

# **Russians and Chechens work together on developing Constructive Nonviolent Conflict Management**

by Pat Patfoort

We have brought Russians and Chechens together, during two one-week seminars, the first in St-Petersburg and the second in Rostov, in October 2005<sup>1</sup>. The objectives of these seminars were to learn more about violence and conflicts, to develop knowledge and skills in nonviolence and nonviolent conflict management, and to learn to use those concretely, first in ordinary daily cases, and then in the conflict between Russians and Chechens.

In each group there were about 16 participants, including teachers, educators, social workers, directors of schools and libraries, psychologists (for instance involved in rehabilitation of children and teenagers, or working with immigrants, or in psychiatric hospitals with people who committed physical injuries, or in prisons), lawyers, journalists, members of humanitarian organisations and human rights organisations. In the beginning of the seminar each participant presented him/herself and expressed his/her expectations.

## **1) Expectations of the participants for this seminar**

Their expectations were the following:

- share and confront my opinions, meet and understand the other people; because through contacts we get to cooperation
- being Russian, I lack information about Chechnya and saw a lot of racial intolerance and discrimination; I feel ashamed
- concerned about the racism of children and the problems in their families
- being Chechen, I desire to learn what people think about us and to bring information (not many people are visiting us)
- being Chechen and having a close family member or friend who fought for justice and who has been shot, or having seen violence many times, I look for strength
- as a Chechen journalist, I want to tell not only about crimes of war, but also about cases of peacemaking
- learn how to make tolerance concrete and to live in a multicultural environment
- learn how to deal with the worsening conflict situation
- how I can bring information to people without horrifying them and making it worse
- it's urgent to get experience
- I need and want to learn about conflicts and to get tools to prevent and solve problems, to use in my own conflicts and to teach at the workplace, school, home, friends
- we need to kill the war inside of ourselves, monitor our own reactions
- learn a new approach and new methods and skills to fight violence without using violence ourselves
- need new skills and exercises
- want to learn about human rights particularly for children
- if we do steps at both sides, we can eliminate the distrust of people as enemies.

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<sup>1</sup> These projects were organised by Pax Christi Flanders (Project leader : Annemarie Gielen) and House of Peace and Non-violence in Saint-Petersburg, and were supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

## 2) Associations with pain and suffering

After having shared the expectations, through exercises concerning personal experiences, we looked for the associations that people make with pain and suffering. At this stage we also used the (very strong and touching) exhibition of pictures of the war and the situation in Chechnya, which were put up on the walls of our meeting-room (which was in a Centre of Non-formal Art). The following words and expressions came up:

- violence, aggression, attack, bullying, offence, humiliation, threat, contempt, ignoring, denying, being indifferent, selfishness, abuse of power, envy, interest, avoidance, infantilism, stereotypes, hatred, conflict, being alone, barrier, misunderstanding, pity, being forced, surprise, human relationships, mother instinct, survival instinct
- absence of objective information, one-sided information, denying the rights of someone, constant change of decisions, reluctance to accept other people, one person doesn't care for another, thinking oneself is right and the other one is wrong, lack of self-control, being dependent, feeling of being led by crowd, absence of activity, long patience, being unsure, not using opportunities
- disillusion, disappointment, dissatisfaction, feeling of injustice, anger, panic, feelings of heaviness, emptiness, being shocked, irritation, depression, psychological destruction, despair, fear, impotence, helplessness in face of conflict, apathy, indifference, feeling of guilt
- lack of /need for (self-)respect, empathy, kindness, honour, dignity, soil ecology, self protection; desire to achieve justice, to restore or change.

## 3) Transforming conflicts from the individual to the inter-ethnic level

On the basis of these words and expressions, we used **the MmE-model**<sup>2</sup> (see fig.2) to clarify what conflict and violence mean, the usual way people react when they are confronted with them, and the different mechanisms of violence (see fig.1). We used theoretical lectures, discussions, different kinds of exercises (also non-verbal ones) and regularly also games to keep-up mental concentration. As a logical consequence we presented in front of **the Major-minor model** the alternative of **the Equivalency-model**. We got to clarify and discuss some specific concepts, like strength, power, compromise, spontaneity, punishment, and different forms of communication.

We studied **the instruments** of both models, the so-called '**arguments**' in the **Major-minor model** and '**foundations**' in the **Equivalency-model**. Therefore we used situations on different levels (from micro- to macro-level), which we each developed first with arguments (in the M-m model) using role-plays, and afterwards with foundations (in the Equivalency-model) using an exercise of analysis (of the two parallel lists of foundations, with precise instructions for determining and formulating the foundations).

