



forumZFD



Committed to Peace

A review of 20 years of forumZFD

Dear Readers,

forumZFD was established twenty years ago with the idea of offering an alternative to war and violent conflict. Today our organisation is active with projects of the Civil Peace Service in ten countries worldwide, including Germany.

When the idea for a civil peace service began to take shape in the early 1990s, Europe was once again experiencing war – for the first time since 1945. In the Balkans, Yugoslavia broke apart. This led to wars between former neighbours, horrific human rights violations, displacement, and ethnic cleansing. Today, as in the past, people flee from war and violence, from repression and marginalisation – also to us here in Germany. Today, as in the past, refugee residences are the target of arson, and extreme right-wing movements and populist parties garner support

The age-old question still applies:

what can the Civil Peace Service do to facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflicts? A look back at our organisation's founding phase and its work over the past twenty years provides insights. What can we learn from the social challenges and political opposition, but also from the past enthusiasm and commitment?

This anniversary publication focuses on three individuals: Helga Tempel, Tilman Evers, and Heinz Wagner. Together they helped to shape our organisation from the very beginning and retain positions of responsibility to this day. They share their memories of forumZFD's development over the years in a discussion with the renowned peace journalist, Andreas Zumach.

Our thanks goes to all those, who have contributed to forumZFD's success: the many volunteers, who helped to develop, build up and raise awareness for the organisation; all of the donors without whose financial support we wouldn't be able to do our work; and the team of now over 100 employees, who strive to make our world that little bit more peaceful every single day.

We hope that you are able to gain countless ideas and impressions while perusing our anniversary special, and are left with the optimistic outlook that it is worth pursuing a good idea with wholehearted dedication, even if you do not know at the outset whether it will become a reality.

Warm wishes,

Heinz Liedgens

Advisory Board (Chairman)



Michael Germer

Advisory Board (Treasurer)



NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES



A discussion on 20 years of the Forum Civil Peace Service

On 11 February 2016, exactly 20 years to the day since a group of around 15 people assembled in Nettetal/Germany to establish the Forum Civil Peace Service, three of the organisation’s founding members met with journalist Andreas Zumach for an interview at Peace House on Am Kölner Brett.

Andreas Zumach: As someone who has followed the history of the Forum Civil Peace Service not only with a critical eye but naturally also with a great deal of approval, I’m delighted to be having this conversation. You three are among the association’s founders. Looking back today, after 20 years, would you do it all again?

Helga Tempel: Yes, definitely. And I mean this on several different levels, too. The human level might not be quite as obvious, but our work has allowed us to get to know each other in a way that is rare. I would also do it all again any time because for me, the Civil Peace Service is a way into tangible political responsibility. It’s no longer about just saying “no” to war, but also about saying “yes” to alternatives.

Andreas Zumach, Tilman Evers, Helga Tempel, Heinz Wagner beim Gespräch im Friedenshaus



Heinz Wagner: Yes, absolutely. In retrospect, I might have been a bit more concerned about whether it would succeed. We went into it all so very naive and yet so optimistic, even though everyone kept telling us we would never manage it. In retrospect, you can also see that it could have failed on many fronts. But it was worth it – and it would definitely be worth it again.

Tilman Evers: For me, forumZFD has become the most important political activity of my life – despite the fact that it was by no means my first political commitment. Each of us contributed our own political experience to the work, but I never could have imagined at the start that this ‘project’ would dwarf everything I had done in the past. Then I met people here that it was incredibly rewarding and a real pleasure to work with. Formally, we three were the chairpersons from the association’s founding until 2010. I think that the understanding between the three of us was a really important driving force for the association and that we had a reach that extended into very different fields: it turned out that we had a Catholic, a Protestant and a Quaker among us, for instance.

Andreas Zumach: Looking back, is there anything that you would have done differently?

Helga Tempel: Not fundamentally different, no. We have always deliberated a great deal and also been challenged time and time again, then been able to adjust our course accordingly.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Tilman Evers: Key to our cooperation was that we listened to each other. We really appreciated each other’s qualities and experience, and therefore also allowed ourselves to be corrected.

Heinz Wagner: There have of course been decisions that were difficult for all of us. Such as when we left Minden, which is home to the Federation for Social Defence where forumZFD had its first office in the Cologne-Bonn region, as well as some personnel decisions. Despite this, I still think that we made the right decisions, and they are part of our history that we can celebrate today, on the occasion of forumZFD’s twentieth anniversary.

The reunification period: between hope for peace and the Gulf War

Andreas Zumach: What was it like in the early nineties, when the idea of a civil peace service was first born? What are your memories of the years after the fall of the Berlin Wall?

Helga Tempel: I was really hoping for a new beginning, away from confrontation and military thinking towards more cooperation and dialogue. But none of that really happened for me. Being faced with this tunnel of hopelessness again was an important motivation for me.

Heinz Wagner: For me personally, the beginnings go back much further than 1989. In the second half of the 1980s, I collaborated with the Peace Tax Initiative and even refused to pay taxes myself once.

But that ended relatively quickly: my accounts were simply blocked! Having experienced that such resistance could be circumvented so easily and at the same time cost so much personal and emotional energy got me thinking about whether there were other, more constructive ways, and whether it was possible to do something else to oppose militarism.

Tilman Evers: I became politicised during my solidarity work for Chile. We didn’t manage to overthrow Pinochet back then. And yet quite a lot has changed over the years in Chile. You do need a lot of patience in this respect. As sobering as the second Gulf War of 1991 was, back then there was still hope for quite some time – after all, we had overcome the wars in Europe, and Russia had suddenly become an ally. The next big challenge only came with the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars.



forumZFD’s founding generation was shaped by the fall of the Berlin Wall.
©Andreas Krüger

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Andreas Zumach: Were the hopes you had back then – the hopes that I had too – not a bit naive and above all rather Eurocentric?

Tilman Evers: That’s one way of looking at it. After all, these so-called ‘new wars’ – these violent domestic conflicts that we became so acutely aware of from the mid-nineties – also existed before 1989.

Heinz Wagner: The fall of the Berlin Wall and overcoming the bloc confrontation were in fact very formative for us. In other words, we really believed back then that we had found a model for peaceful processes. The fact that the collapse of the Eastern Bloc was largely non-violent was a tremendous achievement – as was the European integration.

Tilman Evers: At the same time, though, the concept of a ‘peace dividend’ that everyone was talking about back then was somewhat overloaded with naive perceptions. If anything is to actually change in international politics, there needs to be the appropriate institutions, from an international to a local level. I didn’t see any of these institutions. Which is why I was convinced that peace work would not have a future if we did not translate it into institutions.

Andreas Zumach: You just mentioned the second Gulf War. After the victory of the American-led coalition, the US president at the time, George H.W. Bush, said, “This is the beginning of a new world order”. Did you take this statement seriously at the time?

Helga Tempel: I was on the verge of despair.

Andreas Zumach: Quite a scary world order, as it turned out...

Helga Tempel: That’s how I see it, too.

Tilman Evers: The buzzwords of the time were ‘Pax Americana’, ‘the only remaining super power’ and ‘the end of history’. People spoke of the victory of the liberal world order. But it was very clearly an order based on dominion, not on peace.

