

Peacebuilding: A Review of the Policy Literature

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Introduction

More than 20 years after the Agenda for Peace and with the 10 year anniversary of the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture, this review brings together policy reports and other organisational literature, also referred to as 'grey' literature. The review focuses on 11 selected themes that have resonated in the policy community in recent years:

1. Governance and peacebuilding
2. Inclusiveness and peacebuilding
3. Crime and peacebuilding
4. Resilience and peacebuilding
5. Natural resources and peacebuilding
6. Evaluation and peacebuilding
7. Women and peacebuilding
8. Youth and peacebuilding
9. Business and peacebuilding
10. Statebuilding and peacebuilding
11. Development and peacebuilding

The review has been commissioned to contribute to the *White Paper on Peacebuilding*. The review is based on a systematic review and analysis of the online policy documents of major peacebuilding organisations, including the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP), the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, as well as different international organisations and peacebuilding organisations in the field. A brainstorm between the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP) and the author consolidated the list of key institutions, policy reports and themes within the field of peacebuilding. Based on these exchanges and further web screening, the author identified the eleven focus themes that are presented in this paper.

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions:



Given the breadth and depth of the field of peacebuilding, the review does not have the ambition of being exhaustive. Instead, it presents a selection of key policy contributions that are listed in the bibliography.

1. Governance and peacebuilding

The international peacebuilding community has rallied around a number of guiding principles, most prominently advocating for local ownership and the creation of crosscutting linkages. The notion of local ownership was most recently formalised in 2011, with the adoption of the New Deal for Engagement with Fragile States, which places 'great emphasis on ownership, alignment with local priorities and the use of country systems' (Weijer & Kilnes, 2012, 8). Concurrently, the UN system has also taken multiple steps in recent years to recalibrate its approach towards nurturing local ownership throughout its operations. In its publication entitled 'Governance for Peace', UNDP asserts its firm belief in the 'principle of national ownership, and that this focus must be adaptable to the complex and dynamic context of fragility and conflict' (2011, 12). Going beyond national ownership, an increasing number of international actors, including donors, are abiding by the premise that consolidated national ownership begins first and foremost at the local community level and evolves upwards to create binding linkages with the national, regional and ultimately international level (Odendaal, 2010).

Local Peace Committees (LPCs) are the main the mechanisms through which local ownership is actively promoted and diffused as part of broader peace architectures.¹ Endorsed by the UNDP as an optimal 'architecture for building peace at the local level', these structures have proven to yield valuable results towards achieving sustainable peace and have therefore received significant attention from the mid-1990s onwards (Odendaal, 2010, 8). It is important to note that LPCs vary widely with respect to the degree to which they rely on informal mechanisms. A 2011 UNDP study seeking to analyse LPCs' contributions to the process of peacebuilding chooses to focus on formal LPCs, as they allow for a clearer illustration of the potential they hold as an 'interface between local peacebuilding and formal national processes [...]' (UNDP, 2011). Indeed, the proven strength of formal LPCs is their ability to reach out and integrate a broad range of relevant local stakeholders within a conflict resolution process, and in turn, to encase this functional microcosm within wider regional and national governance structures (UNDP, 2011, 89). Given that 'local and national conflict systems are both interconnected and distinct', LPCs provide an ideal structure to encourage and promote active local ownership of the peacebuilding process, all the while allowing for the creation of crucial linkages with the broader peace architecture (Odendaal, 2010, 6).

Achieving peace that builds on genuine local ownership requires working both from the top-down and from the bottom-up (UNDP, 2011, 90). LPCs stand to fulfil this self-reinforcing approach through their interactions with the overarching national peace architecture. Successful examples include Ghana and Sierra Leone, whereby LPCs have managed to diffuse their know-how and best practices upwards within the regional and national peace architectures. Conversely, the broader national architecture has successfully bolstered their mandates by facilitating access to national resources and the provision of technical capacities through a coordinating body – often itself externally supported by international architectures, such as that of the UN System or other actors (Odendaal, 2010, 15-17). LPCs thereby represent an ideal

¹ An umbrella title used to designate 'an inclusive committee operating at sub-national level (a district, municipality, town or village) [...] Generally speaking, an LPC includes all participants, emphasises dialogue, promotes mutual understanding, builds trust and creates constructive problem-solving and joint action to prevent violence' (Odendaal, 2010, 7).

mechanism through which to promote local ownership while creating the necessary linkages for informed, comprehensive and sustainable strategies. However, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the formation of linkages represents a double-edged sword with regards to preserving the integrity of local ownership. The emergence of an effective peacebuilding system therefore remains highly contingent on local will and agency not being dwarfed or coopted by national or international structures.

The systematic emergence of linkages and joint strategies in tackling the peacebuilding mandate is crucial to go forward. In its report on 'International Support to Peace Processes', the OECD highlights 'inadequate co-operation among mediation, security and development actors' as an important shortcoming that requires immediate action (2012, 11). Such a limitation is clearly detrimental to results on the ground, as concerted action by relevant actors is more likely to bring about a pooling of resources, capacity, skills and know-how, thereby avoiding or mitigating the likelihood of ineffective management and the duplication of tasks. Much in line with the rest of the literature, the OECD recommends nurturing 'strong linkages with other tools in the international community's repertoire to address the structures and incentives that fuel and support violence' (OECD, 2012, 23). A report assessing future prospects for the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) also issues recommendations for greater coordination and integration. Namely, it calls for the PBA to be more proactive both in its relationship with other UN bodies – specifically the UN Security Council in order to develop policies pertaining to the development and security nexus – but also with the research community at large (McAskie, 2010, 23-25).

2. Inclusiveness and peacebuilding

The notion of inclusiveness features prominently across recent policy recommendations, particularly when it comes to political settlements. The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) defines a political settlement as 'a dynamic bargain (primarily between elites) on the distribution of power and resources that is subject to changes and re-adjustments over time' (Castillejo, 2014, 1). Against the backdrop of a growing number of relevant stakeholders within peacebuilding processes – be they international, regional, state or non-state actors – the question of how inclusive political settlements should be to achieve sustainability acquires particular relevance. This is especially so in light of 'increasing evidence that inclusiveness in political settlements is a critical requirement for a sustainable exit from conflict' (Castillejo 2014, 1). An OECD report echoes this requirement for inclusiveness by highlighting Pruitt and Thomas'² recommendation that participants in a peace process should ideally 'be a representative microcosm of the entire conflict system' (2012, 39). Despite the fact that this consensus is becoming entrenched across recent literature, considerable debate remains around what type of inclusiveness is desirable.

