



Tanenbaum ***Peacemakers in Action***

2013 Working Retreat

June 15-21, 2013

Stony Point, N.Y.

Summary Report



Imagine...a more peaceful world that respects difference.
We are committed to making that vision a reality.

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Greetings,

On behalf of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, I am honored to present this Summary Report of the 2013 *Peacemakers in Action Network* Retreat – a time when hidden heroes quietly convene to share strategies on overcoming armed conflicts and to build a community for tackling some of the world’s most challenging work. For me and for many of the *Peacemakers*, this was our fifth Retreat. For others, it was their first. For all, I believe this week-long Retreat again achieved the high level of practical knowledge exchange and relationship-building that we have come to expect from the *Peacemakers Network* and Tanenbaum.

This year’s report focuses on the theory underlying the *Peacemakers in Action Network* and how the *Network* Retreat puts that theory into practice. I believe that the *Network* is among very few global efforts that are charting a new course for peacebuilding communities of practice. And the semi-annual Retreat is at the heart of that innovation.

That is the big picture. But for me, the Retreats have always been more about the people than about the theory or the practice, and this one was no exception. These gatherings are uniquely suited to nurturing the *Peacemakers in Action* as a family, with all that relationship implies—shared laughter and heartache, committed and compassionate support, challenging debates and sharp differences of opinion—all built on a foundation of unwavering love.

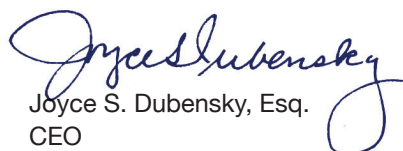
I saw that love play out, as the *Peacemakers* listened raptly to Canon Andrew White explaining the bloody sectarian dynamics in Baghdad; as Bill Lowrey offered the hardships of his first wife’s death from Alzheimer’s in a training on building resilience; as Azi Hussain pushed the *Network* to think creatively about leveraging its potential; as many arms enfolded Hind Kabawat and Jamila Afghani as they feared for the futures of Syria and Afghanistan; and as Ivo Markovic, Ephraim Isaac, and Jacky Manuputty led the *Peacemakers* in boisterous music and dance on their last night together.

My thanks go out to the many people who made this family reunion such a success. First, to the folks at Stony Point Center, who created the perfect green and tranquil environment for our Retreat, and who are doing their own important work to nourish the next generation of religious peacebuilders. My gratitude also goes out to the individual sponsors and supports who made this Retreat possible: Richard M. Aborn Esq., Georgette F. Bennett Ph.D., Foa & Son, John & Kathryn Hart, Martin E. Karlinsky Esq., Judith Thompson, and Maz Zouhairi.

And last, but certainly not least, my profound appreciation belongs to the Tanenbaum team, Clayton Maring, Bruce Crise, and Kiersten Rooke, whose months of dedicated efforts were clearly apparent during the week, and to the many other members of Tanenbaum’s staff who contributed to the success of the 2013 *Peacemakers in Action Network* Retreat. It is a privilege to share with you the daily work of combating religious prejudice.

Finally, I want to thank each of the *Peacemakers in Action* for continuing to surprise me, challenge me, inspire me, and help me to see a better world on the horizon.

In peace and friendship,


Joyce S. Dubensky, Esq.
CEO

“Since 1998, the *Peacemakers in Action* community has grown from a few distinguished individuals to a vibrant network of international peace activists.”

Introduction

Since 1998, the *Peacemakers in Action* community has grown from a few distinguished individuals to a vibrant network of international peace activists. Originally conceived as a one-time recognition for courageous efforts in religious peacebuilding, the *Peacemakers in Action* award intended to shine a light these unknown heroes and their vocation. As the roster of awardees grew over the years, Tanenbaum began convening the *Peacemakers* at Working Retreats, so that they could build relationships with their peers and learn about practical peacebuilding approaches that had proven effective in other conflict zones.

As the *Peacemakers* spent more time with one another, exchanging experiences and deepening their connections, the value of these interactions became increasingly apparent. By the end of the third Working Retreat in 2007, the group concluded that it was necessary to further strengthen the natural community of practice that had formed among them. With guidance from a core group of *Peacemaker* liaisons and the conceptual framework articulated by social learning theorist Etienne Wenger, Tanenbaum created a plan for a formalized network of *Peacemakers*. We offered this plan to the *Peacemakers* for their consideration, refinement, and approval at the 2011 Working Retreat, which culminated in the official creation of Tanenbaum’s *Peacemaker in Action Network*.

Since 2011, the *Peacemakers* have assumed leadership of their *Network* and have tested the boundaries of the communities of practice model. A *Peacemaker* leadership team and a full-time *Network* Coordinator -Tanenbaum staff member- have outlined procedures for guiding the *Network* and stewarding its knowledge. Regular conference calls have established an ongoing system of mutual exchanges, and several *Peacemakers* have seized opportunities for in-depth, on-the-ground exchanges.¹ More recently, the fifth *Peacemakers in Action* Retreat in June 2013 served to refresh and energize the *Network*, while simultaneously strengthening it as a peacebuilding community of practice.

This report examines the 2013 *Network* Retreat (retitled from “Working Retreat”) through the lens of the community of practice model. After a brief overview of the theory of communities of practice (CoP), the report highlights why Tanenbaum selected this model for the *Peacemakers in Action Network* and how the *Network* operates within the principles of CoP. The report then explores how the Retreat advances the development of the *Network* and puts into practice key principles of the CoP framework, including mutual exchange, shared learning, knowledge stewardship, and dynamic leadership. Finally, the report discusses the outcomes of the Retreat and how they measure up to the goals of the *Network* and the goals of communities of practice.

¹ Reports of these *Network* activities and interventions can be found at tanenbaum.org.



Peacemaker Sakena Yacoobi

A Theoretical Foundation for Communities of Practice

The phrase “communities of practice” was first coined in 1991 by cognitive anthropologists Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave to describe a theoretical framework of the ways in which groups of people create and steward knowledge through frequent engagement.² Wenger describes CoPs as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis.”³ They are best understood as spaces for learning, where that learning encompasses both dedicated knowledge acquisition and social interaction within the group.⁴

The framework identifies three distinct dimensions in fully-functioning communities of practice:

The Domain – This is the community’s *raison d’être* (reason for existence) and describes the shared set of core issues around which the community has gathered. Wenger writes, “A well-defined domain legitimizes the community by affirming its purpose and value to members and other stakeholders.”⁵

The Community – This describes the actual group of individuals who share an interest in the community’s *raison d’être*, or domain, and who are interacting with one another to gain new knowledge. According to Wenger, a robust community “creates the social fabric of learning” and “fosters interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust.”⁶

The Practice – This is the community’s unique culture and is comprised of “a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories and documents that community members share.” The practice creates the basis for group action and defines the protocols for how the community will deal with changes in the domain.⁷

² See Lave, Jean & Wenger, Etienne (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Wenger, Etienne (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Wenger, Etienne; McDermott, Richard; Snyder, William (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

³ Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002), p. 4.