Andreas Zumach: But essentially, it was a clear message: there would not be a peace dividend, would there?

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Tilman Evers: And yet there were still voices among the people and in politics calling for a peace dividend in the mid-nineties. We added our voice to these with the Civil Peace Service. To be honest, I’ve got to say we weren’t the only ones. There were many different initiatives – some small, others global – that wanted something similar.

Andreas Zumach: Right after the Wall fell, in 1990 and 1991, the heads of state and government were still committed to a united Europe. Why did that break down so quickly? Why did NATO then expand eastwards just five years later?

Tilman Evers: We just couldn’t stop winning. It wasn’t a world model based on consensus and the logic of peace, but rather a model of rule, which drove potential partners like Yeltsin’s Russia to take an opposing position.

Andreas Zumach: Why was there so little resistance to this among the German population?

Helga Tempel: The front comprising the military-industrial complex and the traditional powers as well as the media is an unspoken alliance, which tends to focus more on tensions and violent approaches than on positive, constructive approaches.

Heinz Wagner: The concept of the ‘survival of the fittest’ is deeply engrained. The wider population was not familiar with the idea of cooperation, which was present to some degree later on in the Cold War thanks to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe – the CSCE, which later became the OSCE. This was also a difficulty for us when we were trying to explain our idea of a civil peace service. We practically had to start from scratch. Theodor Ebert, who was an important supporter of ours, always described it as ‘developing literacy in non-violence’. That hits the nail on the head.

Tilman Evers: I see things a bit differently. During the Gulf War, a great many people hung peace flags in their windows. Any kind of politics of war and violence were met with strong opposition from the majority of the German population.

Heinz Wagner: We also put up banners, but we received quite a few responses, too – even a few anonymous letters. I think there was a significant minority that turned against the war, but the majority did not support this protest.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives to the military – but how?

Andreas Zumach: I understand that it was very different conflicts that led you to think about a civil peace service in the early to mid-nineties. Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda were all internal, domestic conflicts. But in the case of the Gulf War, it was an overwhelming superpower waging war on a much smaller nation. Did you also intend that to be something the Civil Peace Service would get involved in?

Heinz Wagner: We were all bursting with hope at the beginning. It was perhaps naive to suggest an answer to these different conflicts and to think that the Civil Peace Service could do it. Twenty years later, we are more aware of our limits, but we can also see how much we have learnt along the way. And our perspective is not unrealistic.



In 1993, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat signed a ‘Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements’ for Palestine in the presence of US President Bill Clinton. The signing of this declaration brought hope for both the peace process and to the world. ©Vince Musi/The White House

Tilman Evers: The initial idea of a civil peace service was definitely to replace the military directly with civil forces. In the other three domestic conflicts you just mentioned, there was one idea that played a role, which was emerging around the same time as globalisation: the idea of civil society. We wanted to start on this civil society level, which is where we also saw substantial conflict dynamics.

Andreas Zumach: So, it was and remains your aspiration to be able to influence belligerent state policy with the Civil Peace Service?

Helga Tempel: Yes, by setting an example and demonstrating alternatives. We simply said to ourselves, let’s give another turn of the screw, let’s put this approach that we all want to see into practice. Our inner drive was very strongly linked with the war in Yugoslavia that was taking place right on our doorstep, so to speak, in places where we often used to go on family holidays. In that respect, we were right up close to the action and personally affected by it. That’s why we said that there must be other ways.

Andreas Zumach: That brings us to the founding phase of the Civil Peace Service. Soon after the term first came up in around 1992, two concepts evolved that differed in some key aspects. What were the main points of contention?

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Tilman Evers: The first concept for a civil peace service still foresaw a workforce of 100,000. But this model was conceived as an option within the framework of compulsory military service, so for men aged 18 to 20. The idea of sending 100,000 young men into a conflict region to achieve peace just couldn't be logically justified, though. Were 20-year-olds supposed to negotiate with experienced clan chiefs or even warlords? What changes in a society when 100,000 foreigners arrive all of a sudden? That's why we ultimately opted for a different model: voluntary personnel and not a mass event.

Helga Tempel: What I think we did right was to consistently engage in dialogue with potential allies as well as with opponents – with the development services, for example. This gave us new impetus to develop the idea further.

Heinz Wagner: I think Theodor Ebert, who was the most important supporter of the initial model of 100,000 peace workers, primarily thought about things on a state level. He wanted to oppose the military on a state level. We thought more on a civil society level, though. These two positions were ultimately incompatible.

Andreas Zumach: But wouldn't it be a great vision if instead of 200,000 soldiers, we had 200,000 civilian peace workers?

Heinz Wagner: No, that couldn't be done, as it could only be organised by a state. And peace work requires so much self-motivation and initiative that it can't just be incorporated into a command structure, which would be unavoidable on this scale. You can't force people to do peace work. It requires personal growth, which just wouldn't be possible with such large numbers. What's more, it is not feasible for a state that has its own army and partly bases its foreign policy on this to simultaneously have a troop of peace workers and to distinguish between the contradictory logic of these two opposing directions.

Helga Tempel: Even a non-violent invasion is still an invasion if masses of people are involved.

Andreas Zumach: So, to put it bluntly, you have given up on your goal of the Civil Peace Service one day eliminating national military assets?

Helga Tempel: Part of me still hopes that we could succeed in overcoming the military. But we had a similar hope once before with the concept of conscientious objection: armies would not be possible if everyone refused to do military service. But we very quickly realised that this goal was unrealistic in the foreseeable future and we had to limit ourselves to more achievable approaches.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Heinz Wagner: This vision simply cannot be achieved on its own through an instrument such as the Civil Peace Service. But I think the period we are looking back on now – twenty years – is still far too short to be able to say whether this is a viable development or just a pipe dream. Personally, I firmly believe that people will realise that they need to develop new forms of coexistence on this finite planet with its limited resources and growing population. Forms that renounce violence and resolve conflicts differently.

Tilman Evers: I think it would be more honest to admit that we don’t know exactly how war can be overcome. In my view, the idea of ‘social defence’, which is where we got the idea of having 100,000 civil peace service workers, was a slight overestimation. There are only a few, very specific historical cases where a population has united against a far superior foreign aggressor non-violently by refusing to fight in the sense of ‘social defence’. That could be colonial situations such as Gandhi in India and the Prague Spring, of course. But that cannot be transferred to many other violent conflicts.

Andreas Zumach: So, are you really saying that you have no idea how to overcome war?

Tilman Evers: I know what seeds I can contribute. But I don’t know how they will grow. I can partly see what other seeds have been sown, but I can’t predict how the vegetation as a whole will change.

Andreas Zumach: Do you share this view?

Heinz Wagner: Yes, I do. As Helga just said, the Civil Peace Service as it is today is not what we initially had in mind. But its current form works very well with the visions and hopes that we had at the outset.