**The situations** were on three levels: the individual, the societal and the inter-ethnic level.

- 1) A mother and a daughter of 15 years old: "I want you to continue to go to school"  $\leftrightarrow$  "I don't want to continue to go to school"
- 2) A teacher and a pupil: "I don't want you to study in this class"  $\leftrightarrow$  "I want to study in this class"
- 3) Two groups inside of the population: "We don't want a nuclear power plant to be built"  $\leftrightarrow$  "We want a nuclear power plant to be built"

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<sup>2</sup> For more details, see [www.patpatfoort.be](http://www.patpatfoort.be)

- 4) Civilians and people in the army: “We don’t want to keep the draft”  $\leftrightarrow$  “We want to keep the draft”
- 5) Russians and Chechens: “We consider you as terrorists”  $\leftrightarrow$  “We don’t want to be considered as terrorists”
- 6) Chechens and Russians: “We don’t want you to look at us as enemies”  $\leftrightarrow$  “We want to look at you as enemies”.

**Arguments** are the instruments of the Major-minor model, which are used to put oneself up and the adversary down, in all possible ways. The ones proposed were the following:

1) In the situation of the mother and the daughter, who fight about the daughter continuing to go to school or not:

- The mother: “You have to go to school in order to get a job. All your friends go to school! If you don’t study you will have to clean toilets. You will regret it later. See how you look! Whenever we talk, you can never have a normal conversation with me. We are not going to give you money anymore. I am ashamed of you.”
- The daughter: “I know people who studied and didn’t get a job. I don’t need to study, you have enough money. It’s boring. Teachers are stupid. I’m wasting my time. You never listen to me. You have a duty to support me. You don’t really care about me. You don’t know what I want. I might as well leave this house!”

2) Between the teacher and the pupil fighting about the pupil studying in this class or not (some arguments can not be said, but thought, and told to other people, as gossip):

- The teacher: “There must be discipline in the class. Your friends are influencing you in a bad way and you are influencing the class in a bad way. You spoil the class: you teach them to smoke and to drink. Pupils started smoking and drinking BECAUSE OF YOU! You ruin my nerves. You are a hooligan! You have no reason to be respected. You will end up badly.”
- The pupil: “It’s my right to study in this class; I have always been studying in this class. You can’t put me out because I study well. I’m not going to change school because of YOU! You can’t make decisions about MY life! Just try to exclude me from this school and you’ll see. It’s not your business what I do after the lessons (smoke with the classmates). You are a bad teacher. Nobody likes you. Your methods are awful. You are horrible at working with children! Who do you think you are to say things like that?!”

3) With the builders of the nuclear power plant and part of the population on one side and another part of the population on the other side, regarding a nuclear power plant being (re)built or not (parts of the buildings are there already):

- The ones against: “This nuclear power plant is being built on a geologically dangerous place and in the neighbourhood of two rivers. There is old technological equipment. There is a high danger of explosion. There has to be a referendum before building it. There will be contamination of rivers in case of an accident. You didn’t take into account our opinion. You don’t worry about us and our future generation. You only think about yourself and your interests. You hide information. You are organising a genocide on the population, a new Chernobyl! You are thieves, corrupt! You steal everything from us and then go away! You are fascists!”
- The ones in favour: “We work for the people, for the inhabitants. This is cheaper energy. This will favour economic development in the region and in Russia. It’s very safe. It is clean for the air and soil. We are not using non-renewable fuels. You slow down human progress and economic development. You are dramatising. You publish false information. You make an elephant out of a fly; there are nuclear power plants everywhere. You don’t understand, you are idiots. You are bought by the West, in