⁴ Maring, Crise (2012) “Tanenbaum *Peacemakers in Action* Network: A Case Study of a Peacebuilding Community of Practice.” (Unpublished)

⁵ Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002), p. 27.

⁶ Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002), p. 28.

⁷ Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002), p. 29.

**“They say
in Ethiopian,
‘when threads
are knotted
together they can
subdue even a lion.
Similarly, when a
group of people
with one purpose
come together,
they can also
subdue hatred
and promote
peace and love.’”**

– Ephraim Isaac,
Ethiopia

When these three dimensions are developed, the community is poised to foster learning, which takes place in the following ways:

Mutual exchange, which refers to the sharing of ideas, methodologies and experiences by and among community members, thereby expanding the group’s knowledge base. This knowledge base is further strengthened by what each individual member brings to the community.

Shared learning, which describes the development and acquisition of new information and knowledge within the community. This involves a dialectical process through which the entire group learns, advances their knowledge about shared issues within the domain, and enriches the community’s culture or practice.

Knowledge stewardship, which refers to the management of information created by the community and the development of a knowledge base. This often involves documenting new and innovative ideas, as well as keeping track of changes within the community, domain and practice.



Imam Muhammad Ashafa &
Rev. Bill Lowrey

To facilitate these processes, strong and dynamic leadership representative of the community’s diversity is necessary. In most cases, leadership within the CoP is informal, wide-ranging in nature, and emerges in a number of ways. Leadership roles can vary from interpersonal leadership – “those who weave the community’s social fabric” – to those who push the CoP to be on the cutting edge by encouraging innovation and moving community members to action.⁸ With a diverse leadership filling a variety of roles, the community is able to address an array of emerging issues that fall within its domain and situate itself to maximize its learning potential.

⁸Wenger, Etienne, “Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System”
Systems Thinker pg. 7.



Jamila Afghani

Communities of practice can exist just about anywhere these elements are present. Some communities of practice are formally recognized, named, and nurtured, while others carry on informally without any direction or support. Because CoPs present a valuable learning and knowledge resource, some organizations encourage their growth. Wenger articulates several suggestions for ways in which companies and other organizations can foster the growth of the CoPs that form within their institutions. These include:

Legitimizing participation, which may include simple steps such as recognizing the existence of communities of practice, or more intentional efforts to create an environment that values CoPs.

Understanding the connections among CoPs, the learning that occurs within them, and larger business strategies and using this to help articulate a CoP's strategic value.⁹

Identifying and leveraging existing knowledge and practices of the people within an organization to advance learning and technical competence of the work force.

Fine-tuning the organization to facilitate CoP participation.

Tweaks to an organization's policies, systems and corporate culture can encourage CoP growth.

Providing support. As Wenger writes, "Communities of practice are mostly self-sufficient, but they can benefit from some resources, such as outside experts, travel, meeting facilities, and communications technologies."¹⁰

These institutional touches may help foster the growth of CoPs, though it is important to note that a heavy outside hand has the potential to smother an otherwise robust learning community. It is crucial for an organization to modulate its role based on the internal needs of the CoP, or it may risk losing its legitimacy with the members.

⁹ Systems Thinker pg. 8

¹⁰ Systems Thinker pg. 7-8.

“Most of the Peacemakers are experts in their own field. And from that expertise, coming to share experiences among the group has helped.”

– Pastor James Wuye,
Nigeria

Ephraim Isaac, Pastor
James Wuye, George
Rupp, Muhammad Ashafa
& José “Chencho” Alas

The *Peacemakers in Action* Network as a Community of Practice

After several years of periodically engaging with one another at Tanenbaum-sponsored retreats, the *Peacemakers* realized that they had much to learn from each other about their respective peacebuilding methods and approaches. Though the *Peacemakers’* work is primarily localized in their respective countries and communities, they saw an opportunity to leverage one another by tapping into the group’s collective experience and skill sets. They asked Tanenbaum to assist in creating a structure to facilitate this learning on an ongoing basis by establishing a *Peacemakers in Action Network*.



The communities of practice model was an obvious fit for the nascent *Network* and helped situate it within a theoretical frame work and guide its operation. A clear domain (religiously-motivated peacemaking), community (recipients of Tanenbaum’s *Peacemakers in Action* award), and elements of the practice (conflict resolution, mediation, reconciliation, etc.) already existed, and the goals the *Peacemakers* articulated incorporated shared learning, mutual support, and knowledge stewardship. Additionally, Tanenbaum was well-positioned to serve as a nurturing organization, and strong leaders from within the *Peacemaker* group were already stepping up to steer the process.

Since the *Peacemakers* formally adopted and launched their *Network* at the August 2011 Retreat, they have worked to “deepen their understanding of peace and conflict, steward knowledge, and share experiences, skill sets, and ideas, both virtually and in person, to advance their collective work for peace.”¹¹ Their

**“Through this
Network, I’ve
learned from
my fellow
Peacemakers to
develop methods
and strategies to
build peace and
bridge people.”**

– Rev. Jacky
Manuputty,
Indonesia

dedication to peacebuilding binds the *Peacemakers* together around a common raison d’être or domain, while their global distribution enriches the community (*Peacemakers Network*) with diverse ideas and experiences. Though the benefits of this diversity are critical, the wide geographic distribution of the members of the *Network* also poses challenges that make it difficult to sustain a vibrant *Network* in which community members regularly engage.

Each *Peacemaker* is committed to building peace in his or her community, and spends the vast majority of his or her time in this pursuit, often undertaking a range of roles at different points in time. Over the years, the work of the *Peacemakers* has varied, always in some way involving the grassroots. Today, their diverse efforts include running non-governmental organizations, educational initiatives, grassroots work on sex trafficking, serving as high-level politicians, and leading major grassroots peace initiatives, or pursuing their work within the confines of institutions (i.e., global non-profits and religious institutions). In all cases, the *Peacemakers* have little time for additional commitments. As a result, to develop a thriving *Network*, the *Peacemakers* required a model that would allow them to engage according to their availability. Unlike formal organizational learning models with rigid structures and protocols for communication and engagement, the community of practice framework permits such flexibility, and allows members to participate on an entirely voluntary basis. This is an important feature of the framework, because it takes into account the *Peacemakers’* daily shifting realities without requiring them to change their routines.

Often a *Peacemaker* will be highly involved in the *Network* for several months, and then less so over the next few, due to an increased volume of work in their home country. The community of practice model creates the space and opportunity to engage, but does not mandate participation or prescribe unwanted responsibilities or work. Such flexibility deliberately removes the pressures and stress that could inhibit *Network* involvement.

Lastly, the CoP model offers focus while providing the freedom for the domain, community, and practice to evolve. In this way, the *Peacemakers* can adjust the way the *Network* functions based on their collective needs, interests, commitments and availability.