Tilman Evers: We don’t have an overview of everything that our actions with the Civil Peace Service trigger. After all, we can’t just look at Germany. Who knows how the people in our projects will take up an idea and develop the concepts, and whether new things could emerge from this that our grandchildren will someday reimport back to Germany? Things sometimes make their way around the globe before they eventually return to their origins. And who knows what we have started that we will not live to see?

forumZFD works with Israeli and Palestinian partners – here, in the East Jerusalem district of Silwan. ©forumZFD



NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES



In 2013, the Peacemobile (here in Cologne) toured Germany for the Civil Peace Service. ©forumZFD

The Civil Peace Service – an idea in the debate

Andreas Zumach: How did the peace movement receive your ideas?

Helga Tempel: Konrad Tempel and I had some very painful experiences early on when we demanded a clear commitment to actively working on the causes of war at congresses for conscientious objection back in the seventies. People always settled for saying no to military service and opposing the state. This blinkered attitude and the lack of confidence in our forces being able to achieve anything positive dominated the peace movement back then.

Heinz Wagner: In the nineties, there were various different reactions to our suggestion. On the one hand, many people from the pacifist movement were enthusiastic and approved of it. But on the other, we were accused of being too close to the state and the idea of ‘non-violent interventionism’, mainly by the officials at peace organisations.

Tilman Evers: For large parts of the German peace movement, the threat was the military – and the military was the state. The development services established in the fifties and sixties saw things differently and accepted a certain proximity to the state in the name of subsidiarity. It was therefore no coincidence that the discussion groups for the Civil Peace Service also involved people with a background in development work, who were not afraid to cooperate with the civil side of the state in order to diminish its military side.

“We wanted to be able to influence policy!” – from open discussion forum to idea advocate

Andreas Zumach: You touched briefly on forumZFD’s founding phase. How did this come about?

Helga Tempel: We first had to answer the question of what exactly we wanted. A working group was formed within the Federation for Social Defence, which took up the discussion of a ‘civil peace service’ started in 1992 by the Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg with a concept paper. It soon became clear that we needed a broader framework for the discussion, which we created with a conference at the Evangelical Academy in Mülheim. An informal discussion group called Forum Civil Peace Service was launched there as part of the conference. The second step was to win people over to the idea. Soon, a larger, very active group formed. The third step involved winning allies. And only once we had succeeded in doing so could we think about taking steps towards influencing policy.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Tilman Evers: I have a very vivid memory of those first discussions from 1994 onwards. We discussed a variety of issues: how could we abolish the military? How could we educate people about the capacity for peace? How could we intervene in the war in Yugoslavia?

Heinz Wagner: Could we, were we able to and did we want to take on public administration responsibilities within the framework of existing laws?

Tilman Evers: Who would finance all of this? There were a great many unanswered questions and still nothing very concrete. It was when we were then established as a registered association in 1996 that it became clear that we wanted to be able to influence policy.



A school in a Lebanese refugee camp. © *forumZFD*

Heinz Wagner: In 1995, there was a political development that we had to respond to: the Dayton Agreement to end the war in Bosnia. Our supporters in the Bundestag – Winfried Nachtwei from the Greens, Gert Weisskirchen and Uta Zapf from the SPD, as well as Rainer Eppelmann and Armin Laschet from the CDU, and Hans-Jochen Vogel behind the scenes – urged us to stop just writing clever papers and to instead finally make a concrete policy proposal. This situation made it clear to us that as an unofficial (non-registered) association, we were unable to manage public funds. We could propose a civil peace service, but others would then implement our proposal. We also wanted to play a part in organising it, though! Not everyone joined us in taking the step to establish an association – to going from being a discussion group to becoming an organisation striving to shape policy. Losing some of our fellow campaigners at this stage was difficult, but even with hindsight, I wouldn’t do it any differently.

Helga Tempel: We had to finally define what our cause was so that we could speak with the political decision-makers. If we had carried on working so openly and without obligation for another two years, many people would have said that we and our idea would come to nothing anyway, so they would go do something else instead.

Tilman Evers: Based on my previous initiatives, it became clear to me that the whole thing wouldn’t have any authority until it had a legal identity. This discussion group would only ever get off the ground if it was established as a registered association.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Andreas Zumach: Your suggestion of an initial phase for the Civil Peace Service in Bosnia and Herzegovina was ultimately unsuccessful due to opposition from the CSU development minister Spranger.

Tilman Evers: Yes, our proposal ended up getting caught up in party politics. A CSU minister could not simply wave through an initiative presented by a few ‘loose cannons’ from the eighties who blockaded missile silos and were supported by the opposition parties.

Heinz Wagner: ...and twenty years later, we have a new development minister from the CSU, Mr Müller, who is gradually strengthening and supporting the Civil Peace Service in this legislative period. That just shows how much cross-party recognition the Civil Peace Service has gained in twenty years!

Reaching out to the public: the Berlin Declaration for a Civil Peace Service

Andreas Zumach: What were the consequences of this setback that you faced back then?

Helga Tempel: We now needed support from civil society. But we didn’t have any money to introduce our idea to them. We couldn’t afford expensive advertising. We did have contacts, though – including a few well-known personalities. So, we called for initial signatories for an appeal in DIE ZEIT newspaper and asked them for at least 50 DM. The signatories of the ‘Berlin Declaration for a Civil Peace Service’ in February 1997 included politicians from all parties and celebrities such as Dorothee Sölle, Christa Wolf, and Lev Kopelev.

Andreas Zumach: How successful was this campaign?

Heinz Wagner: Financially, it was not very successful. We were always underfunded in the nineties. The impact on the general public was more difficult to gauge. But we do have a large press portfolio from that time.



The ‘Aktion Weißes Friedensband’ (‘White Ribbon of Peace’) initiative in front of the Federal Chancellery in summer 2014. © forumZFD

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Andreas Zumach: And politically?

Helga Tempel: We had something tangible for the subsequent negotiations with politicians and were able to bring several major names into play.

Tilman Evers: With the Berlin Declaration, we were able to make it clear that we had a certain patronage behind us that could also exert political pressure if necessary. We were given a further boost in 1997 by the Gustav-Heinemann Citizens’ Prize, the first public recognition for our initiative that was still in its very early days back then.

The first training course for the Civil Peace Service

Tilman Evers: In the wake of Minister Spranger’s rejection, we couldn’t expect any support from the Kohl government for the time being. But that wasn’t necessary for one of our projects, namely to train peace workers for the Civil Peace Service. So, we decided to push ahead with that.

Heinz Wagner: Exactly. The state government of North Rhine-Westphalia under Johannes Rau expressed an interest. While the federal states cannot set foreign policy, education is the responsibility of the individual federal states. In the second half of 1996, we conducted intensive negotiations with the NRW state chancellery and, between Christmas and New Year’s Day, received confirmation of the financing of the first four-month training course for the Civil Peace Service, which at the time was organised in cooperation with the Evangelical Action Group for Peace (AGDF). It started three months later in April 1997.

Helga Tempel: But we shouldn’t forget just how much conceptual work went into the planning. Konrad Tempel had developed a 40-page, one-year training plan that built on the ideas of many of the pioneers of non-violent action. A central concept of this extensive curriculum has remained in place to this day: reflecting on one’s own conflict behaviour within the group should form part of the training.



