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What Works? Creative approaches to transitional justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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ABSTRACT

Scholars and practitioners of transitional justice have begun to seek alternative approaches in the arts and culture as a means to pursue core goals of peace and reconciliation. This special issue asks what creative approaches can do that conventional transitional justice mechanisms cannot, and invites us to reflect on the possibilities, and the potential challenges, risks and constraints. In response, this article discusses two arts-based initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one involving a national museum, the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and one with a Bosnian peacebuilding organisation, the Post Conflict Research Centre, that provided opportunities for plural, dialogical and localised forms of transitional justice. Analysing the question of what worked in these two distinct initiatives, we highlight four common qualities and offer them as non-prescriptive 'good practice principles' in

¹ This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Global Challenges Research Fund (*Art and Reconciliation: Conflict Culture and Community* and *Open Calls and the Living Museum – Innovation, Research and the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Grant numbers: AH/P005365/1 and AH/AH/S005641/1). Ethical approval was obtained from King's College London Research Ethics Committee on 13 June 2017. Reference Number: HR-16/17-4621.

strategic arts-based peace-building practice: iterative working over time; carving space for plural, locally driven narratives; amplifying the capacities and networks of local actors; and context driven project design.

Keywords: peace, reconciliation, transitional justice, arts, culture.

What Works? Creative approaches to transitional justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

In deeply complex and challenging post conflict settings, where violence and atrocity have taken and destroyed lives and divided societies, there are no straight forward answers to the question of how a society should go about repairing itself. Contending with the past is a complex, difficult and long-term project, and we know from decades of experience with transitional justice that while some form of reckoning may well be deemed necessary, it is by no means sufficient to foster the kind of political, psycho-social and societal repair that is required for sustainable peace. The limits of transitional justice are well-rehearsed, as are critiques that is often a top-down process, dominated by international actors, and with a heavy focus on criminal trials as the primary locus of justice.² Others have long argued that

² Transitional justice as a field of study and practice has been subject to similar criticisms to those levelled at liberal peacebuilding, eloquently dissected by Oliver Richmond, Roger MacGinty and Roland Paris: Richmond, Oliver, and Roger MacGinty. 2015. 'Where Now for the Critique of the Liberal Peace?' *Cooperation and Conflict* 50, 2: 171-189; Roland Paris, 2010. 'Saving Liberal Peacebuilding.' *Review of International Studies* 36, 2: 337-65. Meanwhile, scholars of Transitional Justice have sought to reflect on its normative and political underpinnings embedded in both the liberal conception of human rights and liberal peacebuilding. See, for example, Mutua, Makau, 'What is the future of Transitional Justice?', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 9/1 (2015): 1-9; Simon Robins, 'Mapping a Future for Transitional Justice by Learning from Its Past', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 9/1 (2015): 181-190 and Rachel Kerr. 2017. 'Tyrannies of Peace and Justice? Liberal Peacebuilding and the Politics and Pragmatics of Transitional Justice.' *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 11, 1: 176-185.

order to foster meaningful change, transitional justice ought to be more firmly anchored locally in the communities most deeply affected by violence, and be linked a future oriented transformative agenda.³

Recognising the limits of transitional justice, scholars and practitioners have begun to look to alternative approaches in the arts and culture as an avenue through which to pursue such an agenda.⁴ In his 2015 report, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Pablo de Grieff, noted the potential for

³ See, for example, Gready, Paul and Simon Robins, 'From Transitional to Transformative Justice: A New Agenda for Practice', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 8/3 (2014): 1-23; Millar, G. M., *An Ethnographic Approach to Peacebuilding: Understanding Local Experiences in Transitional States* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2014); Waldorf, Lars, and Rosalind Shaw, eds. 2010. *Localising Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities After Mass Violence*. Stanford Studies in Human Rights. Stanford University Press; Lundy, Patricia, and Mark McGovern. 2008. 'Whose Justice? Rethinking Transitional Justice from the Bottom Up'. *Journal of Law and Society* 35 (2): 265–92; Rosemary Nagy, 'Transitional Justice as a Global Project: Critical Reflections', *Third World Quarterly* 29/2 (2008): 275-289; and Wendy Lambourne, Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding after Mass Violence, *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Volume 3, Issue 1, March 2009, Pages 28–48, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijn037> .

⁴ Peter D. Rush and Olivera Simic (eds). 2014. *The Arts of Transitional Justice: Culture, Activism and Memory after Atrocity*. Springer: New York; Kurze, Arnaud and Christopher K. Lamont (eds), *New Critical Spaces in Transitional Justice: Gender, Art and Memory* (Indiana University Press, 2019); and Clara Ramirez-Barat (ed.). 2014. *Transitional Justice, Culture and Society: Beyond Outreach*.

approaches from the arts and culture to contribute to transitional justice.⁵ The embrace of the arts in transitional justice reflects a broader trend in peacebuilding scholarship and practice where the arts have gained increasing attention as an instrument to promote dialogue, reconciliation and conflict transformation.⁶ There is even a recognition that the process of building peace itself ought to be framed as a creative process – one that requires a great deal of what John Paul Lederach called ‘moral imagination’ to conjure into existence.⁷ However, despite this increased interest, evidence for or against the impact of the arts as a catalyst for change in post-conflict settings remains fragmented and limited.⁸ Whilst there is a growing

⁵ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Human Rights Council, A/HRC/30/42, 7 September 2015.

⁶ See, for example, Baily, Alison. 2019. *The Art of Peace: The Value of Culture in Post-Conflict Recovery*. British Council.

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_art_of_peace_0419.pdf; Cynthia Cohen.

Creative Approaches to Reconciliation. Working Paper online at

https://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/pdfs/publications/Creative_Approaches.pdf; Seidl-Fox, Susana, and

Seema Sridhar. 2014. *Conflict Transformation through Culture: Peacebuilding and the Arts*. Salzburg Global Seminar Session Report 532; and Lizelle Bisschoff and Stefanie Van de Peer (eds). 2013. *Art and Trauma in Africa: Representations of Reconciliation in Music, Visual Arts, Literature and Film*,

IB Taurus; James E. Young, 2000. *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in*

Contemporary Art and Architecture, Yale University Press ; Betty Churcher. 2005. *The Art of War*.