¹¹ Maring, Crise pg. 19

**“Tanenbaum
has opened
doors for me by
permitting me to
interact with the
Peacemakers in
Action who are
from different
countries around
the world.”**

– José “Chencho”
Alas

Peacemakers in Action: The Network Structure

Domain – In the case of the *Peacemakers Network*, their domain, or *raison d’être*, is religiously-motivated peacemaking, through the use of tactics and approaches that often draw on religion, and that are couched in conflict resolution, transformation, reconciliation, peace education, human rights and social justice. The *Peacemakers* captured this in their own words at the 2011 Retreat, when they defined the purpose of their *Network*: “To contribute toward the transformation of conflict and the reconciliation of people in building a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.”¹²

Community – The community is explicitly comprised of the recipients of Tanenbaum’s *Peacemaker in Action* award. In the case of the *Network*, its reach (but not its membership) is “further expanded when appropriate to include members of each respective *Peacemakers* domestic and international networks.”¹³

Practice – The practice, in the case of the *Peacemakers Network*, are the ideas, experiences, support, statements of solidarity, methodologies and skill sets in the field of peacebuilding that they share on an on-going basis.¹⁴ The *Network’s* culture and protocols for action emerge from these activities and, equally, from their individual personalities and personal beliefs. Together, this has established a culture that is open, trusting, and welcoming to new *Peacemakers*. The protocols for making decisions and taking action are similarly transparent, and tend to focus on ways to include the full *Network*, project planning and funding.



Jamília Afghani, Nozizwe
Madlala-Routledge &
Chencho Alas

¹² *Peacemakers in Action Network Charter*

¹³ Maring, Crise pg. 21

“The *Network* created by Tanenbaum is qualified and has a high impact. We can use this as a tool to advance our work for peace...”

– Ricardo Esquivia,
Colombia

Tanenbaum’s Role – Tanenbaum has acted in a nurturing capacity for the *Network* in many of the ways Wegner describes. By holding the first series of Retreats, Tanenbaum played an instrumental role in organizing programming that created the conditions necessary for a community of practice to begin forming organically.

When the idea of developing a formal, operational network later emerged, Tanenbaum supported its formation by bringing together several *Peacemakers* and working with them to design it. Tanenbaum was enthusiastic about this effort for several reasons: firstly because an operational *Network* would be a resource for peace; and secondly because it would enhance the capacity of our *Peacemakers*. As such, the *Network* was not only a natural next step in Tanenbaum’s work, but it was also actively requested by the *Peacemakers* themselves. Equally important for Tanenbaum, operationalizing the *Network* aligned with Tanenbaum’s theory of social change, which seeks to propel religiously motivated peacebuilders into central roles in conflict transformation processes.

As the *Network* formalized, Tanenbaum committed to providing some of the resources needed for a CoP to thrive. Chief among these is a full-time *Network* Coordinator dedicated to facilitating *Network* operations and knowledge stewardship, thereby freeing the members from time-consuming administrative tasks that distract from their own individual—and critical—work. Tanenbaum and the Coordinator provide a range of functions from supporting the development of *Network*-led peacebuilding projects in the *Peacemakers*’ home countries, to coordinating collective action to protect fellow *Peacemakers* from threats to their freedom, to publicizing their work to bring them credibility and support, to organizing face-to-face convenings such as the Retreats. By taking on the tasks of coordination, public promotion, administration and funding, Tanenbaum frees the *Peacemaker* community of practice to reach its full potential as a space for learning.

Peacemakers in Action Network Function

Now that the *Network* is operationalized, it has further aligned with the outcomes of mutual exchange, shared learning, knowledge stewardship, and dynamic leadership envisioned under the CoP model.

Mutual Exchange - The *Peacemakers* convene at the *Peacemakers in Action* Retreats biannually, on monthly conference calls, and in on-the-ground peacebuilding interventions. During these exchanges, they share experiences, ideas

**“These are
Peacemakers from
around the world
that we meet and
share experiences.
By sharing our
experiences, we
are able to develop
new frameworks
that we can
contextualize in
the reality of our
own society.”**

– Imam Ashafa,
Nigeria

and support, while increasing their own awareness of their fellow *Peacemakers*’ different methods and approaches and how they are applying them for peacebuilding around the world. As such, these exchanges provide the *Peacemakers* with new opportunities for understanding, re-contextualizing and identifying ways to apply these methods locally. Examples include:

- Bill Lowrey’s training on network theory – based on his experience on the ground in Sudan) at the 2011 Retreat is now being used in an adapted format by Chencholas for his own trainings in Central American countries.
- Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa’s documentaries about their people-to-people peacebuilding model implemented in Nigeria are now being used by Dishani Jayaweera and Jacky Manuputty as starting points for discussions in their own divided communities of Sri Lanka and Indonesia, respectively.
- Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge participated in a *Peacemakers* Intervention in Honduras with fellow *Peacemaker* Chencholas of El Salvador and members of an emerging peace movement. There, she shared her experiences as a leader in South Africa’s nonviolent movement against apartheid and helped participants identify their own next steps as peace activists.

Shared Learning – To encourage shared learning within the *Network*, the *Peacemakers* regularly discuss the intricacies and nuances of different conflicts and approaches to peacebuilding. Through these conversations, each *Peacemaker* – and the group – understands the complexities of various conflicts and the reasons why some approaches are more effective than others in a given context. Additionally, the *Peacemakers* debate aspects of religion and peacebuilding, both theoretical and practical. These exchanges advance their own knowledge through a learning process that shifts how they think about particular issues.

Muhammad Ashafa &
Joyce S. Dubensky





Vedi Misic & Jamila Afghani

Knowledge Stewardship – Within the *Peacemakers Network*, Tanenbaum has taken on the responsibility for stewarding knowledge by appointing a full-time employee – the *Network Coordinator* – to the tasks of documenting ideas, changes, information and opportunities that arise, as well as coordinating and supporting critical interventions that promote peace, and simultaneously serving as the foundation for all the exchanges. In this way, the *Network's* knowledge not only expands but also is recorded, stored, and accessible to its members.

Examples include:

- Foundational documents, such as the *Network Charter*
- Audio recordings and detailed notes of every conference call
- Reports on Retreats and *Network* projects and interventions
- Guidelines for processes, such as project funding and Leadership rotation

Dynamic Leadership – To ensure the *Network* functions as a *Peacemaker*-led community of practice, its members made the conscious decision to form a *Network Leadership Committee*. The Leadership Committee consists of *Peacemaker* volunteers responsible for making *Network* decisions and providing guidance to Tanenbaum and the *Network Coordinator* on matters of emergency interventions, *Network* operations, Retreat planning, and prioritization of long-term *Network* interventions and projects. They meet on quarterly conference calls and take turns acting as chairperson of each call.

