

## Building a world community

# mondial

*Published by the World Federalist Movement, a non-governmental organization that advocates more just and effective global governance through the application of the principles of democratic federalism to world affairs.*

VOL.1, ISSUE 1  
JUNE, 2017

### Inter-community problem-solving for trust building: Subsidiarity in practice

*The following is based on excerpts from remarks by Scott Cooper at the WFMCanada Montreal AGM, April 27, 2017*

#### TRACK III DIPLOMACY AND LOCAL PROBLEM-SOLVING

It may be challenging to think of high-level World Federalist principles such as subsidiarity, global citizenship and respect for international institutions having direct application at the local level so I will try to re-phrase the approach in the terminology of diplomacy. State-to-state diplomacy is also known as Track I diplomacy. Track II diplomacy consists of the formal diplomatic actions of non-government organisations. Track 3 diplomacy is individual problem-solving initiatives at the grassroots level, under conditions of conflict or potential conflict. My thesis is that Track III diplomacy is a critical component in change management and trustbuilding at the community level, and can be seen in many day to day examples of locally-initiated problem-solving. Also, I suggest that all three tracks are different, important, and need to work together over the longer term if we are to move progressively and globally towards a greater sense of world community.

In the mid 1990s I had just finished a mid-career Master's degree and my wife had just finished a Teacher of Adults certificate to complement her business degree and we were both ready again for employment.

We were recruited as a couple to work in a remote indigenous community in the Northwest Territories: she as Business Manager and I as Community Manager reporting to Chief and Council. The Chief assigned a cultural interpreter to me who helped me interview most of the elders in the community in my first few weeks to get a broad sense of the community's needs and history.

In our minds, a part of our role was to look at capacity building within the community so as to diminish the need to recruit "outsiders." One expressed need that struck me as significant but hopeless in the minds of the community was the absence of a high school program - meaning that young people had to move to Inuvik, some distance away, for high school. The local problem: an unacceptable drop-out rate for high school students from the community.

With all of this in mind, I drafted a letter from the Chief to the Minister of Education explaining why the government, through its Regional Board of Education, should implement a high school program in

the community. I don't remember the details, but we implied that the community might consider doing this independently if the government did not act (surprisingly, at the time the community had qualified high school teachers available). In addition, I supported and encouraged community leaders to continue lobbying efforts for a high school program. We heard nothing for months.

It was over two years later, after we had left the North, when we learned that a new school would be built incorporating both the existing elementary school with the addition of high school programming.

### SUBSIDIARITY NEEDED FOR TRACK III DIPLOMACY

As Hanna Newcombe, two-time President of World Federalist Movement - Canada, described it, subsidiarity is meant to “de-emphasize the national level of decision-making and drain power from it in 2 directions: downward to the people at the community level and upward to the whole of humanity everywhere.” (This quote is from the WFM-C document Principles, Programs, Opportunities.)

In many cases I studied, Track III diplomatic problem-solving can occur when an ‘outsider’ enjoys considerable professional autonomy in a locally oriented specialized job in a relatively small, isolated community. This positive result of subsidiarity holds across sectors as diverse as eco-tourism, organized religion, sports, education, and small business. In each case I examined, an experienced specialist recognized a compelling problem. No-one else was going to take on the problem because it was patently obvious that there was no one else.

In my own case, my recent mid-career job experiences had been as an adjunct professor of organizational behavior, as an adult educator in Kingston-area prisons, and as a supply teacher in a relatively disadvantaged school board in rural Ontario. I was well primed to try to respond to an educational problem, should one present itself.

### SUBSIDIARITY NEEDED FOR BETTER CONSULTATION

In the absence of systematic structures to support Track III diplomacy, much consultation is left to: expediencies of the political process and the limitations of media, think tanks, public opinion polls, and bureaucratic initiatives. Systematic and timely consultation for local problem solving in Canada is seriously under-developed. Those mature professionals who might potentially take on Track III roles are, in general, discouraged by the lack of meaningful opportunities to personally engage on the issues on an inter-community basis.

The goal of consultation should be better policy coordination and consensus-building across jurisdictions and across professional roles, with an eye to empowering highly autonomous front-line workers in Type III diplomatic roles. Perhaps we need to develop a network of well resourced, non-partisan consultations, that would induce more Track III subsidiarity, like the one used annually by the UN Permanent Forum on

#### Indigenous Issues:

1200 delegates meet for two weeks during which each participant has at least a brief opportunity to speak to the whole Forum, and each meets with many sub-groups to share insights, solutions and strategies.

Building local level trust across sub-communities both confirms the concept of world community and

teaches us how to attain it.

Documents, links, and other items referenced in the June 2017 issue of Mondial are available at <http://www.wfmcanada.org/mondial-links-june-2017/>