

EFFECTIVE INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION IN PEACEBUILDING

Guide for Program Evaluation

Draft for Training Program and Field Pilot Testing
CDA-Alliance for Peacebuilding

Peter Woodrow and Michelle Garred, with assistance from Diana Chigas, and contributions from David Steele and Ricardo Wilson-Grau

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects

Draft for Pilot Testing Phase

*Feedback and suggestions are welcome
until 30 April 2017,
to feedback@cdacollaborative.org*

About the Guide

The Alliance for Peacebuilding and its partners in the Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium—CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Mercy Corps, and Search for Common Ground—began the Effective Inter-Religious Action in Peacebuilding project (EIAP), with funding from the GHR Foundation. This three-year initiative seeks to improve the evaluation practices of inter-religious peacebuilding programs by addressing three specific gaps in inter-religious peacebuilding efforts: measurement, cooperation, and policy.

The goals of the EIAP are two-fold: 1) to generate guidance on how to evaluate inter-religious action, and 2) to develop a framework for ongoing learning regarding what constitutes effective inter-religious action.

Before beginning to draft this Guide, the EIAP team engaged in comparison of documents and evaluation reports on inter-religious action programs¹ and completed a thorough review of the relevant literature.² The EIAP has also benefitted from active participation from a global Advisory Group composed of people deeply involved in inter-religious action work, including Amineh Hoti, Dishani Jayaweera, Myla Leguro, Richard Ndi Tanto, Sarah Bernstein, Shamsia Ramadhan, Somboon Chungprampree, Sumaye Hamza, Susan Hayward and Rick Love.

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This version of the Guide is a draft developed for use in a pilot training program and for field testing of the evaluation guidance as applied to inter-religious programs. While this Guide may be cited, it remains a draft and should be cited as such. It will be revised for publication in mid-2017. To provide feedback and suggestions before 30 April 2017, or to request to be notified when the Guide is finalized, please contact Michelle Garred via feedback@cdacollaborative.org.

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¹ Vader 2015.

² Schmidt 2016.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE SCENARIO: EVALUATION COMES TO TERRA NOVA	01
1 INTRODUCTION: WHY THIS GUIDE?	03
1.1 Key Terms	06
1.2 Who might Use this Guide?	11
1.3 How to Use this Guide	13
2 FAITH-SENSITIVITY IN EVALUATION	15
2.1 Considerations for evaluating interreligious peacebuilding work	15
2.2 Desirable attributes of an interreligious peacebuilding evaluator	19
3 DECIDING TO UNDERTAKE AN EVALUATION—OR NOT	21
3.1 Where is the impetus for an evaluation coming from?	21
3.2 What are the options, short of a full evaluation?	23
3.3 Questions for deciding whether to proceed with an evaluation—or not	23
3.4 Program design considerations	25
4 PREPARING FOR & IMPLEMENTING AN EVALUATION	31
4.1 Identify the evaluation objectives or purposes	31
4.2 Apply overarching criteria for evaluation	31
4.3 Determine key questions or “lines of inquiry”	32
4.4 Choosing the evaluation approach most appropriate to the purpose	35
4.5 Decide on an internal or external evaluation	37
4.6 Develop Terms of Reference (Scope of Work) and choose an evaluator or team	37
4.7 Establish an evaluation budget and timeline	39
4.8 Determine data collection and analysis methods	40
4.9 Follow-up and utilization of the evaluation	42
5 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES	44
5.1 Conflict Sensitivity	44
5.2 Gender Dimensions	47
5.3 Youth Dimensions	48
5.4 Relating to Secular Actors	49
ANNEXES	51
Annex A: Program Design	51
Annex B: Common Program Types in Inter-Religious Action	56
Annex C: Evaluation Criteria	59
Annex D: Sample Evaluator Terms of Reference	62
Annex E: Sample Evaluation Questions by Religious Practice	63
Annex F: Thematic Bibliography	68

The Scenario: Evaluation Comes to Terra Nova

The following scenario will be used throughout the Guide to explore a range of issues and challenges and to illustrate how the issues are applicable to each section.

THE SITUATION

Terra Nova is a country that has experienced horrific violence since independence in the mid-1960s. Its population is divided across thirty-two different ethnic groups, of which 60% are Christians, 30% Muslims, and 10% of other faith traditions, including indigenous religions. Despite this diversity, the people have lived together peacefully, even through recurrent violent conflicts resulting from coup d'états and other political upheavals. These incidents of violence have led to the creation of many militia groups that claim to defend different population groups defined by ethnicity, geography, and religion.

Five years ago, one such upheaval brought a predominantly Muslim militia group to power. The brutalities that the militias inflicted on civilian populations as they fought their way to power prompted another predominantly Christian militia group to mobilize itself for reprisals and to defend their communities. The ensuing war led to the death of at least 8,000 combatants and civilians, with thousands more internally displaced or seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Following international intervention, a peace accord has been signed, and an elected government is now in place after a three-year transition period. An interim president has been installed, and there are UN peacekeepers in country. The situation is now calmer, but still punctuated by outbreaks of violence and an ongoing sense of insecurity for many.

The mobilization along religious lines has led to the portrayal of the civil war as a Christian-Muslim struggle, although some analysts argue that the conflict is mostly about power and resources, in which religious identity is used as a tool for gaining allegiance and calling for action. While, the role of faith traditions as an identity marker must be recognized, additional substantive conflict drivers include political and economic tensions magnified by corruption, weak governance and the failure to create a national identity that supersedes other identities. To engage effectively in such a context, any actor—religious or secular—will need to recognize the specific role each conflict driver plays as well as the ways they interact.

THE PROJECT

The Grassroots Peace Project (GPP) has been operating for almost two years, and it is time for a mid-term evaluation. The project is a social cohesion effort implemented by Bridges of Faith (BoF), a multi-faith local organization affiliated with the Interfaith Peace Platform. The Interfaith Peace Platform was established by the leaders of the major faith traditions in the country to promote reconciliation. The

IPP has been driven by a group of local religious leaders, including a Catholic bishop and other local priests, several Muslim imams, and a group of Protestant pastors, who have engaged in efforts to mediate conflicts and communicate messages of coexistence during times of violence.

The GPP and its partners aim to establish local organizational structures that will advance reconciliation in the wake of the recent events and strive to prevent further violence. Bridges of Faith has received a five-year partnership grant from Global Endeavor, an international faith-based NGO, to implement the GPP. Global Endeavor's funds for GPP are from a multi-country grant from an external government funding agency. The project aims to support the ability of local communities to maintain social cohesion and address local level conflicts (some of them involving inter-religious elements) in the capital city and in Alta province, which was severely affected by violence. GPP works with and through the local religious leaders and respected elders at the community level. Bridges of Faith has hired a multi-faith and multi-ethnic team of staff to carry out the project, including, as Co-Directors, Kiki Mara, an outspoken Christian woman, and Ahmed Hussein, a quietly energetic Muslim man of obvious faith. Both come with years of experience with community development programming.

The principal activities of the GPP include:

- 1) dialogue and training for faith-motivated actors (both religious authorities and faith-inspired people); and
- 2) joint action by religious leaders and faith-based community leaders in the various neighborhoods of the capital and in six districts and 23 communities in Alta province.

The project establishes multi-stakeholder peace committees to promote dialogue, social cohesion and reconciliation, as well as to prevent future violence. The program partners with Global Endeavor to provide training to the leaders on conflict transformation, social cohesion, human rights, personal responsibility, forgiveness, mediation and conflict analysis. The leaders, in turn, work together to lead trainings, facilitate dialogue, resolve disputes and mobilize social cohesion activities, mainly through the peace committees.

1. Introduction: Why This Guide?

WARNING! EVALUATION IMPENDING

Kiki Mara and Ahmed Hussein enter the office at Bridges of Faith, grab their morning coffees and turn to check their e-mails. She notices immediately a message from David Barrassa, a colleague from Global Endeavor. The message is labeled "URGENT: evaluation impending!" Kiki is immediately concerned, as she has never had to deal with an evaluation, but she is also a bit excited. This could be an opportunity for both personal and organizational learning. Kiki asks Ahmed, "Have you ever worked on an evaluation?" He replies, "Well, one of my development projects was evaluated, but it was a painful experience and pretty useless."

David Barrassa is the Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist for Global Endeavor, based in their regional office. His e-mail message reminds Ahmed and Kiki that a mid-course evaluation was called for in the five-year grant agreement to Bridges of Faith for The Grassroots Peace Project (GPP), as required by the donor. Now, almost two years into project implementation, they need to start thinking about how to prepare for and organize the evaluation.

Kiki serves as a sister-elder in her own church. Besides having the required technical qualifications and experience the job demands, Kiki applied for the position because she believed that it offered her an opportunity to live out her faith in promoting peace, reconciliation, and peaceful. She also wanted to support the work of faith leaders of all creeds that she had come to respect for their ability to work across their different beliefs in their efforts to bring peace to the people they serve. Ahmed is active in his mosque and had similar motivations as Kiki when he decided to apply for the job with GPP. They were both selected to run the project due to their deep connections with the local communities and with their religious organizations, as well as their experience implementing development efforts.

Ahmed has found satisfaction in his job so far. However, given the tendency of evaluations to look for specific outcomes, he now wonders, "Those of us involved in this project—from our multiple faith traditions—feel that we are responding to the will of God, seeking reconciliation using our core religious values. How on earth can we evaluate this inspired work? We are answerable to God, not some external donor!" How will they explain this process to the pastors, imams and priests that they work with every day? Kiki and Ahmed are firmly committed to local ownership and initiative, and this evaluation demand feels like something imposed from outside.

Religious communities have powerful potential to contribute to sustainable and peaceful societies, and their contribution to and inclusion in peacebuilding has never been more critical. Yet we are also committed to improving our work in order to ensure and expand its positive impacts. We need to identify what really works and show that our interfaith engagement in peace work is actually contributing to building peace and preventing conflicts. Above all, we must show that our engagement in peace work from an interreligious perspective is making a difference that other actors and institutions are unable to make. In sum, we feel compelled to demonstrate the value of doing peace work from an interreligious platform.

If you are involved in peacebuilding, you may have a strong instinctive sense of what needs to be done in a particular context. At the same time, you may also find it challenging to conduct a

comprehensive assessment of your programmatic initiatives in a relatively objective manner. In reality, we all need some systematic way to learn and improve our work. In many cases, we also need evaluation in order to demonstrate the value of our work to other stakeholders.

Evaluation is relatively new in peacebuilding work, having become a standard expectation only within the past ten years. In the peacebuilding field, evaluation is challenging because the work involves long time frames, complex fast-changing dynamics and important human factors that appear intangible. Inter-religious peacebuilding often involves changes in a full range of elusive factors that influence religious actors and affected populations, such as beliefs, values, and spirituality, among others. In many cases, the more rigid and results-based frameworks commonly applied to most development programs are an awkward fit at best to peacebuilding work—and may actually impede the work. In some places and among some donors, approaches that incorporate a systemic understanding of conflict and adaptive management of peacebuilding programs are gaining ground. As those approaches to program design and implementation evolve, it will be necessary to further develop tools for monitoring and evaluation that support ongoing adaptive management. (See text box below regarding “Emergent Design Under Uncertainty & Complexity.”)

The Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium (PEC)⁴ is developing resources to make peacebuilding evaluation simpler to understand, easier to do, and practiced more consistently. Those resources are posted or linked through the Alliance for Peacebuilding and the DM&E for Peace websites.⁵ However, those broad peacebuilding resources cannot address the unique needs of every specialty area. And perhaps no specialty area is growing and changing faster than inter-religious action for peacebuilding.

Inter-religious peacebuilding is not new; it has been practiced throughout history in response to a wide variety of socio-political needs. However, the intensity of inter-religious action for peacebuilding has increased, as globalization has brought a variety of religions into closer proximity to each other and, in some locations, political dynamics and conflicts have strained relations among peoples of different faiths who have lived together in harmony for many generations. In recent decades, religion has taken on renewed political significance, and has been seen increasingly as a driver of conflict—rightly or wrongly. Interest has therefore grown in inter-religious action as a way to promote peace.

More people of faith have begun to participate in peacebuilding activities. Secular peacebuilders, humanitarian and development practitioners and donors have also engaged religious actors, often because they see religious communities as key to building peace. Diverse actors and fields of knowledge are working together for the first time, and it is sometimes challenging to integrate efforts across different initiatives—in terms of developing a common understanding of the problems to be addressed, shared goals or coordinated activities.

⁴ “The Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium,” *Alliance for Peacebuilding*, <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-work/about-our-work/peacebuilding-evaluation/the-peacebuilding-evaluation-consortium/>

⁵ See “The Online Field Guide to Peacebuilding Evaluation,” <http://dmeformpeace.org/online-field-guide>

Complexity Note: Emergent Design Under Uncertainty & Complexity

Most peacebuilding programs/projects take place in situations of *complexity*: multifaceted conflicts driven by many interacting factors, each of which is in constant flux. Complex problems are more challenging than those that are “simple” or merely “complicated.”¹

A **simple problem** is well understood with a fairly linear cause-and-effect pattern and relatively few interacting factors. Solutions are known and proven. Certain diseases and their prevention or cure are examples, as are proven agricultural practices and varieties.

Complicated problems are more challenging. Explanations are unknown or contested; evidence is confusing or inconsistent. Different stakeholders hold competing perspectives and interests—and uncertainty increases and predictability decreases. While some solutions are known, they are contingent upon the context, requiring careful analysis and acknowledgement of what is known and unknown. Examples include working across multiple competing stakeholder groups and efforts to address issues in health or education.

Complex issues are characterized by constant dynamic change and high uncertainty—even about how to define the problem. Few solutions are proven—and even those that exist may be contested from multiple perspectives. In contrast to the known cause-and-effect interactions among factors in simple problems or gaining understanding of context-specific dynamics of complicated problems, in complex problems it may not even be possible to identify all of the important variables or to track their constant changes. Solutions are elusive and controversial and not conducive to careful design.

Plans must be contingent, adaptive and emergent, as “solutions” (insofar as they exist) may not appear until several steps have been taken or various initiatives have been tried and succeeded or failed. Problems like entrenched poverty, drug addiction and climate change are complex. **Most peacebuilding efforts operate in complex conflict contexts.**

Interestingly, religious actors may be well-suited to working under conditions of complexity. They may be more accepting of uncertainty and willing to entertain the notion that we don’t know or can’t know everything before proceeding to action. Similarly, religious actors may be ready to proceed without “proof” regarding the efficacy of proposed solutions; they may be open to seeing what emerges and less convinced that human agency is the primary driver of change. On the other hand, it may be important for religious actors to enhance their analytical capacities, in order to examine complex systems dynamics and to develop effective methods for constant testing of and reflection on contingent interventions—rather than accepting, as a matter of “conviction,” that their favorite methodology will be effective.

¹ These characterizations of simple, complicated and complex problems are adapted from Michael Quinn-Patton, *Principles-Focused Evaluation*, presentation at American Evaluation Association, October 2014. Notes posted: <http://katherinehaugh.com/principles-focused-evaluation/> See also Ricigliano.

The same difficulties arise in relation to evaluations. As faith-inspired actors seek financial support from governments and secular donors for their work, they face increasing obligations to demonstrate results for investments. They also feel obliged to demonstrate to other stakeholders that their approaches are effective. However, some religious actors may see external evaluation as mysterious, irrelevant or just plain too difficult. At the same time, they have their own processes for learning and assessing results. Their secular counterparts often bring evaluation experience as developed within the professional peacebuilding field, yet lack understanding of the underlying inter-religious values, the resulting inter-religious work being undertaken and a faith-based perspective on evaluation.

Those deeply grounded in religious communities typically consider “results” or “effectiveness” or “success” in spiritual terms and language that may seem strange to secular actors and evaluators. Such considerations may derive in part from the motivations for taking inter-religious action in the first place. How can we measure effectiveness when we initiate action in response to a religious call—in which we assess ourselves in relation to faithfulness to the call, rather than the usual instrumentalist notions of results or outcomes? Religious actors may hold themselves responsible for acting for peace in accordance with their call, but leave the delivery of results of their actions to divine intervention—which is difficult to assess! On the other hand, we can ask whether the source of our religious motivation is not interested in effectiveness. That is, the notions of faith and effectiveness are not necessarily in opposition.

This Guide aims to help practitioners make sense of evaluation as applied to inter-religious action in peacebuilding. It aims to support good practice among people who are involved in commissioning or contributing to such evaluations, whether they be religious, secular or a combination of both, in order to maximize peacebuilding learning and effectiveness.

1.1 Key Terms

What do we mean by evaluation of inter-religious action for peacebuilding? Terms like “peacebuilding,” “inter-religious action” and “evaluation” often have different meanings for different people depending on their experience, values, worldview, and religious, cultural and professional identities. For purposes of this Guide, we understand them as described below.