Participants in the second CPS training course in 1998. © forumZFD

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES



An important milestone in forumZFD's history: in the winter of 1998, Heidi Wiecek-Zeul, who was the development minister at the time, official deployed the first peace workers from the Civil Peace Service in front of Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin. ©forumZFD

Heinz Wagner: Reflection and learning as an organisation are fundamentally important. Our training has already undergone many significant developments over the course of twenty years. Back then, we wouldn't have even dreamt of a part-time course like the one we've been offering for three years now.

Tilman Evers: Over time, participants came along who were older on average and had more overseas experience.

Helga Tempel: And they brought different prior knowledge with them. Further training courses have been developed for diverse peace work since the Civil Peace Service has existed: there are the training courses at the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), which is managed by the Federal Foreign Office; for a time, there was the peace university in Stadtschlaining/Austria; and there are relevant degree programmes at many universities.

The 1998 parliamentary elections and the political breakthrough

Andreas Zumach: So, you were then able to train peace workers. But these people were ultimately supposed to be deployed within the Civil Peace Service. How did you promote this?

Heinz Wagner: In the run-up to the 1998 elections, we approached many people, including Günter Verheugen, who was deputy chairman of the SPD faction at the time. He sat back in his chair and said to us, "Surely you must be able to tell your friends in the Green party that they should request that a civil peace service is included in the coalition agreement during the negotiations." And it actually wasn't that difficult in the end. After all, Winfried Nachtwei, who was a member of the German Bundestag for the Green party, was a close ally of ours.

Helga Tempel: The SPD even left a blank space in the budget before a civil peace service even existed under that name.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Andreas Zumach: After the 1998 election, there were fears that the new Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, would take over the CPS. At the time, I was worried that it would be taken over and made that warning pretty clear.

Helga Tempel: She proudly told the media that “we established the Civil Peace Service within half a year” – with a tendency to place it exclusively within the state-run German Development Service (DED). I got really worked up about it back then – and we protested loudly.

Heinz Wagner: If Joschka Fischer had wanted to have the CPS within the Department of Foreign Affairs, then all he would have had to do was to say the word and then we probably would have ended up with him. But that wasn’t what he wanted.

Tilman Evers: While the idea of civil-society deployment services did not even occur to the Federal Foreign Office, it did to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In that respect, we were not completely horrified by the prospect of the Civil Peace Service being located within the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, though we did insist on a pluralistic civil society responsible body. However, we always saw that this could also become something of a gilded cage, and we suspected that we would be perceived as competitors. We also wanted to maintain our political link to the Federal Foreign Office, if not to the Federal Chancellery.

Peace service and development service

Andreas Zumach: This created a notion of the Civil Peace Service that was distinctively similar, but also somewhat different from the existing development services.

Helga Tempel: We had the idea early on that a separate title had to be created for the Civil Peace Service within the budget of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Heinz Wagner: There were of course people on the development services side who responded to this with suspicion, according to the principle that ‘a development service is also a peace service’, so why do we need anything new? And then there were the small development services whose objectives were already very close to the idea, particularly the International Christian Service for Peace (EIRENE) and the World Peace Service (WFD). One person in particular who supported us was the managing director of the German Development Service at the time, Willi Erl. He formed the link between our initiative and the development services.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Andreas Zumach: What differences do you see between the traditional development services and the Civil Peace Service?

Tilman Evers: Our peace projects are also inevitably linked with material emergencies, meaning that there is no clear distinction between peace and development. In my view, development work and peace work go hand in hand, but have different emphases.

Heinz Wagner: Over the years, we have summarised it in a little formula: development services are about working *in* conflict, while the civil peace service is about working *on* conflict – or, in other words, conflict management. That’s the distinction that the development services also go along with.

Helga Tempel: However, we realised that in emergency situations, development aid can also fuel conflicts if it appears that it is being distributed unfairly and without the involvement of the conflict partners. This criticism did not go down very well.

Heinz Wagner: That being said, we acknowledged that the development services had 40 years of experience in personnel deployment. And this experience proved incredibly valuable. It meant that we didn’t have to reinvent the wheel, so to speak.

Andreas Zumach: It all sounds very harmonious. I imagine the criticism of development aid mentioned by Helga Tempel also created one or two controversies for you.

Heinz Wagner: Yes, there were of course controversies. The debate centred on how we in the Civil Peace Service dealt with the achievements of the Development Service. In particular, it was about the integration of personnel into local partner organisations. “Without a local partner, who is also formally the head of development aid workers, there can be no development service” – that’s what the Development Service said, and this was not easy to reconcile with our approach to conflict as a third party. We couldn’t just integrate our people into an organisation because they then would have forfeited their mediatory role. We were therefore accused of ‘peace colonialism’ at the start.

Tilman Evers: The development services had made solidarity their guiding principle. And then we came along as a peace service with the self-conception that “We don’t do solidarity work. We work without bias”. And that was a scandal. Today we say that both solidarity and impartiality can be justified in certain situations and can sometimes even complement one another.

Awarding of the Gustav-Heinemann Citizens’ Prize in 1997. © forumZFD



NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Kosovo War: the Civil Peace Service as a fig leaf for a new form of interventionism?

Andreas Zumach: In 1999, just one year after the election, the new federal government deployed the first Civil Peace Service workers. However, the involvement in the Kosovo War also began that same year. Did this destroy your hopes in this new government?

Helga Tempel: The way that they justified a humanitarian intervention alarmed me back then. If we were really so humanitarian, why were we going in gun in hand and not in a genuinely humanitarian, philanthropic way? At the time, I was already thinking about the Civil Peace Service as an alternative in the Kosovo War and the other conflicts in former Yugoslavia. And then in early 2000, our first peace workers travelled to Kosovo.

Heinz Wagner: It is ultimately a kind of original sin on the part of the Civil Peace Service that Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul was able to establish the Civil Peace Service in the new government so quickly, all because the Greens had a guilty conscience about the Kosovo War.

From policy to practice: development of the project work

Andreas Zumach: Has the Civil Peace Service met expectations in practice?

Tilman Evers: The Civil Peace Service turns twenty today, so until yesterday, it was still a teenager. It can't be at the end of its development yet. However, two evaluations commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) evaluated the development of the CPS. Even back in 2002, the development phase of the Civil Peace Service was scrutinised as a public-private joint effort and commended as an 'institutional design success'. From 2009 to 2011, the impact of the Civil Peace Service was reviewed in a major international evaluation. And as expected, these results were very nuanced, but with a significant positive tendency and a number of recommendations: firstly, to continue and further develop the Civil Peace Service and secondly, to make concrete proposals for improvement to the institutions involved in the Civil Peace Service consortium.

Heinz Wagner: I would like similarly transparent evaluations to be carried out in the military and for the impact, engagement and failures to be documented publicly – as they are for the Civil Peace Service.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Helga Tempel: The second evaluation recommended that the CPS should not confine itself to the grass-roots and middle social levels but should also approach the decision-makers in the conflict regions more. I can see a very different image of a peace worker in this, one that has to work almost on a diplomatic level. I worry that they will no longer be able to make practical contacts at a grass-roots level – with marginalised groups in conflicts, for example.