- order to destroy Russia. You can only criticise. You want us to live in the stone age. You can only shout; whose money is supporting you?!”
- 4) Between the civilians and people in the army, about keeping the draft or not:
- The civilians: “We pay taxes, so we don’t have any other duty. It’s possible to defend our country without arms: education, science, economic development and reproduction. Military service is a threat to life and health. The draft army is a school of cruelty, violence and illegality. The draft army is not capable of defending our country. When you send our children to hot spots, they come back as criminals. In the army there are only criminals. We have only militarism all round. You are all criminals. You are all for sale. You are bringing people to suicide and murder. You can’t protect life or health. You are not able to do anything.”
  - People in the army: “Every state needs an army. The army is a school for life. In the army a boy becomes a man. Society owes this to its state, in return for free education. Russia needs a big army to protect its borders. We need more conscript soldiers than our enemies. We don’t have money to support a professional army. You force us to act as we do. You are destroying the army. You are destroying our land.”
- 5) The situation of Russians and Chechens about considering Chechens as terrorists or not:
- Russians: “There were so many terrorist attacks, explosions, casualties, deaths, mourning (during the first Chechen war). You are supported by and get money from foreigners (through your religion, Wahhabism). Wahhabism is an aggressive religion. You kill our soldiers. You kidnap our people. You kill innocents! You have so many weapons. You have an aggressive and belligerent culture, the ‘blood revenge’ and ‘eye for eye’ mentality. You are always in a state of war. You wage that war to occupy territory to the Urals! If you are striving for peace...why then did you take hostages in ‘Nord-Ost’?! If you have a lot of friends from Russia, then why were Russians leaving Chechnya in crowds?! You should negotiate conflicts; there is no need to use guns. You are not able to do anything! We built your whole economy, institutions of state! And now you want to separate having everything you need. You should negotiate everything with our authorities. Why do you go and kill our children?!”
  - Chechens: “We are citizens of the Russian Federation just as you are. We have a lot of Russian friends, spouses. We didn’t begin, we were/are forced to protect ourselves! Why would you think that WE organise terrorists attacks? We are supported by foreign authorities, but also by Russian authorities! Wahhabism and Sunnism are not the same (99% of the Chechens are Sunnis, and Wahhabism is unacceptable to us). You say that we kill your brothers and sons, then don’t send them to war! Your militia is totally corrupt. That’s why terrorists pass easily where common people can’t pass! You can’t take care of your citizens (you send them to war). You make money out of suffering and mourning. But you don’t want to negotiate!”
- 6) Between Chechens and Russians about looking at Chechens as enemies or not:
- Chechens: “The Chechens fought during the second war on the Soviet side. We are civilians of the Russian federation. We respect Russian culture. My best friends are Russians. Our religion does not accept war as a way to solve conflicts. The institute of blood feud is based on mediation and solution, it seldom resulted in death. For 300 years Russia tried to dominate the Caucasus. We have been deported. Now we have war and genocide on our territory. The Russians are fascists. You are wearing swastikas while killing us. You are blaming Chechens for everything that goes wrong.
  - Russians: “The war is a bad thing, but you Chechens are always fighting. You have a very war-minded religion. You are rich. You are always as one, always together, but you are only friends with your own people. You are you killing us with explosives.

You are kidnapping people. You are killing our boys. You are terrorists. You are raping our girls.”

These situations have been presented in the forum of role-plays by the participants, one after the other, going from individual to inter-ethnic ones. The impact of this exercise was very strong, as can be seen by the **evaluation** which was done afterwards:

- It's frightening that our fears and stereotypes govern us, and not our minds and our inner human essence. A good person can turn into a monster.
- How pathetic a person can be in his anger!
- The conflict is easy to provoke; then it escalates and it's practically impossible to stop it.
- The scenes were real life phenomena and cases. After first having used soft arguments, the hard arguments felt uncomfortable, hurting and heavy, so that it was impossible to stop bringing up destructive arguments. It just happened automatically.
- I'm touched by what a person is capable of. The most important is that he can't listen to the other's reasoning. This could have been avoided if we would do only the smallest thing: to learn to listen to each other.
- Discomfort, uncertainty, compassion, a feeling that the conflict could have been avoided. In all situations I felt myself in a minor-position, not able to solve the conflict or to influence the situation in a constructive way.
- Watching the different presentations of each group, the feeling occurred to me that it was impossible to find an attitude of compromise. Each conflict begins with a conversation of lower intonation, but gradually with growing emotional tension, people become more aggressive, and the gesticulation becomes harder. Anger. People just stop listening to each other. Only a few minutes more were needed to have a hand-to-hand fight. The situation was brought to a limit, and in such moments it would hardly have been possible to solve it in peaceful ways.
- I often watched such situations and they have happened also to me.
- I have the feeling that everything is familiar. They are all situations taken out of life; therefore they are so easily played. In real life you don't notice how from a positive activity it can be transformed into an aggressive activity, and then into a destructive one. Often, and you can maybe even say always, we walk on a leash of our feelings.
- I hope I never shall reach such extremes myself.
- I don't understand how situations can evolve like this: no one was right and no one was guilty....
- I realized that for me the aggressive way is usual, common, natural and easy.
- Striving to raise the spirit of my group made me use destructive arguments.
- I can't use destructive arguments; I take a step aside or take the minor-position for awhile.
- When we were preparing the role play of our situation, I was struck by the difficulty we had of finding positive arguments. We immediately got into negative and destructive ones.
- All scenes we played put me in an unpleasant position. I didn't want to put the other one in a minor-position, and the other one didn't want it either, but we both did it. And we both wanted to find Equivalent solutions, but instead we both behaved in an aggressive way.
- At some moments, I had fun, because it was like a game, like theatre. But unfortunately it was not a game, but reality....
- After I had seen all the played situations again and again I noticed mixed feelings. There was compassion and deception and pain and disappointment. It's not funny for me but very sad. The situation of the conflict is destructive for my soul. For me a little bit of peace is better than a good quarrel. In the world there is so little love and so much hatred! How little we know and are able to be friends, and we don't even want to learn how. And

we think it will just pass....We have to work on it day and night, day and night!  
Everybody has to start with him/herself: if I can't do good, I have at least to try not to cause evil.

