



IICBS

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNITY BASED SOCIO THERAPY



Annual Report 2021

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Message from the Supervisory Board

We have the pleasure to present the Annual Report of the International Institute for Community Based Sociotherapy (IICBS). Established in 2019, the first two years of IICBS coincided with the turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted communities all over the world. The pandemic still had an influence on the activities of IICBS in 2021, as initiated projects started with some delay and COVID-19 measures had to be applied during the implementation of the different training activities. However, despite the pandemic related challenges, IICBS started several exciting projects, that are contributing substantially to the overall mission of the organization. The community-based sociotherapy approach also proved to be a very appropriate method to contribute to the psychosocial well-being of community members in times of COVID-19 related travel restrictions, as the approach is implemented at community level, by community members. In addition to that, coping with the devastating impact of the pandemic, led to new challenges in many communities and a clear correlation between the declining mental health and increase in social and economic distress has been observed. COVID-19 therefore showed the importance for community members to be able to have access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in their neighborhoods.

As Supervisory Board, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to all our funders for their financial support and their belief in the relevance of extending community-based sociotherapy to different parts in the world. A special thanks to our partners and members worldwide for the impactful work they are doing in their respective communities and their dedication to the partnership with IICBS. Last, but not least, we would like to thank our volunteers who enthusiastically committed their time to the work of IICBS. Without their passion and efforts, IICBS would not be at the point where we are now.

As 2022 settles in, we recommit to further our work with various organizations working in the MHPSS and Peacebuilding domain. We look forward to a new year full of inspiring encounters across the globe and new partnerships to enlarge the access to community-based mental health and psychosocial support services.

On behalf of the Supervisory Board,



Carolien Grootendorst

Our vision and mission

The **vision** of the International Institute for Community Based Sociotherapy is that people whose lives have been disrupted by war, violence, natural disasters, or other daily stress factors have the ability to live their lives in peace and to have meaningful relationships in their social environment.

The **mission** of the International Institute for Community Based Sociotherapy is to contribute to the psychosocial well-being of people living in areas that are disrupted by humanitarian crises, by providing access to community-based sociotherapy: a methodology based on group dynamics that strengthens and restores feelings of safety, trust, and dignity and contributes to social cohesion in the community.



Rationale of IICBS

With the increasing interest in CBS worldwide, demand arose for an organization that could act as a knowledge institute, offering support to organizations that implement, or want to implement CBS. To enable this, IICBS was established aiming at building a network and knowledge institute for community-based sociotherapy professionals, and organizations that are interested in implementing community-based sociotherapy using set quality standards.

What we do

The institute provides support to organizations worldwide on training of sociotherapy facilitators and trainers, program and project development, contextualization of the approach, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation and research about the effects of CBS. IICBS also serves as a network for knowledge exchange, of which different organizations implementing CBS can become partners. IICBS works according to the quality criteria laid down in the Handbook *Training in Community-based Sociotherapy* of Cora Dekker (2018).

As a **Center of Expertise**, IICBS tries to reach its objectives through the following strategies:

- 🏠 Developing and promoting quality standards and organizational systems based on the philosophy of CBS.
- 🏠 Facilitating access to a database of training manuals, CBS guidelines, research reports and other relevant documentation.
- 🏠 Facilitate a network and database of CBS professionals.
- 🏠 Facilitate training for trainers and facilitators in facilitating the CBS method.
- 🏠 Supporting partners worldwide in project design, fundraising, implementation, monitoring & evaluation of CBS projects and research.

