Media Kit for Common Ground Media Training

prepared by
Search for Common Ground's
Partners in Humanity
programme
for constructive & vibrant Muslim-Western relations
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This kit has been designed to assist trainers and coordinators hosting Common Ground Media workshops that aim to encourage media professionals to reflect on how they report on conflict. Presenting the various frameworks, biases, tools and choices available to media professionals, it introduces a Common Ground media style that builds awareness of the differences between the various parties to a conflict while simultaneously focusing on opportunities for constructive cooperation.

The resources contained in this kit have been developed and employed by Search for Common Ground staff and trainers during numerous training workshops, and have evolved through continued enhancement based on participant feedback and hands-on experience.

This kit is designed to assist professionals (trainers, workshop organisers, facilitators or moderators) who have attended at least one Common Ground Media workshop and have an understanding of Common Ground Media and Common Ground philosophy that extends beyond what is available in this kit.

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since 1982

Abidjan Abuja Bujumbura Bukavu Conakry Freetown Jakarta Jerusalem
Kathmandu Kiev Kigali Kinshasa Luanda Monrovia Rabat Skopje

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Using this Kit

This kit has been pulled together to provide trainers, moderators and organizers with useful handouts and discussion points for a 3-day Common Ground Media interactive workshop. This is not an exhaustive set of resources, but is designed to offer inspiration and tools for facilitating influential workshop sessions that engage participants and encourage introspection that extends beyond the classroom.

This training is designed:

- To encourage self-reflection on the role and opportunities of media, particularly when it comes to covering conflict.

- To develop skills in reporting on contentious political and social issues by introducing media to a range of conflict resolution skills and tools, with opportunities for experiential exercises and situational role-plays.

- To provide an opportunity to exchange lessons learned and strengthen collaboration.

All sessions should be moderated by professional facilitators and/or led by experienced trainers who have a sense of managing the flow of discussion, including and recognising the participation of all attendees while still moving the sessions forward in a constructive manner.

In each segment below, the *Context* section aims to outline for the trainer or organiser some of the prevailing views and frameworks that shape the thoughts and actions of media professionals. With this in mind, the *Discussion* section offers a list of questions to guide the workshop session and encourage deeper reflection on the part of participants. For certain sessions, *Handouts* have been included to complement the discussion.

In order to gauge the sentiment of participants and to build the training from one session to the next, it can be helpful to summarise the answers to these questions at the end of each session. This serves as a means of capturing the outputs of the discussion and creating a document that can be referred back to, as participants look deeper into the factors that shape their own work during the course of the workshop.

Other ways to reinforce and evaluate any changes in attitude or skill-transfer are:

1) to begin each day with a recap of the previous day's activities, encouraging participants to individually or in groups make lists of what they learnt or what struck them about past sessions; and

2) to end each day by breaking out into groups of individuals with similar reporting interests, or asking participants individually, to begin to develop an article and/or create an outline for a talk show or tv/radio broadcast, integrating the new skills and frameworks that were discussed during that day. Each day the projects can be enhanced based on that day's discussion and learning.

Introductions

Context:

Introductions are an opportunity for participants to begin to feel part of the training and to gain some insight and familiarity with other participants they will be working closely with over the coming days. It also gives those leading and organizing the workshop a window into expectations and skill-levels of the group.

Following the introduction of organizers and trainers, participants can be invited to introduce themselves and their work. This is an opportunity to understand individual motivations for attending the workshop by asking them to quickly add what they expect to get out of the training.

Discussion Questions:

- What is your name, what is your profession and what do you expect to get out of this workshop?

Challenges Facing the Media

Context:

This session is an opportunity for participants to voice their discontents – the challenges they face as media people (whether low salaries, threats of physical harm, censorship, stigma, etc). It allows participants to voice the sometimes significant restraints that face the media – especially in its work as an agent for change – and clears the air to focus on the areas within which media *can* work – the opportunities rather than the obstacles - during the rest of the workshop.

Discussion Questions:

- What are biggest challenges to media in your region?
- Is there any overlap between the challenges you face and those other participants face?
- Are there any opportunities for you as media people to address the challenges in your region?

The Role of Media Professionals

Context:

Many media professionals feel that their role as journalists or reporters is to report on news: to give the facts in an impartial and unbiased manner in order to educate the public. This is a noble and valuable aim.

However when we dig deeper, it becomes clear that even the decision over which stories to cover, which facts to present and which individuals to interview comes down to a personal choice by the media practitioner. Whether these decisions are made based on convenience, preferences or personal assumptions over the events, it is clear that media people are frequently constrained by their own frameworks and presumed roles.

In addition, while attempting to remain neutral, many media people ask viewers to speculate on the future, or do such speculation themselves. Anticipating questions by their media audiences, and seeking to increase circulation or ratings, a reporter or journalist often looks for and encourages the controversial angle or response.

When it comes to reporting on conflict, this often results in a description of the worst-case scenario. Rarely do you see a media report talking about the best-case scenario. Rather than looking for opportunities to defuse or mitigate tensions, or to highlight the shared concerns and interests of both parties, media can often, sometimes unwittingly, contribute to the conflict.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the role of a media professional?
  - Ex. BBC – education, inform, entertain
- What is the role of a media professional covering conflict?
- Each participant identifies 1-2 key issues relevant to their work (to revisit during the various workshop sessions)

Reporting Styles

Context:

In order to start dissecting one's own media style, it can be helpful to understand the different media styles that exist. Each of these styles has its pros and cons. Each can be useful in specific contexts. And for this purpose, it is helpful not to relegate any of them to the realm of "right" or "wrong", but to consider objectively when each might be useful.

The continuum of media:

Peace Media   Objective Media   Hate Media
          CG Media   Positional Media
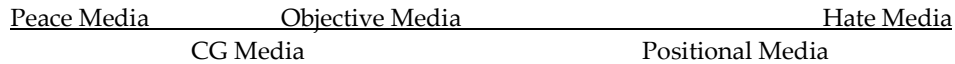

Discussion:

- At this preliminary stage, before we've discussed these labels, rate yourself on this continuum
- For each style, what are the advantages of each? The disadvantages? What are examples of local or international media outlets that practice this type of media? When would it be useful? When would it be inappropriate?
- After this discussion, would you make any changes to where you have rated yourself?

Handouts:

A handout is available breaking down the various media styles with room for participants to rank themselves.

 A second handout provides additional detail on the Common Ground media style (characteristics and examples).