Heinz Wagner: But we are already doing this in some projects. In Macedonia, for example, we advised the Ministry of Education on the inclusion of peace education in school curricula, but at the same time worked with individual schools. There are a growing number of similar projects working on the local and national levels. The profile of the people we are recruiting for the CPS is of course also changing. When I look at some of the job advertisements today, I know for a fact that they would not take me.

Helga Tempel (second from left) and Christian Pfeiffer (third from right) from forumZFD hand over around 7,000 signatures in support of the creation of a European civil peace service to the European Parliament in 2009. © forumZFD



From discussion group to medium-sized peace organisation

Andreas Zumach: Has the Civil Peace Service always remained an exclusively German initiative or has the idea also been taken up in other countries over the years?

Helga Tempel: Very early on, we were accused of trying to shape the world based on German values.

Andreas Zumach: Where did these accusations come from?

Helga Tempel: From the German peace movement.

Tilman Evers: And yet we actually began testing the waters and seeking contact with similar initiatives in different European countries as early as 1997. After two international preparatory meetings in Cologne in 1997 and 1998, we were able to officially form the European Network for Civil Peace Services during the Hague Appeal for Peace conference in May 1999. The network has been very active for many years now and inspired similar approaches to the German Civil Peace Service in other European countries. Unfortunately, we have not managed to create a European civil peace service beyond Germany.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Andreas Zumach: I began our interview by asking whether you would do it all again. I want to conclude with the question of how your involvement in forumZFD and the relationships between the various stakeholders have developed over the past twenty years?

Helga Tempel: In the association’s early days, from 1996 to 2002, the board members were the people who did the work. As the association grew, this changed significantly. The head office is now responsible for all operational matters and decision-making authority has been assigned. The board is actually on its way to becoming a kind of governing body. So that’s one big – but probably necessary – change that we’ve gone through.

Andreas Zumach: Do you see it as a positive change, or are you a bit sad about it?

Helga Tempel: There is some sadness.

Heinz Wagner: forumZFD is no longer just a small association, but rather a medium-sized company employing 100 people. Tension naturally arises between the civil society, political impetus and the professional, practice-oriented institution.

The Civil Peace Service in 2016

Andreas Zumach: Is forumZFD prepared for the crises and violent conflicts in our world today? I above all mean the new challenges posed by the completely random Islamic-motivated terrorism and the very large numbers of refugees we are experiencing for the first time that I believe is unlikely to change in the next ten years.

Tilman Evers: I don’t see how the Civil Peace Service can be an adequate means of combatting the problems of terrorism.

Heinz Wagner: But I do see preventing terrorism as a task for us. After all, the problem of terrorism – in France, for example – did not originate somewhere far away in Syria, but in the French suburbs. It is about young people with no prospects, with a poor education; young people who are alienated from society, who are not offered any sense of identity. Some people are predicting a similar situation in Germany. While we can’t stop the people who have already strapped on an explosives belt, we can start making a difference where people are left out in the cold and are looking for ways to improve their prospects.

Tilman Evers: I actually see the real challenge for us in dealing with the refugee issue, far more than in dealing with terrorism.

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES

Helga Tempel: It is essentially about transferring our work abroad to German society, and this in turn requires special skills. I really hope that we are able to show what the Civil Peace Service can do here. Many a community official would be grateful to have impartial advisers with experience in conflict resolution at their side. Municipal conflict mediators could create neutral spaces that would also give some of those involved in the protest movement an opportunity to talk about their worries and fears, and where they could feel listened to without violence and hate speech.

Heinz Wagner: The Civil Peace Service purely as a development policy tool was never enough for us. And we feel the same about our approach in industrialised countries. But it took a while for us to obtain public funding for it. We spoke with state ministries and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, but at best, the response was “It’s a great idea, but we don’t have any money”. We finally received funding from the EU and developed our expertise in the field of social conflict management in Germany. It is not just a front, it is the association’s main concern.

Andreas Zumach: How big is this field of work in Germany?

Tilman Evers: We have been working in three or four communities in parallel since 2003. In light of the conflicts surrounding the refugee situation, the fact that we never gave up this aspect of our work despite all the funding difficulties is now proving its worth.

Heinz Wagner: It is also proving a success in other ways: things that we are developing here in Germany are suddenly becoming interesting abroad. Communities in conflict regions are showing an interest in our concept of community conflict resolution. Likewise, our team in Germany is learning from our experience abroad.

Tilman Evers: The connections in Lebanon are becoming very tangible in practice. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the people we meet in the refugee camps there are the same people we will see in Germany the day after tomorrow. And perhaps there are still things that the Civil Peace Service can learn here, given the changes currently taking place in our society. I don’t think the number of refugees is likely to decrease any time soon, either. And unfortunately, I think it is conceivable that we will see xenophobes take to the streets in a huge way and even begin resorting to violence.

Andreas Zumach: They’re actually already doing that.

Tilman Evers: Yes, but I’m afraid it might go even further. Who will intervene then? Who will work to educate them?

Heinz Wagner: Which institutions and organisations in Germany are mediating the dialogue between the anxious, anti-Islam Pegida nationalists, those prepared to use violence, and the so-called ‘do-gooders’? I think that’s an important task in today’s society.

Andreas Zumach: And with that, I’d like to conclude by quoting a letter from the German theologian Heinz Wagner dated 26 October 1995: “And so it remains exciting. It goes on and on. Let’s see how far.”

NOT JUST “NO” TO WAR, BUT “YES” TO ALTERNATIVES



Helga Tempel

is a pedagogue, Quaker and pacifist. After completing her studies in pedagogy and physics at the University of Hamburg, she worked as a teacher and in adult education. She founded the Easter March movement together with her husband Konrad Tempel and has been involved in conscious objection and peace work since the 1950s. Helga Tempel was co-chairperson from the association's founding in 1996 until 2004, and has been the Honorary Chairwoman ever since. (Bild: ©forumZFD)

Dr. Tilman Evers

is a social scientist, lecturer and advisor for civil conflict transformation. Prior to joining forumZFD, he was involved in research and solidarity for Latin America and subsequently worked in political adult education at an Evangelical trust. He was a member of forumZFD's founding committee and the association's chairman from 2004 until 2010. (Bild: ©forumZFD)



Heinz Wagner

is a qualified pedagogue. He was involved in political youth education in Berlin and worked for pax christi Aachen as a peace worker for many years. He acted as co-chairman from forumZFD's founding in 1996 until 2004, and was then the association's managing director for ten years. Heinz Wagner has been chairman of the Forum Civil Peace Service Foundation since 2015. (Bild: ©forumZFD)

Andreas Zumach

is a publicist and correspondent based at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva. Among others, he writes for the *Die Tageszeitung* daily newspaper. Andreas Zumach was a vocal critic of the Iraq War. He was awarded the Göttingen Peace Prize in 2009 for his commitment to human rights and peace policy. (Bild: ©forumZFD)



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS



Western Balkans: from soldier to peace warrior

The debate on a civil peace service in the early 1990s was strongly influenced by the Yugoslav wars. Hence forumZFD's first peace workers were deployed to this region. forumZFD commitment in the region concentrates on educational work and work on dealing with the past with the aim of overcoming the concept of 'the enemy' and promoting a culture of non-violence. One focus was on establishing a trauma centre for war veterans and involving them in the reconciliation work. Miodrag Tasić, who goes by the name of Miki, is one of the war veterans who took part in the trauma seminars and today campaigns for reconciliation between the two former adversaries.