Melbourne University Publishing

⁷ Lederach, John Paul. 2005. *The Moral Imagination: the Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁸ *Art and Reconciliation* set out to address this and created a database of arts-based transitional justice and peacebuilding projects and a series of project profiles, accessible on the project website:

<https://artreconciliation.org/arts-and-reconciliation/case-studies/>.

literature that recognises the contribution of the arts, there is a sense that the value of creative approaches are yet to be fully realised, with many projects struggling to survive beyond evaluation stage.⁹

This special issue therefore makes a timely and important intervention. A key question posed is what can artistic and cultural approaches do that conventional transitional justice mechanisms cannot? What are the possibilities of creative approaches, and where are the potential challenges, risks and constraints? Our response to these questions is based on evidence from a two-and-a-half-year research programme, *Art and Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community*, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Global Challenges Research Fund, in which we investigated and experimented with a range of creative approaches to reconciliation. Working in the Western Balkans, the programme commissioned regional artists and built research partnerships with arts institutions and NGOs using ‘strategic’ arts based approaches.¹⁰ The work of individual professional artists commissioned through the programme, and their role in catalysing and re-imagining

⁹ Hunter, Mary-Ann, and Linda Page. 2014. ‘What Is “the Good” of Arts-Based Peacebuilding? Questions of Value and Evaluation in Current Practice.’ *Peace and Conflict Studies* 21, 2: 117; Bergh, Arild, and John Sloboda. 2010. ‘Music and Art in Conflict Transformation: A Review.’ *Music and Arts in Action* 2, 2: 11.

¹⁰ By strategic, Shank & Schirch mean arts-based methodologies that are conceptually grounded and co-ordinated with other forms of peace-building approaches. Shank, Michael, and Lisa Schirch. 2008. ‘Strategic Arts-Based Peacebuilding.’ *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 33, 2: 217-242.

reconciliation, is discussed elsewhere.¹¹ Here, we focus on two discrete projects that were conducted in partnership with established cultural and/or peacebuilding organisations in Sarajevo, *Reconciliations* led by the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and *Balkans Diskurs Youth Correspondents Programme (BDYCP)* run by the Post Conflict Research Centre (PCRC). These two projects, we argue, demonstrate the possibilities of how creative and arts-based approaches can supplement traditional transitional justice mechanisms, providing alternative forms of engagement with legacies of conflict, opening new deliberative spaces and providing a platform for different, sometimes marginalised, voices. Based on our study of these two projects, we offer four ‘good practice principles’ that we hope are useful to others in planning and assessing arts-based approaches to transitional justice.

Why Bosnia and Herzegovina?

The wider research programme focused broadly on the Western Balkans, where the legacy of armed conflict over the break of up of Yugoslavia (1991-2001) continues to challenge political, economic, and social development and to obstruct inter-ethnic and inter-state reconciliation. Reconciliation and transitional justice matter instrumentally, as dealing effectively with the legacy of war crimes was, and remains, a key condition for integration in the European Union (Montenegro, Serbia and the FYROM are official candidates, having opened formal accession negotiations, while Bosnia and Kosovo remain potential candidate countries). And it matters substantively, as inter-ethnic tensions and nationalist agendas

¹¹ Redwood, Henry, Tiffany Fairey and Rachel Kerr, ‘Re-thinking reconciliation through the arts: artistic interventions in the Western Balkans.’ Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Nationalities, Colombia University, New York, 2-4 May 2019.

continue to dominate private and public spaces, evidenced in continuing challenges over refugee return and judicial reform and reflected in polarized media and public discourse.

Across the region, the conflict continues in non-violent form, with ongoing contestation over issues of responsibility and competing narratives. This is in spite of a great deal of effort and investment in transitional justice, including the establishment of an international tribunal (The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia), international support for domestic courts prosecuting war crimes, several attempts to create a truth commission and regional fact-finding efforts, including the Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts About All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia from 1991-2001 (RECOM). In 2019, twenty-four years after the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the two projects discussed here were located, the situation remained largely as Refik Hodzic had described it four years earlier: ‘one of no political agenda for reconciliation, of no social project aimed at overcoming the legacy of the conflict from the ‘90s, of a continuing struggle for ethnic dominance.’¹²

So, while many millions have been invested, widespread disappointment by local communities has become increasingly visible and vocal.¹³ Transitional justice, peace-building and reconciliation programmes, often administered by international donors and professionalised NGOs, have increasingly come to be viewed with suspicion and cynicism by

¹² Refik Hodzic, ‘Twenty years since Srebrenica, no reconciliation: we are still at war’,

<https://www.ictj.org/news/twenty-years-srebrenica-no-reconciliation-we%E2%80%99re-still-war>

¹³ Kappler, Stefanie. 2012. ‘Divergent Transformation and Centrifugal Peacebuilding: The EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina’. *International Peacekeeping* 19 (5): 612–27.

local populations for being more closely aligned to donor priorities than the needs and concerns of local people.¹⁴ Young people in particular feel alienated by these projects and have sought alternative sites and spaces in which to deliberate the past and transform the future.¹⁵ Some of these alternatives have involved community arts based projects,¹⁶ and public art exhibitions to draw attention to specific issues or victim groups.¹⁷ Little wonder, then, that policy makers are also looking at alternatives and are eager to learn ‘what works’.

What works?

This deceptively simple question, ‘what works?’, was posed to us by an Embassy official during a workshop in Belgrade on the evaluation of reconciliation initiatives in the Western Balkans. Underpinning the question was the sense, shared by many policy makers and

¹⁴ Belloni, Roberto. 2019. *The Rise and Fall of Peacebuilding in the Balkans*. Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies. Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁵ Kurze, Arnaud. “#WarCrimes #PostConflictJustice #Balkans: Youth, Performance Activism and the Politics of Memory.” *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 10, no. 3 (2016): 451–70.

¹⁶ Zelizer, Craig (2003) "The Role of Artistic Processes in Peace-Building in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Peace and Conflict Studies: Vol. 10 :No. 2* , Article 4. Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol10/iss2/4>.

¹⁷ There are too many to list here, but a good example is *My Body: A War Zone*, which was a photographic exhibition displayed in Sarajevo in July 2015 of portraits of victims of wartime sexual assault, which helped highlight and provoke debate about the global campaign against sexual violence in conflict. For discussion, see, Olivera Simic, ‘My Body: A War Zone: Documenting stories of wartime sexual violence in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Nepal’, *Journal of Arts & Communities* 8(1) (2016): 11-30.

donors that, while they are fully cognizant of the widely discussed problems and tensions of peace-building, reconciliation and transitional justice projects or mechanisms – including the predominance of top-down approaches, a narrow focus on and unrealistic expectation of short term, quantifiable results, an emphasis on legalistic solutions and a misplaced faith in linear, causal theories of change – as well as the complex and unstable contexts in which such projects are undertaken, and the need to take a long-term, community focused view, what they need is some direction about what might be an effective strategy to support reconciliation and transitional justice. In other words, notwithstanding all the challenges and constraints, *what works?*

In the context of transitional justice, it is perhaps easier to be negative. Critiques abound regarding the failures of transitional justice to achieve lofty goals of justice, peace, reconciliation and deterrence, the insufficient evidence base and lack of systematic and robust evaluation which undermine the tentative formulation of criteria by which success and impact can be determined. By contrast, this article and its evocation of a framework for *what works* purposely adopts a positive approach to the question of how the arts might present intriguing possibilities for transitional justice by pluralising the sites and modes of engagement through which people can engage with and frame the past and its relation to the future on their own terms . We do not discount the many challenges and important critical questions but we nevertheless deliberately choose to highlight these two collaborations and emergent good practice principles, showing how locally based people and organisations have successfully harnessed the arts to great effect, often with few resources, in deeply challenging and fragile circumstances.

