

+
Issue
Theme:

Yes,
It is possible



Adi Gavrilă and Search for Common Ground were honored with the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) International Development Committee's 2009 Outstanding Leadership Awards for their outstanding contributions to international conflict resolution.

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**International
Day inspired us!**

Over 60 participants

**Demonstrations of
Innovation &
Courage**

**Practitioner
workshops**

**Music, Videos and
more!**

+
Progress
Report from
our Outgoing
Section Chair
Kathleen
Coogan

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the many of you who devoted time and energy to serve the International Section over the past year. Together you have helped strengthen ACR, the International Section, and our global network of conflict resolution practitioners. Thank you, and congratulations for your contributions, some of which I will highlight here: Our Communications Committee has started to issue press releases. It has completed an assessment of our website to be implemented once the ACR website redesign has been accomplished.

Our newsletter editors have put together this rich Conference edition.

The CR Networks Committee now includes active CR Network Subcommittee Chairs from nine regions of the world and has researched options to promote social networking among practitioners from around the world. The Committee is setting up two groups and various subgroups on LinkedIn – check them out!

** Bienvenido a todos! Para una versión de este boletín en español, visite a <http://inter.acrnet.org/>*

Collaborations and Transformations within our Global Network

(Message from Kathleen Coogan cont.)

Our International Development Committee (IDC) received an unprecedented number of nominations for this year's Outstanding Leadership Award. The Committee has prepared a report, including recommendations for the next phase of the pilot mentoring initiative, and is preparing a third edition of the IDC Networking Directory.

The Nominations Committee ran a smooth nominations process. We welcome Luis Ore as the new Chair-Elect and Kyra Buchko as our newest



Director-at-Large! We are sorry to see the terms of Cristina Franco as Immediate Past Chair and Eva Marszewski as Director-at-Large come to an end. Although we will miss your wisdom on the Advisory Council, we

look forward to your continued involvement! Our Outreach Committee has begun welcoming new members with an

email about Section initiatives. The Committee has also been reaching out to new and prospective e-members, now that they can more easily register through ACR's website. We have developed an information sheet about conflict resolution techniques for the US Foreign Commercial Service (USFCS) to share with US companies doing business abroad. Our friends in Argentina have been meeting with key contacts in Buenos Aires to discuss possible support for a mid-year 2010 conference.

... more on the back page

David Plumb



Dear Colleagues,

ACR's International Section has grown into a productive space for interchange and learning between dispute resolution professionals

operating on the global stage. I've benefited from the efforts of previous leaders who have created this community of practice.

As your incoming chair, I'm interested in enhancing the section as a compelling resource for practitioners. As a network, we've just started to tap into the opportunities presented by social media and networking. In addition to reaching out to our colleagues, we can use the section as a platform to inform and engage potential users of conflict resolution services. A webinar with US Foreign Service Officers later this year is a first step in that direction.

I look forward to working with you in the months ahead to ensure the section becomes increasingly relevant and vibrant. Please don't hesitate to contact me with you thoughts and ideas.

Warm regards,

David Plumb

Consensus Building Institute

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ACRIS

Launches Online

Networking Site

Conflict Resolution Networks Initiative**Welcome to the 21st Century**

The Section has been working hard to establish viable online conflict resolution networks to link practitioners across the globe. We are pleased to announce that after a year of considering various networking platforms, we have created two new groups on LinkedIn.com. Used by many of our members already, LinkedIn is oriented towards professional networking, and has over 47 million members worldwide for us to connect with. It also provides the ability to create subgroups with templates in four languages, and the choice of using 40 other languages in the text. The groups will remain simple and straightforward, focused on professional networking, current news, and critical topics – available when you need it, but not an intrusive demand on your time.

The [Association for Conflict Resolution International Section Group](#) is a networking site just for International Section members. Here you will have easy access to finding and contacting other Section members, keep up to date on Section news, and find links to other conflict resolution resources. Subgroups will be focused on committee work and initiatives.