The war veteran Miki lives in a village in southern Serbia, close to the small town of Vranje. Beyond the hills that rise on the town outskirts lies Kosovo. Miki fought in Croatia for the Yugoslavian army. He lost his right forearm in 1994 when he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. He was 28 at the time, married and father to a four-year-old daughter and a three-year-old son. After the war, he struggled to cope with life. His marriage broke down and he divorced soon after returning home, leaving his children to grow up without a father. Miki is just one of what are believed to be many traumatised veterans in Serbia.

Vladan Beara from the War Trauma Centre in Novi Sad, which was set up with forumZFD's support, estimates that 20 to 25 per cent of war veterans suffer from varying degrees of trauma. That's more than 200,000 people alone in Serbia. "War is chaos. Soldiers are confronted with the existential fear of death. Many later struggle to cope with the return to civilian life," the psychologist explains. They suffer from sleep disorders, or are scared of the dark or if a bus is travelling behind them. They experience flashbacks and are prone to sudden outbursts of anger or violence. Many traumatised veterans see suicide as the only way out. Miki struggled to cope with his problems for a long time. Dr. Boban Stamenković, who was head of the psychiatric ward at a local hospital at the time, convinced him to take part in a seminar for traumatised veterans organised by the War Trauma Centre in Novi Sad.

The Serbian war veteran Miodrag Tasić has worked through his war trauma and today campaigns for reconciliation. ©forumZFD

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS

Western Balkans: from soldier to peace warrior

“It took a while for Miki to be able to open up in therapy,” recalls Ursula Renner, a forumZFD peace worker who helped to set up the trauma centre. Many veterans find it very difficult to revisit the repressed trauma. Many of them cling to the old concept of ‘the enemy’. The realisation that the war had been senseless and their suffering therefore had been too, would be unbearable for them. It is for this reason that veterans in post-war Balkan societies tend to belong to the radical and nationalistic spectrum of society. Not all have the strength to face up to their memories during therapy, either. Many of his friends envy Miki that he dared to take this step. Today he is another person. The therapy has allowed Miki to reconnect with his children. It is them who awakened his need to campaign against the war and to help other veterans.

“No one knows better than us veterans how truly awful war is. If not us, then who should raise their voice against it?” Says Miki in explanation of his goal today: he is attempting to foster a dialogue between the former warring parties in the Balkans. Miki has decided that he wishes to speak of his experiences during the war as a veteran. He particularly wants young people and politicians to understand what war really means. His story should never be allowed to be repeated.

Miodrag Tasić explains the cruel reality of war to young people. ©forumZFD



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS

A day in the life of a peace worker in Prizren/Kosovo

The first forumZFD peace workers began their work in Kosovo in 2000, just a few months after fighting ended. Silke Maier-Witt was among them. At the time, she wrote the following account of her daily work as a peace worker.

“Time passes so quickly. The memory of the first period of uncertainty and doubt begins to fade. At the start, I often wished for a clearly-defined project; for something tangible like building new houses or distributing food. Working with terms such as ‘peace work’ and ‘capacity building’ all seemed too vague for me. But everything has gradually become more familiar and it has become clear that our work is meaningful, even if the outcomes are far less visible. Now, three months later, I have begun to really live here. People know us now. I’m greeted on the street and invited for a coffee.



It’s the little things that I consider successes. Take the Bosnian couple that stops by every so often, for example. Initially they anxiously asked whether they stood a chance in this country. A visit to their home, a little encouragement to come to a women’s group meeting, mediation of contact with others. While it’s not much, their confidence still grows that they can live here after all. Or my complaint lodged with the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) when I learn that not a single woman has been employed at the new social centre. Everyone knows that I’m right. Things like this are outrageous! No woman will confide her troubles to a man here! Together we find a solution. The head of the UNMIK asks for our understanding that he is dependent on our help. We are to empower and support women. I gladly pledge to do so. After all, I have made that one of my tasks here anyway.

Silke Maier-Witt was active for forumZFD in the Western Balkans for about 15 years. ©forumZFD

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS

A day in the life of a peace worker in Prizren/Kosovo

I want to be at ‘my’ women’s group at noon. The women are active, organise courses. Unfortunately mainly the usual sewing lessons, but there are also computer courses. They have a small children’s group and travel to the surrounding villages to speak with women about their rights. I want to make them dare to do more. They now also support two Roma women and we’re planning a radio programme. I’ve arranged with them to visit one of the villages together next week. I want to learn more about their work and get an idea of what we can do to help. There’s also a round table of the women’s group from Suva Reka coming up that I’ll attend. (...)

A new woman comes in. I’m told she’s a little nervous, as she and her family have to live in tents again now. The work on rebuilding the badly damaged homes has now begun and she hopes that her house is on the list of those to be repaired. I ask her what it’s like to live in a tent; I’d really like to visit her. She’s pleased with my enquiry and immediately invites me. We travel along bumpy, dusty roads to the other side of town. Three tents have been pitched beside the house. The entire family sits in the garage. The elderly parents, one of the father’s brothers with his wife, her brother with his wife and three small children.

Mattresses have been laid out in the garage around the stove. I received a warm welcome and am invited to dinner. Only I and the smallest boy eat, as he is the youngest. All of the others sit and watch. I feel awkward, but have since learnt that this is a tradition. The women smile at me, and the mother gets out a gift for me. She shyly hands me a package wrapped in newspaper. It’s a cotton shirt with lace trim. I am touched.

When I head back along the bumpy road, the traffic chaos has reached its peak. It’s the spring festival, which is above all a festival for the children. I resolve not to get annoyed. A KFOR tank stands beside me. I observe the people around me. Many wave. I spot familiar faces. All are festively attired. Everywhere there are children clutching green branches and toys. I hear music, laughter and excited chatter around me. I almost don’t mind that it takes me 1.5 hours to get home.”



Silke Meier-Witt in Prizren. ©forumZFD

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS

1997: the Berlin Declaration

The Berlin Declaration was agreed in February 1997. Countless prominent figures committed to a civil peace service with this declaration, including Johannes Rau, Joschka Fischer, Hans-Jochen Vogel, Hildegard Hamm-Brücher, Carl-Friedrich von Weizsäcker, Christa Wolf, Dorothee Sölle, Peter Härtling, Lew Kopelew, Hans Koschnick, Marianne Birthler, Bärbel Bohley, Hans-Peter Dürr, Klaus Staeck, Markus Meckel, and Barbara Hendricks.