Reporting Styles Handout – the Continuum of Media

<u>Peace Media</u>	<u>Objective Media</u>	<u>Hate Media</u>
CG Media	Positional Media	
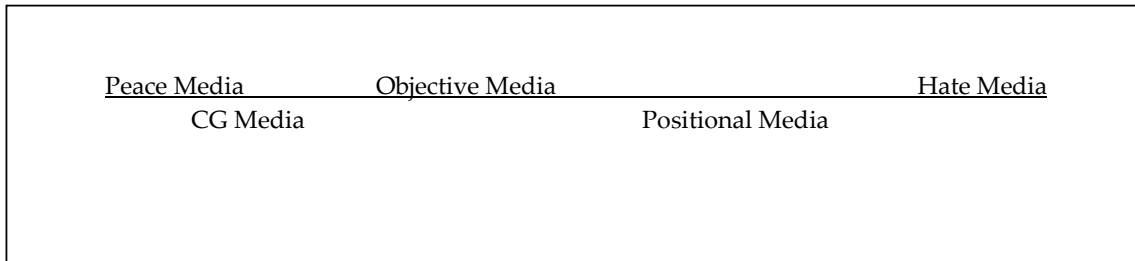
Peace Media: Media with a pacifist agenda - all stories told with a peace activist angle, focus on damage created by war/conflict

Common Ground Media: Neutral in the reporting - equal amount of time dedicated to exploring the differences between the parties and what they have in common – strong focus on root causes of conflict and possible long-term solutions

Objective Media: Neutral reporting of events as they have happened – professional ideal

Positional Media: Media used as a voice for one of the parties to defend their position and agenda – clear us vs. them angle

Hate Media: Media used to increase division and hate among parties, instigating one group to despise and hate the other/s

Handout - Common Ground Media

A Common Ground article:

- Provides constructive and solution-oriented perspectives and concrete steps for collaboration and understanding where possible
- Seeks areas of common ground or common goals and interests
- Promotes dialogue and cooperation
- Emphasizes positive examples of interaction
- Expresses constructive self-criticism
- Instils hope and optimism in readers that non-adversarial solutions to conflict are possible
- Highlights positive experiences between individuals that humanize the other and offer hope
- Contributes to understanding between groups

Sample themes and approaches include:

- Highlighting organizations and people working for a better national, regional or global environment
- Interpreting information, events, polls and analyzes in ways that encourage rational, moderate and positive thinking
- Educating readers on specific non-adversarial approaches of conflict resolution
- Illustrating to readers that "common ground" is not about settling for the lowest possible denominator but seeking a higher denominator
- Informing readers about unheard of dialogue projects around the world
- Elaborating on conflict resolution perspectives and theories to contribute to understanding of problematic relations
- Encouraging policy-makers and international decision-makers to adopt more conciliatory approaches in their policies
- Accentuating the shared humanity and interdependence of humankind
- Dispelling myths and negative stereotypes, and sharing information on widely misunderstood or controversial concepts that serve as obstacles to respect, cooperation or understanding

Dialogue versus Debate

Context:

Building on the different reporting styles, it is useful to begin thinking about the dynamic that is introduced into a media report between different stakeholders. Is a zero-sum situation being developed – where only one side can win and the other(s) lose? Or is a discussion taking place where the aim is for all parties to work together to find a solution? Dialogue explores the issues more deeply than debate but requires more work. Debate often provides more "sparks", but advocates for one side or the other, not for the process.

Discussion:

- What is the difference between dialogue and debate?
- What are the pros and cons of each?
- What media techniques – interviewing tools, talk show format, article structure – would be useful in shifting from the more common debate style to one of dialogue?

Neutral/Impartial Voice

Context:

Everyone talks about neutrality in media, but what does this really mean? Of course all individuals, including media, are influenced by a variety of factors in their lives – their upbringing, education, friends, the politics in their country, even other media reports. But some media continue to strive for an impartial voice, while others reflect the bias or partisanship of the media outlet that they work for.

Discussion:

- Should media be striving for a neutral or impartial voice?
- What does neutrality or impartiality entail?
- Looking at the two articles in the handout, what are the differences between these two articles? What is the different angle taken by each one? Is either impartial?

Handouts:

The following handout features two English-language articles that were commissioned from Jake Lynch by the Memorial Museum in Caen, France, for a display on Peace Journalism. Contact Jake Lynch and his colleagues at conflict.peace@poiesis.org. The articles and more information can be found at http://www.mediachannel.org/originals/warandpeace.shtml.

Ideally this handout would serve as an example only. It would be more useful in most cases to replace this handout with one featuring two articles on an issue that is of greater relevance to the participants of your workshop. A Google search for news items on a specific topic, particularly a controversial one, will likely yield a variety of editorial articles featuring different opinions which would serve to illustrate this point.

Neutrality and Impartiality Handout

Article #1

World Leaders Plead For Sanity in Mideast Meltdown

Prospects for Middle East peace lay in tatters last night after the worst day of violence in the occupied territories since trouble erupted a fortnight ago.

Two Israeli soldiers were killed by rampaging youths who broke into the police station where the soldiers were being held after straying into a Palestinian area. Viewers tuned to television news stations watched in horror as a ringleader of the lynch mob appeared at an upstairs window, his hands dripping with blood.

Israel responded with rockets fired from helicopter gunships at buildings thought to have some connection with the attack. Targets included the broadcasting center of Palestinian television, blamed for inciting local youths to riot, and the Gaza headquarters of Yasser Arafat, accused by Israel of failing to bring his people under control.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, watching the diplomatic prize of his term in office slipping away, appealed for calm. "While I understand the anguish the Palestinians feel over the losses they have suffered, there can be no possible justification for mob violence," he said. "I call on both sides to undertake a cease fire immediately and immediately to condemn all acts of violence."

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright earlier called upon "the entire international community to join the United States in urging Chairman Arafat to take the steps necessary to bring this senseless and destructive cycle of fighting to an end." U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called the lynching and mutilation of the Israeli soldiers' bodies "a chilling act."

The soldiers, both reservists called up to active service in the last few days, had driven their armored vehicle into part of the Arab-dominated West Bank town of Ramallah — whether by accident or design was last night unclear. Palestinian police arrested them and locked them in the cells as a 300-strong crowd, maddened with pent-up rage, gathered outside.

As the mob surged forward, guards reportedly offered little or no resistance. Then the crowd, who included several dozen waiting newsmen as well as rioters who'd stormed the police station, heard two shots ring out.

The two dead bodies were pitched over the balcony to the street below, where youths beat them with scaffolding poles and dragged them through the streets. Young men and women in western clothes cheered and clapped, smiling at the orgy of violence.

The gruesome spectacle of blood on Arab hands provoked Israel into her most forceful retaliation in 14 days of conflict, which has now left 89 people, mostly Palestinians, dead.

Targets for precision strikes ranged from the police station where the atrocity took place to three rubber patrol boats of the Palestinian Navy, moored in Gaza marina. Israeli tanks later circled Palestinian cities and the army clamped an internal closure on the areas, preventing Arabs from leaving their communities.

A smiling, defiant Mr. Arafat was cheered by hundreds of Palestinians as he toured sites hit by Israeli rockets and visited the wounded at a Gaza hospital.

"Our people don't care and don't hesitate to continue their march to Jerusalem, their capital of the independent Palestinian state," he said, adding that the Israeli actions were tantamount to "a declaration of war." tantamount to "a declaration of war."

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak dismissed the claim as "nonsense, bullshit and propaganda." Interviewed by CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour, the former general added ominously: "It doesn't amount to anything. It was not one in millions in what we can do if we are really in war." Israeli military spokesmen later added that their operations were designed to eliminate terrorism.

Many in the region described yesterday's chaos as a nail in the coffin of the peace process in which Israel, the Palestinians and the United States have invested so much over the last seven years. The Palestinian authorities responded by freeing 31 jailed militants from the extremist group Hamas, whose spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, warned Israel she would pay "a heavy price" for the rocket attacks on Arab soil.

The releases contravened the terms of the 1993 Oslo Accords and subsequent Wye River Agreement, under which the Palestinians are responsible for ensuring Israel's security and for clamping down on terror campaigns being plotted and carried out from within their autonomous areas.