One can denote a clear distinction between horizontal and vertical inclusion. Horizontal inclusion refers to the inclusion of various key elite groups viewed as having the potential to be spoilers of peace and stability. Vertical inclusion refers to efforts to strengthen the 'state-society contract' by ensuring that both the interests of elites and the broader population are represented. NOREF finds that actors vested primarily in international security tend to prioritise horizontal inclusion as a strategic means of preventing conflict recurrence, whereas vertical inclusion falls more in line with the development agenda in light of its democratic underpinnings (Castillejo, 2014, 1). While

² B. Pruitt and P. Thomas, *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2007).

the peacebuilding mandate undoubtedly favours the latter from a normative standpoint, it is important to acknowledge that at times the swiftest means of quelling conflict-fuelling grievances might be through engaging key stakeholders horizontally, despite reduced prospects of sustainability. Irrespective of the approach taken, a fundamental requirement is that the political process be locally owned and led, with the OECD emphasising that '[...] the decision of who should participate belongs to the participants (who should own the process) which often equates to the armed groups involved directly in the conflict. It is not a decision that should be imposed by external actors or by the mediator' (2012, 39). That is not to say, however, that support offered by external actors should not be informed as much as possible by guiding principles conducive to effective and sustainable peace. One such principle upholds civil society participation as crucial, in light of the growing realisation that it represents a 'powerful force that can mobilise either to escalate conflict or facilitate its resolution' (Barnes, 2006, 21).

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States paved the way for core governance principles of peacebuilding and also defined the beginning of a paradigm which puts civil society at its core

(Bächtold, Keller and Van Sluijs, 2013, 2). This represents a positive step forward in that there has been a long-identified policy gap in recognising and enabling people as agents of security. For instance, a 2006 Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) publication highlights the need to challenge the state's 'security monopoly', which results in civil society organisations (CSOs) being perceived 'either as irrelevant or as a threat to the sovereign prerogatives of states' (Barnes, 6). The 2011 New Deal therefore marks a departure from this and has been hailed as embodying the necessary framework for CSOs to entrench themselves as active stakeholders at various stages of peace processes. This is particularly so in light of the Deal's first Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal (PSG) calling for 'legitimate politics and inclusive political settlements', as well as its recognition that 'open and constructive relations between state and society' are vital to any statebuilding and peacebuilding process (Bächtold, Keller and Van Sluijs, 2013, 2). This is not to invalidate previous efforts made to recognise civil society and its comparative advantages as valuable.³ Nevertheless, contributions subsequent to Busan are unprecedented in their comprehensive approach and the fact that they account for fragile contexts, thereby making them more tailored to the current global state.

CSOs currently enjoy an unprecedented opportunity to assert themselves as central peacebuilding stakeholders at every stage of the peacebuilding process.

GPPAC provides a comprehensive overview of the roles and activities that CSOs can take on as part of the peacebuilding process. These include, among others: structural prevention by alleviating social tensions; early crisis response through early warning systems and mobilising political will for response; peacemaking through facilitating inclusive dialogue, mediation and negotiations processes; and, finally, post-settlement peacebuilding by facilitating rehabilitation and contributing to transitional justice processes (Barnes, 2006, 28). Interpeace further locates civil society at the centre of constitution-making and constitutional reform processes in conflict-stricken contexts (Brandt *et al.*, 2011). While civil society's potential is enormous when it comes to consolidating peace, it is important to highlight that the success of bringing its contributions forward is highly contingent on the prevailing political and administrative culture (GPPAC, 2007). GPPAC highlights that this dynamic holds true at the domestic level but also at the international one where external actors can sometimes dictate the environment and conditions faced by CSOs (2007, 16). As such, depending on the political will and receptiveness characterising a

³ GPPAC notably highlights the rise of civil society as a concept throughout the 1990s and important recognition milestones, such as the UNSG 2001 report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict (S/2001/574), UNSC Resolution 1366 (2001) and UNGA Resolution 57/337 (2003) (Barnes, 2007, 21).

given society, the relationship that develops between the government and civil society can be one of cooperation, cooptation or confrontation (GPPAC, 2007, 17). Given that the implementation of the New Deal rests on the principle of mutual accountability between governments and civil society, a priority should be to identify and harness factors conducive to a cooperative rapport between governments and CSOs (Bächtold, Keller and Van Sluijs, 2013, 2).

Important structural obstacles still stand in the way for civil society inclusion and participation in peacebuilding processes. First and foremost, a report assessing future prospects for the UN Peacebuilding Architecture notes the lack of entry point mechanisms for civil society within this very structure, arguing that 'there remain real difficulties in bringing civil society into an inter-governmental body [...]' (McAskie, 2010, 12). As the UNPBA remains a prime and widely recognised mechanism through which to push the peacebuilding mandate forward, there is an urgent need for reform in order to make it a more effective interface between governments at the international level and global civil society. A European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) publication also highlights a donor's lack of capacity development support for CSOs located in the South, arguing that this would render them more autonomous, enabling them to formulate their own agendas and undertake their own policy analyses for instance (2012, vii). Interpeace confirms the existence of 'critical capacity gaps' in reporting the results of a civil society survey conducted regarding the UN Review of International Civilian Capacities (2010, 7). It further identifies the failure – and at times conscious reluctance – to draw on the local expertise of civil society in conflict-affected societies as a shortcoming to be remedied (Interpeace, 2010, 3).

3. Crime and peacebuilding

Armed violence and organised crime remain largely unaddressed by the peacebuilding mandate, due in part to conceptual and definitional challenges. The landmark World Development Report 2011 (WDR) provided valuable insight into the fact that these dynamics are increasingly starting to blur, finding for example that a quarter of today's world population lives in 'fragile and conflict-affected states or in countries with very high levels of criminal violence' (World Bank, 2011, 5). What is broadly referred to as 'criminal violence' can be disaggregated into various distinct, but related and often overlapping, categories, including armed violence and organised crime – the focus of this review. Some important definitional challenges exist in pinpointing exactly what is encompassed under each term, but the OECD broadly defines armed violence as 'the use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm' (2011, 2). Organised crime, as a reference point, is regarded by the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) as 'a series of illegal activities that are perpetrated for profit by a group of three or more persons'. Such activities include drug trafficking, human trafficking, migrant smuggling and environmental resource trafficking, etc. (International Alert, 2013, 4). A conference report by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform highlights the specific challenge met in trying to define organised crime, given that 'the characteristics and significance of organised crime are closely related to the historical trajectory and the socio-cultural, economic, environmental and geopolitical context' (GPP, 2013, 2). This implies a dynamism and variance, which is difficult to tackle adequately.

There are concerted calls across recent literature for peacebuilding policy to account for the dynamic nature of armed violence and organised crime, and to address their respective interactions with conflict in contexts of fragility. Indeed, the 2011 edition of the Global Burden of Armed Violence argued that conventional distinctions, such as the one made between conflict

and criminal violence – the former is deemed to be politically motivated while the latter is deemed to be economically motivated – are growing increasingly obsolete and are in fact misleading, as they tend to suggest that given forms of violence fit neatly into various categories (Geneva Declaration, 2011, 1). International Alert further finds that 'shifts in the constituents, landscapes, cycles and dynamics of violence have taken place', however, they have yet to be fully recognised, particularly from a policy-making standpoint. This reality has led to calls for a more proactive political will to embrace what is being referred to as '21st century violence' (2013, 6-7). Moreover, we are at a particularly timely and relevant juncture to address the nexus between conflict, armed violence and organised crime in light of the post-2015 agenda context and the New Deal's aftermath currently playing out. For instance, a 2013 publication analysing the New Deal's Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals (PSGs) argues that phenomena such as organised crime have 'real potential to perpetuate the very fragility we are trying to address through the New Deal, PSGs and numerous other interventions' (International Alert, 32). This gap in the current policy framework is further underscored by an OECD assessment that 'the international toolkit for dealing with the linkages between, and diversity of, violent conflict and organised violence needs to be even more sophisticated' (2012, 19). As such, the task of unpacking and addressing these linkages reflects a current and urgent policy need that is likely to remain a central feature on the agenda in the foreseeable future.