Heidmarie Wieczorek-Zeul (centre) with the peace worker Anna Cummenerl and forumZFD co-founder Tilman Evers. ©forumZFD



2006: forumZFD becomes a sending organisation

To celebrate its tenth anniversary, forumZFD hosted an event at the Representation of the Saarland in Berlin on 6 March 2006. The former development minister Heidmarie Wieczorek-Zeul was among the countless guests from the political sphere and civil society. She brought a very special birthday gift along with her: to thundering applause, she named forumZFD a sending organisation according to the German Development Aid Workers Act (*Entwicklungshelfergesetz*). This designation greatly simplified the organisation's future work and was thus an important step in forumZFD's twenty-year history: until this time, peace workers had to be seconded to existing sending organisations for deployment in the project countries, and this required extensive coordination.

Die Zeit

Die Zeit ist reif! Berliner Erklärung für einen Zivilen Friedensdienst

Konflikte zwischen Menschen, Konflikte in einer Gesellschaft oder zwischen Nationen sind eine Grundgegebenheit des Zusammenlebens. Die mangelnde Bereitschaft und Fähigkeit aber, diese Konflikte gewaltfrei und mit zivilen Mitteln produktiv auszutragen, ist zum anwachsenden Problem geworden.

Mittel und Wege gewaltfreier Konfliktbearbeitung sind vielfach erprobt und realisierbar. Die bislang genutzten zivilen Instrumente für inner- und zwischengesellschaftliche Konfliktregelung reichen jedoch nicht aus. Was in unserer Gesellschaft zudem fehlt, ist das verbreitete Wissen um die Möglichkeiten, deeskalierend und gewaltmindernd, versöhnend und unterstützend in Konflikten zu handeln. Dazu bedarf es aber professioneller Unterstützung durch eigens dafür ausgebildete Friedensfachkräfte.

Vor diesem Hintergrund fordern wir einen in der Gesellschaft verankerten, gesetzlich abgesicherten, staatlich geförderten und international eingebundenen Zivilen Friedensdienst.

Ziviler Friedensdienst meint einen Friedens-Fachdienst, der in nationalen und internationalen Konflikten mit den Methoden der gewaltfreien Konfliktaustragung tätig wird. Sein Ziel ist es, in qualifizierter Form dazu beizutragen, den Ausbruch von Gewalt zu verhindern oder zu beenden oder nach gewaltsamen Konflikten Prozesse der Versöhnung in Gang zu setzen. Die Mitarbeiterinnen, Frauen und Männer unterschiedlichen Alters, sollen durch eine mehrmonatige Ausbildung zu gewaltfreien Einsätzen befähigt werden. Sie sollen nach dem Prinzip der Subsidiarität in pluraler zivilgesellschaftlicher Trägerschaft arbeiten. Der Staat muß für die Trägerorganisationen und Mitarbeiterinnen die notwendigen gesetzlichen Rahmenbedingungen schaffen.

Die Verwirklichung der Idee eines ZFD bedarf einer breiten gesellschaftlichen Unterstützung.

Wir bitten die Bürgerinnen und Bürger unseres Landes:

- Informieren Sie sich über das Konzept des Zivilen Friedensdienstes!
- Setzen Sie Ihre politische Stimme dafür ein, die Politiker und Politikerinnen für den Zivilen Friedensdienst zu gewinnen!
- Helfen Sie mit, diese Idee in unserer Gesellschaft zu verwirklichen!

Den deutschen Bundestag und die Bundesregierung erinnern wir daran, daß die Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit gewaltfreier und zivilgesellschaftlicher Handlungsinstrumente zur Sicherung und Förderung des Friedens längst vorhanden sind. Wir fordern Sie dazu auf, den Weg freizumachen für die Einrichtung des ZFD!

Die Zeit ist reif, sich in neuen Formen der nationalen und internationalen Verantwortung für Frieden und Völkerverständigung zu stellen!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS

Peace House: a symbol of growth

forumZFD's first office when it began its work in 1996 was very modest. The association occupied half of an office in Minden as a tenant of the Federation for Social Defence (*Bund für Soziale Verteidigung*, BSV). In 1999, forumZFD moved to Bonn after a brief interim period in a cramped basement flat in Cologne.

The head office relocated to a little top-floor apartment on Wesselstraße (picture at the top), initially with just one managing director and a secretary. When the German federal government began funding the Civil Peace Service in 1999 and the project work was subsequently expanded, both the association's financial needs as well as the personnel and space requirements continued to grow over the years. The head office also grew continuously after forumZFD took over the training of peace workers through its Academy for Conflict Transformation. The additional space requirements could initially be met by renting other floors in the building on Wesselstraße. But at the latest in 2011 (when there were almost 20 staff), it became too cramped.

With acquisition of a building in Cologne at the end of 2011, the foundations were laid for further expansion of forumZFD and improved working conditions: the Peace House on Am Kölner Brett was born (picture at the bottom). Today about 30 people work at the head office from which more than 80 staff are assisted and supported in projects both in Germany and abroad. Within twenty years, a small initiative has developed into a recognised peace organisation of about the size of a medium-sized company.

Looking back on difficult times

forumZFD's work would not have been possible without the support of the continually growing number of patrons and donors. In its founding year, forumZFD at first received donations and membership fees totalling around 20,000 euros. More than 1,500 donors and almost 600 regular patrons today support the organisation with just over 400,000 euros every year. Over the years, this support has formed the financial backbone of forumZFD's peace work. The financial situation was at times critical. While forumZFD grew significantly up until 2008, it also amassed debts totalling 256,000 euros through the expansion of its peace work. The association subsequently developed systematic fundraising measures and strict debt reduction in order to counteract this. It has since been possible to significantly reduce the debt. That's not all, though: thanks to the loan from around 90 association friends and funders, it was more than possible to close the financing gap.

A further building block for a stable financial basis was then laid with establishment of the Forum Civil Peace Service FOUNDATION in December 2014. Without its countless funders and supporters, this would have been inconceivable for forumZFD. The staff and board greatly appreciate this sign of confidence from countless individuals, church communities, companies and member organisations, and is extremely grateful.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS



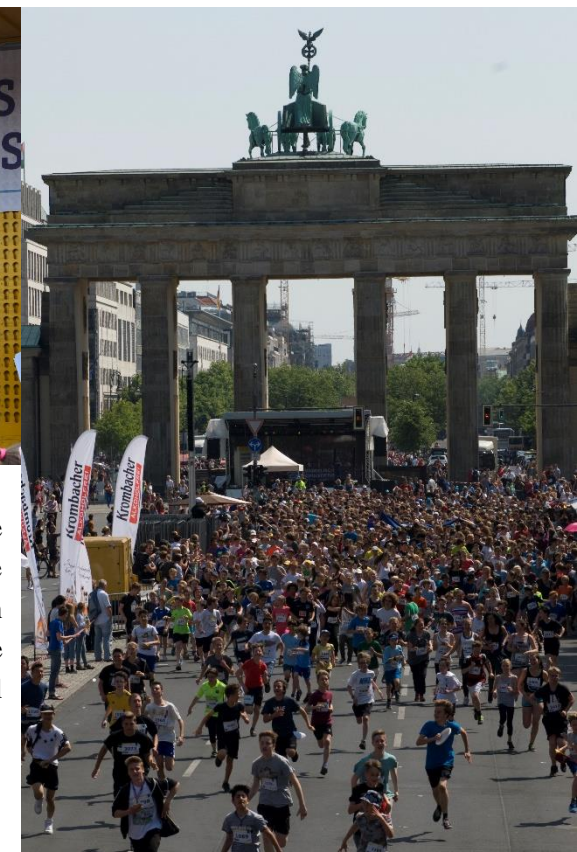
1997: first qualification course

In spring 1997, the Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia of the time, Johannes Rau, inaugurated the Civil Peace Service's first qualification course. He was one of the most important political supporters of the idea in the early years. "Attempts are increasingly being made to find non-violent solutions to conflicts both in Germany and in countless other countries. Civil conflict resolution is the future. I am delighted that North Rhine-Westphalia can play a part in this and support the training of peace workers to help overcome hatred and violence in former Yugoslavia."