Some analysts believe Mr. Arafat needed a fight with Israel to shore up his wavering authority among his own people. At the Camp David talks earlier this year, Mr. Barak offered unprecedented concessions by an Israeli leader, including some disputed parts of East Jerusalem. But the two leaders' positions ultimately proved irreconcilable, with neither willing to cede control over holy sites in the Old City.

Now, such talk seems to belong to a distant dreamland. In the here and now, the ancient hatreds that divide Arabs and Jews speak more loudly than any rhetoric of peace. Yesterday's madness has all but drowned out the hopeful mood music of those few short weeks ago.

Article #2
"Peace — Now More Than Ever," Say Arabs And Jews As Death Toll Inches Up

Middle East peace campaigners redoubled their calls for dialogue last night after violence in the occupied territories caused widespread destruction to property and claimed two more lives, bringing to 89 the number of people killed in the present round of troubles.

In Ramallah, Palestinian police intervened to try to save two Israeli soldiers, who'd driven their car into the West Bank town in an apparent blunder, from being dragged out and seized by locals angry over recent violence and living conditions under the U.S.-brokered Oslo "peace process."

But when a 300-strong crowd converged on the town's dilapidated police station, where the Israelis were taken for their own protection, officers were overwhelmed and could not prevent the pair from being shot and killed.

By this stage, international news crews, in Ramallah to cover the funeral of a Palestinian shot by Israeli soldiers, had been alerted to the standoff by local activists and converged on the police station. They were treated to a gruesome spectacle.

First, two shots rang out from within, then, shortly afterward, a young man appeared at the window with blood smeared on his hands. The soldiers' bodies were tipped over the balcony to the street below, where they were beaten with scaffolding poles to cheers from some onlookers.

The scenes caused anger and frustration in Israel, where they were repeatedly shown on television news bulletins. But Uri Avneri, a founder of the Peace Movement, said the media had failed to prompt Israelis to reflect on their treatment of the Palestinians, instead presenting events in such a way as to instill "total contempt for the other side."

He predicted that calls for a hard-line approach would be short-lived and replaced by a strengthened resolve to make genuine peace, something opinion polls suggest is still favored by most Israeli voters. Three hours after the killings at Ramallah, Israeli helicopter gunships launched rocket attacks on targets including the police station itself, the broadcasting center of Palestinian television, which Israel blames for inciting riots with emotive reporting, and Yasser Arafat's headquarters in Gaza City. No one was killed in the attacks after Israel issued specific warnings of intended targets.

But for many Palestinians the action underlined the arbitrariness and impunity of the occupying forces in territory Israel first gained in the 1967 war. Negotiations in the seven years of the Oslo process have concentrated on the proportion of land to be "given back," in spite of U.N. resolutions that declared the occupation illegal and called on Israel to withdraw forthwith.

Troops closed off entire Arab communities yesterday, a frequent occurrence, which adds to the unpredictability of everyday life for Palestinians. An army checkpoint just south of Bethlehem obliged Ibrahim Issan to scramble over a nearby hill to reach his office at the Hope Flowers school, which places peace and coexistence at the heart of the curriculum.

When movement between areas is possible, Israeli volunteers teach Hebrew, science, English and computer skills to local children; in return, they learn Arabic and Palestinian culture. Mr. Issan founded the school to help overcome negative perceptions as a contribution to peace from the grassroots: "We have a lot of fanatics, but my dream is for Muslims, Jews and Christians to live together. It will not happen without hard work."

Classes were abandoned for the day only after soldiers refused to allow a water carrier to get through. Water is not piped to this part of the West Bank, another frustration underpinning the conflict. The writer Norman Finkelstein estimates that for every liter of water available to a Palestinian in the territories, an Israeli settler consumes 876 liters.

Some analysts believe fears and grievances over so basic a need as water prove the conflict must be seen — and peace sought — in a wider Middle East context. Israel's chief stated concern is invariably "security" — neighbored as she is by countries that still deny her right to exist. The kidnapping of three Israeli soldiers at the weekend by Hezbollah has fed these concerns. Syria supports the Lebanese guerrilla group and wants the Golan Heights, more territory Israel annexed by force in 1967, to be returned. Negotiations brokered by the United States foundered earlier this year.

The Golan forms the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, the "Kinneret" that supplies much of Israel's water; downstream lie the occupied territories, which rely on whatever is left to flow further south in the River Jordan. If Israel is to be relieved of pressure from Hezbollah, she may have to return the Golan to Syria on terms that provide for some sharing of access to water from the Sea.

Syrians in turn are nervous about their water, most of which comes presently from the Euphrates. Upstream, Turkey is now building a massive dam, flouting international law, which could reduce the Euphrates to a trickle. Besides providing irrigation, the Ilisu Dam would inundate areas where Kurdish separatism has flourished, an issue affecting other countries with Kurdish minorities including Iraq and Iran. minorities including Iraq and Iran.

Johan Galtung, director of the TRANSCEND international peace network, called yesterday for a Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Middle East, to consider all parties and all their issues together, with recognition on all sides of Israel's right to exist and of the Palestinians' right to be represented by their own independent state.

Note: These pieces were commissioned from Jake Lynch by the Memorial Museum in Caen, France, for a display on Peace Journalism. Contact Jake Lynch and his colleagues at conflict.peace@poiesis.org. The articles and more information can be found on; http://www.mediachannel.org/originals/warandpeace.shtml

Identifying and Researching the Topic

Context:

For many seasoned media professionals, identifying and researching specific topics has become second nature. However it is worthwhile considering this important process, first of all to reflect, based on previous workshop sessions, on what has influenced the methods that each individual employs, and secondly, as a refresher that takes people back to the basics.

There are a few key elements that take place any time a media professional approaches a new topic, or an old topic from a new angle.

- Who are the stakeholders
- What are their positions and interests
- What angle the will piece take
- What facts, evidence exists
- Whom you will interview

To capture these details, and identify any gaps that reporter might have, it can be useful to create a map of stakeholders.

It might also be useful to use a specific breaking news story as an example to discuss during this workshop to give it a practical dimension.

Discussion:

- Which parties and/or individuals have a stake in this issue?
- What are their positions on the issue?
- What are the interests that influence these positions? What do they really want beyond what they are asking for? What values, desires and/or needs influence their positions?
- How can you discover their interests? What questions can you ask? What research can you conduct?

Handout:

The following handout can help participants to work through the process, organise their thoughts and document the different details. This can be done individually or in groups.