There are a number of valuable policy recommendations regarding how peacebuilding can effectively contend with armed violence and organised crime. In light of Latin America being the only region in the world where lethal violence has increased between 2000 and 2010, many current findings are drawn from case studies based on this region (UNDP, 2013, 1). This is the case for UNDP's Citizen Security report, which finds that progress 'does not stem from a single isolated policy or action, but from a multi-sectoral approach and a series of policies including preventive measures, institutional reforms, sufficient public investment, changes in the relationship between the State and communities, broad and sustained political will [...]' (2013, viii). This is in line with prior world-scale findings that the most successful programmes were comprehensive and multi-sectoral in nature, and relied on a wide range of violence prevention and reduction strategies (Bellis *et al.*, 2010, 6). Inclusiveness has also been found to be a decisive factor for success. The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and Geneva Call (2011) emphasise this by highlighting the importance of taking into account armed non-state actors (NSAs) in light of their demonstrated potential to act as spoilers to a peace process. Such policy recommendations point to the fact that increased communication, coordination and concerted action between peacebuilding and development actors will be a fundamental requirement for effectiveness in going forward.

Community-based approaches have also been highlighted as important means of promoting peace and social cohesion in fragile contexts. For instance, the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSD) finds that 'since public institutions are often weak in conflict and fragile settings, community-based approaches can be used to re-connect the state with its citizens and to strengthen local governance'. Similarly, UNDP's report, Reducing Armed Violence, also recommends making use of 'comprehensive community-based programmes' as well as building on already existing local mechanisms to undertake various key peacebuilding efforts, such as prevention initiatives, social intervention or law enforcement (2011, 6).

4. Resilience and peacebuilding

Despite its growing popularity in policy circles, the concept of resilience and what it specifically refers to remains particularly tricky to define. Initially used in fields as diverse as mechanical engineering, ecology and psychology, the term has been appropriated by peacebuilding actors and, in its simplest terms, refers to the 'capacity to 'bounce back' after a disturbance or a shock' (Jütersonke & Kartas, 2012, 2). This aptitude is generally articulated in terms of the emergence of a whole system rather than a single occurrence. Indeed, a GPP publication highlights the fact that 'most studies on resilience focus on the ability of systems to cope, adapt and reorganise in response to a chronic challenge' (Menkhaus, 2013, 4). A European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) publication confirms this wide-set approach when it argues that the concept of resilience is 'rooted in complex adaptive systems thinking' (Weijer, 2013, 2). Oliver Jütersonke and Moncef Kartas bring an important qualification to this whole-systems lens, however, highlighting that it is not always necessarily the entire system that undergoes adaptation: 'at times it is only a sub-system that transforms in order for the system as a whole to adapt' (2012, 2). As such, it is quite evident that despite being increasingly used by practitioners across the international cooperation field, the concept of resilience is not easily defined or delineated and lends itself to multiple interpretations.

This definitional ambiguity is underscored by the fact that beyond the blurry boundaries of the term, it is equally challenging to determine what (i.e. the object or subject) 'resilience' refers to. Indeed, Weijer poses the following central questions: "But whose resilience is it? To cope with what? [...] Are we talking about the resilience of state institutions, of state-society relations, or of society itself?" (2013, iii). The report concludes that there is no right or wrong answer to these questions, thereby confirming the broad application of the concept. In seeking to narrow down resilience's implications for peacebuilding, Menkhaus outlines four valuable and streamlined ways to conceive the relationship between resilience to conflict and change: 1) resilience as the ability to maintain a positive peace; 2) resilience as the ability to manage the process of transforming a negative peace into a positive peace; 3) resilience as a quest for *status quo ante bellum*; and, finally, 4) resilience as transformation (2013, 4-5). While it is evident that resilience still spans across a wide range of dimensions, even when it is considered with regards to a specific interactions, the above pathways show that it is possible to unpack and make use of the concept in an organised and coherent manner.

The appropriation potential of resilience as a concept can be seen in the manner in which a handful of organisations have embraced it and created a specific vision or interpretation around it. For instance, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has succeeded in adopting the concept and creating a comprehensive approach drawing on it (IFRC, 2012). Doing so has involved explicitly defining key traits characterising resilient communities, among different criteria, as well as establishing a set of core principles that the IFRC considers conducive to resilience (IFRC, 2012). Such principles include respecting local ownership, conducting comprehensive cross-sector assessments throughout planning and implementation phases, and adopting a long-term perspective (IFRC, 2012, 14-15). Similarly, in its report entitled 'Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding in Fragile Situations', the OECD chooses to define the opposite of fragility not as stability but as resilience (2011, 12). As such, although questions still remain as to what exactly resilience embodies, the lack of definitional clarity surrounding it may also be considered an advantage in that it enables actors to seize it and build upon it constructively. Another notable opportunity highlighted by a GPP publication is that 'it shifts the focus from deficit to strengths' (Jütersonke & Kartas, 2012, 4). Departing from

an entrenched tendency to outline the flaws and shortcomings of a given object of study, it allows us to engage in a reflexive and productive exercise of identifying factors contributing to strength. Finally, perhaps a key takeaway from the concept of resilience is that it represents an illustration of the fact that local systems are able to function and develop their coping mechanisms without external intervention or assistance.

5. Natural resources and peacebuilding

There is an increasing consensus that effective and sustainable peacebuilding must take the natural resource dimension into account. Recent research shows that at least 40% of intrastate conflicts have had a link to natural resources over the past 60 years (Matthew *et al.*, 2009, 8). Further, resource scarcity and environmental neglect have been shown to directly affect occurrences of conflict.⁴ Indeed, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) finds that 'familiar sources of conflict are being amplified by environmental stress' (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 4). Conversely, it is increasingly understood that conflict can have significant and detrimental consequences for the environment. A UNEP report argues that these consequences can be categorised along three main pathways: direct (the immediate destruction and environmental degradation caused by conflict), indirect (understood to include the disruption of normal socio-economic patterns as well as the delivery of basic services) and institutional (whereby state institutions and policy-making mechanisms are disrupted, often resulting in poor management and a rise in illegality) (Matthew *et al.*, 2009, 15). In light of such a wide-reaching and potentially destabilising impact, there is an urgent need for the international peacebuilding community to pay closer attention to the interaction between the environment, natural resources and conflict. Most importantly, policy-makers must incorporate appropriate strategies allowing for this nexus to become an operational reality rather than an abstract concept.