The *Network Leadership* is intentionally diverse, seeking to represent a cross-section of the *Peacemakers'* regions, religions and genders. Following the 2013 Retreat, the Leadership Committee included two women and three men, three faith traditions (including four different Christian denominations), and five different geographic regions. The committee members also spanned more than 40 years from youngest to oldest and represent a wide variety of occupational expertise. Diversity on the *Network Leadership Committee* ensures that the *Peacemakers* can best represent their peers in the *Network* when making decisions.

Other *Network* leaders have emerged informally, though no less importantly. Many *Peacemakers* cannot participate on the formal Leadership Committee due to constraints of time and technology, but they are strong presences at *Peacemaker* gatherings. Bill Lowrey acted as a visionary leader and network advocate before

“We learn from one another. It’s a really rich *Network* and it contributes so much to me and my own work at home.”

– Jacky Manuputty,
Indonesia

the *Network* was even formed; James Wuye and Muhammad Ashafa’s leadership of the Nigeria Delegation project (The *Network*’s first on-the-ground project) and championing of local initiatives resulted in the *Network* model for interventions and the pursuit of increased on-the-ground *Network* activity.¹⁵

The *Network* Retreats

Network Retreats, previously known as “Working Retreats,” have been a part of the *Peacemakers in Action* program for nearly a decade. The power of such gatherings has been apparent from the very beginning; indeed, the goals of the first Retreat were remarkably predictive of the direction the *Peacemakers* would journey in the ensuing years. That Retreat, in Amman, Jordan in 2004, was intended to facilitate networking among the *Peacemakers* that would enable mutual support, collaboration, and knowledge exchange, along with raising the profile of religious peacebuilding, Tanenbaum’s *Peacemakers in Action* program and the award given to the *Peacemakers*. All the goals have persisted as the *Peacemaker* community of practice has coalesced, while the award is now emphasized mainly as a vehicle for furthering the program and Tanenbaum’s organizational goal of promoting religious peacemaking. As such, the award serves the recipient, provides them with some recognition and cover, but primarily serves as the ticket into the *Network*.

Through this first Retreat and the ones that followed, the *Peacemaker* community of practice emerged. At first, the Retreats offered an opportunity for participants to find fellow peace activists and aligned companions, thereby ameliorating their profound isolation. Over time, they became reunions of friends, colleagues, co-visionaries and activists. And ultimately, they became a community of practice. Without these gatherings, the community would never have become aware of itself due to the wide geographic spread of its members,

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge,
Rev. Jacky Manuputty,
Chencho Alas & Bill Lowrey



¹⁵ See the report: “*Peacemakers in Action: Delegation to Nigeria*” at <http://tinyurl.com/TanenbaumNigeriaReport>

“For me, the *Network* is a source of empowerment, capacity building, information and experience exchange. [The *Network* has allowed me] to learn from other *Peacemakers* about how to work in my community and with different groups, especially religious leaders.”

– Jamila Afghani,
Afghanistan

and the diversity of their religious affiliations, activities, and other factors. Their shared domain of religious peacebuilding, however, proved strong enough to tie them together and to build momentum over the years of the first Retreats until they determined that they could provide even greater value to one another, as a formal *Network*. As the *Network* has taken on a life of its own, the Retreats remain an essential vehicle for invigorating *Peacemaker* engagement, exchanging knowledge, and maintaining the infrastructure of leadership and knowledge stewardship.

The 2013 *Network* Retreat: An Example of the Tanenbaum *Peacemakers*’ Community of Practice in Action

The 2013 *Peacemakers in Action Network* Retreat took place June 15-21, 2013 at Stony Point Center in Stony Point, New York. Of the 16 *Peacemakers* who planned to participate, 14 attended over the course of the week but two were prevented from coming. Dishani Jayaweera of Sri Lanka suffered a severe knee injury during a trip to Thailand that required her to stay in bed and Benny Giay from West Papua was prevented by the Indonesian authorities from leaving the country at the last minute.¹⁶

Once again, the 2013 Retreat was an important respite and time of learning for Tanenbaum’s *Peacemakers*. The experience of the week is also an example of how the *Network* functions as a community of practice. To share how this lived experience actually matched the theory of the CoP model, the activities and shared moments of the Retreat are described below within the context of the CoP model.

Shared Learning & Mutual Exchange – At the Retreat, *Network* members (primarily) and outside experts offered a series of sessions on their work or area of expertise, a project, a particular methodology or approach. The objective of these sessions was to facilitate shared learning and mutual exchanges. The 2013 Retreat had 12 of these sessions, ranging in length from one to four hours. Session formats included trainings, lectures, discussions, panels, and roundtables.

To plan for the Retreat, Tanenbaum surveyed the *Peacemakers* about the topics they wanted to explore together and which they could offer trainings. Once the list of the *Network*’s interests and capabilities was complete, Tanenbaum organized the data into a list of potential sessions and leaders, presented the options to the Leadership Committee for its comments or adjustments, and then confirmed topics and presenters.

¹⁶ The complete list of *Peacemaker* attendees and their home countries is included in Appendix A.

“Enhancing our capacity as Peacemakers at the Retreats has been significant, especially our learning from others Peacemakers from Africa, Latin America, South Asia, the Middle East and Europe.”

– Imam Muhammad Ashafa, Nigeria

The sessions were exemplars of the mutual exchange component of CoPs and the trainings directly imparted new ideas and techniques. Specifically:

- Elements of mutual exchange were evident in José “Chencho” Alas’s take on the Appreciative Inquiry methodology and the ways in which he has implemented this framework in his activities and advocacy. When he described how he adapted the technique to conduct a special session for women exiting the sex trade in South Africa, he mentioned that the session participants responded enthusiastically.
- Similarly, when Jamila Afghani presented her program to engage imams in Kabul on issues of Islamic women’s rights education, the *Peacemakers* got excited, asking detailed questions about how she got these traditional religious leaders to work with her, and how she moved them from skepticism (at best) to being advocates for women during weekly congregational prayer sermons.

Shared learning was also present in various Retreat sessions,¹⁷ as the *Peacemakers* learned new approaches and skills together as a group, delving into group discussions in which a shared understanding of the nuances and complexities of specific conflicts or tools was reached.

- An example of shared learning through discussion was Ricardo Esquivia’s presentation on the current peace process in Colombia and the conversation that followed it. Through these sessions, the *Peacemakers* become more aware of elements, challenges and opportunities within peacebuilding – their domain.



Muhammad Ashafa,
Friar Ivo Markovic & The
Rev. Canon Andrew White

¹⁷ For a complete list of Retreat sessions, the *Peacemakers* or experts who led them, and a snapshot of their content, see Appendix B.