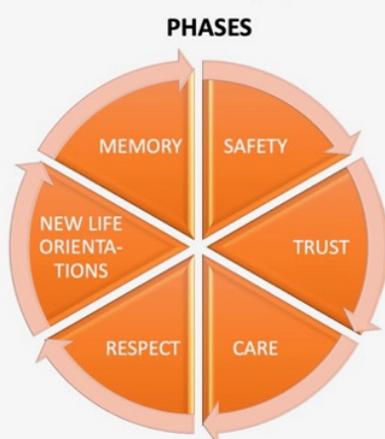


The community-based sociotherapy approach

Community-based sociotherapy (CBS) is a psychosocial methodology aiming at restoring and strengthening safety, trust, dignity and social cohesion in societies affected by violent conflicts or natural disasters. CBS is a method that is carried out in groups of 10-15 people who voluntarily participate, facilitated by two trained facilitators. The facilitators, who guide the groups, are selected based on selection criteria. The facilitators originate from the communities where the methodology is applied, therefore they have a profound understanding of the cultural sensitivities in this area. The CBS cycle lasts 15 weeks, during which the group goes through six phases: safety, trust, care, respect, new life orientations, and processing emotional memories. The method is based on seven principles that recur throughout the 15 weeks in all exercises and steps that the group makes. The seven principles are: equality, democracy, participation, responsibility, here and now, learning by doing, and inter-est.

The community-based sociotherapy method was developed by Cora Dekker in co-creation with the team of the Anglican Church of Rwanda, Byumba Diocese. CBS was implemented in Rwanda for the first time in 2005. Since then, the method has been implemented, adapted and evaluated in various regions in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Uganda. The methodology and results are further elaborated in her dissertation that was published (Cora Dekker (2016), *Terugvinden van waardigheid*, Amsterdam).

The sociotherapy methodology



1. Inter-est (Hannah Arendt)
2. Equality
3. Democracy
4. Here and Now
5. Responsibility
6. Participation
7. Learning by Doing

Different methods and techniques: Facilitation skills, active listening, relax and refocus, games, energizers, songs, cultural expressions etc.

It is a process of bringing together invited 12-15 participants for a journey of 15 sociotherapy-sessions/once a week - 3 hours per week.

Aim of community-based sociotherapy

Community-based sociotherapy contributes to the psychosocial wellbeing of people whose lives are affected by conflict, war and/or natural disaster. It facilitates processes of healing, interpersonal reconciliation and social cohesion (psychosocial peacebuilding).

The group is used as a therapeutic medium to establish:

- Safe environment for discussion and participation
- Trust building
- Peer support structures and building relationships
- Increase of problem solving capacity within the social fabric
- The discovery of meaningful perspectives again



1. Introduction

This Annual Report will present an overview of activities conducted by the International Institute for Community Based Sociotherapy (IICBS) in 2021, some preliminary outputs and it will present the key organizational objectives for 2022.

With mental health and psychosocial well-being gaining more recognition worldwide as a core component of general well-being, global interest in an approach like community-based sociotherapy (CBS) is growing increasingly. In 2021, IICBS has received multiple requests to train community members and staff of organizations in the CBS approach. In this year, this has led to signing three contracts with organizations that wish to implement CBS in the communities where they work. As part of these projects, IICBS worked in Liberia, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Activities in these countries were implemented in partnership with members of IICBS: Africa Restoring Bridges Initiative (ARBI, Democratic Republic of Congo DRC), Community Based Sociotherapy Rwanda (CBS Rwanda) and, Paix et Développement Durable (PDD, DRC). Apart from these three member organizations, IICBS has a fourth member organization, which is Duhumurizanye Iwacu Rwanda (DIR). In 2021, IICBS also started cooperating with these four organizations and the Anglican Church of Rwanda, Byumba Diocese (E.A.R. Byumba) and Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) in the development of an implementation guidance for community-based sociotherapy.

In 2021, IICBS invested in knowledge exchange by participating in the Dutch MHPSS platform facilitated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and presenting about CBS at the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT). In terms of organizational development, IICBS officially invited organizations that implement CBS to become a member of the organization and therefore the platform is now established. In addition to that, IICBS started a partnership with 'De Nieuwe Gevers', which is a platform for skill-based volunteers. IICBS started to work with professional advisors who provide support on financial management and administration, legal matters and communication and visibility. The annual report will elaborate on all these developments more in depth.



2. Organizational development

2.1 The establishment of the network of organizations implementing CBS

In 2021 IICBS established the network of organizations implementing CBS in different countries. At the moment four organizations are member of the IICBS network and we are expecting an expansion of the network in 2022.

Initial steps taken to establish the network:

- ⊕ IICBS developed a network structure and has set the criteria for membership that will be of mutual benefit.
- ⊕ The terms of references for the technical committee members of IICBS was drafted.
- ⊕ Organizations implementing community-based sociotherapy were formally invited to become a partner in the network and have a representative in the technical committee.