The difficulty in devising practical and actionable measures to firmly locate natural resources and the environment on the peacebuilding agenda lies in the complexity of the interplay between these elements. The growing consensus that their interrelatedness can no longer be ignored has failed to materialise into concerted action due to challenges met in proving causation. For instance, IISD highlights that researchers tend to conclude that environmental change 'is only one stress among many affecting conflict and security, and that its precise role in the chain of causation is hard to specify' (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 6). UNEP echoes this, calling the relationship between natural resources, the environment and conflict a 'multi-dimensional' and complex one (Matthew *et al.*, 2009, 8). The same report nonetheless identifies three principal pathways through which the impact that natural resources and the environment bear on conflict can be understood: 1) contributing to the outbreak of conflict; 2) financing and sustaining conflict; and 3) undermining peacemaking (Matthew *et al.*, 2009, 8). While this paper is not exhaustive and does not explore every causal pathway, it nonetheless highlights that both natural resources and the environment stand to shape and often worsen conflict during every phase. Peacebuilding policy will therefore be most effective if it accounts for these dimensions not only once conflict has broken out but also as part of prevention and recovery strategies.

It is important to highlight the positive ways in which natural resources and the environment can be harnessed towards sustainable peacebuilding, particularly with respect to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). UNEP finds that natural resources can significantly

⁴ This occurs, among other dynamics, by 'yielding limited access to productive resources, inequitable wealth-sharing and potential risks of land disputes' (UNDP-UNEP, 2013, 8).

strengthen peacebuilding efforts – directly or indirectly – through supporting economic recovery, developing sustainable livelihoods and contributing to dialogue, cooperation and confidence-building (Matthew *et al.*, 2009, 19). A joint UNDP-UNEP report also finds that effective resource management has a central role to play, particularly within the field of DDR (UNDP-UNEP, 2013). Indeed, while the benefits of sound resource management can be reaped at every stage of a given conflict, it appears that during the recovery phase, these have deeper and wider-reaching consequences. Specifically, the report underscores that natural resources play a role beyond economic recovery, being ‘important factors for social reintegration and reconciliation, as well as for overcoming gender biases [...]’ (UNDP-UNEP, 2013, 8). In actual practice, however, it would appear that these potential linkages with the DDR mandate are not exploited due to an entrenched tendency to consider natural resource management an issue to be addressed at later stages of the recovery phase (UNDP-UNEP, 2013, 50). DDR programmes, which are often ‘politically sensitive processes defined by specific timelines and budgets’, therefore tend not to coordinate or seek synergy with the much broader field of natural resource management (UNDP-UNEP, 2012, 12). Consequently, a key recommendation issued across the literature is to incorporate environmental considerations from early planning stages of any given recovery programme so as to optimally harness existing linkages.

Within the field of natural resource management, conservation appears to be a key area from which peacebuilding stands to benefit, specifically with water as a strategic pathway. An IISD publication studies the role that conservation stands to play in achieving long-lasting peace by seeking to answer the following question: ‘Could investment in environmental conservation [...] offset funds now spent on peacekeeping and humanitarian relief, rather than waiting to address their consequences?’ (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 5). Its answer is a decisive yes, with findings that better conservation practices contribute to peace and stability, in turn fostering development and social justice. The report further calls for planned conservation to continue during times of conflict and during post-conflict reconstruction, which is when it most often becomes neglected (Matthew, Halle & Switzer, 2002, 5). The Environmental Change and Security Programme (ECSP) finds that water management and preservation is a particularly ‘productive pathway for confidence building, cooperation and, arguably, conflict prevention’, with cooperative incidents outnumbering conflicts by more than two to one between 1945 and 1999 (Carius, Dabelko, & Wolf, 2004, 60). Efforts must therefore be made for these consequential findings to inform and enhance peacebuilding policy agendas. Moreover, it is important to locate women at the forefront of strategic measures pertaining to natural resource management and conservation. A recent publication focusing on women and natural resources finds that they have a vital role to play in building peace given that they are most often the primary users and managers of natural resources (UNEP, UN Women, UNDP & PBSO, 2013, 5). Nevertheless, the same report concurrently points out that women ‘remain largely excluded from owning land, benefiting from resource wealth or participating in decision-making about resource management’, thereby underscoring the urgency of a paradigmatic shift towards their inclusion (UNEP, UN Women, UNDP & PBSO, 2013, 5).

6. Evaluation and peacebuilding

The current debate surrounding impact and evaluation assessments is marked by a lack of consensus, as well as accuracy and legitimacy concerns. This is not to deny that strides have been made towards refining current practices and methods. For instance, the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) finds that ‘in the last five to ten years, the field has made significant improvements in developing tools and guidelines on how to measure the impact of

peacebuilding programmes' (2011, 8). Nevertheless, the same report goes on to identify important obstacles that it argues undermine both the legitimacy and accuracy of impact and evaluation assessments relating to peacebuilding.

Challenges faced are structural as well as methodological and appear to be reinforced by an entrenched tendency to favour a 'results-orientation' framework for evaluation and impact assessments. The main structural impediment to stem from this emphasis on results is a tendency to prioritise 'upward accountability' over 'downward accountability', the latter being in principle the cornerstone of any peacebuilding endeavour (Dittli & Servaes, 2013, 11). This in turn inevitably conditions assessments on the ground, in that the yardstick for success becomes the results that are aligned with donors' preferences and end-goals, rather than sustainable change towards peace. AfP finds that this dynamic is all the more limiting given that donors tend to be risk-averse, thereby constraining implementers to 'safe and proven programmes' rather than the freedom to devise innovative and context-tailored initiatives (AfP, 2011, 8).

The emphasis on measuring for results – or 'obsessive measurement disorder'⁵ – that currently characterises many international peacebuilding initiatives raises important questions about where accountability lies. A joint Swisspeace and FriEnt report summarises this dilemma through the following question: 'where and how do we actually learn in safe and self-critical ways when monitoring and evaluation are tweaked to serve predominantly upward accountability needs?' (Dittli & Servaes, 2013, 11). An encouraging aspect of this unresolved *status quo* is the fact that practitioners themselves seem to be at the forefront of this line of questioning. The Peacebuilding Evaluation Project (PEP)⁶ highlights as a main finding that both donors and implementers are dissatisfied with the current state of evaluation, with both sets of actors tellingly rating it a four out of a possible ten (AfP, 2011, 8). It therefore appears that accountability – affecting in turn the integrity and legitimacy of peacebuilding operations on the ground – is a salient and yet unresolved contention point of the current debate regarding evaluation and impact assessment.

The general dissatisfaction with current evaluation practices also extends to a methodological standpoint, whereby there is considerable debate as to which tools, indicators and other such means of assessment are most effective and accurate. Interpeace identifies main shortcomings as comprising measurement issues (specifically the use of indicators), scarce resources, the normative aspect of values and definitions ascribed to peacebuilding, blurry causality and attribution mechanisms, the discrepancy between theory and implementation of a given project, and finally power relationships⁷ that may hinder and complicate evaluation efforts (Menkhous, 2004, 4-9). Such issues are compounded by a general lack of accepted best practices, despite the long-standing existence of evaluation and impact assessments (Corlazzoli & White, 2013, 6). The UK Department for International Development (DFID) further finds that 'perhaps one of the most common critiques of programme design, monitoring and evaluation processes and tools is their linear nature, which some view as incompatible with non-linear social change' (Corlazzoli & White, 2013, 6). As such, there is an urgent need to fine tune and tailor evaluation practices to the precise end goal of peacebuilding. Not doing so not only inherently limits the potential for success, but may also be detrimental, as supported by the AfP's statement that 'evaluations have very high stakes – even dire consequences' (2011, 15).