Ivo Markovic &
Jacky Manuputty

**“Since I joined
Tanenbaum, I
discovered a
huge *Network* of
Peacemakers that
spreads all over
the world.”**
– Jacky Manuputty,
Indonesia



Knowledge stewardship – Tanenbaum has taken on many of the knowledge stewardship functions for the *Network*, and the Retreat was no exception. During the Retreat, Tanenbaum staff was responsible for capturing photos, audio recordings of presentations, notes, presentation slides, handouts, and other tangible components of *Network* knowledge. Following the Retreat, Tanenbaum preserved and organized all of this information so that it is available and accessible to *Network* members.

Leadership – Each Retreat provides an opportunity to refresh the *Network*’s leadership mechanisms. During the week, time to address the formal mechanism for running the *Network*—the Leadership Committee—was set aside over the course of two sessions that focused on *Network* development. In addition, as would be expected, informal leadership naturally emerged from among the *Peacemakers*.

Bill Lowrey, a member of the 2011-2013 Leadership Committee, led the discussion about Leadership succession during the *Network* development sessions. His facilitation of this process as a *Peacemaker* was critical for maintaining the legitimacy of the *Network* Leadership and *Peacemakers*’ sense of ownership over their own *Network*. At the first session, early in the week, Bill reviewed the previously agreed-upon Leadership responsibilities, and emphasized that all of the prospective Leaders must have the availability to take on the role and the technology to participate in quarterly conference calls. A signup sheet was then posted in a common area so that volunteers could sign up to indicate their willingness to serve as members of the Leadership. At the second session, the *Peacemakers* reviewed the full roster of volunteers and finalized commitments from the new Leadership Committee.

“These gatherings, the *Peacemakers in Action* Retreats, are the only time each year that *Peacemakers* from around the world are brought together as one. Without this group, we have no engagement with other people doing similar work. No encounter with any organization which exists to sustain our work and encourage us and keep us going. We only have Tanenbaum.”

– Rev. Canon
Andrew White, Iraq

This process proved quite effective, with eight *Peacemakers* volunteering to assume a role of responsibility. The results of the process are detailed in the “Outcomes” section below.

Informal leaders also emerged over the course of week as inspiration struck individual *Peacemakers*. Some, such as Azi Hussain, pushed the *Network* to grapple with questions about long-term viability and new ways to maximize the utility of Retreats. Others, like Lillian Hall, wife and interpreter for Ricardo Esquivia, and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge organized time for social and spiritual events, including a Quaker meeting that welcomed all. Hind Kabawat, buoyed by the support of her fellow *Peacemakers*, formed a committee to explore ways to show solidarity for Syrian women who were taking action to end the violence affecting women and children on all sides of the conflict. One morning during breakfast, a large group encircled her, sitting and standing around the picnic table where she sat. Ideas swirled from what a solidarity statement could and should convey, what positions should be taken and what might be harmful to adopt, and how each member could use social media to expand awareness of the conflict in Syria. While none of the *Peacemakers* acted in an “official” capacity, their social, activist, and thought leadership demonstrated the vibrancy of the *Peacemaker* CoP.

Strengthening the Community – While bold leadership is a critical part of strengthening a community of practice, the Retreat included other features designed to enhance that “community” aspect. The learning potential of a community of practice directly corresponds to the “willingness [of members] to share ideas, expose one’s ignorance, ask difficult questions and listen carefully.” And that only occurs where there is a firm foundation of respect and trust. The Retreats, as one of the few times *Peacemakers* are able to interact in person, offer the *Network* the best opportunity for building that trust and respect.



Andrew White &
Muhammed Ashafa

¹⁸ Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002), p. 28.



Ephraim Isaac

A serene and isolated setting is one feature of the 2013 Retreat that helped foster deeper relationships. Stony Point Center is a conference and retreat facility located about an hour north of New York City in the Hudson River Valley. It offers simple, quiet accommodations in a green environment, removed from the bustle of a large city. Stony Point's peaceful atmosphere and lack of distraction allowed the *Peacemakers* to relax and focus on their own community.

Structured sessions dedicated to social interaction also contributed to relationship building. The first session of the Retreat consisted of small group conversations about more personal subjects – your biggest fear, role model, most embarrassing moment, and so on. This allowed the *Peacemakers* simultaneously to pick up on their old relationships, and to introduce new *Peacemakers* to the group in a congenial, low-pressure way. Throughout the week, these relationships continued to grow during meals, breaks, and evenings.

Four religious services were held over the course of the week, led by one *Peacemaker* of each faith tradition represented at the Retreat. Here, *Peacemakers* shared spiritual moments and experiencing each other's traditions and religious practices. These moments built community and served as opportunities to explore religious practices and beliefs.

A “farewell dinner” on the final night of the Retreat likewise created an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the week. Quite spontaneously, the participants offered reflections on the Retreat experience. The comments included laughter, memories, hopes and prayers. During the dinner, the *Peacemaker* community bonded over food, song, musical performances, and stories.

While these activities may seem to serve no “practical” purpose, they are actually a critical part of the Retreat; they strengthen the functioning of the *Network* as a community of practice by reinforcing its foundation – the social framework on which the *Peacemaker* group is built. Indeed, it is the trust and personal connection achieved in these moments that enables someone like Jamila Afghani to be open about her fears for the future of her country (Afghanistan) and her family. Such openness has tangible results. Jamila immediately received encouragement to continue her work, as well as practical suggestions for addressing her challenges—in other words, she received emotional strength and was able to learn from her community of practice.

Strengthening the Practice – The Retreat also enabled the *Peacemakers* to review the way the *Network* was operating and determine if any changes needed to be made. These discussions took place primarily during the two



Jacky Manuputty,
Kiersten Rooke & Vedi Misis

Network development sessions and the final session, dedicated to reflection and evaluation. They touched on major elements of *Network* practice, including:

- Conference call structure, frequency, scheduling and purpose: the *Peacemakers* decided to continue holding two conference calls every six weeks.
- Past interventions, namely Chenchu Alas and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge's two projects, and intervention opportunities for the near future (see below).¹⁹
- Retreat feedback and suggestions for the future (see below).

The *Peacemakers* also discussed practices that they would be interested in using, such as an "Ambassador" initiative to reach out to *Peacemakers* on the periphery of the *Network*, and strategies for fundraising that will help the *Network* sustain itself and expand its activities.

These discussions and their resulting decisions give Tanenbaum and the Leadership Committee a road map for the next few years of *Network* development.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the 2013 Retreat speak to the power of applying the communities of practice model to the work of field-based peacebuilders. In a profession and a calling that is lonely and full of hazards, belonging to a community of international peers living through similar experiences, and with a proven interest and ability to resolve violent conflict, is a unique resource. The 2013 Retreat provided a concentrated dose of CoP benefits for each *Peacemaker*, and set the stage for *Network* growth through 2015.



Jame Wuye & Bill Lowrey

¹⁹ In November 2011, Nozizwe traveled to Honduras to provide trainings to a nascent coalition of peace activists with fellow *Peacemaker*, Chenchu Alas. In February 2013, Chenchu Alas and a leader from the Honduran peace movement, and current vice presidential candidate, traveled to South Africa to meet with members of the ANC and other South African civil society organizations to develop a relationship of technical exchange.