Peacebuilding:⁶ Peace is more than the formal end to violent conflict (negative peace). Peacebuilding encompasses efforts to build positive peace, in which underlying structural, relational, cultural, political and economic drivers of conflict are addressed and transformed. Peacebuilding efforts can be direct—and designed with an explicit focus on transforming conflict factors. Or peacebuilding programs can be indirect, integrated with other goals such as humanitarian relief or development efforts, and implemented in ways that aim to improve relations across conflict lines.

⁶ See “What is Peacebuilding?” *Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP)*, <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-work/what-is-peacebuilding/>

The Organization for Economic Cooperation in Development (OECD) provides the following definition. *“Peacebuilding: Actions and policies “aimed at preventing the outbreak, the recurrence or continuation of armed conflict,” encompassing “a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms,” including “short and long term actions tailored to address the particular needs of societies sliding into conflict or emerging from it.” Includes long-term support to, and establishment of, viable political and socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of addressing the proximate and root causes of conflicts, as well as other initiatives aimed at creating the necessary conditions for sustained peace and stability.”**

The School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University offers this definition: *Peacebuilding is a term used within the international development community to describe the processes and activities involved in resolving violent conflict and establishing a sustainable peace.*

It is an overarching concept that includes conflict transformation, restorative justice, trauma healing, reconciliation, development, and leadership, underlain by spirituality and religion. It is similar in meaning to conflict resolution but highlights the difficult reality that the end of a conflict does not automatically lead to peaceful, stable social or economic development. A number of national and international organizations describe their activities in conflict zones as peacebuilding.

*OECD 2012, Glossary.

Inter-religious Action for Peacebuilding^{7,8} (or ***inter-religious peacebuilding***) is defined broadly as peacebuilding initiatives that involve actors, institutions, and interventions from multiple religions that focus on religious narratives, target religious dimensions of a conflict, or promote peace within religious groups (thus *intra*-religious), between religious groups (thus *inter*-religious) or represent the efforts of religious groups to influence secular or political actors. Actions may take place at any level or scale in support of solidarity, cooperation, prevention of conflict, or conflict resolution and peacebuilding. *Intra*-religious work may be undertaken as the situation demands—which could be as a complementary process towards later efforts at inter-religious peacebuilding—or as an end in itself, especially in situations of high tension between people from different sects of the same religious tradition (Catholic and Protestant Christians, Sunni and Shia Muslims, etc.).

Inter-religious peacebuilders are those who define themselves as religiously motivated and who work at any level (grassroots to national to international), to prevent or end a cultural, structural and violent conflict, with a particular emphasis on religious pluralism. They operate out of a religious

⁷ See Vader 2015.

⁸ More information, see McLaughlin 2016.

or faith identity (in coordination with or despite other identities) and leverage religion as a catalyst for conflict transformation or address other important drivers of conflict.

Therefore, ***inter-religious action for peacebuilding*** is the engagement of actors from different faith traditions, institutions, identities, narratives, and groups to support peace—whether or not the conflict itself involves religious groups or identities and whether or not the methodology or operation of the intervention employs religious elements.

Evaluation⁹ is a systematic and intentional process of gathering and analyzing data (quantitative and qualitative) to inform learning, decision-making and action.¹⁰ While evaluation is often concerned with accountability to donors, accountability can also embrace other dimensions, including to affected populations, constituents and stakeholders, religious organizations and communities, as well as future generations and, ultimately, to a superior, transcendent good. Evaluation can also be used for other purposes. For example, program and management staff may seek any of the following—or a combination of them. An evaluation may:

- Strive to understand how well a peacebuilding effort is meeting its goals and obligation to serve key communities;
- Seek information about how key participants, beneficiaries or other stakeholders view the activities and outcomes;
- Pursue learning to inform program decisions to adapt and improve an initiative;
- Assess the value of a program/project—how it may or may not be contributing to larger goals;
- Identify lessons to inform future similar programs; and/or
- Help develop a systematic way to tell the story about the value of inter-religious peacebuilding to participants, partners and supporters.

In this guide, “evaluation” is used broadly to include “developmental evaluations”¹¹ or other forms of real-time or mid-course or “formative” evaluations¹² that take place during the course of a program, or final or “summative” evaluations.¹³ It also includes initiatives to assess progress and to support program adaptation, for management, learning, and knowledge generation. It includes evaluations undertaken by external consultants, as well as internal self-evaluations by a program team or by the implementing organization itself or its peers, and participatory processes in which stakeholders and participants lead/conduct the evaluation.

It should also be noted that evaluations—or evaluative processes—take a range of forms from quite formal to relatively informal. Formal evaluations are expected to meet certain standards established

⁹ More information: “Introduction to Evaluation and General Guidance,” *DM&E for Peace*, <http://dmeformpeace.org/introduction-to-evaluation>

¹⁰ Church and Rogers 2006.

¹¹ To learn about Developmental Evaluation, see Quinn Patton 2006.

¹² “Formative Evaluation,” Evaluation Toolbox, http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24&Itemid=125

¹³ “Summative Evaluation”, Evaluation Toobox, http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=40&Itemid=126

by the professional evaluation field, including impartiality, independence, credibility and usefulness.¹⁴ While this Guide focuses on the more formal evaluation processes, other options are available—and may be more appropriate, depending on the circumstance and the purposes of the review or assessment.¹⁵ This question will be explored further below, in Section 3, which is concerned with whether or not to undertake an evaluation and choices regarding the type of evaluation.

KIKI AND AHMED TALK WITH THEIR ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Grassroots Peace Project is guided by an Advisory Council: a bishop, a pastor and two imams. Kiki and Ahmed meet with this group as one place to start discussion of the coming evaluation. It is a fine day and the group is meeting in the grass-roofed pavilion in the garden of the BoF office. After serving up tea and sweets, Ahmed opens the topic casually. *"You know, we are being asked to perform an evaluation of GPP. Apparently, the donor requires it."*

Pastor: Evaluation!?! You mean they will come to judge our work? What do they know about our situation?

Kiki: It may not be so bad. The evaluation is to see what progress we have made—and will include a strong element of learning to improve the project.

Imam: Who are "they"? Will someone come from Europe or America to do this evaluation?

Ahmed: I think we will have some influence over the process and even the choice of the evaluator—what they will focus on, the questions they will ask. They will want to talk to everyone to get a full picture.

Bishop: Our effort draws on our common values and faith-based under-standings of life, peace and reconciliation. How can that be evaluated? It's not an objective process—nor is it short-term!

Kiki: Well, we will just have to make sure that the evaluator understands this—it will be fundamental to the learning process.

What about "Design" and "Monitoring?" Many will recognize that the terms "monitoring" and "evaluation" are often used together, as in "the program needs a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan." The term "design" usually refers to the planning of the program or project. This produces the plan that eventually will be monitored and evaluated. But design is also often joined to M&E (hence "DM&E"), and can refer both to the design of a monitoring and evaluation process as well as the overall project/program design. Many of the citations in this Guide link to the *DM&E for Peace* website, a useful resource for all kinds of information, tools, evaluation reports and an Online Field

¹⁴ OECD 1991.

¹⁵ See Annex A. See also Ernstorfer 2016.

Guide to evaluation for the peacebuilding community.¹⁶

Monitoring refers to setting and tracking targets and milestones to measure progress and achievements, and verify whether the planned outputs are occurring. Monitoring, therefore, tracks whether a project/program is being implemented consistent with the design and reaching expected outcomes. The key difference between monitoring and evaluation is that evaluation is about making a judgment about the worth or significance of the intervention, based on the information gathered during a project or program, including the monitoring data. Evaluation also looks for competing explanations for why an observed change occurred, and whether there have been any unintended positive or negative consequences. Thus, the assessment of a project's success (its evaluation) can be different, depending on who draws the conclusions regarding the value. For example, a project manager's judgment may differ from that of the project's participants, or other stakeholders—or an external evaluator.

While design, monitoring and evaluation processes are distinct, they work together in important ways. For instance, the stronger the design, the easier it will be to monitor and evaluate a program or project.¹⁷ The program design is the framework for what to monitor: what changes are expected and how the planned activities and outputs will combine to achieve the outcomes. Monitoring information can provide information for adjusting the program design in mid-course and may be one source of useful information for an evaluation. Evaluation can look into how things took place in reality, as conflict settings usually require a lot of modifications to initial plans. The evaluator looks at the decisions made with what results.

Ultimately, a final (or "summative") evaluation should inform the design of future programs through "closing the learning loop." However, the reality is that many evaluations fail to be considered in follow-on programming in *any* field, not just peacebuilding!

MONITORING?! WHO HAS TIME FOR MONITORING?

Kiki just got off the phone with David at Global Endeavor's regional office. Among other things, he mentioned that the evaluator would want to see any monitoring data the project has been keeping. She turns to Ahmed. *"We are definitely in trouble. David says they will need to see our monitoring data—and he said something about a baseline. We have been so busy dealing with constant crises, we barely have time to think, much less collect information! What are we going to do?"*

Ahmed thinks a minute and says, *"Well, we are who we are and we have done the best we can—we are not asked to do more. I have heard that it is possible to 'reconstruct' a baseline—the initial conditions of the project. Everyone knows what the situation was when we started two years ago, so it shouldn't be too hard to do that. And, while we have not been collecting lots of information, we do have some interesting stuff—like how many peace committees we have set up, who has been involved, how many people we trained. There are lots of stories as well. We will be all right."*

¹⁶ See DM&E for Peace, www.dmeforpeace.org; The Online Field Guide to Peacebuilding Evaluation, <http://dmeforpeace.org/online-field-guide>

¹⁷ See, for instance, Church and Rogers 2006.

1.2 Who might use this Guide?

This Guide is for anyone who is involved in evaluating inter-religious peacebuilding programs or initiatives. This includes professional evaluators, practitioners and leaders who are tasked with commissioning an evaluation, or who are managing learning and evaluation processes, as well as donors (public and private) who are involved in funding and evaluating inter-religious action for peacebuilding.

Thus, a wide range of people and organizations might make use of this Guide:

- Evaluation specialists/evaluators, particularly those who focus on evaluating peacebuilding and/or inter-religious peacebuilding programs.
- Local and national level staff of faith-based organizations engaged in inter-religious action for peacebuilding: program staff, program managers/directors, executives. Some of them may be involved in organizing or commissioning various forms of review/evaluation.
- Specialized monitoring and evaluation staff of local/international NGOs that work on inter-religious action—for those organizations that have them. They are often based in headquarters locations and support multiple programs and their M&E plans.
- Program officers of private and public institutional donors that fund inter-religious action programs who are in a position to require M&E plans and formal evaluations—or other forms of review.

We also imagine a number of scenarios regarding different circumstances that might generate demand for information and resources on the evaluation of inter-religious action, including the following illustrative examples, based on real situations.

- Youth Engaging Spirit!, a local religious organization, works on dialogue and reconciliation among youth across religious lines at a local community level, in an effort to prevent repeated outbreaks of violence among youth gangs organized across ethnic and religious lines in Northern Nigeria. YES! receives small amounts of funding from international NGOs and institutional donors, but has relatively few resources or in-house capacities for M&E. They have no explicit requirements to perform an evaluation, but are intensely interested in learning about what is working and not working in their violence-prevention initiatives.
- Health Mission Services (HMS) is a local NGO focused on community health in the war-ravaged regions of the Central African Republic. A new antibiotic-resistant infection has begun to affect communities, creating suspicions that militant religious groups are poisoning each other. HMS believes that cooperation between religious leaders could be an effective way to address both the illness and the rumors. They want to involve religious leaders in providing health messages regarding preventive measures to their constituents. HMS, however, does not have experience working through religious leaders and they have to discover how best to engage them in this conflict context. They require real-time information on what works and what does not so they can adaptive accordingly.

- A Protestant Church in the Solomon Islands has established a series of Peaceful Community structures at various levels down to the district and local churches. These peace structures are active in areas of the country that have experienced repeated cycles of ethnic riots and mass killings along ethnic lines. They have been cooperating with other religious groups to organize a series of dialogues and to identify respected community leaders (religious and otherwise) to act as mediators regarding land disputes among the ethnic groups—the main source of tension and trigger of violence in the past. At the national level, the church has received a five-year grant from a European donor for these activities, which requires a mid-term evaluation to be performed after the first three years and a summative evaluation at completion. They want to involve their partners from the other religious organizations and community members in the evaluation process.
- Global Islamic Development is operating with United Kingdom government funding to undertake reconstruction and reconciliation efforts in Basra, southern Iraq. Their program design assumes that they can promote better relationships across Sunni-Shia lines through engaging both groups in joint projects that benefit everyone, with an initial focus on redevelopment of water resources at the community level. The project has hired local staff from all communities, taking care to include a balanced group from both Sunni and Shia groups, as well as both men and women, recognizing that, at the family level, women are in charge of bringing in water, treating it and conserving it. The funding agreement requires an M&E component to the program, including identification of baseline conditions and periodic real-time evaluations to influence program redesign decisions. The donor representative has signaled that they would like the next evaluation to explore the inter-religious and gender elements of the program, testing a) whether the joint project approach has resulted in improved inter-group relations, and, if so, how and why; and b) how the approaches to gender dynamics have affected religious dimensions.

Each of these situations requires dedicated attention to evaluation processes—and the commitment of organizational time and resources (staff time, budget) to organize and implement a credible

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FROM GLOBAL ENDEAVOR

David Barrassa at Global Endeavor assures Kiki and Ahmed that he is prepared to help throughout the evaluation process. He will clarify the purpose of the evaluation to make sure that the donor will be satisfied—but also so the project itself will gain value from it. Global Endeavor is also part of an international network of religiously-based organizations working for development, humanitarian relief and peace, and represents a lot of experience with evaluations of all kinds. Therefore, although he is not an expert on the situation in Terra Nova or the religious dimensions of the conflict there, he does know about inter-religious action for peace and is committed to making this process as locally-driven as possible, including taking careful account of the needs and sensitivity of local religious actors. Even though Ahmed and Kiki are not evaluation experts, they will provide a crucial liaison with the religious partners of the project and ensure full participation by all stakeholders.

evaluation for both accountability and and/or learning process. Some of the smaller organizations will clearly need technical and perhaps funding assistance, while the larger groups probably have considerable organizational experience with evaluations and can manage on their own. In all cases, though, experience specifically with the evaluation of inter-religious action may be missing—which is where this Guide comes into play.

1.3 How to Use this Guide

This Guide outlines the decisions and stages of an evaluation process for inter-religious action for peacebuilding. It adapts and supplements professional (secular) evaluation principles and practices to ensure that the evaluation of inter-religious actions are sensitive to and respectful of faith traditions, values, practices, priorities and motivations—and that they capture adequately the important spiritual dimensions of the work. It does not repeat basic “how to” guidance on evaluation processes, but includes multiple references to the most relevant evaluation resources. Rather, the Guide focuses on the issues, questions and adaptations that arise in the context of inter-religious peacebuilding, and follows the evaluation process more or less chronologically, including (in approximate order):

- Examination of a core set of issues involved in “faith-sensitivity” in evaluation;
- The decision whether or not to evaluate (determining the feasibility and value of evaluating at a particular point in time);
- Preparing for an evaluation: deciding *what* to evaluate, *how to conduct the evaluation* (what approaches are most appropriate), and *who* should conduct the evaluation;
- Considerations for implementing an evaluation (e.g., collecting and analyzing data, and ensuring the evaluation process is sensitive to issues of faith and conflict dynamics); and
- Exploration of a series of cross-cutting themes that will influence most evaluation processes.

Throughout the guide, we provide examples to illustrate various steps and processes. We will also use the scenario presented at the beginning of the Guide (adapted from a real program) to illustrate how the guidance might be applied in a particular case.

2. Faith-Sensitivity in Evaluation

When evaluating religious and inter-religious peacebuilding work, it is essential to consider – and be highly sensitive to – the ways in which faith-based efforts may be distinct from mainstream practice.

2.1 Considerations for evaluating religious peacebuilding work¹⁸

It is very important for evaluators to understand the uniqueness of faith-based peacebuilding, and to plan and adapt accordingly. There are a number of factors that contribute to the distinctive nature of faith-based peace work. Yet one factor is unique to faith-based peacebuilding – belief in the supernatural.¹⁹ Religious peacebuilders from all faith traditions are motivated by their sense of connection to a higher power, whatever it may be called: divinity, ultimate reality or transcendent good. Belief in the supernatural leads to some distinct features that are especially relevant for evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding.

Principal Features of Faith-based Peacebuilding and Evaluation

Accountability. Secular and religious actors are both concerned with effective results and accountability. However, accountability for religious peacebuilders is not always tied to achieving predefined results. Often, the primary sense of accountability is about faithfulness to a supernatural presence, to the faith tradition, or to a personal sense of calling. Religious peacebuilders often value motive and relationships more highly than demonstration of observable results within a limited time period. Being less project oriented or time bound, religious peacebuilders often enjoy greater flexibility to change strategies and objectives.

Distinctive value system. The focal point of any religious value system is a framework of meaning that makes sense of life and provides a moral compass. Most faith traditions hold some general values in common. One can find adherents within most religions that claim to value peace, justice and compassion. Different religious communities, however, give particular meanings to those values. It is important to understand the specific meanings and practices of the religious community with which one works, using language and concepts inherent within that tradition, rather than external perspectives.