⁵ A. Natsios, *The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development* (Washington: Center for Global Development, 2010).

⁶ A forum for dialogue between donors and implementers.

⁷ These include diverse power dynamics between 'donor and agency, headquarter and field, project and local community' (p. 8).

Indicators hold a central place in the methodological debate surrounding evaluation, with recent literature suggesting that increasing efforts are being made to devise tailored and accurate tools. Interpeace summarises the underlying challenge by stating that because post-conflict situations vary widely, there is little 'prospect for developing a bundle of universal indicators for peacebuilding [...] yet most agree that post-conflict settings are not so unique as to defy comparison or generalisation [...]' (Menkhaus, 2004, 10). In a recent publication, Saferworld unpacks the way in which global as well as local indicators each stand to play an important role in evaluation. While they inscribe themselves within a one-size-fits-all approach, it is found that global indicators are valuable tools when they are limited to 'genuinely universal key issues', in that they provide clarity, simplicity and a common measure that fosters a willingness to perform well among counterparts (Saferworld, 2013, 2). A practical embodiment of this is the Globally-Accepted Indication (GAIN) initiative, which was launched in 2008 by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and has produced 18 relevant peacebuilding indicators (CRS, 2010, i). On the other hand, Saferworld also makes the case that local indicators allow decision-making powers to rest with the most local – and often most recognised and competent – body; above all, they take into account the specificity and uniqueness of challenges faced in each given context (2013, 2). As such, a crucial task currently facing the international peacebuilding community is to engage in the right balancing act between these approaches so as to fine-tune evaluation.

7. Women and peacebuilding

Policy measures seeking to address the specific vulnerabilities that women face in the context of violence and conflict have mostly been limited to sexual violence. In his report on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) highlights that while attention has increasingly been focused on conflict-related sexual violence, there is a need for 'greater attention to be paid to the full spectrum of security threats faced by women and girls' (UNGA, 2010, 2). These threats include, among others, a higher likelihood of forced displacement than that faced by men, trafficking, exploitation, sexual slavery and increased incidences of domestic violence (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). Although there is increasing policy will to tackle these issues, effectively countering such forms of violence has proven challenging and results have been marginal (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002, viii). Notable policy gaps have been identified across a spectrum spanning from the areas of prevention, participation, protection, peacebuilding and recovery (UNGA, 2010). Such findings point towards an urgent need to find and adopt actionable means in order to locate women firmly within the peacebuilding agenda.

The difficulty in devising adequate measures to address the various challenges faced by women in conflict settings might stem from the fact that despite their unique social position, they share common characteristics with the rest of the population. Indeed, the UNSG report on women's participation finds that 'in their diversity, conflict-affected women mirror populations at large'; it further finds that women's post-conflict needs align with the five priorities outlined in the 2009 UNSG Report on Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict⁸ (UNGA, 2010, 5). As such, there is an inherent challenge in targeting women's essential needs in situations of conflict, all while acknowledging and upholding their particular status in such situations. This policy

⁸ These are: (a) safety and security, including justice and respect for the rule of law; (b) confidence in the political process, through both inclusive dialogue and post-conflict elections; (c) access to basic services, such as water and education; (d) a functioning public administration to manage government funds and public records, at a minimum; and (e) economic revitalisation, notably, employment creation and infrastructural improvements.

shortcoming is complicated by the fact that women most often do not fit neatly into one category defined by gender: they may be widows, disabled, ex-combatants or part of marginalised religious minorities (UNGA, 2010, 5). The literature suggests that a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to gender therefore is most adequate. International Alert's 'gender-relational' approach is one example of this as 'it examines the interplay between gender and other identity markers, such as age, social class, sexuality, disability, ethnic or religious background, marital status or urban/rural setting' (Myrtilinen *et al.*, 2014, 7). Encouraging the systematic adoption of similar broadened perspectives is likely to lead to better-targeted and sustainable programmes.

Beyond the need to identify and emphasise women-specific vulnerabilities resulting from conflict, it is primordial to recognise and uphold women as key stakeholders within peace processes. The shift from a limited depiction of women as victims of conflicts to a broader recognition of their positive agents for peace lacks momentum. While there have been notable efforts in this direction, current policy stops short of making this an operational reality. A significant milestone was achieved in 2000 with the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1325⁹ and voices recognising women's importance in preserving a cohesive social fabric have grown louder over the past decade (UNGA, 2010, 2). Despite this, however, UN Women estimates that 'fewer than 3 percent of signatories to peace agreements have been women and that women's participation in peace negotiations averages less than 8 percent' for assessed peace processes (Norville, 2011, 3). Taking stock of the progress made thus far, the literature generally finds that the international community has come short of moving towards a remedial action mode, despite its diagnosis of exclusionary practices towards women as regards to peacebuilding processes.

The way forward to entrench the unique vantage point held by women with regards to sustainable peace must go beyond the immediate circumstances of conflict. Women are extremely valuable actors when it comes to early warning systems for instance, as they are often aware of key information such as the location of arms caches, transportation routes and the social changes triggered by influxes of such weapons (UN Women, 2012, 4). A UN Women report therefore finds that 'by overlooking female stakeholders, early warning systems were missing women's potential contribution to more comprehensive information and responses' (2012, 5). Beyond occurrences of violence, the 2010 UNSG Report finds that women's participation must extend to the political process, arguing that nurturing a 'critical mass' of women officials is an imperative (UNGA, 2010, 7). Women must especially be empowered to promote the rule of law, given that 'marginalisation is exacerbated when law and custom combine to prevent women from gaining an effective voice in political forums' (UNGA, 2010, 7). Such a dynamic in turn undermines confidence in the political process, a fundamental requirement for sustainable peace.

Until the vital roles that women stand to play and contribute to peace processes are acknowledged and harnessed, peacebuilding is likely to remain an incomplete endeavor. The UNSG's report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding finds that their exclusion from designing peace agreements and recovery frameworks leads to a vicious cycle wherein gender inequalities as well as women's insecurity are perpetuated (UNGA, 2010, 4). The importance of encouraging women's participation for effective and sustainable peacebuilding is best

⁹ Calling for 'equal participation by women in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and for the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction' (UNSG's Report on Women's Participation, p.2).

summarised by the US Institute of Peace's (USIP) brief on the role of women in global security, when it asserts that 'half of the world's population cannot make a whole peace' (Norville, 2011, 1).

