

Collaborative relationships take many forms, tailored to the opportunities available and the needs determined by the specific changes we aim to promote. We develop deep and continual analysis with a range of collaborators operating at different levels. A core element of our work in peacebuilding contexts is the formation of long-term partnerships with local people and organisations, in which we work very closely together in support of a shared vision and goals. These relationships are facilitated and sustained through the capacities of our field offices and/or by staff making regular visits, with the aim of sustaining the relationships over years. At other times, we collaborate with local and international entities in a looser relationship, which may be of a shorter duration, and is often tied to specific projects or programme goals. Our relationships are not confined only to local entities: we also collaborate with individuals and organisations operating internationally to catalyse change processes.

Independence

Whilst we collaborate with those best placed to bring about societal change, we realise that the political dynamics within conflict contexts are fluid and often fast moving. For example, leaders with political influence can often lose it quickly, although the deeper, systemic exclusion and marginalisation of groups and individuals is more constant. We strive to maintain an independent profile that communicates clearly our peacebuilding goals whilst avoiding taking sides with any party to the conflict, or allying ourselves entirely with one partner. While much of our work in peacebuilding contexts consists of supporting local civil society actors, we recognise that we ourselves are civil society actors in our own right. Furthermore, we are funded by some government agencies and as such carry ‘baggage’ that we need to both recognise and manage. This requires a deep knowledge of the politics within civil society organisations as well as political parties and agencies, and results in collaborative relationships covering a spectrum of interests within a conflict context. By striving to establish and sustain an independent profile, we seek to maintain our individuality and the legitimacy of our own ideas. This helps clarify our added value to the work of others and enables us to sustain and grow our peacebuilding.

Leverage

In keeping with the image of the stone being thrown into a pond, and the distance from our intervention to the ultimate impact on peace (see Figures 1 and 4), we work with those who have access to decision-making processes within different institutions. These ‘agents of change’ operate at community, national and/or global levels, as illustrated in Figure 5. The different cogs are connected, and we work to make these

connections operate in ways that strengthen the prospects for peace. We do this because the resources available for peacebuilding are both limited and difficult to secure. We are a small non-governmental organisation with big ambitions for change, so we must find ways of leveraging change through others. Connecting individuals and institutions on different levels enables us to leverage societal change at a scale greater than if we only worked at one level. For example, the work of those determining the global policies of the World Bank in Washington will influence the degree and quality of space for discussion about how aid can support peacebuilding at the national level in, say, Nepal. National-level discussion, in turn, influences how development assistance is delivered to vulnerable and conflict-affected communities at the local/community level. Change is leveraged by connecting policies and practices on different levels, at a scale appropriate to the problem being addressed.

Inquiry, analysis and clarity of purpose

The Programming Framework identifies five peace factors that provide a backdrop for the analysis of conflict contexts, to better understand the issues that block peace and the societal change that needs to occur to build peace. We work to open up and reframe issues relating to these peace factors (e.g. reframing the idea of 'security' from one associated with winning control of the means of force and coercion to one of 'human security', whereby the safety of one group is dependent on that of others), to change attitudes and behaviours that sustain violent conflict. This reframing of issues is usually conducted in a participative way, with a hypothesis generated and then tested through engagement with a wider constituency. In bringing people together from different perspectives, new ideas are forged. These provide the basis for establishing clear change goals, against which we monitor and evaluate our programmes.

Learning and exchange

There is no magic formula for successful peacebuilding. The nature of the work means that progress is often gradual and takes place over time. One step forward can sometimes be followed by what seems like two steps back. The ability to deal with uncertainty is a necessary quality for the peacebuilder. In these circumstances, it is important to learn from experience and facilitate the exchange of this learning amongst the peacebuilding community. We put a premium on and actively plan for the generation of knowledge, and the exchange of learning and experience among those engaged in peacebuilding at different levels, and with others who can have an impact on the prospects for peace. In this way, our methodology strengthens the peacebuilding sector.

Methods

Our staff employ different methods in implementing our methodology, at all levels. Broadly, the same methods are used by others in different fields of societal change work such as 'development'. What is different about our use of these methods is our purpose, i.e. we deploy them to bring about positive peace.

Dialogue

Dialogue brings together and enables communications between people or groups who would not normally come together or would not normally communicate effectively on important conflict issues. This includes a broad spectrum of work, including the negotiation of specific resolutions between parties in conflict through to the creation of safe spaces for discussions. These safe spaces can be exploited by those taking part to reduce tensions and mutual misconceptions, and to generate a shared vision for change and practical ways to progress towards the peace factors. Dialogue is not just about formal meetings, but is an extended process that develops relationships between diverse groups around common issues, builds confidence and fosters local ownership. Thus, the work done between formal meetings is at least as important as what happens at the meetings themselves. We work to ensure that there is sufficient analysis and research to provide the substance and stimulus for effective and extended dialogue processes that can lead to mutually beneficial relationships, problem-solving and practical action. Dialogue encapsulates facilitation, shuttle diplomacy and mediation.

At times, our staff play a central role, planning and facilitating dialogue. More often, we play a backstage role, guiding and supporting partners who are doing the actual facilitations.

