

**Geneva Dialogue on Environment,
Climate, Conflict, and Peace:
Meeting 5**

24 September, Zoom

Notes:

- A facilitated discussion about the impact of covid-19 on our work / environmental peacebuilding
 - Assuming the next year will be like the last 6 months

- Introductory inputs from 3 members
 - Peacemaking operations
 - Three words to describe what's happening now: Stop, Go, Shift
 - Stop: Almost everything has stopped in government level/Track 1 political or highly-sensitive processes
 - Go: Local-level operations have flourished
 - Shift: Peacemaking actors have seen attention away from the political work to the humanitarian work
 - Some covid-19 response framing from peacemaking actors:
 - providing information & combating misinformation
 - providing humanitarian & health goods, negotiating access for humanitarian actors
 - supporting communities in strengthening their own responses
 - negotiating humanitarian ceasefires and humanitarian pauses
 - 12 quiet ceasefires with armed groups
 - Armed groups have joined the UNSG ceasefire, but no governments
 - Now that people are used to the pandemic, there is a resurgence of political tracks
 - Need to adapt ways of working - more time & energy into strategic planning
 - Environmental peacemaking operations
 - Intermingling of environmental and health/covid agendas
 - They are bound together
 - Ex: Ukraine - During the pandemic there was a lot of shooting, but movement restrictions personnel around water filtration stations couldn't access their job sites (100k people at risk of losing water) / Different actors were able to convince the decision-makers to find an agreement safeguarding access to water stations
 - Key questions:
 - How do you prove your continued relevance to donors & interlocutors?

- Have there been any upsides to the pandemic on anyone's work?
 - Bridging HQ & the field
 - When you bring together a wide array of actors, both in HQ and fragile/conflict settings, what becomes possible in the adaptation?
 - Trust - How do we get to know people, build trust, integrate them into your work, and unhold existing relationships virtually?
 - Safety - With technology, how do you navigate protecting sensitive topics and vulnerable groups as they discuss online?
 - What does absence of some actors on the ground mean in the medium-long term for peacebuilding? Are we losing something we may not get back?
 - Adaptation to digital formats
 - Two tracks
 - Can we move this activity online?
 - Does this activity need to happen now? In this way?
 - What needs to be in person?
 - What is our duty of care?
 - How can we move this activity online?
 - What are the best tools for online facilitation?
 - How do people learn, work, relate, create online?
 - What do we gain or lose by collaborating with each other online? In person?
 - Resource/report: [covid-19 impact on peace](#)
- Facilitated discussion on COVID-19 by Tobias von Lossow, Clingendael Institute
 - What do we gain collaborating with each other digitally?
 - Building relationships with people in other countries easily
 - Saving money and protecting the environment by not traveling
 - This is where the future is going, so we should get on board now
 - Hybrid events (Impact Hub Netherlands, adelphi, Paris Peace Forum)
 - The Geneva-bubble has gone online so people in other countries can be included - access to information on policy frameworks, etc.
 - So now outsiders get to feed into these conversations they were previously excluded from based on proximity
 - Gain flexibility of schedule if you don't need to fly people around the world to do a project
 - People who are not experts in topics have more access to different conversations that they may not have been invited to in person
 - I.e., the democratization of information
 - Re-evaluation of our work and how we do it: there is now an expansion of stakeholders and widening of conversations that had previously been insular
 - Invitation to think about things in a new way - why were we doing this?
 - Given the extenuating circumstances, it's a time when actors feel a little more freedom to be creative/make mistakes, because the atmosphere feels slightly more forgiving than usual

- What do we gain by only collaborating in person?
 - Water-cooler discussions and relationship building
 - But meeting in person doesn't not inherently build trust
 - Especially for workshops, learning and attention are more quickly and easily given in person

- How do you prove your continued relevance to donors & interlocutors?
 - Lost some of the feeling of a right to be there - lost the ability to monitor the situation in the same way
 - Curfews, internet connection issues, etc., making it much harder to get feedback from people on the ground
 - If you can't be in country, it's hard to verify what's actually happening, and this ties into how much you can trust conversations being safe
 - Idea from participant: What about a core connecting element online with regional, small groupings for regional meetings, in partnership sometimes with reliable actors... like an event online with workgroup discussions sponsored by a friendly embassy?

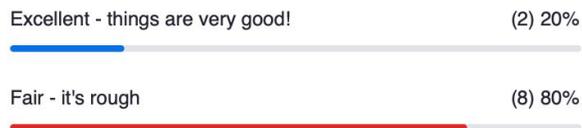
- Trust - How do we get to know people, build trust, integrate them into your work, and unhold existing relationships virtually?
 - Build community ahead of virtual events to facilitate a better experience
 - For example, host one-on-one meetings with the participants first, then come together as a group
 - Building trust through a process of working together on a specific project - follow-through/demonstrated reliability can build credibility between parties

- Safety - With technology, how do you navigate protecting sensitive topics and vulnerable groups as they discuss online?
 - We don't really know what's happening when we host online events
 - When you share important data about armed groups online (whatsapp, zoom), how can you protect yourselves and the individuals?
 - We should just assume that nothing is private and someone is listening
 - Perhaps work on two different tracks: one is public dissemination, and one is very private
 - The technologies that are deemed the most unsafe are also the ones that work best for people on the ground (i.e., whatsapp and zoom)
 - Putting people in potential danger in every conversation

- What are some of the tools and best practices for online facilitation?
 - Mural
 - Virtual whiteboard that integrates with zoom
 - Downloadable parts

- Sessions Lab
 - Miro
 - Small groups and breakout rooms that “force” participants to interact
 - BlackBoard virtual room (aarhus university)
 - Teams also allows for breakout rooms
 - Zoom
 - One-on-one phone calls
 - How to continue conversations beyond virtual events?
 - Caux Forum: A small group that met each day of the forum increased participation during the plenaries, interaction with the material, and kept the conversation going for months afterwards
 - Hybrid
 - Creating breakout rooms for the online people to talk to each other while the in-person people talked to each other
 - Constantly feeding online questions into the main room
 - Am I filling my time with virtual events, or just using them to fill them my time until life gets “back to normal”?
 - Hosting an event as a means to a series of different ends, as opposed to an isolated 50 minute event / inviting attendees into the beginning of a conversation
- Where are you in the adjustment process? (Meaning, adjusting to the covid-19 world)

1. How is the adjustment process going?



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- covid-19 feels like a time warp
 - Constant postponement of events, personal events, etc.
 - A different relationship to decision making
 - The world will not be on hold forever, so you cannot put work on hold constantly