8. Youth and peacebuilding

Despite 1.2 billion youths comprising 18 percent of the world's population, 'the potential contribution and inclusion of young people to effective peacebuilding has received little attention and support' (Subgroup on Youth Participation, 2014, 3). This finding is supported across the literature, with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) highlighting that to date, and particularly within the UN, no specific policy framework regarding the themes of youth, peace and security has been put forward (UNOY, 2013b, 15). While the General Assembly and Security Council have adopted a number of resolutions addressing the issue,¹⁰ such documents tend to resemble 'ambitious wishlists' rather than establishing clear and practical recommendations. They are further often limited to regional or country-specific dynamics (UNOY, 2013b, 5). There is therefore an urgent need for policy to tackle the nexus between peacebuilding and global youth, particularly in light of 'their unique vulnerability to both voluntary and involuntary military recruitment' (UNOY, 2013b, 1).

Sustainably entrenching youth as an integral part of the peacebuilding agenda entails a redefinition of their role and importance as agents of peace. Indeed, the conception of youth and of the role they stand to play in peacebuilding is limited to a few rigid scenarios. These tend to revolve around the premise of the 'youth bulge', or the idea that disproportionately large youth cohorts relative to the population bear a strong correlation with the occurrence of violence (USAID, 2005, 3). A recent UNOY report underscores this idea, arguing that the perception of youth in relation to violence and conflict is often a dichotomous one, with them being depicted either as 'causal or recipient agents', rather than positive agents for peace (UNOY, 2013a, 1). A trend in the recent literature is to caution against such reductionist representations and call for a move towards nurturing the positive dividends that youth stands to contribute to peace processes. USAID's report, 'Youth and Conflict', situates itself within this current, arguing that 'when youth are shielded from social and economic stresses, and can participate in decisions that affect their lives, they are more likely to pursue peaceful change' (2005, 5).

The successful implication of youth in peacebuilding processes requires a comprehensive approach going beyond immediate conflict dynamics in order to address socio-economic concerns. This is in line with the recommendations issued by the UN-led Subgroup on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding. Specifically, it argues that successful policy must firmly rest on the adoption of multiple approaches, drawing from human rights, economic, socio-political and sociocultural components (Subgroup on Youth Participation, 2014). The fact that this wide-ranging framework closely overlaps with the development agenda validates the relevance of calls issued for youth and peacebuilding to occupy a prime position on the post-2015 agenda. Across the literature, there is a consensus that international actors must capitalise on the momentum provided by the upcoming review of the Millennium Development Goals to make a case for the importance of placing youth at the heart of peacebuilding. For instance, UNOY's latest report urges Member States to establish a goal on peace and security recognising young

¹⁰ Among which the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965) and the Resolution based on the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth (2011).

people as specific stakeholders. It simultaneously calls for mainstreaming youth and peacebuilding 'among all future goals, targets and indicators in the post-2015 development agenda' (A Space for Peace, 2013, 4). The current international conjuncture with the approaching review of the development agenda therefore presents a strategic opportunity to assert the importance of youth as agents of peacebuilding. It would further allow a mutually reinforcing collaboration between the peacebuilding and development mandates, thereby facilitating the adoption of a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to the issue.

A specific tool being highlighted as a means of securing active and positive youth involvement in peacebuilding is education. The Youth and Conflict report finds that 'an important way to avoid future conflict is to draw on the energy and capacities of youth as the leaders of tomorrow's societies' (USAID, 2005, 3). In its 2011 Education and Peacebuilding Report, UNICEF argues that education acts as a significant vehicle of social cohesion. It must therefore be supported at every stage of a given conflict, and most critically so in post-conflict settings (2011, 7). Indeed, a survey of selected case studies shows that education stands to have a transformative effect in post-conflict societies in the long run by yielding changes in social attitudes and values which may in turn redefine conflict (UNICEF, 2011, 7). Accordingly, one of the report's main recommendations – echoed by UNESCO and World Bank publications – is that international donors and in particular the PBF, which has thus far only marginally supported education initiatives, increase funding towards the delivery of education services (UNICEF, 2011, 6).

9. Business and peacebuilding

Attention paid to the role of the private sector in peacebuilding and conflict resolution has grown significantly over the recent years. A Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) publication on the issue outlines three main causes for the increased prominence of this actor that has, until recently, remained largely invisible or ignored. First, the private sector is simply increasingly present and therefore impacted in situations of conflict – whether through domestic or multinational dealings. Second, it is often able to intervene in different ways than the government or other traditional parties to a conflict owing to its resources as well as its managerial and technical capabilities. Finally, we are witnessing a global trend in what is referred to as the 'privatisation of peace', particularly in the context of the emergence of so-called 'fragile states' (Tripathi & Gunduz, 2008, 16). This defining feature of the current international landscape has created an environment allowing the private sector to assert itself as an actor of significance when it comes to peacebuilding and related processes.

While it has become a rising actor in the peacebuilding universe, there is considerable debate as to what positive contributions the private sector stands to make. A USIP report points out that there has been significant research highlighting business as a cause or exacerbating factor in conflict, particularly in resource-rich countries (Forrer *et al.*, 2012, 2). This can take place through hiring practices whereby a firm may inadvertently employ workers coming disproportionately from a particular social group; a skewed distribution of resources; the displacement of local populations; or through environmental degradation (Forrer *et al.*, 2012, 2). A survey of the literature indicates that a clear answer to this is contingent on a number of factors. Countering this, however, is the case made in recent literature that under the right conditions and a willingness to endorse its role as a stakeholder in conflict processes, businesses can be important agents in fostering peace. Indeed, International Alert finds that 'in view of their outwardly apolitical nature, businesses are, in theory, able to act where others sometimes cannot'. Further,

it argues that 'the private sector may also possess unique knowledge of an economy and can produce politically un-biased information that can lead to more reliable decisions on some issues' (Tripathi & Gunduz, 2008, 25). The literature therefore generally finds that there is an important place carved out for the business sector within peace processes. The positive contribution it stands to make however is highly contingent on its willingness to act and, most importantly, on its capacity to maintain a neutral and apolitical stance.

The potential of the business sector to be a catalyst for peace ranges across a wide spectrum, including prevention, negotiation and mediation. With regards to conflict prevention specifically, the role the business sector stands to play is multidimensional and presupposes the emergence of a whole-systems approach bringing together various elements (Ganson, 2011, 2). The GPP identifies these critical dimensions as being threefold: individual skills, organisational capabilities and inter-organisational mechanisms (Ganson, 2011, 2-3). These three dimensions must be self-reinforcing and feed off one another so that individual skills expressed through positive attitudes – particularly within management – and endorsed responsibility to assess, prevent and manage conflict together with relevant parties must be enabled and facilitated by specific organisational capacities. This capacity framework needs to be responsive enough so as to anticipate potential conflict and adapt to these conditions. It must simultaneously be able to inscribe itself within an external set of relationships often characterised by a 'complex stakeholder environment' (Ganson, 2011, 3). Hence, the ability of businesses to effectively carry out conflict prevention rests upon multiple pre-requirements making up the earlier mentioned whole systems approach. Alongside conflict prevention, International Alert highlights negotiation and mediation as key contributions that the private sector is able to make to peace processes. Indeed, if the condition of lack of self-interest is met, it argues that 'businesses have been in a position to offer something of value – resources, neutrality, credibility, legitimacy, their good offices – that other actors lacked' (Tripathi & Gunduz, 2008, 25).

