

A cluster of various geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, in shades of grey, white, teal, and yellow, scattered in the upper right quadrant of the page.

FAITH MATTERS

A GUIDE FOR THE DESIGN,
MONITORING & EVALUATION OF
INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR
PEACEBUILDING

BY PETER WOODROW, NICK OATLEY & MICHELLE GARRED

EIAP is a project by the Alliance for Peacebuilding in partnership with Search for Common Ground and CDA Collaborative with funding and support from the GHR Foundation.

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.

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¹Available at: <http://dmeformpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding>

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² Available at: <http://dmeformpeace.org/eiap>

Using the Guide

This Guide provides advice on designing a monitoring and evaluation process to collect data that can be used for learning, assessment of results and project improvement. Guidance will cover monitoring, evaluation and use and dissemination of results. Because considerations of project design are integral to monitoring and evaluation questions, we have also provided a brief overview of emerging standards regarding the design of peacebuilding programming, with references to additional resources (Sect. 3).

The Guide outlines the decisions and stages involved in setting up a monitoring process and undertaking an evaluation for inter-religious action for peacebuilding. It adapts and supplements secular evaluation principles and practices to ensure that the monitoring and 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 draws on available “how to” guidance on monitoring and evaluation processes and includes multiple references to the most relevant resources.

Throughout the Guide, we provide examples to illustrate various steps and processes. We will also use an illustrative scenario (see Section 1.8, an illustrative scenario, adapted from a real project) to illustrate how the guidance might be applied in a particular case.

Section 2 addresses cross-cutting issues that should be considered at the design stage and throughout project implementation. These considerations promote sensitivity to religious and inter-religious issues throughout the monitoring and evaluation processes. They also address unintended consequences of projects, the perspectives of people and groups who experience conflict in ways different than the mainstream, and relationships that are often overlooked.

Subsections 2.1 on Faith Sensitivity, 2.2 on the Purposes of Monitoring and Evaluation in Religious Peacebuilding, and 2.3 on Conflict Sensitivity may be useful to **monitoring and evaluation specialists** who are newer to inter-religious action. Subsections 2.3 and 2.4 are especially useful for **inter-religious peacebuilders** who are newer to monitoring and evaluation, and for project managers or monitoring and evaluation specialists who are newer to contexts affected by conflict.

Section 3 deals with the importance of project design in establishing robust monitoring and evaluation strategies. It stresses the importance of establishing effective monitoring systems to capture information that can be used to reflect on the progress of a project and whether changes are needed during implementation. The section also shows how monitoring data can be used in evaluation processes. This section will be most interesting for **project managers** and the **monitoring and evaluation leads** in partner organizations, who may be involved in commissioning an evaluation.

Section 4 presents the steps needed to prepare for an evaluation. It explores considerations of whether to undertake an evaluation or not, whether a project can be evaluated or not (evaluability), what types of evaluation approaches an organization might consider, issues associated with the complex contexts in which inter-religious action takes place, and the timing of when to conduct an evaluation. This section will be most useful for **project managers** and **design, monitoring and evaluation lead officers** in the implementing organization, who may be involved in commissioning an evaluation.

Section 5 addresses the issues to be considered when commissioning an evaluation, including which evaluation criteria to use, articulating the purpose of the evaluation, establishing specific questions for the evaluation, deciding on a methodological approach to the evaluation, developing terms of reference and selecting an evaluator. This section also addresses the question of how to use the results of an evaluation. This section will be most useful to those **commissioning, planning, or conducting evaluations** as well as **policy and project staff** preparing to be involved in or learn from an evaluation.

1.

INTRODUCTION

This introductory section will explain the focus of the Guide and who might use it, and explain which sections will be most useful to particular users. It will also define key terms and introduce an illustrative scenario based on many real experiences that will be used throughout the Guide to illustrate key points.

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1.1 Why this Guide?

This Guide is intended to improve the practice of inter-religious action for peace, by encouraging the regular application of monitoring and evaluation tools. We assume that when practitioners of inter-religious peacebuilding use monitoring and evaluation processes for learning, improvements in effectiveness will follow. There is a large and expanding body of guidance for monitoring and evaluation in many realms. However, there has not been a guide specifically oriented to the needs of those engaging religious actors. This Guide seeks to fill that gap.

1.2 Why Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding?

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. 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 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 partners for building peace. Actors representing diverse backgrounds are working together for the first time in innovative partnerships that draw on multiple fields of knowledge. It is often 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.

1.3 Who might use this Guide?

This Guide aims to help practitioners make sense of monitoring and 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 efforts, whether they be religious, secular or a combination of both, to maximize peacebuilding learning and effectiveness.

Therefore, the audience for this Guide is anyone who is involved in the design, monitoring or evaluation of inter-religious peacebuilding programs or initiatives. These users include inter-religious peacebuilders, 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.

Throughout the Guide, we indicate which sections might be most useful for which audiences. For purposes of simplicity, we will flag sections for three (overlapping!) overall categories of users:

- ❖ **Inter-religious peacebuilding implementers** - Local and national level staff of faith-based organizations or independent practitioners engaged in inter-religious action for peacebuilding. This includes project staff, project managers/directors, and volunteers, some of whom may have limited prior exposure to monitoring and evaluation processes.
- ❖ **Internal project managers or monitoring and evaluation specialists** - This includes monitoring and evaluation specialists and staff of local/international NGOs that work on inter-religious action. Some may be experienced inter-religious project managers who are new to monitoring and evaluation. Others may be regularly involved in organizing monitoring systems or commissioning various forms of review/evaluation, yet have limited prior experience with inter-religious action. They may be based in national headquarters or regional locations and support multiple programs and their monitoring and evaluation plans. Information for this group may also be of interest to the staff of donor organizations.
- ❖ **External evaluators** - Some evaluators may be well-informed and experienced in evaluation, but without exposure to peacebuilding or inter-religious action in particular. Evaluators who are tasked with evaluating peacebuilding and/or inter-religious peacebuilding programs will find the flagged sections of interest.

1.4 What users will find in this Guide—and where

This Guide provides advice on designing a monitoring and evaluation process to collect data that can be used for learning, assessment of results and project improvement. Guidance will cover monitoring, evaluation and use and dissemination of results. Because considerations of project design are integral to monitoring and evaluation questions, we have also provided a brief overview of emerging standards regarding the design of peacebuilding programming, with references to additional resources (Sect. 3).

The Guide outlines the decisions and stages involved in setting up a monitoring process and undertaking an evaluation for inter-religious action for peacebuilding. It adapts and supplements secular evaluation principles and practices to ensure that the monitoring and 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 draws on available “how to” guidance on monitoring and evaluation processes and includes multiple references to the most relevant resources.

Throughout the Guide, we provide examples to illustrate various steps and processes. We will also use an illustrative scenario (see Section 1.8, an illustrative scenario, adapted from a real project) to illustrate how the guidance might be applied in a particular case.

[Section 2](#) addresses cross-cutting issues that should be considered at the design stage and throughout project implementation. These considerations promote sensitivity to religious and inter-religious issues throughout the monitoring and evaluation processes. They also address unintended consequences of projects, the perspectives of people and groups who experience conflict in ways different than the mainstream, and relationships that are often overlooked.

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Section 5 addresses the issues to be considered when commissioning an evaluation, including which evaluation criteria to use, articulating the purpose of the evaluation, establishing specific questions for the evaluation, deciding on a methodological approach to the evaluation, developing terms of reference and selecting an evaluator. This section also addresses the question of how to use the results of an evaluation. This section will be most useful to those **commissioning, planning, or conducting evaluations** as well as **policy and project staff** preparing to be involved in or learn from an evaluation.

1.5 The challenge of monitoring and evaluating inter-religious action for peacebuilding

Across the field of peacebuilding, there has been mounting pressure from private and government donors, legislators and peacebuilding networks to provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of actions taken to transform conflict, reduce violence, and promote greater tolerance and understanding. From the donor and legislator side, the interest in evidence arises from the need to justify allocation of funds for peacebuilding work—to show “value for money” in the terms used by some. Peacebuilding practitioners are interested in proving their effectiveness and in continuous learning and improvement of their work.

For inter-religious action, we need to identify what works and show that interfaith engagement in peace work is contributing to building peace and preventing conflicts. Above all, we want to show how our engagement in peace work from an inter-religious perspective is making a difference that other actors and institutions are unable to make. We recognize that deciding what kind of monitoring and evaluation to undertake can be a challenge, particularly for smaller organizations working in low resource environments with little experience of doing monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation is relatively new in peacebuilding, 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 range of elusive

factors that influence religious actors and affected populations, such as beliefs, values, and spirituality, among others.

As faith-inspired actors engage in peacebuilding work, finding out what works can be difficult. Peacebuilders are engaged in such assessment based on multiple sources of motivation. Some experience a strong, internal spiritual desire to know if their actions are working; and some organizations wish to learn from their actions. Others respond to donor requirements and accountability to multiple stakeholders. In any case, peace practitioners have a strong rationale for gathering information to help answer the question: "Is our work having a positive effect?" Some religious actors with little experience of monitoring and evaluation, may see such activities as mysterious, irrelevant or just too difficult. They may feel they have their own processes for learning and assessing results. Or they may consider that secular approaches to evaluation fail to understand the underlying religious values, the resulting inter-religious work being undertaken and a religious perspective on evaluation.

Those who are deeply grounded in religious communities typically express "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 calling—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 contradiction.

Many inter-religious programs can use standard methods for monitoring and evaluation. Measuring changes in the level of violence or the results of inter-religious dialogue, or resolving conflicts over land or access to water do not necessarily require a whole new approach to monitoring and evaluation. There are tried and tested ways to approach these types of activities, and we should not reinvent the wheel. Yet even these tried and tested approaches should be presented and deployed faith-sensitive ways.

1.6 A range of situations that call for learning from Inter-Religious Action

Many religious initiatives engage with real conflicts over access to land, power, or long-standing grievances between religious and ethnic groups. In these cases, implementers often want to know whether their actions are influencing the conflicts that are playing out in the community. a series of examples based on real situations, that might generate demand for information and resources on the effectiveness of inter-religious action—in short, for learning – are presented.

- **Youth Engaging Spirit!** is a local religious organization that works on dialogue and reconciliation among youth across religious lines at a local community level. They aim 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 monitoring and evaluation. They have no explicit requirements to perform an evaluation, but are 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 need to identify how best to engage them in this conflict context. They require real-time information on what works and what does not, so they can adapt 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.
- **Islamic Development Partners** is operating with western government funding to undertake reconstruction and reconciliation efforts in Basra, southern Iraq. Their project 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, that balances religious affiliation and gender, especially since women are in charge of carrying, treating and storing water. The funding agreement requires monitoring and evaluation of the project, including identification of baseline conditions and periodic real-time evaluations to influence project redesign decisions. The donor representative has signaled that they would like the next evaluation to explore the inter-religious and gender elements of the project, 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, whether formal or informal. Such processes demand the commitment of time and resources to organize and implement a credible evaluation for accountability and learning purposes. Further, smaller organizations will clearly need technical and perhaps funding assistance, while the larger organizations may have considerable organizational experience with evaluations and can manage on their own.

1.7 Key terms used throughout this Guide

Several terms are used throughout this Guide. To help the reader, therefore, definitions are provided for: inter-religious action, peacebuilding, evaluation, monitoring, and project design. These terms often have different meanings for different people depending on their experience, values, worldview, and religious, cultural and professional identities. For purposes of this Guide, the following definitions are used.

Peacebuilding:³

Peace is more than the formal end to violent conflict, referred to as 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. Peacebuilding can attempt to prevent violence, to end it or to consolidate peace in its aftermath. Peacebuilding is sometimes used as a broad term encompassing a full range of peace-promoting activities, such as *conflict transformation*, *dialog*, *restorative justice*, *trauma healing*, *reconciliation*, etc. Because peacebuilding definitions vary, we provide two influential samples in the text box "Peacebuilding Defined."

Peacebuilding Defined

The Organization for Economic Cooperation in Development (OECD) ⁴ provides the following definition. "Peacebuilding: Actions and policies are "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.

Respected researcher Lisa Schirch⁵ defines peacebuilding as follows: A wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society to address the root causes of violence before, during and after violent conflict. The term "peacebuilding" can have two broad meanings. Peacebuilding can refer to the direct work that intentionally focuses on addressing the factors driving and mitigating conflict. Peacebuilding can also refer to efforts to coordinate a comprehensive, multi-leveled, multisectoral strategy, including development, humanitarian assistance, governance, security, justice and other sectors that may not use the term "peacebuilding" to describe themselves.

Inter-religious Action for Peacebuilding^{6,7} (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 between religious groups, 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.

³ Alliance for Peacebuilding: "What is Peacebuilding?" <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-work/what-is-peacebuilding/>

⁴ OECD-DAC. 2012. "Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results." Paris: OECD, glossary. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/evaluating-donor-engagement-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility_9789264106802-en

⁵ Schirch, Lisa. 2013. *Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security*. Boulder, CO: Rienner, p. xiii.

⁶ Vader, Jennie. 2015. "Meta-Review of Inter-Religious Peacebuilding Program Evaluations." Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/meta-review-of-inter-religious-peacebuilding-program-evaluations/>

⁷ More information, see McLaughlin, Sarah. 2016. "Thursday Talk - Why Effective Inter-Religious Action in Peacebuilding Matters." Washington: DM&E for Peace, June 30. <http://dmeforpeace.org/discuss/me-thursday-talk-why-effective-inter-religious-action-peacebuilding-matters>

Some groups also engage in peacebuilding across contending groups *within* a larger religious community referred to as *intra-religious* action. Examples include work among Catholics and Protestants within Christianity; Sunni and Shia among Muslims. *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, especially in situations of high tension between people from different sects of the same religious tradition. In this Guide, all references to inter-religious peacebuilding may be applied equally to intra-religious peacebuilding.

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.

Inter-religious actors or 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 violent conflict, with a particular emphasis on religious pluralism. They operate out of a religious or faith identity (in coordination with or despite other identities such as political) and leverage religion as a catalyst for conflict transformation to address important drivers of conflict.

Project vs. Program: A 'project' typically refers to an intervention that is limited in scope and has a defined start and end point in time. In contrast, a "program" is usually defined as an integrated collection of projects taking place in a particular geographic area, with a less distinct end point or an ongoing mandate. This Guide is relevant to both projects and programs, as well to inter-religious action interventions that might call themselves by a different name. However, for the sake of simplicity, 'project' is used throughout this document.

Design, Monitoring and Evaluation: Many will recognize that the terms "monitoring" and "evaluation" are often used together, as in "the project needs a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan." The term "design" usually refers to the planning of the project. The design process 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 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 Guide to evaluation for the peacebuilding community.⁸

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 project.⁹ The project 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 project design in mid-course and may be one source of useful information for an evaluation. Evaluation findings will inform future design and monitoring activities.

⁸ See DM&E for Peace, [www.dmeformpeace.org](http://dmeformpeace.org). The Online Field Guide to Peacebuilding Evaluation, <http://dmeformpeace.org/online-field-guide>

⁹ See, for instance, Church, Cheyanne, and Mark M. Rogers. 2006. "Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs." Washington: Search for Common Ground. <http://dmeformpeace.org/learn/designing-results-integrating-monitoring-and-evaluation-conflict-transformation-activities>

Project Design in peacebuilding has come to embrace several key steps and processes that are seen to be necessary for achieving effectiveness. Typically, the first step in design will involve some form of conflict analysis—to develop a better understanding of the drivers of conflict and to identify possible ways to intervene to promote change. From there, practitioners usually determine goals, activities, theories of change, and a monitoring and evaluation process to address these drivers. Additional information about project design is presented in Section 3.

Monitoring is an on-going process which generates information that informs decisions about a project while it is being implemented. It refers to setting and tracking targets and milestones to measure progress and achievements, and to verify whether the planned outputs are occurring. Monitoring, therefore, tracks whether a project is being implemented consistent with the design and reaching expected outcomes—and whether any unintended negative effects are being created. Monitoring focuses on information that is immediately relevant to the implementation of the project¹⁰. Monitoring can determine whether an intervention is achieving its intended results and or generating unintended or unexpected changes. Such information establishes the basis for project adjustments.

Evaluation¹¹ is the systematic and intentional process of gathering and analyzing data (quantitative and qualitative) to inform learning, decision-making and action.¹² Evaluation can examine how things took place in reality, as programs in conflict settings usually require a lot of modifications to initial plans. The evaluator looks at the decisions made and with what results. 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 good¹³. Evaluation can be used for other purposes also. For example, project and management staff may seek any of the following—or a combination of them:

- 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 project decisions to adapt and improve an initiative;
- Assess the value of a project—how it may/may not contribute to larger goals;
- Identify lessons to inform future similar programs; and/or

¹⁰ Corlazzoli, Vanessa, and Jonathan White. 2013 "Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-affected Environments." London: DFID. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/back-to-basics-a-compilation-of-best-practices-in-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-environments/>

¹¹ For more information, see DM&E for Peace, "Introduction to Evaluation and General Guidance." <http://dmeformpeace.org/introduction-to-evaluation>

¹² Church, Cheyanne, and Mark M. Rogers. 2006. "Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs." Washington: Search for Common Ground. <http://dmeformpeace.org/learn/designing-results-integrating-monitoring-and-evaluation-conflict-transformation-activities>

¹³ Katherine O'Connor and F. E. Netting, 2008 "Faith-based evaluation: Accountable to whom, for what? Evaluation and Program Planning," Volume 31, Issue 4, November, Pages 347-355

- Help develop a systematic way to tell the story about the value of inter-religious peacebuilding to participants, partners and supporters.

The key difference between monitoring and evaluation is that monitoring focuses on ongoing changes and adjustments, while evaluation is about making a judgment about the worth or significance of the intervention. Evaluation is based on the information gathered during a periodic assessment process, 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.

In this Guide, "evaluation" is used broadly to include the following types/approaches:

- Traditional approaches, based on the measurement of intended outcomes programming (including results-based management and the use of logframes);
- Newer, emergent forms of evaluation, such as developmental evaluation,¹⁴ most significant change and outcome harvesting undertaken with minimal reference to pre-defined outcomes;
- Real-time, mid-course or "formative" evaluations¹⁵ undertaken during project implementation; and
- Final or "summative" evaluations undertaken at the end of a project.¹⁶

Our definition of evaluation also includes initiatives to assess progress and to support project adaptation, for management, learning, and knowledge generation. It includes evaluations undertaken by external consultants, as well as internal self-evaluations by a project 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 within the evaluation field, including impartiality, independence, credibility and usefulness.¹⁷ This Guide presents information on the more formal evaluation processes, but also explores other options, some of which may be more appropriate, depending on the circumstance and the purposes of the review.¹⁸ This question will be explored further in Section

¹⁴ For more information, see Quinn Patton, Michael. 2006. "Evaluation for the Way We Work." *NPQ Nonprofit Quarterly*, March 21. <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2006/03/21/evaluation-for-the-way-we-work/>

¹⁵ Evaluation Toolbox: "Formative Evaluation." http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24&Itemid=125

¹⁶ Evaluation Toolbox: "Summative Evaluation." http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=40&Itemid=126

¹⁷ OECD-DAC. 1991. "Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance." Paris: OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2755284.pdf>

¹⁸ See Ernstorfer, Anita et al. 2016. "Thinking Evaluatively in Peacebuilding Design, Implementation and Monitoring." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/thinking-evaluatively-peacebuilding-design-implementation-monitoring/>

4, which is concerned with whether or not to undertake an evaluation and choices regarding the type of evaluation.

