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## PROFILE

# The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy

U.S. Ambassador John W. McDonald, ret.

### ■ Abstract

The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1992 by Ambassador John W. McDonald and Dr. Louise Diamond. The mission of IMTD is to promote a systems-based approach to peacebuilding and to facilitate the transformation of deep-rooted social conflict through education, conflict resolution training and communication.

### ■ Keywords

diplomacy, multi-track, peacebuilding, education, training

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, based in Arlington, Virginia, USA, was established in May 1992 as a small, not-for-profit, non-governmental organization with the aim of promoting a systems-based approach to peacebuilding and to facilitate the transformation of deep-rooted social conflict. The Institute has more than 1,500 members in 35 countries and is supported by a wide range of key personnel, associates and interns.

The Institute is focused on identifying and understanding the causes of conflict within a nation. IMTD promotes the breaking down of stereotypes and other barriers to peace by providing conflicting groups with the following skills:

- 1) Transforming the view/perception of the adversary
- 2) Developing mutual understanding between conflicting parties
- 3) Building trust between adversaries
- 4) Reconciling past grievances
- 5) Negotiation
- 6) Creating cultural awareness

Aside from providing skills, IMTD's goal is to touch the heart of the participants, making them realize that the enemy is also a human being, with the same hopes and fears that they have. Once that is realized, IMTD begins to make true progress in peacebuilding.

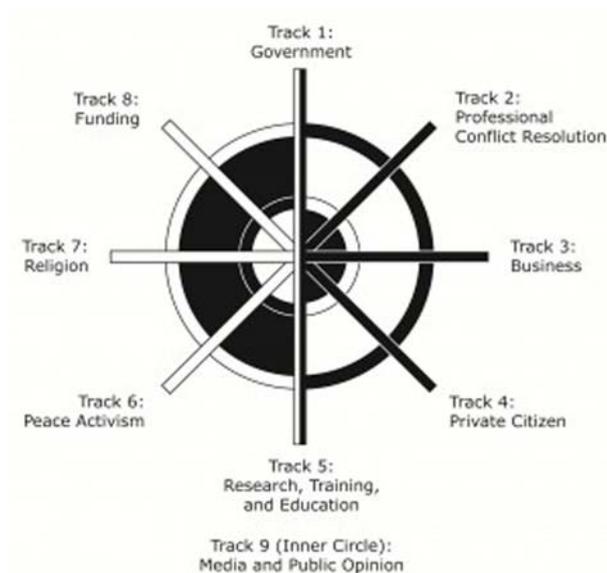
Since 1992, IMTD has had 285 interns from 65 countries, all getting their Masters or PhDs in Conflict Resolution. None of them have been paid, and all have become Program Managers, with responsibility for a particular project. When funds are available, they are members of the training team that participate in training overseas.

IMTD has also taught Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding for the last twelve semesters at the U.S. National Defense University, in Washington, D.C. The goal of the course is to teach the participants that



there are other ways than the gun to solve conflict. When our twelfth semester ends in December 2012 we will have graduated 180 participants from 53 countries, 98 of the 180 graduates are non-American.

## THE MULTI-TRACK SYSTEM



IMTD logo identifies nine tracks

The idea of multi-track diplomacy evolved over a period of years. In 1981 Joseph Montville wrote an article on foreign affairs, creating the concept of track one and track two. In 1985 Ambassador John W. McDonald wrote the first book entitled *Conflict Resolution: Track Two Diplomacy*, which was published by the State Department in 1987. In 1989, McDonald wrote a chapter in the book expanding the two tracks to five tracks, and in 1991, McDonald and Dr. Louise Diamond published the book *Multi-Track Diplomacy, a systems approach to peace*.

The Multi-track diplomacy consists of nine tracks, as follows:

**Track 1 – Government, or Peacemaking through Diplomacy.** This is the world of official diplomacy, policymaking, and peacebuilding as expressed through formal aspects of the governmental process.

**Track 2 – Nongovernment/Professional, or Peacemaking through Conflict Resolution.** This is the realm of professional nongovernmental action attempting to analyze, prevent, resolve, and manage international conflicts by non-state actors.

**Track 3 – Business, or Peacemaking through Commerce.** This is the field of business and its actual and potential effects on peacebuilding through the provision of economic opportunities, international friendship and understanding, informal channels of communication, and support for other peacemaking activities.