Rather than go around in circles trying objectively to quantify the ‘true’ impact of the arts then, we concentrate our efforts here on describing *what seems to work best*. We do this by highlighting four emergent good practice principles that we have identified as informing and shaping two distinct creative interventions, *Reconciliations* and *BDYCP*, that have contributed (albeit in limited ways) to building peace and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The notion of good practice is of course problematic in both the context of transitional justice and the arts. Criteria for success, excellence, best or good practice carry with them value- and power-laden perspectives around whose opinions counts and whose version of quality is prioritised that directly speak to the tensions and controversies that shape the politics of evidence and impact. There are important concerns over the value of good practice criteria and their capacity to homogenise, undermine, mis-represent and instrumentalise the diverse array of artistic methods, approaches, agendas and their impacts. Good practice frameworks can mistakenly imply that universalistic models are transferable or scalable, that outcomes are replicable and that a formulaic approach to the arts is valid. That is not our intention. We are not seeking to generalise but rather to highlight common principles across these two specific projects in order to draw out lessons we hope are useful to guide others, not a blueprint to be applied.

The framework of good practice principles draws on developmental and principles-based evaluation literature that focuses on assessing new and adaptive approaches and innovative initiatives in complex and dynamic environments¹⁸. As researchers we sought to track, document and help interpret the nature and implications of these interventions as they

¹⁸ Patton, Michael Quinn. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. New York: The Guildford Press, 2011.

unfolded, gathering data about their processes, activities, outcomes and contexts in order to help extract lessons and insights to inform subsequent initiatives. We looked for effective principles of practice in action that informed and shaped these initiatives and offer them as ‘hypotheses, not truths’¹⁹ that can provide guiding markers in the context of the arts and peace-building where outcomes, processes and activities can vary and need to be decided in response to what is appropriate, possible and relevant. Accordingly we propose these good practice principles not as fixed criteria or guarantees of outcomes and impact but rather as a flexible, non-prescriptive formulation of shared qualities to develop dialogue around standards, effectiveness and accountability in creative approaches to transitional justice and arts-based peacebuilding.

We first provide some background on *Art and Reconciliation* before describing the two projects in more detail and offering an analysis that highlights what arts-based approaches do to drive localised forms of transitional justice, often neglected by conventional transitional justice mechanisms, by outlining four principles of good practice that underpin the approaches of these two distinct initiatives, namely: iterative project cycles over time; driven by local context and priorities; providing space for locally driven narratives and building capacities and networks of local actors. Differentiating between means (approaches, practices and methods) and the ends (outcomes and impacts), these principles focuses on good practices as a set of underpinning approaches that inform the conceptualisation, practices and methods of two distinct arts and media based localised initiatives that worked with different stakeholders, audiences and agendas. These good practice principles seek to

¹⁹ Patton, Michael Quinn. *Principles-Focused Evaluation: The Guide*. New York: The Guildford Press, 2018, page 3

accommodate and celebrate, rather than flatten, the contextual and open-ended diversity that is the core of the critical potential of the arts.

Art and Reconciliation

The research presented in this paper was undertaken as part of Art and Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community, an interdisciplinary research programme that involved historians, political scientists, arts scholars and an academic artist in residence and brought together UK universities with organisations and artists in the Western Balkans. The research sought to examine the relationship between the arts and reconciliation and explore how the arts may (or may not) contribute to facilitating and re-imagining reconciliation. In the context of this research, reconciliation was understood to be a contested and problematic term. Rather than attempting to pre-define what was meant by it, we sought to explore how reconciliation was experienced, conceptualised, evaluated and practiced by those involved.

Recognising the need for a better acknowledgement of the diverse applications and implications of the use of the arts,²⁰ we adopted an eclectic and inter-disciplinary approach and engaged with a multiplicity of arts practices by commissioning and researching a range of different types of creative interventions with a focus on the under-explored area of visual arts. In total, fifteen artistic projects were commissioned, including a participatory drawing workshop, a documentary film and the creation of 11 new pieces of artwork (sculpture, paintings and mixed media installations). Mixed qualitative methods and adaptive evaluation

²⁰ Fairey, Tiffany. 2017. 'The Arts in Peace-Building and Reconciliation: Mapping Practice'. Art & Reconciliation Working Paper Series. <https://artreconciliation.org/research-activities/publications/>

strategies were designed to assess each intervention. Data was gathered through artist's diaries, focus groups, audience surveys, content analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Whilst the authors of this paper were directly involved in formulating the overarching research design, our direct involvement in each of the two projects discussed here differed. In relation to the Museum, the research team helped to frame the open call to artists, and members of the research team (not the authors) sat on the judging panel, the call and resulting exhibition was managed by the Museum's Director and Curator. In contrast, our relationship with PCRC was one of observer and evaluator– they sought our help in assessing the impact of an ongoing programme and we were not involved in its conception or the selection of participants. That means that the focus of our research was slightly different for each project. With the Museum, we were primarily concerned with observing the artistic process and how each artist engaged with the concept of reconciliation through the Museum's archives and artefacts; a key concern was how the artists helped to reframe the concept of reconciliation as opening up dialogue. However, as we conducted the research, it became clear that the project shared some important characteristics with the PCRC project, which we present in what follows.

'Reconciliations' at the History Museum of Bosnia and Hercegovina

Reconciliations was conducted in partnership with the History Museum of Bosnia and Hercegovina. It involved an open call to artists to work with the collections of the Museum, specifically those relating to its permanent exhibition on the siege of Sarajevo.

[Image 1 here]

The Museum is a unique cultural institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina: it operates largely independent of government, with no core funding, but manages nevertheless to provide an important space for dialogue about the past and different aspects of remembrance.²¹

Originally established as the Museum of the Revolution to commemorate and celebrate the victory of Marshal Josip Broz Tito's Partisans in the Second World War, it has undergone waves of transformation.²² From its founding in 1945 until 1993, the Museum remained thematically focused on the history of antifascism during World War II and the cultivation of socialist state values. Following the war and the collapse of the Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992, the Museum was renamed the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, although the bulk of the collection, including artworks celebrating the Partisans' victory, remains.