1.8 An illustrative scenario: Monitoring & Evaluation in Uruzania

At this point, we introduce a scenario that is used as an illustrative example all the way through the Guide. Text boxes will appear at key points to show how the project staff cope with an evaluation process.

URUZANIA: THE SITUATION

Uruzania is a coastal country with a large rural agricultural inland and active coastal fishery communities. Oil and gas companies have been engaged in exploration off shore, but no viable resource has been identified yet. Uruzania 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 during 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, or religion.

Five years ago, one such upheaval brought a predominantly Christian military group to power. The brutalities that the military units inflicted on civilian populations as they fought their way to power prompted both Muslim and Christian militia groups to mobilize themselves for reprisals and to defend their communities. The ensuing war led to the deaths 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 was 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. Militia groups are still active.

The mobilization along religious lines has led to the portrayal of the civil war as a Christian-Muslim struggle, although most analysts argue that the conflict is mostly about power and resources in which religious identity is used as a tool for rousing fear, gaining allegiance and seeking power. While the role of faith traditions as an identity marker must be recognized, additional conflict drivers include political and economic tensions magnified by corruption, weak governance and the failure to create a national identity that supersedes other identities. While many rural minority groups experience marginalization, Muslim groups are particularly aggrieved, feel excluded from political influence, and observe that they have not received their fair share of economic development support. 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.

URUZANIA: THE PROJECT

The Grassroots Peace Project (GPP) is a social cohesion effort that has been operating for almost two years, and it is time for a mid-term evaluation. The project is implemented by 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 guided by a group of local religious leaders, including a Catholic Bishop, several Muslim imams, Protestant pastors and a traditional healer. They have tried 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 conflict and strive to prevent further violence. IPP 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 reduce violence, 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. The IPP 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-inspired 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 project 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.

URUZANIA: PROSPECT OF AN EVALUATION

Kiki Mara and Ahmed Hussein enter the office at the Interfaith Peace Platform, grab their morning coffees and turn to check their e-mails. Kiki notices immediately a message from David Barrassa, a colleague from the regional office of Global Endeavor. The message is labeled "URGENT: evaluation impending!" Kiki remembers that provision for an evaluation was included in the grant agreement with Global Endeavor and the donor. Although she has never had to deal with an evaluation, she is 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 painful and pretty useless."

David Barrassa is the Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist for Global Endeavor. His e-mail message reminds Ahmed and Kiki that a mid-course evaluation was called for in the five-year grant agreement for the Grassroots Peace Project (GPP). Now, almost two years into project implementation, they need to start thinking about how to organize the evaluation—and he is prepared to support them throughout the process.

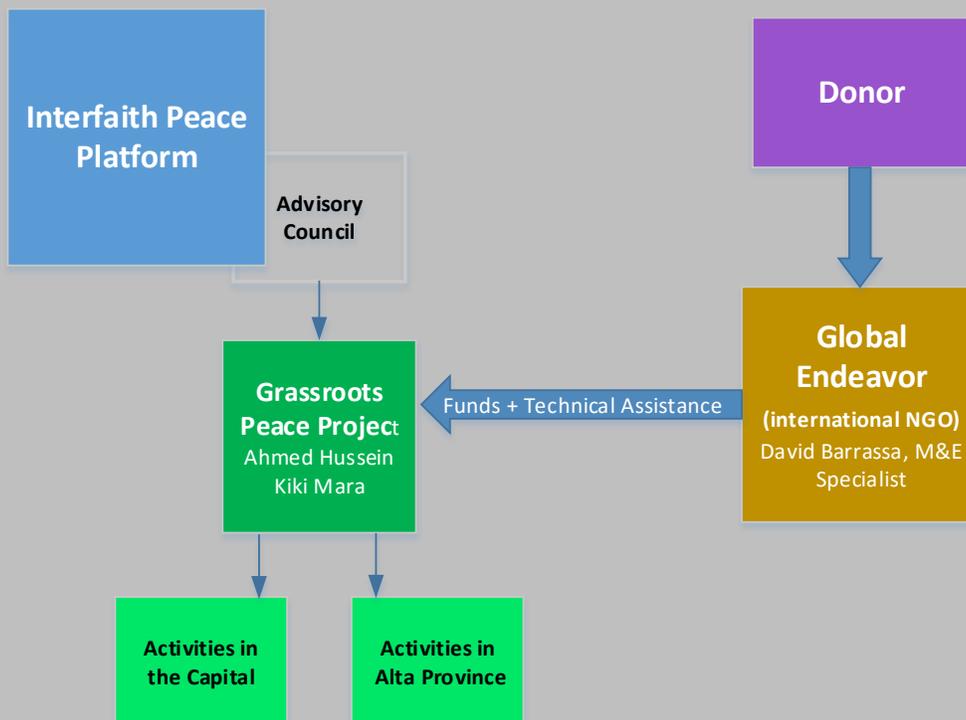
Kiki serves as a sister-elder in her own church. Besides having the required technical qualifications and experience the job demands, Kiki applied for the position because she believed that it offered her an opportunity to live out her faith in promoting peace, reconciliation, and peaceful. She also 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 can we evaluate this faith-inspired work? We are answerable to God, not to an external donor!”

How will they explain this process to the pastors, imams and priests that they work with every day? Kiki and Ahmed are committed to local ownership and initiative. They want to make sure that this evaluation will not feel like something imposed from the outside.

Project Structure



As noted, Kiki and Ahmed’s story and the religious leaders they work with will continue to unfold throughout the Guide.

2.

DISTINCTIVE CONSIDERATIONS FOR MONITORING & EVALUATING INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING

This section addresses several cross-cutting issues that should be considered at the project design stage and throughout project implementation. These considerations help improve sensitivity to religious and inter-religious issues throughout the monitoring and evaluation processes. They also help address unintended consequences, and to increase awareness of groups of people who experience conflict in ways different than the mainstream 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 project stakeholders.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Subsections 2.1 (Faith Sensitivity in Monitoring and Evaluation), 2.2 (Purposes of Faith-Based Peacebuilding Monitoring and Evaluation), and 2.3 (Conflict Sensitivity) are useful to **monitoring and evaluation specialists** who are newer to inter-religious action. Subsections 2.3 (Conflict Sensitivity) and 2.4 (Groups that Experience Conflict and Religion Differently) are useful for **inter-religious peacebuilders** who are newer to monitoring and evaluation, and for project managers or monitoring and evaluation specialists who are newer to contexts affected by conflict.

2.1	Faith-Sensitivity in Monitoring & Evaluation	18
2.2	Purpose of Faith-based Peacebuilding Monitoring & Evaluation	21
2.3	Context Awareness	23
2.4	Conflict Sensitivity	27
2.5	Groups that Experience Conflict and Religion Differently	30

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

2.1 Faith-Sensitivity in Monitoring & Evaluation¹⁹

Any form of ongoing tracking or periodic assessment needs to be relevant to the worldview of its stakeholders. In the context of an inter-religious action project, it will be important to consider how religious actors themselves think about issues such as the definition of success and failure, and the ways in which progress should be assessed or measured. Many religious actors operate from a value base that may appear to be in tension with more secular ways of thinking about success. However, religious actors do desire their work to be effective, and if their unique perspectives are understood and respected, then ideas about effectiveness can be quite compatible with religious values.

Several factors contribute to the distinctive nature of religious peace work. Yet just one factor is truly unique to religious peacebuilding: belief in the supernatural.²⁰ Religious peacebuilders from all faith backgrounds find inspiration in a sense of connection to a higher power, despite the fact that they may name and understand that power in very diverse ways. Belief in the supernatural leads to some distinct features that are especially relevant for the monitoring and evaluation of religious peacebuilding.

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. Their primary sense of accountability may center around faithfulness to a higher power, to a sense of calling or vocation, or to the faith community itself. Religious peacebuilders often value motive and relationships more highly than demonstration of observable results within a limited time period. Thus, religious peacebuilding may be at its best where there is flexibility to change strategies and objectives, rather than adherence to the time-bound demands of a previous plan. They are often long-term members of a community—and the religious community itself is not defined by a project. Their timeframes for assessing results may greatly exceed the start and end dates of a particular project.

Distinctive value system. Religious value systems provide a framework of meaning for interpreting life and morality. There are some general values that are common to most faith traditions, such as an emphasis on justice, peace and compassion. However, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims all have somewhat different interpretations of what those values mean, and they express and enact them differently. It is important to understand the specific

¹⁹ This section is adapted from Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau. 2016. "Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, p.2-9. This paper examines the nature of religious (or 'faith-based') peacebuilding, and its insights apply also to inter-religious peacebuilding as a sub-set of that broader field. <http://dmeforpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding>

²⁰ "Supernatural" is defined as beyond the natural...It is synonymous with 'transcendent,' understood as that which is beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience..." Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau. 2016. "Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium. <http://dmeforpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding> .

meanings and practices of the religious community with which one works, using language and concepts shared widely within that tradition, rather than external perspectives.

BUDDHIST REFLECTIONS ON NONVIOLENCE, PEACE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Some years ago, one of the authors participated in a fascinating workshop that explored the intersection between global peacebuilding, nonviolent action and conflict resolution concepts and Buddhist precepts. The context was a special workshop organized by prominent Thai Buddhists for a group of visiting Sri Lankan Buddhist monks, during the time that Sri Lanka was during a brutal civil war. This exchange drew on centuries of respect and interaction between Thai and Sri Lankan Buddhists.

The format of the workshop was unique. The project covered concepts in nonviolent action, political advocacy, reconciliation/peacebuilding, and dispute resolution. Each morning, the trainers (themselves representing a range of religious traditions and diverse nationalities) presented concepts and skills much as they would to any secular group of human rights or peace activists. In the afternoon, the senior monks in the group led a session in their own language (Sinhalese) in which they reviewed the concepts and practical skills presented in the morning and then looked for specific Buddhist precepts that supported or echoed those elements. Often, lively discussion ensued! At the end of those sessions the Sri Lankans made a brief presentation to their Thai hosts and international trainers regarding what they had found. Clearly a mutual learning experience!

Understanding of Success/Failure. From a religious perspective, success can be understood from a transcendent perspective, not solely in earthly, material terms. Faithfulness to a spiritual calling, rather than performance, is often a standard by which success of human effort is evaluated. Furthermore, success may also be based on the perception of transcendent supernatural activity that goes beyond what can be objectively measured. This helps explain how Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity could labor for years among Kolkata's poor without much sign of objective, measurable systemic success, other than the direct effects on individuals. Nonetheless, while the criteria for measuring ongoing results or for judging success may differ, most religious peacebuilders are very keen to know if their interventions are having the intended effect.

Motivation and Supernatural Action. Spiritual direction and guidance, via scripture, prayer, meditation or a mentor, can be a major factor in determining what a religious person does. Yet, for the religious 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 apparent inaction while waiting for the supernatural to act, or prayer as an alternate form of action, as well as resistance to intervention by others. However, most religious peacebuilders believe that both human and supernatural agency are important, and they act accordingly.

EXAMPLE: SPIRITUAL MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGING ELECTIONS

When the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda asked Christian leaders of various denominations what had led them to work for peaceful and stable elections in 2016, their responses indicated a deeply spiritual motivation. They found inspiration in Biblical Old Testament teachings about how prophets had influenced their communities, and about equality and social justice for all human beings.

Spiritual transformation. Religious peacebuilding sets its ultimate sights on the whole world, guided by a hope of transformation that has no bounds. Peace practitioners acting from a faith perspective often have a different view of what constitutes the most important forms of change

or transformation, compared with their secular colleagues. Individual changes in attitude are especially important, and they correlate closely with changes in beliefs and perspectives, all of which are seen as contributing to the shaping of behavior. The reframing of attitudes, perspectives and beliefs takes time, but once it has begun, it can signal deep transformation in a person's stance toward other groups, and it can help explain and legitimize new patterns of behavior.

In religious projects that emphasize inner transformation, it is important to assess when, why and how people's attitudes change and how to utilize such information to shape immediate project adjustments or to inform future intervention efforts. This may involve self-reported data, which should be carefully triangulated (compared) to data drawn from other sources. It may also be important to explore, respectfully, the extent to which attitudinal changes are reflected in behavior changes, and contribute to changes at the socio-political level. Many religious peacebuilders do see individual transformation or relationship-building as the most effective path towards socio-political change. However, the distinction here is one of emphasis, since many religious peacebuilders have also worked in direct and powerful ways for socio-political transformation.

In sum, the monitoring and evaluation of religious peacebuilding must provide ways to assess action that arises from a belief in the existence of a supernatural, transcendent presence. This has implications for all aspects of a monitoring and evaluation system, including its purpose (see Section 2.2), lines of inquiry (Section 4.4), approaches (4.6), criteria (Section 5.2), and methods of collecting and analyzing data (Section 5.7).

URUZANIA: KIKI AND AHMED TALK WITH THEIR ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Grassroots Peace Project is guided by an Advisory Council drawn from the Interfaith Peace Platform: 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 IPC office. After serving up tea and sweets, Ahmed opens the topic casually. "You know, we are being asked to perform an evaluation of GPP. You may recall that the donor requires it."

Pastor: Evaluation!?! You mean they will come to judge our work? What do they know about our situation? Our efforts are grounded in our common values for peace—so it seems to me it will be difficult to assess that.

Kiki: It may not be so bad. The evaluation will assess 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 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.

Imam: I work with my brothers here because I believe Allah calls me to do this; it is my religious duty. We are striving for transformation in the hearts of our people and how they see people of other faiths. 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. The evaluation must be sensitive to our inter-faith context.

2.2 Purpose of Monitoring & Evaluation in Religious Peacebuilding²¹

The monitoring and evaluation of a peacebuilding initiative can be seen as an effort to support accountability and learning by tracking progress and by determining the *merit*, *worth* or *significance* of what has taken place.²² The evaluation concepts of merit, worth and significance align in relevant ways with three key aspects of faith experience — believing, doing and belonging.²³ All three aspects are interconnected. The role played by supernatural belief is to explain and legitimize the other two – what the believer does when he or she acts, and where the believer belongs in his/her connectedness to a faith community. For evaluation, this implies that understanding the influence of belief can help an evaluator to perceive the importance, influence and significance of the peacebuilding effort.

To be clear, evaluation does not attempt 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 religious actors—the way they propose to design the initiative, track its progress, and assess results. Such consideration will also influence the way religious actors interpret any information collected and derive any lessons learned throughout an evaluation process.²⁴

Table 1: Purposes of evaluation²⁵

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 project 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, identity 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 project will have more or different merit or worth.	<i>Importance</i> of what has been done and achieved considering 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)

²¹ Adapted from Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau, 2016. "Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium. <http://dmeformpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding> .

²² American Evaluation Association: "What is Evaluation?" <http://www.eval.org/p/bl/et/blogaid=4>

²³ See Haidt, Jonathan. 2012. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*. New York: Vintage, p.290-291.

²⁴ Adapted from Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau. 2016. "Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, p. 5-7, 21. <http://dmeformpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding> .

²⁵ Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau. 2016. "Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, p.7. <http://dmeformpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding> .

2.2.1 Implications for Monitoring & Evaluation Processes

These religious distinctions/foci have far-reaching implications for planning and carrying out ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluations, which will be explored throughout the remainder of this Guide. For example, when choosing a monitoring and evaluation approach, it is important to consider desired characteristics, such as participatory processes. Participatory methods can give religious actors a strong voice to present their own perspectives and to honor the collaborative nature of the inter-faith partnership structures in which they often work. Likewise, qualitative methods are usually well-suited to understanding the believing and belonging aspects of religious practice. (Section 1.6 provided definitions of monitoring and evaluation. Sections 3.8 and 3.9 address additional monitoring questions. See Section 4.7 for more on faith-sensitive evaluation approaches).

When considering evaluation criteria, it becomes important to consider religious interpretations and application of the criteria typically used - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and/or sustainability²⁶ – but also to consider how the project undertaken aligns with the values of its religious stakeholders, and how coordination and linkages work in an inter-religious network. (See 5.2 for more on evaluation criteria). The evaluation's lines of inquiry or key questions should be attuned to the unique types of activities carried out by religious actors (Section 4.4), and the evaluator or evaluation team should be selected with faith-sensitive competencies in mind (Section 5.5).

²⁶ OECD-DAC. 2012. "Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results." Paris: OECD, p.65-71. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/evaluating-donor-engagement-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility_9789264106802-en

EXAMPLE: MAKING MONITORING & EVALUATION MORE FAITH-SENSITIVE

When Mercy Corps and World Vision International tested the pilot version of this Guide, they adapted their usual evaluation practices to make them more faith-sensitive.

Mercy Corps in Myanmar was developing the monitoring and evaluation strategy for their Some Hmat community-based inter-communal peacebuilding project. They had originally planned to focus on mostly theory-based approaches and a quantitative set of indicators. However, they increasingly considered the relevance of goal-free impact evaluation approaches (i.e., Most Significant Change), and decided to expand that plan to include more qualitative data gathered through participatory processes, so that project stakeholders (community leaders, government officials and inter-religious leaders) could voice their own interpretations of project experiences and results in ways that influence monitoring and evaluation findings and future project design. This decision involved adding semi-structured interviews to elicit stories, and training staff in how to facilitate this form of data collection and highlight individual behavioral changes. It also involved convening project participants to discuss the purpose of participatory monitoring and evaluation, and to collectively identify the best way to tell the story of the project's impact. This adjustment greatly increased religious leaders' understanding, ownership, and active participation in the monitoring and evaluation process, and reduced suspicions about the investigation of sensitive topics such as peace and religion. The Mercy Corps team still plans to analyze the findings according to their traditional results framework, but they expect those findings to be more robust and meaningful.

World Vision International (WVI) had initially focused its multi-country inter-religious conflict sensitivity project evaluation plans exclusively on community-level changes. When they decided to add an evaluation question about individual-level change, in view of the importance of personal transformation in religious practice, they were surprised by a significant number of stories like the following: 'A female Christian pastor who lives in a predominantly Muslim area in Kenya shared how her Christian daughter wanted to dress in hijab to feel what Muslim girls feel. The mother resisted initially, but after participating in our joint training, she asked one of her Muslim classmates to help find her daughter a hijab. Her daughter wore the hijab, learned, satisfied her curiosity, and later donated that hijab to a Muslim girl. Since that time, she has developed a strong bond with Muslim girls and if she has any items or resources to share, she considers her Muslims friends as well as her Christian friends.' These findings led WVI and religious leaders and partners alike to recognize the importance of individual transformation as a foundation for broader community and socio-political impact, particularly in conflicts that involve religious identity. WVI plans to continue comparison across evaluations of inter-faith action to learn more about key themes including linkages between different levels of impact.

2.3 Religious Context Awareness²⁷

Good peacebuilding requires a high level of contextual awareness and understanding, in addition to focused analysis of conflict dynamics. Contexts in which religious identity plays a strong role in public life can appear confusing, particularly for outsiders. This section briefly highlights a few selected aspects that can help to develop an understanding of the religious context. Evaluators will need to discern how important these aspects are in a particular context, how they have affected project progress and outcomes, and how project participants have

²⁷ See Section 3.2 for more information on context and conflict analysis.

acted to manage or mitigate them. For deeper learning, see [The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding](#).²⁸

2.3.1 Religion as a 'cause' of conflict

It is common to hear people say: "Religion is the main cause of conflict!" However, evidence indicates this is almost never the case. Conflict has multiple causes, and the key drivers are often structural, political and economic. When those drivers separate groups who also have different faith identities, religion can become an influential secondary factor. For statistical analysis of the links between religion and conflict, see the [Institute for Economics & Peace](#).²⁹

URUZANIA: WHAT IS THE CONFLICT 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 Uruzania 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 connected closely to political and economic power. As religious leaders, we don't intervene in political struggles—at least not directly. But each of our faith traditions emphasizes a responsibility to ensure that all are fed, clothed and have shelter.