- All scenes were taken out of real life and showed again very clearly that people haven't learned after thousands of years the most necessary science: to understand each other and to be friends with each other. Therefore there is so much grief and so many tears on this planet. That hurts so much.
- A very strange contradictory feeling. Of course the situations are as in real life, but in reality I think I always try to listen and now, according to this exercise, we had to quarrel, as we had to develop the situations in the Major-minor way. I noticed though during the exercise that it was difficult for me to find positive arguments. It was much easier to find negative and destructive ones.
- In the first stage of all the situations, as soon as we found out what the differences in opinion were, when it still was possible to change the situation and to negotiate, nobody wanted to listen to each other and to understand each other. Therefore I felt unpleasant and sad. The lack of will to understand led to broken and destroyed relations.
- In the individual cases, I felt very bad and ashamed for our education and our schools. We have to stimulate our youth to become more interested in studying rather than forcing them. Parents don't need to talk to their children with such a tone, forcing them to run away from their homes. Then there are feelings of being hurt, of hopelessness, and guilt. The most difficult thing in all cases is that you have the feeling you can't do anything. The inter-ethnic scene produced a feeling of hurt, of hatred, anger, aggression. And as a result there is a general feeling of guilt about our education, accusing our parents who don't understand us and who give children too little attention because they work so hard in order to raise their children. I feel ashamed for the state that brings its citizens to this. I feel bad for our army. And also for the peacemaking and human rights organisations that can't do anything or so little. I feel bad and bitter for our people who don't want to love each other, don't want to understand each other and don't want to live in friendship with each other.
- I saw how all kind of arguments followed each other during the escalation. I realized that the further the conflict goes, the less attention the sides pay to the real reasons.
- In an aggressive conflict situation the parties involved cease to be interested in the core of the conflict; they go to the personal level (they begin to affect the persons, and not the points of view anymore).
- I understood that all the conflicts develop in the same way, despite the fact that all sides possess such qualities as good/bad, kind/evil.
- Among them there are no strong people. The one who seems to be strong, is in fact weak, unsure, not loved.
- There is often a feeling of helplessness before violence overtakes a person.
- You can't say that someone suffers and the other one doesn't.
- Often stereotypes and social roles disturb the conflict resolution.
- If you don't like a person, it doesn't mean that he or she is bad.
- Being aware of the laws doesn't mean that you may be tempted to break them.
- Because of problems from childhood, you can't put up with the role of victim.
- Any situation which is imagined helps to solve problems from real life. It's important to exchange roles with representatives of the other -opposite- side, to stand in the shoes of the other person, especially in a situation of safety and trust (such as in this seminar).
- It's very useful to test your own point of view, collecting the arguments of the other side. At some point you begin to think: "We don't actually seem to be opponents. There is some sense in what the other ones are saying").

- A Chechen: I understood that among Russians there are people who understand our pain and our suffering. And such communication offers the possibility of understanding each other. I was very touched by the reaction of this Russian woman who played the role of a Chechen.
- The fact that we are placed and feel in a minor-position makes it impossible to deal with the situation in another way.
- Aggression is bad for at least one of the sides.
- People! Just stop! Think about it. Be merciful! Just live in such a way so people around you can feel themselves comfortable and at ease.
- We have to try, as partners in a conversation, to create an atmosphere in which the other one feels safe.
- We must learn to be more tolerant towards each other; we must respect one another.
- To understand a person it's necessary to receive his/her messages (the words, but also the other forms of communication) and to try to get into the skin of our opponent.
- Not giving a person (people) the possibility to express himself, creates for him a situation of no way out. We eliminate this person. We need to have the inner strength not to let us be eliminated.
- Patience and labour do everything.
- Treat the other as you want to be treated.
- Understanding the mechanisms, the victim him- or herself can propose the method of Equivalency, without disturbing the other one.
- It's better to listen to our opponent, to state our point of view and to propose something. We should not start with emotions.
- It's difficult to put aside the emotions of the other people: they subdue, irritate, upset us.
- We should not keep silent, but it's better to keep silent than to accuse.
- Only patience and striving for mutual understanding, leaving personal emotions aside will lead to peace and understanding in all big and small conflicts. As our ancestors' proverb says: "Put yourself in the position of your opponent and you will understand him."
- There will always be conflicts and we always have to be ready for that; so we have to learn how to solve them, but what is better is to prevent them.
- It would be very good if we could learn to control our emotions and feelings. Then we could avoid many conflicts, fights, wars. I hope that after this seminar we will bring a piece of love to one another and the world, patience towards our partners in conversations, the knowledge to listen to the message of our conversation partners, and empathize with his/her pain, problem. All tragedies begin with misunderstandings.
- There is hope that mutual understanding and cooperation will one day replace confrontations, as more and more people want to learn how to hear and to listen to each other. These kinds of seminars are necessary, to make us smarter and stronger, to develop the inner, good strength.