Understanding of Success/Failure. From a faith-based perspective, success is understood from a transcendent perspective, not solely in earthly, material terms. Faithfulness to a spiritual calling, rather than performance, is often the standard by which success of human effort is evaluated. Furthermore, it is also based on the perception of transcendent supernatural activity that goes beyond what can be objectively measured. This helps explain how Mother Teresa could labor for years among the poor without much sign of measurable success. The definition of success held by her faith community, the Sisters of Charity within the Catholic Church, went far beyond what could

¹⁸ This section was written by Steele and Wilson-Grau, as an excerpt adapted from their 2016 paper.

¹⁹ "Supernatural" is defined as beyond the natural, greater than the sum of all parts natural. It is synonymous with "transcendent," understood as that which is beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience, beyond the ordinary range of perception. Such a definition is reflected in the official designation of what constitutes a religion in Australia. Among other characteristics, there must be "belief in a supernatural being, thing, or principle."

be measured objectively.

Motivation. Supernatural direction, guidance and calling, via scripture, spiritual mentor, or meditation, can be a major factor in determining what a faith-based person does. Yet, for the faith-based actor, there can also be a strong conviction that this supernatural entity can act on its own, apart from any human action. Such beliefs can sometimes motivate inaction as well as resistance to intervention by others. However, in most cases, faith-based peacebuilders believe in a combination of human and supernatural agency.

Faith-based transformation. Religious transformation sets its ultimate sights on the whole world, guided by a hope of transformation that has no bounds. The most common religious theory of change assumes that peace will be built to the extent that people-to-people efforts are in accord with a transcendent vision or design. Therefore, many faith-based peacebuilders see individual transformation or relationship-building as the most effective path towards both reconciliation and socio-political change. The distinction here, is one of emphasis, since many religious peacebuilders have also worked directly for social and structural transformation.

In sum, evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding must provide ways to assess action that is grounded in a belief in the existence of the supernatural, a powerful, transcendent presence as manifest in five distinct features.

A Framework for the Evaluation of Faith-based Peacebuilding

Believing, doing and belonging are three interactive aspects of religiosity. The function of doing and believing is to create belonging, the ultimate goal.²⁰ The specific role played by belief is to explain and legitimize the other two – what the believer does and where the believer belongs. Thus, the role of supernatural belief is to clarify and justify an ultimate experience of transcendent belonging and provide a source of motivation that pervades what the believer does. Finally, there is the faith community to which one belongs, which shares the belief and legitimizes one's activity.

Evaluation of a peacebuilding initiative can be seen as an effort to support accountability, understanding and learning by determining the *merit*, *worth* or *significance* of what has happened and been achieved.²¹ These three foci, derived from professional evaluation, are also relevant to faith-based peacebuilders, because they can be applied to the distinctive nature of religious peacebuilding. Merit, worth and significance correspond to the three interconnected aspects of faith experience — believing, doing and belonging.

²⁰ See Haidt 2012, 290-291.

²¹ See "What is Evaluation?" *American Evaluation Association*, <http://www.eval.org/p/bl/et/blogaid=4>

Focus of professional evaluation	Focus of religious peacebuilding evaluation
<i>Merit</i> is about intrinsic qualities, performance or results of an intervention – how well the activities implemented meet the needs of those it intends to serve.	<i>Excellence</i> of performance of the religious peacebuilding process, including use of faith-based practices and religious networks to facilitate personal and communal transformation. (Doing)
<i>Worth</i> is the extrinsic quality of an intervention or its results – the value of the program for the broader community or society.	<i>Value</i> of the results of peacebuilding efforts, whether they are in line with the faith tradition's vision of community and sense of purpose, as informed by its worldview, values and source of motivation based on its understanding of human and supernatural agency. (Belonging)
<i>Significance</i> is the potential importance of the intervention or influence of its results – the prospect that the program will have more or different merit or worth.	<i>Importance</i> of what has been done and achieved in light of the faith-tradition's understanding of accountability and standards for measuring success, both <i>influenced</i> by belief in the transcendent intervention of the supernatural. (Believing)

The distinctive role played by belief, including affirmation of the supernatural, is to explain or legitimize any activity undertaken as well as the understanding of belonging, the ultimate objective. Discerning (but not measuring) the influence of belief helps establish the importance, influence and significance of the peacebuilding effort. Religious belief, then, can influence the way in which faith-based actors conceptualize each of the following criteria typically used in the professional evaluation of peacebuilding interventions:²²

Efficiency measures how well resources used in a peacebuilding effort are converted to results. Religious actors sense of *motivation* affects how they will view efficiency.

Effectiveness measures the extent to which a peacebuilding activity attains its objectives within its immediate environment. Religious actors' understanding of *accountability* influences how they view effectiveness.

Impact refers to the wider effects produced by a peacebuilding intervention - positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. Religious peacebuilders' *understanding of success/failure* affects how they think about impact.

Relevance is the extent to which the peacebuilding activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the parties in conflict, the peacebuilders and other stakeholders. Religious peacebuilders' distinct set of *values* will determine relevance.

²² Adapted here from OECD 2012, 65-71. See also Annex C.

Sustainability is concerned with assessing whether the benefits of a peacebuilding activity are likely to continue after the intervention. The way faith-based peacebuilders conceive of *transformation* affects how they view sustainability.

These five criteria are neither all obligatory nor exhaustive. In each evaluation, one or more are chosen or prioritized. Furthermore, additional criteria may be added, such as *coherence* and *coordination*.

A framework for evaluation involves more than the assessment of its purpose and selection of criteria. How the evaluation of religious peacebuilding will be done is equally important. Creating or restoring a sense of *belonging* is rather vague and difficult to measure objectively, although this goal cannot be ignored. Likewise, *belief*, the aspect which makes evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding most distinctive, has effects that are nearly impossible to measure. In the evaluation of any peacebuilding intervention, it is the activity (the *doing*) which can be evaluated. Everything that is done to affect the entire spectrum of transformation – personal, inter-personal, social and structural – can be evaluated.

Many of the types of activity involved (e.g. mediation, conciliation, dialogue, educational efforts, advocacy, problem solving, or structural reform) are also performed by secular peacebuilders. However, some distinct categories of religious practice are used by faith-based peacebuilders, sometimes as part of traditional activities, sometimes as stand-alone activities. Five such practices are of particular significance:²³

Expressions of piety through worship, sacrament, prayer, meditation. *Significance: The ultimate arena in which direct encounter with the supernatural occurs, effecting, in particular, motivation, accountability, and understanding of success.*

Education/proclamation through scripture, teaching, preaching, moral edicts, public statements. *Significance: Formation and internalization of a worldview and value system – derived from the faith tradition's basic narrative.*

Rituals: the use of sacred rites, symbolic expressions, customs and ceremonies embedded within the faith tradition. *Significance: Dramatization of the human/supernatural encounter, connecting past tradition with present context in order to open the potential for transformation.*

Reconciliation processes with long histories of use within specific faith communities, as well as recent adaptations such as establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions. *Significance: Spiritual practices which enable adversaries to move toward the restoration of right relations, facilitating inter-communal transformation.*

Faith witness through story-telling, religious music/drama/art, and dialogue leading to collaborative action. *Significance: Response to participation in a sacred presence that*

²³ Annex E illustrates how an evaluation of a faith-based peacebuilding intervention might be structured to assess these five categories of faith-based practice.

transforms oneself and builds conflicted parties into a peaceful community, guided by a transcendent vision of success.

Selecting Evaluation Approaches

After agreeing on the framework most appropriate for evaluating a specific faith-based peacebuilding initiative, three essential components must inform the selection of an approach.

Awareness of complexity. All peacebuilding efforts contend with complexity due to uncertain and volatile circumstances. The relationships of cause and effect are often not known in advance, effecting both objectives and strategy. Unknown degrees of impact resulting from belief in supernatural agency can add another dimension of complexity. Thus traditional evaluation of performance and results against predefined plans often will not work for religious peacebuilding. Fortunately, complexity-sensitive professional evaluation alternatives are available.

Participation. Participatory evaluation methods are required to generate and analyze credible data with which to assess the value systems and dynamics of faith-based peacebuilding. Key stakeholders must have a voice and an opportunity to present more of their perspective than typically occurs in conventional evaluations. However, Appreciative Inquiry, Most Significant Change and Outcome Harvesting are approaches that can provide stakeholders with a voice and enable evaluators to arrive at evidence-based answers to evaluation questions.²⁴

Use of qualitative methods. Appropriate evaluation approaches for faith-based peacebuilding will primarily use a variety of qualitative data-gathering methods: reviewing documents such as reports, chronicles and histories, generating stories, opinion surveys, parables and poetry, making observations, and conducting interviews and focus groups. The kinds of data collected, depending on the kinds of questions asked and participant perspectives on process and outcome, can be used to assess outcomes as subjective as attitudinal change or degree of hope for various levels of transformation.

Evaluation of faith-based interventions must on activities and results, while taking into account what motivates religious peacebuilders within distinct value systems to pursue transformation. It must enable them to be appropriately accountable and explain the success or failure of their interventions. The influence of religious belief on this process should be apparent in the way the entire evaluation process is designed and implemented – how criteria are understood, theories of change viewed, indicators determined, results interpreted, and lessons learned applied.

2.2 Desirable attributes of an interreligious peacebuilding evaluator

Due to the unique aspects cited above, and other similar dynamics, it is important that the evaluator have the appropriate competencies for addressing inter-religious action. The evaluator should:

- Recognize that he or she brings to the project his/her own beliefs and value system, whether religious or not.

²⁴ See www.BetterEvaluation.org/Approaches for information on these and other participatory approaches.

- Assist peacebuilding actors to reflect carefully on the influence of their values and worldview, both the benefits and their own potential sources of bias. Furthermore, the evaluator can assist them to recognize the values systems of others with whom they work, again assessing both the actual and potential positive or negative impacts.
- Understand that the evaluator is not attempting to assess whether a belief in divine or supernatural agency has influenced the outcome. Rather the aim is to understand how that belief influences the faith-based actors—the way they propose to design the initiative and the evaluation process, as well as the way they interpret any data collected and derive any lessons learned throughout an evaluation process.
- Consider their own religions/cultural identity, and the ways in which it is perceived in the context, in order to adjust accordingly.
- Treat religious traditions and practices with genuine respect and interest (whether or not they agree with them).
- Have sufficient “religious literacy” to be able to understand the core concepts that inform faith-based peacebuilding in each of the religious traditions involved, ask insightful questions, and communicate in ways that make sense to religious actors.

In many circumstances, it may be very difficult for one person to encompass all these attributes, and it is then advisable to compose a carefully selected evaluation team.

3. *Deciding to Undertake an Evaluation—or Not*

A threshold question is whether an evaluation *could or should* take place—and, if so, of what kind.²⁵ We can also examine whether an “evaluation” is really what is needed, desired or required—by classical or formal definitions. There are, in fact, other processes that may be more appropriate. Figure 1 provides a series of decisions that can help determine whether and how to proceed. It starts with the basic question: should we launch an evaluation or not—and, if so, of what kind? This leads to discussion of what is required and by whom (donor, internal procedures...), and, whether some kind of formal process is required or whether an informal effort would be acceptable. (Informal options include Program Reflection Exercise, Evaluability Assessment or Program Quality Assessment—each discussed further below.)

If a formal process is needed, it would be necessary to ask whether it is possible to proceed to planning the evaluation directly. Or, delays may be needed due to external conditions (security, weather, etc.) or the status of the program itself. In case of such delays, other the less formal options can be considered (Program Reflection, Evaluability Assessment or Program Quality Assessment) in the interim and to help get the program ready. Following delay and/or completion of an informal process, eventually, you would return to planning the full evaluation, if it is needed.

3.1 *Where is the impetus for an evaluation coming from?*

Some donors require programs to perform a full, formal evaluation using an external evaluator, usually as specified in a grant agreement. In other cases, a donor may suggest an “evaluation” without determining what that means, in terms of process or methodology. Some organizations have internal requirements for review of all programs on a periodic basis, as a means for ongoing learning and continuous program improvement—regardless of what a donor might require. Such reviews may or may not be performed with external resources, depending on the specific situation.

Formal evaluations using external evaluators can be costly, in terms of staff, partner and project participant time, as well as expenses for the evaluator’s time and direct expenses. In many cases, this is unnecessary, depending on who is asking for the evaluation with what definition. In other instances, the organization may not have sufficient resources to perform a credible evaluation. Ideally, costs for an evaluation are built into project/program budgets—at a level that matches the type of program review required.

If a reliable and credible evaluation is not feasible, then it may not be worth investing resources to conduct one. If the organization or certain key stakeholders are not ready, available or supportive of the evaluation, an evaluation may not be useful or practical at a particular point in time. In such cases, it is often useful to consider alternatives, including an internal evaluation and/or application of the less formal processes depicted in Figure 1 and further described below.

²⁵ More information: Mayne 2008.

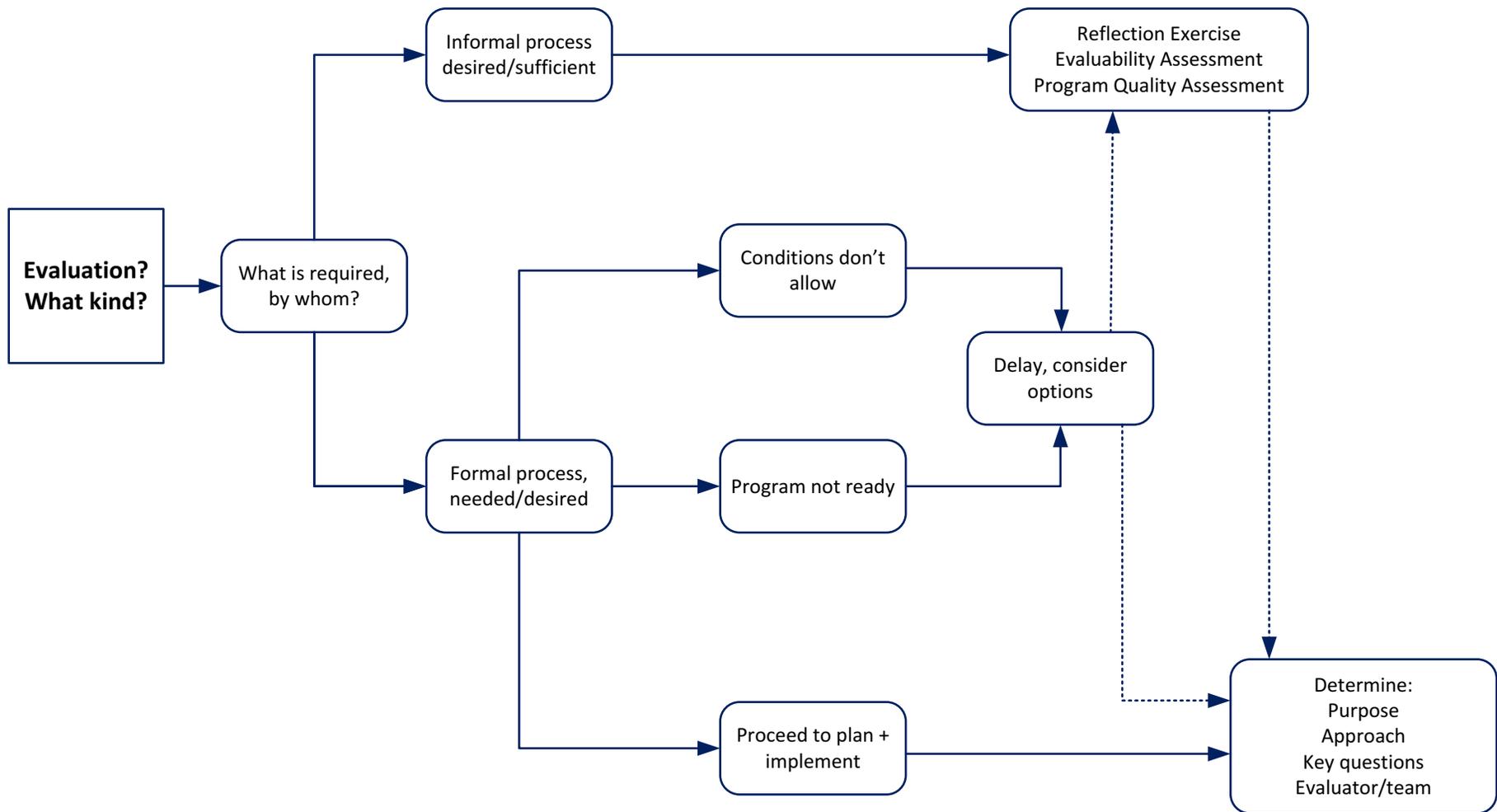


Figure 1: Decision making flow chart—to evaluate or not?