©forumZFD

Neuss held its first peace run in 2015. It was opened by the Federal Health Minister, Hermann Gröhe. © forumZFD

Almost 4,000 children participated in the tenth Berlin Peace Run in 2015. ©forumZFD



Peace runs

Five years after the founding of forumZFD, a successful model for peace work was initiated in Aachen that the association has continued to this day: the 'peace run' concept that was first launched in 2001. Other cities such as Berlin, Augsburg, Bremen, Jülich and Neuss have got involved over the years. More than 10,000 people participate in the peace runs every year and support forumZFD's work in this way. Over the years, several hundred thousand euros in donations have been collected. The peace runs are more than just a sponsored run though: in the build-up to the events, the organisers also offer an extensive programme for participating schools. There is the opportunity to consider peace topics in greater depth, to develop one's own strategies for finding peaceful solutions to problems, or to recognise the causes of such conflicts.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS



Activities and campaigns

A protest outside the Bundestag

Activists from the ‘20 million more from the military for peace!’ campaign met outside the Reichstag on 30 August 2013 on the occasion of World Peace Day. With a huge caricature, they protested against the absurd disparity between military spending and investments in peace. The German government always has a few million euros to spare for dubious armament projects, such as the Euro Hawk, but not for investing in peace – this is the campaign’s message. Activists in T-shirts bearing the slogan “20 million more please!” erected a huge banner featuring a cartoon by the caricaturist Kostas Koufogiorgos outside the Reichstag on Platz der Republik.

Campaign hands over 8,500 signatures

On World Peace Day 2013, forumZFD also handed over 8,500 signatures to the parties represented in the Bundestag. The two-year campaign proved successful: in October 2013, the coalition government (CDU/CSU, SPD) pledged in the coalition agreement to develop the Civil Peace Service further.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS

Conflicts in Germany: forumZFD advises affected municipalities

Violence also escalates in Germany time and time again. It was therefore logical to also begin offering the Civil Peace Service's instruments in Germany at some point. forumZFD offers affected municipalities support in the prevention and processing of conflicts in the form of 'municipal conflict consulting'. Osterholz-Scharmbeck in Lower Saxony is one such municipality.

July 2014: it's the time of the World Cup in Brazil. The final was broadcast live in a large cinema at Bremen main railway station. Shortly before the match ended, the broadcast cut off in one of the cinemas. Crowds of people flooded into the already overfilled neighbouring cinemas. Suddenly a young man lay bleeding on the floor. He died a short time later. The *Weser-Kurier* newspaper later wrote: "Police arrested the suspected attacker close to the scene. His injuries were also severe, but not fatal. The victim was a member of an Arab family from Osterholz-Scharmbeck; the suspected perpetrator had his family roots in Albania." In November 2014, the public prosecutor's office pressed charges for manslaughter.

forumZFD peace workers in Osterholz-Scharmbeck. ©forumZFD



It is not the first time that Osterholz-Scharmbeck has made the headlines in connection with violence among migrants. Particularly the area around Drosselstraße has become known beyond the town's borders as a social flashpoint with high potential for violence. The residential area was built in the late 1970s when US American soldiers were stationed here. When the military base was relocated in 1992, the inhabitant structure changed. Particularly refugee families from Turkey, Lebanon and Syria moved here. And now a family from Osterholz-Scharmbeck was once again involved in an act of violence among migrants. But this time the story ended differently: to help combat criminality in the region, the town's prevention committee asked forumZFD for help solving the problems there using municipal conflict consulting approaches.

Immediately after the incident was reported, discussions took place with the families to offer family members help coping with what they had experienced – particularly the young people directly involved in the confrontation. Those involved were included and comprehensively enlightened on the standard procedure in Germany, such as questioning by the police and other state institutions. Contacts within the town and beyond the state borders between Lower Saxony and Bremen kept in touch to keep an eye on the situation and ensure that the family dispute did not escalate.

New in this case was that the general public received comprehensive information without any prejudices being confirmed or anything being whitewashed or kept secret. A forumZFD advisor worked with the responsible person from the town to assist in this approach and prevent violent confrontations from recurring between the rival families. There's also a background to the successful de-escalation. In the three-year cooperation between the town and forumZFD, preventive steps were introduced, such as regular neighbourhood forums to respond to residents' specific questions and problems. The coexistence of the long-term residents and the migrant families has become far more relaxed due to a variety of factors. Even if violence conflicts do occasionally arise – as was the case in the aforementioned incident – they no longer end in family feuds.



Municipal conflict consulting helps to enable children to grow up in a peaceful environment. ©forumZFD

THOUGHTS ON 20 YEARS OF FORUMZFD

“I am a member of the forumZFD’s board, and though my day job is far removed from peace work, the subject is very close to my heart. I like the integrated approach of linking active conflict transformation in Germany and abroad with the qualification of people and the political sensitisation through public outreach and lobby activities.”

Mareike Junge, Member of the Board



“In retrospect, it’s an incredibly exciting experience: to follow an idea’s journey from the first seeds in 1993 to its unfolding, and in part to also be able to help shape its course. We had big dreams and ideas back then and generated energy – always together with others – that has been kept alive over the decades. Some things developed surprisingly differently to expected, and some things far, far better than hoped. It’s hard to believe that ZFD and civil conflict transformation have become such future-oriented political and social factors in such a short time!”

Konrad Tempel, Founding Member



“pax christi is one of the founders of forumZFD, as the resolution of conflicts without a military presence and without violence represents a feasible alternative to common practices. forumZFD brings together expertise and lobby work for civil conflict transformation. In its twenty-year history, forumZFD has also proven in practice that civil transformation can succeed if all conflict parties are involved.”

Gerold König, Member of the Board, pax christi Aachen





forumZFD

Editorial team:

Christoph Bongard (responsible for content pursuant to press law), Richard Klasen, Larissa Janz

English translations:

Denise Dewey-Muno and Claire Coombes

Committed to Peace

forumZFD

Forum Civil Peace Service
Am Kölner Brett 8
50825 Cologne, Germany

Phone +49 (0)221 91 27 32-0
Fax +49 (0)221 91 27 32-99
Email kontakt@forumZFD.de
www.forumZFD.de

Donations:

Bank für Sozialwirtschaft
IBAN DE37 3702 0500 0008 2401 01
BIC BFSWDE33XXX