Research

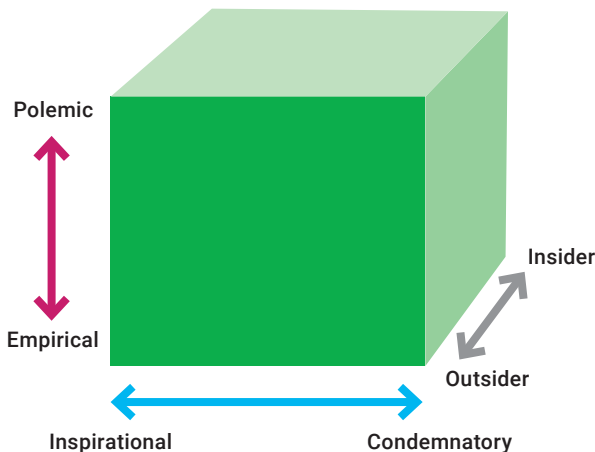
Research provides evidence to assist the reframing of issues. It also provides data and analysis for lobbying and for leveraging policy change. When done with others, or by others within an accompaniment relationship, research can lead to a fundamental change in the way people perceive and approach the issues concerned, and it is often thus part of an advocacy strategy. While analysis is part of a constant process of critical enquiry, embodied in the characteristics of our methodology (see above), research is a more specific activity that usually results in the production of specific

written outputs. These research outputs strengthen the credibility of advocacy and dialogue processes by providing an informed, evidence-based stimulus for the reframing of issues and the rethinking of policies, mindsets and opinions.

Advocacy

Advocacy is most simply defined as the attempt to change the behaviour of institutions. Although this often focuses on formal changes to written policies, the 'policy' of an institution is in fact best understood as the practical way it acts and engages with others, rather than the way it says that it acts and engages. We work to influence the ways in which institutions (local, national and global) act by adopting, in most cases, an 'insider-inspirational' approach that aims to engage the target institution in a process of critical enquiry about its relationship with violent conflict (see Figure 6). An alternative 'condemnatory-outsider' approach may also be adopted, depending on the change goals we seek, the nature of the target institutions concerned, and our relationship to them. However, this approach is less common and often incompatible with the sensitive, long-term nature of our work. Our partners may adopt a different advocacy approach to our own, reflecting their own contexts, goals, identities and relationships.

Figure 6: Advocacy approaches



Training

Training and learning play a key role in building the capacity of individuals, organisations and institutions to work in and on conflict. It enables us to influence the approaches and develop the skills of international and local practitioners, to build understanding, to advocate for change and to reflect on current practice. Whether we are working at a local level or international level, with individuals, with organisations or with governments, we root our training in our direct experience of peacebuilding and the successes and challenges this involves. We are always context-specific, tailoring our approach to the context and to the needs and nature of those who are learning. We employ experiential methods to create a space in which individuals can reflect on their own practice and learn new approaches and techniques for working more effectively. To this end, training and learning is as much about enabling a cultural or institutional shift towards more positive peace practice as it is about developing hard skills. Pairing this form of advocacy with the sharing of techniques and tools opens up both conceptual and concrete ways with which to instigate change.

Accompaniment

The need to ensure ownership of sustained change processes over time requires our staff to spend much of their time building and maintaining relationships. This involves working with individuals and partner organisations, as well as our advocacy targets (be it politicians, companies or institutions), as a critical friend, advisor, monitor and informal capacity-builder. We aim to be available when needed, bringing in experience from other contexts, while allowing partners space. Accompaniment is a subtle approach, which takes a great deal of patience, tact, political astuteness, diplomacy and ability to communicate frankly. It is not always easy to see from outside. An essential element of accompaniment is to have a shared vision and/or strategy. We collaborate with partners using in-depth analysis to design programmes that can strengthen the peace factors. Accompaniment works within different forms of partnership and incorporates coalition building, networking and informal relationship-building. It can also include accompanying the implementation of practical initiatives aimed at building peace, for example, joint business ventures pursued by parties on different sides of a conflict divide.

Table 2: Analytical framework for peacebuilding

| Methodology | Actions | Peace factors | Peace |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Core characteristics: Collaboration/partnerships Independence Leverage Enquiry, analysis and clarity of purpose Learning and exchange</p> <p>Methods: Dialogue Research Advocacy Training Accompaniment</p> | <p>Attitudes, behaviours and conditions, and other factors that enable or hinder the peace factors</p> <p>This is where the objectives and impact indicators of our work will tend to lie, often expressed in terms of targeted groups, institutions or people conducting themselves differently; linked to a clear hypothesis showing the impact of their different comportment on the peace factors</p> | <p>Power Voice and participation Inclusion and power differentials Social capital Leadership and legitimacy Values and incentives Functional horizontal and vertical relationships</p> <p>Income and assets Economic opportunity Economic equality</p> <p>Fair and effective laws Effective laws Effective legal mechanisms</p> <p>Safety Personal security Security providers</p> <p>Wellbeing Fair access to the means of wellbeing Quality of the services that promote wellbeing Psychosocial wellbeing</p> | <p>Peace is when people are anticipating and managing conflicts without violence, and are engaging in inclusive social change processes that improve the quality of life</p> <p>They are doing so without compromising the possibility of continuing to do so in the future, or compromising the possibility of others to do so</p> <p>This is the idea of inter-dependent, positive peace</p> |
| <p>Direction of impact (right-pointing arrow)</p> <p>Direction of analysis (left-pointing arrow)</p> | | | |

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