“PIA retreats, including the last one in Stony Point, allow me to interact with fellow Tanenbaum Peacemakers up close, to hear about their work and peacebuilding strategies, and to offer them my support--and to receive theirs.”

– Yehezkel Landau,
Israel/Palestine

Taking Action: Syria and Colombia – Throughout the Retreat, the situation in Syria and the struggle of *Peacemaker* Hind Kabawat, who is currently working to end the violence in her country, weighed heavily on everyone. On the final day of the Retreat, a handful of *Peacemakers* spontaneously gathered to explore opportunities for the *Network* to help end the suffering of women in Syria. They began by writing a *Network* Statement of Solidarity and urging other *Peacemakers* to sign on and disseminate the *Network*’s message for peace throughout their networks. The Committee also assigned specific tasks to its members, including identifying and engaging with key stakeholders on both sides of the conflict. As of the writing of this report, the Committee on Syria has already finalized and disseminated the *Peacemakers in Action Network* Statement on Syria throughout their respective professional and personal networks, calling for an end to the violence. The Committee will continue to work with Hind and Tanenbaum in the coming months to take additional steps in solidarity with Syrian women.

The *Peacemakers* also expressed strong interest in working on a project with Ricardo Esquivia in Colombia. The country is at a unique moment in its long history of conflict, in which the government and the FARC guerrilla opposition are engaged in comprehensive peace negotiations. During the Retreat, Ricardo expressed optimism that an agreement will finally end decades of violence so that the real work of peacebuilding in Colombia can begin. He believes that donors are interested in funding projects that will build on successful negotiations, and the *Network* may have a window of opportunity to have an impact on the ground in Colombia. While the Retreat schedule did not allow much time for the planning of such an intervention to begin, factors such as *Peacemaker* enthusiasm for the idea and Ricardo’s new position on the Leadership Committee (see below) make it likely that a Colombian intervention will materialize in the near future.



Yehezkel Landau &
Joyce S. Dubensky

**“Just being
among those great
human beings—
learning together,
supporting each
other—will give
you a boost
that the World
will be better.”**

– Hind Kabawat,
Syria

Since the Retreat, the *Peacemakers* have continued to work on these ideas. They wrote and signed a *Network* Statement of Solidarity for the women of Syria. The Statement was then disseminated extensively by each *Peacemaker* through their personal and professional networks to raise support for an end to the violence. Hind was extraordinarily grateful for the support and has since leveraged the *Network*’s collective voice to protect women in Syria. Currently, the *Network* is developing a *Network* intervention in Syria that will provide capacity building trainings to individuals from all sides of the conflict with a strong focus on peacebuilding and reconciliation.

In addition, soon after the Retreat, Tanenbaum received word that *Peacemaker*, Ricardo Esquivia of Colombia, is facing possible incarceration and political persecution at the hands of the Colombian military and paramilitary groups. In response, the *Network* rallied in support, leveraging their contacts and resources. This led to the creation of a *Network* Statement of Solidarity for Ricardo, Tanenbaum and individual *Peacemaker* engagement on this issue with the State Department, and a face-to-face encounter between Tanenbaum’s CEO and the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos. During the meeting, the *Peacemakers* message to protect the life and safety of Ricardo was delivered to President Santos in addition to the *Network* Statement. Though Ricardo is still under threat, the *Network*’s efforts, at least for the time being, have helped prevent further persecution.

Lastly, a *Network* project is currently being designed for Colombia, growing out of the initial conversations held at the Retreat. Though still in the early planning stages, the project is shaping up to be a major *Network* initiative involving multiple *Peacemakers* from around the globe. With ongoing peace talks in Havana, Colombia’s pending peace plan could end over 60 years of open conflict. The project’s goal is to train civil society organizations and government institutions to work collaboratively in order to uphold key provisions in Colombia’s pending peace agreement.

The Restructuring of the Leadership Committee – The leadership succession process described above resulted in a different Leadership Committee than the one that preceded it. Originally, the *Network* Leadership Committee was envisioned as a small group of five *Peacemakers* representing the diversity of the *Network*. However, the strengthening of the *Network* over the past few years and the growing enthusiasm over the course of the Retreat resulted in a group of eight *Peacemakers* with a strong interest in taking a Leadership role—including some who were not even at the Retreat. Even with some of the original members of the Leadership stepping down—Ivo Markovic from Sarajevo, for lack of availability, and Jamila Afghani, for lack of reliable technology in Afghanistan—the new

*James Wuye, Vedi Mistic,
Barea Sinno, Lillian Hall,
Ricardo Esquivia,
Hind Kabawat &
Muhammad Ashafa*



We look forward to what this [Retreat] can bring about in helping our *Network* to explore new ground and to address emerging issues in our countries.”

– Pastor James,
Nigeria

Leadership shaped up to be a much larger group. When no consensus could be reached on how to reduce the numbers or choose among them, the *Network* decided that there was no reason they should not all participate. The result of expanding the Leadership team will unfold as the group begins its meetings in the coming months.

No other changes were made to the Leadership structure or responsibilities. The larger group made it easy to meet the desired diversity of members, with three women, five men, three faith traditions, and representation from nine major geographic regions. The new Leadership Committee includes:

- Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, Quaker, South Africa
- Ricardo Esquivia, Mennonite, Colombia
- José “Chencho” Alas, Catholic, El Salvador
- Hind Kabawat, Christian, Syria
- James Movel Wuye, Protestant, Nigeria
- Jacky Manuputty, Protestant, Indonesia
- Yehezkel Landau, Jewish, Israel/USA
- Dishani Jayaweera, Buddhist, Sri Lanka

Greater Peacemaker Ownership of the *Network* Retreats – Historically, Tanenbaum has been the primary organizer of the *Peacemaker in Action* Retreats. This has made sense, as the Retreats began as an initiative of Tanenbaum as an organization, and only recently became an intrinsic part of the *Network* practice. In addition, Tanenbaum is able to commit the time and resources for planning and executing such a complex event; the *Network* on its



Jacky Manuputty &
Clayton Maring

own cannot. That said, Tanenbaum deliberately included the *Network* in planning the 2013 Retreat while retaining sole responsibility for such aspects as session design, scheduling, location selection, inviting outside experts, choosing partners, and designing “off-campus” activities. This year, once again, most *Peacemaker* responses to Tanenbaum’s Retreat Evaluation were strongly positive; however, we also received a greater volume of specific feedback and constructive criticism than we have in the past, particularly on how to structure the Retreat. Suggestions included, among many others:

- Lengthening sessions and reducing their number to allow for more in-depth engagement with content areas.
- Shortening the overall length of the Retreat to reduce the heavy time commitment.
- Including even more breaks and physical activities to keep the group energized.
- Selecting outside experts more strategically to make sure they align with *Peacemaker* interests.
- Including more time for reflection and evaluation.
- Choosing a Retreat location with more opportunities to leverage outside supporters, or in a *Peacemaker*’s home country in order to engage with specific local projects.