In 2017, a public call was made for applications from regional artists. The form of the artwork was left entirely open. It could be performance, sculpture, photography, film or fine art as long as it had the potential to be exhibited. Applications that were socially engaged and participatory or collaborative in nature were particularly welcome. The Museum received over fifty applications, from which three projects were selected by an independent panel of judges: *Bedtime Stories* by Adela Jušić and Lana Čmajčanin, *Cathode Infusion*, by Dario Krštic and Sabina Tanović and *Memoria Bosniaca* by Vladimir Miladinović. All three artworks (or modified versions of them) were exhibited at the Museum in Sarajevo and at King's College London, together with other works commissioned or created in connection

²¹ Workshop notes, 27 June 2018.

²² Reif Larsen, 'Sarajevo's enduring optimism', New York Times, 2 October 2015.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/04/travel/sarajevo-tourism-history.html>.

with *Art and Reconciliation*.²³ *Bedtime Stories* and *Cathode Infusion* are now part of the permanent exhibition *Sarajevo Under Siege*.

[Image 2 here]

From the artists' reflections on their process, artists' workshops,²⁴ and the responses to the work from audiences, we identified a series of key features that art can contribute to post conflict situations. First, art is personal, allowing for an individual response to a complex issue. Second, art remembers and pays testimony to the past. Third, art pays attention to things that might otherwise go unnoticed and unseen. Fourth, art has a transformative potential, both in terms of material objects but also perceptions, and finally the arts are empathetic, enabling a shared emotional response that can bring people together.²⁵

Cathode Infusion is a compilation of short inserts from programs that were broadcast during the Siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996). A selection of these programs (acquired through a public call) are screened on a typical TV set used at the time. The programs are interrupted by abrupt silences, referring to the frequent power cuts during the siege. *Memoria Bosniaca*, by Vladimir Miladinović, a Belgrade based artist, was produced from the archives of the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Miladinović selected documents relating to the siege of Sarajevo, which he then redrew in ink wash. In doing so, he sought to reconcile his own

²³ <https://artreconciliation.org/research-activities/exhibitions/>.

²⁴ 'The artist in post conflict society' was a one-day public artists workshop held at the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 25th, 2018.

<https://artreconciliation.org/research-activities/events/artists-workshop-sarajevo-june-2018/>

²⁵ *Reconciliations*. 2019. King's College London. [catalogue].

sense of guilt at having known nothing of the siege when he was a teenager in Serbia, and his collective sense of guilt at what was done in his name. Through the meticulous and time-consuming process of drawing the documents he wrestled with his own conscience and the beauty of the drawings serve to draw people in to engage in a different way with the story of the Siege than they might otherwise do.²⁶

A fundamental question the project sought to address was how art and artists should relate and engage with the broader social, political and economic climate of the times. This question is particularly urgent and troubling in those parts of the world that have endured the scars of war, where artists and arts organisations have to deal with the complex and problematic issue of whether the past should be remembered and commemorated, or whether such attention is actually counterproductive in imagining how, in the future, further conflicts might be prevented. The panel selected interventions that sought to question the role of the artist in post conflict society, and the role that creative arts practices can play in processes of reconciliation, remembering, dialogue and peace building.

Bedtime Stories illustrates this very well. Created in 2011-2013 by artists Lana Čmajčanin and Adela Jušić, the work had been exhibited globally (in Stockholm, Maribor, and Zagreb), but never in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In response to the open call, the artists created a version of the work specifically for the Museum, and it now forms part of its permanent collection. The work seeks to reproduce and represent, through the voice of youth at the

²⁶ Interview with Vladimir Miladinović, 25 June 2018, Sarajevo. Vladimir Miladinović and Adela Jušić also discussed their work in a documentary film made for *Art and Reconciliation*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/-VsCV0ZCnuI>.

time, the experience of everyday life under siege. The Siege of Sarajevo lasted from the outbreak of war in Bosnia in April 1992 to February 1996. For 1,425 days, the city was encircled by Bosnian Serb forces, blockaded and under constant bombardment from artillery, tanks and sniper fire emanating from the hills surrounding the city, where Bosnian Serb forces were stationed. It was the longest siege in modern warfare. Just under 14,000 people were killed during the siege, including over 5,000 civilians. Life was unbearable at times, with the search for clean drinking water a daily game of roulette. Unable to remain in their homes, people retreated to their basements as relative places of safety, but these were small, confined spaces, where families crowded together, occupying space that had previously been used to store unwanted or unused items. *Bedtime Stories* recreates the sanctuary of the basement spaces and contrasts the apparent safety and comfort of a ‘bed’, which is reproduced as a ‘sanctuary’ with the wider context of deep insecurity. It is at once an intimate telling of individual stories, including the artists’ own, and a political statement of resilience.²⁷ In that sense, it probes the un-reconciled nature of dissonant experiences, but also seeks to reconcile the past with the lived experience of the present. The effect is profoundly discomfoting.

Aside from the effect of the artwork on the artist and audience, *Reconciliations* impacted in other ways, as we discuss below in the context of good practices. The exhibition and open call had three immediate impacts relevant to transitional justice goals of dealing with the past and transforming the future: it helped to build the capacity and profiles of local artists in a context where the cultural sector remains underfunded by providing space and funds for artists to work together in the Museum, and by drawing public attention to their work,

²⁷ *Reconciliations*. 2019. King’s College London. [catalogue].

including in the local news media;²⁸ it brought new audiences to the Museum, and encouraged different forms of engagement with its collections through visual arts-based workshops with children and young adults; and it helped to raise the Museum's profile as a site of deliberation and provided evidence of the value of creative approaches to leveraging the Museum's collections that proved instrumental in securing funding from other bodies (e.g. the John Paul Getty Foundation and Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK);²⁹ The open call and the work produced around it gave a new strand of life to the Museum, helping to create a 'living museum', and sustaining employment.³⁰

Balkans Diskurs Youth Correspondent Program

Balkans Diskurs Youth Correspondent Programme (BDYCP), led by the peace-building NGO Post Conflict Research Centre (PCRC), is a youth mentoring program that seeks to catalyse new forms of participatory youth-produced visual and digital media in order to build inclusive civil society in BiH. The aim is not specifically to create citizen or career

²⁸ For example, Bosnian daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje* covered the exhibition and featured interviews with two of the artists, Vladimir Miladinović and Adela Jušić. "'Reconciliations": Historijski momenat u Historijskom muzeju', *Oslobodjenje*, 27 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/o2/kultura/izlozbe/umjetnost-i-pomirenje-izlozba-reconciliations-u-historijskom-muzeju-bih-374632>; 'Adela Jušić: Glas i muzika, narativ i historija', *Oslobodjenje*, 16 July 2018. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/intervjui/adela-jusic-glas-i-muzika-narativ-i-historija-379051>; and 'Vladimir Miladinović: Pomirenje je devalvirani termin', *Oslobodjenje*, 19 July 2018. Available at: <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/intervjui/vladimir-miladinovic-pomirenje-je-devalvirani-termin-379572>.

