

## SFCG in Côte d'Ivoire

### Newsletter n°1 - October 2005

*The crisis in which Côte d'Ivoire has been mired since September 2002 has divided the country and has contributed to the aggravation of ethnic and communal conflicts. The current situation remains tense and unpredictable; the election planned for end of October has been postponed and the country is dealing with a constitutional crises. The African Union has weighed in on this crises indicating that the Presidential mandate should be prolonged for one year at which time an election would take place. A new transitional government will be established. The continuing crisis has consequences on the stability of neighboring countries, particularly Liberia and Guinea.*

#### SFCG's regional approach in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

Conditions for peace and security are closely interlinked between countries. Beginning in 1997 in Liberia, Search for Common Ground's (SFCG) approach in the Mano River Union (MRU) and Côte d'Ivoire is grounded in its regional strategy, which emphasizes four thematic priorities: Security, Governance, Information, and Civil Society. Under these priorities and combining the tools of media and outreach, SFCG's national programmes undertake integrated activities to achieve increased regional communication, informed dialogue and enhanced cross-border cooperation.

#### SFCG's overall goals in Côte d'Ivoire :

- Reduce tensions among divided groups
- Strengthen social cohesion and facilitate the reconciliation process

#### SFCG's new partners in Côte d'Ivoire.

Organisation des Femmes Actives de Côte d'Ivoire (OFACI), is partnering with SFCG's targeting three regions in the west of the country: 18 Montagnes, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra to support social cohesion.

Programme National Démobilisation Désarmement et Réintégration (PNDDR) partners with SFCG and CARE in the cities of Bouaké, Man, Bouna, Khorogo and Yamoussoukro to support community rehabilitation.

With start up funds from National Endowment for Democracy (NED), SFCG began its programme in Côte d'Ivoire in April 2005.

For 2005-2006, SFCG is implementing two complementary projects with the financial support of the World Bank and the European Fund for Development. These two projects aim to fulfill the overall objectives of building conflict management capacity and strengthening social cohesion in Côte d'Ivoire.

#### Radio productions to facilitate social dialogue and reconciliation.

« Main dans la main » (« Hand in Hand), co-produced with OCHA, was broadcast on September 10 marking the first radio programme of Talking Drum Studio in Côte d'Ivoire. Focusing on humanitarian action and social cohesion, this radio programme aims to inform people on the humanitarian situation in their region and the efforts made towards restoring social cohesion.



Collecting voices for Passerelle

« Passerelle », the second media product recently launched, focus on inter ethnic alliances and traditional methods of conflict resolution. These alliances are customary pacts between families, groups or clans linking these groups in solidarity to an agreed mechanism for their disputes. By promoting these inter ethnic alliances, SFCG is emphasizing and building on the capacities that exist for non violent resolution and management of conflict in and between communities as well as adding value through SFCG's expertise in the field of conflict resolution.

One of the ten techniques OF  
**COMMON GROUND**  
to tackle sensitive subjects through medias:

**HUMANIZE**

« Get to know the people behind the opinions. Why do they care ? What in your guests' lives made them feel so strongly about this issue ? »

SFCG held a working session with 10 radio station partners in September. Primarily to meet each other, this 3 day session included exploring production techniques and skills and journalistic ethics.



*Common ground methodology and production skills training*

### Reflecting on Peace Practice, working with Partners.

As part of its partnership with PNDDR/RC and CARE, SFCG took part in a series of meetings where PNDDR/RC presented and finalized their Community Rehabilitation Manual.

Facilitated by Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) through its project Reflecting on Peace Practice, SFCG and its partners met in August to explore the designed programme and reflect on the dynamics of conflict looking at the driving force, the priority factors and the dynamic of the Ivorian conflict.

The Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP)<sup>1</sup> is an experience-based learning process that involves agencies whose programs attempt to prevent or mitigate violent conflict. Its purpose is to increase the effectiveness of peace work.

Using the tools developed by RPP, the group analysed the conflicts emerging with a more profound understanding of how to maximize impact of project interventions. This session enabled a strategic linking between partners and a joint analysis of the conflict's dynamics using tested methodologies.

### Introducing Vianney Missumbi, SFCG's Project Director in Côte d'Ivoire.

Before coming to Côte d'Ivoire, Vianney worked with Radio Okapi in Congo, the UN radio established by Foundation Hirondelle. In establishing this radio, Vianney worked closely with Centre Lokole, the Talking Drum Studio equivalent in Congo. Vianney is an excellent producer and has intimate working knowledge of common ground methodology and how to use the media for peace building.

In December's newsletter, two new radio programs will be introduced « N'Zassa » et « Noces ». The newsletter will include, as well, information on two trainings: one in facilitation and one in radio techniques.

#### SFCG's MISSION

*is to transform the way the world deals with conflict: away from adversarial approaches, toward cooperative solutions.*

*SFCG's projects in Côte d'Ivoire are possible thanks to the financial support of the EU, the World Bank and SIDA:*

