

Reintegration of armed groups and ex-combatants into civilian life

Rehabilitation of infrastructure and people, including youths

Resettlement of displaced populations with special attention to women and children

Reconciliation between communities, using local mediation mechanisms.

success with the Desarmament and Demobilization than with the Reintegration, and Afghanistan was no exception: you cannot achieve proper re-integration in less than 5-7 years, and the donors funded ANBP for only 3 years.

Furthermore the DD is a military operation, while the R process requires sustainable development skills that soldiers do not possess. The DDR shorthand is misleading. We prefer the term **3D4R** which emphasizes that the R is longer.

This is an important lesson learned from the Afghan experience, and it has also been learned elsewhere.

Peace-Making in West Africa

The Nigerian delta

Robin Poulton was invited by the **Nigerian Presidency and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPRC)** to participate in a peace-making process in the Delta States of southern Nigeria. The meetings took place in Bayelsa State during a very tense period shortly before the elections which carried the Governor of Bayelsa State, Goodluck Johnathan, to the Vice-Presidency of Nigeria. This offers a real chance for the national government to work for peace in the Niger River Delta.

The troubles that disrupt oil

production and lead to kidnappings are due to poverty, and this is jointly the responsibility of the federal government and the oil companies. The mis-management of oil resources by successive military regimes in Nigeria is well-established. At the same time – and notwithstanding the responsibility of government – much more could have been done by the oil companies (led by Shell) to tackle poverty and reduce tensions. A British journalist wondered why the village next to Shell's floodlit golf course had no electricity. A Shell manager told him, "If one village gets electricity, they'll all want it." Precisely! If Shell gave all the villages electricity, the anger and violence

might wither away. We would very much like to help oil companies and local state governments work out new policies to bring peace to the region.

« Peace-dividend » activities in Ivory Coast

In December senior consultant Tore Rose began working with the Prime Minister's Office and UNDP in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to put together a number of relatively short-term 'peace dividend' activities for donor financing, following the political agreement reached between the President and the rebel forces (Forces Nouvelles) earlier in the year.

This work will continue into 2008.

*"If one village gets electricity, they'll all want it",
a Shell manager said.*

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EPES Mandala Consulting is an experienced, multi-national team working for disarmament, peace and development. Our African roots go back to the 1991 democratic revolution in Mali and armed conflict in the Sahara. **In 1996 we lit our first Flame of Peace in Timbuktu**, destroying rebel small arms and light weapons (SALW). We have worked on peace building in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Somalia, and in the Balkans, **evolving our conflict transformation methodology with a non-military approach to disarmament, peace and development.**

EPES Mandala news !

New office in Brussels!

EPES Mandala Consulting celebrated the opening of its new office in Brussels!

The office was set up in June 2007 to get closer to our EU clients and promote our work. It is managed by Namuezi FEDI, Management and Marketing Officer, who has also worked in Sri Lanka and Haiti before settling in Belgium.



EPES Mandala expands its activities

In **2008**, EPES Mandala will be adding a new speciality to its range of expertise: **human security and especially child protection.**

The effect of wars on development and especially on children is devastating. There can be no recovery and lasting peace without a general feeling of safety and stability in the country. Fighting for children's rights gives a chance to the leaders and the civil society of tomorrow to build a prosperous and peaceful country.



Michelle Elcoat Poulton joined the board as a Managing Partner of the company in July 2007 and will be heading this branch.

Michelle was Vice-President for international programs at the Christian Children's Fund. She worked for more than 25 years in favor of child rights both in the field (Mali, Gambia, Afghanistan, etc) and at head quarters.

She has extensive knowledge on human rights and the impact of armed conflicts on the civil population and development in general.

EPES Mandala is proud to offer her expertise and that of her network of consultants.