While nearly every *Peacemaker* expressed their satisfaction with the Retreat and their intention to attend the next one, these comments indicate the value of ensuring greater *Network* engagement in Retreat planning next time, including on issues beyond session content. This feedback represents an exciting high water mark in *Peacemaker* ownership of their community of practice, as well as a challenge to strike the right balance between *Peacemaker* expectations for the Retreats and what is realistic. By including the *Network* in more aspects of Retreat planning, we have the opportunity to create a Retreat experience that further enhances the community’s capacity and learning – while also better aligning with the *Network*’s vision for itself.



Muhammad Ashafa,
Joyce S. Dubensky &
James Wuye

“This Retreat by Tanenbaum helps build our capacity because there is a pool of resources in the *Network*.”

– Pastor James Wuye,
Nigeria

Conclusion

Tanenbaum’s Retreats have been instrumental in creating the *Peacemaker* in Action community of practice. The early Working Retreats laid the foundation for the *Peacemaker* community to recognize its common *raison d’être* or domain, to build trust, and make its first forays into mutual exchange. These elements intensified over time so that, at the third and fourth Retreats, the community was ready to take the additional step of becoming the *Peacemakers in Action Network*. Now, at the 2013 *Peacemakers in Action Network* Retreat, the community has reached another milestone with dynamic leadership, shared learning, and exploratory action at the edges of their field. The *Network* Retreat, with its focus on mutual exchange and relationship building, has been a foundational and, indeed, an essential tool in constructing this community of practice. Looking ahead, however, it appears that the community itself may be ready to seek a stronger role in constructing this element of its practice. The feedback

Tanenbaum Peacemakers and staff enjoy food and fellowship on the final day of the retreat.



on this year’s Retreat suggests that the *Network* is beginning to articulate its own vision for how it wishes to facilitate mutual exchange and promote its own learning—just as a vibrant community of practice should. Tanenbaum, which acts as the coordinator, an institutional supporter and a supportive friend, is pivotal to the *Network* but not inside it. In the coming years, it is likely that Retreat goals and vision will increasingly be set by the *Network* Leadership and the members of the *Network*, who have clearly demonstrated a desire to take on this role. To what extent and how fast this will occur, remains to be seen.

APPENDIX A: Retreat Attendees

Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action*

Ivo Markovic, Catholic, Bosnia-Herzegovina
José “Chencho” Alas, Catholic, El Salvador
James Movel Wuye, Protestant, Nigeria
Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa, Muslim, Nigeria
Yehezkel Landau, Jewish, USA/Israel
William Lowrey, Presbyterian, USA/South Sudan
Ephraim Isaac, Jewish, Ethiopia
Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, Quaker, South Africa
Andrew White, Anglican, Iraq
Ricardo Esquivia, Mennonite, Colombia
Hind Kabawat, Christian, Syria
Jamila Afghani, Muslim, Afghanistan
Jacklevyn “Jacky” Manuputty, Protestant, Indonesia

Tanenbaum *Peacemaker Assistants*

Paul White, assistant to Andrew White
Lillian Hall, wife and interpreter for Ricardo Esquivia

Outside Experts

Sheherazade Jafari, PhD. Candidate at the School of International Service, American University
Azza Karam, Ph.D. Senior Advisor on Culture for the United Nations Population Fund
Katherine Marshall, Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University
George Rupp, Ph. D. President of the International Rescue Committee

Tanenbaum

Joyce S. Dubensky, CEO
Mark Fowler, Managing Director of Programs
Clayton Maring, Assistant Program Director, Conflict Resolution
Bob Johnson, Assistant Director of Communications
Bruce Crise, Network Coordinator, Conflict Resolution
Kiersten Rooke, Program Associate, Conflict Resolution
Mike Ward, Communications Manager
Didi Lacher, Director of Development
Sarita Joseph, Development Assistant
Barea Sinno, Intern, Conflict Resolution
Vedrana Misic, Intern, Conflict Resolution

APPENDIX B: Retreat Sessions

Session 1: Introduction/Ice Breakers

- Joyce S. Dubensky opened the Retreat with an office welcome, taking a moment as well to acknowledge the *Peacemakers* who could not attend.
- Mark Fowler facilitated a process for laying Retreat ground rules or agreements, combining a standard set of guidelines with *Peacemaker* suggestions for their own group.
- The *Peacemakers* then rotated through casual small group conversations to help old friends catch up with one another and to bring new *Peacemakers* into the *Network* community.

Session 2: Network Business

- Chencho Alas and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge presented photos and stories of their experiences during their two *Network* interventions: Honduras in 2011 and South Africa in 2013.
- Bill Lowrey then began a conversation about the future of the *Network* and the need to rotate the member of the Leadership Committee. He explained the responsibilities, time commitment, and technology requirements, and then invited *Peacemakers* to volunteer on a sign-up poster of the course of the week.

Session 3: Appreciative Inquiry Methodology

By Chencho Alas

- A strategic planning methodology for organizations grounded in vivencias—the transformative experiences from which inspiration and positive values emerge.
- *Peacemakers* read aloud the “Invisible hunters” legend from Nicaragua and practiced identifying the community’s vivencias as they emerged from the story.
- Chencho’s Mesoamerican Peace Movement offers training on 7 different themes, all from an appreciative inquiry approach. In South Africa, he and Nozizwe’s organization, Embrace Dignity, produced a 20-year strategic plan based on this methodology.

Session 4: Using Arts and Music for Peace

By Ivo Markovic and Jacky Manuputty

- Ivo’s presentation reviewed the philosophical history of thinking about the goals of art, covering Aristotle, Kant, Brecht, and Gadamer. He then shared some examples of painting, music and architecture that have built bridges of peace in the Balkans.
- Jacky shared how he makes use of music and dance in his peace work. He emphasized how folk songs and dances form a “hearty language” for reconciliation at a deeper level, and how shared cosmology and siblinghood narratives in the arts have proven effective tools in the Maluku Islands.
- During the discussion, Imam Ashafa raised the question of how these peacemaking methods can include groups who do not allow music or dance, such as Salafi Muslims.

Session 5: Eliminating Violence against Women

By Jamila Afghani and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge

- Jamila presented on one of her organization's projects to reduce violence against women, which involved educating a wide network of imams on the protections of women's rights found in the Qur'an.
- Nozizwe presented on the activities of her organization, Embrace Dignity, which is seeking an end to prostitution in South Africa through legislation that criminalizes the purchase of sex and pimping.
- Nozizwe also shared some United Nations resources for creating legislation and national action plans on eliminating violence against women.

