# international alert

# Programming Framework

Peace
is within
our power

## About International Alert

International Alert works with people directly affected by conflict to build lasting peace. Together, we believe peace is within our power. We focus on solving the root causes of conflict, bringing together people from across divides. From the grassroots to policy level, we come together to build everyday peace.

Peace is just as much about communities living together, side by side, and resolving their differences without resorting to violence as it is about people signing a treaty or laying down their arms. That is why we believe that we all have a role to play in building a more peaceful future.

**www.international-alert.org**

# Programming Framework

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# Introduction

The following framework document offers the International Alert peace practitioner some guidance in the complex and difficult task of building peace. It also offers those we work with and are accountable to greater clarity about what we do and why we do it. Most importantly, it is designed to enable peacebuilders to be better able to identify and measure the impact of their actions, so that they can be more effective in what they do.

We recognise that many organisations are involved in the process of peacebuilding and there are other interpretations of peacebuilding. What follows is intended to act as a practical programming guide for our staff. It is designed to assist our peacebuilders in the task of designing interventions in ways that will enable the desired social change to be identified clearly and, therefore, for impact to be assessed.

It is important that programmes and interventions designed by our staff are coherent with this framework. However, the framework also needs to be used with the wisdom and creativity that comes from other experiences, and has not been designed to be a rigid document. In other words, while providing a coherence function for the organisation, the framework is a guide rather than a rigid off-the-shelf template.

The first section explains in more detail why we need a peacebuilding framework. The second section deals with the analytical framework, covering the meaning of peace and conflict, the peace factors that are required to sustain peaceful societies, and the kind of analysis that is needed to inform peacebuilding interventions. Section three explains what gender means to us as peacebuilders. The actual implementation of peacebuilding activities is the subject of the fourth section, which covers methodology.
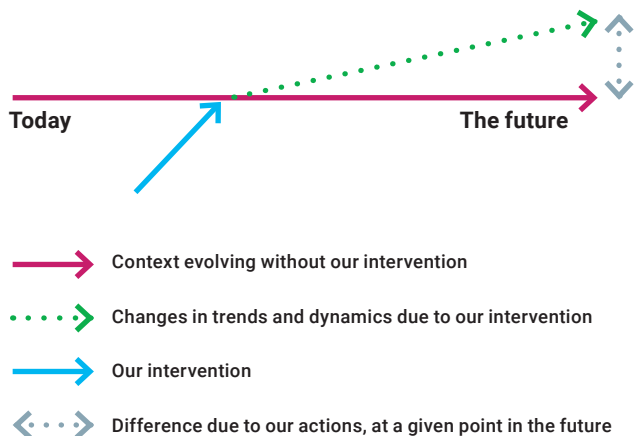
# 1. Why we need a Programming Framework

## To measure change and impact

Our business is peacebuilding, and peacebuilding involves social change. Therefore, we need to be able to assess our impact systematically – which is true more generally in the peacebuilding sector. The incidences and severity of civil wars appear to be decreasing, but it is speculative to suggest that peacebuilding interventions are the cause. We need to be able to assess the impact we undoubtedly have.

Part of the difficulty in making this assessment is the distance between the initial intervention and the consequent change or impact. Much can happen in between, for better or for worse. This framework will help us to better identify the change we hope to bring about by our intervention. Only with this clarity can we hope to monitor and measure the success of our actions.

Figure 1 shows in a simplified way that our best hope of achieving a positive contribution to peace is by identifying the dynamic changes taking place without our intervention, and figuring out how we can influence these to make the situation better than it would otherwise have been. The measure of our work can thus be made at two levels: monitoring whether or not the processes have indeed been 'deflected' as we hoped; and evaluating whether or not the deflection has resulted in the positive change we expected.

## Figure 1: Identifying expected change



**Today**          **The future**

→ Context evolving without our intervention

▸ Changes in trends and dynamics due to our intervention

→ Our intervention

◂ ▸ Difference due to our actions, at a given point in the future

# To clarify our mandate

We are a non-governmental organisation committed to peacebuilding. We believe in a world where people resolve their differences without violence and can build a more peaceful future for their families and communities. We design, implement and engage in peacebuilding interventions in order to fulfil the three components of our mission:

- Working with people directly affected by conflict to find peaceful solutions;
- Shaping policies and practices to support peace; and
- Collaborating with all those striving for peace to strengthen our collective voice and impact.

We value our partnerships and our belief that solutions to violent conflict can only be found with the involvement of those directly affected by it. But this does not relieve us of the responsibility of being clear about what we do, why we do it and the impact we have. Indeed, we have our own 'outsider' identity that is separate from that of our partners. This framework helps to clarify our identity, thereby strengthening our partnerships.

As a non-membership organisation, we have no mandate from paying, public supporters to intervene in the places where we work. Our mandate comes from a transparent commitment to our goals, values and methods, and through this, from the relationships we develop with those we seek to assist. This peacebuilding framework is one way in which we can express these goals, values and methods, to those we are aiming to assist, to those we receive funding from, and to those with an interest in creating the conditions for peace in regions affected by violent conflict. In this way, we are putting on the table something that these groups can hold us accountable for. We are being clear about what we are, what we believe in and what we do.

## To explain the kinds of contexts in which we work

As a peacebuilding organisation, we are concerned with finding answers to why particular societies are characterised by violent conflict rather than by peaceful conflicts. This framework helps us clarify how we determine where we work. We are drawn to societies experiencing violence, but we work on peace. Although violence is a determinant of where we work, the eradication of violence is not in itself the primary goal of our engagement. Our vision is to help create a world where people seek to resolve their differences peacefully; a world where, when people seek better lives for their families and communities, they are able to manage any conflicts that may arise with honesty and wisdom, without resorting to violence.

The prevalence of violence and/or potential violence is an indicator of the extent to which these conditions exist or not. The space for peacebuilding is narrower in those places experiencing all-out civil war, and broader in those places where settlement has been reached or where violence is anticipated but not yet apparent.

# To be explicit about the core characteristics that underpin our programming

In pursuing our mission, we believe in adhering to certain core values and principles as stated in our ethical guidance for staff, and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Our guiding principles**

| We value... | Our ethical principles |
|---|---|
| • **Progress**, because no society is perfect and each contains both the need and opportunities for improvement<br>• **Fairness**, because everyone should have access to opportunities and should not be treated arbitrarily, nor discriminated against, because of her/his status or identity<br>• **Respect**, because everyone should be valued and respected as a person with inalienable human rights and her/his own values and views<br>• **Inclusion**, because the participation and collaboration of people with diverse and complementary knowledge and perspectives is critical for cohesion and the quality of outcomes<br>• **Openness** about intentions and actions, because this is an essential element of trust, accountability and collaboration | • We integrate the views and experiences of people into the design of policies and programmes that will affect them, and continue to do so as we learn and adapt<br>• We are clear and open about our intentions and plans, and how they contribute to peace<br>• We monitor the consequences of our actions, and discontinue any that are not contributing to peace<br>• We avoid increasing people's risk of harm by our actions, though we respect the choices they make in their own actions<br>• We do not abuse the power that unequal relationships at times confer on us<br>• We will work with those who can make a difference for peace, even when we disagree with their ethics or actions – unless by so doing we contribute to harm, undermine peace or impede our or others' ability to build peace<br>• We adopt a position of humility and do not take on roles or activities we cannot reasonably achieve, nor do we claim achievements and outcomes that are not our own |

This framework document does not seek to reinterpret these values and principles, which apply to the full breadth of our activities. What it does do is draw on these documents to highlight the key principles that are central to our process of programming.

We consider ourselves part of the human rights community without being a human rights organisation per se. Historically, many non-governmental organisations working in the area of human rights have focused on documenting and denouncing human rights violations, and campaigning against parties associated with such abuses. Our approach is to take a broader approach, incorporating human rights to build peace with justice. Respect for human rights and justice is part of peacebuilding. Violent conflict is, after all, a denial of human rights. Given that human rights abuses are often a precursor to, and are always a consequence of, violent conflict, our work is to contribute to the protection of individual and collective human rights by working with others to build peaceful societies in which human rights are valued, respected and enforced.

# 2. The analytical framework

## What is peace and what is peacebuilding?

Conflicts are not necessarily inherently bad. Conflicts are an inevitable part of living in society, and a result of the differences and tensions between people and between groups. A certain degree of conflict is essential for progress, because progress requires change and change generates conflict.

It is violent conflict, rather than conflict itself, that we see as a problem. Although we recognise that that there are times when fighting is justified, this is a last resort and best avoided. The challenge is to channel conflicts in peaceful ways to constructive ends, and to manage differences without violence.

### What is peace?

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. They are doing so without compromising the possibility of continuing to do so in the future, or the possibility of others to do so. This is the idea of interdependent, positive peace.

Peace is recognisable not just by evidence that people are resolving conflicts and differences peacefully, but also by the presence of a number of 'peace factors' that allow people to do so.

This idea of peace can be applied at multiple levels: global, regional, national, provincial, local, etc. In doing so, we recognise that the prospects for peace at each level depend partly on the degree of peace at other levels, and in other places and groups.

Peace can be more or less present, on a continuum. So, for example, we can talk of a society, a country, a region or even the entire world as being largely peaceful, or significantly prone to violence. What is important is not just where it appears on the continuum at a given moment, but whether it is moving towards the left or right extreme (see Figure 2).

## Figure 2: Peace continuum

More conflict prone

Society more likely
to be peaceful

In considering peace in a 'society', one must also consider the influence and impact
it has on others – for example, if some people are living in peace at the expense of
other people living in violence, this would justify placing it at a point more towards
the left of this continuum.

Peace is not a fixed state: there is always the likelihood that people will find ways
to turn conflict into violence, however peaceful things may seem for a given group,
time and place. Nor are the factors that enable peace entirely naturally self-
sustaining. Thus, peace has to be purposefully gained and constantly maintained,
through vigilance and effort. Given the pressures on society to adapt to different
circumstances and changes, there must be strong ability, will and structure to
manage conflict peacefully. Peaceful societies demonstrate a resilience to adapt,
to change, to promote relationships that are mutually affirmative, and to value
cooperation.

Because of this emphasis on 'positive peace' – the peaceful management of
differences and conflict, rather than the absence of war – our analytical framework
focuses on the presence or absence of generic conditions that allow or disable
peace, rather than on the causes of a particular conflict. Of course, the way in which
these factors combine to reflect a conflict/peace dynamic will vary from context to
context.

Peacebuilding is the set of processes whose purpose is to gain and maintain peace.
This means activities and interventions that are designed to influence events,
processes and actors to create new outcomes, so that peaceful conditions are
gained and/or maintained. This is a larger goal than simply preventing or stopping
violence, or resolving conflicts.

'Peacebuilding' covers a broad set of interventions being implemented by any party with the capacity to influence the prospects for peace. What sets aside peacebuilding interventions from other interventions – development, humanitarian, diplomatic, economic, etc. – is quite simply that they are implemented with the purpose of building lasting peace, and are based on as complete an understanding as possible of the factors that contribute to or prevent peace.

If the intervening party is prevented – by reason of capacity or for external reasons – from developing a relatively complete understanding, it would be irresponsible to engage in peacebuilding. But because no individual or institution can develop a complete understanding, networking and partnerships are essential to peacebuilding. Outsiders and insiders to a conflict context have complementary advantages in understanding the context, and in devising and implementing appropriate peacebuilding approaches. Peacebuilding is a dynamic process of engagement and relationship building between different people or groups.

Our peacebuilding programmes are designed to achieve identifiable changes at the level of the peace factors discussed in the next section.

Because the presence or absence of peace is determined by the character of society or societies involved, we must recognise that there is a normative – perhaps even a social engineering – element to peacebuilding work: if our analysis and values tell us that peace requires society to adopt different values, systems, power structures, relationships, behaviours, etc., we should not shy away from this.

However, it is not up to – or even possible for – us alone to change societies. Such changes are brought about by affecting the structures, behaviours and attitudes of those in society, and are achieved by influencing those with the power, the mandate and the capacity to do so in and on a given situation or issue. This requires identifying those within society who want to achieve these kinds of changes, and working in support of their efforts.

# The web of factors that gain and sustain peace

If peace is when people, groups, societies, countries, regions, etc. manage their conflicts without violence, then what are the conditions – or peace factors – that contribute to and enable peace, and by which progress towards peace can be recognised?

These peace factors are listed below, and their relationship to the definition of peace is shown in Table 2. They are integral parts of an interconnected web, in which the presence or absence of each factor has an influence on the presence or absence of the other factors. They should not therefore be considered in isolation from one another.

Even though it may be legitimate – for reasons of niche, prioritisation, funding or capacity – for us to focus our programming efforts on one peace factor in a given context, our analysis and monitoring and evaluation must recognise and take into account the interconnectedness between factors. Successful programming on a particular factor will almost certainly have an impact on the other factors.

The peace factors in the following sections draw on the idea of human security. They are written in terms of 'people', but this word can be replaced by communities, peoples, institutions, nations, regions, etc. That is, each factor can be considered at any level and all levels – for example, local, national, regional or global. Thus, for example, 'voice' or 'effective laws' as expressed below can be assessed and analysed in terms of impact on and participation of individuals, ethnic groups, nations or even entire regions. When considering the strength and weakness of the different peace factors in analyses, it is important to look beyond the initial context and consider ways in which broader and higher-level influences and dynamics impact on them.

In considering these peace factors, perceptions are as important and as factual as objectively verifiable data. For example, while it may be possible to point to reliable statistics proving that government investment in a particular part of a country is as high as elsewhere, this fact should be considered alongside the fact that people in that part of the country perceive themselves to be neglected and under-served, and thus excluded.

Peacebuilding is inherently value-based. Thus, the following peace factors can be read as a statement of the outcomes that we value. Running through all these peace factors is the cross-cutting idea of fairness.

Out of the five peace factors that follow, the first is described in most detail, conveying the weight we give to the impact of power relations on the conditions for peace.

## Power

### *How leadership is provided, how people inter-relate, and how they belong*

### Voice and participation

People have influence over the choice of those who provide them with leadership, and over the directions and conduct of such leaders. They also need to be able to voice their impressions of whether or not the system of governance itself is working well, or if it needs adjusting from time to time.

The right to be heard is balanced by the responsibility to contribute. Voice is not enough, and people should also ideally contribute to the public good in other ways, such as materially through taxes or labour, in order to feel membership of the group and to be able to hold the leadership to account in a form of social contract. Indeed, people should be able to participate more proactively in politics if they wish to do so.

### Inclusion

While people in any society will have differing amounts and types of power, a peaceful society is one that does not exclude sections of its population from power on account of their membership of a particular sub-section – for instance, based on sex, ethnicity, religion, etc.

Societies tend to be dominated by particular powerful groups. Their power may come from numbers or from historical control over the economy. This may lead to stability in the short term, but over time it entrenches injustice and the perception of injustice and resentment among those who are excluded from the political process.

It is not necessarily a given that 'the excluded' will rise up and cause violence. Indeed, the nature of their exclusion may well be that it has become accepted by the

excluded themselves, i.e. their expectations have been shaped and lowered by what is known as 'invisible power'. But fundamentally, a society that structurally excludes some of its members is a society that is failing to resolve conflicts, and is thus prone to violence.

This is particularly problematic when identifiable subsets within society are excluded. A typical and particularly important example of this is the exclusion of women and young adults on account of their sex and/or age.

## Power differentials

Power is exercised in many different ways, but the power of political decision-making (i.e. decision-making about the use of resources, at any level, including the household) is one of the most crucial for our purposes.

A society in which all members – men and women, rich and poor, from all regions and ethnicities – have the opportunity and the capacity to participate in decision-making is more resilient to violence than one in which decisions tend to be in the hands of a particular category.

Moreover, participation in formal political arenas is determined by – and in turn influences – the social attitudes and values that are current in society at large. The participation of women, for example, depends on positive attitudes towards women in general, as well as mechanisms designed to facilitate their access to formal politics.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that discriminatory power relations can exist between different categories of men (for example, between older and younger men) and between different categories of women (for example, between elite women and women in menial occupations), as well as between women and men.

All these power differentials, if not recognised and addressed, can contribute to a society's capacity or incapacity to manage conflict.

## Social capital

The relationships between people are built on mutual social capital that is constantly being drawn upon and reinvested. This is the 'give and take' that allows for trust,

compromise and reconciliation required for conflicts to be managed, and investment in such 'horizontal relationships' is most effective as peace factors when they extend beyond local boundaries to include members of 'other' groups.

## Leadership and legitimacy

Those with power exercise it responsibly, considering the impact of their decisions and actions on those affected, and with a view to the future consequences.

Leaders in a peaceful society exercise 'power with', rather than 'power over'. Those with power to make decisions or provide services – at whatever level – are viewed as holding that power legitimately and exercising it fairly, by all those affected. They exercise the power in a way that maintains or increases their legitimacy, in line with a 'contract' based on shared values.

This legitimacy may be transferred to others more able to respect the terms of the contract, if those affected decide to do so.

## Values and incentives

Society values good governance and functional relationships among and between people, and incentivises behaviours in line with these values through rewards and sanctions.

A peaceful culture of power is critical – one that encourages people to modify the power held by their leaders, and that allows leaders to be held accountable for their actions. The ability to achieve compromise between competing demands and interests within society is a key feature of peace. Human rights are intrinsically valued by society, and its culture and institutions of power are shaped by and reflect this.

Issues of power are not abstract, but are felt and considered by people in terms of the policies and services they are (or are not) provided by those who lead the society or group to which they belong. These services are related to the headings that follow: income and assets; law and justice; safety; and wellbeing, all of which are subject to issues of quality and opportunity that are defined largely in terms of power relations.

### Relationships

Ultimately, one of the key attributes for peace is the presence of functional, dynamic, open relationships between people and those who govern them, and among people and peoples, allowing for two-way collaboration, communication and the development of trust.

## Income and assets

*How people make their living and manage their assets*

### Availability of economic opportunity

Enough economic opportunities are available on a fair and sustainable basis to satisfy the needs of all people, so that they are nourished, can invest capital in whatever form is appropriate (taxes, savings, social capital, etc.) and maximise their sense of economic contribution. People can reduce their livelihood vulnerability and help provide services their society needs. In developing opportunities for economic activity, consideration is given to the impact on the environment. There is a willingness to ensure economic activity is sustained within the carrying capacity of the physical environment upon which it depends. Diversity of economic opportunities is important not only in encouraging competition and innovation, but also in ensuring sufficient interdependence, both within and between different communities.

### Equality of economic opportunity

There is a tendency towards fairness and inclusion, so that barriers to economic opportunity are not strongly aligned with fault lines in society such as gender, ethnicity, class, region, age. This reduces the likelihood of resentment due to a perception of exclusion, and more mundanely, it provides work and engagement for people who might otherwise be in a position to destabilise. Functional inequality and competition are, however, important as a motivating factor for innovation and social mobility, and society accepts the possibility of self-improvement by individuals or households.

## Fairness, equality and effectiveness of the law and legal process

*How justice is applied and received*

### Effective laws

Laws are designed with the purpose – among others – to reduce the ability or need of all individuals and groups to use violence or provoke violence by others,

and to protect human rights. In doing so, value is given to traditional concepts of law, justice and rights.

### Effective mechanisms for justice
Formal and informal mechanisms exist to enforce the laws fairly, applying them as equally as possible to all, and minimising the possibility of impunity. These mechanisms focus on prevention, protection and punishment, and enable justice not only to be done, but to be seen to be done.

## Safety

***How people can keep safe from harm***

### Personal security
All people can live their lives in security, without undue fear of physical or psychological threat. Although the physical prevention of violence is not enough by itself to build peace, it is an essential component in peacebuilding. A society in which violence against others is commonly used to resolve personal or local conflicts is a society that legitimises violence and is more likely to resort to violence as a solution to political or other conflicts.

### Agents of security
Police and security forces, and others with the power and responsibility to provide security services, have the trust of the societies they are recruited to protect, and the skills and capacity to protect. This is in line with the society's values, which themselves reflect the principles of human rights and humanitarian law.

## Wellbeing

***How people's mental and physical wellbeing is maintained and their aspirations are considered***

### Fair access
Shelter, nutrition, education, health and clean water are fairly accessible to all.

### Quality of services
People can access services of decent standards that, though inevitably variable, are provided to a sufficient minimum level of quality to allow them to live in dignity. This

basic minimum level is established as a comparative level, i.e. if standards increase generally, the basic minimum standard also increases. The way in which education is provided should reinforce the values and the other peace factors, so that children grow up with the vision, the desire and the capability to live peacefully.

## Psychosocial wellbeing

Wellbeing is not measured in terms of services alone: it is fundamentally about the quality of people's lives, seen individually and as a group. This includes psychosocial issues such as people's status (e.g. under-class, refugee, displaced), location and environment (e.g. slums, proximity to polluting industry), their access to leisure opportunities, their structural vulnerability (e.g. HIV), which have a significant psychosocial impact. For example, a stratum of bored young people without a sense of hope has a negative influence on the possibilities of peace. In particular, peaceful societies will enable individuals and groups to feel respected and to experience their contribution to social change being valued.

**Figure 3: Peace factors and their interconnectedness**



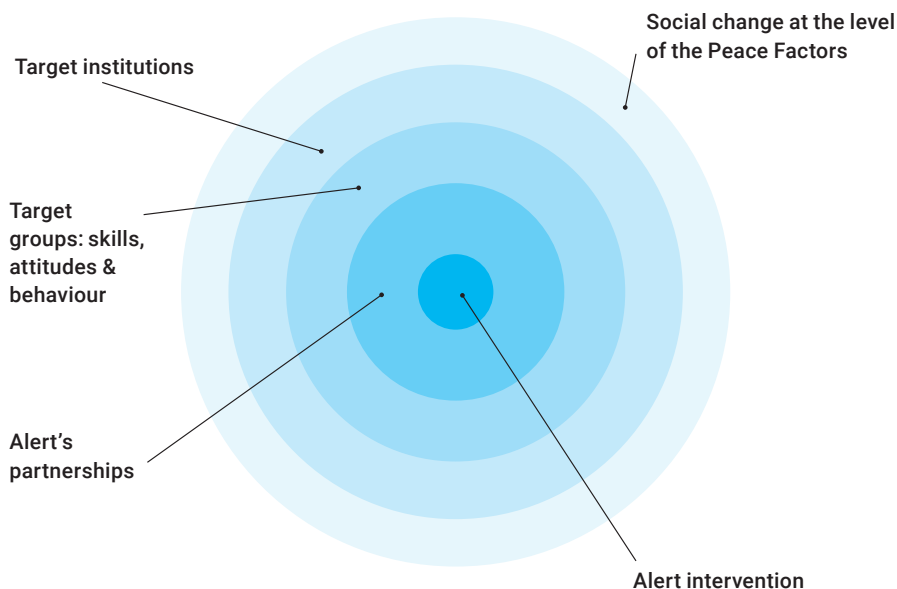Law & justice

Safety

Wellbeing

Power

**Income & assets**
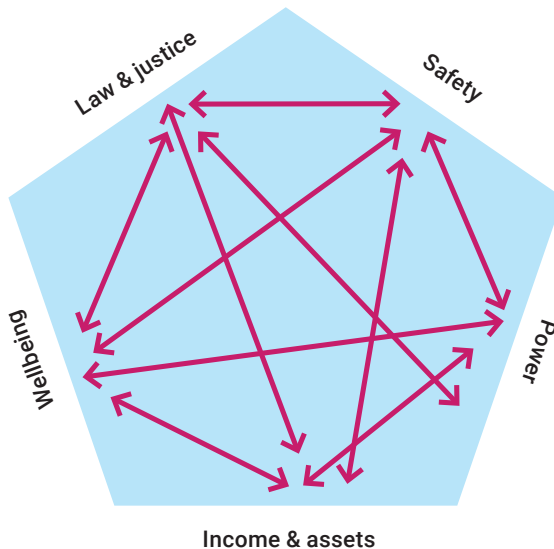
As mentioned above, these peace factors are all influenced by one another, as illustrated by Figure 3. This diagram merely shows the generic interconnectedness

between the different peace-enabling or peace-hindering factors, and therefore the need to consider the influence of factors on all sides of the pentagon even when focusing particularly on one specific peace factor. In any given context, these connections will play out differently, and one or more of the factors may be of priority importance, either in terms of its potential to promote peaceful or violent approaches to conflict, or its amenability to change.

## Using the Programming Framework for analysis

One of the main purposes of this Programming Framework is to provide a framework within which our programming analysis can be done. There are many valuable ways of conducting analysis. The choice of method and approach depends on a number of factors, such as the mindset and experience of the people conducting the analysis, the specific purpose (e.g. strategy, project design, project review, etc.) and resources available. Therefore, we do not set out here to present a 'right' way of doing analysis – but rather some guiding, underlying principles.

First, it is worth reiterating that the basic idea underlying this Programming Framework is that our actions are usually going to be aimed at, in the first instance, obtaining changes in the attitudes, behaviours and conditions that enable or hinder the peace factors (see Table 2). The following diagram (see Figure 4) helps to illustrate this, by showing our intervention as a stone being dropped into water and creating a series of waves, each pushing outwards until – at a considerable remove – they have an impact on the peace factors. For example, our interventions will influence the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, who will in turn influence institutions that create the conditions for peace. Impacts may be big or small, and may be positive or negative – perhaps both – and whatever we do will have unforeseen consequences. This framework helps us to be accountable for the size, quality and impact of the 'stones' we drop into the conflict contexts where we work.

## Figure 4: The peacebuilding ripple

**Target institutions**

**Social change at the level of the Peace Factors**

**Target groups: skills, attitudes & behaviour**

**Alert's partnerships**

**Alert intervention**

The critical task in programming analysis is therefore:

- To describe the context or issue being analysed in terms of the presence or absence, strength or weakness, and fragility or robustness of the different peace factors;
- To identify the processes and dynamics operating in and on the context, and their likely impact – positive and negative – on the peace factors;[1]
- To identify which peace factors are most critical to building peace in the context, and also which ones are amenable to change;
- To identify the structures, attitudes and behaviours of institutions and/or individuals that are enabling or hindering the peace factors; and those that have the capacity to influence the dynamics – and thus improve the presence, strength and robustness of the peace factors concerned;

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1    It is important to consider the context as broadly as possible here, so as to capture 'external' factors.

- To identify the interventions that we might implement or support, in order to enable such influence to be exerted – this will be based on an assessment of our capacity and comparative/competitive advantage, including our partnerships and potential for collaboration with others, and on an understanding of the possible synergy and overlap with the peacebuilding actions of others; and
- To envisage the impact – including the possible negative impact – of such interventions.

The purpose of the analysis is to determine what actions we can take – if any – to improve the prospects for peace in a specific conflict context or regarding a specific issue or theme that is relevant to peace and conflict – often one of the peace factors.

Analysis is not a one-off event, but is rather a continuous and iterative process, so that we are continually updating our information and assessment of the context and the programming possibilities.

The analysis will be done differently according to the programming decision concerned: i.e. organisational strategy, programme strategy, country strategy, or a specific project proposal. When resources allow, the ideal is to conduct a holistic context analysis in terms of all the peace factors, even if the situation is one in which we are likely – for funding or capacity reasons – already committed to working on a particular sector or theme. Given the interconnectedness of the various peace factors, this analysis will provide a baseline against which to judge later changes in context, including changes attributable to our work, i.e. impact.

Realistically, however, the initial analysis may be more superficial in some cases and may lead us to a focus on specific aspects of the context or theme, which will be assessed and analysed in more depth. Even so, the whole context should be described and some opinion formed about each of the peace factors.

Given the importance of monitoring, accountability and evaluation, this analysis will give rise to specific programming ideas containing a specific and clear hypothesis of change, which will be expressed in terms of one or a combination of the peace factors.

# 3. Gender and peacebuilding

The purpose of this document is to build a basis for a common understanding across the organisation on the links between gender and peacebuilding. This is part of a longer-term process of integrating gender analysis into our programming, policy work and practice.

## Why gender?

Gender is one of the factors that influence, positively and negatively, the ability of societies to manage conflict without resorting to violence. Since gender analysis can help us understand complex relationships, power relations and roles in society, it is a powerful tool for analysing conflict and building peace.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and expectations that are attributed to men, women, girls and boys on the basis of their sex. By the term 'gender relations' we mean a combination of roles, identities, institutions and ideologies, which have enabled societies to allocate the different functions of production and reproduction to different sexes and to uphold a specific social order.

## Key considerations

The following considerations constitute a basic conceptual framework on the basis of which we can start integrating gender analysis into our programming:

- Gender is just one, albeit important, aspect of people's identity and cannot sufficiently capture social reality unless it is seen as connected to a multitude of identities and power relations, such as class, ethnicity, race, sexual identity, age, dis/ability.
- Gender relations are created by societies and differ from one context to another. They are dynamic and change over time. Indeed, the interplay between gender relations and conflict dynamics is complex and highly context-specific.
- Men's and women's vulnerability to violent conflict and their capacity to respond are partly determined by gender relations.

- There is a relationship between gender relations and continuing cycles of violence. Norms that promote narrow, uncompromising and violent identities for boys and men are an important underlying cause of high levels of violence at all levels of society. Individuals who have the courage to break prevailing gender norms and stand up against violence risk losing fundamental rights and endanger their own safety. These dynamics have implications both for conflict analysis and for designing peacebuilding strategies: if gender relations have been a factor in perpetuating violence, they can also be transformed into a strategy for rebuilding more peaceful social relations.
- At the same time, violent conflict is a driver for changes in gender relations. In many cases, women have taken on a broader range of economic and societal roles in times of conflict. Conflict can also give rise to more rigid gender stereotypes that men and women are expected to fulfil. We should aim to make use of positive changes in gender relations during conflict to promote more peaceful and inclusive societies.

## Understanding the Programming Framework from a gender perspective

Our Programming Framework sets out five peace factors that determine the ability of societies to resolve conflict without resorting to violence – namely, power, income and assets, laws and legal process, safety, and wellbeing. Gender relations have an impact on each of these factors and therefore on the prospects for peace. In drawing out the linkages between gender relations and peace, it is useful to consider the correlation between a person's sex and their ability to access, enjoy and influence each of these peace factors.

### Power

Gender relations are relations of power. The way in which power is distributed can affect the way people feel about leadership, participation and decision-making. Gender relations help shape men's and women's access to political decision-making and the ability to enjoy representative leadership. Men's traditional role in the public sphere has, in most societies, given them greater access to decision-making both at formal and informal levels. The majority of women do not necessarily have their interests represented, even when individual women are able to participate politically.

Gender analysis of power is not only about understanding access to decision-making and representative leadership, however. Understanding the relationship between gender, power and peace requires a nuanced understanding of the less tangible and visible forms of power. Norms, stereotypes, perceptions and rumours – which can all be considered manifestations of power – make gender roles and relations seem very natural and discourage us from questioning our place in family and society. Although unequal power relations may have become accepted by many of those who are excluded, a society that structurally excludes some of its members is a society that is failing to exploit its potential.

## Income and assets

Unequal access to and control over income and assets can be both a factor and consequence of gender relations. Women's access to productive resources is not necessarily matched by control over them, and an individual's economic choices are significantly conditioned by his or her gender role. Access to and control over income and assets can be changed by conflict. For example, economic hardship can mean that women are forced to undertake new productive roles ('men's jobs'), whereas for men it may mean a loss of income and loss of status as head of the household.

## Fairness, equality and effectiveness of the law and legal process

Laws provide the formal framework for rights, and gender analysis should include an analysis of formal in/equality of rights enshrined in legislation as well as the extent to which these laws are enforced in practice. Discriminatory laws, inadequate implementation of laws that in principle guarantee equality and inequitable informal norms are at the basis of women's inability to adequately respond to difficulties that arise from armed conflict. Women, for example, do not always have the right to inherit or own property, with a negative impact on women's access to income and assets and often devastating consequences for widows.

## Safety

Whether men and women feel safe is influenced by gender relations. Women's confinement to the role of mothers can limit their choices and make them more vulnerable to violence in the home, but also gives them special status as mothers of soldiers. Men, on the other hand, may have a dominant position in society, but through their socialisation into violent behaviour (and protection of women and

children) they are put in constant danger of physical violence in the public sphere. As gender norms are accepted by a broad section of society, gender-based vulnerability becomes effectively normalised and grievances about gender-based violence may not be considered legitimate.

## Wellbeing

People can derive a sense of wellbeing and self-confidence from their gender identity, especially if they are in a position to fulfil their socially ascribed roles or derive a certain degree of status from this identity. At the same time, drastic changes in people's ability to fulfil traditional gender roles because of conflict can considerably decrease the psychosocial wellbeing of men and women.

# 4. Our methodology

## Overview

A methodology is more than simply a collection of methods. It is the entire body of practices, procedures and rules used by those who work in a discipline or engage in an inquiry. Our peacebuilding methodology is based on the way in which we understand peace and peacebuilding, and thus incorporates much of what has been described in previous sections of this document. Taken as a whole, the methodology guides us in designing and implementing interventions that strengthen the peace factors sustainably, and thus builds the capacity within society to manage conflict without violence. Our methodology enables us to:

- Have a tangible and felt impact on societal change in the spheres of power, income and assets, wellbeing, law and justice, and safety;
- Remain faithful to our principles and standards of practice (as articulated in the code of conduct, for example); and
- Demonstrate sensitivity appropriate for the actions of an 'outside agency', whose roots lie largely outside the specific contexts in which it works.

Figure 5 below illustrates how the different characteristics and methods that comprise our methodology pull together as a gear mechanism. Our engagement at different 'levels' aims to address the key peace factors described in section two, whether local, national or international. In reality, there will be more than the three levels of engagement highlighted here for illustrative purposes.

The primacy of these peace factors is illustrated by their presence at the centre of each 'cog' in the gear. However, movement is not possible without adopting appropriate methods through which we interact with others. These methods – advocacy, accompaniment, dialogue, training and research – constitute the teeth of the cogs.

Learning and exchange of experience from different levels of engagement, as well as from different conflict contexts, strengthens the overall process and is channelled to

and from different peacebuilding interventions. Together with learning and exchange, the core characteristics of collaboration, inquiry and analysis, independence and leverage ensure that our interventions are robust and sustainable.

It is the combination of engagement at different levels that enables us to have meaningful traction on the key problems it is addressing. Each level has an influence on the others and is an integral part of the overall gear mechanism that generates movement and change.

We bring our influence to bear on different cogs at different times and locations. The choice of level(s) and method(s) is dependent on the change goal in question – the problem being addressed. Whatever the engagement, all levels will be affected in some way or another. Intervention at all levels will have maximum impact.

The gear represents the totality of our methodology, movement being towards a world in which people, groups, societies, countries, regions, etc. have greater capacities to manage their conflicts without violence.

One 'cog' in this mechanism is enlarged to show how the different peace factors, characteristics and methods combine. While the peace factors are described in section two, the core characteristics and methods are explained in the following pages.

## Core characteristics

To successfully build peace as we have defined it, our interventions invariably reflect the following core characteristics.

### Collaboration and partnerships

Peacebuilding requires that we collaborate with others, for three main reasons. First, the scale of the endeavour requires us to work within networks and partnerships to have an impact at any significant scope and scale. Second, the multi-dimensionality of the issues we aim to address most often requires a multi-dimensional approach that is beyond the reach of a single entity. Third, the solutions to societal problems must by their very nature be applied from within society, which means we often rely on people and organisations in the conflict-affected societies where we work, to define and achieve the appropriate changes.

## Figure 5: Our 'gear' methodology



Local/
Community
level

National/
Country level

Global/
International
level
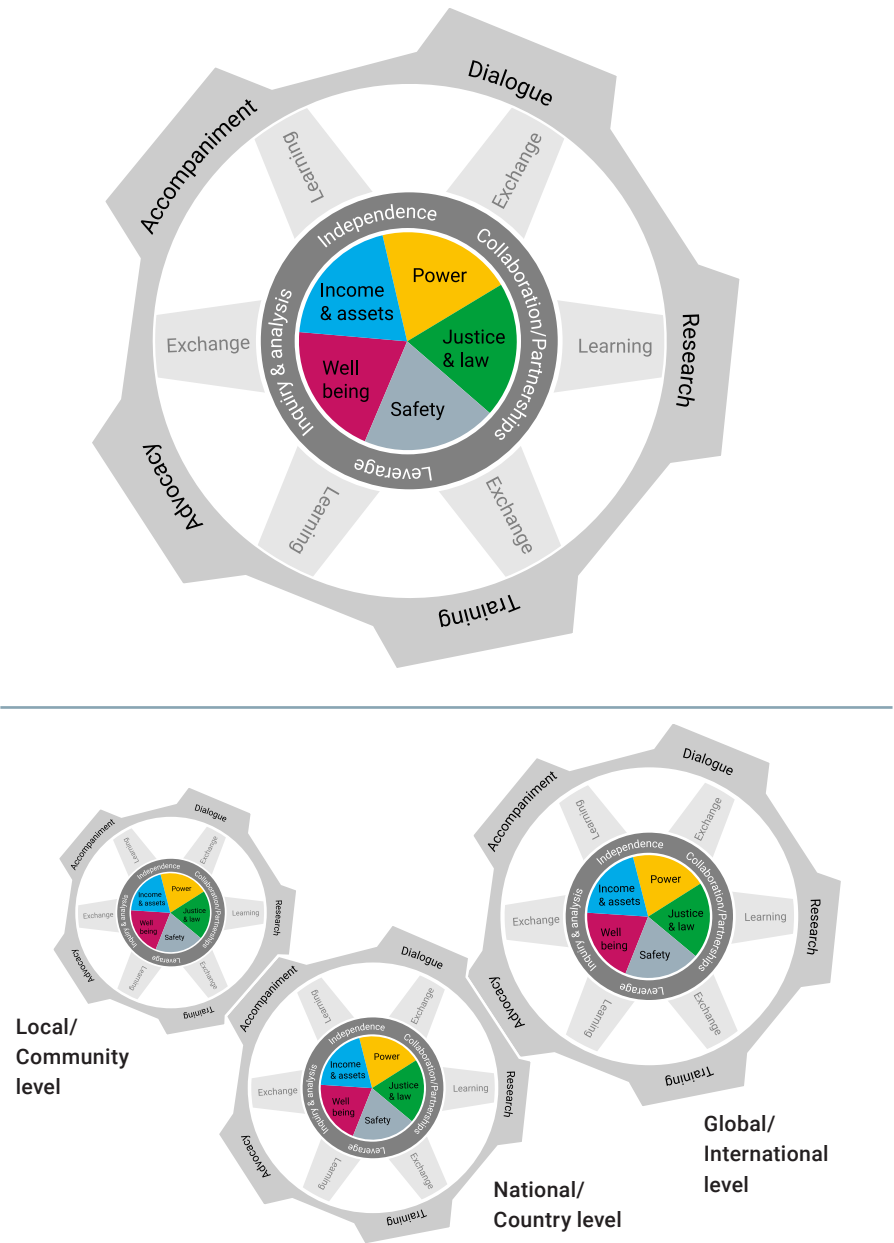
Collaborative relationships take many forms, tailored to the opportunities available and the needs determined by the specific changes we aim to promote. We develop deep and continual analysis with a range of collaborators operating at different levels. A core element of our work in peacebuilding contexts 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
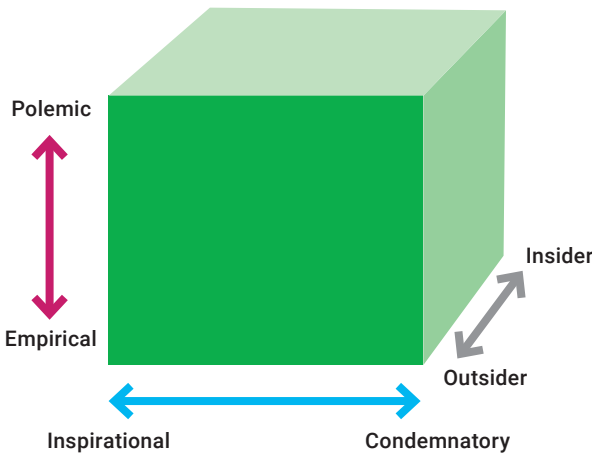
## Training

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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Core characteristics:**<br>Collaboration/ partnerships<br>Independence<br>Leverage<br>Enquiry, analysis and clarity of purpose<br>Learning and exchange<br><br>**Methods:**<br>Dialogue<br>Research<br>Advocacy<br>Training<br>Accompaniment | Attitudes, behaviours and conditions, and other factors that enable or hinder the peace factors<br><br>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 | **Power**<br>Voice and participation<br>Inclusion and power differentials<br>Social capital<br>Leadership and legitimacy<br>Values and incentives<br>Functional horizontal and vertical relationships<br><br>**Income and assets**<br>Economic opportunity<br>Economic equality<br><br>**Fair and effective laws**<br>Effective laws<br>Effective legal mechanisms<br><br>**Safety**<br>Personal security<br>Security providers<br><br>**Wellbeing**<br>Fair access to the means of wellbeing<br>Quality of the services that promote wellbeing<br>Psychosocial wellbeing | 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<br><br>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<br><br>This is the idea of inter-dependent, positive peace |

**Direction of impact →**

**← Direction of analysis**

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