Afterwards, for the same situations, we developed **the foundations** (the instruments of the Equivalency model), so as to transform those conflicts towards a Constructive Nonviolent, Equivalent management of them. Foundations are all elements which are at the basis of the different points of view involved, and are formulated following strict rules<sup>3</sup>. The foundations which were listed for the different situations are the following ones:

- 1) The situation of the mother and the daughter, fighting about the daughter continuing to go to school or not:

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<sup>3</sup> They are fundamentally completely different from arguments, even if sometimes they may look similar

Mother : I don't want you to miss your classes

1. I'm afraid you will not get education
2. I'm afraid you won't have a successful life
3. I'm afraid that without education you won't get an interesting job
4. I'm afraid you won't develop your personality
5. I feel ashamed that I have failed to encourage your interest in learning
6. I'm afraid you won't live up to my expectations and hopes
7. I think I shall feel comfortable if you become independent
8. For me education is a great value
9. I remember my university years as the brightest in my life

Daughter : I'm missing classes

1. I don't like my teacher
2. I feel afraid at school
3. I'm ashamed to get poor marks
4. I feel uninterested and bored with some of the subjects
5. I don't feel like learning
6. I have complicated relations with my classmates
7. I'm afraid my friends will not respect me if I do not miss lessons
8. I don't have enough sleep and get tired
9. I don't like to be forced to do things
10. I don't like to be reprimanded for my looks by my class-mates

2) The teacher and the pupil, fighting about the pupil studying in this class or not:

Teacher : I don't want you to study in this class

1. I find it difficult to work in this class, when you are present.
2. I'm afraid of being accused of being unprofessional.
3. I am used to having contact with students.
4. I don't feel contact with you.
5. I have the feeling that soon I will not have patience anymore.
6. I feel humiliated by you in my dignity and my authority as a teacher.
7. I have the feeling that your behaviour sets the whole class against the teacher and the studies.
8. I give all my inner power just to deal with your person.
9. I'm afraid your parents have stopped respecting me, because of our bad relation.
10. I'm afraid I won't be able to cope with the situation in the class.
11. I'm afraid that your behaviour will destroy the ethical values of our nation.

Pupil : I want to study in this class

1. I am used to being a leader in this class.
2. I'm afraid I won't be admitted to a new class.
3. I need my classmates to pay attention to me.
4. I'm afraid if I go to another class, it will be a shame for my family.
5. I'm afraid that it will be as if I lost the fight, if I go to another school.
6. I really like a girl of this school.
7. I'm afraid to be in a class which is not familiar to me.
8. I'm afraid of new teachers.
9. I'm afraid to lose authority among my classmates.
10. I'm afraid to lose the company of my friends.

- 3) At one side, the builders of the nuclear power plant and one part of the population (the ones in favour), and at the other side another part of the population (the ones against), about having a nuclear power plant built or not:

We don't want a Nuclear Power Plant to be built in this area

1. We are afraid to have another 'Chernobyl'
2. We need more information (full and objective) about building NPP
3. We think that if a new plant is built, we'll have a constant feeling of danger.
4. We are afraid that we'll live under constant stress.
5. We find it difficult to believe that the usefulness which the NPP will bring, will be bigger than the possible danger.
6. We think that non-recycled nuclear litter buried in Russia will make the ecological situation worse.
7. We need to be sure about our safety now and for the future.
8. We feel ignored, as the people responsible for making the decision don't live here and so won't feel the consequences afterwards.
9. We are afraid that the NPP can easily become a target point for terrorists.
10. We have heard that there is a good alternative for the NPP.

We want a Nuclear Power Plant to be built in this area

1. We are afraid that the money already invested in the NPP will be lost.
2. We need jobs and believe that the NPP will bring them.
3. We believe that the NPP will provide development for the region.
4. We are afraid that we will be without electricity.
5. We heard that this NPP is ecologically safer than other NPP.
6. We are afraid that other sources of energy will be used up and that we will be without energy.
7. We don't believe that there are alternative sources that could satisfy our energy needs today.
8. We are afraid that, if the NPP is not built, we will have to leave, as there won't be any work for us and our children.