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Issue:

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Stakeholder:

Position:

Interest:

Sub-Stakeholder:
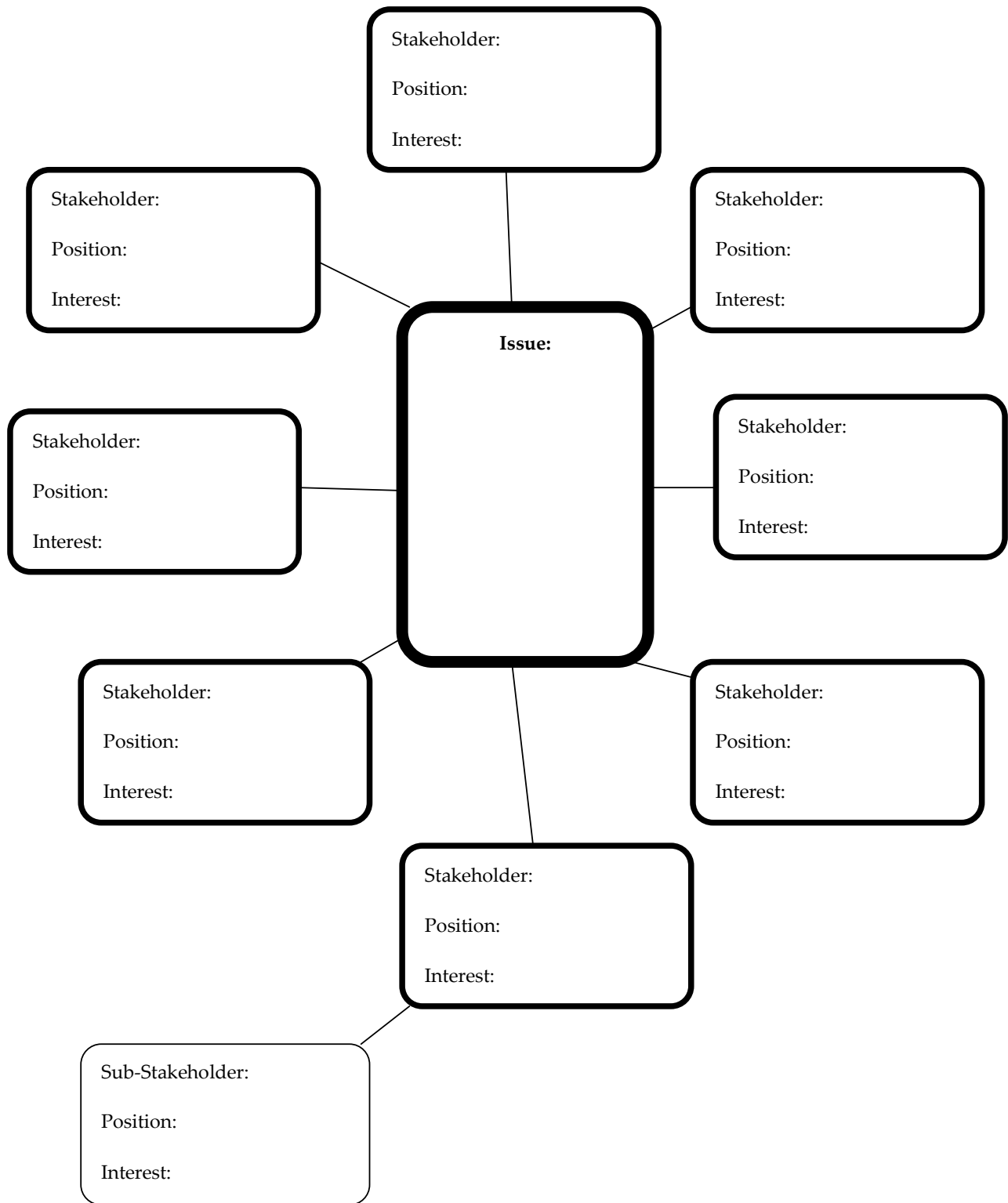
Position:

Interest:

Selecting Spokespeople

Context:

It is obviously impossible to interview every individual or group who has a position or an interest in a specific conflict. So how should interviewees or guests be selected with an eye to highlighting the various interests at stake as well as giving a voice to parties on all sides of a conflict, even those who are frequently under- or un-represented.

Discussion:

- Who do you choose to interview or as guests? (in the context of the earlier example)
- How do you represent the voices that can't be present?
- Do you choose the most radical or the representatives of the majority?
- Do you bring together people who are in total disagreement?
- What is the role of the academic experts?
- How do you know someone is representative?

Interviewing Spokespeople

Context:

To guess the positions and interests of the stakeholders is insufficient. A good interviewer must forget all that they think they know and dig for what the parties' interests *really* are.

Popular techniques for getting at interests include: "vox pop" or "on the street" interviews ; surveys, statistics, archives; newspapers; internet searches; history books, historians; phone-ins during talk shows. At the research stage, the objective is to gather as much information as possible, not to corner the person you are interviewing.

Effective questions are as open-ended as possible (versus closed questions where interviewees and/or guests select from a list of already formulated answers), and make a person feel safe.

Some techniques that can be covered during this session include: open versus closed questions, listening skills (how to engage in active listening and paraphrasing questions); paraphrasing/summarizing; fairness (equal time to all guests or equal space for all interviewees); maintaining control of the issue during a talk show; importance of the personal agenda of the moderator; tone and attitude of the moderator.

Some techniques for keeping control of the interview or show include: asking guests to slow down; interrupting and building on points using sentences such as:

"Let me please interrupt you….",
"Thank you very much, but I would like us to focus on this point…."
Or "Help me to understand this point…";
briefing guests before the show on the objective and format;
paraphrasing!;
specifying the rules in the introduction: "As an introduction, I would like to give the floor to my guests for 5 minutes, and then we'll move on…"; and
treating guests as partners, build trust and make sure not to make him/her angry.
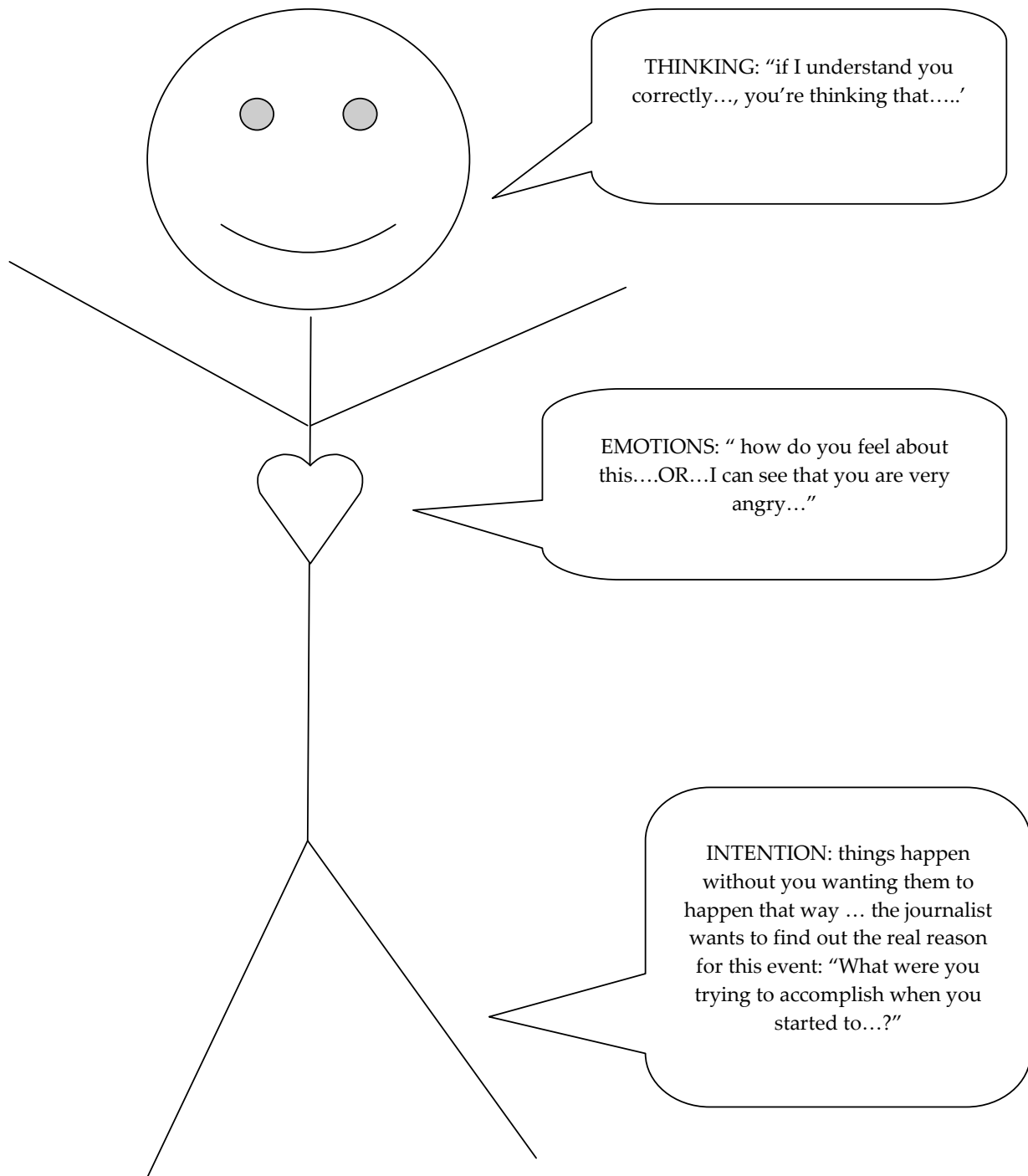
Discussion:

- What techniques can you use to discover interests?
- What questions could you ask? (in the context of the earlier example)
- During a live broadcast, what techniques can be used to give equal time to all guests and to ensure things don't get out of control?
- What do you do when people disagree?
- What is the role of the moderator?

Handout:

The following handout provides moderators and interviewees with an image that helps to trigger appropriate questions or summaries for paraphrasing. Once some questions have been developed during the discussion, it could be useful to split into groups and have one person ask the questions, one to respond, and a third to paraphrase.

Getting at Interests through Paraphrasing

Handout

THINKING: "if I understand you correctly…, you're thinking that….."

EMOTIONS: " how do you feel about this….OR…I can see that you are very angry…"

INTENTION: things happen without you wanting them to happen that way … the journalist wants to find out the real reason for this event: "What were you trying to accomplish when you started to…?"

Media Diplomacy

Context:

Intended outcome media is media with the objective of changing attitudes and behaviour. This type of media style assumes that media plays an influencing role and that the type of influence it has can be determined by the reporter or journalist.

If this is a goal, it should be reflected in all parts of the media process from the way interviewees and guests are managed, to the format of an article or talk show, to the tone.

Discussion:

- What opportunity does media have for changing the outcome of a conflict or a tense situation?
- Is this a role that media should be playing?
- Can they avoid playing such a role?
- What responsibilities would such a role involve?
- If you wanted to play this role, what does this mean for any of the tools or examples that were previously introduced?

The Power of Words

Context:

The words we use impact the way we are understood and influence listeners and/or readers. Misunderstandings regularly occur over even the simplest and most innocuous phrases. Media professionals are aware of these and frequently do their best to speak clearly.

However occasionally words are intentionally misused or abused to serve ulterior motives.   This happens when terms – often new ones – are co-opted by different parties and attributed a different or misleading meaning.   Terms can be insulting or even racist against particular parties, demonstrate bias, be ambiguous or result in disagreement on meaning, or provide an inaccurate description.

Many examples of this are apparent particularly when it comes to reporting on Muslim-Western relations.

Discussion:

- Do the words media uses influence the impact of an article or broadcast? How?
- What are some controversial terms the media in your region use? (e.g. terrorist, martyr, Islamist, Islamophobia)
- What about foreign (and/or Western) media?
- What alternatives exist to using these terms?

Handout:

The terms that are considered controversial vary from region to region and language to language. The following handout provides a list of frequently misused terms in Western media with regards to Muslim-Western relations.

English Terminology in Muslim-Western Dialogue

neither the list of terms nor the suggested alternatives are exhaustive of the possibilities or contexts

Term	Islamic terrorism
Intended Meaning	Acts of terrorism by individuals who claim to conduct them in the name of Islam
Why a Problem	Implies that terrorism can be Islamic in character, i.e., that the ethos of Islam is compatible with that of terrorism
Impact	Most Muslims feel insulted, wronged, and even angry on hearing expressions which seem to blame terrorism on, or attribute it to, Islam; the term helps terrorists as it reinforces the idea that the West views Islam as a source of evil and openly says so
Alternatives	- Terrorism, Terrorists - Terrorism in the name of Islam, Terrorists claiming to be Muslims, Terrorists in/from country X - Takfiri terrorism (*Takfir* in Arabic means is the act of pronouncing/passing judgment on who is a real Muslim and who is not, a concept that is antithetical to mainstream Islam. Advantage: it clearly denotes a distinction from mainstream Islam. Disadvantage: it introduces a non-English word into popular language, which could be used incorrectly and/or misunderstood.

Term	Islamo-facism
Intended Meaning	An authoritarian or oppressive ideology or system of government based on a totalitarian interpretation of Islam
Why a Problem	The linking of Islam and fascism is highly offensive and provocative to the vast majority of Muslims, who love and respect their religion, and do not associate Islam with totalitarianism; it is an oxymoron
Impact	Most Muslims naturally feel insulted, even angry, on hearing expressions which denigrate their religion; the term helps terrorists as it reinforces the idea that the West associates Islam with their most reviled ideologies
Alternatives	- Religious Totalitarianism by group X

Term	Jihad/Jihadists
Intended Meaning	In Western media, this term is almost always linked to acts of violence and is often used to mean terrorism/terrorists
Why a Problem	To Muslims, jihad means the struggle to move closer to God, to live in the way of God – thus it is a positive, predominantly non-violent and personal act by a devoted individual, or jihadi (also mujahed)
Impact	Angers Muslims as it equates a noble religious concept with violence/terrorism; extends the respectability of being true travelers in the way of God to terrorists, who welcome the title; the use of an Islamic term to describe violent acts gives the non-Muslim Westerner the impression that Islam sanctions such violent acts
Alternatives	- Terrorism/ Vigilantism/Violence in the name of Islam - Terrorists/Vigilantes/Violent Extremists claiming to be Muslims - Terrorists/ Vigilantes/Violent Extremists from/in country X

