

## Truth, Reconciliation & Restoration Process in Gambia

### Introduction:

This document is meant to serve as an initial general overview of a proposed process to be discussed in detail and customized at a later stage. The overarching intention is to work together with and support the new Gambia in its restorative peace process.

### Purpose:

Traditionally, a Truth and Reconciliation Process is established to resolve long-standing and widespread conflict, oppression, violence and human-rights violations that have occurred.

The Process enables stakeholders to directly engage with one another in order to address the past and present harms, air their grievances and address the narratives that perpetuate conflict and prevent peaceful co-existence. The Process includes frank discussions about all relevant information including how past behavior has been damaging, and how the parties can begin rebuilding social trust.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have been used in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, South Africa, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, Philippines, Nepal, and Canada and elsewhere.

In the past, many Truth and Reconciliation Processes have focused on truth-telling and amnesty with the hope of achieving forgiveness and healing. However, to the extent these processes have not included empathy and responsibility for past harm, they have been criticized for failing to address another important need, a sense of justice. The process described below addresses this shortcoming. In addition to providing a forum for Truth and Reconciliation, it provides a path to Restoration. This it is called Truth, Reconciliation & Restoration (TRR). This approach integrates some of the fundamental principles of traditional African peacemaking and innovative models of restorative justice.

### Essential Elements of Truth, Reconciliation & Restoration:

In addition to skillful planning and implementation, these are some of the fundamental elements required for a TRR Process that can support lasting healing and peace:

**Truth** – Individuals have the opportunity to talk about what has occurred and how it has impacted them. They are able to speak freely and be heard. They are also willing to bear witness to the harm that has occurred to others.

**Empathy** – Individuals acknowledge what is shared, the harm that has occurred and take responsibility for their actions. This is possible only when the process is committed to restoration, and not punishment or compensation.

**Connection** – Individuals signal whether what someone else has heard and acknowledged reflects their truth, providing the opportunity to clarify what they want the other to hear and understand.

**Healing and Reconciliation** – The parties are supported in the healing of the trauma on an individual and collective level. The process fosters forgiveness of one another and reconciliation, based on shared values and a renewed commitment to mutual dignity and respect.

**Agreements** – Through mediated dialogues, the agents and receivers of harm have the opportunity to come to an agreement as to how they want their relationship to continue. The process allows each individual to be heard and participate in the development of clear agreements that enable the parties to rebuild trust by meeting each person's respective needs and thus providing mutual reassurance. If and when disputes arise under the agreements, the parties agree to return to the TRR process.

**Facilitation** - The process and elements above are enabled by skilled facilitators who can support all participants in being heard and hearing others, and who moderate the discussion in ways conducive to healing and finding effective agreements.

## Facilitators:



**Eileen Barker** is an attorney, mediator, peacemaker and pioneer in an international movement to integrate emotional healing and forgiveness in conflict resolution. Eileen previously served as a trial attorney for the US Department of Justice in Washington DC and one of the largest law firms in San Francisco, before becoming a professional mediator over 25 years ago. Eileen has extensive international teaching experience including in Europe, Africa, India and throughout the US. In 2016 she received the prestigious Champion of Forgiveness Award along with Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in honor of her commitment to teaching people how to achieve peace, no matter what has occurred in the past.



**Duke Duchscherer** is a Facilitator and a Certified Trainer with the International Center for Nonviolent Communication and was on the Board of Directors for the MK Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence for 8 years. He has lead training in Restorative Circles & Nonviolent Communication around the world in many conflict & post-conflict regions as well as facilitating hundreds of dialogues between conflicting groups/ communities. Some of this work has included supporting peace builders & civil rights advocates in giving voice to victims in Sri Lanka's 25 year civil war; facilitating the building of dialogue skills in mixed Moslem – Christian communities, and guiding trauma healing for those horribly affected by the Boko Haram activities in Nigeria; leading a series of restorative dialogues between the Ukrainian army and the pro-Russian community where they reside near the war front in Ukraine; and helping build the reconciliation skills of two of the Commissions working for Truth and Reconciliation in Nepal after 10 years of civil war.



**Oliver Rizzi Carlson** is a restorative facilitator and peace educator from Switzerland who has obtained a Master's in Peace Education at the University for Peace (UPEACE) founded by the UN. Representative at the UN for the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders), and board member of several organizations, including the International Fellowship of Reconciliation Switzerland, the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP), the Culture of Peace Corporation and the Swiss Peace Education Network. Oliver's work focuses on the facilitation of Restorative Circles as formulated by Dominic Barter from Brazil, and the creation of restorative systems.



**Arnaud Durand** is a social and emotional learning trainer, facilitator and mediator. His practice gives priority to the quality of the relationship between stakeholders to achieve desired and lasting results. He is also project manager for the Education4Peace Foundation which advocates integrating social and emotional learning into education for the future generations. Arnaud is one the founder of the Gross National Happiness in Switzerland, a think-tank to reflect about a more inclusive paradigm of development and act to make this change possible. He is a board member and Vice-President of the Eurasia learning institute for happiness and wellbeing to promote a culture of peace and nonviolence.



**Yannick Arlabosse-Titz** is a peace advocate and Co-founder of Espérance en Casamance and has been working for the past several years in Senegalese and Gambian prisons. Yannick connects experts in peace processes and serves as the contact person for this proposal.

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