3.2 What are the options, short of a full evaluation?

If the fundamental need is for learning and program improvement, rather than accountability or to demonstrate results, then a formal evaluation may not be the best choice. Or, if an evaluation is needed, but the program/project is not ready or was not designed with an evaluation in mind, alternative processes are available that can help a program team strengthen the program and better prepare for an eventual evaluation.²⁶

The options short of a full evaluation include:

Program Reflection Exercise: A step-by-step process of program review, lead primarily by the program staff and involving partners and other stakeholders, but engaging external facilitation assistance is also possible. The primary purpose is to take stock of progress, identify any barriers to achievement of program goals, and to adjust the program design to increase the likelihood of greater effectiveness.

Evaluability Assessment: “Evaluability” is a technical term among professional evaluators that refers to the question of whether a program can be evaluated—or what needs to be done to prepare for an evaluation. The assessment examines program design, availability of information, and whether the conditions (in the organization and the external situation) would actually permit an evaluation. Evaluability assessments are often undertaken in advance of a planned evaluation, especially of a large program, in order to increase the prospect of a successful and useful evaluation at a later time. Normally, an evaluability assessment is undertaken by an external evaluator and may involve some data gathering, but not at the volume normally required by a full evaluation.

Program Quality Assessment: A program quality assessment (PQA) focuses primarily on program design, with some preliminary attention to program implementation and results. Typically, a PQA compares the program design to existing or emerging standards in the field. While a PQA could be performed by an internal person or team, it is often useful to gain the added perspective of an external evaluator.

Any of these processes of review/assessment may be sufficient in themselves, depending on the needs or requirements. They can be followed by a more formal evaluation, if needed or desired.

3.3 Questions for deciding whether to proceed with an evaluation—or not

Organizations considering whether to conduct or commission an evaluation can reflect on a set of basic questions as a way of testing support for the evaluation among key groups (staff, participants, partner organizations...) and also determining whether the program²⁷ itself is ready—or how it might become ready for a developmental, formative or summative evaluation.

Note that it is not necessary that all questions are answered positively to move forward; there is still a judgement call to be made. Answers to these questions might dictate which kinds of evaluation would

²⁶ See Annex A. See also Ernstorfer 2016.

²⁷ “Project” and “program” are used interchangeably.

be the best, depending on the security of the situation, the access to stakeholders and partners, and the amount of monitoring data you have. Or reflection on these questions might lead to consideration of the alternatives as discussed above. Basic questions include the following:

1. Who are the main program stakeholders/participants/partners, and are they well-informed about the nature of an evaluation and supportive of the process?
2. Are the purposes/aims of the evaluation clear to all? Is the main purpose accountability to an external party (such as a donor)? Or is the primary purpose about learning and program adaptation?
3. Is this the right time for an evaluation of the program, in terms of important activities, milestones and results?
4. Are key locations and people accessible (season of the year/weather, road conditions, security, terrain, population movements)?
5. What forms of information are available that will be useful to an evaluation? This might include regular reports, information from monitoring systems, surveys, participant questionnaires from events or workshops, etc.
6. What is the political context, and what are the current sensitivities to any form of information gathering in the situation? Are people willing and able to talk? Are there issues regarding conflict, gender, faith communities or other dimensions of difference that would need to be taken into account or could actually impede an evaluation? Would asking questions put anyone at risk?
7. Was the program designed with a formal evaluation in mind? That is, did the implementers know that there would be an assessment of what they did and achieved?
8. Does the program design include important elements, including problem or conflict analysis (and/or some form of baseline conditions), clear goals, expected changes, theory of change and ongoing feedback mechanisms? These elements are considered the basic necessities for full formal evaluations, but there are ways to get around them. If any of those are missing, how might an evaluation adjust to that reality? Can the program design be strengthened in anticipation of an evaluation to take place at a later time?
9. Are the needed resources available to conduct the type of evaluation needed? This may include budget for a skilled external evaluator or evaluation team, sufficient staff time for organizing the evaluation, and budget for travel, lodging, meals, and so forth, depending on the evaluation process.
10. What are the cost-benefits for conducting an evaluation, taking into account political risks (to the implementing partners, participating communities, other stakeholders); readiness of the parties in conflict to participate in an evaluation exercise; time and effort costs? That is, how much investment of time and effort will it take to carry out the evaluation and will the benefits meet or outweigh these costs?
11. Are there other options—other than a full, formal developmental, formative or summative

evaluation—that would be more appropriate (or affordable) for the program in question?²⁸

Participatory and inclusive processes for consideration of these (and other) questions about a proposed evaluation can help educate and prepare partners, participants and staff—and build support for the evaluation itself. It may be particularly helpful to engage all stakeholders in discussion of the core purposes of the evaluation: what do we want from an evaluation and what will we do with the results?

If a full formal evaluation is planned or deemed to be needed, and serious doubts have been raised through discussion of the questions listed above, a more formal evaluability assessment can be considered. It is one way to address concerns and better prepare the organization and its partners for such an evaluation.²⁹ The specific dimensions of evaluability will depend on the program, its context, the evaluators and the chosen methodological approach.

CAN GPP BE EVALUATED?

David, Kiki and Ahmed, along with the Executive Director of Bridges of Faith, hold a conference call to discuss whether it is advisable to go forward with the evaluation—and the possible alternatives. David walks them through the basic questions about evaluability, including issues regarding program design, data availability and data analysis.

After considerable back and forth, they decide that it would be possible to conduct the evaluation, but would like to propose a two-step process. The first step would involve a technical assistance visit from David, in which the staff team, Advisory Council and key local religious leaders would engage in their own reflection exercise, including elaboration of the theory of change, strengthening the goals, improved ongoing monitoring, and eliciting feedback and discussion about how the program is working in several dimensions. This would get them better prepared for a later more formal evaluation

The external evaluation would take place perhaps nine months after the conclusion of the internal reflection and project strengthening exercise. While that would be a little later than the schedule called for and a fairly short time after the internal process, they would, nonetheless be in a better position to work with an evaluator in a productive manner.

3.4 Program design considerations

Formal evaluations are much stronger when the evaluators can work with a clear program design. If the program design is not adequate, then an evaluation may not yield useful insights, and the

²⁸ See the previous section for further discussion of such options.

²⁹ See Davies 2013. See also Reimann 2012.

findings and conclusions may not be as defensible.

Throughout the discussion above, we have referred to issues of program design. Unfortunately, there are no widely accepted standards for program design in peacebuilding—at least, not in specific or prescriptive terms (“if faced with X, do Y”). However, there is agreement about what elements need to be included in a robust program design and, depending on the circumstances, some confluence of opinion regarding appropriate processes to follow in developing a peacebuilding program. Practitioners also agree that “context matters”; we cannot assume that a program approach that worked in one setting will be effective in another. We can, however, identify the necessary ways of thinking about peacebuilding program design, that must be adapted to each conflict context and adjusted frequently in response to dynamic changes. (See text box below regarding “Conflict Analysis and Program Design under Complexity and Uncertainty.”)

COMPLEXITY NOTE: Conflict Analysis and Program Design under Complexity and Uncertainty

For simple and even complicated situations, fairly straightforward methods of problem analysis may be sufficient. We have already noted, however, that most peacebuilding programming, including inter-religious action, takes place in complex situations. How, then, can we gain sufficient understanding of such complexity in order to focus a program on the right issues and the right groups? The discipline of “systems thinking” offers concepts and tools for “mapping” a conflict as a system of interacting factors and actors, as an initial step in identifying how best to intervene to change the conflict system. Systems thinking also assumes that solutions cannot be entirely predetermined, but will emerge from taking initiatives, while paying careful attention to the results through ongoing feedback mechanisms (effective monitoring processes) and adaptive management that responds to the dynamic changes in the context and ongoing effects from program activities.¹ Peacebuilders acting from a faith tradition may be well-placed to adopt a flexible and adaptive approach that acknowledges the complexity of the situation, yet remains grounded in faith values, as well as local realities and capacities.

¹ See section of Annex E/Bibliography that lists systems thinking resources.

This Guide is focused on evaluation—and is not the place for extensive treatment of program design issues. Nevertheless, we will present a brief overview of current practices in peacebuilding program design, and provide additional material in Annex A, along with references to other resources.

Generally, peacebuilding programs are expected to contain the following elements—with a great deal of latitude to respond to the needs of the context and the stakeholders involved.

- Conflict analysis that identifies the key driving factors of conflict
- Goals and objectives focused on desired/expected changes
- A plausible theory of change

- Mechanism for ongoing collection of feedback and a monitoring and evaluation plan

Conflict Analysis. A full understanding the conflict is essential to being able to plan and implement a peacebuilding program. Emerging best practice in peacebuilding suggests that programs should address key driving factors of conflict, factors that are identified through a process of conflict analysis.

- ***Does the program clearly define the conflict and key driving factors of conflict and peace that it aims to address?*** Is a careful conflict analysis the foundation for programming? That is, how does the program address the drivers and sustainers of conflict?³⁰ How has the situation changed and does the conflict analysis need to be updated?
- ***What role(s) do religious factors, organizations or individuals play in the conflict and the approaches to affecting the conflict?*** How have these factors been characterized publicly, in the media and in popular opinion—and to what extent are those depictions valid or distorted?³¹ In what ways are religious practices and beliefs designed to play a role in the program activities.

There are many ways to conduct a conflict analysis and many tools and frameworks are available. We have listed conflict analysis resources in the Bibliography in Annex F. In the context of an evaluation, especially in exploring the relevance of the program, it will be necessary to review any existing conflict analyses performed by or used by the program, in order to determine whether the program is addressing the right issues at the right time with the right people and using an appropriate approach to creating positive change. In some circumstances, the evaluator or evaluation team will need to perform their own conflict analysis as part of the process.

³⁰ Schirch 2013; Garred 2015; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) 2015.

³¹ Frazer and Owen, 35. Forthcoming.

CONFLICT IN TERRA NOVA: WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

For several years, the Interfaith Peace Platform has had many vigorous discussions about the conflict in the country and whether it has religious dimensions. Last year Pastor Otano and Imam Bubakar were interviewed by the BBC. Part of the interview went like this:

James Menendez (BBC): *Thank you, Pastor Otano and Imam Bubakar for joining us today. We have been told that the conflict and violence in Terra Nova arises from tensions between Muslims and Christians. Yet the two of you have been cooperating to promote peace. How do you explain that contradiction?*

Imam: *Thanks, James, we are pleased to be here. Actually, we don't agree that the conflict here is primarily about religion. The contending groups are struggling for political power and have been manipulating peoples' religious identities to mobilize actions and violence. But there is no fundamental contention between religious groups.*

Pastor: *I would just add that a lot of the conflict is about neglect and marginalization of the huge majority of the population—both Muslim and Christian. Elite groups (which include both Muslim and Christian as well) are doing well, while most people suffer. And, the farther from the capital you are, the less likely you will receive services, including health care, education, and even basic security.*

James: *So the issue is about how to ensure that everyone receives an equitable share of resources, regardless of their faith community. Is that right?*

Imam: *Absolutely! And resources are directly connected to political and economic power.*

Well-formulated Goals and Objectives. Traditionally, evaluations have been based on program goals and objectives, which may have been laid out in a funding proposal or project description. Much has been written on formulation of goals and objectives and ensuring that they are expressed in terms of desired changes. (Resources on goals are presented in Annex A.)

- ***Were the original program goals and/or objectives clear and realistic descriptions of the change that is sought?*** Have they been updated or adapted?
- ***Were the goals as stated too broad, effectively visions for long-term change—or too narrowly focused on activities (outputs or outcomes)?***

GRASSROOTS PEACE PROJECT'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In thinking about how best to support his partners at Bridges of Faith, David Barrassa reads back over the project goals and objectives, and asks himself, "*Are these strong goals? Will it be possible to evaluate against these? Should we try to improve them?*"

Goal: to reduce the recruitment of people (mainly young men) to violent groups on both sides, and to increase the ability of religious actors to mobilize communities for peace.

Objectives:

1. To improve understanding, trust and cooperation among Muslim and Christian religious and community leaders in the capital and in Alta Province.
2. To increase the ability of religious actors to facilitate nonviolent conflict resolution and mobilize for peace.

David's sense is that it might be fairly easy to assess the rates of recruitment and to observe aspects of mobilization. It will be harder, though, to evaluate "trust and cooperation," unless we can translate those into behavioral measures. Similarly, it will take some thinking to determine how to assess "ability to facilitate conflict resolution," although community members may have good stories about key incidents and the roles of religious leaders and peace committees in dealing with them.

Plausible "Theory of Change." Is there an agreed understanding of how the program/organization expects the desired changes to occur? This is called a "theory of change": a clear statement of how the activities we are engaging in will result in or contribute to the changes we anticipate, and then how those changes will contribute to a larger vision for peace.³²

- ***Does the program have a stated theory of change—or can it be extracted from program documents or from interviews with program staff and participants?***
- ***Is the theory of change clear and plausible?***

This is not a theory in an academic or abstract sense; rather, the theory of change is something to be tested continuously: theory vs. real experience. In performing background research for this Guide, we have identified the most common general theories of change underlying inter-religious peacebuilding programs. These are presented in Annex B.

Peacebuilding programs of all types deal with dynamic situations, multiple forces for and against peace, a great deal of uncertainty, and a relative new field of practice that engages in approaches that are effective, but not proven. By articulating our theory of change, therefore, we engage in a

³² Corlazzoli and White 2013.

discipline that compels us to think about why we are doing what we are doing and how we think those actions will result in the desired changes in conditions of tension, violence and war. In essence, a theory of change reveals the underlying assumptions behind our chosen methods, participants, and even timing.

Ongoing Feedback and an M&E Plan. These days, almost all donor application templates require description of a monitoring and evaluation plan. While such donor requirements are interesting, the need for ongoing information, learning and program adjustment is more compelling—which is the original of the donor requirements, but often lost in the bureaucratic processes.

In recent years, peacebuilding programs (like their counterparts in the humanitarian and development arenas) have increasingly focused on creating mechanisms for seeking and responding to feedback from participants, partners and the conflict context itself. Ongoing feedback is particularly important when working in a conflict context that is constantly changing in response to a host of political, economic, social and even environmental factors. Inter-religious action is almost always operating in such settings; developing the capacity to obtain and respond to feedback is a crucial element of program design.³³

There are many resources available regarding basic M&E plans, so there is no need to repeat that here. The feedback mechanisms discussed above can be integrated into monitoring procedures, along with other ongoing data collection processes. Often, as program designers think about how a program will be evaluated, it causes them to circle back to reconsider the intended changes, goals/objectives and theories of change, in order to ensure that it will be more possible to evaluate the program when the time comes. As we have noted, it can be more difficult to evaluate programs that were not designed with evaluation in mind. At the same time, *programs should not be driven by the need to evaluate*; the primary concern should be responding to the needs of the situation and people living with conflict and violence. If an evaluation can support continuous program improvement and adaptation to changing conditions—as an integral element of the program rather than an alien “add on”—then M&E plans can enhance overall program effectiveness.

As introduced in Section 2, in the context of inter-religious action programs, it will be important to consider how religious actors think about issues of obtaining feedback, measurement of progress, and definitions of success and failure, as these elements are fundamental to M&E processes. Many religious actors operate from a values base that may appear to be in tension with more secular ways of thinking about success or progress. However, if careful attention is paid to issues of language and symbols, ideas about effectiveness need not conflict with faith-based values.

³³ See Bonino and Warner 2014; Bonino, Jean and Clarke, 2014.

4. Preparing for & Implementing an Evaluation³⁴

In preparing for an evaluation, it is important to decide what we want to achieve with the evaluation (and for whom), and make decisions about who, how, when, and at what cost. The evaluation objectives and design should flow from the purposes for which the evaluation is being conducted, as well as the timing of the evaluation and resources available. The steps presented below are in approximate chronological order, but may occur in a different sequence or repeat.

4.1 Identify the evaluation objectives or purposes

What is to be examined through an evaluation? What are the learning objectives? Where is the initiative or demand for an evaluation coming from? Is the program relatively new, or is it near a mid-point or appropriate moment for reassessment (suggesting a developmental or formative evaluation)? Or is it near or at the end (implying a summative evaluation)? These issues influence the purpose. Some of the most common purposes of evaluations include:

- Assessing progress and informing decision making to improve or adapt the program;
- Determining the “value” or results of a program for accountability to donors, constituents and others;
- Providing more objective information that can challenge assumptions about what is happening and test the theory of change;
- Engaging in a participatory process that enables key stakeholders to help shape the future of the program—to gain buy-in/commitment and improve outcomes;
- Understanding to what extent the program contributed to changes in the context or conflict;³⁵ and
- Informing decisions on whether and how to continue or expand or even replicate the principles of the program elsewhere, with appropriate adaptation to unique circumstances.

The purposes of most evaluations will be a combination of these and other aims. No evaluation is purely about learning or purely focused on accountability. But it is important to know why you are doing an evaluation and what different stakeholders hope to gain from it.

4.2 Apply overarching criteria for evaluation

Evaluations can be shaped by **overarching criteria**, including for developing focus questions (see below). For instance, the criteria developed by the OECD DAC for evaluating development initiatives have been adapted and revised for peacebuilding.³⁶ These include: *relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, efficiency, and coherence and coordination*. This Guide further adapts the criteria for inter-religious peacebuilding, including addition of a criterion related to *consistency with peacebuilding and faith values*. We have examined how the core OECD DAC criteria apply to inter-

³⁴ Information on evaluation preparation, see Church and Rogers 2006, 96-136.