Term	Islamists/Islamism
Intended Meaning	In academia, the term Islamist (noun/adj.) denotes a Muslim who seeks a formal role for certain Islamic ideas in a political system, and/or to describe those institutions or principles which uphold this end; in such circles, the term denotes "political Islam" and has neutral implications.
Why a Problem	In mass media, the term is often used to describe a wide spectrum of players without distinction between them, from non-controversial and non-violent groups and individuals who believe that governance of their state should be based on certain Islamic principles, to Islamic political parties (AK in Turkey, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt), to Islamic political parties-cum-armed-wing (Hizbullah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine), to would-be Islamic political parties operating in states of relative political anarchy (Taliban), to terrorist or vigilante groups (Al Qaeda and its spawns). There are significant and very serious differences between these groups, e.g., some are advocating democratic states based on certain Islamic values or principles. Alternatively put, the term is often used to describe any one of the following: Islamic activist, extremist, radical, fundamentalist, militant, as well as vigilante or terrorist acting in the name of Islam. Note : The adjective "Islamist" doesn't exist in Arabic, despite its having been around in English for a while – it is translated as "Islamic" .
Impact	Makes mainstream Muslims feel disrespected given its often negative use/association, even resentful when applied to radical movements; angers some Islamic political parties as they are placed in same category as vigilantes and terrorists; makes it difficult for mainstream Muslims to argue or disagree with radical elements because the term is so tightly associated with the religion that they fear appearing to denounce Islam and not only the actions of a specific group
Alternatives	- Islamist/Islamism (when the intended use is specifically defined) - Name of group whenever possible - Islamic Politicians/ Islamic Political Activists - Supporters or Proponents of Political Islam - Political Islam/Politicized Islam When not being used to denote a Muslim who seeks a formal role for Islamic ideas in a political system, use the appropriate alternative: Islamic activist, extremist, radical, fundamentalist, militant, or vigilante or terrorist acting in the name of Islam, as appropriate.

Term	Moderate Muslim/Islam
Intended Meaning	A Muslim/ an interpretation of Islam that rejects extremism and terrorism; a Muslim who supports Western foreign policy; a non-practicing Muslim or sometimes even a former Muslim
Why a Problem	Implies that Islam as a whole is by definition intolerant and aggressive; that the majority of Muslims are extremist, intolerant, radical or violent - hence the need to qualify those who are not - rather than the other way around; alternatively put: equates piety with violence and by extension the religion of Islam with inspiring violence – implying that the less Islam consumed, the better Does not allow for the fact that one can be politically "moderate" in a given context, even though they would be seen to take extreme positions on religion; understood by many Muslims to apply to any position on any political issue taken by Muslim individuals or groups that is deemed acceptable by the West Note: the adjective "moderate" is not always negative for pious Muslims, given the importance of moderation in Islamic tradition and Muslim association of the term with a positive. Rather, it is a question of how the word is used. For instance, "the moderate majority in Muslim society" does not carry a negative connotation as it does not imply that it is the limited intake of Islam that is making this majority a good thing.
Impact	Offense: "What's wrong with just being *Muslim*?" "Why does Islam need a qualifier to make it alright?" Implies a Muslim who is passionate rather than moderate about their religion is one who takes extreme or exclusive positions.
Alternatives	- Mainstream or Mainline Muslim/Islam - Name of group or individual - The moderate majority in Muslim society

Term	Secularism/Secular Society
Intended Meaning	A political system in which religion does not dictate to, or interfere with, matters of state; one where religion and politics are formally separated, yet where religious freedom is guaranteed and protected
Why a Problem	This is a tricky term because one of its dictionary definitions is the outright rejection of religion and so is translated in Arabic and other "Muslim" languages as areligiosity/irreligiosity; this can cause conflict because, according to extensive studies of Muslim public opinion, a majority of Muslims want religious principles to be a source of legislation. The term secularization is generally perceived as an attempt to recreate Muslim societies in the West's image. Note: In practice, Western secular states preclude the abolition of religion and religious values and endorse pluralism and religious freedom, even protecting them. In fact, many Western constitutions are based on religious (Christian) values, and many political leaders speak openly about their faith. The French concept of laicism, or laicite, denotes the strict separation of public and private, or non-interference of religion in politics and vice versa (often associated with France and Turkey). This is usually considered a more severe or strict form of secularism. In Turkey and France, laicism actively confines religion to the private sphere.
Impact	Knee-jerk rejection by most Muslims, who are religious and want some role for religion in public life, exacerbating already-prevalent feelings among Muslims that the West has disrespect for their religious values
Alternatives	- Religious Pluralism/Pluralistic Society - Multiculturalism/Multicultural System

Term	Liberal Democracy
Intended Meaning	Generally refers to a democratic system of governance whereby rights are protected by a constitution and include the right to vote; often characterized by tolerance and pluralism
Why a Problem	It is often unclear whether the term "liberal" refers to political values or Western social values or, in fact, whether the two can be separated as such; often understood outside of the West as synonymous with "Western values"
Impact	Many Muslims view this as an attempt to impose Western social values on their societies; promotes an adversarial attitude as it leads to many Muslims fearing the imposition of a Western model of democracy in lieu of allowing a home-grown one to develop
Alternatives	- Democracy

Term	Fatwa
Intended Meaning	An opinion or pronouncement by a trained Islamic jurist, or Mufti
Why a Problem	A fatwa is a legally non-binding opinion, but is often understood in the West to be a religious edict that must be acted upon. It entered Western parlance with the issuance of a fatwa calling for the death of the author, Salman Rushdie, in the 1980s. Thus the general perception is that a fatwa is a death sentence, which feeds into the notion that Islam is a violent religion which does not value "rights of due process" or human life. Another problem that has arisen is that many opinions issued by unqualified persons recently have been called fatwas in the media; calling such pronouncements fatwas lends such opinions a legitimacy they in fact lack.
Impact	Creates the impression that judicial systems in Muslim-majority countries are based on the opinions of religious leaders. Although this is sometimes the case, it is rare; by calling illegitimate opinions fatwas, the person making the pronouncement is automatically being acknowledged as a legitimate religious jurist, or Mufti
Alternatives	- Non-binding opinion by Islamic jurist, or Mufti - Non-binding opinion in Islamic law

Term	Shari'a
Intended Meaning	System of individual and societal conduct that is in accordance with Islamic principles.
Why a Problem	Shari'a is often considered, especially in the West, as an archaic legal system best known for cutting off the hands of thieves and stoning adulterers; it is seen as written in stone and not open for interpretation or customization, and even contrary to universal codes of human rights. In fact, shari'a is the framework from which Islamic law is derived. It is similar to Jewish Halakhah and Catholic Canon Law. Different Islamic schools of jurisprudence have their own ways of interpreting shari'a.
Impact	Offense is taken by many Muslims when it is implied that shari'a is an inequitable system
Alternatives	- Islamic principles

Term	Allah
Intended Meaning	The divine entity whom Muslims worship
Why a Problem	Sounds like a reference to a specifically Muslim divinity, something strange and alien, rather than the Arabic word for God; suggests incorrectly that the Muslim God is different from the Christian or Jewish God; overlooks the fact that Christian and Jewish Arabs also use Allah to refer to God
Impact	Creates unwarranted division or separation between Muslims and non-Muslims; promotes the idea "They are different from us, they worship someone called Allah"
Alternatives	- God

Term	American Muslims
Intended Meaning	Muslims of American citizenship or residence
Why a Problem	Defines people by their religion rather than nationality, which goes against both the American ethos and the concept of nation-state
Impact	Propagates the idea that allegiance of Muslims in the US is to entities/countries outside the US. This distinction is particularly important to indigenous Muslims in the United States e.g. African Americans. Note: when comparing Muslims from different places, for example, the above is not always an issue: e.g. British Muslims as compared with American Muslims is a legitimate and innocuous use of the term.
Alternatives	- Muslim Americans (like African Americans, Chinese Americans, Arab Americans, Native Americans, etc)