²⁹ Interview with Elma Hasimbegović, 18 April 2019.

³⁰ Interview with the Director of the Museum, Elma Hasimbegović, 18 April 2019.

journalists, although some participants have gone on to work as media professionals, rather the project harnesses creative multi-media to build the capacities and voices of young civil society activists to produce counter-narratives that challenge divisive public discourse and media. Arts based and creative approaches lie at the heart of the multifaceted strategic programmes undertaken by PCRC that seek to restore a culture of peace in BiH.

[Image 3 here]

The annual BDYCP programme, open to young people from across the region, consists of photography and writing workshops followed by a specialised mentoring programme where participants are supported to develop personal and collaborative creative visual storytelling projects and to produce articles and photo stories for *Balkan Diskurs*, an online multimedia platform run by PCRC, that publishes articles, creative multi-media and photo-features on relevant regional and civil society issues.

Our evaluative research, which utilised mixed qualitative methods including regular interviews, focus groups, surveys and content analysis of creative outputs,³¹ focused on the programme between 2017-2018 over an annual project cycle and beyond. Researchers followed the experiences of its 2017 cohort group, exploring how the project was conceptualised and experienced by those involved, its impact on participants and whether

³¹ The aim was to capture plural types of evaluation data and to allow for triangulation and cross data analysis. Full details on research methods, data and findings detailed in this article is available in the final evaluation report: Fairey, Tiffany. 2019. *Evaluation Report: Balkans Diskurs Youth Correspondents Programme, Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Art & Reconciliation Working Paper Series. <https://artreconciliation.org/research-activities/publications/>.

(and how) it did or did not affect their attitudes towards reconciliation and their capacities as young peacebuilders.

The *BDYCP* 2017 cohort consisted of seventeen young people, nine female and eight males, aged from 18 to 28 years old, from all ethnic groups and 13 different locations across BiH. They took part in 5 days of workshops in Sarajevo and went on to be offered mentoring support. The mentoring took various forms. Participants were supported to engage in extended collaborative visual digital media projects and assignments developing their dialogical and creative storytelling skills. These included Instagram based photo-dialogues and a public participatory photography project called ‘Possible Landscapes’ (Image 4).³² They were also supported to produce their own articles and features, individually and collaboratively for *Balkans Diskurs* on subjects of their choosing and to produce visual projects and features for other external publications.

[Image 4 here]

BDYCP did not explicitly frame itself as a peace-building or reconciliation project however the research findings established that the project successfully amplified and extended the profiles and networks of its active participants as cultural actors, media professionals and young peace-builders.³³ Attracting young people who were already open to and supportive of inter-ethnic co-operation and with high levels of tolerance and mutual understanding, the project consolidated their positive resolve to engage in civil society and work towards

³² Led by Monica Alcazar-Duarte, Possible Landscapes is an Instagram based participatory photography. <http://www.monicaalcazarduarte.com/possiblelandscapes>.

³³ Fairey, 2019.

durable peace, built solidarity and enhanced career development prospects and opportunities. In this sense the project expanded their capacities as ‘active citizens’ to influence and become actors for and multipliers of peace from within their own societies and peer groups.³⁴

Of the seventeen participants who attended the training, eleven stayed actively involved in the project after the workshops, producing articles and images for *Balkans Diskurs* and other publications. Of the remaining six, one dropped out and the other five stayed in touch, engaging with the project network, but not actively participating after the training. Participants’ feedback on the project experience was overwhelmingly positive with a majority reporting that it not only met but exceeded their expectations.

The project’s success was, in part, demonstrated by the number of stories and other forms of creative outputs (photo exhibitions, publications, participation in collaborative digital media projects) and opportunities that were generated with, for and by its active participants and the reach and audiences their articles and photography commanded. The eleven active participants on the *Balkans Diskurs* platform published a total of 29 stories and photo-essays and these were viewed 61,699 times via PCRC and *Balkan Diskurs* online platforms and social media. The subjects of their stories ranged from the challenges faced by the disabled community, independent journalism, minority religions and groups in BiH, local heroes, the work of local artists and artisans, Sarajevo’s graffiti, animal cruelty, cyber-bullying, gender discrimination in the work place and the Bosnian music scene, to name a few.³⁵ In addition,

³⁴ Reardon, Betty. 1998. ‘The Urgency of Peace Education: The Good News and the Bad News’. *Peace Studies Newsletter*, *Peace Studies Association of Japan*, 17.

³⁵ See Fairey, 2019: 18 for a full table of all the articles written by the Youth Correspondents over the 2017-18 period.

eight participants contributed articles, stories and images to the first Bosnian edition of the youth culture magazine, *ASBO* (Image 5).³⁶ One young person was awarded a prize for this photographic work and created a photographic project, *On the Margins*, that challenged common stereotypes and discriminatory practices against BiH's Roma population, culminating in an exhibition and publication (Image 6).³⁷ Others were able to bolster and amplify their own civil society work in human and disability rights and community and local journalism, pursuing their own new initiatives. For example, Alma Mujanović, who is a disability activist, wrote extensively around disability rights (Image 3) and while on the project also founded 'Znak za riječ' ('Sign for a Word'), a social media community that promotes sign language in Bosnia through creative multimedia (@znakzarijec).

[Image 5 here]

Many of the young people already held strongly positive attitudes towards reconciliation, inter-ethnic co-operation and forgiveness when they first got involved in the project. This is unsurprising given PCRC sought to recruit engaged young people already active in their communities or who showed the potential to be such and whom shared their organisational

³⁶ ASBO is an independent publication created by The D Foundation as an extension of its missions to unearth and showcase fresh talent and create platform for youth subcultures.

<https://www.asbomagazine.com/about>.

³⁷ *On the Margins*, supported by the Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission to BiH (OSCE BiH), the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the City of Sarajevo, was launched in June 2018 at the Sarajevo City Hall. It was moved to the Skenderija Steel Bridge on 28 June 2018 to be displayed as a part of the 2018 WARM Festival. The exhibition began traveling across BiH starting in 2019 with the cities Brčko and Tuzla.

commitment to restoring a culture of peace and preventing violent conflict. However, the research confirmed that these views were sustained and solidified over the course of the year, with participant's levels of trust in other ethnic groups and willingness to forgive increasing.³⁸ The project activities augmented participants' already positive levels of trust and attitudes towards reconciliation and served to further expand their belief in inter-ethnic collaboration and their capacity to work together constructively, in dialogue and as active young change-makers to become multipliers of peace. As such, whilst of course these relatively small numbers of young people cannot alone transform Bosnian politics and society, the project sought to give them tools and a platform so that they might provide the 'critical yeast' to bring others along with them.