The [International Conflict Resolution Networks Portal](#) has been created to develop regional CR Networks where practitioners and conflict resolution organizations across the globe can strengthen networking, facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences, and promote a culture of conflict resolution in particular geographic regions. Most importantly, membership is unrestricted for all conflict resolution practitioners. The Portal provides a central international network, from which practitioners can access regional subgroups.

Each CR Network subgroup may focus on specific countries within a region and on one or more substantive areas of conflict resolution, and content may be in the language appropriate to that region. Regions are loosely defined by the participants and have no hard boundaries, but generally represent common interests and challenges. The intention of the CR Networks is to promote conflict resolution capacity building in regions around the world where there are limited organizational resources for practitioners, and limited networking opportunities. Building the online network is just one step in the process, yet a critical

access to building contacts in different regions. The Section has also been actively building face to face relationships through meeting and conference support, most recently in Colombia, Argentina, India, Northern Ireland, and Eastern Europe.

Our belief is that where people know their choices in conflict resolution, and have access to those choices, a culture of peace can emerge.

If you are interested in networking with international conflict resolution practitioners, and in partnering to promote a culture of conflict resolution around the world, please join us at LinkedIn.com. It's free. It's easy. And it just might make a difference.

Gail Ervin is Chair of the Section's CR Networks Initiative and the former U.S. Representative to the World Mediation Forum Steering Committee. A public policy mediator and environmental planner, Gail is currently working on her doctorate in social transformation/peace and conflict resolution at Saybrook University.



+ Romanian Peacemaker, International Organization are Honored



ACR's International Development Committee Presents Two 2009 Outstanding Leadership Awards

Constantin-Adi Gavrila, founding member and manager of the Craiova Mediation Center (CMC) and president of the Romanian Mediation Centers Union, was selected for the individual award in recognition of his extraordinary work navigating a complex political environment to advance alternative dispute resolution in Romania. The CMC was established in 2003 as a pilot center to test mediation in real cases that, based on good results, led to further implementation throughout Romania.

Between many other projects today, the Craiova Mediation Center and the Romanian Mediation Centers Union are partnering with the Romanian Magistrates Association in a new three year plan starting with the spring of 2009 towards the establishment of a strong mediation culture between the Romanian magistrates.

Search for Common Ground was selected for the Organization Award in recognition of its work in challenging international conflicts, social entrepreneurship, and creative use of media in working in conflict-affected countries. The organization, founded in 1982, works to transform the way that the world deals with conflict: promoting collaborative problem-solving and non-adversarial approaches. SFCG works in over 20 countries, with local partners, to find culturally suitable ways to strengthen societies' capacity to deal with conflicts constructively.

Search for Common Ground Senior Vice President Susan Collin Marks received the award on behalf of the organization.

It is possible



Link to these web sites to learn more about these amazing award recipients:

<http://www.mediere.ro/>

<http://www.sfcg.org/>





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(From left to right): Luis Ore, Chair, International Development Committee of the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) International Section; Kathleen Coogan, Chair, ACR International Section; Lee Hamilton, former Congressman from Indiana; **Shamil Fattakhov, recipient of the ACR International Section 2008 Outstanding Leadership Award**

Q & A

with

**Constantin-Adi
Gavrila**

These 3 interviews with International Day Speakers: Constantin-Adi Gavrila, Searching for Common Ground's Susan Collin Marks, and the Carter Center's Hrair Balain were written by David Plumb.

How do you describe your work (the cocktail party version)?

The short answer is that I manage a mediation center. I started by managing a pilot program of the Romanian Department of Justice created to test mediation in the courts. As I managed this program, we created an energy around mediation in the country. We trained lawyers, brought U.S. and European trainers and experts for years and years, and traveled with them all around the country. We organized an umbrella organization. I was involved in the creation of the country's mediation law, then in the management of the mediation council, a body created to implement the law and regulate the profession.