³⁵ This point emphasizes “contribution” not “attribution” of changes to a program. Determining attribution usually requires some form of experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation with “counterfactuals” and control groups. For ethical, economic, political, cultural or religious reasons, these are rarely appropriate in peacebuilding.

³⁶ OECD 2012.

religious action and provided sample questions for those and the additional criterion of consistency with values. These are presented in Annex C.

Among the OECD DAC criteria, it is particularly important to understand the notion of "**impact**."³⁷ An initiative may be very effective in meeting its goals, yet the question remains whether it is contributing to the larger peace. Thus, there is a difference between "program effectiveness" (achieving the goals of the programs) and "peace effectiveness" (understanding the contribution to the larger peace").³⁸ At the same time, it is usually unrealistic to expect a *visible or immediate impact* on the larger peace and conflict dynamics (Peace Writ Large) from a small program or within the limited time frames of most programs.

In this regard, CDA's Reflecting on Peace Practice program has developed Criteria of Effectiveness, also called Building Blocks for Peace, that can be used to develop markers or provide indications that initiatives are making progress towards the larger peace.³⁹

4.3 Determine key questions or "lines of inquiry"

Types of Questions. The questions posed about the program shape the parameters and scope of the evaluation—which should achieve the intended evaluation purpose. Questions and purpose are closely related—so exploration of different specific questions may stimulate reconsideration of the purpose of the evaluation. Evaluation questions can follow on the general criteria, as discussed above. Questions generally fall into **three categories: descriptive, normative and cause-effect.**

Descriptive questions represent "what is." They describe aspects of a process, a condition, a set of views and a set of organizational relationships or networks...They seek to understand or describe a program or process...[or] they can be used to describe: inputs, activities and outputs.

Normative questions compare "what is" to "what should be." They compare the current situation against a specified target, goal or benchmark.... Normative questions ask: Are we doing what we are supposed to be doing? Are we hitting our target? Did we accomplish what we said we would accomplish?

Cause-effect questions determine "what difference the intervention makes." They attempt to measure what has changed because of the intervention. Cause-effect questions seek to determine the effects of a program. They are the "so what" questions. Cause and effect, or attributional, or outcome questions ask whether the desired results have been achieved as a result of the program. Is it the intervention that has caused the results?⁴⁰

³⁷ Additional information on impact evaluation: Rogers, Patricia, RMIT University (Australia), and BetterEvaluation, 2014. "Introduction to Impact Evaluation." <https://www.medbox.org/key-resources/impact-evaluation-notes-no-1-introduction-to-impact-evaluation/preview?q=>

³⁸ Anderson and Olson 2003.

³⁹ See CDA Collaborative Learning Projects 2016. *Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual.*

⁴⁰ International Program for Development Evaluation Training 2007, 228-231.

In generating questions, it will be important to include not only those that are of interest to the donor and implementing organization, but also to participants and partners. Ideally, you can ask those (and other) stakeholders what questions they have or would like explored through an evaluation process. In addition to the categories above, they might offer questions that address the following:

- What is the view of participants/stakeholders on the quantity, quality, timing, etc. of project inputs, services, and activities? Are project interventions implemented in ways they prefer?
- How do participants view the nature of relationships between contending groups as a result of the project?
- How do participants/stakeholders view the outcomes of the project?
- How do participants/stakeholders assess the contributions or effects of the project or program? Do they see either desirable or undesirable, intended and unintended consequences of the project?

Who can generate questions? Questions to be included in an evaluation should be customized to the particular program, its situation, and the purpose of the evaluation. They can be generated by program and management staff, or from the funder who may have required an evaluation. The M&E specialists within organizations (if any) can help think through appropriate questions, drawing on both their M&E experience and their knowledge of the organization. Questions can also come from the evaluator him/herself, based on his/her experience. It is often quite useful to engage program participants and partners in generating possible questions through a participatory process. The questions will generally be incorporated into the Terms of Reference or Scope of Work for the evaluation, especially if the evaluator is being hired from outside the organization. (See section on ToRs below and sample in Annex D.)

Questions are shaped by the types of changes being evaluated. Types of changes include personal attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, skills, public attitudes and social norms, culture, relationships, and structures, among others. Many people believe that peacebuilding, and inter-religious peacebuilding especially, cannot be evaluated because the “results” are not concrete; they are intangible or unmeasurable. However, most practitioners have an intuitive understanding of what indicates progress, even if these are not “SMART”⁴¹ indicators demanded in many logframes. In many circumstances addressed by inter-religious action, it is also difficult to pre-judge what the scale or pace of change might be. Thus, you might be able to state the changes desired, without being able to determine how quickly or how much change will take place.

⁴¹ Although SMART has many variations, the most usual acronym is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

GRASSROOTS PEACE PROJECT ENGAGES IN QUESTION GENERATION

As they prepared for the formal external evaluation, Kiki and Ahmed consulted with their Advisory Council, and decided that it would be good to get input from several sources, partly to gain greater buy-in for the evaluation, but also because they would likely get better questions.

Kiki and Ahmed were asked to work with staff members, and the members of the Advisory Council volunteered to facilitate two meetings in the capital neighborhoods where GPP is active and then three meetings in Alta province. They decided to pose the question: “We have been implementing the Grassroots Peace Project and supporting local peace committees for almost two years...what would you like to know about the effects of the project? What questions would you ask about any aspect of GPP?”

After the five meetings, they had a pool of 83 questions! After sorting and analyzing them, they fell into a few broad categories and, ultimately, ten specific questions, as follows:

1. What are the roots of the conflicts GPP is trying to address—and have the efforts so far had any influence on those issues? Is the project working on the right things? What are the observable results of the GPP? What evidence do we have?
2. Which GPP activities seem to be more effective than others? Why? What could be improved?
3. Who has been included or touched by the project, directly or indirectly? Who has not been involved? Why? With what effects? By working mainly through religious communities, are some people left out?
4. The project was supposed to concentrate on preventing youth recruitment to violence—has that worked? How do we know?
5. Do we see any different effects (incidents of violence, mobilization of young people in violence) in communities that have active peace committees versus those that have no peace committee?
6. Have any of the activities or operations of the GPP had any unexpected negative impacts on the communities—or any unexpected positive impacts?
7. Will the communities be able to sustain the peace committees once the funding for GPP stops? How do we know that or why do you say so?
8. Key people in the communities (mainly religious leaders) have received training through the program...are the skills and processes they learned consistent with cultural norms of the communities and with religious values?
9. A lot of the efforts have focused on individual skills, resolving disputes between individuals and preventing violence. Can we see any effects, so far, on larger levels in society or the overall peace process in the country?
10. How has the project linked to other similar efforts in the country and even with other initiatives of the Interfaith Peace Platform?

This is still a lot of questions! Kiki and Ahmed will have to work with the evaluator to pare down the list to manageable number in the light of program priorities and resources. (Jane Davidson, recommends five questions plus or minus two. <http://RealEvaluation.com>)

As noted, local people, whether program staff, partners or other stakeholders will have their own views of what kinds of changes and outcomes are important to assess—and how to assess them in their circumstances. Their perspectives should take precedence over the interests of external actors.

For inter-religious peacebuilding efforts, evaluation questions should also be consistent with or explore the **values** underlying the program and how those influence the definitions of “success.” How do religious leaders, staff, partners, and community members understand success? What made the collaboration between the different faiths work (or not) in this project? What challenges, if any, did they have to deal with to make working together easier? What moral and ethical choices are involved in focusing on particular criteria or outcomes? In interactions and collaborations with more secular organizations, it will be important to discuss the values underpinning choices of objectives and criteria for evaluation, and, therefore, the focus questions for the evaluation.

Dealing with Politically Sensitive Questions

The political situation may shape or limit the types of questions or data that can be collected. As an example, in a recent evaluation in an African country in deep conflict, the donors wanted to know how project interventions had influenced the incidence of rape in the main conflict region of the country. On the other hand, the word “rape” was a taboo word for the government, especially when used by international NGOs, and any data collection relating to rape was totally forbidden. All interview questions were subject to vetting by government agents to make sure they did not include this word or references associated with it. How should implementing partners deal with this kind of situation? Are there ways that an evaluation team could explore the issue without offending government officials?

4.4 Choosing the evaluation approach most appropriate to the purpose

Evaluation approach refers to the conceptual framework adopted to answer the evaluation questions. As noted, frequent types of evaluation include, among others, formative, summative, developmental, process, and impact evaluations. In addition, within those broad categories, there are myriad specific approaches and methods for evaluating initiatives. Possibilities include goal-free approaches (such as “most significant change”, outcome harvesting, some types of case studies, and “micro-narratives”); theory-based approaches (such as contribution analysis, theory-based evaluation and case studies) that examine the various linkages and assumptions in the theory of how the initiative is intended to work; experimental and quasi-experimental approaches; and participatory approaches (such as participatory impact analysis). These are not mutually exclusive—many overlap and can be pursued together. These models/approaches are each described on the DME for Peace website.⁴²

Deciding what type of evaluation to conduct will depend on the purposes for the evaluation, the questions to be posed, as well as internal and external conditions (see Section 3 above). Ideally the evaluator or evaluation team (whether internal or external), the program team and other

⁴² “Introduction to Evaluation and General Guidance,” *DM&E for Peace*, <http://dmeforpeace.org/introduction-to-evaluation>

organizational leadership and/or M&E resources will work together to decide on the best approach. Alternatively, an evaluator can consider the purpose, general type of evaluation and key questions as the basis for proposing the model or methodology to be used. This might be part of an application or bidding process, or could be a required first step in the evaluation process (sometimes called an “inception report” that proposes the methodology and timeline).

Different approaches to the evaluation process imply different roles for the evaluator, and different relationships of the evaluator to the program team and stakeholders; this too will shape the evaluation process significantly. In utilization-focused evaluation,⁴³ for example, the evaluator works closely with the team to promote useable findings. In empowerment evaluation, the focus is on making sure the team and stakeholders gain needed skills to participate in the evaluation. And, in self-evaluation, the evaluation process itself is internal.

COMPLEXITY NOTE: Evaluating in Conditions of Complexity

In situations where it is difficult to comprehend all of the relevant factors that influence conflict and change, it is necessary to apply approaches that take account of uncertainty and non-linear thinking. Some relatively new evaluation approaches and methods may be interesting for inter-religious peacebuilding initiatives, where it is difficult and often contrary to the spirit of the initiative to predetermine outcomes. These include “micro narratives” that draw on large numbers of short narratives from stakeholders; participatory impact analysis (in which participants drive the definition and analysis of impact); outcome harvesting and social network analysis. [[Reference forthcoming](#)]

The intended level(s) of change of the program will also influence the type of evaluation methodology needed. Is the program intending to generate changes:

- In individual attitudes, perceptions or skills;
- In relationships among participating groups (trust, confidence...);
- In social norms and public opinion;
- In structures/institutions or deeper elements of culture; and/or
- In the larger driving factors of conflict—also called “Peace Writ Large”?

These different levels are not exclusive; most programs address a mix of these levels. The “higher” level changes usually require significant changes at more basic levels. Changes in laws or institutions may, in turn, lead to additional work on individual and inter-group levels. In any case, the choice of evaluation methodology must take account of where to look for expected or desired changes.

Many faith-based initiatives start at the individual/personal change level, as religious organizations are well-suited to work with issues of perceptions and attitudes. Tools for evaluating this kind of

⁴³ Quinn Patton 2008.

change are available.⁴⁴

4.5 Decide on an internal or external evaluation

Should the evaluation be conducted by staff members (“internal” evaluators) or by non-staff members (“external” evaluators)? Is it more important to get an outside set of eyes to bring new perspectives or to have staff work systematically to understand what is or isn’t changing and why? Key considerations include:

- Tradeoffs between resources, evaluation expertise and in depth knowledge:
 - Resources: Do you have enough funding to pay an external evaluator? Can you free up the needed staff time to conduct the evaluation internally?
 - Possible biases: Can internal evaluators evaluate it without biases? Can the use of external evaluators help all stakeholders view the results more dispassionately, especially in cases where the project implementation process has not been smooth?
- Capacity: do you have the requisite skills (adequate, qualified, and competent staff) and systems and tools needed to conduct the evaluation in-house?
- Knowledge of program and operations: Internal evaluators will have more knowledge than external evaluators.
- Expectations/requirements: Have donors specified the need for an external evaluation (and will they pay for it)? Are certain standards of evidence to be met in the evaluation—suggesting the need for an external evaluator?

Another option is forming a mixed evaluation team including both internal and external evaluators who can combine the benefits of both approaches. That is, external expertise and “a new set of eyes” can be maintained without losing the benefit of an internal person’s first-hand knowledge of the program and operations. Most evaluations will be strengthened by including a team member who has evaluation training—who may be internal to the organization or brought in from the outside.

4.6 Develop Terms of Reference (Scope of Work) and choose an evaluator or team

The **Terms of Reference** (or Scope of Work) for the evaluation draw upon the purpose, questions and approach described above. The Terms of Reference describe, therefore, what is expected of the evaluator, from the point of view of those commissioning the evaluation. While the ToRs may lay out the basic questions and objectives, it is possible to ask potential evaluators to propose an approach, process and budget that they think will meet the objectives and answer the questions. Or, as a first task, the chosen evaluator may submit an “inception report” for consideration and approval. See Annex D for sample ToRs.

⁴⁴ Reference forthcoming.

Note: Terms of Reference/Scope of Work and the Evaluation Report

One issue that should be addressed in the ToRs or Scope of Work concerns the nature of the anticipated evaluation report. How long or detailed should it be, with what specific sections or topics? Who are the target audiences of the report? Will more than one version be needed for different groups? What should be included: are there sensitive issues that must be left out or reported in other ways? Will the report be published in some way or remain an internal document only? How will the report be used and by whom?

Will some stakeholder or staff groups be engaged in reviewing a draft report? How and in what settings? How will such input be incorporated into the final report? Might such participatory processes result in the need for further data gathering?

Choosing an evaluator.⁴⁵ The commissioning organization or individual must identify the desired profile and experience of the evaluator—in realistic terms, and recognizing that it may not be possible to find someone who meets all criteria. Some questions to consider include:

1. What would be the knowledge, skills, and experiences required of the ideal candidate to evaluate the project? This statement of job requirements provides the standard against which to measure prospective candidates.
2. What evaluation expertise and experience does the candidate bring? In what kinds of evaluation for what kinds of organizations and projects?
3. If the commissioning organization already knows what evaluation approach they are interested in (e.g., outcome mapping or most significant change or participatory evaluation), does the evaluator have experience with that approach?
4. Has the candidate ever done an evaluation for religious organizations or involving religious leaders and communities as key participants or partners? The best case would be an evaluator with experience in inter-religious action for peacebuilding, but they won't be easy to find.
5. What is the candidate's own profile and potential biases—and how do those characteristics interact with the project stakeholders/participants, their perceptions and biases? This would include issues of religious affiliation or non-affiliation, race, ethnicity, gender, nationality—and any other dimension of difference that would be significant in the context. Given local sensitivities, would a male evaluator have access to women or a woman to men, for instance?
6. Does the candidate appear self-aware about the impacts of his/her personal profile on the evaluation process and the perceptions of local people? If so, how does he/she propose to handle any issues or problems that might come up?

⁴⁵ For more information, see Bronte-Tinkew, Joyner, and Allen, 2007.

4.7 Establish an evaluation budget and timeline

Evaluation budget.⁴⁶ What are the financial parameters for the evaluation? Where will funding come from to pay for the evaluator's time and expenses? Will the donor allow or expect the evaluation to be paid from project funds? Will there be additional costs to staff members, such as extra trips, lodging, meals? Will there be events, such as focus groups or workshops that will involve expenses, or costs for surveys?

Evaluation timeframe. Is the project/program ready to be evaluated? Is there enough time to conduct the evaluation before any deadlines that have been established—or is there flexibility? Is the evaluation being scheduled at a time when staff members can focus on it? Are there particular religious holidays that must be taken into account?

Plan for the Unexpected! Budgets and timeframes are all very well and good—but life, particularly in situations of conflict and fragility, is full of unexpected events. Personnel may change suddenly (in the implementing organization, donor or key partners). Weather or incidents of insecurity may cause delays. Important interviewees may become unavailable. Those commissioning evaluations and the evaluator or evaluation team should expect the unexpected, and allow for likely delays and unplanned costs.

THE GPP EVALUATION TAKES SHAPE

As the formal evaluation draws near, Kiki and Ahmed are talking with David almost daily to make decisions about how it will go forward. This is clearly a formative (mid-course) evaluation and is intended to provide an opportunity for learning and program strengthening, as well as to reassure the donor that funds are being used wisely.

