

Common Bond Institute

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COMMON BOND INSTITUTE (CBI) is a US based NGO that grew out of the Association for Humanistic Psychology's Soviet-American (International) Professional Exchange. First established in 1990, CBI organizes and sponsors international conferences, professional training programs, relief efforts, and professional exchanges internationally, and actively provides consulting, coordination, and networking support to assist newly emerging human service and civil society organizations in developing countries.

Cultivating the fundamental elements of a consciousness of peace and local capacity building are seen as natural, effective antidotes to small group radical extremism and large group despair, as well as to hardship and suffering in the human condition. To this end, enabling each society to effectively resolve and transform conflicts, satisfy core human needs within their communities, and construct effective, holistic mechanisms for self determination, self esteem, and fundamental human dignity and worth is the purpose of our work. CBI is grounded in the application of humanistic psychology's principles in it's commitment to capacity building at both the grass roots and social institutional level, and in providing the individual in society with practical skills and visions for transforming conflict in their day to day lives. It works to actively form strategic alliances and partnerships with organizations, groups, and individuals dedicated to nurturing global relationships as a whole in creating and promoting an authentic world culture of peace.

CONFERENCES: In 1992 CBI established and for 16 years has co-sponsored the **ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION (ICR)** in collaboration with HARMONY Institute of Psychotherapy and Counseling of St. Petersburg, Russia. It occurs each May and is open to all globally. This multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural conference brings together hundreds of participants from around the world to explore core issues and share effective skills. It has received support by Former US President Clinton, Former Russian President Yeltsin, St. Petersburg Governor Yakovlev, and is endorsed by a growing list of over 85 universities and organizations internationally. Each year CBI promotes and supports cooperation between participants and organizations represented.

In addition to numerous other international conferences organized since 1993, in 2004 CBI established and sponsors the **International Youth Conference on "The ECOLOGY OF WAR AND PEACE (EWP),"** held in cooperation with HARMONY Institute, the International Humanistic Psychology Association, and the Jane Goodall Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia.

In 2006 CBI launched a new **Annual International Conference on "ENGAGING THE OTHER,"** held in conjunction with an edited book in progress addressing psychological concepts of "The Other" in a cross-cultural, multidisciplinary forum contributed to by authors from around the world. The basis of the **book project** is a chapter contributed by CBI's director to a book titled "The Psychology of Terrorism." The purpose of the conference is to promote a wider public dialogue to address the roots of negative stereotyping and prejudice, how to move past artificial barriers of misunderstanding and distrust to cultivate compassion and capacity for appreciation of diversity, reconciliation, and peace, and how to apply the results to the current state of world relationships. Among products are published results, recorded proceedings, media and art images, building a working network of activists and change agents, and linking the program with related international conferences in various regions of the world to build on the mission of each event for a wider impact. Planned are a film documentary and an **"Engaging The Other" training program.**

TRAININGS: In 1998 CBI established the **INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION.** Currently two projects are operated out of this program:

► **"CATASTROPHIC TRAUMA RECOVERY (CTR) TRAINING"** - Over the last 9 years this project has offered trauma recovery skills training to local counselors and relief workers assisting victims of violence, war, and disaster in regions of conflict, helping to create local teams of qualified trainers to expand the training pool. Intensive trainings are provided to counselors in Russia, the Caucuses, Balkans, and Middle East and include trainees brought from all over the world. Components of this training project currently being developed include:

[1] Collaborating with local human service organizations in **Nablus, West Bank** to provide training, operational assistance, and material resources to establish the **Bait Al Hayat / House of Life trauma treatment center for children.**

[2] Providing training and professional resources to the **Gaza Community Mental Health Program** in Gaza & the **Palestinian Counseling Center** in the West Bank.

[3] **The Palestinian-Israeli Joint Trauma Recovery Training Project:** a joint training project in trauma treatment for Palestinian and Israeli therapists in order to assist victims of violence in the Middle East conflict; and to facilitate cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian mental health centers.

[4] Provide training, on-going clinical consultation, professional resources, and an infrastructure plan to a team of Iraqi counselors to staff a **trauma treatment center in Iraq**.

Trainings are also provided each year immediately following the ICR Conference in Russia in cooperation with the EMDR Humanitarian Assistance Program. Follow up supervision, consultation, and networking is offered to all trainees from the cooperating organizations. The CTR model, developed by CBI and designed for working with large populations of trauma victims in societies where the internal support systems have been debilitated by catastrophe, is included in a book edited by Dr. Stanley Krippner on the treatment of large civilian populations traumatized by war: "The Psychological Impact of War Trauma on Civilian Populations."

▶ **"CAPACITY FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY"** - A project to assist Al-Azhar University, Gaza, and the Arab American University in Jenin (AAUJ), West Bank, Palestine, in establishing Centers for Conflict Resolution and Human Rights, and providing a pool of visiting professors and core curriculum for courses in Human Services and Civil Society. The purpose is to help increase local capacity for peace, democracy, & development in Palestinian society by preparing future civil leaders & local professionals skilled in providing critical needed human services to the population.

INTEGRATED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SERIES: In 2004 CBI initiated an experiment to collaborate in coordinating an integrated series of 5 international conferences in 3 countries sharing a focus on exploring and advancing the consciousness of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. While each was independent with various partners, content, and goals, all events in this series were programmatically linked to build on each other for an energetic flow and larger impact. As a result, outcomes have emerged and coalesced synergistically as the process has progressed, and have inspired promising new collaborative projects and partnerships, some of which CBI is directly involved in. Following the success of this model we have continued the process each year, inviting other international conferences to link programs to maximize the energy and products of each event and promote an expanding network of social activists and healers for greater mutual benefit. A major goal is to raise the level, depth, and breadth of public awareness and public dialogue on vital issues in exploring a consciousness of peace, and to foster proactive networks that create practical strategies for applying results in advancing capacity for a global culture of peace.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT INCLUDE:

▶ **A Global Internet nexus**, including: • a virtual **Journal of Conflict Transformation**, • a virtual **Resource Library**; • **topical E-dialogues** to maintain contact between participants and provide networking, support, and follow-through between events, • **E-working groups** to house virtual meeting groups for collaborative projects; • a web-based **Clinical Consultation** service to support participants of CBI's trauma training projects; • Professional **E-courses** to expand the knowledge base of service providers, particularly in developing countries; • **E-conferencing**, • a virtual **Global Youth Forum** for a cross-cultural youth community made up of participants of our international youth conferences, intended for and operated by the youth themselves.

▶ Cooperating on **joint Palestinian / Israeli efforts** on peace capacity building, reconciliation, and relief services in the Middle East, including: establish a joint Palestinian / Israeli Peace Studies Network between the regional universities and organizations in our network. The hope is to work toward including additional local academic institutions to promote direct dialogue, interaction, and cooperation.

▶ Assisting the establishment and development of **locally based professional schools and practical training programs** in human services to assist in forming core mentor groups in region of the Former Soviet Union and other countries.

▶ **Facilitated Encounter Group Dialogues** An initiative to offer facilitated informal meetings between representatives of opposing sides of existing conflicts to provide personal interaction and experience with "the Other" to increase understanding, empathy, and trust, leading to exploring new avenues for solutions. Based on the landmark international peace work of Carl Rogers conducted in N. Ireland, S. Africa, Central America, and the Former Soviet Union.

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