I'm still managing that same mediation center (I started out at in the beginning). We are now fully sustainable for several years into the future. We create services for mediators and public awareness programs around the country. Romania is still in the early phase of turning people's minds toward mediation. You train many people. Some are just curious, some are trying to insert it into their practice. But many are very, very frustrated because there aren't many cases.

What personal traits make you good at what you do:

One of the qualities of mediators is modesty, so I don't know. I guess you have to be a bad person, because you have to take time from your family. You need loads of sense of humor because as days are passing by, you need it as you bump your head against walls.

In what types of situations can you have the biggest impact?

A mediation program must start with the biggest incentive, which is the quality of the people in the program. If you want to start a program, you have to create a good, smart bunch of people, with stakeholders in the group.

We've had more than 1,000 cases in the past few years, mostly referred by the courts. As people start to feel this profession, they will feel dedicated to the program. They will be the ones out there speaking about the profession. They will be the core team.

In the US, a good part of the market is taken away from the free market and managed by the state and not in a professional way. You can get mediation for free or basically peanuts.

What we did in Romania was try to create a professional system. Our center was opened by the court, but all the mediators have their own business, they are private, and they can mediate pro bono when parties can't afford mediation. But we try to create the idea that mediation is a professional service that doesn't come for free. For the first few years when we mediated for free we found people took us more seriously when we started charging them. If people put up money, they will want something in return. The good news is that what I'm saying looks good on

paper. The bad news is that the cases aren't flooding in.

What kind of people will the field need in the next 5-10 years.

All sorts of people. You need them all. For our country, we are creating a profession. The future of this profession is the quality of the people in it. You need people who took very good training courses, but people from many facets of the society - you need a good cocktail of people.

You need a good bunch of people who will be able to lift the weight and move it forward. You need energetic people and people who will do it in good faith. You have to be promoting the profession, not yourself. It doesn't matter whether they are lawyers or teachers or whatever.



How do you describe your work (the cocktail party version)?

When I'm talking personally, I describe myself as a peacemaker and a peace-builder. I talk about being part of a community of people around the world who are dedicated to building peace. When you stand for peace in the middle of a conflict, it is a very brave thing to do. If I'm going deeper (in a different setting), I talk about myself transforming conflict. I talk about how our knee-jerk reaction to conflict is violence, and my job is helping to find a different path forward.

What personal traits make you good at what you do?

We need to be profoundly connected to the conflicts and the people with whom we engage. I remember when I was first involved in this work in South Africa in the 1980s, the literature said you needed to be neutral. I soon came to the realization that it is not possible for us as human beings to be neutral. You are always an advocate for something. I realized that we became advocates for a process.

I will be present with everybody. I have sat with people on one side and cried about the pain inflicted by the other side, then sat with the other side and cried with them about their pain. It shows that I am a human being, too. I've made my commitment to be present with them, and to resolve the conflict with them.

In what situations can you & Search for Common Ground have the greatest impact?

At Search, we're organizers - a word that has a whole new cadence since Obama came on the scene. We are social entrepreneurs; we are able to create and co-create the possibility and the structure in which people can find a way to work through the conflict and find a way to transform it. As a senior person in the organization, I feel that my social entrepreneurial piece of seeding and creating, like what I've done with the *Leadership Wisdom Initiative*, is a big part of what I do. I'm in a guidance role; I want to bring people in. On the personal level, I've more and more moved into working one-on-one or in groups in a very deep way, beyond positions and interests, to find where people really are, a deeper place. I'm 60 years old, I've claimed my elderhood and I love it. As an elder, with years of experience and the relationships I've built, I feel that I am able to step into that place. For me it is the greatest privilege when people allow me to step in with them.

What changes have you seen in the field in recent years?

I see more people engaging in it. More and more people at local levels and national levels, coming from different sectors of society, adding peace building to what they already. I was in Kenya recently and met with a lot of peacemakers. Peace building permeates that society right down to the local level. People are seeing that violence in the community destroys everything. This rise of people who are now calling themselves peacekeepers is exponential. I love it.