²⁸ Silvestri, Sara and James Mayall. 2015. "The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding." London: British Academy. <http://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Role-of-religion-in-conflict-peacebuilding.pdf>

²⁹ Institute for Economics and Peace. 2014. "Five Key Questions Answered on the Link between Peace and Religion: A Global Statistical Analysis on the Empirical Link between Peace and Religion." <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/04/Peace-and-Religion-Report.pdf>

2.3.2 Religion and power

The relationship between religion and the centers of power play a major role in shaping the religious context. If the government is affiliated with or favors a religious group, it gives that group a powerful platform for influencing society according to its will. On the other hand, if a religious group aspires to exercise political power or even to participate in decision making, but is blocked from doing so, they may be tempted to use violence.³⁰ Demographics, too, are a source of power. Majority religious groups have a great deal of power to set the terms of engagement with religious minority groups, and the dynamics of majority-minority relations significantly influence how both groups perceive their context and operate within it.

2.3.3 Intra-faith relations

The relationships *within* faith traditions can be as important as the relationships between them.³¹ Nearly everyone is familiar with the headline cases of sectarian differences, such as Catholic-Protestant violence within Christianity (e.g., Northern Ireland during 'the Troubles') or Sunni-Shia violence within Islam (e.g., Iraq at present). These same types of sectarian tensions can be present under the surface in less visible ways, having a major impact on the inter-religious project context. Further, there are often significant tensions between progressive or modernist sub-groups that encourage inter-religious action, and more traditional or conservative sub-groups that avoid it, all within the same religious tradition. Because of these factors, inter-religious action participants may find themselves facing significant pressures from within their own faith traditions.

2.3.4 Religious distinctives and conversion

Several major faith traditions, including Christianity and Islam, contain teachings about the importance of spreading one's own faith, and maintaining the distinctiveness of one's own religious commitments. In many contexts, fear of being influenced to convert or to 'water down' one's faith convictions is a major factor that prevents people from engaging in inter-religious action. There are a range of ways that inter-religious actors deal with these concerns. Some mutually agree to establish their inter-religious effort as a 'conversion-free' space. Others may agree that all involved may seek to mutually influence each other's faith, so long as they do not deceive or pressure each other.

2.3.5 Relationship between religious and secular

Religious action does not occur in isolation. Religious actors encounter many different types of people and institutions. Some of these are not particularly religious, and yet may be important to project outcomes. The social structures of the religious and secular spheres differ greatly depending on the context, yet the relationship between them needs to be considered. For example, where the culture is significantly secularized, religious actors may find it difficult to gain respect or influence. Where the government is religiously affiliated, civil society actors that are secular may have difficulty gaining acceptance and developing partnerships. Where policy change is desired, religious actors may need to work in coalition with secular partners to

³⁰ Toft, Monica Duffy, Daniel Philpott and Timothy Samuel Shah. 2011. *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*. London: Norton.

³¹ For more learning, see The Interfaith Observer: "Intra-Faith." <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/food-1/>

achieve their goals. It is not unusual for religious and secular actors to question whether their counterparts fully understand or respect them, so evaluation may need to consider the nature of these relationships, and their effect on project outcomes.

2.3.6 Insider perspectives

In addition to previous aspects of context awareness, it is essential to seek to understand how 'insiders' in a context interpret their own surroundings and experiences. In international organizations or evaluation teams, there is often a tendency to interpret a context based on international paradigms and external analyses, which are heavily influenced by the global North. Local people may perceive their context very differently, and their interpretations most directly shape what happens 'on the ground,' both in conflict and in peacebuilding. For examples of how context and conflict analysis can be made highly participatory to emphasize local perspectives, see [People's Peacemaking Perspectives](#)³² and [Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts](#).³³

2.3.7 Politically sensitive situations

Evaluators who work on broad portfolios may be surprised to encounter the level of political sensitivity that can arise in peacebuilding, in general, and inter-religious peacebuilding in particular. It is important for the evaluation to assess the extent to which project stakeholders have understood the risks that the political context might pose to project outcomes and operational safety, and to factor these issues into project planning and adaptations. Such considerations must also be incorporated into monitoring processes, as even tracking certain kinds of changes may be politically sensitive. Quality analysis is key to developing and updating this understanding among organizations with internal analytical capacity. Their understanding might be included in their conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity, or risk identification and management plan. Indicators might be used to track political risks and identify mitigating actions. It is likewise important for the monitoring and evaluation plan to consider political risks that might arise during data collection, as seen in this example.

³² Hiscock, Duncan and Teresa Dumasy. 2012. "From Conflict Analysis to Peacebuilding Impact: Lessons from the People's Peacemaking Perspectives Project." London: Saferworld and Conciliation Resources. <http://www.c-r.org/resources/conflict-analysis-peacebuilding-impact-lessons-peoples-peacemaking-perspectives-project>

³³ Garred, Michelle et al. 2015. *Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts: Local Perspectives on Large-Scale Conflict*. New York: World Vision International. <http://participate-mstc.net/book>

EXAMPLE: SENSITIVITY AND SECURITY

A national team, highly skilled in evaluation and relatively new to peacebuilding, recently evaluated a project on religion and public policy. The team found that the project was both relevant and effective – yet unanticipated security concerns arose during the evaluation process. While interviewing judges in a dissent-prone region of the country, the team discovered that officials were eager to speak off the record, to expose stories of individuals being falsely accused on charges of religiously-motivated terrorism. The team members, all of whom were citizens of the country in which the evaluation was taking place, began to fear for their personal security. They knew that exposing the false charges could make them a target for retribution.

The evaluation team consulted closely amongst themselves and with the locally-based staff of the commissioning organization. Together, they decided to include these important issues in the evaluation report, in a somewhat vague and generalized manner that was not identifiable or traceable. These experiences influenced the team's recommendations on future legislation and government capacity building. The team also disclosed in the report's methodology section that process adjustments had been made for security reasons. One team member's name was left off the report – by request, as that person was particularly vulnerable due to religious identity, and the team supported this decision. Both the project and the evaluation were successful, but the team ended up wishing they had been more prepared for dealing with politically sensitive situations.

2.4 Conflict Sensitivity

In its simplest form, conflict sensitivity helps practitioners to avoid unintentionally making conflict worse. It is 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** to minimize unintended negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of their activities.³⁴

This sub-section provides selected insight on evaluating the conflict sensitivity of inter-religious action for peace, and doing so in a conflict-sensitive manner.

2.4.1 Conflict Sensitivity Basics

It is widely 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 project, or even a peacebuilding evaluation! In fact, the potential for complex inter-religious peacebuilding efforts to unintentionally exacerbate inter-group tension is quite high.

³⁴ International Alert et al. 2004. "Chapter 1: An Introduction to conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding." In *Conflict-sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment*. http://local.conflictsensitivity.org/key_reading/conflict-sensitive-approaches-to-development-humanitarian-assistance-and-peacebuilding-resource-pack/

Conflict sensitivity is therefore a very important consideration when evaluating inter-religious action for peacebuilding. It makes us aware of our obligation, at a minimum, to avoid exacerbating conflict. Conflict sensitivity differs from peacebuilding³⁵ in that it does not directly address the key drivers of conflict. Rather, it aims to anticipate and prevent unintended negative consequences. Key conflict sensitivity tools include [Do No Harm \(DNH\)](#),³⁶ which has been customized to support [Evaluation and Do No Harm](#),³⁷ and [DNH for Faith Groups](#).³⁸

Many inter-religious peacebuilders have a basic, intuitive understanding of conflict sensitivity that draws on faith-inspired goodwill and deep experience. Often this understanding is informal or undocumented. An evaluation team can build on this intuitive understanding by avoiding technical terms, articulating conflict sensitivity in ways appropriate to the local context, and linking project stakeholders to opportunities for conflict sensitivity skills training, if desired.

When evaluating the conflict sensitivity of an inter-religious peacebuilding project, there are two key issues to consider:

- Has the project itself been conflict-sensitive? That is, did the project analyze the potential negative effects from its activities and choices and take measures to avoid them?
- Is the evaluation effort itself conflict-sensitive? That is, are the decisions about approach, evaluation team, data collection methods, etc. taking account of possible avoidable negative impacts on conflict dynamics?

Inter-religious action programs in conflict contexts should have an ongoing process for seeking and analyzing feedback about their effects on conflict dynamics. This should be built into their monitoring systems—as conflict sensitivity is most effective as a continuous process of seeking and acting on information gathered from project participants (religious leaders and groups), local observers, government officials, and other stakeholders. Monitoring can also track relatively objective behavioral indicators that might indicate progress towards objectives—or inadvertent negative effects. (For more on monitoring, see Section 3.8 and 3.9.)

³⁵ For more information, see Woodrow, Peter, and Diana Chigas, 2009. "A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding." Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/a-distinction-with-a-difference-conflict-sensitivity-and-peacebuilding/>

³⁶ For resources on Do No Harm, see <http://cdacollaborative.org/what-we-do/conflict-sensitivity/>

³⁷ CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2012. "Guidance Note on Evaluation and Do No Harm." <http://cdacollaborative.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Guidance-Note-on-Evaluation-and-Do-No-Harm.pdf>

³⁸ Silalahi, Esther. 2017. "Do No Harm for Faith Groups: Christian-Muslim Edition." World Vision International. <http://www.wvi.org/peacebuilding-and-conflict-sensitivity/publication/do-no-harm-faith-groups-christian-muslim-edition>

2.4.2 Evaluating the conflict sensitivity of an inter-religious action project

In the context of an evaluation, if the project team has explicitly integrated conflict sensitivity into their work, then an evaluation team may review existing conflict analyses and conflict sensitivity monitoring reports, before proceeding to further data collection in the field. If conflict sensitivity has been pursued informally, or not at all, then the evaluation team will incorporate questions relating to conflict sensitivity into interviews, focus groups, and other forms of data collection. Sample questions to explore whether an inter-religious action project has been conflict-sensitive are provided:

EVALUATING THE CONFLICT SENSITIVITY OF A PROJECT – SAMPLE CONSIDERATIONS

- Did the project conduct an initial conflict analysis to inform planning? If yes, how were the findings applied to project design and implementation?
- Was analysis updated and applied at regular intervals in the project cycle? How did the project adapt to context changes?
- In this context, which inter-group conflicts stand out as destructive? What are the factors that divide (cause tension between) those groups? What are the factors that connect them (or help them to manage conflict)? To what extent, if any, is religion linked to the dividers or connectors?
- Has that inter-group relationship improved or deteriorated? Why, and in what ways? Which aspects of the project have caused or influenced this change? (Consider both large project choices and smaller micro-decisions, such as: people hired, participant selection, groups engaged or not, sites chosen for events, suppliers of various services, etc.).
- What disputes arose during the project? What were their underlying causes? Did the implementers address those disputes, and, if yes, how? Were any disputes avoided, and, if yes, how? What roles did religious actors play in dispute resolution, if any?
- To what extent do project staff and participants model respect, acceptance and inclusion towards people of other religious faiths? What barriers to interaction with 'the other' do they face, and are they able to overcome them? How has the project influenced these dynamics?
- In programs that involve partnerships, to what extent do the partners model positive relations amongst themselves? Do organizations that represent religious majorities and minorities, or the global North and the global South, treat each other with mutual respect and equality?

2.4.3 Making an 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.³⁹ In addition to cultivating an awareness of their relationship to the context of conflict, evaluation planners should consider factors including those presented here.

CONFLICT-SENSITIVE EVALUATION – SAMPLE CONSIDERATIONS

- The evaluation team's identities should be acceptable to all the major groups in the context. Ensure that those collecting data reflect the ethnicities/religions involved and are accepted by those communities. Also, ensure that the team has the capacity to take in all perspectives equitably.
- In some contexts, the biggest conflict sensitivity issues are unspoken, and may even be implicit in the way that an evaluation is commissioned, hosted and implemented. Be alert to such issues and develop strategies to avoid them. Example: In the context of identifying potential interviewees, a local staff member says, "Oh, you don't need to talk with X [minority] group, they really have not been involved and don't seem interested in the project."
- Consider how data collection can avoid fueling tensions. For example, will the act of asking questions cause suspicion, rumors or fear? If focus group discussions are used, will it be better to meet with different ethnic/religious groups separately to avoid clashes of opinions over disputed events or results? Or does a mixed group provide more information?
- In intensely conflicted contexts, prioritize the participants' physical security, and the security of their data, dignity and reputation. Make careful choices about how security – the use of armed escorts can foster mistrust or make the evaluation team a target.
- 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 employ empathy and respect, and yet remain objective and truthful in reporting on the findings.

2.5 Groups that Experience Conflict and Religion Differently

Both war and organized religion are highly variable experiences, meaning people with different identities and different levels of access to power will experience war and religion in very different ways. Women, sexual minorities, young people and people with disabilities are among those who face risks and challenges that are hidden from people who don't share their experiences. These risks and challenges need to be considered when evaluating inter-religious peacebuilding.

2.5.1 Women and Men

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

³⁹ For more on the conflict sensitivity and ethics of evaluation in situations of violent conflict, see Bush, Kenneth, and Colleen Dugan, 2015. *Evaluation in the Extreme: Research, Impact and Politics in Violently Divided Societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

nature, means, and directions of the contribution of religious men and women to the peacebuilding process, as explored in '[Faith-Based Peacebuilding: The Need for a Gender Perspective](#).'⁴⁰ 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. These gender issues are not just "about women;" both masculine and feminine gender norms merit attention in ongoing monitoring and during an evaluation.⁴¹

URUZANIA: GENDER ISSUES IN THE GPP

Gender has been a concern for the GPP since its beginning. A female evangelical Christian pastor is an active member of the Interfaith Peace Platform, and, at the local level, the project has made sure that women are involved in the peace committees. Kiki is aware that she was hired to co-lead the project, partly to maintain gender balance.

Although these measures have been taken, it should also be noted that issues remain. In rural villages, traditional values often predominate, sometimes restricting the roles that women can play, at least openly. GPP project staff often find that they must meet with women and men separately, and that female staff members must meet with women's groups. On the other hand, traditional society also includes separate women's and men's groups that observe certain rituals irrespective of the religions the participants might belong to at other times. Such groups play an influential role behind the scenes in many communities.

The gender sensitivity of a monitoring and evaluation system 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 project stakeholders regarding which gender criteria are appropriate for evaluating the project, and what style should be used for inquiry. Where gender norms need to be challenged, it is often best to draw on sympathetic sources within the stakeholders own religious and cultural tradition, and to proceed in a way that communicates respect.

⁴⁰ International Fellowship of Reconciliation. 2010. "Faith-Based Peacebuilding: The Need for a Gender Perspective." Alkmaar, The Netherlands. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/berkeley-center/100524WPPFaith-BasedPeacebuildingTheNeedforaGenderPerspective.pdf>

⁴¹ See Wright, Hannah. 2014. "Masculinities, Conflict and Peacebuilding: Perspectives on Men through a Gender Lens." London: Saferworld. <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/862-masculinities-conflict-and-peacebuilding-perspectives-on-men-through-a-gender-lens>

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN EVALUATING INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING

1. Did the project conduct a gender analysis to inform its planning? If so, how were the findings applied to project design and implementation? If not, how was gender perceived by key stakeholders at project inception and in the project cycle? How is the project seeking ongoing feedback on gender dynamics in its monitoring system?
2. Did the project design and implementation processes consider traditional value systems that define and sustain gender roles as the leverage points for managing change? If so, 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 project include female religious leaders, whether formal clergy or informal lay leaders? Beyond the numbers involved, 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 project?
5. In what ways were women's priorities raised and/or incorporated in the project design and implementation?
6. Did the project engage men and male children in supporting women's leadership in religiously and culturally appropriate ways? If yes, with what effects?
7. Did the project provide religious alternatives to gender norms that promote or encourage violence? If yes, how, and with what effect?
8. Did the project activities and outcomes influence gender perceptions, norms and behavior over time? Did the inter-group relationships between men and women evolve? If so, how?
9. Were there any 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?

For more tools and tips, see 'Gender-Sensitive Evaluation and Monitoring: Best and Promising Practices in Engendering Evaluations.'⁴²

2.5.2 Sexual and Gender Minorities

Questions of gender include not only male-female relations (as explored in the previous section), but also the challenges faced by sexual minorities. 'Sexual orientation' refers to the question of which sex a person consistently finds romantically and sexually attractive – whether women, men or both. 'Gender identity' refers to the question of how a person identifies themselves – whether as male, female or something else – which is sometimes different than the sex that was ascribed to them at birth.⁴³ In both cases, sexual and gender minorities who differ from the mainstream often experience conflict differently. In violent conflicts or other

⁴² US Agency for International Development. 2014. "Gender-Sensitive Evaluation and Monitoring: Best and Promising Practices in Engendering Evaluations." Washington. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00K43P.pdf

⁴³ Definitions adapted from American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org>

emergency situations, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people often face increased risk of physical and sexual assault, denial of health and wellbeing services, harassment and exclusion.⁴⁴ Under such conditions, '[Merely Existing is a Risk](#).'⁴⁵

At the same time, beliefs and attitudes about sexual minorities vary widely, with opposition tending to be highest in cultural contexts where religion is particularly central to people's lives.⁴⁶ Many faith traditions are internally divided over whether to accept sexual and gender minorities, and on what terms. All of this implies that sexual minorities, particularly those who openly express their orientation or identity, are very likely to be marginalized or even absent in inter-religious action for peacebuilding. The issue of exclusion in a peacebuilding project is something that must be taken seriously. At the same time, this topic is highly sensitive, and it should be approached in a way that aligns with the worldview of project stakeholders.

2.5.3 Children and Youth

Many conflict-affected contexts have large populations of young people, who are often key ingredients in the dynamics of conflict and peace. They may be peacemakers, fighters, or victims. In situations where children are neglected and youth have minimal access to opportunities, they may be vulnerable to recruitment as militants or soldiers. In situations where children and youth enjoy a level of skill and empowerment, they may become prominent peace advocates. Children and youth have long been underrepresented in formal peacebuilding processes, but this is slowly beginning to change under UN [Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security](#).⁴⁷

Young people are marginalized in inter-religious action that centers around religious institutions, because youth often have no role in the hierarchy of faith leaders, and children are not always seen as viable contributors in religious sub-cultures. Girl children and sexual minority youth may be particularly marginalized, as described in the previous sections. Nonetheless youth can and do organize powerfully through inter-faith networks, such as [Interfaith Youth Core](#) in the United States.⁴⁸ In evaluating inter-religious peacebuilding, it is important to consider not only *whether* young people are involved, but also to consider *why* and *how*. Much faith-oriented youth peacebuilding work is currently based on the assumption that youth are dangerous potential militants, so it seeks to prevent and disrupt their radicalization. In contrast, youth advocates argue that an equally relevant and more constructive assumption is that youth are powerful potential actors for peace, in need of support and empowerment.⁴⁹ For more on the assumptions that underlie project planning choices, see Section 3.4 on theories of change.

⁴⁴ United Nations. 2015. "Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action." https://gbvguidelines.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines_lo-res.pdf .