- 4) Between civilians and people in the army, about keeping the draft or not:

We don't want the draft

1. I'm afraid to lose my life
2. I need education
3. I need freedom to make decisions
4. It's hard for me to imagine I could kill a human being
5. I'm accustomed to normal life conditions
6. I fear humiliation
7. It's important for me to preserve my feeling of dignity
8. I need privacy
9. I need to maintain my family
10. I am a pacifist

We want the draft

1. I'm afraid I'll be dismissed from the army
2. I'm afraid that a professional army will be incapable of defending our country
3. I'm afraid of high-level requirements
4. I'm afraid to lose power over my subordinates
5. I'm accustomed to using soldiers as manpower
6. I need to be of value to my country
7. I'm afraid the army will collapse with contract-services
8. I'm afraid my society will lose

its patriotism

9. I'm afraid the state will not be able to maintain an army

5) The situation of Russians and Chechens about considering Chechens as terrorists or not:

Russians : We consider you as terrorists

1. We are afraid of being killed
2. We feel a constant threat.
3. We need to have a feeling of safety.
4. We are afraid of terrorist attacks.
5. We are told that you are terrorists every day in the mass media.
6. We are used to the image of Chechens as belligerent people.
7. We are used to suppressing other nations.
8. We are afraid to lose our oil.
9. We are afraid of giving up territory.
10. We find it difficult to be looked at as the bad ones in this war.
11. We find it difficult to admit that we are responsible for some deaths.
12. We have needed that war to distract the attention of the population from domestic issues that were going wrong.
13. We are afraid Russia would split, with all its unpredictable consequences.
14. We are concerned about the lives of our children

Chechens : We don't want you to consider us as terrorists

1. We have the feeling that we are the same as you.
2. We can't imagine ever being able to kill human beings.
3. We feel humiliation.
4. We need justice.
5. We wish we could live in peace with each other.
6. We have the feeling we will not be able to bear such treatment anymore.
7. We feel this very hard, unbearable.
8. We are in constant tension.
9. We are afraid of being eliminated (both as a person and as a nation).
10. We feel the need for a free and peaceful life.
11. We need to perceive and feel ourselves as real (true) people.
12. We feel the need and importance of being considered as real citizens.
13. We are afraid of being provoked.
14. We are afraid of being accused unjustly.
15. I'm afraid we will always be considered as terrorists.
16. I feel great concern about our future and the future of our children and our people.
17. I'm afraid that the younger generation that was brought up in such an atmosphere, will be hostile to other people.
18. We are afraid not to have a future.

6) Between Chechens and Russians about looking at Chechens as enemies or not:

Chechens : We don't want you to consider us as enemies

1. I feel pain.
2. I feel weak and humiliated
3. I'm afraid I can be killed
4. I'm afraid of my aggression
5. I need your respect

Russians : We consider you as enemies

1. We are afraid you will kill us
2. We don't know you
3. We need to learn more about you
4. We are afraid to lose our jobs because of you

6. I miss your love
7. I miss Equivalency
8. I'm afraid to regard people as my enemy
9. I'm afraid it could drive me to suicide

5. We are not accustomed to seeing people who are not like us
6. We are afraid you will impose your religion on us
7. I'm afraid you will take my land from me
8. We are afraid Russia will disintegrate
9. We are afraid you will be stronger than us.

Notice for the reader after reading all these foundations: if at any time while reading them, you were judging that there was a bad foundation, a wrong one, a silly one, or you thought this was not a foundation at all, then be aware you were not reading a foundation anymore, but you were transforming this foundation back to a negative argument, in the Major-minor system. You were not behaving in a nonviolent, Equivalent way, but in a Major-minor way, which is building up violence.

After having set up these parallel lists of foundations, **the evaluation** was the following:

1) For the individual level (mother and daughter, teacher and pupil):

- This is an effective, useful exercise for a deep, many-sided analysis of the situation.
- We formulated the problem concretely; we got a vision of the situation.
- We learned to see what is below the situation, the deeper causes of the problem.
- This is a constructive way of dealing with criticism.
- This method teaches frankness.
- We identified our own feelings.
- We listened to and accepted the opinion of others.
- We learned how to respect the feelings of others.
- We managed to put ourselves into the 'skin' of another person.
- We learned to be more careful with others and their problems.
- We learned to avoid negative conclusions.
- We felt sympathy for the other person, and we got a better understanding of what love is.
- We learned a lot about the Chechen culture.
- This is recharging us.

2) For the societal level (about building a nuclear power plant, about keeping the draft in the army):

- It was difficult; we had to drag the foundations out of ourselves.
- It was difficult to listen to the others, to put ourselves into the skin of the other side, to find their foundations.
- The position of the 'other' side became more clear: we got a better picture of it.
- We hear arguments everyday, but foundations are hidden and different for everybody.
- There are common elements on the level of the foundations on both sides.
- We have the feeling this model is useful for daily life.
- It is important to make a choice for following the model of Equivalency. In this choice lies our responsibility for the world in which we live.