Session 6: Using Local Understanding for Peace Education; or Developmental Stages of Faith

By Azi Hussain

- Azi shared his approach for working with faith leaders in Pakistan to change madrasa curriculums, which places great importance on building trust and encouraging self-reflection.
- He reviewed the "developmental stages of faith" that he has witnessed among his workshop participants, which he describes as denial, defense, tolerance and acceptance, respect, and appreciation.
- *Peacemakers* gained understanding of each stage by forming small groups and pretending to be Pakistani imams. Each group represented a different stage and crafted a short sermon in response to President George Bush's 2001 "crusade" quote.

Session 7: Mobilizing Faith Communities for Social Change

Led by Joyce Dubensky

- Joyce reflected on the work of Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and his use of writing and oratory to mobilize faith communities for dialogue, reconciliation, and human rights activism.
- In the discussion, a consensus emerged that while the official leadership of most faith communities is dominated by men, reaching out to women is key to mobilizing these communities.
- The *Peacemakers* considered a strategic approach in which peacebuilders could identify an issue important to two different religious groups, organize an interfaith dialogue, and then encourage the participants to return to their own communities for intra-faith dialogue.

Session 8: Building Resilience for Peacebuilders

By Bill Lowrey

- Bill began the session by adding up the number of “peacebuilding years” the *Peacemakers* had among them, assuming everyone lived to be 80. The total was over 200 years! Bill then highlighted the importance of nurturing resilience for sustained peacebuilding so that the *Peacemakers* spent their collective 200 years actively building peace.
- Bill walked the *Peacemakers* through the various elements critical to building resilience against personal shocks (major disruptive events – death, sickness etc.) for those 200 years, including different types of relationship to nurture and strategies for self-care.
- *Peacemakers* reflected on the major shocks that affected their and the various elements that helped them to persevere by drawing timelines of those periods.

Session 9: Social Media Basics

By Mike Ward, Tanenbaum Communications Associate

- Mike’s session gave an overview of social media, discussing its various forms, their specific uses, and how social media differs from traditional media.
- Mike used YouTube videos to compare examples of old media and social media, showing how one seeks to dominate and sell a message, while the other seeks to create conversation and pull people in.
- The *Peacemakers* broke into small groups and developed a mock social media strategy to raise awareness about a humanitarian disaster.

Session 10: Network Business II

- Bill Lowrey led a discussion about the *Network* Leadership Committee. The *Network* decided to include all *Peacemakers* interested in volunteering, rather than narrow the committee to a smaller group.
- The *Peacemakers* discussed the *Network* calls, sharing what is helpful and what could be improved over the next 2 years to increase participation. Some ideas included creating a *Peacemakers Network* page on Facebook or a *Network* webpage where the *Peacemakers* could post articles and discussions.
- The *Peacemakers* also discussed how they could reach out to better connect *Peacemakers* who work in regions or conditions that make regular contact a challenge. They suggested appointing *Peacemaker* “Ambassadors” to reach out to these individuals and perhaps visit them when possible.
- The *Peacemakers* then discussed how the *Network* could be scaled up. They suggested creating a *Network* Fund to help raise money for *Network* projects.

Session 11: Writing for Reconciliation and the Media

By Ivo Markovic

- Ivo shared his thoughts on the power of writing and the media to influence reconciliation. He compared writing and speaking, noting that writing can require more difficult and thoughtful processes. He shared examples of how positive stories can ripple out and feed more positive energy, and emphasized that the most effective tools for communication change depending on the stage of conflict or reconciliation present in the society.
- Many *Peacemakers* were uncomfortable with the sharp contrast drawn between speaking and writing, noting the richness and creativity that is present in oral cultures and illiterate communities.
- A debate also emerged between *Peacemakers* like Andrew, who promotes his work widely and publically, and Ephraim, who credits the success and longevity of his Council of Elders with their strict aversion to speaking with the media.

Session 12: Panel on Overcoming Sectarian and Communal Violence

By Andrew White, James Wuye, Muhammad Ashafa, and Hind Kabawat

- Hind shared photos and positive stories from the Syrian refugee camps in Turkey and the liberated villages of Syria. Recurrent themes included appreciation for religious diversity, hopeful outlooks for girls and women, the centrality of education.
- Andrew reviewed some of the most shocking sectarian developments in Baghdad, including the high prevalence of attacks against Shias, the rise of “birds of paradise”—children, many with learning disabilities, who are trained to be suicide bombers—and devastating death toll on his own community at St. George’s (over a 1000 members of his church have been killed).
- Pastor James gave an overview of the conflict with Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, and Imam Ashafa offered his thoughts on the root causes of that conflict, which encompass historical injustices, the blending of religion and politics, climate change, corruption, poverty, and illiteracy, and the failure of the Nigerian state to equitably manage its oil wealth.

Session 13: Colombia’s Emerging Peace Process

By Ricardo Esquivia (Lillian Hall interpreting)

- Ricardo gave a history of the conflict in Colombia and how the political climate has changed in recent year to make a promising space for peace. Colombia’s neighbors and its elites now believe peace will be more profitable than war.
- Difficult but comprehensive negotiations are now in progress between the government and the FARC. Ricardo emphasized that while the process is promising, these groups are negotiating to end war—not to build peace.
- The work of building peace will be left to Colombia’s citizens. Ricardo sees this moment as a ripe opportunity for the *Peacemakers Network* to put together an intervention that will be both effective and attractive to funders.

Session 14: Roundtable Conversations with Outside Experts

With Azza Karam, Katherine Marshall, George Rupp and Sheherazade Jafari

- Azza Karam, Senior Advisor on Culture for the United Nations Population Fund, spoke to her experiences mapping engagement of religious leaders and organizations with UN agencies, and lead discussions on how to better facilitate partnerships between the UN and religious actors.
- Katherine Marshall, Senior Fellow at Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, engaged the *Peacemakers* on three topics: bridging the academic divide between the fields of peace/conflict and development; the role of women, particularly religious women, in peace processes; and how to use peace prizes to shine light on effective peace work.
- George Rupp, President of the International Rescue Committee, opened his tables to discussion of how the changing nature of conflict has resulted in the changing nature of peacebuilding.
- Sheherazade Jafari, a PhD candidate at American University's School of International Service, shared the research she's been doing on how groups have worked across the religious/secular divide on tough issues, such as gender equality.

Session 15: People to People Peacebuilding Process

By Muhammad Ashafa and James Wuye

- Pastor James and Imam Ashafa showed their documentary, *An African Answer*, which follows the peacebuilding process they facilitated between ethnic Kikuyus and Kalenjins in the Burnt Forest community of Kenya in 2007.
- The Nigerians paused the DVD at several key points to draw out and discuss the various methods and techniques they used during their people-to-people process.

Session 16: Evaluation and Retreat Closing

- The *Peacemakers* completed an evaluation survey to give their feedback on the Retreat, and Mark Fowler facilitated a conversation among those who wished to share their thoughts out loud.
- Mark led the community through a final reflection on the words and feelings that best summed up the Retreat.
- The *Peacemakers* said their final goodbyes with hugs and pictures.