⁴⁵ Myrtilinen, Henri and Megan Diagle. 2017. "When Merely Existing is a Risk: Sexual and Gender Minorities in Conflict, Displacement and Peacebuilding." London: International Alert. http://international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_SexualAndGenderMinorities_EN_2017.pdf

⁴⁶ Pew Research Center. 2013. "The Global Divide on Homosexuality." <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/>

⁴⁷ United Network of Young Peacebuilders. 2015. "Security Council Resolution 2250: Annotated and Explained." <http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/2250-annotated-and-explained.pdf>

⁴⁸ For more information about Interfaith Youth Core, see <https://www.ifyc.org>

⁴⁹ Kamatsiko, Valarie Vat. 2011. "Guidelines for Empowering Children and Youth as Peacebuilders." Nairobi: World Vision International. <http://www.wvi.org/peacebuilding-and-conflict-sensitivity/publication/guidelines-empowering-children-and-youth>

Thus, key considerations on evaluating the engagement of youth may include:

- Who are the children and youth in this context? (Age, gender and geographic distributions, access to education, access to employment, victims or participants in previous violence, etc.)
- What are the roles of children and youth in specific religious activities and institutions? What are their roles in the dynamics of conflict and peace: fighters, peacemakers, victims, or other?
- Did the project engage children and youth in some way? If yes, with what project outcomes? How did the engagement of young people relate to their faith or their role in the religious community? What were the assumptions underlying the reasons for youth participation, and how did this influence outcomes?
- How do the children and youth themselves perceive the inter-religious action opportunities available to them? The quality of the relationships with adults involved in the process? The effectiveness of their own effort as children and youth? Their ideas for improvement?
- If youth were not engaged in any way, why not? In retrospect, how do project stakeholders now assess those reasons? How did the presence or absence of young people's engagement influence the project outcomes?

Engaging children and youth in evaluation requires creative, engaging methodologies, and special attention to ethics. In the case of minors, there are often specific requirements for parental consent and protection of children from physical and emotional harm. Methodology guidelines and ideas can be found in Save the Children's work on [Children and Participation](#).⁵⁰ Insights on [Accommodating Religious Identity in Youth Peacebuilding Programs](#)⁵¹ are available from Search for Common Ground.

2.5.4 Persons with Disabilities

Physical and mental disabilities are a critical issue in conflict settings. Combat and other forms of violence can become a leading cause of disabilities during and after conflict. At the same time, people with disabilities are often increasingly vulnerable in settings of armed conflict, due to hardships encountered, disruptions of health services and support systems, and opportunistic attacks. Even within religious traditions there are internal variations in what they believe and practice in relation to disabilities. When faith groups come together for inter-religious action, they expend a great deal of effort to include and accommodate the religious needs of everyone involved. Under those circumstances, the accommodation of persons with disabilities, and the recognition of their contributions, can easily be overlooked. Evaluations in contexts with

⁵⁰ Save the Children. n.d. "Children and Participation: Research, Monitoring and Evaluation with Children and Young People." http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/children_and_participation_1.pdf

⁵¹ Ehmer, Ariel et al. n.d. "Accommodating Religious Identity in Youth Peacebuilding Programs." Search for Common Ground. <https://www.american.edu/sis/practica/upload/S15-Final-Draft-SFCG-Toolkit.pdf>

high rates of disability should be particularly attentive to this issue. For an overview of practical learnings, see [The Involvement of Persons with Disabilities in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding](#).⁵²

⁵² Aaron, Anita et al. 2015. "The Involvement of Persons with Disabilities in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Efforts: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities as Part of the Solution in the Post-Conflict Arena." (Berkeley: World Institute on Disability).
<https://worldinstituteondisabilityblog.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/wid-disability-inclusive-peacebuilding-process.pdf>

3. DESIGNING AND MONITORING OF INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION PROGRAMS

This section deal with the importance of project design in establishing robust monitoring and selecting evaluation strategies that can demonstrate quality, impactful programming. It highlights the importance of establishing relevant and effective monitoring systems to capture information that can be used to reflect on the progress of a project and whether changes are needed during implementation (adaptive management). It also stresses the importance of monitoring data to any evaluation that is undertaken.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

This section will be most interesting for **project managers and the M&E leads in lead and partner organizations**, who may be involved in commissioning an evaluation.

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3.1 Why good design matters to effective monitoring and evaluation

Good project design is critical for effective programming. A good design responds to the context and is informed by an understanding of the conflict dynamics and the roles played by various actors (including religious actors). A good design identifies the key changes desired over a given period and the strategies and actions needed to get there. A well-designed project will also surface the assumptions about how the strategies and actions will lead to the desired changes. In turn, all these characteristics, enable clearer, more rigorous, and more useful monitoring and evaluation practices.

Generally, the ingredients for good peacebuilding project design include the following elements—with 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

3.2 Conducting a Conflict Analysis

A conflict analysis should be the starting point for any project operating in complex, fragile and conflict affected environments. The conflict analysis should be written down and updated on a regular basis to check for any shifts in dynamics that might affect programming. Conflict analysis should help peace actors 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.

According to the OECD-DAC, a conflict analysis is “a systematic study of the political, economic, social, historical, and cultural factors that directly influence the shape, dynamics and direction of existing or potential conflicts. It includes an analysis of conflict causes and dynamics as well as assessments of the profiles, motivations, objectives and resources of conflict protagonists.”⁵³ Conflict analysis should be differentiated from *context analysis*, which is typically a quite broad examination of the full range of economic, social and political elements of a context. Conflict analysis focuses on the subset of those elements that are specifically related to conflict.

There are many frameworks and processes available to conduct a conflict analysis (see the bibliography). One resource that not only lists available frameworks, but also provides annotations about each of them, is included in the OECD-DAC guide to *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility*.⁵⁴

At a minimum, the conflict analysis should address the following four questions:

1. What is the conflict about?

⁵³ OECD-DAC. 2012. “Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results.” Paris: OECD, p.11. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/evaluating-donor-engagement-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility_9789264106802-en

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.79.

2. What are the drivers and triggers of the conflict? What forces are working towards peace?
3. Who are the actors involved? What are their interests, positions, or needs?
4. What are the existing conflict resolution mechanisms? What are their strengths/weaknesses?

It may be helpful to think of these issues in terms of the “3Ps”.⁵⁵ Here are some questions that might be asked in relation to each of these dimensions:

People: Who is involved in the conflict? Who are the primary parties in the conflict? Who are the secondary parties? How does an individual or group perceive the situation? How do perceptions of the conflict differ between the groups? What are the expressed demands and underlying needs and interests of each party?

Problem: What are the issues or drivers in the conflict? What are people fighting over? What are the underlying needs of the various parties in conflict? Do any mutually acceptable criteria or processes for decision-making exist? What might be some of the common values or interests in the conflict?

Process: What methods are being used, if any, to resolve the conflict? Are groups using violence or is the conflict playing out in other ways (e.g. demonstrations, protests, legal battles)? What is the phase of the conflict? How has the behavior of the various parties influenced the conflict?

Conflict analysis processes can include consideration of the role of religion, and religious institutions, actors and beliefs in the conflict as either positive and/or negative influences. Such analysis should 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 the religious aspects will be part of a larger whole, but not necessarily the determining or primary concern. We know that religious identity, symbols and values can be manipulated by political actors as a means of mobilizing people to violence. So, it is important to pay attention to how these factors have been characterized publicly, in the media and in popular opinion. Asking whether those depictions are valid or biased and in what ways religious practices and beliefs are designed to play a role in project activities, are all relevant questions.

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.

In recent years, some practitioners have increasingly viewed conflict through a *system's thinking* lens. That is, conflicts consist of a series of interacting factors and actors that create a complex

⁵⁵ For further practical guidance on how to use the 3P approach, see Caritas Internationalis. 2002. “Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual.” Vatican City. http://peacebuilding.deependable.com/images/b/bc/Peacebuilding_English.pdf

and ever-changing conflict dynamic. The text box below ("Examples of well-formulated objectives") underlines the importance of recognizing complexity in project design.⁵⁶

In the context of an evaluation, especially in exploring the relevance of the project, it will be necessary to review any existing conflict analyses performed by or used by the project, to determine whether the project 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 may want to conduct their own conflict analysis as part of the process.

3.3 Formulating Clear Goals, Objectives and Activities

Clear project goals, objectives and activities should be developed in response to a recent and valid conflict analysis. They provide the framework and the focus for ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluations.

A **Goal** statement is the higher-order objective to which an intervention is intended to contribute. In other words, it is the broadest level of change the project seeks to achieve given its resources and timeframe. Goal statements are broad and visionary in nature and represent abstract, intangible changes—often at the macro-level (this is sometimes referred to as Peace Writ Large).

Each project will only have one goal statement, which typically depends on several factors that are outside the control of any one project. As such, goal statements are useful for providing strategic vision, but programs will not be held directly accountable for achieving the goal. Avoid making goal statements too specific and detailed. Goals should not be concerned with activities or "outputs", but rather longer-term, higher level changes.

An **objective** is an achievable result from a project within a stated time period. The objective aims at contributing to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other benefits to a society, community, or group of people. They tend to be more concrete, measurable, and tangible changes that need to occur to achieve the goal. An organization will be held accountable for achieving objectives during an evaluation process.

For inter-religious action programming, it may be hard to predict all expected changes with precision, such as reducing violence by x%, increasing trust by y%, or increasing support for reconciliation by z%. We recognize it is hard to attribute such changes to project activities or to measure these changes within the resources of an organization.

Although some objectives are difficult to define in terms of specific observable changes, it may nevertheless be possible to develop ways to assess such changes. For instance, evidence of increased youth involvement in community development activities could be an indication of new skills being used or evidence of increased cooperation between key groups as indications of increased trust.

⁵⁶ See also CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. "Designing Strategic Initiatives to Impact Conflict Systems: Systems Approaches to Peacebuilding." Cambridge, MA. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/designing-strategic-initiatives-impact-conflict-systems-systems-approaches-peacebuilding/>

EXAMPLES OF WELL-FORMULATED OBJECTIVES:

These objectives suggest changes that will be observable, in terms of behavior and other concrete changes.

"Religious leaders from group X and group Y in four regions of X country, will work together over 18 months to intervene together to prevent local incidents from escalating into violence and promoting positive changes in their communities."

"Women of different faiths in six provinces in X country will form self-help and micro-finance groups across group lines working together to market products."

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 It may prove difficult to articulate measurable objectives for efforts that strive towards these relatively intangible intentions—but it is not impossible. The challenge is to envision what changes in behavior might result from progress in any of these dimensions—and then figure out how to measure such changes.

CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND PROJECT DESIGN UNDER COMPLEXITY AND UNCERTAINTY

For simple and even complicated situations, straightforward methods of problem analysis may be sufficient. However, most peacebuilding programming, including inter-religious action, takes place in complex situations, characterized by uncertainty regarding causes, shifting dynamics, and unknown solutions. How, then, can we gain sufficient understanding of such complexity to focus a project on the right issues and the right groups—or to undertake an effective approach to problem resolution?

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 project activities. 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. [Note: See how the Grassroots Peace Project responded to changing conditions, new realizations and feedback in Annex B: Reflection Exercise.]

Similarly, many inter-religious programs emphasize personal change (inner reconciliation, healing or forgiveness), often, as an end in itself without any connection to larger societal changes (social cohesion or 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? And how will we know? Thus, a little creativity may be needed in stating the objectives, as well as the specification of desired indicators of change.

⁵⁷ See Schmidt, Stephanie L. et al. 2016. "Literature Review: Effective Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding." CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/literature-review-effective-inter-religious-action-peacebuilding-program/>

URUZANIA: GRASSROOTS PEACE PROJECT'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In thinking about how best to support his partners at the Interfaith Peace Platform, David Barrassa reads 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: 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.

Objectives: The project will:

1. Improve understanding, trust and cooperation among Muslim and Christian religious and community leaders in the capital and in Alta Province.
2. Increase the ability of religious actors to facilitate nonviolent conflict resolution and mobilize for peace.
3. Reduce the recruitment of people (mainly young men) to violent groups on both sides, and increase the ability of religious actors to mobilize communities 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.

The following example of goal and objective statements is drawn from the recent Catholic Relief Services publication, *Inter-Religious Action for Peace*.⁵⁸

Table 2: Sample Goals and Objectives⁵⁹

CONTEXT

With the largest Muslim population in the world making up the majority of its 247 million inhabitants, Indonesia is also home to Christians, Catholics, Buddhists, Hindus and Confucians, made up of more than 1,000 ethnic groups. Despite a rich history of cultural and religious pluralism, Indonesia has seen a rise in radicalism and intolerance along ethnic, religious and gender lines since the end of Suharto's 32-year authoritarian regime in 1998.

GOALS:

Overarching or project goal: Build a peaceful and plural Indonesia without violent conflict by engaging civil society (community leaders, teachers and schools, religious leaders, and community-based organizations), local officials, national executive and legislative bodies, as well as law enforcement officers.

⁵⁸ Bamat, Tom et al., ed. 2017. "Inter-Religious Action for Peace. Studies in Muslim-Christian Cooperation." Catholic Relief Services. <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications/interreligious-action-peace>

⁵⁹ Inspired by the work of an international NGO in Indonesia.

More **specific, project level, goal** statement focused on working with youth and *pesantrons* (Islamic boarding schools):

- To promote religious freedom and prevent radicalization through youth-centered media and educational activities in *pesantrons*, in areas vulnerable to religious intolerance and violence.

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS GOAL:

- By the end of the two-year project, students in 10 *pesantrons* are more aware of and better able to think critically on issues related to counter-terrorism, counter-radicalization, religious pluralism, and understanding.
- During the course of the project, extremist messages are directly countered in areas where radicalization is prevalent.
- In 10 locations in Indonesia, communal conflict is prevented and religious understanding is advanced through the utilization of diverse and complementary media, including “intended outcomes” video documentary, and community radio.
- Programming that counters and prevents radicalization is institutionalized in *pesantrons*.

Activities are concrete and tangible actions, events, or tasks conducted by project staff. Activities should be clearly linked to the type of change and subsequent results that are desired. They provide the means of achieving the stated objectives and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the project.

Typically, in accordance with the common results-based management approach, many donors require information on goals, objectives, activities together with information on how these activities will be measured (indicators), which are all incorporated into a [Logical Framework](#)⁶⁰. A Logical Framework or Log Frame, is a visual representation of the project logic and captures the plans and expectations of the overall project. Logical Frameworks can provide the basis for monitoring and evaluation plans (at least of the intended outcomes). As noted, other approaches to project management exist, including “adaptive management,” which sets goals and objectives but also emphasizes obtaining regular feedback and adjusting activities—and even objectives—based on the changing circumstances and immediate results.

3.4 Developing Plausible “Theories of Change”⁶¹

A Theory of Change, at its simplest, is an explanation of why we are doing what we are doing and why we think this will be effective. Peacebuilding programs of all types deal with dynamic situations, multiple forces for and against peace, and a great deal of uncertainty. By articulating our theory of change, we engage in a process 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

⁶⁰ BetterEvaluation: “Logframe.” <http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/logframe>

⁶¹ Theories of Change in the Grassroots Peace Project in Uruzania are thoroughly discussed in Annex B: Project Reflection Exercise.

changes. Our theory of change should reveal the underlying assumptions behind our chosen methods, participants, and timing.

For example, we may focus on youth employment because we think that by getting more young people engaged in productive activities and earning income, they will be less vulnerable to political manipulation and incitement to violence. This approach to youth work has a theory of change embedded in it, involving 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:

*(For a project 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 so simply stated. 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 project design? Essentially, a well-articulated—and plausible—Theory of Change demonstrates that the project team has thought through the logic of the project and can justify its claims about the changes (outcomes and impacts) that will result from the project. Working to articulate a Theory of Change requires 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 humbler (and more realistic) about what we can achieve, or to adopt a more ambitious strategy for more significant outcomes, if that fits with our project goals and the resources we have.

We have already noted that many inter-religious actions 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 project 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.

A clear theory of change can be useful for several reasons. It can help to align all implementing partners around a common understanding of the logic and assumptions underpinning a project. In terms of monitoring, by making our underlying assumptions explicit about how we expect change to happen, we can continuously monitor to see how activities and outcomes unfold, and adjust our approach and Theory of Change accordingly. Such Theory of Change

tracking can be built into a monitoring process and/or evaluation effort, in which a project engages in regular reflection (with or without external assessments) to adapt to changing circumstances and information about the effects our efforts are creating.

An evaluation might be designed to help articulate the Theory of Change *in use* and to redesign the project 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 project staff and participants can be used to examine whether the espoused theory (say, in an original project, 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, 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 project has progressed?

Table 3 sets out the most common general theories of change underlying inter-religious peacebuilding programs based on a literature review conducted as part of the Effective Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding project. The table lists four common types of programming: dialog, cooperation around common interests, reconciliation, and countering/prevention violent extremism. It then presents one or more theories of change that are associated with those project types.

Table 3. Most common general theories of change underlying inter-religious peacebuilding programs⁶²

<p>DIALOG: <i>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 leaders, everyday believers, or a mixture of both. Sometimes dialog is limited to conversation, and at other times it links to action through other activities including some of those described here.</i></p>	
<p>Common theories of change include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitudes: Learning about the beliefs and practices of another religion will reduce tension and separation between religious groups, because accurate information can reduce stereotyping, and common ground can be discovered. ▪ Behaviors: Relational 'contact' works by engaging directly with a person of another faith—which reduces tension and separation between religious groups, because 'contact' can lead to recognizing each other's humanity, or acting to promote solidarity. 	<p>Challenges: Opposition from intra-faith co-religionists, and difficulty in translating individual transformation into collective action or socio-political impact. Further, research on "contact theory" 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.⁶³</p>
<p>COOPERATION AROUND COMMON INTERESTS: <i>Practical projects are an indirect way of approaching peacebuilding, by engaging people from across religious lines of conflict in concrete activities that address their common needs and interests. These activities often take the form of humanitarian assistance, development initiatives, or community problem-solving, spearheaded through local action and/or supported by international assistance.</i></p>	
<p>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 will increase, because relationships can grow when a 'safe space' is</p>	<p>Challenges: Limitations of attitude change and contact theory as described . Changes in individuals and one-on-one relationships may not be enough to counter other conflict drivers. A Mercy Corps analysis of work in Maluku</p>

⁶² Schmidt, Stephanie L. et al. 2016. "Literature Review: Effective Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding." Alliance for Peacebuilding, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, and Search for Common Ground. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/literature-review-effective-inter-religious-action-peacebuilding-program/>

⁶³ See for example Pettigrew, Thomas F. and Linda R. Tropp. 2006. "Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes: A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory." In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90 (5): 751-783.

<p>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.</p>	<p>and Uganda offers preliminary conclusions about how to maximize the potential for joint economic activities to contribute to peacebuilding: 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.⁶⁴</p>
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RECONCILIATION: *Reconciliation programs aim to address conflict directly by drawing on religious 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.*

<p>Theories of change are often rooted in the teachings of the religious traditions. 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</p>	<p>Challenges: The long processes required for pursuing reconciliation and the importance of narrative stories as evidence of transformation. Religious reconciliation programs often appear incompatible with ‘professional peacebuilders’ heavily ‘projectized’ way of thinking. It’s 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.</p>
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⁶⁴ Mercy Corps. 2010. “Evaluation and Assessment of Poverty and Conflict Interventions. Conflict & Economics: Lessons Learned on Measuring Impact.” https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/eapc_lessons_learned_on_measuring_impact_2011-07-28_final.pdf

COUNTERING OR PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE/PVE): *CVE/PVE efforts aim to reduce religiously-motivated violent extremism through prevention, disengagement, and amplifying new narratives.⁶⁵ These approaches may be implemented by either religious or non-religious actors. While many CVE/PVE activities clearly overlap with peacebuilding, their relationship to anti-terrorism efforts leads to debate about whether they should be called 'peacebuilding.'*

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

- 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 practices.
- **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.