3) For the inter-ethnic level (between Russians and Chechens, about considering Chechens as terrorists or enemies):

- It is difficult to look for the foundations of the other side, to put ourselves into the skin of the 'enemy'.
- From time to time we came to negative arguments; it's easier to formulate them, we are so used to that.
- It is easier to find foundations for our own point of view, but still difficult.
- It is important to realize and to learn to know our own foundations, to investigate ourselves.
- With the Major-minor system we were acting in a more superficial way, now with the Equivalency we were looking deeper.
- There were lots of emotions, because this topic was very close and personal.
- We had the possibility of speaking about our problem and being heard.
- This exercise helped to destroy stereotypes.
- When we worked with the arguments (in the Major-minor way) the group split; while working with the foundations (in the Equivalent way) we rejoined and acted again as one group.
- We liked the sense of mutual understanding.

It is interesting on one side to see that the exercise indeed can happen on different levels, going from the micro- to the macro level, and on the other side to look at the evolution of the evaluations from the individual to the inter-ethnic level: it becomes more and more difficult to open oneself to the foundations of the others. On the inter-ethnic level it is also important to be heard by the others ('the enemy') in expressing one's own foundations (needs, feelings, etc.).

#### **4) Working on solutions**

On the basis of gathered foundations, we collected elements to create solutions (see fig.3).

For the situation of the mother and the daughter the following elements came up:

- They could choose a different school, or the daughter could take exams as an external student.
- Get in deeper communication with the school.
- They could discuss together what is 'successful' (in life, at work), look as well at the expectations of the mother and the daughter.
- They could identify the positive aspects of the school.
- The mother could work on her fears.
- Look for the reasons behind the fears.
- The mother could tell her daughter about the joys of university life based on her own experiences.
- The mother could make her daughter think by asking her open and interested questions.
- The mother should listen well to understand the matter.
- Listen to the daughter's opinion; listen to why she is being reprimanded for her looks by her class-mates.
- Find out what kind of attitude the daughter would prefer to get from the mother and other adults around her.
- The daughter should be encouraged in her search for distinguishing what is interesting for her or not.
- The mother could help to look for the support of a specialist.

- Find out opportunities.

For the situation of the teacher and the pupil, we got the following:

- Have a talk with the pupil, to find out about and understand his foundations.
- Have a talk with his parents, to find out more about and understand better his foundations.
- Develop a big creative activity in which the pupil can feel appreciated, feel that he is important.
- The teacher is ready to pay more attention to the pupil.
- The teacher is ready to meet the pupil regularly (for instance once a week) to discuss their problems.
- The teacher will invite the representatives of the council of wise people to a class meeting in order to speak about customs and traditions.

After having collected these elements for solutions on the individual level, an evaluation of this work was made, which was kept very visibly on the board, to be reminded while doing the same kind of work on the inter-ethnic level<sup>4</sup>:

- We have to listen to the opinion of the other side.
- We must accept the foundations of the other person even without sharing them.
- The question 'why?' is an important element of the dialogue.
- We have to look into ourselves.
- We have to arouse the interest of the other side, providing information, encouraging the other side.
- There must be mutual understanding between both sides.
- We should really love the child and be tolerant.
- We should get into the child's shoes as much as possible.
- We have to learn to understand the child's position.
- We have to keep informed about the youth's development.
- We should not hurry when addressing the problem.
- We have to maintain optimism because there are multiple ways out.
- It is hard but possible.

## **5) Meeting of Russians and Chechens in Equivalency**

With this evaluation on the background, two groups were made: one of Russians and one of Chechens. Both groups studied the parallel lists of foundations on the inter-ethnic level, and afterwards had a meeting of 2 representatives of each group together. During the meeting, they said what they would do to respond to the foundations of the other, and checked every time if it was O.K. for the other ones.

We find below what Russians and Chechens said:

a) The Chechens (responding to the foundations of the Russians):

- We are ready to listen to you.
- We are ready to exchange information on the level of personal meetings and also on the level of social organisations on the topic of what is happening in Chechnya and Russia, and about our traditions and culture.

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<sup>4</sup> We didn't work on solutions for the situations on the societal level because of lack of time.