[Image 6 here]

Good practice principles

Reconciliations and *BDYCP* represent two very different approaches, and each intervention was shaped by the distinct agendas of the leading organisations, their different stakeholders, and different sectorial practices. However, a multiplicity of goals, motivations, tools and practices does not necessarily imply a multiplicity in underpinning standards and principles. Both of these initiatives were found to have engendered a form of participatory creative practice that created a multiplier impact enabling different sectors of Bosnian society – youth and artists – to play an active role in carving out new spaces for deliberation about the past, present and future, which we argue is a critical element of transitional justice and reconciliation.

³⁸ Fairey, 2019: 9.

We identify four commonalities, which we call good practice principles, that underpinned both of these initiatives and contributed to why they worked: 1. They evolved through iterative project cycles that happened over time; 2. Their design was driven by local contexts and priorities; 3. They carved a space and provided a platform for plural narratives and 4. they built the capacities and networks of local actors.

1. Iterative project cycles over long timeframes

Both initiatives evolved over time through iterative and adaptive project cycles. PCRC has run annual creative multimedia training workshops for Bosnian youth since 2014. *BDYCP* evolved from PCRC's *Ordinary Heroes* programme³⁹ and the Srđan Aleksić Youth Competition.⁴⁰ The project, as it currently exists, did not come fully formed; it grew over iterative cycles of workshops and different initiatives that were adapted and built on over a number of years. Over time, the project organisers have incorporated the learning they have gleaned from each activity they have run, as they have got a better sense of what worked and what did not, and as participants and staff have grown with the programme and come to more actively and strategically shape its vision and hone its language, activities and working practices. This kind of adaptive, grounded approach to project management imitates long established traditions in arts-based research and practice processes that have reflexivity and experiential and situated learning as core components best suited to the emergent outcomes of the arts.

³⁹ <https://www.p-crc.org/our-work/peace-education/ordinary-heroes-peacebuilding-program/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.p-crc.org/our-work/creative-multimedia/digital-media/srdjan-aleksic-youth-competition/>

Over various cycles, PCRC have adjusted their training, recruitment and mentoring strategies, shaping the project to arising challenges and building on its emergent impacts to grow its network and profile. Short term funding undermines an organisation's ability to plan strategically for the long-term but through iterative rounds of initiatives, each one evolving and building on the other, PCRC have managed to foster the project's expansive impact over time. In BiH, where young people struggle with disillusionment and apathy as they face, what seem to many, insurmountable problems, PCRC understand that one of their main tasks is to 'inspire hope that all is not lost'.⁴¹ Time is crucial in this respect to building trust and hope, to nurturing relationships and solidarity, as well as to honing and improving project methods.

The Museum, similarly, has over time built their engagement with artists and programme of activities that innovates by using the arts as a means of having a dialogue with BiH's past and contested histories. These were small-scale and piecemeal at first, but they have gradually established the Museum as a focal point for creative collaborations, and this was further reinforced and solidified by *Reconciliations*. In its wake, the Museum has continued to build its work in this regard: *Reconciliations 2*, in November 2018, commissioned and engaged a new set of artists, some of whom directly engaged with the work of one of the key mechanisms for transitional justice in the region, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), powerfully demonstrating how arts and aesthetic approaches elicit different kinds of responses – more open and on a more emotional register than the court records. In a similar vein, a recent exhibition conducted in collaboration with Mirko Klarin and SENSE Agency exhibited a series of photographs taken in Central Bosnia by

⁴¹ Interview with PCRC Co-Founder and Director, Leslie Woodward, 31 October 2018.

Giles Penfound, a war photographer attached to the British UNPROFOR battalion stationed in Vitez in 1993 (*48 Hours of Ashes and Blood*)⁴² that were introduced as evidence during ICTY trials. Their impact beyond the courtroom is even more profound.

The next iteration of the Museum's arts work is *Living Museum* which evolved from *Reconciliations* in that it sought to establish a permanent engagement between artists, curators and researchers and to foster a variety of creative responses to the Museum's art collection, in particular artworks collected by the Museum in its past iteration as the Museum of the Revolution, which celebrate the Partisan victory.⁴³ As discussed below, these are being used to open up new and different conversations about Yugoslav history and the politics of resistance and reconciliation. *Reconciliations* also initiated work with educators, students and young people, sparking the development of a more sustained programme of public activities involving creative engagement with the Museum's collections, such as a series of workshops with history teachers in BiH,⁴⁴ a drawing workshop led by London-based

⁴² *48 Hours of Ashes and Blood*, History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and SENSE Agency, April 2018. [catalogue].

⁴³ This work is also supported by the AHRC as a follow-on for impact and engagement award from the original grant: *Art and Reconciliation: Open Calls and the Living Museum – Innovation, Research and the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. (AHS005641/1), and runs from 1 February 2019-31 January 2020. See: <http://muzej.ba/open-call/>; and <https://artreconciliation.org/arts-and-reconciliation/commissions/the-living-museum/>.

⁴⁴ *Between Diversity and Division*, April-June 2018, History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. <http://muzej.ba/learning/community-collaborations/>

artist Paul Coldwell, and pinhole camera workshops run by artist Luke Watson in connection with his exploration of Witness Objects/Witness Subjects at the Museum in 2018 and 2019.⁴⁵

[Image 7 here]

Continually responding and adapting to the environment in which they are working, PCRC and the Museum are intuitively practicing a form of adaptive peacebuilding⁴⁶ that responds to and builds on local priorities. In the field of development the value and relevance of adaptive approaches to project management and evaluation are widely accepted as being most appropriate to complex environments where there are high degrees of instability, evolving stakeholder expectations, funding precariousness, non-linear processes of change and projects are dealing with emergent outcomes and objectives.⁴⁷ We argue that adaptive approaches are also clearly relevant and useful in arts-based transitional justice initiatives.

2. Driven by local context and priorities

Despite having grown up in relative peace, young Bosnians live in a country where democratic processes are unconsolidated, inter-ethnic relations remain fragile and decision makers show little regard for their needs as they struggle to build themselves a different kind of future in an unforgiving global market. Deteriorating economic and social conditions,

⁴⁵ <https://www.lukewatsonphotography.com/de>

⁴⁶ De Coning, Cedric. 2018. 'Adaptive Peace-Building.' *International Affairs* 94, 2): 301-317.

⁴⁷ Adaptive approaches build on complexity and systems change theory that recognize social phenomena to be uncertain, dynamic, made up of multiple interconnected players and elements.