Term	War on Terror
Intended Meaning	The Western/US-led military and intelligence effort to stymie, imprison and/or eliminate all militants and groups, including terrorists, who are attacking or planning to attack Western interests and the West itself
Why a Problem	Because all individuals, groups and countries that the West has engaged with in an adversarial manner since the declaration of this war, whether directly or indirectly, have been Muslim, it has created the impression that it is in fact a war on Islam; This term raises the critical question of why terrorist groups that are not Muslim have not been a target in this war. In addition, it is not clear who the "enemy" is or what a victory would look like, and as a result it perpetuates a sense of fear in society and empowers militants who do take violent actions against Western or other targets.
Impact	Many Muslims feel suspicious of all Western (especially US) policies toward them; feelings of mistrust are underscored and Muslims are put in the position of defending themselves as non-terrorists It contributes to the "if you're not with us, you're against us" paradigm
Alternatives	- Effort/initiative against Al Qaeda - Anti-Terrorism Measures

<u>Distinctions</u>

Term	Muslim (noun/adj.)	Islamic (adj.)
	Denotes an adherent of Islam or a characteristic of its adherents (descriptive, adj. comparable to "Jewish")	Denotes the religion or its institutions (prescriptive, comparable to "Judaic")
Example	A Muslim country is one where the majority of citizens follow the religion of Islam	An Islamic country is one whose political system is based on Islamic law
Why Important	Avoids negative events, acts or ideas being attributed to the religion of Islam itself (rather than its followers)	

Term	Headscarf	Veil
Definition	Worn by many Muslim women to cover their hair in public; usually accompanied by non-revealing clothes	Worn by a small minority of Muslim women to cover face; usually accompanied by non-revealing clothes
Also Referred to as	Hijab	Niqab
Why Important	"Veil" conjures up "barrier" and has a negative impact on bridge-building efforts Note: neither garment says anything about political viewpoints	

For comments or ideas, contact Leena El-Ali at lel-ali@sfcg.org.

Produced by the Partners in Humanity team: *for constructive and vibrant Muslim-Western relations*
October 2007

Search for Common Ground

since 1982

Abidjan Abuja Bujumbura Bukavu Conakry Freetown Jakarta Jerusalem
Kathmandu Kiev Kigali Kinshasa Luanda Monrovia Rabat Skopje

Common Ground Resources

Context:

Founded in 1982, Search for Common Ground makes a concerted effort to advocate constructive, rather than adversarial approaches to violence. In 2001 we launched the weekly Common Ground News Service (CGNews) which distributes constructive articles on the Arab-Israeli conflict in Arabic, English and Hebrew to editors and email subscribers around the world.

In 2003 a new edition, CGNews – Partners in Humanity, - was launched, which today delivers Common Ground views on Muslim-Western relations in Arabic, English, French, Indonesian and Urdu to editors and subscribers around the world.

These weekly publications are archived on our website and serve as a reservoir of interesting voices from different regions, speaking on a variety of topics. Our search function enables visitors to search for particular individuals or issues and can be a valuable resource for media looking for spokespeople or for interesting reporting angles.

We also invite media to submit their own original articles through our website – www.commongroundnews.org.

Discussion:

When possible we would be happy to attend your workshop, introduce this topic and answer any questions from participants on Search for Common Ground and the Common Ground News Service.

Handout:

The following handout is a guide for writers who wish to contribute to the Common Ground News Service. Certain sections can also help to guide journalists who wish to produce articles in a common ground style as part of their own work.

The Common Ground News Service (CGNews) Handout

Common Ground News Service Guide for Writers

The Common Ground News Service (CGNews) is an independent source of news and opinion that disseminates fresh, solution-oriented articles to promote constructive perspectives and encourage dialogue. We publish and promote articles by local and international experts on current Middle East issues and on the relationship between Western and Muslim societies worldwide. The service is a non-profit initiative of Search for Common Ground, an international non-governmental organisation headquartered in Washington and Brussels, whose mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict -- away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions.

CGNews is a weekly news service published in six languages – Arabic, English, French, Hebrew, Indonesian and Urdu. It is distributed to hundreds of media outlets around the world and to over 23,000 individual subscribers which include policy-makers, think-tanks, diplomats, journalists, activists, academics and students, among others. Launched in 2001, CGNews spans linguistic, geographic and political barriers to distribute articles to media outlets and individuals that may otherwise never benefit from such exchanges, much less cooperate by contributing to and reprinting from the same news service.

CGNews articles include both original, commissioned pieces as well as reprints sourced from a diverse set of publications, and our articles have been reprinted over 10,000 times in a varied list of over 1000 media outlets including *The Christian Science Monitor (US), The Washington Post (US), Chicago Tribune (US),The Washington Times (US), Al Hayat (Saudi Arabia/UK), Arab News (Saudi Arabia),The Jakarta Post, The Guardian (UK), Birmingham Post (UK), Pakistan Link, Qamar Online (Pakistan),The Daily Star (Lebanon), L'Orient le Jour (Lebanon), Al Arab Online (UK), Al Wasat (Bahrain), The Yemen Times, Al Jazeera Online, The Jordan Times, Al Ghad (Jordan), Al Ittihad (Abu Dhabi), Haaretz (Israel), Maan News Agency (Palestine), AMIN (Palestine), Surabaya Post (Indonesia) and Hidayatullah.com (Indonesia).*

The CGNews board of editors comprises individuals in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe, South Asia and North America with extensive knowledge of the Middle East, issues relevant to Muslim-Western and/or Arab-Israeli relations, and a "common ground" orientation.

CGNews appears in two editions. One is *CGNews-Middle East,* featuring solution-oriented articles primarily on the Arab-Israeli conflict, published in Arabic, English and Hebrew. The other is *CGNews-Partners in Humanity*, which addresses issues pertaining to Muslim-Western relations and is published in Arabic, English, French, Indonesian and Urdu. The following information provides general guidelines that apply to both but were written specifically with examples for the latter.

The CGNews – Partners in Humanity Mission:

Today, with the exception of a small number of people around the world, there is little direct exchange of perspectives between Western and Muslim individuals, communities and nations. Thus, in our global community where news travels fast and radical elements have learnt to use modern media effectively, those like Search for Common Ground, who are working for peace, reconciliation and a more secure world, have adopted media as a major tool in their repertoire.

CGNews – Partners in Humanity seeks to distribute, as widely as possible, timely articles of the highest quality that help promote a shift to positive and constructive thinking about how to address deteriorating Muslim-Western relations. This initiative aims to bring about a paradigm shift in the thinking of readers of mainstream media on Muslim-Western relations by promoting thoughtful analysis of issues as broadly as possible.

CGNews-Partners in Humanity believes that the ability and willingness to deal peacefully and constructively with those issues distancing Muslim communities from their Western counterparts are not the domain only of policy-makers and bureaucrats. Grassroots projects and cooperative efforts abound globally, though they rarely make their way into mainstream media and onto the desks of decision-makers and interested individuals. Our subscription list includes thousands who stem from a long list of professions, and includes over 1000 media outlets.

CGNews Authors:

Anyone with an interest in Muslim-Western affairs is invited to submit articles to *CGNews – Partners in Humanity* through our website – www.commongroundnews.org, or via email – cgnewspih@sfcg.org. Regular contributors include scholars, religious leaders, writers, policy-makers, civil society practitioners, dialogue and reconciliation activists, economists, artists and musicians, amongst others.