Recent literature emphasises information-sharing as another promising avenue through which the business sector stands to make a difference. This would be most effectively achieved through producing independent conflict analysis based on the private sector's specific knowledge in order to assist informed decision-making in conflict settings. However, such contributions currently remain closer to a theoretical assumption than an operational reality. CDA finds that this is mainly because 'companies assume they have little control over conflict', when in fact their presence on the ground – which often dates back further than that of international peacebuilding actors – provides them with access to privileged information (Zandvliet, 2010, 6). This is supported by a USIP publication that finds that businesses working in conflict settings 'may engage in practices and risk assessments unique to the political environment' involving 'careful attention to the interests and concerns of customers, employees, suppliers and other stakeholders (Forrer *et al.*, 2012, 5). This type of comparative advantage and wealth of knowledge should therefore be actively harnessed in an effort to inform and strengthen existing conflict analyses.

Notably absent from the literature is a differentiated analysis of the role businesses role with regards to when they are locally owned as opposed to when they are part of a multi- or transnational corporation (MNC or TNC). A Berghof Foundation publication states that 'the peacebuilding role of businesses – large and small – that are locally owned, run and staffed will differ from those that answer to foreign management' (Killick *et al.* 2005, 2). Indeed, local businesses are much more likely to have a 'rooted relationship' to the conflict which in turn creates various linkages across strata of society, as well as with political actors and other relevant stakeholders. Moreover, they tend to be more in touch with the immediate cultural,

ethnic and religious context, thereby legitimising and entrenching their role as stakeholders (Killick *et al.*, 2005, 2). As such, although notable efforts have been made in recent years to create binding codes of conduct encouraging corporate citizenship for businesses operating in conflict-settings,¹¹ it is crucial to bear in mind that a one-size-fits-all approach to engage the business sector limits the positive contributions it stands to make. Paying attention to the diversity of the business realm – be it size, sector of operation or ownership of firms – will allow for optimisation of its potential as an important stakeholder and agent within peace processes.

10. Statebuilding and peacebuilding

A successful operationalisation of the synergy between peacebuilding and statebuilding mandates has yet to materialise. Indeed, the nature of the interplay between the two and resulting implications have yet to be fully unpacked. Drawing a clear distinction, as well as establishing which types of activities befall each mandate is a complex task, particularly in light of the broad nature of both concepts and the growing number of actors in the field of international cooperation.

From a definitional standpoint, the current literature seems to converge around the peacebuilding and statebuilding definitions put forward by the UN and the OECD, respectively. According to the UN-adopted definition, peacebuilding 'involves a range of measures targeted at reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development' (Interpeace, 2010, 4). Statebuilding, on the other hand, is defined by the OECD as 'an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations', with substantial emphasis being laid on the reciprocal and constructive nature of these relations between the state and society (Interpeace, 2010, 4). A survey of these definitions renders apparent that these processes are not dissociable, but must be carried out in a mutually reinforcing manner. However, despite the fact that 'statebuilding has become a central focus of multi-dimensional peace operations in war-torn societies', over the years, a sustainable operationalisation of the positive linkages between the two mandates has proven to be a challenge on the ground (Paris & Sisk, 2007, 1).

Limitations in harnessing the synergy between peacebuilding and statebuilding may be explained by the fact that endorsed definitions stop short of delving into the process through which these goals are best achieved. In its report drawn from consultations with civil society organisations, Interpeace finds that respondents stress the need to move away from the 'what' of both peacebuilding and statebuilding, and focus instead on the 'how'. Indeed, a key take-away is that 'peacebuilding and statebuilding processes do not follow a linear path' (2010, 5). A high level of flexibility and adaptability is therefore essential to any strategic planning process as well as implementation. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (PBSB) report on the associated challenges echoes this, highlighting that too-narrowly defined approaches foster a compartmentalisation of the two mandates that in turn hinders successful results (2010, 46). Chief among the report's identified challenges are the 'weak alignment of donors behind a unified national plan' and the 'lack of agreement on the need to address shifting short-term and long-term priorities at the same time' (PBSB Dialogue, 2010, 8).

¹¹ Examples include the United Nations' 'Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations' (2004), 'The Global Compact' (2008) and the OECD's 'Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights' (2011).

There is an important need to address the inherent tensions that arise when statebuilding is pursued alongside peacebuilding. An Overseas Development Institute (ODI) briefing paper highlights that 'statebuilding for peace', an expression coined by UNDP, amounts to 'navigating an arena of contradictions' and that these need to be recognised if they are to be effectively managed (2009, 1). First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge that statebuilding may not necessarily lead to peace, as this process can be highly exclusionary and tends to create winners and losers who will vie for competing interests (ODI, 2009, 3). Similarly, Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk (2010) find that short-term imperatives often clash with longer-term objectives. For instance, bargaining or entering into a tacit agreement with the ruling elite or other party to the conflict in order to quell immediate tensions will likely undermine the establishment of 'depersonalised' state institutions and broad political representation (Paris & Sisk, 2007, 4). Such findings underscore one of the OECD's main propositions that statebuilding in fragile situations 'is a deeply political process, and understanding the context – especially what is perceived as legitimate in a specific context – is crucial if international support is to be useful' (OECD, 2011, 11).

The way forward must necessarily bear a strong focus on nurturing legitimate and sustainable state-society relations. This is contingent on making sure that local ownership prevails despite the fact that peacebuilding and statebuilding in conflict settings are largely taken on by outside actors. Building on its consultations with civil society, Interpeace advocates for both mandates to be 'internally-led and externally supported'. It further highlights the need to reach out beyond government institutions and actors in order to secure broad and inclusive ownership (2010, 6). There is an emerging consensus that in seeking to promote peace and fruitful state-society relations, the international community should assume the role of enablers rather than agents and above all prioritise the emergence of inclusive polities.

11. Peacebuilding and development

Peacebuilding and conflict prevention are inextricably linked to development, yet a steady and effective synergy has yet to be concretised between the two mandates. As early as 2001, an independent study commissioned by UNDP highlighted the fact that conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development were indissociable, and that the adoption of a 'developmental perspective' was crucial to any efforts to tackle conflict (Wood, 2001, 10). This developmental perspective on conflict recognises that conflict is a 'normal and inescapable fact of life and development', rather than an aberration (Wood, 2001,10). Taking this as its premise, it upholds guiding principles such as the search for the root causes of conflict, sharing and building on knowledge among practitioners, abiding by an enabling rather than interventionist approach, and committing to taking on joint global goals together with other practitioners across silos from 2015 onwards (Wood, 2001). While this paradigm was formulated over a decade ago, it remains more relevant than ever given current efforts to entrench conflict and peacebuilding within the post-2015 development agenda in light of the looming Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review. Indeed, many of the peacebuilding voices currently trying to make themselves heard are pushing for measures and principles that fall in line with the 'developmental perspective on conflict', demonstrating that this approach has stopped short of becoming an operational reality over the years.