Purpose of the network:

The collaboration through the network aims at the quality enhancement of community-based sociotherapy in current and future projects and the expansion of the approach to different communities and countries where CBS can be impactful.

IICBS and member organizations generally agree to:

- a) Work together towards a harmonized community based sociotherapy approach, which is aiming at restoring and strengthening safety, trust, dignity and social cohesion in societies affected by traumatic events.
- b) Commit to the enhancement of the work of the other party in the development and implementation of community-based sociotherapy projects.
- c) Contribute to the visibility of the other party and the IICBS network in general.
- d) Work together on the establishment of a database which provides access to CBS documentation including guiding CBS documents, manuals, (research) reports, and an overview of CBS professionals including trainers, researchers and coordination experts.
- e) Work together to mobilize the international community to integrate mental health and psychosocial services and peacebuilding approaches (such as CBS) and make funding available for implementation.
- f) Ensure transparent and effective inter-organizational communication.
- g) Act independently and effectively towards common objectives, as separates entities, and will each respect and follow their respective operational, legal or constitutional documents governing each party.

Partnership terms

- ⊕ Partnership is renewable on an annual basis based on the satisfaction of both organizations (IICBS and the member organization);
- ⊕ A declaration of intent for joint cooperation will be developed, outlining the terms of the cooperation;

- ⊕ As part of the partnership, one focal point will be identified at the organization to whom the official communication will be addressed;
- ⊕ Each partner of the IICBS network has the right to assign one employee to the voluntary Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Requirement to become a partner of the IICBS network

- ⊕ Implemented community-based sociotherapy based on the philosophy as described in the Handbook of Cora Dekker (2018): *Handbook training in community-based sociotherapy: experiences in Rwanda, East Congo and Liberia*, African Studies Centre Leiden.

Current services offered to a member organization

- ⊕ Exchange of knowledge, experiences and skills between sociotherapy trainers and implementers from different member organizations;
- ⊕ Have a representative in the technical advisory committee;
- ⊕ Provide, upon request of the organization, support in design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of CBS projects;
- ⊕ Provide consultancy possibilities in different contexts worldwide to the organization's staff in case an opportunity arises;
- ⊕ Reference to the member organization and its website on the IICBS website;
- ⊕ Increase the visibility of the member organization through social media;
- ⊕ Reception of the IICBS Newsletter.

Potential future services to be offered to a member organization

- ⊕ Participation in linking and learning workshops;
- ⊕ Participate in the co-development of the quality standards for sociotherapy, CBS guidelines, manuals, research reports and other relevant documentation to which the organization contributed;
- ⊕ Receive access to the database of training materials and other documentation;
- ⊕ Become part of setting up an accreditation system and receive accreditation as an organization.

2.2. Technical Advisory Committee

With the aim of facilitating linking and learning processes and developing quality standards that are shared by organizations operating in different contexts, IICBS established a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This committee provides advice to IICBS and consists of staff members of the organizations that are member of the IICBS network, and additional technical advisors who are invited upon the invitation of IICBS. Based on the total number of advisors, IICBS will decide to set up different separate committees focusing on different areas of expertise. Members of the TAC who contributed to the development of certain documents, will be co-owner of the documents together with their respective organizations.

Terms for advisors

- ⊕ Each member organization of the IICBS network assigns one staff member to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) who fulfils the criteria as mentioned below;

- ✦ It is a voluntary position;
- ✦ Online meetings will be conducted with the TAC Advisors;
- ✦ Any publication or documentation developed to which the TAC advisor has contributed will be co-owned by the respective advisor and their organization.

Criteria to become a member of the Technical Advisory Committee

- ✦ Minimum of five-years' experience in the direct implementation of community-based sociotherapy;
- ✦ Having experience in facilitating community-based sociotherapy trainings, or extensive experience in one of the other areas of expertise like setting up monitoring and evaluation systems for the approach.