The team announced the evaluation and asked for evaluator candidates to indicate interest—and they received fourteen applications from a wide range of people, only a few based in Terra Nova, but most from fairly close by in the region. In the end they chose Professor Kano, a senior university sociology professor from a neighboring country, who proposed to work in a team with one of his graduate students, Mariama Abdi Nur, a Muslim woman with a background in psychology who has been studying evaluation. The team makeup would give them credibility with the elders among the religious leaders, but also access to women at the community level.

After initial consultation with the program team and David, the evaluation team proposes to use a Most Significant Change methodology, which would allow them to elicit from a range of stakeholder how they see the project and its outcomes (and can also be done without baseline data.) They also proposed to integrate an empowerment approach, in which they would train key project and religious leaders, to conduct parts of the evaluation process, including a series of focus groups and workshops.

⁴⁶ For additional information, see Horn, Jerry, 2001. "A Checklist for Developing and Evaluating Evaluation Budgets." http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/tools/checklist_evaluation_budgets

4.8 Determine data collection and analysis methods

Data Collection Methods. Careful attention to data collection avoids bias and sets up the evaluation to best reflect what is actually going on. Data collection methods range from questionnaires, to interviews, document review, focus groups, observation, video and photography, media analysis, on-line or in-person surveys, and crowd sourcing, among others. The data collection methods must be appropriate to the purpose and core questions, as discussed in the previous section, and to ensure that the evaluation findings will be considered valid.⁴⁷ Those commissioning an evaluation need to be aware of the methods available, so they can hold informed conversations with evaluators and provide enough budget to allow for quality data collection and analysis. Evaluators will propose an approach to data collection and analysis and may select additional team members to undertake certain data collection roles.

Which data collection methods are chosen will depend on a number of factors:

- *Matching data collection to core questions.* Can the approach to data collection provide the necessary information to answer the evaluation questions posed? For example, if a program wishes to learn whether reduction in violence in a particular community is *attributable* to the program, it may be necessary to compare similar communities that were not touched by the program.
- *Limitation of methods.* What limitations do the data collection method(s) have? Are the limitations significant, and can they threaten the validity or reliability of the evaluation?
- *Language.* If the collection of data would involve engaging people who do not speak or write the official language of the country, how would you ensure that all respondents are understanding and responding to the same questions? Would interpreters be needed, and how would you ensure accuracy in the interpretation and minimization of interpreter self-projection, intrusion, and bias over the course of the interview?
- *Complementarity.* If *using* one method of data collection will have limitations, can other additional methods be included to ensure more complete and robust data for the evaluation?
- *Resources.* Are the resources (skills, finances) needed to implement the approach available?
- *Sensitivities.* What are conflict and religious sensitivity risks to the data collection approach, and can they be minimized?
- *Treatment of information.* How will the evaluation treat information regarding personal narratives, community rituals, intra- and inter-faith events, and the use (and misuse!) of symbols?
- *Ability to analyze data.* Not all data that is collected can be analyzed easily and efficiently. This suggests a distinction between “need to have” and “nice to have” data. Hence, issues to consider would include: What data and how much of it needs to be collected? Do you or the evaluators have the skills, tools, and time to analyze the data effectively and efficiently to produce quality results that also meet the timelines for the evaluation?

⁴⁷ Reference forthcoming.

Whatever data collection methods are chosen, the evaluator must ensure that the data are valid, reliable and consistent (like a thermometer measuring the same thing every time), whether using qualitative or quantitative methods or a combination.

Inter-religious action for peacebuilding is likely to rely heavily on approaches that emphasize qualitative data: information gathered from program/project documents and interviews with key stakeholders. Qualitative data gathering must be careful and systematic to ensure that conclusions are not drawn from small numbers of people or sources.⁴⁸ A mix of methods is also useful, as it provides multiple perspectives on a question and ways of confirming conclusions through “triangulation.” Triangulation involves supporting the validity of findings by obtaining confirming information from multiple sources, different methods of data collection and analysis, or even by different evaluators.

It is also possible to obtain and incorporate quantitative data, as many programs do in measuring attitude change through surveys. Furthermore, inter-religious work often emphasizes attitude change, behavior change, and changes in individual and inter-group relationships—and interactions among these factors.

Data Analysis Methods. Data analysis methods are for “making sense” of the data collected. Whatever method is used to collect information, someone must analyze it. For instance, you might collect pre- and post-test scores from a workshop—which would then need to be analyzed. Or you might find a way to survey Buddhist and Christian perspectives over time, generating a significant amount of data to be sorted. These might be elements of the program monitoring process—which would then be available to an evaluation. While staff members may have done some initial analysis, an evaluation may need to take the process further and also compare information from such sources with other data gathered in other ways.

A common problem in data analysis is that it is treated as an afterthought. That is, the focus is so much on the collection method (surveys, interviews, focus groups...), insufficient attention is given to planning how to make sense of it. Interview reports and other qualitative sources need to be analyzed in a rigorous manner. Increasingly, qualitative information can be analyzed using social science software that can sort on key words or can provide ways to code interviews according to key themes.⁴⁹ Planning for data analysis early on can help focus on what qualitative and quantitative data is needed to answer the evaluation questions and achieve the evaluation purpose.

How information is sorted, analyzed and “made sense of” is important in evaluating inter-religious action. Are those assigned these tasks sufficiently aware of the meanings, symbols, and values that may be embedded in various forms of information collected? Can they present data analysis in a form and using language that will be understandable and meaningful to the religious actors and communities concerned?

⁴⁸ Leeuw and Vaessen 2009.

⁴⁹ Reference forthcoming.

SORTING THROUGH A SMALL MOUNTAIN OF GPP INPUT

The evaluation team conducted a series of individual interviews, focus groups, and workshops—with careful recording of what people said, including the actual language used. The lead evaluator, Professor Kano, and his graduate student, Mariama, were then faced with a huge amount of information to analyze. The professor had planned for the help of two graduate students from the local university in the capital city, being careful to recruit both a Muslim and a Christian.

The four team members first read through all of the information and identified the main themes, including the usage of religious language and symbols and the occasions for celebration and rituals that often incorporated religious elements. The team then went back through the material and coded each document or record according to those themes, using fairly simple social science software (free shareware from the internet).

Each document/record was coded by at least two team members (to avoid unintentional bias of one person). The resulting files could then be analyzed using the software—essentially sorting information across all sources by theme, showing not only the frequency of the theme, but also the range of perspectives, and areas of agreement and disagreement among different groups and individuals.

As another source of information, the team was also able to obtain information from UN peacekeepers about incidents of violence by district and village—which allowed comparison of communities with peace committees and those without. This was really valuable, as it permitted comparison of local participant and staff perspectives with information on violence.

4.9 Follow-up and utilization of the evaluation

There are two important elements to the aftermath of an evaluation: use of the findings and recommendations themselves and learning from the evaluation process.

Using the Findings and Recommendations. Evaluations take time and money and should only be done if they are used to inform decision making about the current program, future programs, or similar programs elsewhere.

- What are the key project findings about results so far, and do we understand why and how these were derived?
- If this is an ongoing program/project, how does it need to be adjusted to take account of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation? These might include: changed

goals/objectives, stronger theory of change and/or change pathway; clearer measures/ indicators of progress; revised monitoring plan; different/altered set of participants/ partners; new/revised activities; revised timeline; and more consistent processes for seeking and responding to feedback from participants/community members, etc.

- What is the follow-up plan: who will take what steps? How will we follow up regarding implementation? How and when will we check back?
- What are key recommendations for future programming? How will these lessons be communicated to those who might be designing future programs?

Reflecting on and Learning from the Evaluation Process. When the evaluation ends, it is important to debrief and discuss the evaluation process with relevant program staff and, ideally, respective community members and other key stakeholders. This is particularly important when you have an external evaluator. Key questions can include the following:

- What parts of the evaluation design, planning and logistics worked, and do we understand why?
- What parts of the evaluation implementation (including logistics and access to stakeholders) didn't work as planned, and what can we learn from this to make sure we can manage this in the future?
- What recommendations would we make to inform future evaluations? Who needs to receive these recommendations?

GPP IN THE WAKE OF THE EVALUATION

Ahmed and Kiki were exhausted at the end of the evaluation process, thankful it was over and appreciative of the overall positive feedback and frank suggestions for improvement offered by the evaluation team.

Before they left town, Professor Kano and Mariama met with the full project and management staff, the Advisory Council and several key community leaders to give their preliminary findings and recommendations, pending completion of their formal written report. The group was relieved that the findings were so supportive and entered immediately into lively discussion of the recommendations for improvement.

Over the next two months in a series of intense planning meetings, the project staff, led by Kiki and Ahmed, partners and participants and their leaders reviewed and discussed each recommendation and made decisions about project elements to continue and ones to change.

The project team then submitted a revised program plan to Global Endeavor. Kiki, Ahmed and the Executive Director of Bridges of Faith subsequently met with the donor representative, accompanied by David and members of the Advisory Council. The donor rep said that he was impressed by the strength of the evaluation, the thorough involvement of multiple stakeholders, and the serious attention given to incorporating the recommendations into the project plans.

5. Cross-Cutting Themes

This section addresses several issues that merit consideration throughout the evaluation process, from beginning to the end. These themes help us to address unintended consequences, and they prompt us to think about people and relationships that are often overlooked. Some themes may be more important than others in a particular place and time, so it is important for the evaluation team to assess these issues together with program stakeholders.

5.1 Conflict Sensitivity

It is increasingly recognized that development or humanitarian assistance efforts can have unintended outcomes that worsen conflict. However, there is less recognition that the same problem can arise in a peacebuilding program, or even a peacebuilding evaluation! In fact, the potential for complex inter-religious peacebuilding efforts to unintentionally exacerbate inter-group tension is quite high. Moreover, even an evaluation of such efforts can cause or worsen conflict in the context where it is carried out.

Conflict sensitivity is therefore a very important consideration when evaluating inter-religious action. It makes us aware of the minimal obligation to avoid exacerbating conflict, and the desirability of contributing to peace where possible. Conflict sensitivity can be defined as the ability of an organization (or an evaluation team) to:

- **Understand the conflict dynamics** in the context in which they are operating, particularly with respect to inter-group relations;
- **Understand the interaction** between their own activities and the conflict dynamics in the context; and
- **Act upon this understanding** in order to minimize unintended negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of their activities.⁵⁰

Conflict sensitivity differs from peacebuilding⁵¹ in that it does not directly address the key drivers of conflict, but rather it aims to anticipate and improve on unintended consequences. When evaluating the conflict sensitivity of an inter-religious peacebuilding program, there are two key issues to consider: evaluating the conflict sensitivity of the program itself, and ensuring that the evaluation effort itself is conflict-sensitive.

It is important to note that even if program stakeholders are unfamiliar with the term “conflict sensitivity,” they may be intuitively practicing it. Many inter-religious peacebuilders have a basic, instinctive understanding of conflict sensitivity based on faith-based goodwill. In other words, nobody wants to see their peacebuilding efforts cause a fight! Such conflict sensitivity efforts may be implicit, informal or undocumented. An evaluation team can build on this intuitive understanding by avoiding technical terms, expressing conflict sensitivity concepts in ways that resonate with the local context, and linking program stakeholders to opportunities for conflict sensitivity skills training, if desired.

⁵⁰ International Alert et al. 2004.

⁵¹ For more information, see Woodrow and Chigas 2009.

Evaluating the conflict sensitivity of an inter-religious action program

If the program team has explicitly integrated conflict sensitivity into their work, then an evaluation team's first step may be to review existing conflict analyses and conflict sensitivity monitoring reports, before proceeding to data collection in the field. If conflict sensitivity has been pursued informally, or not at all, then the starting point will be interviews, focus groups, and other forms of data collection.

Key lines of inquiry for evaluating the conflict sensitivity of a program may include:

- Did the program conduct ongoing conflict analysis to inform its planning? If yes, how were the findings applied to program design and implementation? Was the analysis kept updated, and applied to action, at regular intervals in the program cycle? How did the program adapt to changes in context?
- Among the many complex relationships in the context, which inter-group conflicts stands out as the most potentially destructive? How has the program affected the relationships between those groups? Has the relationship improved or deteriorated? Why, and in what ways? Which aspects of the program have caused or influenced this change?
- What were the micro-decisions of the project and how did any of those interact with conflict dynamics: people hired, participant selection, groups engaged or not, sites chosen for workshops and other events, suppliers of various services, and so forth?
- What disputes arose during the course of the program? What were their underlying causes? Did the implementers address those disputes, and, if yes, how? Were any disputes successfully avoided, and, if yes, how?
- How do the religious actors involved in the program view and act upon their own sense of responsibility for any unintended consequences resulting from their activities?
- To what extent do the religious actors in the program model respect, acceptance and inclusion toward "the other," particularly those whom the biases of popular religious culture tells them not to mix with?
- Do the religious leaders involved in the program teach and emphasize the peace-promoting theologies and practices within their own traditions? How do they deal with the more problematic aspects of scriptures or traditions that appear to promote violence?
- Which marginalized group(s) participated in this program? Was there any need for special "affirmative action" to ensure their inclusion? What was their experience in terms of inclusion, empowerment, relationships, etc.? Were there any marginalized groups excluded or disengaged from this program, and, if yes, why?
- If the program is ending soon, has conflict sensitivity been considered in the phase-out plan? Are stakeholders in agreement on the next steps, the future leadership, and the future use of program assets? If not, how might this be improved to help prevent future conflict?

Making your evaluation conflict-sensitive

An evaluation is a form of intervention, so it too has the potential to create unintended negative impacts on the context of conflict.⁵² In addition to cultivating an awareness of their relationship to the context of conflict, evaluation planners should consider factors such as:

- The evaluation team's identities should be acceptable to all the major groups in the context, and the team should have the capacity to equitably take in all perspectives.
- In some contexts, the biggest conflict sensitivity issues are unspoken, and may even be implicit in the way that an evaluation is commissioned and hosted. The evaluation team needs to be alert and think critically.
- Is it possible to ask questions in the current situation? Will just the act of entering communities to interview people cause suspicion or rumors? Are people able to talk freely or do they fear expressing views to strangers?
- The evaluation questions themselves should be vetted for unintentional offense or bias.
- Evaluation event timing and venue decisions should be equally accessible to all major groups. For example, avoid scheduling meetings on religious holidays or in religious buildings not accessible comfortably to all.
- In intensely conflicted contexts, participant security must be a top priority—not only physical security, but also security of identifiable data, dignity and reputation.
- Make careful choices about evaluation team security. A heavy security presence can send the message that local people cannot be trusted, or can make the team a target.
- In an intense conflict setting, the evaluation team will likely face pressures to take ethical shortcuts—yet it will be particularly important to uphold high ethical standards.
- In situations where marginalized groups feel unheard, they may see an evaluation as an opportunity to tell their story to the public. The evaluator needs to be empathic and respectful, and yet objective and truthful in reporting on the findings.

⁵² For more on the conflict sensitivity and ethics of evaluation in situations of violent conflict, see Bush and Dugan 2015.

5.2 Gender Dimensions

Both war and organized religion can have important gender dimensions, meaning that females and males experience them in different ways. In most contexts, men are more likely to hold positions of authority in religious institutions, and to shape gender norms and behavior in ways that privilege men. These dynamics often define the nature, means, and directions of the contribution of religious men and women to the peacebuilding process.⁵³ At the same time, men and women tend to play distinct roles in the promotion and perpetration of violence, and religion can significantly influence the gender norms that shape such behavior. Gender is not just “about women;” both masculine and feminine gender norms merit attention during an evaluation.⁵⁴

Key gender considerations for evaluating inter-religious action for peacebuilding may include:

1. Did the program conduct a gender analysis to inform its planning? If so, how were the findings applied to program design and implementation? If not, how was gender perceived by key stakeholders at program inception and in the program cycle?
2. Did the program design and implementation processes take into account traditional value systems that define and sustain gender roles as the leverage points for managing change? If yes, what were the effects of this recognition and valuing of traditional cultural systems?
3. To what extent did women and girl children participate actively? Did the program include female religious leaders, whether formal clergy or informal lay leaders? Going beyond the numbers, what were their roles? In what ways were women heard and able to exercise leadership, whether formally or informally?
4. How many non-clergy men participated actively? In what types of roles? How did their roles relate to those of the women participating in the program?
5. In what ways were women’s priorities raised and/or incorporated in the program design and implementation?
6. Did the program engage men and male children in supporting women’s leadership in religiously and culturally appropriate ways? If yes, with what effects?
7. Did the program provide faith-based alternatives to gender norms that promote or encourage violence? If yes, how, and with what effect?
8. Did the program activities and outcomes influence gender perceptions, norms and behavior—or the inter-group relationships between men and women involved in the program over time?
9. Were there any particular opportunities and/or challenges that women or men faced during implementation? If yes, why, how and with what effect?
10. Were there any other unintended consequences (either positive or negative) in gender relations and outcomes?

⁵³ See for example International Fellowship of Reconciliation 2010.

⁵⁴ Wright 2014.

