

Chapter 9 Excerpts

In the early 1990s, forces from the Georgian government and the ethnic enclave of South Ossetia (in the north of Georgia) fought a war. By late 1994, the active fighting had stopped, though there was sporadic violence, and it was unsafe to travel across the battle lines. In addition, the two sides were at an impasse in terms of finding a political solution. In 1995, I was part of a team from the Conflict Management Group (CMG) that began a series of informal brainstorming meetings between delegations from Georgia and South Ossetia designed to find ways to break the impasse. The sessions were unofficial and off-the-record and included many exercises and discussions aimed at finding new ways to look at the situation and the conflict. Despite a high degree of skepticism among the participants that there was any hope of moving beyond the stalemate, the sessions did succeed in developing new possibilities and momentum for change. At the end of one session, a participant explained why the meeting had been a success: “You opened our eyes to possibilities to which we had blinded ourselves.” – pg. 211