Horizontal inequalities are becoming increasingly recognised as a key driver of conflict, presenting a promising opportunity to successfully link the peacebuilding and development agendas going forward. For instance, a PBSO-Saferworld publication argues that 'various inequalities – economic, political, cultural, gender and those related to security, justice and

social services – can heighten group grievances and lead to conflict [...]’ (Brinkman, Atree & Hezir, 2013, 1). Further, it underscores a mutually reinforcing relationship between violence and inequality whereby horizontal inequalities increase the risk of violent conflict, that may in turn worsen inequalities. In light of this dynamic, Saferworld and the PBSO call for equality to feature as a guiding principle of the post-2015 framework (Brinkman, Atree & Hezir, 2013, 1). A particularly relevant recommendation issued by the report is that equality should not only be recognised and upheld, but that this must be accompanied by a ‘credible policy response’ for governments to address horizontal inequalities effectively,¹² short of which such an initiative is unlikely to be sustainable (Brinkman, Atree L & Hezir, 2013, 15).

Conflict and its interaction with fragile contexts is another salient issue that emerges from the literature as an item of chief importance for the post-2015 agenda. Organisations such as Act Alliance argue that with the majority of the world’s poorest now residing in a small group of conflict-affected and fragile states, the nexus between peace and development is experiencing renewed relevance (2013, 2). Among its recommendations for the post-2015 framework is the need to ‘recognise and address the root causes of conflict and fragility’ through a holistic approach that takes into account the interrelated and multidimensional aspects of these issues (Act Alliance, 2013, 3). It is important to note that both the New Deal for engagement in fragile states as well as the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) are recognised as effective tools through which to conceive conflict and fragility. Nonetheless, Act Alliance pushes for further unpacking the underlying dynamics of fragility or the ‘why’ (2013, 5). Moreover, an important contribution is the report’s emphasis on the imperative to include the most vulnerable in the process of developing and implementing the new framework. In doing so, it highlights a general need for broadening ownership past state institutions, as well as creating more inclusive and participatory mechanisms for citizens (Act Alliance, 2013, 4). In a separate policy brief, Saferworld also issues a call for the interplay between conflict and fragility to feature at the top of the post-2015 development agenda. Interestingly however, it highlights that this does not necessarily align fully with the MDGs (Saferworld, 2012, 8).

While a convergence of the peacebuilding and development agendas under the post-2015 framework would undoubtedly bolster both mandates, it is also important to bear in mind the sizeable gap currently existing between the two. There is little controversy regarding the fact that conflict and its implications are a main impediment to development, with the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda going as far as to state that ‘violence and fragility have become the largest obstacle to the MDGs’ (2012, 3). However, in crosschecking three main peacebuilding frameworks – the World Bank’s ‘World Development Report 2011’, the Institute for Economics and Peace’s ‘Structures of Peace’ and the New Deal’s ‘Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals’ (PSGs) – against the MDGs, Saferworld finds that ‘the current MDG framework does not cover the core elements of most peacebuilding frameworks’ (2012, 4). That is not to say that the MDG seeking to secure universal primary education, for instance, will not play a role towards mitigating violence or conflict; indeed, by fostering more equality, it is likely to reduce societal tensions and, in turn, the likelihood of conflict. The respective frameworks therefore remain compatible; however, fundamental factors needing to be addressed in order

¹² This builds on Thania Paffenholz’s scholarship contending that it is not inequality in itself, but the manner in which it is dealt with by the government, that shapes conflict. T. Paffenholz, ‘Underdevelopment and Armed Conflict: Making Sense of the Debates’ (Unpublished Paper, 2008). Available at: http://humansecuritygateway.com/documents/ISA_underdevelopmentandarmedconflict.pdf.

to quell violence and fragility – including citizen security, justice, legitimate politics and a sound business environment, among others – are noticeably absent from the MDGs agenda (Saferworld, 2012, 4). Given that the MDGs are currently comprised of targets that tend to be more apolitical in nature than those of the peacebuilding agenda, a cautious and holistic approach will be needed to secure a successful merging of the two frameworks, all while retaining governments' buy-in.

Concluding Remarks: The new context of peacebuilding

There is little doubt that peacebuilding as we know it today operates in a radically different environment than the one in which original efforts were born. The changing nature of violence and conflict, rapid multiplication of actors involved, growing stakes in achieving sustainable peace and the increasingly blurry line between various international cooperation mandates mean that peacebuilding is currently contending with a complex and highly dynamic reality. In its publication aiming to map the evolving boundaries of peacebuilding, the Alliance for Peacebuilding highlights three principal defining features. To begin, it finds that peacebuilding is a very large community of practice and therefore underscores the need to 'harness intersecting efforts in a systematised and coordinated manner so as to improve results' (2012, 7). Similarly, it highlights the fact that in the deeply divided societies in which peacebuilding takes place, 'every intervention, from building a school to negotiation a peace agreement, can serve to reduce or augment conflict, often in unpredictable ways'. This further validates the idea that a systemic approach merging all relevant sectors is necessary to go forward. Finally, the report emphasises that a 'conflict-sensitive lens' must permeate all work in and around conflict environments [...]. This includes abiding by principles in line with the 'do-no-harm' approach, as well as adopting an informed and long-term perspective through tools such as conflict mapping, analysis and monitoring.

Calls for a strategic shift towards a more systemic and concerted approach by all stakeholders are particularly relevant as two decades after the inception of peacebuilding, key drivers of violence and conflict remain neglected. This is in line with CDA Collaborative Learning Projects' finding, based on an analysis of fifteen case studies, that what it terms 'persistent issues' embodying key conflict drivers remain either inadequately addressed or wholly unaddressed (2012, 9). While this is due in part to the ever-evolving nature of violence and conflict, going forward, the international community must find a way to grasp the key dynamics underlying current manifestations of both these elements and devise a cogent and systemised approach in response. It is becoming increasingly accepted that the forms of violence characterising the 21st century are driven by multiple and simultaneous drivers, and bear complex social consequences. As such, organisations, such as NOREF, call for the acceptance of these dynamics by peacebuilding actors as a long-term 'normality', rather than the result of particular or exceptional circumstances. It further calls for intersectoral and interdisciplinary learning, as well as policy development to form the basis of any framework devised to this effect (Adams, 2012, 1).

The emergence and nurturing of a community of learning within the field of peacebuilding is a recommendation that features increasingly prominently across the policy literature. Indeed, a Berghof publication entitled 'Peacebuilding at a crossroads' highlights that the move away from technical peacebuilding activities towards a more transformative peacebuilding mandate is contingent on addressing the factors hindering 'effective networking, cooperation and learning processes' (Fischer & Schmelzle, 2009, 6). Similarly, in its report seeking to unpack 'Peacebuilding

2.0', the Alliance for Peacebuilding concludes that 'the field is not a single silo of peacebuilding actors, but rather a rich mosaic of interlocking institutions whose work in concert can be far more effective than any single organisation working alone' (2012, 44). As such, going forward, it appears as though efforts towards securing sustainable peace will be largely contingent on the emergence of a whole-system approach taking into account the interconnectedness of actors and institutions as part of peacebuilding. Simultaneously, this system must be built upon a foundation that best allows for and facilitates the sharing of knowledge, expertise and successful practices across networks.

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About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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