The gender sensitivity of an evaluation can leave a lasting effect in the local context. It is very important that the team organize and conduct themselves in ways that support equitable empowerment and mutual interdependence. At the same time, gender dynamics may be particularly sensitive in inter-religious peacebuilding, and an inflexible or westernized approach to assessing women's empowerment may be more harmful than helpful. The evaluation team should examine its own biases, and, in advance, reach a mutual understanding with program stakeholders regarding which gender criteria are appropriate for evaluating the program, and what style should be used for inquiry. Where gender norms need to be challenged, it is often best to draw on progressive sources found within the stakeholders own religious and cultural tradition, and to proceed in a way that communicates respect.

GENDER ISSUES IN THE GPP EVALUATION

During one of their initial meetings, the evaluation team and program team reviewed the questions that had been generated through the participatory process. After the meeting Mariama quietly approached Kiki and asked, *"Do you think we should be looking at any gender dimensions in the evaluation? What might those be?"*

Kiki was immediately shocked that she had not noticed that gender was missing from the ten key questions identified—even though a significant number of women participated in the question development process. Assuredly, she replied *"That is an important aspect of the project. We have been hearing a lot about the role of mothers and aunties in resisting the recruitment of their sons and relatives. We have to look at these issues and more!"*

5.3 Youth Dimensions

Many conflict-affected contexts have large populations of children and youth, who are often key ingredients in the dynamics of conflict and peace. They may be peacemakers, fighters, or victims. In situations where youth have minimal access to jobs, yet they are potentially adept in handling weapons, they may be vulnerable to recruitment as militants or soldiers. In situations where youth enjoy a level of skill and empowerment, they may become prominent peace advocates.⁵⁵ However, like women, youth tend to be underrepresented in formal peacebuilding processes, especially interreligious processes, because they often have no formal roles in the hierarchy of faith leaders.

Key considerations on evaluating the engagement of youth may include:

- Who are the youth in this context? (Age, gender and geographic distributions, access to education, employment status, victims or participants in previous violence, etc.)
- What are the roles of youth in religious activities and institutions? What are their roles in the

⁵⁵ See for example UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development 2016.

dynamics of conflict and peace: fighters, peacemakers, victims, or other?

- Did the program engage youth in some way? If yes, how? In what ways was the engagement of young people related to their faith or their role in the religious community? How do the youth themselves perceive the opportunities available to them, and the effectiveness of their efforts?
- If youth were not engaged in any way, why not? In retrospect, how do program stakeholders now assess those reasons? How the presence or absence of youth engagement influence the program outcomes?

5.4 Relating to Secular Actors

Faith-based action does not occur in isolation. Religious actors encounter with many different types of people and institutions. Some of those people and institutions are not particularly religious, and yet they may be important to the program outcomes. The social structure of the religious and secular spheres differ greatly depending on the context, yet the relationship between them is consistently worth considering when evaluating inter-religious action.

In some contexts, government institutions, as well as the majority of civil society organizations and/or local business, are considered non-religious or “secular.” Some religious actors may be reluctant to work with secular actors, and some secular actors may operate with an anti-religious bias.

In other contexts, the governance system will be affiliated explicitly with a particular religious tradition, and civil society may be expected to uphold the same. Minority groups that are less religious, or hold to a different faith, may face pressure or exclusion. Transnational organizations that are secular may find it difficult to gain acceptance and develop partnerships.

In either type of context, religious and secular actors may need each other, because each may be able to accomplish something that the other cannot. For example, if policy change is desired in a secular governance context, religious actors may need to work in coalition with secular partners, and engage secular policymakers, in order to achieve that policy change. Or, faith-based advocates in a context of religious governance may choose to express solidarity with a non-religious minority group that is particularly isolated.

Evaluation should consider whether religious and secular actors have identified a context- and program-specific needs for interaction, and how that interaction has been carried out. Key lines of inquiry for assessing engagement with the secular may include:

- At the beginning of the program, to what extent did secular stakeholders recognize and understand the religious elements of the conflict and the intervention? To what extent do they recognize these factors now?
- Likewise, at the outset of the program, to what extent did religious actors recognize and understand the role of the secular actors in achieving program goals? To what extent do they recognize it now?
- Was the selection of program partners or participants affected by preconceptions about

their religion, or lack of religion? If yes, in what ways, and with what effect?

- Did religious and secular actors seek to expand their influence through use of each other's symbols (such as, scriptures, public appearances by key leaders, etc.)? If yes, how was this perceived – as respectful, exploitive, or other? How did this affect the program?
- What was the nature and quality of the relationships between religious and secular stakeholders and participants? How did it evolve during the course of the program?
- Did religious and secular actors accomplish something together that they could not have accomplished separately? If yes, what was it?

Of course, while there are distinctions between the roles of religious and secular actors, many contexts also show complex types of overlap. For example, there may be religiously-motivated individuals working in secular organizations, and vice versa. There may also be secular actors who choose to work closely with religious actors in inter-faith action. The point here is not to insist on rigid definitions of "religious" or "secular," but rather to emphasize that evaluation teams should consider how inter-religious programs relate to the broader context around them, including the less religious or non-religious sphere.

Annex A: Program Design

While there are no universally accepted standards for peacebuilding program design, several common elements have emerged in recent years. These are outlined below—and a series of resources that support program design are listed in Annex E/Bibliography. The categories covered include:

- Conflict Analysis
- Formulation of Goals & Objectives
- Theory of Change
- Program Strategy

Conflict Analysis

There is wide agreement among peacebuilding practitioners that peace programming must be informed by conflict analysis that identifies the key drivers of conflict. Logically, it is important to understand a problem before trying to solve it. Conflict analysis, performed well, should help peace actors to decide whether they are working on the right issues with the right people at the right time. A good analysis can also help identify possible ways to intervene to create change.

Key driving factors are those elements of a conflict without which the conflict either would not exist or would be completely different.

Key driving factors are best identified through careful conflict analysis—and many frameworks and processes are available and some are listed in Annex E. It is also helpful to determine which of the many analytical frameworks are most appropriate for a particular purpose. One resource that not only lists available frameworks, but also provides annotation about each of them, is included in the OECD DAC guide to peacebuilding evaluation: *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results*.⁵⁶

Generally, the best way to perform a conflict analysis is through some form of participatory process that includes all major perspectives—although this is an ideal that is not always feasible, given high tensions or security concerns. But even if it is not possible to bring representative of all viewpoints into the room together for an analysis exercise, it is usually possible to conduct interviews or separate focus groups or other forms of participation to ensure that all perspectives are considered in an analysis.

A common challenge in design a peacebuilding program is making a clear link between conflict analysis and a program strategy. Often, organizations simply do the same program they have always done or are most comfortable doing—rather than allowing the conflict analysis to determine what is most important to address. That said, many organizations, including religious groups or faith-based organizations, may be working under a particular mandate or a pre-determined set of participants or partners and possibly even a pre-set methodology (dialogue, reconciliation, trauma healing...).

Increasingly, conflict analysis has become a dimension of evaluation itself. That is, an evaluator may

⁵⁶ OECD 2012, Annex A, 77.

explore whether and how peacebuilding actors performed conflict analysis, how they used it to inform programming, and whether or not they updated the analysis over time—and adjusted programming as a result.

Conflict analysis processes can include consideration of the role of religion, and religious institutions, actors and beliefs as either positive and/or negative influences. Such analysis should help examine a conflict that has been characterized, rightly or wrongly, as a “religious conflict.” Frequently there may be religious dimensions, but these usually interact with a host of other factors, so that the religious aspects can be seen as part of a larger whole, not necessarily the determining or primary concern. We find, for instance, that religious identity, symbols and values can be manipulated by political actors as a means of mobilizing people to violence. Thus, while the primary driver of conflict may be political, the religious dimension cannot be ignored.

In recent years, some practitioners have increasingly viewed conflict through a *systems thinking* lens. That is, conflicts consist of a series of interacting factors and actors that create a complex and ever-changing conflict dynamic. This approach has been referenced in the body of the guide, especially in the series of “Complexity Notes” in text boxes. Further references on this approach are provided in the Bibliography.

Formulation of Program Goals & Objectives

Program goals and objectives should be seen in reference to the conflict analysis. That is, how will the program address the factors identified in the analysis, especially those that can be considered key driving factors? Over time, we have learned a good deal about generating strong goals or objectives for conflict programming.

Program goals should be clear and realistic descriptions of the change that is sought. Often goals are too broad, effectively visions for long-term change, or too narrowly focused on activities (outputs or outcomes).

- *Goals that are too broad:* Such goals lack designation of intermediate steps or shorter term objectives that can be realized within the period that would be the focus of an evaluation. For example, a goal might be stated as “promote reconciliation,” which does not indicate what reconciliation might look like or changed behavior might be. Or the goal statement can be too vague, such as, “to empower youth to take part in transformation of the country through education and training at the grassroots.” In this case, it is unclear what this really means, or what changed behavior we would see on the part of youth as a result. Frequently, program partners have wildly different views about what they are aiming for. If the objectives are too broad or it is not clear whether everyone involved has the same understanding of program aims, it is hard to evaluate effectiveness or whether expected outcomes have been reached.
- *Goals that are too narrow:* Such goals are too focused on activities or “outputs” (number of events, number of people served...) and are not statements of change. For example, the goal could be stated as “to provide 38 training workshops for youth entering the labor market,” or “to conduct 45 training programs in conflict resolution skills for Christians and Muslims and introduce them

to processes of reconciliation.” These goals do not state what the youth or religious groups would be expected to do with their new skills, nor the expected changes at a societal level.

- *Examples of well-formulated goals:* “Religious leaders from group X and group Y will work together to promote positive changes in their communities, and contact each other to intervene together to prevent local incidents from escalating into violence.” “Women of different faiths will form self-help and micro-finance groups across group lines and work together to market products.” These goals suggest changes that will be observable, in terms of behavior and other changes.

For inter-religious action programming it may be hard to predict all expected changes with precision, such as reducing violence by x%, increase trust y%, or increase support for reconciliation by z%, both because it is hard to attribute such changes to program activities or because such measures do not exist. (How do you measure trust or reconciliation?!) Although some objectives are difficult to define in terms of specific observable changes, and goals may be stated on a general level, it may nevertheless be possible to develop ways to assess such broad goals. For instance, you could look for evidence of increased youth involvement in community development activities or evidence of increased cooperation between key groups as indications of use of skills or increased trust.

Inter-religious action programs often focus on issues of motivation, hope, healing, inner reconciliation, responsibility, perseverance and commitment, and providing a moral compass in difficult situations of tension and violence.⁵⁷ As noted above, it may prove difficult to articulate measurable goals for efforts that strive towards these relatively intangible intentions—but not impossible. The challenge is to project what changes in behavior might result from progress in any of these factors—and then figure out how you might go about measuring such changes.

Similarly, many inter-religious programs emphasize personal change (inner reconciliation, healing, forgiveness, ...), often as an end in itself, without direct reference to larger societal changes (social cohesion, reconciliation...). Here, the challenge is to consider individual changes as building blocks towards larger changes in society. That is, if numerous individuals experience a change in certain key attitudes, what will be the effect on the larger conflict context? How will we know?

Theories of Change

A Theory of Change, at its most basic level, is simply an explanation of why we are doing what we are doing. Thus, we might be focusing on youth employment, because we think that by getting more young people engaged in productive activities and earning income, they will be less inclined to be recruited into violent activities. This approach to youth work has a theory of change embedded in it, essentially a set of underlying assumptions about how a desired change will be brought about by our approach to peacebuilding.

In its simplest form, a theory of change can be expressed in an “If...then...because” statement, such

⁵⁷ These themes were identified in a literature review and analysis of inter-religious action programs in preparation for development of this Guide. See Schmidt 2016.

as this example.

*In a program aimed at reintegration of ex-combatants: **If** ex-combatants gain skills and resources, **then** they will become productive members of society and less likely to re-engage in violence, **because** they will have alternative sources of income and will reduce their allegiance to their former commanders and comrades.*

In many cases, the statement cannot be quite so simple. Often multiple elements are needed: “If we do x, y and z, then a and b and perhaps c will result, because....”

***If** we welcome ex-combatants into local religious communities, train them in a combination of needed job skills and conflict resolution practices, ensure access to land and agricultural inputs, and involve them in decisions regarding local development projects, **then** they will interact more regularly with other community members, will become active and positive forces in the community, and will be less likely to respond to calls to violence from former comrades and commanders, **because** they will be better known, treated with respect, and able to show that they can be productive citizens.*

Why have Theories of Change become an expected element of peacebuilding program design? Essentially, a well-articulated—and plausible—Theory of Change demonstrates that the program team has thought through the logic of the program and can justify its claims about the changes (outcomes and impacts) that will result from the program. Working to articulate a Theory of Change requires peace practitioners to think carefully about how much change can realistically be brought about by proposed activities—and to consider whether there is a logical connection between those activities and higher level changes desired. We may need to be more humble (and more realistic) about what we can achieve, or to adopt a more ambitious strategy for more significant outcomes, if that fits with who we are and the resources we have.

We have already noted that many inter-religious action for peacebuilding focus on individual change. There is nothing wrong with undertaking peacebuilding activities that will have outcomes at the level of individual change or local community levels, without claiming impacts at a larger level (province, sub-region or nation). Such activities can be justified on their own terms and may produce needed incremental changes; not every peace program needs to aspire to contribute directly to “Peace Writ Large” (at the societal level). The Theory of Change should be appropriate to the level of change that the organization wishes to create and that fits its mandate and resources.

An evaluation might be designed to help articulate the Theory of Change *in use* and to redesign the program to be more realistic, based on a stronger, more plausible Theory of Change appropriate to the context and available resources. Thus, Theory of change statements drawn from program staff and participants can be used to examine whether the espoused theory (say, in an original program, proposal) matches with the actual experience on the ground. In the example regarding the ex-combatants above, an evaluation would test whether the combination of activities, performed well, actually result in the successful integration of ex-combatants into communities. Has the Theory of Change proven to be plausible—or do we need to adjust it to certain realities that have come to light as the program has progressed.

This highlights an important aspect of Theories of Change—they are “only theories” to be tested in the reality of the program in the context with the actual staff participants, and partners. By making our underlying assumptions explicit about how we expect change to happen, we can then continuously monitor to see how activities and outcomes actually unfold, and adjust our approach and Theory of Change accordingly. Such Theory of Change tracking can be built into a monitoring process and/or a developmental evaluation effort, in which a program engages in regular reflection (with or without external assessments) to adapt to changing circumstances and information about the effects our efforts are creating.

Program Strategies

Increasingly, peacebuilding practitioners are pushing for an overall program strategy—essentially a strategy for change. Usually, this means extending our program thinking beyond a list of activities and near-term outputs and outcomes to describe a longer arc of effort that leads to a larger desired result or series of results. Such a strategy could be a series of intermediate objectives or “building blocks” that create a cumulative impact over time, perhaps also including how our efforts might link with other actors’ efforts to generate synergies.

Program strategy is a big topic that cannot be treated usefully in this manual. It has been one preoccupation of the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP) at CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, and RPP materials and tools about program strategies are available—as referenced frequently throughout this manual and in the Bibliography.

Annex B: Common Program Types in Inter-Religious Action

This Annex addresses some of the more common types of programming in Inter-Religious Action, in order to explore briefly the underlying theories of change and programmatic challenges that frequently appear.⁵⁸ This may be a helpful starting point when readers are called upon to 'think evaluatively' about a program type with which they are not yet familiar.

These program types are used at various points in the life cycle of a conflict. While it is common to think of inter-religious peacebuilding as an intervention that takes place during or after open violence, such programs can also be used before violence breaks out. Preventative action can stop violence, or it can help people and societies to better prepared and thus mitigate the impact of violence when it does occur.

Dialog. Dialog programs aim to help individuals from different religious groups to become familiar with each other's beliefs and practices, while building relationships across religious lines. Such programs may involve religious leader, everyday believers, or a mixture of both. Sometimes dialog is limited to conversation, and at other times it links to action through program types like those described below.

Common theories of change include:

- Attitudes – Learning about the beliefs and practices of another religion is thought to reduce tension and separation between religious groups, because accurate information can reduce stereotyping, and common ground can be discovered.
- Relational 'contact' – Engaging directly with a person of another faith is thought to reduce tension and separation between religious groups, because 'contact' can lead us to recognize each other's humanity, or to take action to promote solidarity.

Frequent challenges include opposition from intra-faith co-religionists, and difficulty in translating individual transformation into collective action or socio-political impact. Further, research suggests that the depth and characteristics of contact play an important role in determining outcomes, and that certain conditions such as long-standing inequality between participant groups may, if not carefully addressed, worsen rather than improve relationships.⁵⁹

Cooperation around common interests. This theory of change focuses on indirect ways of approaching peacebuilding, by engaging people across from across religious lines of conflict in concrete activities that address their common needs and interests. These activities often take the form of humanitarian or development initiatives, spearheaded through either local action or international assistance.

The underlying theory of change proposes that if contact among people across religious lines occurs in activities based on mutual interests, then prejudice and mistrust will be reduced and understanding

⁵⁸ For more information, see Schmidt 2016.