What kind of people does the field need going forward?

When I started in this field there was a little university work, and now it has become a field. One of the things I see today is a split in the field between a technical approach and a transformative approach. You need both, but unless you are connecting with the people you are with, it's not going to work. It's about a sense of us being present with our full humanity. There is a spiritual element in this too, coming from that deep place inside all of us, bringing love and compassion. When we do that, we change the room, we change the situation. This is a key piece of something we need to be working on. It concerns me that we've become quite technical, without the transformative piece. Without the deeper soul piece, without the common humanity, we're losing something and reducing our effectiveness.

In what area would you like to see the field grow?

I would like to see much more institutional transformation - security forces, multilaterals, the UN, and within the institutions of society. We are not engaged enough at those levels. There seems to be a sense of hard power and soft power, with the "hard power" being what works. The new word being coined now is smart power, and I like that a lot. I worked a lot with the security forces in South Africa, because I knew that society wasn't going to change without the transformation of the security forces, particularly the police. During the transition, the Police Force became the Police Service, and the doctrine of community policing came in. Bringing ourselves into the middle of it was one of the most important pieces of making it happen. We should be putting much more effort into this area. We are often preaching to the choir.

Q & A

with

Susan Collin
Marks

Q & A

with

Hrair Balain

How do you describe your work (the cocktail party version)?

Well, it's one step forward and three steps back. Once in a while I hope for three steps forward and one step back. It's thrilling and rewarding, but also extremely frustrating.

I'm part lawyer, part psychologist, part politician. We're trying to see if there is any value we can add to everything else that is already happening out there to mitigate conflict or resolve conflict. It's a very sexy, crowded field. We bring parties together for talks, prepare the ground for other more official discussions and dialogue, and try to seed points of discussion.

In what situations can you and Search for Common Ground have the greatest impact?

President Carter has tremendous moral authority in many parts of the world. He has long-standing relationships with world leaders. People listen to him, people have time for him, people rearrange their schedules for him. And the center itself has standing with many people that allows us to open doors.

We are trying to develop certain expertise for which the Carter center is known. Election monitoring, state building and long-term peace building are areas where the Carter Center has been working for many years. Now we're trying to develop expertise in post-election dispute resolution and border disputes. We want to be known for our expertise in these areas.

What kind of people does the field need going forward?

People who are able to be honest brokers, people who do not prioritize whatever particular interest that they have over the common interest of building peace. People like President Barack Obama, who presents the best chance for peace in the Middle East because he's presenting himself as an honest broker.

We were involved in Nepal, where one side of the international community, headed by the US, was refusing to talk to the Maoists. We need people who can talk to all sides, as "evil" as you might think them to be. You can't make peace with your friends.



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Do you have an idea or a story for our next issue?

Please send them or call us.



(Message from Kathleen Coogan con't. from page 2)

... The Programs Committee put together an impressive program for this year's Conference! We teamed up for the first time with the Commercial Section to offer International Day participants the opportunity to attend the second afternoon of the Advanced Commercial Mediation Institute (ACMI). We are fortunate again to have the support of several volunteer interpreters this year during the Conference – and to them we extend our gratitude!

We have worked closely with many of the liaisons from the Sections and Ethics Liaison Committee, particularly with our Commercial Section liaisons, with whom we are planning the first in what we hope to become a series of teleseminars. We are also speaking with our Community Section liaison about a joint teleseminar and we have begun working more closely with our Environment and Public Policy Liaison in publicizing events and exchanging information.

We designed a new fundraising structure that was open primarily to International Section members and were delighted with the response. The generosity of our funders allowed us to cover, for example, the travel and lodging for our IDC awardees as well as refreshments for the conference. We were delighted and look forward

As I pass the baton to David, I look forward to continuing to work together with many of you, to strengthen our global network of CR practitioners and raise the voice with which we advocate for effective peaceful processes to resolve problems.

Warm Regards, Kathleen Coogan