Initial activities

- ✦ Provide advice on the design of the future cooperation between IICBS and the members of the network, to ensure a mutually benefitting partnership;
- ✦ Provide methodological advice to enhance quality assurance guidelines and co-develop quality standards that will be co-owned by the organizations.
- ✦ Co-develop with all TAC advisors and organizations that are partner of the network mutual guidelines and quality standards for CBS implementation.
- ✦ Provide advice on potential procedures on certification of trainers/organizations and the development of an accreditation system.

2.3 The IICBS network

In 2021, four organizations have become a member of the IICBS network. These organizations include: 1) African Bridges Restoring Initiative (ARBI - DRC), 2) Community Based Sociotherapy Rwanda (CBS Rwanda), 3) Duhumurizanye Iwacu Rwanda (DIR), and 4) Paix et Développement Durable (PDD).



ARBI is a Non-Governmental Organisation created in Goma by motivated humanitarians passionate about healing, conflict transformation, peace building and integral development of communities affected by identity-based conflicts. The organisation was founded since 2011 in response to the successive wars linked to the conflictual challenges in the East of DR Congo.

ARBI equips members of target communities to become active citizens who can define and take charge of their integral development. ARBI is an NGO dedicated to positive conflict transformation to break the cycle of ethnic violence and leave a new legacy for the next generation.



The Rwandan NGO Community Based Sociotherapy Rwanda (CBS Rwanda) has been registered in 2016. CBS Rwanda aims at consolidating and sustaining what has been achieved by the consortium Community Based Sociotherapy Program 2013-2016 (CBSP), while extending the community-based sociotherapy approach to other areas in Rwanda.

The NGO has invested much in localizing research on topics relevant in the context of community-based sociotherapy and works with numerous CBS professionals including trainers and supervisors.



Duhumurizanye Iwacu Rwanda (English: *Comfort each other in one's neighborhood*) is a Rwandan non-governmental organization, whose main focus is to implement community-based sociotherapy in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. The NGO was created in 2011 by sociotherapy facilitators who had been trained in 2008 by Cora Dekker in partnership with the NGO Faith Victory Association.

The organization has the vision to contribute to building Rwandan communities which are united, peaceful and where there is equitable distribution of resources for the well-being of all.



**Dignité humaine via
sociothérapie**

PDD was established in DR Congo in 2014. The NGO was initiated by community-based sociotherapists that were trained in 2007 on the community-based sociotherapy approach and continued to implement the approach in their communities in South Kivu.

The expertise of PDD lies in the ability to facilitate community mobilization, civic participation and promoting horizontal democracy whereby community members are able to raise their voices and advocate for changes in their community.

2.4 Partnership with “De nieuwe gevers”

In 2021, IICBS also started a partnership with “De nieuwe gevers” (denieuwegevers.nl). Through this partnership, IICBS will engage with professionals who will voluntarily support the organization with their skills and expertise. IICBS will publish requests on the website of De nieuwe gevers for professionals in the following domains:

- ⊕ Legal and judicial advice (e.g. contract review and development);
- ⊕ Financial management and administration;
- ⊕ Communication strategy;
- ⊕ Visibility and promotion of community-based sociotherapy.



de
nieuwe
gevers

2.5 Knowledge exchange

IICBS participated at multiple fora, presenting about the implementation community-based sociotherapy in different contexts. The overall goal was to exchange knowledge and expertise with other organizations and academicians working in, or studying, (post-)conflict or disaster affected areas.

HRFT symposium

On the 19th of June 2021, IICBS and CBS Rwanda presented about the CBS approach during a symposium organized by the Human Rights Association and the Turkish Medical Association, the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT). This is an internationally recognized human rights organization with the main aims of providing treatment and rehabilitation for torture survivors, strengthening accountability of perpetrators, and contributing to the prevention of torture in Turkey.

The meeting took place in Diyarbakir, located in the conflict-affected region (Eastern and Southeastern-Turkey). The aim of the symposium was to create an open discussion environment, to collectively *make sense* of the traumatic experiences resulting from human rights violations in the region in the recent period, and to *contribute to reparation processes*, in rehabilitation, truth and justice, and prevention perspectives, and to elaborate together on concrete steps that can be taken by civil society actors in the following period. IICBS and CBS Rwanda shared experiences, lessons learned and good practices regarding implementation of community-based sociotherapy in different contexts.