Challenges: Common misconception that a single issue such as poverty or religion can lead to violent extremism or can fuel radicalization. However, these risk factors 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.

⁶⁵ See Schmidt, Stephanie L. et al. 2016. "Literature Review: Effective Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding." CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/literature-review-effective-inter-religious-action-peacebuilding-program/>

3.5 Dimensions of Change in Inter-Religious Action: Level, Scale and Time Frame

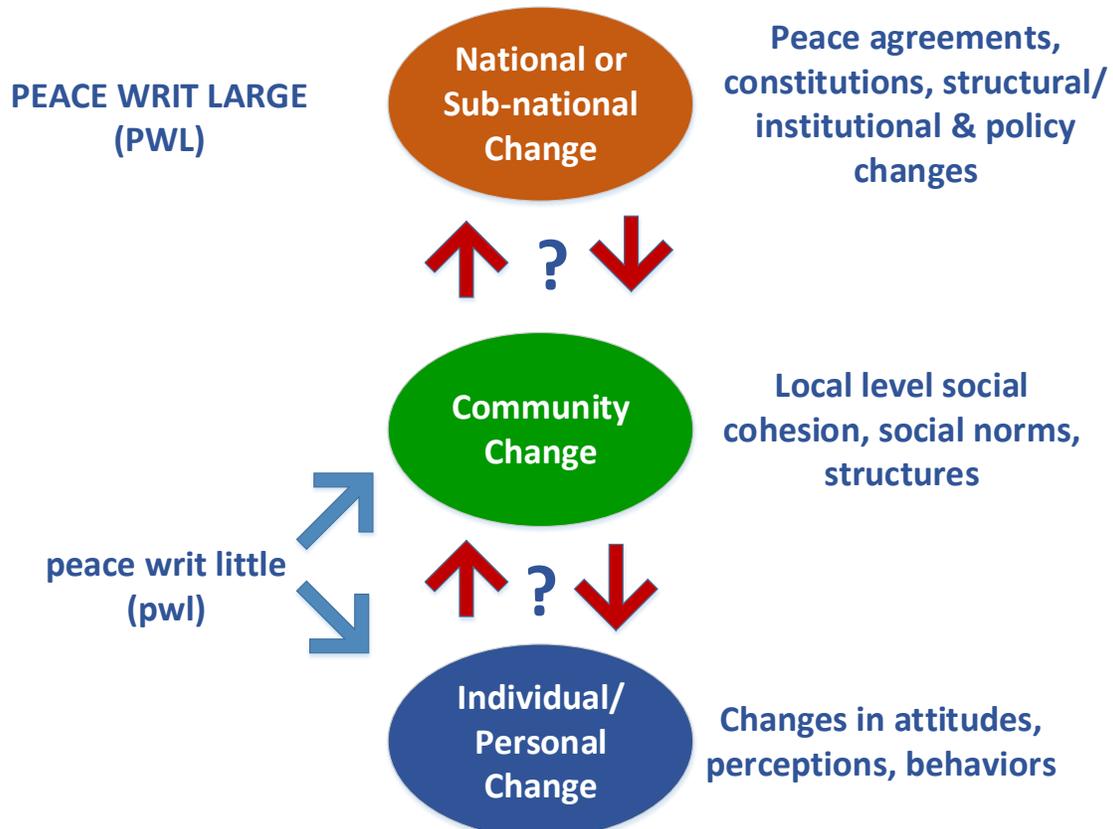
Several dimensions must be considered, in designing and evaluating inter-religious projects. The level of change desired, the intended scale of impact, and how long the project will operate should all be considered.

3.5.1 Level of Change: from personal to community to national

Many peacebuilding programs—whether religious or secular—make ambitious claims about their contribution to the goal of “peace.” Most peacebuilding efforts work quite effectively on personal change among individual participants. Some generate changes at a community level, addressing social cohesion, reconciliation among contending groups, trauma healing among victims of violence, or establishing new mechanisms or institutions for handling local level disputes, such as community peace committees.

Table 4 illustrates the different levels of change in peacebuilding. Most inter-religious action efforts inspire changes at the personal and community levels, partly because they rely upon the kinds of work that religious organizations do well: engaging people and groups from a value perspective, promoting emotional and spiritual connections, and convening people across lines of division and distrust. Many religious leaders address these factors, whether in a formal project or not; it is part of their normal work. This personal- and community-level vital and important work, even if it does not always achieve changes at other levels.

Table 4: Levels of Change in Peacebuilding



Individual/personal and community level changes are crucial on their own terms; not every peacebuilding activity has to contribute directly or indirectly to Peace Writ Large (the larger, societal level - PWL). Programs are often tempted to *claim* that they will achieve impacts at the PWL level, under the mistaken assumption that donors are more interested in such changes. The truth is that personal and community level changes are fully justified in themselves, even if they do not show a connection to PWL.

The diagram shows a series of arrows between the different levels—with associated question marks. The question marks refer to the ongoing debate whether a lot of personal change results in changes at the community level, or whether a significant amount of progress in social cohesion or other positive changes at a community level contribute to PWL. In most circumstances, the answer is found the context and the ways that the different levels are connected or disconnected. In some places—Burundi is an example—developments in rural areas have very little to do with the elite power struggles in the capital, and vice versa. Therefore, even considerable progress in community level reconciliation, integration and cohesion would likely have no impact on national level conflict. In other settings, there is a stronger nexus between the local and national levels. In Liberia, for example, powerful political leaders and militia commanders maintain personal connections with local level conflict dynamics. In that case, community level change can influence national politics—and the reverse is true as well.

URUZANIA: LEVELS OF CHANGE, SCALE AND TIME IN THE GPP

Pastor Otano and Imam Bubakar meet for lunch. They have been hearing about a range of questions that will arise during the coming evaluation. Just yesterday Kiki talked about issues regarding what kinds of changes are expected from the GPP—as well as considerations of scale and timeframe.

Pastor: It strikes me that, so far, we have been able to reach a lot of individuals, people in our churches and mosques, as well as some community leaders. I am not sure I have seen a lot of changes in how people behave yet, although tensions seem to be less intense.

Imam: Right, I have been preaching about tolerance weekly, and leading special sessions for our youth groups—in cooperation with the local church in my community. The young people appear to be getting along. They are starting to engage in the usual amount of friendly teasing and joking, but without any real animosity or bitterness.

Pastor: But how much time will it take to achieve broader acceptance and real changes in social norms—you know, permanent acceptance of difference and easy interactions between people from different groups? I think at least five years.

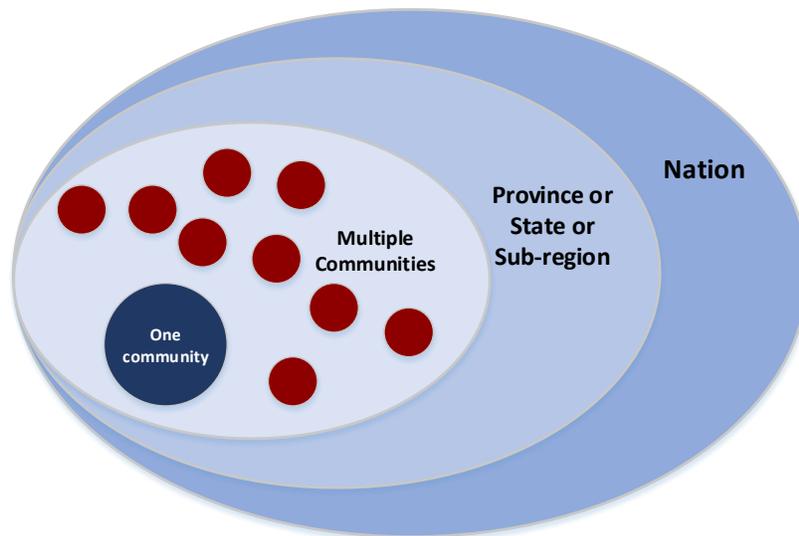
Imam: I agree—and I am also seeing that we can't be content with the limited numbers of communities we are reaching so far. It won't do much good if your community and mine are getting along, if our neighbors are still feeling hostile and alienated—that will just spill back on us again.

3.5.2 Scale of Effort

The dimension of scale is similar to the issue regarding the level of change, but involves the question of size, scope or reach of the effort. Does the project engage only one mosque and one church in a single village—or many religious groups in multiple communities? Does the project have ambitions for mobilizing religious leaders from multiple faith communities in an entire province or state, all working towards similar goals regarding bridge-building, dialogue and reducing distrust and stereotypes? Is there capacity for making this a nation-wide effort, using strong networks of religious leaders and constituencies to replicate inter-religious action throughout the country, to achieve a real shift in perceptions and behaviors that has the potential to influence national consciousness, policies and institutions?

Table 5 illustrates how small, local initiatives in a single community may be embedded in a larger effort across multiple localities. Initiatives that embrace not only multiple local communities, but attempt to reach whole provinces or sub-regions of a nation (Mindanao in the Philippines, Aceh in Indonesia, Northeast Nigeria...) may require sustained efforts to mobilize people through multiple religious networks and their leaders. In most cases, no single project or organization can achieve large scale impacts by itself; most initiatives that seek to influence a whole province/state or nation (or international region) require cooperation among multiple stakeholders, in which religious actors may be able to play a crucial convening role.

Table 5: Scale of Effort in Peacebuilding



3.5.3 The Time Dimension

Issues of level and scale also intersect with the time dimension. We may be able to achieve initial changes at the individual level after six months or a year. Changes in an entire community may be apparent only after an additional two or three years. If we can expand efforts, in terms of scale and level of changes, we might obtain observable changes in behavior at a state/province level after five years, with transformation of institutions only

evident after ten years, due to a scaled-up project that reaches several key geographic areas and engages key decision makers at a policy level.

These issues are important when considering the design of a project. They are also important for evaluation, as it may not be possible to demonstrate broader institutional changes until considerable time has elapsed. Nevertheless, there are evaluation techniques that can identify early indicators of change that suggest whether an initiative is on the right track towards significant changes over time. These issues will be dealt with in sections.

3.6 Developing Appropriate Indicators

Indicators are factors or variables that allow us to track changes—so we can tell whether and to what extent we are progressing towards project objectives, compared to a starting point (baseline). Indicators can help track changes over the course of the project. They can also identify areas for more in-depth study, when surprising changes are uncovered during regular collection of data on indicators. The process of developing indicators itself can also help reinforce or refine ideas about what managers will want to learn to ensure that project results are progressing as anticipated. In some cases, donors require indicators to be developed either as part of the log frame and monitoring and evaluation in an initial proposal, or as an early step in implementation.

Indicators should be **SMART**:

- **Specific:** Indicators should reflect simple information that is communicable and easily understood.
- **Measurable:** Are changes objectively verifiable? Will everyone have the same understanding of the indicator?
- **Achievable:** Indicators and their measurement units must be achievable and sensitive to change during the life of the project.
- **Relevant:** Indicators should reflect information that is important and likely to be used for management and/or immediate analytical purposes.
- **Time-bound:** Progress can be tracked at a desired frequency for a set period of time.

Indicators should also meet the following three tests:⁶⁶

1. **Reliability:** consistency of the findings regardless of who makes the measurement.
2. **Feasibility:** ease in collecting the information.
3. **Utility in decision making:** critical to informed choices.

Indicators should flow naturally from the project's goal, objectives, desired outcomes, and especially the theories of change that underpin each level of desired change. That is, indicators should provide information to tell us whether the theory of change is proving valid

⁶⁶ Corlazzoli, Vanessa, and Jonathan White. 2013 "Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-affected Environments." London: DFID. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/back-to-basics-a-Compilation-of-best-practices-in-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-environments/>

or not. At the same time, developing indicators and thinking through how to track and assess change should also help further evolve these basic project frameworks and ensure that a project is conflict-sensitive (see Section 2.3) and relevant to inter-religious practice.

As with most design, monitoring and evaluation processes, indicator development should be as inclusive and participatory a process as possible. Context-specific indicators can be generated by and/or validated with key actors from a variety of faith backgrounds and identities. This would help refine indicators and ensure local actors support the underlying logic of programming. In inter-religious programming, this is particularly important, since key actors will have specific ideas about what drives change and may want to include indicators that relate to concepts like trust or cooperation⁶⁷.

To support adaptive management, indicator development should be rooted in utility and based on the information managers need to track changes and make ongoing project adjustments. Information needs may be related to results, processes, and/or context (see Section 3.9-3.10), and how the project interacts with conflict dynamics in positive or negative ways. Consequently, indicators are likely to be a mix of qualitative and quantitative factors. Quantitative indicators might be related to levels of violence between conflicted groups and expressed as '% change in violent incidents related to inter-religious tensions between xx/xx/xx date and xx/xx/xx date,' or 'change in the number of violent incidents related to inter-religious tensions between xx/xx/xx date and xx/xx/xx date.' Qualitative indicators might relate to the establishment of a dialogue platform to promote peace and understanding or changes in state relating to capacities of individuals to build trust between groups or the perceived positive effect of religious leaders on tensions and the levels of conflict. Examples of how these might be expressed include: 'An inter-faith dialogue platform established and operationalized to coordinate dialogue efforts and promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence,' or 'the number of members of the inter-faith dialogue platform who claim their capacities have been strengthened to enable them to effectively address contentious issues in their communities.'

Another dimension that should be considered when developing indicators is that of political risks and mitigation. Using political risk indicators in monitoring and evaluating of programs allows an assessment to be made of the potential impact on activities and what can be done to mitigate these risks.

With learning and use in mind, a review of existing resources and examples of indicators can ensure standard indicators have been considered. Several illustrative indicator examples drawn from Catholic Relief Services are included in Table 6 and many organizations or donors have also developed their own indicators. From these resources, indicators that are best

⁶⁷ Lederach, John Paul, Reina Neufeldt and Hal Culbertson. 2007. "Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit." Notre Dame: Kroc Institute.
https://ndigd.nd.edu/assets/172927/reflective_peacebuilding_a_planning_monitoring_and_learning_toolkit.pdf

aligned with the project's theories of change can be chosen and tailored to the context in which the project is operating, apart from any standard required indicators such as the [US Government Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators](#) or F Indicators⁶⁸. However, custom indicators will be most useful because they can be adapted to respond to the specific context, sector, or project.

A CAUTION ABOUT INDICATORS

While indicator data can be useful sources of information, they mostly concentrate on the changes the project expects to see at the outset of a project. A strong focus on achieving performance indicators, to the exclusion of other forms of contextual awareness and stakeholder feedback can lead to a narrowing of vision and a rigid adherence to a particular pre-determined path. Further, the use of narrowly defined indicators are not well suited to capture unanticipated or unintended consequences of the project. For this reason, indicators that are more flexible that provide signs/signals pointing to unexpected or unanticipated outcomes could be developed. Similarly, indicators that reflect the political risks and mitigation efforts can be developed to track those changes in context that might affect the work of the project. In addition, the use of other approaches to track unintended positive or negative consequences of programming should be used in completing the picture of the dynamic systems and context in which the project is operating. Developmental evaluation, the most significant change approach, and outcome mapping or outcome harvesting are approaches that are useful for capturing this type of information. Even just the use of occasional open-ended Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries to see what changes are emerging would be a way to identify any unexpected or unanticipated changes.

While it can be easy to accumulate long lists of indicators, it is important to focus only on those that are essential for learning and project adjustment. Select only those that are essential to capture the key outputs and outcomes of the project, including those that address conflict sensitivity and faith sensitivity concerns. This will avoid an onerous, resource-heavy monitoring system. In the section of the monitoring and evaluation Plan that deals with indicators, details on how to measure and collect information for each indicator and the timing that makes the most sense for collecting data on each should be included⁶⁹.

It is important to apply conflict sensitivity considerations to the process of collecting data on indicators. The very act of asking questions on indicators could positively or negatively affect those answering or asking them. Particularly in the complex, fragile, and conflict affected environments in which inter-religious peacebuilding takes place, it is important to ensure and periodically check that the monitoring system itself will not cause harm. On the other hand, the list of indicators should include conflict sensitivity questions that will help reveal unintended negative effects.

Inter-religious peacebuilding is often rooted in building relationships and shifting attitudes, for which self-reported data from participants will often be the information source. When possible, triangulate (cross check or validate) this type of information with other sources like media reports or document reviews to verify the reliability of information gathered from varied

⁶⁸ US State Department. "Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators" (F Indicators). Washington. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/260455.xlsx>

⁶⁹ Mercy Corps. 2012. "Program Management Manual." <https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/programmanagementmanualpmm.pdf>

self-reported perspectives. Disaggregating data in ways that denote the identities of those responding can be another way to glean information on varied perspectives or results.

Thoughtful interpretation questions can aid in analyzing information collected on indicators, by clarifying or sparking deeper conversation on underlying causes of the information or changes found. For example, if one indicator tracks the percent of people in the affected population who believe inter-religious initiatives add value to a peace process, interpretation questions might include: How can these inter-religious structures become more active in the peace process? What results have been achieved from the efforts of these inter-religious structures?

In the spirit of adaptive management indicators should be reviewed at key points in the project cycle to ensure they continue to provide useful information to guide the project. Again, this can be a participatory process of review and renewal of indicators.

Table 6 provides some examples of indicators that relate to inter-religious action for peacebuilding. The table sets out suggested indicators, the theory of change they relate to, the associated results statement, the most suitable measurement method, ways to disaggregate the data and suggestions on timing. These examples are drawn from the work of Catholic Relief Services⁷⁰.

For further details on how to develop indicators, see the Indicator module produced by Search for Common Ground available on the [DME for Peace website](#).⁷¹

3.7 Establishing Baseline Conditions

A baseline is “an analysis describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.”⁷² A baseline is related to a conflict analysis, as described in Section 3.2 above—but different in important respects. A conflict analysis should identify key actors and conflict drivers and the dynamics among them—but usually does not attempt to quantify them. A baseline can use the factors and actors in a conflict analysis as the starting point for identifying important areas to be covered by a baseline study. For instance, a conflict analysis might identify youth unemployment as a key driver of conflict. A baseline survey would establish the current percentage of unemployment and disaggregate such information along key dimensions of difference (such as age, ethnicity, religion, or location).

A baseline survey gathers information on the current situation related to the key indicators of change, before programming begins, so that intermediate and end results can be measured and judgements made about changes over time. For instance, if a project is about increasing inter-ethnic or religious cooperation, then it is important to understand existing and previous

⁷⁰ Catholic Relief Services. 2010. “GAIN Peacebuilding Indicators.” Baltimore. <http://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/gain-peacebuilding-indicators.pdf>

⁷¹ Search for Common Ground. n.d. “Indicator Module.” Washington. http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/3.9_Indicators.pdf

⁷² OECD-DAC. 2010. “Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results-based management.” <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>

interethnic relations and measure the current levels of cooperation and antagonism within the community.

The baseline may be the first activity that needs to be conducted once a project has been approved. It can be a big undertaking and needs to be planned and properly resourced. If a baseline study is not adequately funded it will limit what can be measured and learned from the project. Baseline assessments should focus on collecting information on the current environment and the specific areas or indicators that the project will later seek to affect.

In conducting the baseline, be sure to draw on existing literature, reliable statistics, and local knowledge to provide depth and breadth of information. Once the baseline has been completed, convene the project team to reflect on its findings and potential implications for the proposed intervention. The information generated from a baseline assessment provides an opportunity to reflect on the relevance and feasibility of your project design— and adjust if necessary.