We also encourage young writers – the thought leaders of the future - to submit articles for our ~Youth Views~ column. Each week, we select and distribute one article by a writer under 27 years of age.

Style & Format:

Word Limit: The word limit for all articles is a maximum of 750 words in order to comply with the word limits of many major publications, making it easier for them to reprint our articles.

Language: We have the capacity to receive articles in Arabic, English, French, Indonesian and Urdu. However for review and editing purposes, we prefer to receive them in English where possible. We edit all English-language articles in accordance with British language conventions for international distribution.

Style: Since we are aiming for widespread distribution, articles should be written in a journalistic style that is appropriate for mainstream consumption: for a reader who is intelligent but unfamiliar with your topic. We encourage writers to dig deeply into any given topic, addressing the complexities of issues and participating in meaningful dialogue. Articles should not read like essays but like op-eds, and paragraphs should be kept short.

Terminology: Keep jargon, clichés and technical terms to a minimum to facilitate translation into other languages. We recognise that many foreign words have no equivalent in other languages. In these cases, when you use a foreign word, please put it in italics and provide a brief explanation in English.

When it comes to Muslim-Western relations, many terms have been co-opted or demonised. Words such as jihadist or Islamist are rarely used to mean struggling for one's faith, and seeking a formal role for religion in a political system, respectively. Instead they are irresponsibility and inaccurately used as synonymous with terrorist, militant, activist of fundamentalist.

In order to reduce the misuse and misunderstanding of such terms. Search for Common Ground has created a terminology document outlining the most frequently misused terms and appropriate alternatives. This document is available online at
 http://www.sfcg.org/documents/Muslim-Western_Terminology.pdf

Guidelines:

A common ground article on Muslim-Western issues:
- Provides constructive and solution-oriented perspectives and concrete steps for collaboration and understanding where possible
- Seeks areas of common ground or common goals and interests
- Promotes dialogue and cooperation
- Emphasises positive examples of interaction between Western and Muslim cultures
- Expresses constructive self-criticism
- Instils hope and optimism in readers that non-adversarial solutions to conflict are possible
- Highlights positive experiences between individuals that humanise the other and offer hope
- Contributes to understanding between Muslim and Western cultures

Examples:

Sample themes and approaches include:
- Highlighting organisations and people working for a better national, regional or global environment
- Interpreting information, events, polls and analyses in ways that encourage rational, moderate and positive thinking
- Educating readers on specific non-adversarial approaches of conflict resolution
- Illustrating to readers that "common ground" is not about settling for the lowest possible denominator but seeking a higher denominator
- Informing readers about unheard of dialogue projects around the world
- Elaborating on non-Western or Muslim conflict resolution perspectives and theories to contribute to understanding of Muslim-Western relations
- Encouraging policy-makers and international decision-makers to adopt more conciliatory approaches in their policies
- Accentuating the shared humanity and interdependence of humankind
- Dispelling myths and negative stereotypes, and sharing information on widely misunderstood or controversial concepts that serve as obstacles to respect, cooperation or understanding

Copyright & Permissions:

An author bears sole responsibility for his/her article's content and is expected to show intellectual honesty (i.e. no plagiarism) and accuracy (i.e. fact checking), and to identify all information taken from other sources. We expect that all submitted article are unique and have not been published elsewhere.

If your article is selected for publication in *CGNews – Partners in Humanity*, anyone is free to reprint the article so long as they attribute the article to both the author and to *CGNews*.

Submission Process:

Articles can be submitted through our website at www.commongroundnews.org, or by email to cgnewspih@sfcg.org.

Review Process:

In order to deepen our approach and ensure the best long-term results, the *CGNews-Partners in Humanity's* editorial board consists of 7 editors based in *Beirut, Geneva, Islamabad, Jakarta, Toronto and Washington*. Collectively, the team has extensive and nuanced knowledge of the points of contention in Muslim-Western relations. These individuals consult, via email, on all articles that are published by *CGNews-Partners in Humanity* to ensure the highest quality output.

We publish articles from a wide variety of authors, each requiring their own detailed review process:

Unsolicited Articles
All articles that have been submitted but have not been solicited for publication undergo a peer-review process by the team of *CGNews* editors. Submissions for *CGNews-Partners in Humanity's* ~Youth Views~ column as well as regular articles are welcome. The review process can take between 2 days and two weeks depending on the timeliness of the article.

Solicited Articles
CGNews publishes multi-author series on special themes several times throughout the year. In these cases, the editorial board solicits articles from local and international experts on specific themes. The topic is often predetermined by CGNews editors.

CGNews also requests standalone, non-series articles from specific authors on a topic within their expertise, often determined by the writer. Our ~Youth Views~ editor also approaches young writers and helps develop their topics where appropriate.

CGNews editors give feedback on submissions, and may offer suggestions on developing them further or ensuring they meet our common ground guidelines. Any editing - for length, content or clarity - is collaborative; we ensure that we have full agreement from the author on a definitive version before publication.

Distribution mechanisms:

There are three ways we encourage widespread distribution and readership:

a) *Media Clients and their Multiplier Effect*: By making our articles available to all publications, including electronic publications and online media portals, we access their readers and an audience we may not otherwise reach. While it is impossible for us to track 100% of our reprints, since few outlets report back to us when using an article and since many outlets are not on the internet to facilitate our tracking process, our research nonetheless reveals very successful reprint rates.

b) *Direct Subscription across Languages*: *CGNews – Partners in Humanity* is sent to thousands of individual subscribers around the world through e-mail, about a hundred of which are media outlets. Recipients include government officials, diplomats, academics, members of the defence community, journalists, civil society leaders and others who have an interest in the West's relationship with Muslim countries and communities.

c) *Access through the Internet*: All issues of *CGNews – Partners in Humanity* can be found on the CGNews website www.commongroundnews.org. An archive of past editions is structured in an easy-to-navigate way with original material classified and highlighted.

About SFCG

Founded in 1982, Search for Common Ground (www.sfcg.org) works to transform the way the world deals with conflict - away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative problem solving. We work with local partners to find culturally appropriate means to strengthen societies' capacity to deal with conflicts constructively: to understand the differences and act on the commonalities.

Wrap Up and Conclusion

Context:

The final workshop session provides the opportunity to discover what participants have learnt; serves as an informal survey of what worked and what didn't during the workshop; and, perhaps most importantly, provides a forum for participants to take ownership over next steps.

Discussion:

- What opportunities exist to work as a team/network to deal with the challenges?
- What is possible in 5 years? Create a common vision
- What can we do now?
- What has shifted for participants through this training?

Logistics and Materials

- A room large enough for twenty people to sit in a circle plus extra space or rooms for up to four or five small break-out groups to meet in relative privacy.

- Audio-visual equipment to show media clips and display and capture key points (flipcharts and/or laptops with digital projector).

- Handouts summarizing key points and translated into local languages where appropriate.

- Though not necessary, if possible the use of a camera with audio and visual to capture mock interviews, talk shows, etc, as well as a previously tested means of playing back the captured footage – either through a laptop with speakers, or a television.

- If all participants do not speak English, professional interpretation may be required.

since
1982

Abidjan Abuja Bujumbura Bukavu Conakry Freetown Jakarta Jerusalem
Kathmandu Kiev Kigali Kinshasa Luanda Monrovia Rabat Skopje

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