Patton, M. Q. 2011. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. New York: Guildford Press.

high levels of youth unemployment and wide-spread dissatisfaction with the education system along with endemic corruption, nepotism and mismanagement means that many young Bosnians are leaving the country. This ‘brain-drain’ compounds the sense of the lack opportunities in Bosnia. Feeling left behind, many Bosnians are disillusioned and despondent about their own futures and the future of the country with serious repercussions for civil and democratic society. Evidence shows that many young people have no confidence in the government and institutions and disengaged from politics, express a largely apolitical attitude and ambivalence towards democracy,⁴⁸ distancing themselves from what is happening in the formal political sphere.⁴⁹

Against this backdrop, PCRC has evolved *BDYCP* to carve a space where active Bosnian youth, disappointed by politics and political peacebuilding, can use creative digital media to engage public audiences and build their legitimacy as civil society actors on their own terms. In this sense the programme is designed to tackle the socio-political problems that young Bosnians face but in addition it is also shaped around the situated realities and the concerns of young people. The programme model does not seek to impose, but rather to engage, to motivate, and to build solidarity. While conflict analysis is designated as a crucial step in peace-building programming, many projects fail to design initiatives that take the realities of participants lives into account. *BDYCP*’s design has been adapted to ensure that the concerns, priorities and languages of the young people are at its heart.

⁴⁸ Ziga, Jusuf, Lejla Turcilo, Amer Osmic, Sanela Basic, Nedzma Džananović Mirascija, Damir Kapidžić, and Jelena Brkić Smigoc. 2015. *Youth Study Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

⁴⁹ Kappler, Stefanie. 2012. ‘Divergent Transformation and Centrifugal Peace-building: The EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina.’ *International Peacekeeping* 19, 5: 612–27.

The youth correspondents greatly value the encouraging and unpressured support they received, that they described as ‘relaxed’ and ‘respectful’, cognizant of their other responsibilities and that gave them the time, space and support they needed. The project purposefully sought to provide them with a structure in which they have a say in setting the framework and pace. This is especially relevant in an environment where many NGOs or agency led (peacebuilding) initiatives are perceived of as top-down, with little relevance or benefits for community participants.⁵⁰ PCRC sought to differentiate their approach, specifically using the open-ended, collaborative and dialogical potential of the arts and creative approaches to devise programmes built around the lived experiences of their participants. Recognising the instability that characterises their lives and going against the donor pressure to account for their impact in terms of participant and output numbers, Tatjana Milovanović (*BDYCP* Project Manager) is honest that some do not continue to work with them after the initial workshops: some are too busy, some lose interest and some have other priorities.⁵¹

Whilst PCRC responded to the particular needs of young people in post-conflict BiH, the Museum responded to the need to reassert the place of culture and cultural organisations and to nurture and provide opportunities for the region’s under-resourced independent artistic community . The destruction of culture during wartime is aimed at the destruction of community with its bonds and its history; conversely, it is through culture that communities can demonstrate and build resilience, resisting attempts to destroy them, and potentially

⁵⁰ Kappler Stephanie. 2012. ‘Divergent Transformation and Centrifugal Peace-building: The EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina.’ *International Peacekeeping* 19, 5: 612–27.

⁵¹ Interview with Tatjana Milovanović, 27 June 2018.

creating space for reconciliation. We see this prominently in Sarajevo and the legacy of the siege, which was both a symbol of the worst of humanity and provides evidence of its resilience. Restoration, however, is hampered by the dysfunctional and divided politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Museum was the victim of this when, in 2012, it faced closure because of the failure of the state to agree amongst itself on its future, owing in large part to the failure of the factions in the tripartite presidency to agree on what version of ‘history’ the Historical Museum ought to commemorate. As such, the Museum’s development of a creative and innovative programme of artistic interventions and a ‘Living Museum’ directly contributes to the restoration and future resilience of cultural life. Participants in the artist workshop identified the lack of opportunities and spaces for young regional artists and in response the History Museum has continued to develop strategic programmes, *Reconciliations 2* and the *Living Museum*, creating opportunities and support for young local artists, both financially through commissions, and by providing a public space for creative collaborations via open studios and opportunities to exhibit and raise their profiles – nationally and internationally.

3. Providing space for plural, locally driven narratives

Providing this space for young people and artists was crucial to these projects’ success in supporting peace and reconciliation from below. This entailed more than simply creating *space*; these projects made visible locally driven narratives. Having public platforms also served a function to validate and give legitimacy to those narratives and engage public discourse: it is not just about creating a space for these stories to be told; but enabling them to be heard that is important.

Reconciliations engaged new user communities and brought new audiences to the Museum. Beyond those artists who were selected in the open call, many more reported that they benefited from the process and from involvement in workshops both personally and professionally, gaining new perspectives on their practice and career.⁵² These Bosnian artists, who were creating work that related to their own and to their country's past, were keen to engage in debates about the social role of the artist in remembering the past and re-imagining the future but struggled to find the places and means to engage public audiences. The project also enabled the Museum to engage new and different audiences in discourse by attracting general visitors, including increasing numbers of tourists, involving schools and other educational and youth groups in visits, events and educational activities, and engaging them through creative approaches focused on drawing, painting and photography.

In *BDYCP*, the participants applauded the freedom and flexibility they were given to choose their own story ideas which allowed them to focus on topics that they considered 'valuable and important'.⁵³ With specific assignments PCRC encouraged the youth correspondents to find stories from within their communities relating to inter-ethnic co-operation and moral courage, however with general projects the young people were free to choose the stories that they wanted to write. PCRC supported them to develop their research and interviewing skills, to edit and produce their work but the young people retained control over the content and focus. This is significant in an environment where youth feel powerless to affect change.

⁵² At the Artists' Workshop held in Sarajevo in June 2018 several of those who had applied to the open call but not been selected attended and expressed unprompted views about the benefits the open call had brought, even without their having been successful in the competition.

⁵³ Participant B, 2018.

In a country where censorship is a major issue for professional journalists, PCRC are keen to establish *Balkan Diskurs* as a pan-ethnic platform that does not subject its correspondents to censorship and which can provide a space to develop ‘counter-narratives’.⁵⁴ Leslie Woodward, PCRC’s Co-Founder and Vice President, explains that their approach is to guide the youth correspondents through the process of exploring what they want to cover and to work with the ideas they propose, encouraging them to run with them. The emergent quality of arts-based processes and PCRC’s collaborative, dialogical approach allows for the young people involved to develop their narrative frames about what is relevant and worthy of attention which constitutes their own locally driven youth agenda for transitional justice. What emerged from the range of stories produced on subjects from domestic violence, religious plurality, artistic memorialisation, youth cultures and underground music was a version of what a youth-driven peacebuilding and reconciliation discourse might consist of. It shifts the narrative away from a focus on memory, past conflict and inter-ethnic relations towards a more future-oriented, rights-focused and positive perspective. Recognising the power of positive stories to inspire, the scope of their articles demonstrates how the young people are consciously carving space to celebrate diversity, inclusivity and local culture, music and personalities.. Their stories recognise identities as intersectional and subvert and challenge the dominant notion perpetuated in public discourse and the media that ethnicity is at the root of all problems in BiH. Their writing and images engage with the past but do so in order to ‘turn to the future’.⁵⁵

4. Building the capacities and networks of local actors

⁵⁴ Interview with PCRC Co-Founder and Director, Leslie Woodward, 31 October 2018.