Make sure a system to store raw data is set up and that copies or an electronic back up exists. It is always good practice to test methodologies, indicators and tools before conducting the full baseline study. Insights may be gained that will lead to modifications of the indicators or approach to collecting data. Once the baseline is completed, review the monitoring and evaluation plan, review and set targets for each indicator, and establish a robust monitoring system for learning.

Given the state of the conflict and level of violence in the country, it may not be possible, feasible or ethical to conduct a baseline at the outset of the project. Be prepared for this eventuality and monitor the situation carefully and collect data as soon as possible when the violence subsides. Always be sure to conduct the baseline in a conflict-sensitive manner, informed by a detailed and nuanced understanding of the conflict dynamics and cultural norms, all of which have implications for the staffing of the baseline survey process, desired data, and research tools and approaches.

For more information on conducting baseline assessments see Search for Common Ground's [Baseline Study Module](#)⁷³.

⁷³ Search for Common Ground. n.d. "Baseline Study Module." Washington. <http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/3.3%20Baseline%20Study.pdf>

Table 6: Illustrative examples of indicators related to inter-religious action⁷⁴

THEORY OF CHANGE	RESULTS STATEMENT	SUBSECTOR/ OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT METHOD	WAYS TO DISAGGREGATE	TIMING
If underlying issues of injustice, threats to group identity, and/or people's sense of insecurity or victimization are addressed by credible religious leaders acting together, then the potential for sustainable peace is enhanced.	Faith-based organizations contribute to increased equity in _____ (targeted equity issues).	Interfaith dialogue and cooperation / Increased equity	<i>Number of joint activities undertaken by religious leaders or faith-based organizations to advocate for increased equity on targeted issues (state targeted issues here) in 'x time period'</i>	Interviews of religious leaders to understand how they have engaged in targeted issues.	By type of activity, targeted equity issues, persons or religious authorities engaged in advocacy, other factors relevant to the context	Dependent on how often advocacy activities occur
If isolation, division and prejudice between identity groups are broken down, and common interests addressed, then constructive, non-violent relationships can be (re-) established.	Inter-religious violence is reduced	Interfaith dialogue and cooperation /Social Cohesion	<i>Levels of inter-religious violence reduced (incidents, destruction, injuries, deaths) in last 'x time period'</i>	Group interviews using closed and open-ended questions with different religious groups (separately or together, as possible)	By geographic area, type of violence, identities of perpetrators/victims of violence, other factors relevant to the context	Based on time frame in the indicator

⁷⁴ Adapted from Catholic Relief Services. 2010. "GAIN Peacebuilding Indicators." Baltimore. <http://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/gain-peacebuilding-indicators.pdf>

THEORY OF CHANGE	RESULTS STATEMENT	SUBSECTOR/ OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT METHOD	WAYS TO DISAGGREGATE	TIMING
If key religious leaders denounce inter-religious violence and promote measures to prevent it, then inter-religious violence will decrease.	Communication/education campaigns led by religious leaders have increased awareness of how to prevent inter-religious violence	Violence reduction /Action by religious leaders	<i>Percent of affected population who can correctly cite 3 key messages related to preventing inter-religious violence from the public statements made by religious leaders in last 'x time period'</i>	Survey of representative random sample from affected population and comparison group (consult M&E team on sample size and selection method)	By geographic area, sex, religion, age, media source of message, other factors relevant to the context	Based on time frame in the indicator
If religious institutions strengthen their own commitment to promote justice and peace, then it will respond more decisively to social inequities and conflicts.	Religious institutions have committed human and financial resources necessary to serve effectively in national and local peacebuilding efforts	Civic engagement /Action by religious leaders	<i>Increased level of resources strategically committed by religious organizations to peacebuilding and justice programs</i>	Interviews of religious leaders responsible for allocating financial, physical, and human resources. Reviews of budgets, organizational charts, other planning documents.	By religious group other factors relevant to the context	Based on frequency of budget development (once per budget cycle)

THEORY OF CHANGE	RESULTS STATEMENT	SUBSECTOR/ OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT METHOD	WAYS TO DISAGGREGATE	TIMING
If different faith traditions work together systematically, they help overcome isolation, polarization, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/among groups.	Participation by religious institutions in inter-religious structures has leveraged significant peacebuilding results	Interfaith dialogue and cooperation /Action by religious leaders	<i>Percent of affected population who believe inter-religious structures are adding value to a peace process in 'x time period'</i>	Survey of representative random sample from affected population and comparison group (consult M&E team on sample size and selection method)	By members of different religious groups, geographic area, other factors relevant to the context	Intervals of 6 months or a year depending on the pace and momentum of local peace processes
If religious leaders can reduce or transcend internal tensions among themselves, they will be more credible and effective promoters of healthy relationships in the broader society.	Religious leaders have spoken/acted together on key social conflicts despite tensions or divisions	Infrastructure for peace /Action by religious leaders	<i>Number of social conflicts in 'x time period' in which religious leaders have spoken/acted in unison despite internal tensions or divisions.</i>	Interviews with leaders and lay employees from all sides of the divide. Consider triangulation with interviews of community members.	By factors relevant to the context	Based on religious leadership operational calendars, societal conflict that arises, and/or changes in religious leadership or membership

3.8 Developing a Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

These days, almost all donor application templates require elements of a monitoring and evaluation plan. The monitoring and evaluation plan (M&E plan) can be used by the project team to help plan and manage all monitoring and evaluation activities throughout the project cycle. It also should be shared and utilized among all stakeholders as well as the donors. It keeps track of what to monitor, when to monitor, who is responsible for monitoring, and why it is being monitored. It also identifies at what points the project or project will be evaluated. Think about the M&E Plan as a workplan specific to monitoring and evaluation activities. Generally, the M&E Plan includes:

- Goals and objectives of overall project plan
- M&E questions and methodologies
- Project implementation plan
- Matrix of M&E indicators and expected results
- Proposed timetable of all M&E activities, including baseline, monitoring systems, internal reviews, and any planned formative or mid-course evaluations
- M&E instruments for gathering data

A rudimentary M&E plan would normally be included in a proposal to a donor. A more detailed version would be formulated once funding had been secured. This document would then be discussed with local partner organizations at the project kick-off meeting to get everyone's input and agreement to what monitoring data would be collected by whom and at what times. The M&E Plan would also set out what kind of evaluation was going to be commissioned and when this would take place and who would conduct it (internal evaluation or external evaluator).

The M&E Plan is a useful management tool. It is critical for planning, managing and documenting data collection. It sets out the M&E system for the project. The Plan also works to build ownership of the M&E system by the project team, creating additional responsibility and accountability for the success of the M&E activities.

It is important to note, that in addition to setting out the plans for capturing data on the *intended* outcomes, the plan should also set out how it will gather data on *unintended* outcomes (positive and negative), with particular attention to faith-sensitivity and conflict sensitivity. We operate in contexts where we cannot foresee all the changes that might arise from our projects, so we must be open to collecting data on unforeseen, unexpected or emergent outcomes. There are certain approaches to collecting such data which we will highlight in the sections on monitoring (3.9-3.10) and evaluation (Section 4).

For more information on what to include in an M&E plan, a suggested template and guidance on how to write the Plan, see the Search for Common Ground [module](#)⁷⁵ on the DME For Peace website.

3.9 Monitoring

Monitoring is a continuing process that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of a project with evidence of progress against outcomes and achievement of objectives. Monitoring provides critical, ongoing information that can be used to help make needed adjustments during implementation of a project. Monitoring activities are generally focused on information that is immediately relevant to the implementation of the project. Monitoring provides information on where an intervention is in relation to achieving its intended results, as well as any unintended negative impacts.

Monitoring, in all its forms, is central to ensuring that the project is being implemented according to the project design and that the project remains relevant to the ever-changing dynamics of the context. Monitoring should be an ongoing learning process that helps project managers improve and adapt the project as it proceeds.

Given the highly volatile and shifting contexts in which we work, setting up the right monitoring system is increasingly seen as essential to **adaptive management**. Adaptive management, in this context, is a process in which data collected is used with project staff—and perhaps other stakeholders—in periodic meetings to reflect on progress and changes in context and whether activities, indicators and criteria for success need to be changed. In recent years, peacebuilding programs have increasingly focused on creating mechanisms for seeking and responding to feedback from participants, partners and the conflict context itself. Ongoing feedback is 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 project design and monitoring. Feedback mechanisms should be integrated in to monitoring procedures, along with other ongoing data collection processes.⁷⁶

Whereas government donors used to insist more on rigid adherence to predefined indicators, they are now increasingly embracing the importance of adaptive management, and the need to balance learning with accountability. A strong consensus is emerging that adaptive approaches not only improve decision-making in complex environments, but also raises the quality of programming in the face of uncertainty.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Search for Common Ground. n.d. "Monitoring and Evaluation Plan" Module. Washington. <http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/3.10%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20Plan%20Module.pdf>

⁷⁶ See Bonino, Francesca, with Isabella Jean, and Paul Knox Clarke. 2014. "Closing the Loop: Effective Feedback in Humanitarian Contexts, Practitioner Guidance." London: ALNAP-CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/closing-the-loop-effective-feedback-in-humanitarian-contexts-practitioner-guidance/>

⁷⁷ See for example Valters, Craig, Clare Cummings and Hamish Nixon. 2016. "Putting Learning at the Centre: Adaptive Development Programming in Practice." London: Overseas Development Institute. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10401.pdf>

Three important implications flow from these shifts in perspective and operating rules:

1. In complex peacebuilding environments, the context will shift continually, and programming must change and adapt accordingly;
2. Acknowledging that no two contexts are alike, donors and practitioners alike should move away from mandatory indicators in favor of context-specific indicators; and
3. There is greater acceptance of the need to de-emphasize standard, *post-hoc* reporting in favor of ongoing monitoring for better decision-making.

In summary, we need a monitoring system that creates continuous, evidence-based learning and feedback loops to guide implementation, inform and shift strategy, and tracks progress toward the project's goals, even as these goals may evolve.

So, what does all this mean for the type of monitoring to be performed? It is helpful to think of three dimensions to monitor: **context** monitoring; **process** or implementation monitoring; and **results** monitoring.

Context monitoring focuses on regular assessments of the conflict context and how the project or project is affecting that context (i.e. conflict sensitivity—see Section 2.3). Data should be collected on how the conflict is evolving, are there new actors, new conflict divides or shifts in alliances? Will staff and beneficiaries remain safe if the activities are implemented given the conflict dynamics? Are there areas where it is no longer safe to operate? How is the project impacting the conflict (for better or worse)? Are there changes in the environment that require a change in activities, theory of change, or strategy?

Process or implementation monitoring focuses on how well the project is being managed. It is concerned with the extent to which the intervention is doing what it said it would do and the quality of the intervention. Consider asking the following questions to gather this type of monitoring data: Are the activities being implemented in line with the schedule and workplan? Have the activities taken place within the sequence and timeframe needed to produce the desired change? Were the activities safe for all participants? Were the most appropriate individuals involved during the activities? Are the activities considering women and men's role and responsibilities? Is the spending in line with projections? Are local partners being supported appropriately? If changes or delays occurred, what is the rationale?

Results monitoring collects data on progress towards achieving the objectives of the project. Data to assess achievement of project indicators or criteria for success should be collected. In addition, project staff should be sensitive to unexpected outcomes (especially negative or harmful ones) and use data collection methods that enable unexpected or unintended outcomes to be gathered. In inter-religious programming, monitoring should continuously assess the intended and unintended effects on the religious groups involved (or left out). Monitoring progress towards results should go beyond simply reporting on planned versus actual activities and results. The purpose of monitoring is to use data gathered regarding key outcome indicators to inform decisions. Data collected must be used not only to report to donors, but to inform programming decisions and improve project implementation.

In fact, learning is supposed to underpin the entire monitoring process. Be sure to create a safe and reflective space when monitoring data is reviewed, so that colleagues can exchange frank

views on the information collected. Openness to change and adaptation based on the insights gained from an analysis of the data should be emphasized.

URUZANIA: MONITORING THE GRASSROOTS PEACE PROJECT

Kiki has been talking with David at Global Endeavor about the coming evaluation. David points out that the evaluator will want to see all the monitoring information for GPP. Kiki reminds David that GPP started under emergency conditions and there was not time to set up good project management systems, including robust monitoring. Of course, they have been producing regular quarterly reports on the progress of the project. In addition, notes have been taken at regular staff meetings and discussions of the project and its results in the Advisory Council. While this is all informal, David assures Kiki that it will be helpful. He also notes that the original project proposal to the funder included an extensive description of the conditions at the time. While this is not a formal baseline, it provides a concise picture of the pre-project situation that will enable comparison to the current situation. Meanwhile, David is happy to help Kiki and Ahmed to put in place a stronger ongoing monitoring process. By the time the evaluation takes place, they may be able to collect better information—which they should be doing anyway.

3.10 Issues to consider in setting up monitoring systems

In setting up a monitoring system, the following four considerations are a guide:

Purpose of project and type of monitoring needed: The type of monitoring should relate directly to the project being implemented and the type of information wanted/needed to be collected. If a donor requires a logframe to be developed and a set of indicators to collect information on is selected, then this information should be reflected in the monitoring approach (e.g., interviews, surveys, diaries or observation to collect data on the changes resulting from training, dialogues or inter-community development initiatives). If there are no such requirements, then the project has more discretion to collect information that will help monitor progress of the project and contribute to the story of eventual effectiveness. This type of monitoring might involve undertaking Focus Group Discussions or collecting testimonies from participants on the effect of the project on their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.

Resources available: The kind of monitoring a project undertakes will depend on the level of resources you can devote to the exercise. If resources are few, then approaches and data collection tools should be chosen given budgetary constraints. If the budget allows for more extensive data collection (whether that is bringing on a developmental evaluator or commissioning a large-scale survey) then clearly that will affect the type of monitoring to be established.

Context: Following the principles of conflict sensitivity (Section 2.3), consideration should be given to safety in relative to time and place for collecting data and to certain subjects in certain areas. Asking questions on any aspect of religious actions in certain contexts, could place those collecting or contributing data at risk of violence. Conflict analysis and context monitoring updates can help establish how safe the context is to undertake other types of monitoring.

Budget: Unless monitoring and evaluation activities are *budgeted*, no meaningful monitoring or evaluation will occur, so it is very important to include the costs of collecting data in budgets. At the proposal stage or outset of a project, estimates for an activity-based budget to include

the costs of undertaking the types of monitoring (and evaluation) desired should be considered. The following types of costs are considered appropriate costs:

- **Staffing** (time for enumerators/data gatherers to be trained and then time spent gathering data)
- **Travel** (costs to travel to different communities – driver, gas/petrol)
- **Subsistence** (food and accommodation costs of enumerators/researchers)
- **Supplies** (costs to print data collection documents, for example, questionnaires for a survey; any translation costs; laptops; any electrical data recording equipment such as recorders, or phones, if phones are being used to collect data)

Data collected for monitoring purposes will be used to contribute to any evaluation of the project, whether that is an interim evaluation or a final, summative evaluation. All monitoring data will provide useful background material and evidence that can be used in an evaluation. Monitoring has the following critical contributions to make to evaluation:

- Identifying when and under what circumstances it would be possible and appropriate to undertake an evaluation.
- Contributing essential data to conduct an evaluation, such as baseline data of various forms and information about the nature of the intervention.
- Contributing necessary information to interpret and apply findings from the evaluation. This includes information about context, and data like the quality of implementation, needed to understand why given changes have or have not come about and what we can do to make our efforts even more effective in the future.

3.11 Monitoring Methodologies and Tools

Setting up a monitoring system at the outset of a project to collect data on project progress and identify problems or bottlenecks in implementation, and which is sensitive to unexpected or unanticipated outcomes, is important to effective project management. The processes set up should be directly geared to the changes sought, the resources available and what is safe to collect, given the context. Peacebuilding work often occurs in unstable and dangerous environments. Tailoring monitoring processes to ensure that project staff are safe and not put people in harm's way is critical.

There are several practical social science data collection tools that can be used in conflict and fragile environments. These are shown in the table7. This is not an exhaustive list of tools, but offers guidance on some of the more common tools to incorporate into a data collection strategy.

Other tips to consider when engaging in monitoring activity⁷⁸ include:

Provide some basic training of staff and build capacity of the core concepts of data collection tools. Provide training on some of the foundational tools of surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews; do no harm practices for collecting sensitive data; security of confidential information; and creating knowledge management plans.

Be participatory. Where possible, consider using tools that are participatory. This will enable partners and participants to reflect on the conflict and changes taken place.

Use mixed-methods. Mixing qualitative and quantitative data provides a fuller breadth and depth of information. Using mixed methods is generally seen as the best approach to apply in conflict and sensitive situations where individuals may not feel comfortable answering certain questions in surveys or focus groups.

Be innovative. Do not be afraid of using newer methodologies, such as outcome mapping, to measure non-linear result chains, or storytelling, participant diaries and video logs, if the security situation allows.

Comparison groups. In conflict and fragile states, it may be very difficult to find an exact control group. Finding near similar groups for comparisons, acknowledging the differences in context, can increase the rigor of your monitoring.

Triangulate. Regardless of the data collection tool chosen, triangulating data between sources and across different data collection tools will yield further evidence on the validity of the information you collect.

Section 4 provides guidance on how to undertake an evaluation that provides evidence of success together with useful insights and learnings about how things could have been done differently to enhance the impact of future projects.

⁷⁸ Corlazzoli, Vanessa, and Jonathan White. 2013 "Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-affected Environments." London: DFID. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/back-to-basics-a-compilation-of-best-practices-in-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-environments/>

Table 7. Data Collection Tools

<p>FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD) (in-depth, group interviews with a small number (6 to 10) carefully selected people, who usually have similar characteristics (such as gender, age, ethnicity, etc.)</p> <p>Further materials: SFCG module on conducting FGDs; Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews (Richard A. Krueger); BetterEvaluation featuring USAID's Tips on Conducting Focus Groups; SFCG Training module on Data Collection Tools</p>				
Advantages	Disadvantages	Costs	Skills	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FGDs produce in-depth qualitative information. ▪ FGDs can be low cost and provide speedy results. ▪ Flexible format allows the facilitator to explore unanticipated issues that may arise during the discussion. ▪ Format encourages interaction among participants, allowing them to hear each other's ideas. In a group setting, participants provide checks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitator needs to be trained and experienced in designing and managing group discussions. ▪ The flexible format makes it susceptible to facilitator bias, which can undermine the validity and reliability of findings. Therefore, the questions to be covered during the discussion should be established beforehand. ▪ Discussions can be sidetracked or dominated by a few vocal individuals. The facilitator needs to be skillful in managing dominant individuals and encourage others to participate. FGDs generate relevant qualitative information, but it is usually specific to that group/setting and not helpful for generalizing for a whole population. 	<p>Cost is generally low for focus group interviews. A safe and suitable location to conduct the interview is required as well as flip charts, a skilled facilitator and perhaps a translator.</p>	<p>Facilitator should be trained in managing group discussions and be aware of how to manage vocal participants and bring in more introverted participants.</p>	<p>FGD should last approximately 1-2 hours. An additional 2-4 hours are needed to compile the results of the interview.</p>

and balances, thus minimizing false or extreme views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with most qualitative data, the information can be difficult and time consuming to analyze. 			
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Considerations: FGDs allow the assembly of groups from a faith community to get their collective views/input on project interventions and changes happening in their community. It also allows issues to be raised around the importance of activities in catalyzing change (e.g., the use of ceremony, scripture, ritual, prayer, faith-based mediation processes, storytelling)

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS: (one-on-one discussions with people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic. These individuals can be beneficiaries, people involved in other organizations involved in the project or key members from a community affected by the project intervention)

Further materials: SFCG Training Module on [How to Conduct Interviews](#); USAID's Tips document on [how to conduct key informant interviews](#); SFCG Training module on [Data Collection Tools](#)

Advantages	Disadvantages	Costs	Skills	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information directly from knowledgeable people. Provides flexibility to explore new ideas and issues not anticipated during planning. Inexpensive and simple to conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not appropriate if quantitative data are needed. May be biased if informants are not carefully selected. Susceptible to interviewer biases. May be difficult to generalize findings 	<p>Depending on how many interviews are planned, cost is generally low. Finding a location without interruptions and where the interviewee can answer freely is important.</p>	<p>Conducting an interview requires active listening skills, awareness of not asking leading questions, reflecting back and summarizing answers at the end of each major segment to get respondents' agreement, awareness of body language and demeanor (interviewees will not want to disagree if they feel the interviewer has an opinion or perspective). Knowing when to probe by using</p>	<p>Interviews should normally be scheduled to last no more than an hour, unless prior agreement is discussed, in which case an interview could run to one hour and a half. An additional 1-2 hours are needed to write up the transcript of the interview.</p>

			comments such as "That's very interesting, say more..." "I'm interested in your opinion/perspective..."	
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Considerations: Interviews are useful for having in-depth conversations about a person's attitudes, behaviors, motivations and perspectives. Interviews are a useful tool for exploring any religious issues.