MHPSS platform

Throughout 2021, several platform meetings were organized by the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) group moderated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this platform organizations take part that are active in the field of MHPSS. IICBS participated in all the meetings, and it led to several conversations with organizations interested in the community-based sociotherapy approach.

3. Project implementation

In 2021, IICBS became a partner in three different projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia, Liberia and Uganda. In this section we will elaborate on these projects and the results so far.

3.1 “Promoting stability and strengthening basic service delivery for host communities, refugees and other displaced population in Gambella Regional State (GRS) of Ethiopia”

In Ethiopia, IICBS is contributing to the promotion of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and reconciliation in Gambella Regional State (GRS) by supporting ZOA in the development and implementation of the community-based sociotherapy activities in the Gambella region. By doing so, IICBS will contribute to the following project outcomes:

- ⊕ Extended and improved social cohesion and peacebuilding approach in the targeted areas;
- ⊕ Tensions between local communities and between refugees and host communities are reduced.

In 2021, during the first stage of the project, IICBS conducted an inception visit in partnership with CBS Rwanda to shape and adapt the activities, and thereafter provided a 15-day basic training on community-based sociotherapy.

Inception visit

The inception period of 11 days (08-18 July 2021) was an opportunity to meet staff at the ZOA head office in Addis Ababa, staff in Gambella office, communities’ leaders and facilitators. The objectives of the inception were:

- Supporting staff in the preparation of the training and help them for a better understanding on the intervention in general;
- Understanding the project context, its realities and challenges;
- Mapping the community issues and the existing mechanisms to address them;
- Ensuring that local leaders feel the ownership of the sociotherapy process.



Meetings with community leaders and facilitators

During the field visits, the consultants and staff discussed with the local leaders and the facilitators that were selected by the leaders, on their impression on the project, their commitment, community issues and the existing mechanisms to address them.

Basic training

Two groups, each consisting of twelve facilitators (total twenty-four), and one ZOA staff member were trained in a period of six weeks (three weeks per group). Each group was composed of host community and refugee people of Nuer, Anywaa and Amharic speakers. The training covered the phases and principles of sociotherapy, including Types of Families, Johari Window, Change and Transition, Emotions and Behavior, while applying different facilitations skills and relax and refocus exercises for learning purposes and to keep facilitators engaged.



Group A



Group B



Experiencing surprises at the “walking blind”



3.2 “Peacebuilding and Reconciliation through Community Dialogues II in Liberia”

The Peacebuilding and Reconciliation through Community Dialogues II (PRCD II) project is implemented in Liberia by ZOA in partnership with YMCA. The overall objective of the project is “*Strengthened conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives at community and county level*”, whereas the project has the following specific objective: “*Strengthened social cohesion and civic trust within and between communities and between population and local government in five counties*”. The project is implemented in five counties in Liberia:

1. Lofa (Zorzor)
2. Montserrado (Monrovia)
3. Margibi (Unification Town and Kakata)
4. Nimba (Ganta and Yekepa)
5. Grand Cape Mount (Robertsport and Sinje)

IICBS contributes towards the objectives of PRCD II by providing training and support to the ZOA and YMCA Peacebuilding team in the implementation of CBS in Liberia. Through the implementation of Community Based Sociotherapy (CBS), bottom-up approaches in which project participants increase their self-awareness, learn more positive behaviors and are able to meaningfully connect to each other, this project contributes to strengthening peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation at local level. Contributions at national level mainly focus on advocacy and adoption of successful approaches by relevant actors in the Peacebuilding and MHPSS sector, and on the institutionalization of CBS. Community-based methodologies are implemented for building peace, achieving social cohesion and civic engagement, and to establish civic trust. In this project, CBS is used as a methodology and tool across the project outcomes to establish trust, create safe spaces, contribute to meaningful and peaceful relations, foster dialogue and open communication, and enhance good governance principles, including transparency, accountability, participation and inclusion.

The project PRCD II has five expected outcomes:

1. Improved psychosocial well-being and enhanced interpersonal relations within families and the community;
2. Local leaders and government officials adhere to and act upon good governance principles;
3. Improved civic participation and positive engagement with local government
4. A peaceful and safe school environment is established for students to reach their full potential;
5. Increased capacity of YMCA to independently implement similar projects.