⁵⁵ Participant C, 2018.

Whilst the arts can create spaces for new imaginaries, without also building the capacities and networks of local actors to ensure they have the means to sustain, share and communicate those stories, its impact will be limited. *BDYCP* did this in multiple ways: by fostering friendships and collaborative working between participants (thorough collaborative projects and social media groups), by engaging them in the wider PCRC network, by enlarging skills and career development opportunities and building their portfolios and profiles as young change-makers and media producers by developing their public and professional networks. The participants themselves, in particular, valued the new networks they had gained. As one explained, ‘the networking with a very diverse group of young people is super beneficial for my work and, generally, for my life as a young person in this country. I believe that we can make something for ourselves only if we are connected and act together and this program was a great opportunity to do just that.’⁵⁶ The solidarity that the young people developed as they became connected with other young civil activists and a wider network combatted their isolation and disillusionment, motivating their individual efforts and belief that change was possible. What is effective about *BDYCP* is that the project invested in their capacities not just as young peacebuilders but as independent young people seeking to cultivate their career and professional prospects. These two identities were understood to be synonymous.

BDYCP not only built skills but motivated the young people to engage with topics that they previously thought about but had not had the know-how and confidence to launch into.⁵⁷

Despite reporting frustrations with the challenging process of producing and editing, most young people persisted and succeeded in publishing stories. PCRC’s guided mentoring

⁵⁶ Participant D, 2018.

⁵⁷ Fairey, 2019: 12.

framework allowed young people to develop and mature their professional skills and confidence as writers and photographers. Their exacting editorial process ensures every article meets professional quality standards and is published online in both Bosnian and English building the youth correspondents' credibility with prospective employers and clients. The circulation and readership of the *Balkans Diskurs* platform means the young correspondent's work gets a level of visibility further validating their writing and activities. PCRC make it a priority to pay the correspondents a small honorarium for their articles as they know how hard it is for young people to get jobs and they are keen to support their work not just in terms of providing opportunities but also with actual payment. Other employment opportunities also become available to active participants through the PCRC network and invitations to work on short-term projects as translators, fixers and researchers. In the last year, 6 former youth correspondents have gained short-term employment in linked projects working for NGOs, academic institutions and researchers.⁵⁸

As discussed above, in addition to building capacity among local artists on an individual level, creative approaches involving the arts have helped build the capacity of the Museum itself. From a rocky foundation, it has been able to establish itself through innovative work as one of the most important cultural institutions in the city, representing an alternative vision of what the future might hold, vested in what the New York Times columnist Reif Larsen called the eternal optimism of the Museum's Director, Elma Hasimbegović:

‘Visionaries like Ms. Hasimbegovic ... seem to hold the key to Sarajevo's future. It is the persistence and ingenuity of the individual who continues to effect change in the

⁵⁸ Fairey, 2019: 13.

city and in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole. It is this same persistence and ingenuity that allowed people to function day after day during the war with limited or no electricity, water, heat or food; to risk their lives to attend candlelit theatre shows or hand-operated film screenings; to bend and bend but never to break. And it is this same persistence and ingenuity that give the city its air of buoyant survivalism today.’⁵⁹

Both projects have succeeded in harnessing this optimism and ‘buoyant survivalism’ and giving it succour. It is amply demonstrated by the co-Founder and Director of PCRC as well, the indefatigable Velma Sarić. What is striking about *BDYCP* in particular is that it has demonstrated and drawn out what Larsen identifies as the self-belief of the new generation of young Bosnians, born during or after the war, who see the country as theirs, and seeking to mould it in new ways, not burdened by its history.

Conclusion

This article presented two distinct organisation led, arts based initiatives in BiH and proposed four emergent good practice principles that underpinned their success and which will be of relevance to strategic arts-based transitional justice and peace-building initiatives: they evolve over iterative and adapted project cycles over time; their design is driven by the local context and lived priorities; they carve spaces for plural, locally driven narratives and they build the capacities, profiles and networks of local actors. These projects demonstrate how

⁵⁹ Reif Larsen, ‘Sarajevo’s enduring optimism’, New York Times, 2 October 2015.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/04/travel/sarajevo-tourism-history.html>

the impacts of arts projects are often distributed: they ripple out and multiply through the people, networks and creative processes and outputs that they give rise to.

This article has taken a consciously positive perspective. Based on these examples, we are optimistic about the possibilities for creative approaches in transitional justice. This optimism is rooted not only in the potential of arts-based approaches, but also by the people involved in them. In such a difficult and hostile context, the work of the individuals pushing these initiatives forward is truly inspiring and we wanted to recognise that. By focusing on the good practice principles that inform ‘what works’, the intention has not been to airbrush over what did not work or to avoid discussions about the inevitable problems, imperfections or constraints these projects had. Nor has the intention been to paint a romanticised picture of the arts. Rather, we sought to describe the ways that people are using the arts to catalyse constructive and emergent change in complex and unstable conditions.

However, this deliberately affirming view must also be coupled with a managing of expectations and note of caution. Among those whose lives are most affected by conflict, including those driving these two initiatives, there is understandably pessimism about the inherent systemic challenges, the possibility of change and cynicism about the mechanisms designed to bring it about; change is both complex and unpredictable.⁶⁰ Creating durable processes of social change is not simply a question engaging in arts and cultural projects or of catalysing the change makers. However it is important to understand the role of arts and

⁶⁰ Lederach. 2005: 1.

culture in the small processes and changes that can provide the crucial ‘critical yeast’ to make exponentially larger changes possible.⁶¹

Moreover, whilst all of this provides strong justification for deeper engagement with the arts in transitional justice, we should also be cautious about assuming uniformity in practice. As discussed, these projects were distinct and had their own form of engagement, purpose and practice. They did not seek to disseminate a ‘shared’ narrative or to heal division in the way that is normally associated with reconciliation activity, but rather to open up new discursive spaces and encourage others to reflect. It is precisely the idea that the engagement is open-ended, and not pre-determined, that is valuable in so far as the arts can accommodate difference, not seek a single didactic ‘truth’.⁶² But we should also understand that open-ended connection can be difficult and potentially counter-productive. And that just as art might push for positive change, it can also serve to reinforce the status quo and consolidate divisive narratives. In sum, there is considerable room for optimism, but we should also sound a note of caution, and, as this special issue demonstrates, there remains a great deal of room for further careful research and reflection on the potential for arts-based approaches to be deployed in pursuit of transitional justice goals.

⁶¹ Ibid. 91.

⁶² Kerr, R. 2017. ‘The Art of Reconciliation.’ *FICIL Policy Brief Series* 78.

<http://www.toaep.org/pbs-pdf/78-kerr/>