- We will establish and expand contacts (links) between our peoples and especially between our children.
- We are ready to tell you more about ourselves.
- We will take joint actions on violation of human rights in Russia and in Chechnya.
- We are ready to get rid of personal and social stereotypes. (This one was originally not said by the Chechens, but was asked by the Russians, and then agreed to by the Chechens)

b) The Russians (responding to the foundations of the Chechens):

- We shall try to listen and to respect your concerns and feelings.
- We shall learn to express our feelings and emotional states.
- We shall introduce you to our culture and traditions.
- We shall learn to be open and honest towards ourselves and towards you.
- We shall discuss our intentions among ourselves and with you.
- We are ready to receive and spread information that reflects different points of view about the issue.
- We are ready to participate in and create cultural, educational and exchange projects.
- We will be bridging the gaps through supporting and developing personal contacts with each other.
- We shall work on rejecting the language of hostility.
- We will participate in the creation and promotion of the positive image of representatives of the Chechen people (social advertisement, PR).
- We are ready to learn not to shift our personal problems to the shoulders of the representatives of any nationality; to reject our own stereotypes.
- We shall use psychological support.
- We shall learn how to protect our rights and put them in practice.
- We are ready to bring human rights education into Chechnya and other regions of the Russian federation.

## **6) Evaluation and results of this seminar**

- During the seminar I had many different emotions. I could hear, understand and feel many new things. The form of the seminar was a bit unfamiliar. The most important thing is that the training was very wholesome and full of harmony.
- Very valuable was that this seminar offered an opportunity to deal with different people.
- I'm very glad to get acquainted with new people, who gave me power and positive emotions for my future work.
- The models are useful and will be really helpful in the future (in my personal life and also in the seminars I'll give). But the last day...it was really strong...(from the point of view of morality, emotionally). I feel the need for a follow-up.
- This was very interesting, but very hard at the same time. I want to learn to turn theory into practice.
- I have the feeling I have been working so hard, but there is still so much more to do.
- This was a very important experience for me. I'll try to use it in my real life for sure.
- I learned a lesson for myself. Before the training I did not give attention to the positions Major and minor of the opposite side. When I was listening to the theory in the training I was very critical towards my previous actions in one or another situation.
- I learned a lesson that you have to build up serious relationships even with your two year old child. It appears I made a lot of mistakes.
- I will certainly use all of this seminar in my work with psychiatric patients who committed serious crimes.

- I learned something new and interesting about the conflicts. I found a theoretical basis to solve conflicts. During the seminar a lot of questions and a big wish to solve personal conflicts appeared. There was a need to be heard, to speak about personal feelings, goals, problems.
- During this seminar I discovered a lot of things in a new light; a lot was structured and became more understandable.
- Now, after this seminar, I think I can take part in solving very difficult and very important problems.
- I can't say I have learned to solve conflicts, but at least I have learned to analyse them and see them without completely neglecting them. Now they don't seem impossible to solve.
- I learned to be better and to be more tolerant.
- It's necessary to learn how to love people and to understand them, and then it will be much easier to solve conflicts and to go towards Equivalency.
- I felt it would still be difficult to solve the Chechen problem. And how difficult it was to look at both sides in a calm way, without emotions. The seminar already helped to solve some of my personal problems. I think in the future it will help to deal with the Russian-Chechen conflict.
- The training helped me to become aware of some of my own stereotyped thinking although before it seemed to me that I didn't have that stereotyped way of thinking. I became very close to the other participants. It seems to me that I became more human.
- I learned a lot about the Chechen people in such a way that my relation to this people changed in a radical way towards the better. This helped me to fight my fears and stereotypes.
- I still have to work a lot on myself. I'm not ready for the system of Equivalency. But I'm ready to work on it. Ten years of war have changed my relationship with people a lot.
- I feel sorrow and relief.
- There was tension until common points appeared.
- It was difficult for me to admit the other point of view, to listen to it.
- I'm wondering "Why do we have conflicts?" if foundations are so logical....
- A Russian: I got closer to the Chechen culture.
- We had deep communication; we got in each others skin.
- We have to learn to choose the words; the others can get the message. Do politicians do that?
- I am agitated. I have the feeling I watched a mystery.
- Today we have started to think of realistic solutions. I have the feeling it is possible.
- The most important is to keep in touch all along, to match our steps, not to go away from Equivalency.
- We have to work on wording which doesn't affect anybody.
- I would like to be such training at a higher level.
- This sounds like a fairy-tale.
- Here we felt as if it was a real solution, but there is still lack of trust. We need to build confidence between people in real negotiations.
- Waiting for solutions from the top is not realistic. Solutions should be introduced by the lower part of the population.
- We may not be passive, should be more open and active.
- There were revelations here. I have the feeling of evolution.
- I have a feeling of optimism.
- I have an awareness of prospects, some ideas for future projects.
- I now have the feeling we can do something, a feeling of responsibility.
- I have hope again (a Chechen).

I want to extend my deepest thanks to the Russian and Chechen women and men who participated in these seminars, who are giving other Russian and Chechen people, and so many other people living in inter-ethnic conflicts, an idea of what is possible in such a situation to build peace.

I wish the description of this seminar will help others to think about how hatred, images of enemies, prejudices and despair can be replaced by communication, understanding, respect and hope.

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