

# The Hamburg TRT<sup>1</sup> Seminar: Storytelling in the service of peace building

Dan Bar-On<sup>2</sup>

---

**Abstract:** The TRT (To Reflect and Trust) approach of bringing together descendants of Holocaust survivors and descendants of Nazi perpetrators was very much inspired by the work of the late Don Schon. Basically, this approach relies on dialogues in which participants share their personal life stories, thereby enabling members of German and Jewish groups reflect on their personal and collective history as victims and victimizers. The present paper describes a new phase of the TRT group, when it brought together, in the framework of the Hamburg seminar, practitioners from South Africa, Northern Ireland and Palestinians and Israelis who work in current conflicts, with victims and victimizers. The question was: Is the TRT process, dealing with a past man-made catastrophe through methods of storytelling, valid for professionals who try to help people move out of current conflicts into peace building?

---

---

[1] TRT (To Reflect and Trust) was the name the group adopted after its fifth seminar in Ein Gedi, Israel, in December 1995. It was adopted after a long discussion in which the group rejected the term *reconciliation* as a concept that, members felt did not represent the group's work. That concept was used by one member of the group during the BBC documentary that was filmed at the second encounter in April 1993. Prior to that the group had no name and perhaps did not feel the need to have one as it did not present itself in public. I would say that also this process was very much in the spirit of Don's generative logic.

[2] Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel