



**international
alert**

International Alert's Strategy 2019–2023

**Breaking cycles of violence,
building cycles of peace**



“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Alert’s patron

Our vision and mission

For over 30 years, International Alert has been working to build positive peace and reduce violence, working across conflict lines and with all parties to conflicts.

Experienced and respected, we have a proud track record of achieving change in fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories.

Our **vision** is that people and their societies can resolve conflicts without violence, working together to build sustainable and inclusive peace.

Our **mission** is to break cycles of violence and to build sustainable peace by:

- working with people directly affected by violent conflict to find **lasting solutions**;
- shaping policies and practices to reduce and prevent violence, and to **support sustainable peace**;
- collaborating with all those striving for peace to **strengthen our collective voice and impact**.

Connecting these three mission goals will be central to our success in reaching bold targets to reduce violence and proactively build peace over the next five years.

Responding to a world at war

We are convinced that peace is within our power if we work together and people are given the opportunities.

However, after years of decline, armed conflict is surging and we face a violent crisis of epic proportions:

More people are being **killed in battle – rising by 27%** in 2016.

In 2016, violent conflict **directly led to over 100,000 deaths.**

Of those injured and killed in war, **80% are civilians, many of them children.**

Today, **68.5 million people** are internally displaced persons or refugees – more than at any time in history.

In 2017, fuelled by tragedies in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Myanmar and Syria, **31 people were driven from their homes every minute of every day.**

Half of the world's poor are living in fragile places riddled by violence, and this is predicted to rise to 80% if no action is taken.

Sexual violence continues to be systematically used as a tactic of war, with long-lasting devastating consequences for people and communities.

The nature of conflict is also changing. While conflicts between countries, including superpowers, remain a threat, wars are increasingly being fought within countries and territories, but are often financed and armed by outside powers. More conflicts are in the 'grey zone' between skirmishes and war, with simmering fighting continuing between dispersed and fragmented groups. People are hit by different forms of violence, such as the rise in violent extremism and organised crime, while there is an increasing rejection of global multilateralism and disregard for international humanitarian laws and treaties.

That is why, as a peacebuilding organisation, we need to renew our determination to support communities building peace, as the bedrock of all our work, and to influence wider change. With citizens more in the frontline than ever before, organisations like Alert are needed to support peacebuilding, and build effective partnerships.

Conflict and instability impact women and men differently, with women and girls being the main victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during war. SGBV is a symptom of wider societal and gender inequalities, which undermine the long-term prospects for peace and development. It is crucial to promote the empowerment of women and girls while also working with men and boys in a transformative manner to change attitudes.

At the same time, pressure on natural resources is intense and economic inequalities are dividing communities locally, regionally and globally, feeding social and political tensions. That is why engaging

Civilians pay the highest price in war



80%

of those injured and killed in war
are civilians, **many of them children**

with the private sector, from local enterprises to multinationals, and supporting their role in sustainable and peaceful development is a priority.

We are more connected than ever, which is opening up opportunities for collaboration and new movements for peace, which we must support. However, we are also seeing new divisions and alarming rises in racism, xenophobia and hate speech. Governments are pushing back on the checks and balances of democratic traditions, while divisive narratives of nationalism and religion

are threatening minority and marginalised groups. The space for inclusive governance is shrinking and the room for dialogue, compromise and understanding between conflicting views is being squeezed.

In this toxic environment, the need for peacebuilding has never been more urgent. We need to scale up our impact and embrace new partnerships. Current top-down and security-led approaches are not working. Instead of fighting violence with violence, we should address the root causes of conflict.

Moving towards positive peace

Over the coming five years, we will redouble our efforts to break cycles of violence and build cycles of sustainable peace.

We will sharpen our focus, scale up our tried and tested approaches, and develop new strategies to respond to threats such as the rise in hate speech and violent extremism.

We know that violence evolves over time and breeds further violence. Too many people and communities are caught in vicious, downward spirals of violence. For example, a community may begin protesting because they are politically or economically excluded, but if the authorities respond violently, this will further enflame people's anger and may spill over into violence. As a result, a single solution to violence is never enough.

Equally, we know that peace needs building at multiple levels, setting off a positive, upward cycle of change. It needs people at the grassroots calling for peace to push those at the negotiation table to sign the deal, which will only hold if communities are supported to reconcile their differences. Such efforts will lay the foundations for a virtuous positive cycle, each step forward reinforcing the last, as a community and country moves towards positive peace – that is, when people can manage their differences without resorting to violence and when governments address their people's needs. We can be inspired by those communities and countries that have successfully taken action to prevent violence or end conflict.

At International Alert, we focus on five '**positive peace factors**' that will help to lay the foundations for cycles of sustainable and inclusive peace.

The five positive peace factors



Power



**Income
and Assets**



**Fairness,
Equality
and Justice**



Safety



Wellbeing

**“Peace cannot
be kept by force;
it can only be
achieved by
understanding.”**

Albert Einstein



Our ambitions

We work with

people affected by violent conflict to find lasting solutions.

Goal: In 20 years, cycles of violence will have been broken in at least 10 conflicts where we work in a way that builds sustainable peace, with 'no-one left behind'.

To achieve this, in five years we will have:

- played an active role in **two peace processes**, which will have succeeded in bringing an end to violent conflict, by supporting community engagement in and facilitating backing for the process – for example, through working with the private sector or encouraging trade between parties to the conflict;

- demonstrably contributed to **preventing or reducing violent conflict** in two further contexts, working with and giving voice to grassroots communities; and
- effectively connected the levels of our work in at least five conflicts (including sub-national conflicts) in order to bring about **institutional reforms** to support peace and prevent and reduce violence.

We will have contributed to ending one of the longest running civil wars, between the government and communists in the **Philippines**, and successfully lobbied for the passing of the Bangsamoro Basic Law. We will have also supported communities' resilience to conflict and ensured that local and national policies sustain and protect the gains of peace, while also mitigating emerging threats of violence.



We shape

policies and practices through in-depth research and analysis to influence powerholders to support sustainable peace.

Goal: In 20 years, we want to see peacebuilding approaches routinely used as the first response to violent conflict, concrete improvements being made to the policies and practices of security forces in 10 active conflicts, and key stakeholders within the private sector contributing positively to inclusive peace.

To achieve this, in five years we will have:

- provided an evidence base on how to break cycles of violence and build cycles of peace – including how to engage with communities, the private sector, formal and informal security forces or armed groups, and governments;
- supported in one country the linking of diplomatic and peacebuilding tracks to strengthen the inclusion and representation

of under-represented constituencies in the peace process, especially informal civil society networks; also enabled women, young people and civil society to feed their views into a peace process;

- ensured that policies and practices on violent extremism and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) in places coming out of conflict are based on quality evidence and analysis from the field, and are gender and conflict sensitive;
- improved the policies and practices of the security forces in five countries; and
- advocated for two countries to adopt economic policies that address conflict-sensitive mining approaches.

In Mali, over the next five years we will support the inclusive dialogue between local communities, authorities and security forces, with a particular focus on training and working with young men and women. This will increase communication, trust and collaboration amongst these groups, building resilience to violent extremism in conflict-affected regions.

We collaborate

with all those striving for peace to strengthen our collective voice and impact.

Goal: In 20 years, we will see our civil society partners playing a leading role in building cycles of peace and advocating for inclusive government policies. Our 50 years of experience and the global coalition of like-minded organisations will have a compelling evidence base, supported by a widespread social movement. This will enable us to increase the financial and policy support for peacebuilding.

To achieve this, in five years we will have:

- built a compelling evidence base of peacebuilding from the experiences of Alert and the wider coalition, enabling us to articulate our impact and convince decision-makers that peacebuilding is effective, cost-effective and popular;

- built up the peacebuilding coalition, and supported a widespread social movement, to transform our sector's profile, put peacebuilding higher up on governments' agendas, and increase financial and policy support for it;
- seen one country pass a Global Fragility and Violence Reduction Act, which commits to investing in proactive measures to prevent and reduce violence and fragility, with two other countries giving it active consideration;
- supported key stakeholders within the private sector to contribute positively to inclusive peace in conflict-affected areas, with a high-profile corporate champion advocating for business to engage proactively to build peace, and an active network of committed companies;
- sustained our leading role as a 'go to' organisation for partners, because we learn from each other based on mutual respect, and created change through successful strategic partnerships that go beyond project delivery; and
- contributed to vibrant networks of national civil society organisations focused on peacebuilding and shared skills with citizens in all our work.

These are ambitious goals. In 2019, we will trial and develop our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy, which considers how we can best track the reduction in violence.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

Our development

Our strengths are the springboard for the next five years.

For 30 years, we have developed our expertise on the pathways to peace, such as managing natural resources, preventing violent extremism, promoting economic development for peace and improving gender. We are an experienced, respected organisation, with a proud track record in reducing violence and building peace. We work across conflict lines and with all parties to the conflicts.

Alert has contributed to change in Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, DRC, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, Somalia, the South Caucasus, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia and Ukraine, among other places.

We will maintain our role as professional thought leaders and change leaders. Even in difficult and dangerous places, we engage directly with communities, using dialogue as a key method and seeking to win people's trust. We take time to research and understand the context and issues that need addressing, while acknowledging how

peacebuilding approaches can have an impact. When we know what is causing cycles of violence, we can help to build cycles of peace. While working with a range of actors, we nurture our strongest relations with our partners.

Now we need to sharpen our focus. This strategy re-emphasises our roots, working at the grassroots, while putting renewed focus on working with formal and informal security forces or armed groups, on peace processes, on gender- and conflict-sensitivity, and on active conflicts. We will examine how we can scale up to maximum effect – whether in one country or with one initiative across many countries or territories.

We believe that peace is within the power of individuals and must be built from the grassroots up. That is why we undertake practical activities to build everyday peace with communities and civil society – always seeking to influence wider change at local, national, regional and international levels.

As new conflict trends emerge, we must invest in new ways of working, skills, partnerships, and learn how to work in different ways to break different cycles of violence. Over the next five years, we will seek to build on our work with refugees and migrants, and examine how we can address the rise in hate speech. We will continue to innovate at the project level by using adaptive management and be ready to change if such initiatives fail.

Alert was requested by the United Nations (UN) to support the peace process in Burundi in 1995. Our colleague Ndeye Sow engaged political leaders, civil servants, the army and civil society representatives of the parties to the conflict and later also armed groups. We helped them to support the formal peace process, ensuring all voices were heard, including those of women. We arranged for leaders to learn from the new post-apartheid government in South Africa by meeting our patron Archbishop Desmond Tutu, also encouraging difficult dialogue across conflict divides. Ndeye still works with us. Her skills and experience are needed now more than ever, as we keep building on our strong track record and helping communities around the world to deal with violent conflict.



“International Alert has a distinguished track record of working with courage and compassion to build peace and inspire hope in troubled communities. From holding hands with Rwandans in the aftermath of genocide, to supporting young Syrians today. Always building, always challenging, always inspiring. For 30 years. I am very proud to be associated with this history..You are part of a global network for good, extending from the villages of DRC to the corridors of the United Nations.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Patron



How change happens

Breaking cycles of violence and building cycles of peace



“Instead of responding to crises, we need to invest far more in prevention. Prevention works, saves lives and is cost-effective.”

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General

Our work

1. With communities

Goal: To strengthen communities' voices and their capacity to reduce violence, in particular by working with disadvantaged women and young people

In fragile and conflict-affected states riven by social exclusion and inequality, we will combat marginalisation, strengthen connections within communities, break down the divides and support the momentum of change in favour of peace. We will promote collaboration between different groups to work together for a peaceful, inclusive and fairer society. We will also work with those on the frontline of conflict prevention and mitigation.

Creating strong relations within societies that are inclusive and fair is at the heart of reducing violence and building sustainable peace. To counteract power imbalances, we will prioritise working with the more marginalised sections of society, in particular, disadvantaged women and young people. However, we also recognise the importance of engaging elites and those with power.

Our work with communities includes:

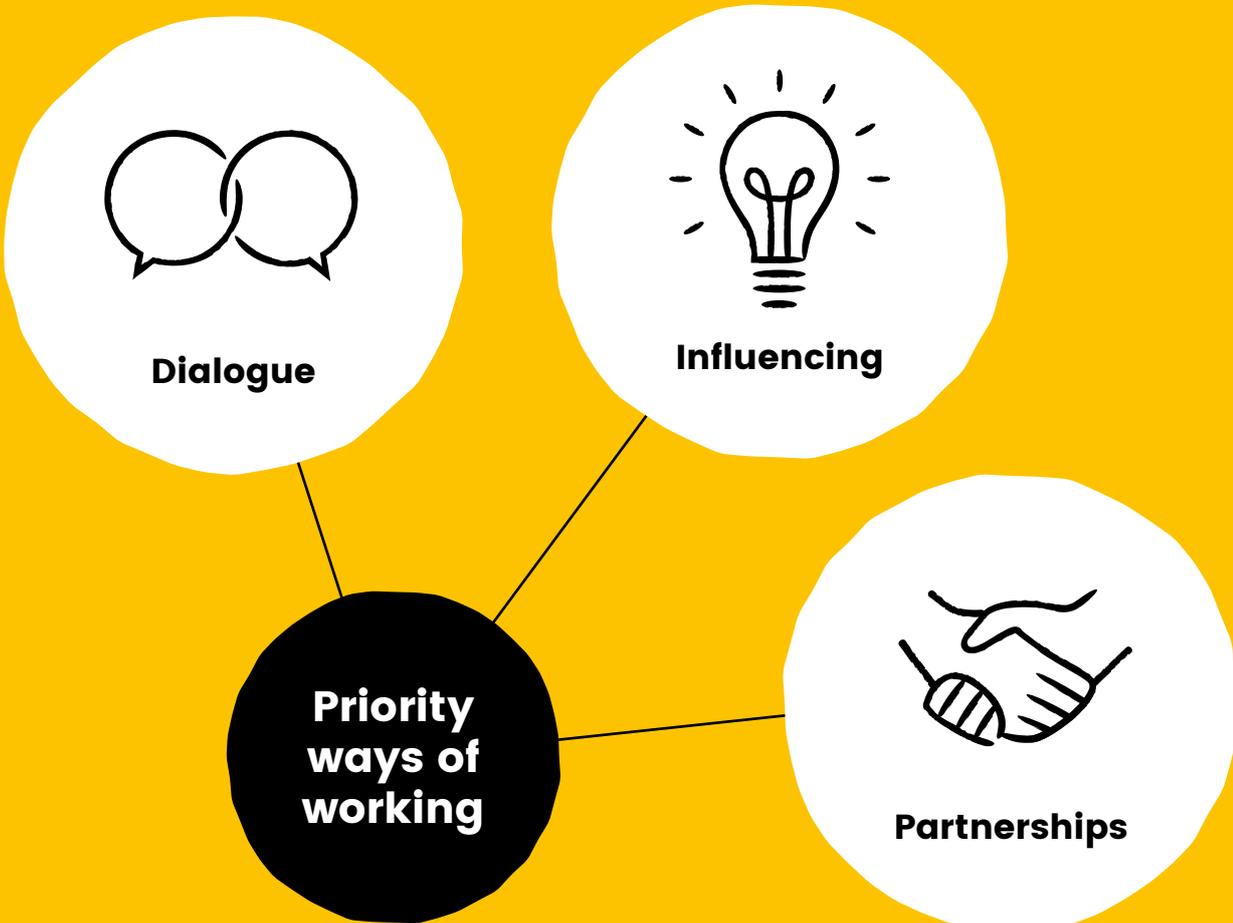
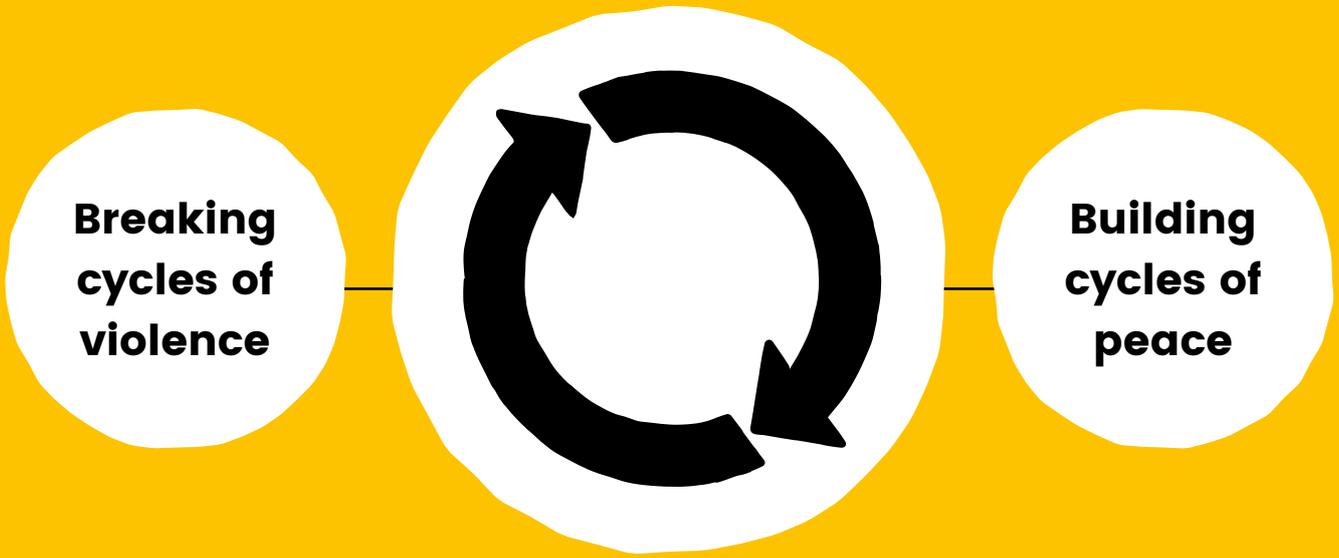
- linking people across conflict divides to build trust and support dialogue and reconciliation;
- countering the spread of division and fostering cultures of tolerance; and
- supporting diverse and marginalised community and civil society voices to actively contribute to peace processes to address the roots causes of conflict.

We will implement further our 'gender-relational approach'. The dominance of aggressive and violent models of masculinity puts social peace at risk. We will work across different groups of men and women to better influence social change, understanding multiple identities and vulnerabilities. We will address social norms, with an emphasis on equality between people of different social, gender and sexual identities.

Our engagement with communities is the bedrock of all our work. We seek to enable communities to positively influence businesses, governments and peace processes.



Our work



Our goals

Champion **gender- and conflict-sensitivity in ways that contribute to peace**, including in our own work

Strengthen **communities' voices and their capacity to reduce violence**, in particular working with disadvantaged women and young people

Harness the **private sector** to support inclusive peace

Support **inclusive peace processes and wider peacebuilding initiatives**

Promote **fairness, inclusion and justice in local and national governance systems, including security**, to support peace and to address the root causes of conflict, including structural inequalities



2. With business

Goal: To harness the private sector to support inclusive peace

From the community to the global level, we will seek to address the economic drivers of peace and conflict. We will work at all levels to improve understanding of how resources can be managed peacefully and for the benefit of wider society.

We will:

- promote conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive practices in the private sector;
- encourage the peace-supporting management of natural resources in fragile and conflict-affected contexts through the actions and policies of the private sector and government;
- strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to meaningfully engage with the private sector, so that investments and economic development are responsive to people's needs;
- leverage the private sector from the local to the global level to contribute proactively to peace;
- facilitate the transition of coping economies into the formal economy in a conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive manner; and
- build everyday peace through informal economic actors, especially women traders, connecting them across divides and amplifying their voices.

3. With governments

Goal: To promote fairness, inclusion and justice in local and national governance systems, including security, to support peace and to address the root causes of conflict, including structural inequalities

We will strengthen relations between the state and citizens to reduce instability and inequality. We will work with governments, including justice systems, security forces, community groups and civil society to find common ground on issues that can reduce violence and promote peaceful, inclusive societies.

We will:

- support disadvantaged groups, including minorities, young people and women, to increase their active political participation and become leaders;
- strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and community representatives to bridge conflict divides and engage with all parties;
- ensure political settlements promote inclusive governance that works for the marginalised;



- increase the accountability and effectiveness of security forces, including peacekeeping missions, through community engagement and improving their policies and practices;
- encourage security forces to be responsive, accountable and engaged with communities – for example, by facilitating dialogue between community representatives and security forces and, when appropriate, armed groups, or by ensuring that military forces in one country integrate our approaches to engaging communities into their training programmes;
- influence national policies on reconciliation by providing evidence of what works, especially for marginalised groups;
- contribute to the fair and inclusive distribution and management of services and natural resources, including influencing humanitarian and development organisations to increase the impact of their work on peace, also engaging with governments on their private sector policies to ensure fairness; and
- encourage the adoption of non-violent strategies by key national governments to prevent violent extremism.

4. With peace processes and initiatives

Goal: To support inclusive peace processes and wider peacebuilding initiatives

We will:

- ensure a range of communities and diverse groups participate effectively in formal and informal peace processes, linking different levels and tracks;
- ensure that formal and informal peace processes take account of people's needs, including of the most vulnerable, supporting women and young people in particular;
- support effective conflict recovery, including reconciliation and transitional justice;
- engage with armed groups (where possible and appropriate) and support effective reintegration of ex-combatants;
- identify alternative entry points to support peace processes, such as trade, the role of the private sector and service delivery, especially when formal political processes have stalled; and
- advise on the design and architecture of peace processes.



5. With gender- and conflict-sensitivity

Goal: To champion gender- and conflict-sensitivity in ways that contribute to peace, including in our own work

We will:

- mainstream gender- and conflict-sensitivity across all our work;
 - document and disseminate best practices in conflict-sensitivity;
 - develop, consolidate and disseminate our training material and guidance as the leading global organisation on conflict-sensitive approaches to working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts;
 - promote conflict-sensitivity with external stakeholders at project, strategy and policy level,
- offering advice, training as well as long-term accompaniment or sustained support, and strengthening the role of conflict analysis in conflict-sensitive approaches;
 - strengthen Alert's staff capacity in gender mainstreaming, gender analysis and gender-sensitivity in programming and monitoring and evaluation (M&E);
 - train key stakeholders on comprehensive, gender-relational approaches to peacebuilding, including critically engaging with femininities, masculinities and diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and work with women, men and people of other gender identities in preventing and redressing all forms of discrimination;
 - promote the agency of previously marginalised groups and individuals, especially women, in promoting peace and security and in building more inclusive societies;
 - support more diverse voices to be actively involved in different levels of peace processes, leading to gender-responsive outcomes of the negotiations and dialogues.

“To SIDA, Alert’s key strength is its grassroots community-based peacebuilding work, and the fact that Alert is able to draw on experiences from this work to shape policies and practices, ensuring that people affected by conflict have a voice and are able to influence processes in order to actually address the root causes at hand.”

**Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency (SIDA)**

How we will achieve these ambitions

We remain committed to relying on strong evidence to inform all our programming and advocacy.

Our work will continue to be underpinned by research, analysis and a framing of issues that identify the root causes of violence and long-term solutions to conflict.

Research, guided by our ethics, ensures that our interventions are based on strong understanding. We will share our analysis more proactively and develop a body of evidence from our programming. We will contribute to global knowledge about the impact of peacebuilding and what works on key issues such as violent extremism. We will continue to develop our data tracking and analysis, such as our successful Philippines' Conflict Monitoring System.

To ensure we keep learning from and improving the impact of our interventions, and to remain transparent about our successes and failures, we will continue to strengthen our M&E capacity and systems.

We will also make it the overall focus for all our teams to better understand, improve and communicate our impact. We will further promote both financial and impact accountability as the basis for decision-making at Alert and across the sector.

Over the next five years, we will **prioritise three core ways of working: dialogue, influencing and partnerships**, providing more standardised methodologies and tools that can be adapted to each context by our staff and partners. These align with our three mission goals and we will focus on strengthening the links between them, from the local to the global levels. This is part of our added value as an international non-governmental organisation (INGO).



1. Dialogue

We will enable people directly affected by conflict to build peace by promoting dialogue, connecting people across conflict lines.

We will give renewed priority to the development of our dialogue approaches, ensuring that they are well integrated into our programming. We will improve the effectiveness and quality of our dialogue work and increase our impact through developing a common understanding of how, why and when we use dialogue.

In the next five years, we will develop specific dialogue approaches for different situations. We will improve and strengthen our methodologies and indicators of success, and set up systems for sharing and learning internally and externally.

We use dialogue to connect people, create alliances and identify joint solutions, to mediate and to help people reconcile.

We will be bolder in involving parties to the conflict

and people in power, and in reaching across conflict lines. This will include talking with formal and informal security forces and armed groups. All our work seeks to build relationships of trust and to build bridges between divided people. This will include strengthening our work with companies and others who can help to reduce violence.

We will further improve the quality and impact of our dialogue by:

- establishing and promoting basic principles and key skills for dialogue, including developing and rolling out our dialogue basic principles and core skills training;
- understanding and responding to power dynamics in dialogue, particularly gender dynamics; and
- exploring the potential to further develop our mediation capacity.

2. Influencing

We will shape policies and practices to reduce violence, and prevent conflict by better addressing root causes and influencing structural change in favour of peace.

Changing conflict dynamics is essential to the sustainability of our peacebuilding, particularly where volatile national-level politics can disrupt positive local change.

We will increase the ability of our staff and partners to influence people in power to promote the policy and practice changes necessary to address macro drivers of conflict. We will strengthen our influencing capacity across the organisation. Clear strategies will tie together the many elements of our work that generate influence, including: informal dialogue, training, policy advocacy, research and communications. Influencing goals will also be clearly embedded in all our country strategies.

We will improve our ability to capture the impact of our influencing activities through new M&E solutions, recognising our contribution to change. We will develop sound plans, create internal accountabilities and incentives, and prioritise necessary resourcing for influencing.

Taking account of differences, we will enhance our capability to influence at the national level in the places where we work. We will extend this to selected governments that play influential roles in international peace and security. In addition, we will leverage our access to continue influencing at the international level. For instance, if just one country adopts legislation committing to reduce violence, we can use this example to encourage others to adopt similar measures – thus contributing to our violence reduction targets.

We will explore opportunities to raise our voices more loudly for the values we hold dear and that are under attack. We will be more visible when this provides a better chance to create substantive change.

3. Partnerships

We will collaborate with those striving for peace to strengthen our collective voice and impact by building and strengthening partnerships for peace.

We will amplify our own and others' impact and influence through working with a broad network of partners and collaborations.

Partnerships are at the heart of our work. Currently, one third of our funds go through over 100 national civil society organisations, and we collaborate with many more. We will strengthen and evolve our partnership model, building on the respect with which many partners hold us. In each country or territory, we will develop relationships with a few key partners that are independent of funding cycles and we will explore opportunities to support promising nascent groups.

We will pilot building strategic partnerships and then networking with these partners, nationally and globally, to share learning and inform approaches. That way, partners can influence our priorities, share experiences and build influence together, and we can help develop local change leaders.

We will continue to lead the development of a strong global coalition of NGOs that can better advance the case for peacebuilding, developing new ways to explain peacebuilding. We will engage the public, and influence policymakers and politicians.

These three ways of working are connected. For example, we do our best influencing when it is based on our partnerships and in delivering local dialogue. We need to improve our ability to leverage these connections in order to maximise our impact.

In DRC, we supported the development of Rien Sans les Femmes, a network of over 160 NGOs advocating for women's rights. The group has petitioned the DRC government on women's participation in elections – one of the largest ever coming together of women's organisations in DRC for a petition – and briefed the UN Security Council. It is with such groups that we seek to develop long-term strategic partnerships.



Who we will work with

We will work in partnership with others whenever possible.

We often act as a catalyst for change by supporting and empowering individuals, communities and groups to implement their solutions for resolving conflict. Those we reach are in turn able to influence thousands more in their own communities.

We will engage over 200,000 people per year. This will include:

- **150,000 community members**, with a focus on individuals vulnerable to and affected by violent conflict and members of local community groups, youth groups, women's groups, refugees and displaced communities;
- **30,000 representatives from governments and authorities**, such as candidates, elected officials, civil servants, police, defence and military personnel at local, provincial and national levels, as well as those who represent donor governments;
- **15,500 civil society and community leaders** from all sides of the conflict, academic institutions, NGOs, diaspora representatives, media organisations and social media activists;

- **4,000 people from national and international businesses**, with a focus on business leaders interested and able to play a positive role for peace in the communities where they operate; and
- **500 people from formal and informal security forces or armed groups**, as we gradually build our new work with non-state armed groups – for example, in 2019 we started engaging with the Civilian Joint Task Force in northeast Nigeria.

In addition, through our increasing engagement with the media and social media, and with our coalition partners, we expect to **inspire 10 million people** – and to reach millions more.

We will focus on four groups of people:

- those especially **at risk from violent conflict**;
- **peace champions** and change leaders;
- those with power who can change violent approaches to peaceful outcomes;
- those who influence **government policies** to address inequalities, unfairness and injustice.

“As Alert says, peace is within our power. We cannot import peace from Abuja. The community in Borno state has to build peace itself ... In one brutal area, no-one is working – it’s a no-man’s land. The insurgency takes its toll and gangs are in control. But we went there and met community leaders and explained that we are giving the community a chance to build peace, to look for their own solutions.”

**Agnes Bashir,
Executive Director of our partners
Healthcare Development Focus Initiative
(HECADF), Nigeria**

Where we work

We will continue to work in countries and territories at all stages of cycles of violence, including those in transition from violent conflict, those in protracted conflict or those in which we help to prevent conflict.

Within that framework, our model is flexible, including country offices, regional hubs, remote coordination and work through partners. We will only open new country offices when there is a strong case for impact and sustainability.

We will:

- by 2023, be working at the right scale to have impact in 10 countries or territories, with a team showing strong leadership in driving our national strategies and connecting our work from the grassroots to policy level;
- adopt a lighter touch in other places, by working with remote management and through partners, or undertaking consultancies;
- build up our consultancy wing and undertake commercial contracts, more work for companies, and other paid work that meets our goals and values;
- reconfigure the organisation to be an international NGO fit for 2023, including: getting the balance right between our London and country teams – considering where people can be based to be most effective; exploring options for decentralisation of roles or for centres of excellence – seeking to strengthen skills and knowledge sharing between country offices; and developing our Europe office in the Hague to manage our EU-funded programmes and drive our influencing agenda; and
- seek to become thought and change leaders at a regional level, as conflict is becoming increasingly transnational – exploring the financial viability and effectiveness of regional hubs to improve links and learning between our programme teams, to develop joint approaches and to influence regional policy and practice.



Our business model and finances

We seek to grow steadily from 2019 to 2023, with a financial model that will also enable us to strengthen the quality of our peacebuilding.

In 2019, under our new Business Model, we will:

- implement a new global financial model to create greater financial sustainability across our programmes;
 - maximise our global impact, professionalism and legitimacy, including building staff capacity and bringing in any skills and experience needed, as well as investing in our internal systems (including finance);
 - continue to strengthen our relations with our core donors, while seeking new funding sources – from other governments and new donors; and
 - scale up our consultancy work and commercial contracting, developing the systems, incentives and capacities to deliver this.
- every programme and country office will have their own business model and funding strategy in line with their country strategies, the scale of their ambitions and capacity to deliver – including options such as consultancies to reach financial sustainability;
 - over 20% of our income will come from commercial contracting and consultancies, and our systems will enable us to bid, deliver and monitor this work effectively; and
 - we will have tripled our income from new sources such as corporates, trusts, foundations and high net worth donors to £1 million.

By 2023:

- our main funds will come from strategic partnerships with institutional donors in Sweden, the Netherlands and Ireland;
- we will have further built our relationships with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the UN, the Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Union (EU) (via our Hague office);
- we will have strengthened funding relations with other institutional donors such as Switzerland and Denmark;

This will not be easy. While the need for peacebuilding has never been greater, the situation for civil society, and for fundraising, is challenging. Recognising the scale of these challenges and the small size of the peacebuilding sector, and knowing that collaboration is the way forward, we remain open to working in coalition with other organisations – or indeed to merging.





Our people

Our reputation is built on our track record over 30 years. We are respected, trusted to do solid research and analysis, and to be a professional partner. This is thanks to our people.

Our best work is created by thought leaders who lead change in their country. We need to invest in attracting and retaining such talented individuals.

We need to train our existing staff and recruit new staff with the skills to deliver the new strategy – from influencing to working with security forces or armed groups.

We will develop and roll out the necessary tools for our staff, our partners and others – on peacebuilding and influencing as well as core skills, including dialogue and M&E.

We recognise that many of our staff working in complex or high-risk environments face enormous pressures and experience stress. We will provide support when needed and foster a positive culture that enables open discussion on staff wellbeing.

In the Philippines, Francisco ‘Pancho’ Lara Jr. has been an activist all his life and was part of the people’s movement to overthrow the dictator Marcos. He has since worked to build a fair economy and to bring the two long-running internal conflicts to an end – for example, lobbying MPs to adopt laws that will address the marginalisation of Muslim Mindanao, engaging with the senior leaders of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) when he headed the government’s ceasefire committee in negotiations with communist rebels, and listening to women traders on the Sulu seas. It is this connection between different levels of our programming that makes our work in the Philippines so effective. Pancho has also contributed through his published work to the discourse on informal institutions that shape conflict dynamics in the Philippines. He lends his academic expertise in analysing and explaining data generated by Alert’s innovative sub-national conflict monitoring system, Conflict Alert, for decision-makers who use the detailed empirical information in designing and implementing programmes and policies. And he currently guides Alert’s ongoing research on the vectors of violent extremism in the country.





Our Board

Our Board of Trustees are strong guardians of the charity, ensuring that we fulfil our obligations and are compliant with the increasing range of standards rightly expected of charities – particularly safeguarding and value for money.

The Board will proactively support the implementation of the strategy and develop its membership specifically to deliver it, for example, by recruiting trustees with a background in mediation and influencing.

As part of our Partnership Strategy, we will have representatives of partners from different regions on our Board, and we will ensure the Board's diversity reflects the breadth of our work.

We will also recruit Alert ambassadors who can assist in influencing and fundraising.

Abir Ibrahim is the co-founder of Mobaderoon, a peacebuilding network of civil society activists in Syria and across the refugee community. Previously, she worked with the oil giant Total. As an Alert Board member, she brings in-depth expertise of how to build peace even in the midst of war and how to feed the views of civil society and women into formal peace processes.



Risks and how we will mitigate them

Working more in active conflicts:

We will review our risk appetite to enable more effective work in such conflicts and maintain strong security policies and procedures for us and our partners.

Working more with formal and informal security forces or armed groups:

We will implement a comprehensive due diligence process to check with whom we will and will not work. We will also train existing staff with the necessary skills and resources, and recruit specialist staff as necessary.

Increasing difficulty of raising funds, including for our core costs:

We will implement our new Business Model to increase our efficiency and a new Fundraising Strategy to diversify our income.

Being used or perceived to further harmful agendas:

We will develop our risk analysis on certain issues such as violent extremism, and strengthen our influence in coalitions and our partnerships based on evidence.

Inability to operate in some places as governments clamp down on NGOs:

We will operate with care and sensitivity to each country's or territory's environment, and work in coalitions.

Rising compliance issues, including in difficult places:

We will be constantly vigilant that our policies and procedures are being implemented, and invest to have the right level of staff and the right systems.

**“Those who
love peace
must learn to
organise as
effectively as
those who
love war.”**

Martin Luther King Jr.

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