In 2021, IICBS provided technical expertise and other requested support under Outcome 1, 2, 4 and 5 and delivered the following outputs:

1. Provide technical support to two selected trainers to deliver training for eight additional trainers;
2. Provide support to the CBS Trainers on the establishment of local CBS organization;

3. Deliver a Training of Trainers (ToT) for eight CBS Trainers on CBS for leaders and officials (eight days);
4. Develop a training module of CBS for leaders and government officials;
5. Provide advice to YMCA staff on the integration of CBS in the peace club methodology
6. Workshop / brainstorm sessions with YMCA management and representative of trainers on institutionalization of CBS;
7. Support YMCA in the development of a concrete action plan for the institutionalization of CBS.

The five-day ToT in Kakata for the eight trainers was also attended by a staff from ZOA and a staff member of YMCA. The objective of this training was to prepare the trainers for an eight-day CBS introduction training for government officials and local leaders. The training was very interactive with lots of input from all participants. After the training, IICBS developed a guideline with the input from the trainers and staff acquired during this training. The guidelines have been shared with the Peacebuilding team.



Brainstorming on the content of the training

YMCA has indicated to have interest to become a partner of IICBS. IICBS can assist in developing proposals so that surprises in the implementation will be minimized and the quality of the program can be maintained. This will be further discussed in online meetings and in the next visit that is planned in Quarter three of 2022.



3.3. Community-based sociotherapy in Ugandan Refugee settings

TPO Uganda is currently implementing a project with support from UNHCR to provide Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) interventions for Refugees and Asylum seekers in West Nile and South West in Uganda. One of the approaches that has been fronted by TPO Uganda and UNHCR in their current PPA is Community-Based Sociotherapy (CBS), to be implemented in the three refugee settlements of Nakivale, Rhino Camp and Imvepi.

IICBS has been selected to partner with TPO with the overall objective to train and equip 60 community members from Nakivale, Rhino and Imvepi as community-based sociotherapy facilitators and build the capacity of (at least four) TPO Uganda staff as supervisors in the

CBS approach. Ultimately this will also lead to a group of 16 future trainers, who can be national staff and refugees.

The inception period took place in November 2021 was conducted in partnership with ARBI and was an opportunity to meet the TPO staff at the headquarter in Kampala and field staff and relevant stakeholders in Rhino Camp and Imvepi settlements and Arua.

The objectives of the inception phase were:

- Further explaining the CBS approach to stakeholders to gain support in the implementation;
- Defining the area of intervention in consultation with the commandants of the Prime Minister Office (PMO), UNHCR and TPO;
- Understanding the project and community context, its realities and challenges;
- Support staff in the recruitment of facilitator trainees;
- Support staff in the preparation of the training arrangements.



Meeting the Refugee Welfare Committee and TPO field staff in Imvepi



Meeting the TPO field staff at basecamp Rhino Camp settlement

4. Looking Ahead

Organizational objectives for 2022



5. Conclusion

The year 2021 has still been characterized by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and its related consequences. One of the consequences of the pandemic is that the demand for mental health and psychosocial support services has significantly increased, due to the psychological, social and economic setback many people experienced in their lives. Fortunately, IICBS was able to implement its planned activities in 2021, and started different partnerships with organizations that already implemented, or were interested to implement community-based sociotherapy, including ZOA Liberia, ZOA Ethiopia and TPO Uganda. IICBS worked together with two of its member organizations in 2021, ARBI and CBS Rwanda, to implement the activities in these three countries.

As we move forward, IICBS aims at strengthening the partnership and knowledge exchange with member organizations and expanding its network. In this coming year we will focus on more improving our organizational structure and governance and increasing IICBS' and member organizations' visibility. We will also actively engage in different platforms that focus on MHPSS and Peacebuilding and strongly advocate for its integration. Apart from that, we are committed to contribute to the movements related to locally-led development, "shifting/transforming the power" and localization of research. We believe in the wisdom of the group, and remain dedicated to bring this to the forefront.



"By joining our hands and efforts we are hoping to contribute to more peaceful communities."