**Track 4 – Private Citizen, or Peacemaking through Personal Involvement.** This includes the various ways that individual citizens become involved in peace and development activities through citizen diplomacy, exchange programs, private voluntary organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and special-interest groups.

**Track 5 – Research, Training, and Education, or peacemaking through Learning.** This track includes three related worlds: *research*, as it is connected to university programs, think tanks, and special-interest research centers; *training programs* that seek to provide training in practitioner skills such as negotiation,



mediation, conflict resolution, and third-party facilitation; and *education*, including kindergarten through PhD programs that cover various aspects of global or cross-cultural studies, peace and world order studies, and conflict analysis, management, and resolution.

**Track 6 – Activism, or Peacemaking through Advocacy.** This track covers the field of peace and environmental activism on such issues as disarmament, human rights, social and economic justice, and advocacy of special-interest groups regarding specific governmental policies.

**Track 7 – Religion, or Peacemaking through Faith in action.** This examines the beliefs and peace-oriented actions of spiritual and religious communities and such morality-based movements as pacifism, sanctuary, and nonviolence.

**Track 8 – Funding, or Peacemaking through Providing Resources.** This refers to the funding community – those foundations and individual philanthropists that provide the financial support for many of the activities undertaken by the other tracks.

**Track 9 – Communications and the Media, or Peacemaking through Information.** This is the realm of the voice of the people: how public opinion gets shaped and expressed by the media—print, film, video, radio, electronic systems, the arts.

The system requires all tracks to eventually work together to build a peace process that will last. The transition from track 1 to track 2 is difficult to achieve, becoming one of the main problems the organization has to face.

Another issue is the funding. These days it is especially hard to raise money for peace in the United States. In twenty years, IMTD has never had funding from the U.S. government directly. Funding comes from contributions from members (currently some 1,500, from 35 countries), family foundations and other individuals.

Over the last two decades, IMTD worked for eight years in divided Cyprus, five years in Israel-Palestine, eight years in Bosnia, fifteen years in divided Kashmir, and twenty-two years with the Dali Lama and the Government of Tibet-In-Exile.

IMTD has also worked in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Libya, Cuba, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, and Equatorial Guinea.

## A MULTI-TRACK PROJECT

The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD) has spent nearly 20 years working with the Tibetan Community in Exile, based in Dharamsala, India. Ambassador John McDonald's training programs with Tibetans started in 1990, before IMTD's foundation. Continuing a relationship with the Tibetan Government in Exile was one of IMTD's first initiatives in 1992. Since then, IMTD has conducted 15 annual training workshops with professionals from the Tibetan community on Conflict Resolution, Multi-Track Diplomacy, Mediation, and Forgiveness. We have trained participants from a variety of professional fields coming from Tibetan communities throughout India and the East Coast of the United States.

In August 2011, IMTD continued its rewarding work with the Tibetan refugee community and government in exile, conducting the training in Bangalore, India. This was a landmark event in the Tibet program, as it was the first training session conducted in South India, marking a new initiative to expand the reach of IMTD's work to large Tibetan communities outside of Dharamasala. IMTD's Director of Training, Dr. Eileen Borris, and Program Manager, Mr. Kevin LaFleur, conducted a week-long training course for twenty Tibetan professionals. These included teachers, official representatives of the Tibetan Government in Exile, Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders and monks, and members or staff of Tibetan civil society organizations.

The training is designed to be hands-on and highly interactive, utilizing activities such as group discussions, case studies, role plays, and simulations. Participants also watch and discuss documentaries on



case studies of nonviolent resistance and forgiveness and reconciliation movements as sources of inspiration that can be adapted to the Tibetan Community context. Classes such as Mediation Collaboration, Problem Solving, and Dialogue highlight trust-building skills while in-depth discussion sessions challenge participants to look at how to apply Forgiveness and Reconciliation skills in their community as well as personal and professional lives.

Participant evaluations at the end of the course showed a strong and positive response to the training. Participants were eager to engage in discussions, work together, and to teach others in their communities back home about the information they gained. Dr. Borris and Mr. LaFleur feel that this particular training workshop was especially successful in identifying new needs of the Tibetan communities and in inspiring changed perspectives and continued long-term commitment to multi-track strategies of conflict resolution among participants.

Participants encouraged IMTD to expand the Tibet program and are eager for IMTD to return to South India for more training sessions in the future. After nearly 20 years of success in working with the Tibetan community, we are now exploring what an expanded Tibet program may look like in years to come. ■

### ■ Recommended citation

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