⁵⁹ See for example Pettigrew, Thomas F. and Linda R. Tropp, 2006. "Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes: A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90 (5): 751-783.

will increase, because relationships can grow when as a 'safe space' is cultivated. This approach is thought to be less threatening than working directly on attitude change, because it allows groups to interact while working on important public issues, possibly influencing some of the key socio-economic factors that drive the conflict.

Challenges include the limitations of attitude change and contact theory as described above. Changes in individuals and one-on-one relationships may be enough to counter other conflict drivers in the context. Interestingly, a Mercy Corp synthesis of programs in Maluku and Uganda offers preliminary conclusions about how to maximize the potential for joint economic activities to contribute to peacebuilding: design to encourage cooperation rather than increase economic competition between groups; target underlying economic drivers of the conflict rather than economic development more broadly; and focus on developing "deep" relationship building rather than "thin" cooperation.⁶⁰

Reconciliation. Reconciliation programs aim to address conflict directly by drawing on faith-based belief systems and practices to advance relational healing at the inter-personal or collective level. It is not only modern religious institutions that provide a foundation for reconciliation; indigenous beliefs and spiritual practices can also play a key role. Ritual is particularly important in religious reconciliation approaches.

In reconciliation work, the theories of change are often rooted in the teachings of the particular religious traditions involved. For example, Christian programs are often based on the theological assumption that apology and forgiveness can spiritually free the offender and victims of aggressive acts to break out of the destructive cycles and build a better future. Native American talking circles pursue victim-offender reconciliation in a group format, because restoration is understood to require the involvement of the broader community.

Challenges for evaluation include the long processes required for pursuing reconciliation in this way, and the importance of narrative stories as evidence of transformation. Faith-based reconciliation programs often appear particularly incompatible with the professional peacebuilders' heavily 'projectized' way of thinking. It is also important for the participating religious believers to have a solid understanding of what their own faith teaches about reconciliation, so religious leaders often integrate theological instruction into the process of facilitating reconciliation.

Countering or preventing violent extremism (CVE/PVE). CVE/PVE efforts aim to reduce religiously-motivated violent extremism through prevention, disengagement, and amplifying new narratives.⁶¹ These approaches may be implemented by both religious and non-religious actors. While many CVE/PVE activities clearly overlap with peacebuilding, their relationship to anti-terrorism efforts leads to debate about whether or not they should be called 'peacebuilding.'

Theories of change are wide-ranging and diverse, but some of those most common include the following:

⁶⁰ Mercy Corps 2010

⁶¹ See Schmidt 2016

Annex B: Common Program Types in Inter-Religious Action

- Prevention of violent extremism is thought to require addressing and reducing grievances, including socio-political exclusion and marginalization, because these are believed to contribute to radical interpretations of religious teachings and subsequent acts of violence.
- Disengagement of people who have already committed religiously-motivated acts of violence is thought to require supporting them in such areas as identity, self-esteem and social reintegration, without which they may be unable to change their lifestyle.
- Amplifying new narratives involves using public speaking opportunities and media to promote moderate and peaceful interpretations of religious teachings, and to call into question religious interpretations that advocate violence, because ideological formation is believed to contribute significantly to violence.

Among the challenges of CVE/PVE, there is common misconception is that a single issue such as poverty or religion can lead to violent extremism or can fuel radicalization. However, these risk factors actually vary greatly across contexts, so a one size-fits-it all approach to programming and evaluation is not appropriate. There is also a possibility of unbalanced targeting in CVE/PVE programs, with some religious groups perceived to be more at risk for radicalization and violence than others. CVE/PVE evaluation requires a rigorous approach to conflict sensitivity due to the delicate and sensitive nature of this programming.

Annex C: Evaluation Criteria

The peacebuilding evaluation criteria below are adapted from those originally used by the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee.⁶² It is not necessary for an evaluation to consider all of these criteria. Rather, the appropriate criteria can be selected based on the objectives of a particular evaluation.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Broad Question</i>	<i>Key Considerations</i>	<i>Sample inquiries for inter-religious peacebuilding initiatives</i>
Relevance	Why and how are we conducting the initiative? Is it suited to the situation?	Strategic alignment Context-appropriateness	Is the initiative based on a quality analysis of the conflict? What are the key conflict drivers and factors for peace revealed by the analysis? Which ones are related to religion? How is the initiative addressing them? Do the objectives and activities logically support the overarching goal in this particular context? Does the initiative align with the values of the faith groups involved? Does it meet their felt needs with regard to the issue being addressed?
Effectiveness	How well has the initiative achieved its stated objectives? And what has the initiative achieved that was not anticipated?	Assessment Implementation process Activities and results Unanticipated results	How well have the planned activities been implemented, and with what immediate result? Did the initiative adapt appropriately when necessary to changes in context? Do the initiative participants attribute any of the results to supernatural activity or intervention? If so, how? Was the timeline reasonable from the perspective of the religious actors involved? Were any components of the initiative considered to have 'failed?' If so, what can be learned from this 'failure?' What were the positive unanticipated outcomes of this project? The negative unintended consequences?

⁶² OECD 2012, 65-71

Criterion	Broad Question	Key Considerations	Sample inquiries for inter-religious peacebuilding initiatives
Efficiency	How economically have resources been converted into results (compared to other options for supporting peace in this context)?	Cost-efficiency Time-efficiency Quality of management	Does the initiative meet common efficiency standards? Would all the partners involved spend money and time in the same way again? If not, how would they invest differently? How do the religious groups involved assess this initiative against their own faith-based values on the appropriate use of resources?
Impact	What are, or will likely be, the long-term results?	Contribution to Peace Writ Large ⁶³ Early indications of emergent contribution toward Peace Writ Large	Are individual changes in attitudes and behaviors likely to endure over the long term? Has the effort prompted people to increasingly resist provocations to violence? Did the initiative involve both 'more people' and 'key people'? Have individual changes in attitudes and behaviors been mobilized to contribute to positive change at the socio-political level? Are new behaviors and actions being integrated into religious institutions? Has there been a creation or reform of mechanisms to handle key grievances that drive the conflict? Has the effort meaningfully increased people's security and sense of security?
Sustainability	Do local actors have the capacity to continue their current efforts indefinitely? In the case of external assistance, will the benefits endure after the funding ends?	'Ownership' Resilience to shocks Sustainability of finances Sustainability of human capacity	Do all project participants feel they have appropriate 'say' in the design, implementation and results of the initiative? Are all the involved faith groups invested <i>equally</i> in the initiative? Do participants remain committed to inter-faith relationships and actions even

⁶³ For more information on contributions to Peace Writ Large, and indications of emergent contributions toward Peace Writ Large, see CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, *Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual* 2016.

Criterion	Broad Question	Key Considerations	Sample inquiries for inter-religious peacebuilding initiatives
			<p>in moments of crisis? Are participants now developing their own initiatives?</p> <p>Are there mechanisms already being used and/or relationships being tapped in moments of crisis?</p> <p>Have any 'spoilers' been adequately addressed?</p>
Consistency with Values	Does the initiative demonstrate the same values that it claims to promote?	<p>Respect & dignity</p> <p>Inclusion</p> <p>Non-violent action & communication</p> <p>Participation</p> <p>Etc.</p>	<p>Does the initiative uphold the common religious value of the dignity of all people?</p> <p>Is the initiative sensitive to the differing religious needs of diverse participants?</p> <p>Do the staff and core volunteers consistently seek to live out the values that the initiative promotes?</p> <p>Is the initiative consistently conflict-sensitive?</p>
Coordination and Linkages	Has the initiative's impact been enhanced through coordination or linkages to external stakeholders?	<p>Coordination with stakeholders who influence success</p> <p>Linkages between individual and socio-political levels</p>	<p>In inter-faith initiatives, are intra-faith relations also being adequately addressed?</p> <p>Where appropriate, how well have inter-religious actors collaborated with secular initiatives?</p> <p>Where appropriate, have policy makers been engaged, and with what result?</p> <p>Where appropriate, did the intervention responsibly and effectively engage the media?</p>

Annex D: Sample Evaluator Terms of Reference

A clear Terms of Reference (or Scope of Work) is a key step towards a useful evaluation, whether led by an external evaluator or an internal team. The evaluation commissioners can use this document to communicate the objectives, the questions and approach that they expect be used. Alternatively, it is possible to ask potential evaluators to propose an approach, process and budget that they think will meet the objectives and answer the questions. For a simple outline, see this sample from *Better Evaluation*, <http://betterevaluation.org>.

Common elements of a ToR include:

1. Why and for whom the evaluation is being done

- Background knowledge about the evaluand including objective, strategy and progress to date
- Purpose(s) of the evaluation
- Primary intended users and uses
- Key evaluation questions.

2. How it will be accomplished

- Overall scope and approach
- Evaluation methodology/evaluation plan (sometimes done as part of the ToR and sometimes done as part of the evaluation proposal or as the first deliverable in the evaluation project)

3. Who will undertake the evaluation and accountabilities

- Professional qualifications, experience and expertise required for the evaluator or evaluation team.
- Roles and responsibilities of the parties, including processes for signing off on the evaluation plan and reports

4. Milestones, deliverables and timelines

- What deliverables are required and when - for example, detailed evaluation plan, inception report, progress report, interim report, draft final report, final report
- Timelines

5. What resources are available to conduct the evaluation

- Budget (if organization's policy allows this to be stated)
- Existing data

Source: "Terms of Reference," *Better Evaluation*, http://betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/terms_of_reference

For more detailed guidance on developing a Terms of Reference, see also:

- "Qualities of Good Terms of Reference," *DM&E for Peace*, <http://dmeformpeace.org/discuss/qualities-good-terms-reference>
- Search for Common Ground, 2013. "Section 5.1: Terms of Reference Module." In *Training Modules for Design, Monitoring and Evaluation for Peacebuilding*.

Annex E: Sample Evaluation Questions by Religious Practice⁶⁴

This Annex provides sample questions to use in evaluating faith-based peacebuilding practice, according to each categories of religious practice presented in section 2.1. Of course, these questions need to be adapted to fit the context and the evaluation objectives.

<p>Expressions of piety through worship, sacrament, prayer, meditation</p> <p><i>Significance: Direct encounter with the supernatural, as both beneficiary and respondent – the ultimate arena in which the interaction of human and supra-human agency is experienced. Frequently this is the context within which one is reminded of the ultimate, unparalleled potential impact of all supernatural intervention, as well as one’s own potential role as part of the process. Piety leads to a sense of motivation, guidance, direction or calling to which the believer can respond.</i></p>	
<p>Sample questions for the evaluation to answer</p>	<p>Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the purpose for which a specific expression of piety was designed? 2. What changes do participants believe happened, in themselves or others, as a result of participation in acts of piety? 3. How effectively was the experience of piety reflected upon and used to foster further transformation of individuals or of relationships between disparate parties? 	<p>In what ways did participation in (x) act of piety change your attitude toward other groups? Or toward specific individuals within other groups? What caused such changes?</p> <p>How did your participation change your behavior toward other groups or individuals—or did you continue as before?</p> <p>Following participation in (x) act of piety, what changes have you noticed in attitude or behavior on the part of other members of your group toward other groups or individuals—if any?</p>

⁶⁴ This Annex is from Steele and Wilson-Grau 2016.

<p>Education/proclamation through use of scripture, teaching, preaching, moral edicts, public statements</p> <p><i>Significance: More than imparting of information and skills, the intent is formation and internalization of a worldview, framework of meaning, value system – derived from the faith tradition’s basic narrative found within its foundational, spiritual source material.</i></p>	
<p>Sample questions for the evaluation to answer</p>	<p>Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers</p>
<p>4. How effectively has the faith tradition’s narrative laid a foundation for participants to internalize the peace-related values and concomitant ethical behavior inherent within their spiritual tradition?</p> <p>5. To what extent have participants succeeded in mitigating conflict dynamics by acting in accord with their tradition’s peace-related values?</p>	<p>How do you evaluate the extent to which through this peacebuilding activity you have understood and internalized your tradition’s peace values and behavioral norms?</p> <p>In what specific ways did your understanding of your faith tradition’s peace related values motivate you to be a peacebuilder?</p> <p>What kinds of action did you attempt? In an effort to mitigate what specific conflict situation?</p> <p>Did your faith tradition provide you with insights that helped you to assess the peacebuilding problem? How?</p> <p>Has your perception of your faith’s perspective on tolerance changed? If so how? Toward whom?</p> <p>Has your perception of your faith’s call for compassion or hospitality changed? If so, how? With whom?</p> <p>Did your faith offer you any insight about what kinds of structural change to promote in this peacebuilding activity? Or how to approach this task?</p>

Rituals (rites, symbolic expression, customs, ceremonies) which can be used either to promote or inhibit transformation: fasting, funerals, weddings, icons, purification rites, rites of passage or membership, healing rituals, ceremonies of celebration or dedication, holy holidays.

Significance: Sequence of sacred, customary activities involving gestures, words, and objects, the purpose of which is to dramatize the human/supra-human encounter, connecting past tradition with present context that fully engages the participant in remembrance, affirmation of belonging, catharsis, reassessment of perspective, reframing of worldview and values, or formalization and celebration of agreement.

<p>Sample questions for the evaluation to answer</p>	<p>Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers</p>
<p>6. How effectively has the use of ritual led to noticeable change in participants' or members of adversarial groups emotional response to memorable events, or to proposals for reconciliation or dispute resolution?</p>	<p>Following participation in a given ritual in the peacebuilding initiative, was there been any noticeable change in participants' or members of adversarial groups emotional response to memorable events? Who and what responded?</p> <p>Did anyone propose reconciliation or dispute resolution? Who proposed what, when and where?</p> <p>What changes have occurred in participants' perceptions of any historical wounds or recent losses, dysfunctional or disrupted relationships, possible alterations in their worldview?</p> <p>Implications of specific values inherent within their faith tradition?</p>

Reconciliation Processes – Examples: TRCs (S. Africa and elsewhere), Islamic Sulha, Jewish Teshuva, and Buddhist mindfulness meditation.

Significance: Spiritual practices, involving dialogue and mediation, which enable adversaries to move toward the restoration of right relations - frequently helping parties to mourn losses, face fears, accept "the other," admit wrongdoing, forgive, repent (commit to change), engage in restorative justice, and enter into joint problem solving.

Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers
<p>7. What were the most significant behavioral transformations for participants and others that resulted from the reconciliation processes in which they participated?</p>	<p>In which kinds of faith-based reconciliation processes have you participated?</p> <p>In what context (within or outside the intervention being evaluated)?</p> <p>Which kinds of processes were included? (handling grief? admitting wrongdoing? repenting? forgiving? engaging in restorative justice?)</p>
<p>8. Why do the faith-based participants believe some transformations they experience in peacebuilding processes are more significant than others?</p>	<p>What benefit do you believe you received? What about other participants?</p> <p>What parts of the experience were difficult?</p> <p>To what extent did the process cause you to change your views or actions? Those of other participants?</p>
<p>9. To what extent did the reconciliation process assist, or have the potential to assist, conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values?</p>	<p>How effectively did it enable you to relinquish any bondage to hurt and resentment?</p> <p>Do you believe this reconciliation process has the potential to assist conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values? Do other participants believe this?</p>

<p>Faith witness through story-telling, religious music/drama/art, and diapraxis (combination of dialogue and collaborative action)</p> <p><i>Significance: A response to participation in a sacred presence that transforms oneself, builds community and leads to implementation of guidance or calling. Sometimes involves patient waiting or action motivated by hope, based only on a transcendent promise.⁶⁵</i></p>	
<p>Sample questions for the evaluation to answer</p>	<p>Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers</p>
<p>10. How effectively does participation in a given act of faith witness provide a healthy sense of belonging – bonding with one’s own identity group and bridging the divides between groups?</p> <p>11. To what extent does participation motivate the believer to peacebuilding diapraxis?</p> <p>12. What do participants consider is the value of their faith witness?</p>	<p>Has your participation in a specific act of faith witness in the peacebuilding activity influenced your understanding of belonging to your own group? How?</p> <p>Has it influenced your understanding of communal solidarity with members of other groups? How?</p> <p>Has it helped you to see potential ways to bridge the divides between groups? How?</p> <p>How did you view the waiting process before any results can be seen?</p> <p>What kept you committed?</p> <p>What did you learn?</p> <p>What did you hope to achieve? What do your answers to these questions say about the potential value of your faith witness?</p>

⁶⁵ Examples: The film “Pray the Devil Back to Hell” (story of Muslim and Christian women gathering to pray, sing and calling for peace in Liberia), accompaniment of victims (Mennonite peacemaker teams), interfaith choirs (Pontanima Choir in Sarajevo), non-violent peaceful protest (Gandhi; Martin Luther King Jr., People Power in Philippines, Arab Spring, etc.

Annex F: Thematic Bibliography

Evaluation – Key Websites

- DM&E for Peace: <http://dmeforpeace.org/>
- The Online Field Guide to Peacebuilding Evaluation: <http://dmeforpeace.org/online-field-guide>
- Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium: <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-work/about-our-work/peacebuilding-evaluation/the-peacebuilding-evaluation-consortium/>
- Better Evaluation: <http://betterevaluation.org/>
- Evaluation Toolbox: <http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/>

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