SURVEYS (a method of gathering information for a sample of a target population through a sequence of focused, targeted questions. Information is collected by using a standardized set of questions to ensure that everyone is asked the same questions in the same way and order. Surveys can be administered face to face or over the phones or self-administered (by mail or online). General guidance is to use closed form questions to see if the respondent has thought about or is aware of an issue or to at specific aspects of an issue or to see how strongly an opinion is held. Use open-ended questions to get at feelings, explore respondents' reasons for their opinions.

Further materials: [Survey Research](#), Research Methods Knowledge Base; SFCG Training module on [Surveys](#); [Surveys and Survey Design](#), Skills You Need; SFCG Training module on [Data Collection Tools](#); A range of materials can also be found on the [BetterEvaluation website](#)

Advantages	Disadvantages	Costs	Skills	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Useful to obtain views that are representative of a larger population ▪ Closed question formats can be useful where the questionnaire is long or the motivation to answer is not high ▪ Closed formats are also easier to code and analyze Closed formats do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be costly to obtain a representative sample ▪ On some issues, closed format questions can create false opinions either by giving insufficient range of alternatives from which to choose or by prompting people with acceptable answers ▪ Closed questions may not allow individuals to qualify their answer when they feel a need to do so ▪ Open ended questions can be difficult/impossible to quantify 	<p>Conducting surveys can be expensive depending on the number of people to be interviewed to obtain a representative sample (minimum is around 300 for each target group – men, women, youth, etc..). There is the cost of recruiting and training the enumerators /interviewers if</p>	<p>Designing surveys is a skill that takes a bit of time, and plenty of practice, to develop. Ideally, you should seek out training to develop these skills. Failing that, there are plenty of materials online to help design and conduct an effective survey. First the type of survey to undertake (self-completed or interviewer-administered) should</p>	<p>Designing and conducting an effective survey can take considerable time. First is survey design followed by a pilot of the survey. The pilot will identify modifications for the final survey tool. Next identification and recruitment of enumerators or researchers to carry out the survey is done. Identifying the</p>

<p>not discriminate against the less talkative and inarticulate respondents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-developed open-ended questions can address issues that cannot be put in a forced choice format ▪ Open ended questions can bring up important points that were not considered in the design of the questionnaire ▪ Respondents can qualify their answers ▪ Open ended questions do not “put words in the mouths of participants.” 	<p>without careful, consistent content analysis and coding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open ended questions can take a long time for people to answer, sometimes resulting in incomplete or no information ▪ Surveys are susceptible to response bias. A wide range of cognitive biases can influence participant responses that are not accurate or truthful. 	<p>interviewer-administered surveys are being done and the transport costs for the interviewers to travel to communities. There is also the cost of analyzing the data generated. It is important to have sufficient resources to design, implement and analyze this type of survey.</p>	<p>be determined. Second, the balance of open and closed questions to include is decided. When developing the questions bear in mind these principles: 1. Each question or item should only express one idea. 2. Avoid jargon, abbreviations and colloquialisms. 3. Use simple language and expressions. 4. Word your questions positively. 5. Avoid leading questions.</p>	<p>respondents and undertaking the survey will take time and will vary depending on the sample size selected. ‘Cleaning’ the data collected (scanning for errors in the responses) and analyzing the data will also take time.</p>
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Considerations: Surveys are a useful tool for gathering (predominantly) quantitative information, that can be analyzed statistically and generalized to the population being studied. Because the project designs the questions, the survey can be faith-sensitive (that is use language and focus on issues that are relevant to faith-sensitive programming). It does have its limitations. Unlike more, open-ended key informant interviews, the ability to pursue issues that might emerge in a survey is less likely. These surveys tend to be more impersonal and respondents may not answer truthfully if they feel the nature of the questions are too sensitive or personal.

[A note on samples and sample sizes](#): Obtaining a representative sample has been mentioned a few times in Table 7 in connection with the survey data collection tool. Almost all surveys rely on sampling -- that is, identifying a section of the population that accurately reflects the characteristics to be surveyed. To have a statistically representative sample, the size of the sample must be large enough to represent the characteristics of the population. A sample size calculator, such as The Survey System's [Sample Size Calculator, can be utilized to determine sample size](#). This online tool identifies the sample size, given the size of the population and confidence level selected (i.e., 95% or 99% confidence level). This is a statistical term that describes the accuracy of results to a specified degree.

4.

PREPARING FOR AN EVALUATION

This section sets out the steps needed to go through in preparing to undertake an evaluation. It provides a framework to decide whether to undertake an evaluation or not, whether the project can be evaluated or not (evaluability), what types of evaluation approaches can be considered, issues associated with the complex contexts in which inter-religious action takes place, and the timing of when to conduct an evaluation.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

This entire section will be useful for project managers and design, monitoring and evaluation lead officers in the implementing organization, who may be involved in commissioning an evaluation. Additionally, sub-sections 4.4 and 4.7 contain important faith sensitivity information for **external evaluators**.

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Evaluation refers to the process of determining merit, worth or value of an activity, policy or project. It is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, project or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.⁷⁹ Evaluations should not only focus on the extent to which anticipated outcomes were achieved, but also what unintended (positive or negative) outcomes resulted from the intervention.

Evaluations may occur at the mid-term (half-way through or at a critical juncture) in the project lifecycle, or at the end of a project. Timing of the evaluation will determine approach selected. For example, a **developmental evaluation** approach will run throughout the project lifecycle, providing ongoing feedback to help improve the implementation of the project. An evaluation conducted during a project's implementation is called a **formative evaluation** and has the aim of improving the project's design and performance. An evaluation conducted at the end of the project is called a **summative evaluation**. Summative evaluations focus on the outcomes of a project.

URUZANIA: 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 help 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. He sees this as a “formative” evaluation—aimed mainly at learning and adjusting the project. The basic evaluation approach can reflect that primary purpose.

David also points out that Global Endeavor is 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 David is not an expert on the situation in Uruzania 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. And, although 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.

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

Organizations considering whether to 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 determine whether the project is ready—or how it might become ready for an 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

⁷⁹ Scriven, Michael. 1991. *Evaluation Thesaurus, Fourth Edition*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. OECD-DAC. 2010. “Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results-based management,” p.21. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>

evaluation would be the best, depending on the security of the situation, the access to stakeholders and partners, and the amount of monitoring data that exists. Or reflection on these questions might lead to consideration of alternative, internal evaluative processes. Basic questions include the following:

1. Who are the main project stakeholders/participants/partners, and are they well-informed about the nature of an evaluation and supportive of the process? The answer to this question will help identify what work needs to be done to prepare stakeholders for an evaluation.
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 it accountability to other stakeholders, and/or the staff of the implementing organization? Or is the primary purpose about learning and project adaptation? The answers to these questions will help clarify the purpose and objectives of an evaluation.
3. Is this the right time for an evaluation of the project, 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 considered or could impede an evaluation? Would asking questions put anyone at risk?
7. Was the project 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 project 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 necessities for an evaluation, but there are ways to get around them. If any of those are missing, how might an evaluation adjust to that reality? Can the project design be strengthened in anticipation of an evaluation to take place later?
9. Are the 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, considering 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 formal formative or summative evaluation—that would be more appropriate (or affordable) for the project in question?

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 serious doubts have been raised about the usefulness or practicality or timing of an evaluation, a more formal evaluability assessment or postponement of or option for an alternative to an externally-led evaluation, including an internal evaluation and/or application of a less formal process might be considered. These options would help address concerns and better prepare the organization and its partners for an eventual evaluation.⁸⁰ The specific dimensions of evaluability will depend on the project, its context, the evaluators and the chosen methodological approach.

URUZANIA: CAN GPP BE EVALUATED?

David, Kiki and Ahmed, along with the Executive Director of the Interfaith Peace Platform, 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 project 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 project is working in several dimensions. This activity would get them better prepared for a later more formal evaluation. **The concepts and tools offered through such a reflection exercise are detailed in Annex B, along with a sample illustration of how this process might have unfolded in Uruzania.**

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.

⁸⁰ See Davies, Rick. 2013. "Planning Evaluability Assessments: A Synthesis of the Literature with Recommendations." UK Department for International Development (DFID) Working Paper #40. London: DFID.
http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/overview/planning_evaluability/planning_evaluability_overview. See also Reimann, Cordula. 2012. *Evaluability Assessments in Peacebuilding Programming*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.
<http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/evaluability-assessments-in-peacebuilding-programming/>

4.2 What kind of evaluative process is appropriate?

Careful thought should go in to deciding what kind of evaluation is appropriate for your project. In addition to the basic formative, summative and developmental types, there are many different evaluative options open to you. Even when an evaluation is needed by a donor and where there is a strong desire to learn from the project, the question should be asked whether an evaluation *could or should* take place—and, if so, what kind.⁸¹

Some donors require projects to perform summative and even formative evaluations 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 and monitoring and evaluation policies governing all programs, to promote ongoing learning, continuous project improvement and the capturing of results—regardless of what a donor might require. Such reviews may or may not involve external evaluators, depending on the specific situation.

Summative 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 travel expenses. In many cases, this is unnecessary, depending on who is asking for the evaluation and what scope and purpose is appropriate. In other instances, the organization may not have sufficient resources to perform a credible evaluation. Ideally, costs for an evaluation are built into project budgets—at a level that matches the type of project review required. For smaller organizations and projects where the project is not that large and where resources are scarce, and where insufficient resources have been devoted to an evaluation, there may be other formative evaluative options that would be more appropriate than a costly end-of-project summative evaluation. If a reliable and credible evaluation is not feasible, then it may not be worth investing resources to conduct one.

If a formal process is needed, it would be necessary to ask whether it is possible to proceed to planning the evaluation at the desired time. Delays may be encountered due to external conditions (security, weather, etc.) or the status of the project itself (e.g., if implementation has been delayed and a cost or no-cost extension has been applied for, it will be necessary to reschedule the timing of a summative evaluation).

Where delays are encountered or a less formal process is appropriate, a Project Reflection, Evaluability Assessment or Project Quality Assessment, or After Action Review may be considered in the interim and to help get the project ready. These processes are described in Section 4.3. Following delay and/or completion of an informal process, a summative evaluation may be commissioned if the context allows.

4.3 Deciding on an internal or external evaluation

A key decision in commissioning an evaluation is whether it should be conducted by an internal or external evaluator. **Internal evaluations** refer to evaluations conducted by a person

⁸¹ For more information, see Mayne, John. 2008. “Building an Evaluative Culture for Effective Evaluation and Results Management.” Institutional Learning and Change Brief 20.

http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/example/building_evaluative_culture/building_evaluative_culture_example

or team of persons that are from the organization implementing the project or commissioning the evaluation. Evaluations conducted by individuals external to the organization implementing the project or commissioning the evaluation are considered **external evaluations**. There are strengths and weaknesses for both options. The decision on whether the evaluation should be made by an internal staff member of an implementing organization or an external consultant should be made by considering the evaluation purpose, scope, criteria, and budget, compared against the potential evaluator's skills, experience, and overall familiarity with the organization or project.

If you decide to conduct an internal evaluation, try to use someone from a different part of the organization (another department, country project or headquarters) to improve the credibility and independence of the evaluation whilst maintaining the organizational knowledge an internal evaluator brings. Another key question is whether it is 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? Other key considerations include:

- Tradeoffs between resources, evaluation expertise and in-depth knowledge:
 - Resources: Does the project have enough funding to pay an external evaluator? Can the organization free up the needed staff time to conduct the evaluation internally?
 - Possible biases: Can internal evaluators conduct the evaluation without bias? 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: does the project staff have the requisite skills (adequate, qualified, and competent staff) and systems and tools needed to conduct the evaluation in-house?
- Knowledge of project and operations: Internal evaluators will have more knowledge than external evaluators.
- How does the implementing organization learn best – with insiders or outsiders?
- 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?

If an external evaluation is required, another option is forming a mixed evaluation team including both internal and external evaluators that combines 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 project 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.

Regardless of whether the evaluation is conducted internally or externally or by a mixed team, evaluators must adhere to International Evaluation Standards:

Credibility: which depends on the [evaluation] process being systematic, transparent, inclusive, and conducted by an individual or team who are appropriately skilled and experienced.

Impartiality: evaluators are expected to make balanced judgements, reporting, and analyzing success and failure alike. If stakeholders have very different views this should be made clear in the evaluation report.

Propriety and ethics: evaluations should be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard to the welfare of those involved in the evaluation. (See Section 2.3.2 regarding the conflict sensitivity of an evaluation.)

4.3.1 Internal Evaluative Options

If the fundamental need is for internal learning and project improvement, rather than accountability or to demonstrate results, then a formal formative or summative evaluation may not be the best choice. Or, if an evaluation is needed, but the organization does not have the resources to commission an external evaluation, alternative processes are available that can help a project team strengthen the project and better prepare for an eventual evaluation.⁸²

Alternative evaluative options include:

Project Reflection Exercise: A step-by-step process of project review, led primarily by the project staff and involving partners and other stakeholders. The primary purpose is to take stock of progress, identify any barriers to achievement of project goals, and to adjust the project design to increase the likelihood of greater effectiveness. (See Annex B for the basic framework of a Reflection Exercise and its application to the Grassroots Peace Project in Uruzania.)

Evaluability Assessment: “Evaluability” is a technical term among professional evaluators that refers to the question of whether a project can be evaluated—or what needs to be done to prepare for an evaluation. The assessment examines project design, availability of information, and whether the conditions (in the organization and the external situation) would permit an evaluation. Evaluability assessments are often undertaken in advance of a planned evaluation, especially of a large project, to increase the prospect of a successful and useful evaluation later. 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.⁸³

Project Quality Assessment: A project quality assessment (PQA) focuses primarily on project design, with some preliminary attention to project implementation and results. Typically, a PQA compares the project 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.

After Action Review: An After-Action Review (AAR) is a simple process used by a team to capture the lessons learned from the implementation of a project, with the goal of improving

⁸² The first three options, Project Reflection Exercise, Evaluability Assessment and Project Quality Assessment are described in Erstorfer, Anita, et al. 2016. “Thinking Evaluatively in Peacebuilding Design, Implementation and Monitoring.” Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/thinking-evaluatively-peacebuilding-design-implementation-monitoring/>

⁸³ BetterEvaluation: “Evaluability Assessment.” http://www.betterevaluation.org/themes/evaluability_assessment

future performance. It can also be employed during a project to learn while doing. AARs should be carried out with an open spirit and no intent to blame. An AAR is a form of group reflection; participants review what was intended, what happened, why it happened and what was learned. One member of the group facilitates, capturing results on a flip chart or in a document. AARs can be short, frequent group process checks, or more extended, in-depth explorations. They are useful both during and after a project to reveal what has been learned, reassess direction, and review both successes and challenges. In this sense, they can yield valuable information for adaptive management during a project (formative).⁸⁴

EXAMPLE: CREATIVE LOW-COST ALTERNATIVES

The Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue has struggled to find an affordable way to evaluate its Dialogue and Identity project, which pairs [Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Christian schools] to promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance. In 2016, the project engaged about 22 schools and 700 children. The Center wants to have this project periodically evaluated, but it cannot afford to repeatedly pay external facilitators to conduct focus groups and interviews. However, one of the teachers involved in the project recently identified a partial solution. She conducted a quantitative survey of her own class, and compared it to a survey of another class that had not participated in the project. The Center found this approach promising enough to expand, so now all participating classes are surveyed at the beginning and end of the school year, and the results are compared to surveys of other classes that have not participated. The survey data don't support interpretations and explanations, but they do provide basic, important metrics on the level of change taking place in each classroom. Further, the comparative aspect helps establish a link between the changes observed and their participation in the dialogue project. It is too early to track the findings of this approach over time, but the Center is pleased to have identified an affordable way to learn from this internal evaluative process.

4.4 Determining key questions or “lines of inquiry”⁸⁵

It is important to develop evaluation questions that are sensitive to the spiritual and inter-religious approaches of the project. There may be aspects of the project that are difficult to measure. For example, *belonging* is rather vague, although this goal of creating or restoring a sense of belonging cannot be ignored. Likewise, *belief*, the aspect which makes evaluation of inter-religious peacebuilding most distinctive, is nearly impossible to measure. However, the *doing*, the activity of inter-religious peacebuilding, can be both measured and evaluated.⁸⁶ Everything that is done to affect the entire spectrum of transformation – personal, inter-personal, social and structural – can be evaluated.

⁸⁴ BetterEvaluation: “After Action Review.” http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/after_action_review

⁸⁵ Adapted from Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau. 2016. “Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding.” Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, p. 6, 8, 12-15. <http://dmeforpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding>.

⁸⁶ For more on believing, belonging and doing, see Section 2.2.

When considering the *doing*, it becomes clear that many activities performed by religious peacebuilders (e.g., mediation, reconciliation, dialogue, educational efforts, advocacy, problem solving, or structural reform) are also performed by secular peacebuilders. However, there are also some distinct practices used primarily by religious peacebuilders, either alone or in combination with other practices. Table 8 summarizes the significance of five key types of religious *doing* practices, and offers some sample questions that may be used to evaluate them.

Table 8: Sample Evaluation Questions by Religious Practice⁸⁷

Expressions of reverence through worship, sacrament, prayer, meditation	
<i>Significance: Direct encounter with the supernatural, 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, potential impact of all supernatural intervention, as well as one's own potential role as part of the process. Reverence leads to a sense of motivation, guidance, direction or calling to which the believer can respond.</i>	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers
1. What is the purpose for which a specific expression of reverence was designed?	In what ways did participation in (x) act of reverence change your attitude toward other groups? Or toward specific individuals within other groups? What caused such changes?
2. What changes do participants believe happened, in themselves or others, because of participation in acts of reverence?	How did your participation change your behavior toward other groups or individuals—or did you continue as before?
3. How effectively was the experience of reverence reflected upon and used to foster further transformation of individuals or of relationships between disparate parties?	Following participation in (x) act of reverence, 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?
Education/proclamation through use of scripture, teaching, preaching, moral edicts, public statements	
<i>Significance: More than imparting information and developing skills, the intent is the formation and internalization of a worldview, framework of meaning, value system – derived from the faith tradition's basic narrative found within its spiritual source material.</i>	

⁸⁷ Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau. 2016. "Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, p.12-15. <http://dmeforpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding> .

Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers
<p>1. How effectively has the faith tradition's narrative laid a foundation for participants to internalize the peace-related values and associated ethical behavior based in their spiritual tradition?</p> <p>2. To what extent have participants succeeded in improving conflict dynamics by acting in accord with their tradition's peace-related values?</p>	<p>To what extent was this peacebuilding activity an expression of the values of your faith tradition? How did it show your own understanding and commitment to those values?</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 address 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>
<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.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers
<p>1. 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 each ritual in the peacebuilding initiative, was there 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>
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Reconciliation Processes – Examples: TRCs (S. Africa and elsewhere), Islamic Sulha, Jewish Teshuva, and Buddhist mindfulness meditation, Christian acts of forgiveness.

Significance: Spiritual practices, involving dialogue and mediation, that 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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were the most significant behavioral transformations for participants and others that resulted from the reconciliation processes in which they participated? 2. Do the faith-based participants believe some transformations they experience in peacebuilding processes are more significant than others? If so, why? 3. 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>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>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>How effectively did it enable you to release yourself from attachment 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>

Faith witness through story-telling, religious music/drama/art, and a combination of dialogue and collaborative action

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.

Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers
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<p>1. How effectively does participation in an 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>2. To what extent does participation motivate the believer to work together with members of different groups to create a shared future (diapraxis)?</p> <p>3. 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>
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Other Types of Questions. The questions posed about the project shape the parameters and scope of the evaluation—which should achieve the intended evaluation purpose. Questions and purpose are closely related—so exploration of specific questions may stimulate reconsideration of the purpose of the evaluation. In addition to the faith-sensitive questions outlined above, we have also set out questions relating to the OECD DAC criteria set out in Section 5.2.

Questions generally fall into **three categories: descriptive, normative and cause-effect.**

1. **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 project or process...[or] they can be used to describe inputs, activities and outputs.
2. **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? Are the results of high quality? Are there any unintended negative consequences?
3. **Cause-effect questions** determine “what difference did the intervention make.” They attempt to measure what has changed because of the intervention. Cause-effect questions seek to determine the results and impacts of a project. They are the “so what” questions. Cause and effect, or attributional, or outcome questions ask whether the desired results have been achieved because of the project. Is it the intervention that has caused the results?⁸⁸

⁸⁸International Program for Development Evaluation Training. 2007. “Module 5: Evaluative Questions.” In *IPDET Handbook*, p. 228-231. http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/M05_NA.pdf

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 activities implemented in ways they prefer?
- How do participants view the nature of relationships between contending groups because of the project?
- Do participants feel there could have been a better way to achieve the goals 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 project? 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 project, its situation, and the purpose of the evaluation. They can be generated by project and management staff, or from the funder who may have required an evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation specialists within organizations (if any) can help think through appropriate questions, drawing on both their monitoring and evaluation experience and their knowledge of the organization. Questions can also come from the evaluator, based on his/her experience. It is often quite useful to engage project 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 5.4 on Terms of Reference).

Questions are shaped by the types of changes being evaluated. The concepts we are trying to measure in our inter-religious actions for peacebuilding can be challenging. Types of changes may include personal attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, skills, public attitudes and social norms, culture, relationships, and structures, among others. Some people have asserted that peacebuilding, and inter-religious peacebuilding especially, cannot be evaluated, because the “results” are not concrete; they are intangible or unmeasurable. However, we need to be innovative and creative in developing measures that capture the results of this work. A great example of this can be seen in the work of John Paul Lederach, Reina Neufeldt and Hal

Culbertson⁸⁹ in their reflections on how to develop indicators on inter-religious tolerance and trust between members of different religious groups. Most practitioners have an intuitive understanding of what indicates progress, even if these are not “SMART”⁹⁰ indicators demanded in many logframes. In many circumstances addressed by inter-religious action, it is also difficult to pre-judge the scale or pace of change. Thus, you might be able to state the changes desired, without being able to determine how quickly or how much change will take place.

Local people, whether project 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 project 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.

URUZANIA: Generating Questions for the GPP Evaluation

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 regarding focus questions for the evaluation. This would gain more buy-in for the evaluation, and likely generate better questions.

Kiki and Ahmed worked with staff members, and two members of the Advisory Council who volunteered, to facilitate two meetings in the capital neighborhoods where GPP is active and then three meetings in Alta province. In each meeting, they posed 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? How are religious differences involved as a conflict factor?
2. Which GPP activities seem to be more effective than others? Why? What could be improved?

⁸⁹ Lederach, John Paul, Reina Neufeldt and Hal Culbertson. 2007. “Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit.” Notre Dame: Kroc Institute, p.37-41.

https://ndiqd.nd.edu/assets/172927/reflective_peacebuilding_a_planning_monitoring_and_learning_toolkit.pdf

⁹⁰ Although SMART has many variations, the most common acronym is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. See Section 3.6 for a thorough discussion of SMART indicators.

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? Are all religious groups engaged relatively equally?
4. The project was supposed to prevent youth recruitment to violence—has that worked? How do we know? What role has faith played in that effort?
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? On conflict dynamics? On faith groups?
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 project...are the skills and processes they learned consistent with cultural norms of the communities and with religious values? How have they used those skills?
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 project priorities and resources. (Jane Davidson, recommends five questions plus or minus two. <http://RealEvaluation.com>)

4.5 Choosing the evaluation approach most appropriate to the purpose

As noted at the beginning of this Section, there are several basic **types** of evaluation. These include those already mentioned: formative, summative, and developmental, but also ex-post, process, and impact. Under each of these broad types, there are myriad of specific **approaches** and **methods** for conducting an evaluation. In other words, a summative evaluation can be conducted in many ways. The key variables that differentiate these approaches include how participatory it is, the number and quality of data collected, methods for collecting and analyzing data, as well as whether it is internal or external.

Evaluation approach refers to the methodological framework adopted to answer the evaluation questions. An evaluation approach provides the framework, philosophy, methods or style of an evaluation. There are many approaches available that can be categorized in different ways. The most common evaluation approaches 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;

- Impact (Experimental and quasi-experimental) approaches that apply a causal analysis framework to “deliver precise estimates of the cause-effect relationship between action and outcomes by comparing predefined treatment and control groups before and after”⁹¹ an intervention; and
- Participatory approaches (which include most significant change, outcome harvesting or participatory impact analysis).

These approaches are not mutually exclusive—many overlap and can be pursued together. These approaches are each described on the DME for Peace website⁹² and in the Church and Rogers publication, [Designing For Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs](#)⁹³.

Deciding what type of evaluation or evaluations to conduct will depend on the purpose(s) for the evaluation(s), the questions to be posed, as well as internal and external conditions. Deciding on which approach or approaches to take in designing an evaluation is a critical and early consideration in project implementation. Ideally the evaluator or evaluation team (whether internal or external), the project team and other organizational leadership and/or monitoring and evaluation resources will work together to decide on the best approach. The choice of an approach to evaluation should also be consistent with the overall monitoring and evaluation plan. Cost considerations will bear more directly on the data collection and analysis methods, rather than the approach. Most approaches are pursued through a range of data collection and analysis methods.

All the decisions regarding the purpose, lines of inquiry, and approach to the evaluation should be reflected in the Terms of Reference for an evaluation and in the associated scope of work for the evaluator.

Table 9 illustrates the coherence between purpose, key evaluation questions and common evaluation approaches. The approaches underlined are those that will be covered in greater detail.

⁹¹ Legovini, Arianna. 2010. "Development Impact Evaluation Initiative: A World Bank-Wide Strategic Approach to Enhance Development Effectiveness." Washington: World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/689141468161083406/Development-impact-evaluation-initiative-a-World-Bank-wide-strategic-approach-to-enhance-developmental-effectiveness>

⁹² DME for Peace: "Introduction to Evaluation and General Guidance." <http://dmeforpeace.org/introduction-to-evaluation>

⁹³ Church, Cheyanne, and Mark M. Rogers. 2006. "Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs." Washington: Search for Common Ground. <http://dmeforpeace.org/learn/designing-results-integrating-monitoring-and-evaluation-conflict-transformation-activities>

Table 9: Common Evaluation Approaches by Purpose⁹⁴

PURPOSE	LINES OF INQUIRY	EVALUATION APPROACHES
<p>Judgement of overall value and support to major decision making</p>	<p>Does the project meet the participants' needs?</p> <p>To what extent does the project have merit? Can the outcomes be attributed to the intervention?</p> <p>Is the project theory clear and supported by the findings?</p> <p>Is this an especially effective practice that should be funded and disseminated as a model project?</p>	<p><u>Theory-based Evaluation</u>, <u>Impact Evaluation</u></p>
<p>Learning – improve the project</p>	<p>What works and doesn't work, for whom in what context?</p> <p>How can results be increased or improved?</p> <p>How can quality be enhanced?</p>	<p><u>Outcome Identification/ Objectives-based studies</u></p> <p>Reflective Practice, Appreciative Inquiry</p> <p><u>Action Evaluation/Developmental Evaluation</u></p> <p><u>Participatory Evaluation</u></p> <p><u>Empowerment Evaluation</u></p>
<p>Accountability – demonstrate that resources are well managed and efficiently attain desired results</p>	<p>Are goals and targets being met?</p> <p>Are indicators showing improvement?</p> <p>Are funds being used for intended purposes?</p> <p>Are staffers qualified?</p> <p>Are only eligible participants being accepted into the project?</p> <p>Are resources being efficiently allocated?</p>	<p>Project Audits</p> <p>Performance Measurement and Monitoring</p> <p>Accreditation and Licensing</p> <p>End of Project Reports Scorecards</p>

⁹⁴ Rogers, Mark M. 2012. "Selecting Evaluation Approaches. Options in Peacebuilding Evaluation." London: CARE International UK. <http://conflict.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/16+Feb+2012+Evaluation+Approach+Paper+-+Copy.pdf>

<p>Project Improvement -- Adaptation in a complex, emergent and dynamic situation</p>	<p>How is the intervention connected to and affected by the larger changing system? How do we distinguish signal from noise to determine what to attend to? How do we respond to what we cannot control, predict or measure?</p>	<p><u>Developmental Evaluation</u>, Systems Evaluations, Real-time Evaluation Environmental Scanning</p>
<p>Knowledge Generation – Enhance general understanding & identify generic principles about effectiveness</p>	<p>What are the general patterns and principles of effectiveness across projects and sites? What lessons are being learned? What principles can be extracted to inform practice? How do evaluation findings triangulate with research results, social science theory, expert opinion, practitioner wisdom and participant feedback?</p>	<p>Cluster Evaluation Meta-analysis Effective Practice Studies Comparative Case Studies</p>

Evaluation approaches vary in their scope. Evaluation approaches are not entirely distinct from one another. Many engage participants in some step in the process. Most approaches consider at some point the results stemming from the intervention. However, the types of results and the way in which results are evaluated differ from one approach to another. The overlaps and similarities can be confusing. Avoid opting for the first approach that seems to meet your needs as several different approaches may address the same need. Selecting an evaluation approach does not automatically predetermine data collection or data analysis methods. For example, key informant interviews could be part of any approach and are not required by any single approach. Data collection methods should be agreed with the evaluator prior to the start of an evaluation and set out in the evaluator's [inception report](#).

URUZANIA: AN EVALUATION APPROACH FOR THE GPP

After discussing the evaluation with Kiki and Ahmed, David thinks about the approach that might be most appropriate for GPP. He knows that the monitoring information is fairly incomplete—although improved in recent months—and there was no formal baseline survey conducted at the beginning of the project. While the project is focused on changes, so far most of the work has focused on personal change and at the community level, with the establishment of peace committees.

After consulting with a few colleagues who are experienced evaluators, David proposes that the evaluation use the Outcome Mapping approach because it allows for a thoroughly participatory process and focuses on learning as well as accountability for results. David looked up key guides to Outcome Mapping and noted that “Outcomes are defined as changes in the behavior, relationships, activities, or

actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a project works directly.”⁹⁵ The mapping process will also consider the direct interactions of the project with individuals, groups, and organizations in attempting to influence their thinking and behavior, and will recognize that the GPP is not be the only cause of change; many other factors will be at play. This seems like a good approach for GPP to their evaluation.

4.6 Complexity, linear and non-linear change and approaches to evaluation

There is much debate over evaluation approaches that is connected to wider debates about the nature of the contexts in which we work and whether traditional linear approaches to programming are appropriate. Peacebuilding programming has often been required to comply with the requirements of results-based management.⁹⁶ Such requirements can result in rigidly linear design, monitoring and evaluation processes and tools. There is a growing critique that this approach is incompatible with the complex environments in which we work and non-linear pattern of social change that often occurs.⁹⁷ Where an organization stand on the question of planned, intended outcomes programming versus more emergent forms of programming, will determine preference for the kind of evaluation approaches considered appropriate.

We recognize that our peacebuilding actions operate in complex, dynamic and dangerous environments where systems, dynamics, actors and relations are constantly changing. Moreover, in peacebuilding programs, causal paths are not always linear or predictable. This situation has led some to believe that project designs that are based on linear principles and evaluation approaches that focus on planned, predefined measures of success are unsuitable for peacebuilding work. Some even suggest that adopting evaluation approaches based on assumptions of linear causality represent “a strong bias of western modes of thought that is inappropriate in the diverse and variegated community contexts” in which the work occurs”.⁹⁸

The view we take in this guide is that, whilst we acknowledge the context in which we work is complex and outcomes are not always linear, we do not necessarily reject the more traditional, results-based approaches to project management and evaluation. Even in complex contexts and where dynamics are constantly shifting, and where donors require results-based

⁹⁵ Earl, Sarah, Fred Carden and Terry Smutylo. 2001. “Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs.” Ottawa: International Development Research Centre. <https://www.idrc.ca/en/book/outcome-mapping-building-learning-and-reflection-development-programs>

⁹⁶ Global Affairs Canada. 2016. “Results-Based Management: A How-to Guide.” Ottawa. <http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/assets/pdfs/partners-partenaires/bt-qa/rbm-gar-guide-e.pdf>

⁹⁷ Neufeldt, Reina C. 2011. “‘Frameworkers’ and ‘Circlers’—Exploring Assumptions in Impact Assessment.” Berghof Foundation. [http://www.berghof-foundation.org/en/publications/publication/"Frameworkers" and "Circlers" - Exploring Assumptions in Impact Assessment/](http://www.berghof-foundation.org/en/publications/publication/)

⁹⁸Ibid, p.4. [http://www.berghof-foundation.org/en/publications/publication/"Frameworkers" and "Circlers" - Exploring Assumptions in Impact Assessment/](http://www.berghof-foundation.org/en/publications/publication/)

management complete with clearly stated intended outcomes, logframes and indicators of change, it may still be desirable to undertake an evaluation that assesses the intended and planned outcomes for a project, or as modified in response to feedback and monitoring information. In this context, what is important is the extent to which a project has responded to changes in the context. If the planned project activities and measures of success are no longer relevant or feasible, it would be appropriate to engage with the donor to request a modification to the activities and success criteria or indicators.

Awareness of complexity, due to the volatile circumstances and how this may affect cause and effect relationships should always be borne in mind in interpreting data and drawing conclusions from an evaluation.

4.7 Faith Sensitivity and Evaluation Approaches⁹⁹

For inter-religious action for peacebuilding, impacts resulting from belief in supernatural agency can add another dimension of complexity. The evaluation of religious interventions, whilst focusing on activities and results, should also consider what motivates religious peacebuilders within distinct value systems to pursue transformation. The evaluation must enable them to be accountable in appropriate ways and explain the success or failure of their interventions. The influence of religious belief on this process should be visible in all aspects of the evaluation process. Three characteristics or features that often make an evaluation approach a particularly good 'fit' in inter-religious settings are provided. This summary is followed by an assessment of the advantages, disadvantages and faith-sensitive characteristics of various evaluation approaches.

As mentioned in Section 4.6, **complexity-awareness** is important, because many peacebuilding efforts take place in contexts where causation is complex, and beliefs about supernatural causation bring in yet another factor that stakeholders may experience as unpredictable or outside the realm of human planning and control. Evaluation approaches that measure project performance and results against pre-defined objectives may face limitations if they are applied inflexibly in inter-religious settings. On the other hand, evaluation approaches that acknowledge and encourage the adaptation of objectives to fast-changing contexts can capture important aspects of inter-religious action.

Another important characteristic in religious settings is **participation**. External evaluators may find it difficult to fully understand the nuance of a particular religious system of belief and practice, so stakeholders need a strong voice to present their own perspectives. An evaluation process that features local religious actors in prominent roles is likely to have more credibility in the eyes of their other religious actors. Further, projects that are inter-religious often involve complex partnership structures that bring groups together across lines of tension or power

⁹⁹ Adapted from Steele, David and Ricardo Wilson-Grau. 2016. "Supernatural Belief and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding." Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, p. 9-11, 21. <http://dmeforpeace.org/learn/supernatural-belief-and-evaluation-faith-based-peacebuilding> .

disparity. These inter-religious structures work to the extent that each faith group feels heard and respected, so it is important for evaluation processes to support their participatory way of operating.¹⁰⁰

Involving local stakeholders in data collection is a starting point for participation. In many cases, they can also participate in evaluation planning, data analysis and interpretation, and identification of key findings and recommendations. There are several approaches and tools that allow stakeholders to present more of their perspective than typically occurs in conventional evaluations. Approaches such as Outcome Harvesting, Appreciative Inquiry, and Most Significant Change, can give stakeholders more voice to surface their own perspectives and their values.¹⁰¹

Finally, evaluation approaches that include **qualitative methodologies** are well-suited to understanding the *believing* and *belonging* aspects of religious practice (as described in Section 2.2). For example, qualitative data can be used to identify and interpret outcomes such as changes in attitudes and beliefs, or degree of hope for various levels of transformation. Qualitative methodologies include interviews and focus groups, reviewing reports, chronicles and histories, generating stories, open-ended questions on opinion surveys, parables and poetry, and making observations.

Whilst the value of qualitative methods in evaluating inter-religious action is clear, quantitative methods may still provide valuable data. In fact, quantitative methodologies may be particularly useful for measuring the *doing* or behavioral aspects of religious practice. The combination of qualitative and quantitative (**mixed methods**) often provides particularly powerful evidence.

Any evaluation should not forget the importance of analyzing documentary evidence such as reports, chronicles and histories. In addition, investing in the generation of stories, opinion surveys, parables and poetry, making observations, and conducting interviews and focus groups are all useful tools for data collection to gain insight in to faith dimensions of the project's outcomes.

¹⁰⁰ For more learning, see Aubel, Judi. 1999. "Participatory Project Evaluation Manual: Involving Project Stakeholders in the Evaluation Process, Second Edition." Child Survival Technical Support Project and Catholic Relief Services. http://www.coregroup.org/storage/Monitoring_Evaluation/PartEvalManualEnglish.pdf

¹⁰¹ See <http://www.betterevaluation.org/Approaches> for more information on these and other participatory approaches.

EXAMPLE: 'MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE' IN MINDANAO

Catholic Relief Services used the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach during an internal assessment of its A3B project in the Mindanao regional of the Philippines. The project's '3 Bs' address ethno-religiously charged land conflict in Mindanao through Binding (individual healing), Bonding (intra-group capacity building) and Bridging (inter-group conflict resolution processes). Muslim, Catholic, Protestant and indigenous faith leaders are equipped to serve as resource persons and facilitators in each aspect of the project. MSC's story-based approach provided a highly participatory way for project stakeholders to generate and jointly analyze qualitative data, all through the lens of their own perceptions and experiences. In this case, the internally-led MSC process was combined with an internal review of project documents and monitoring data, and subsequently followed by an externally-led evaluation.

During the MSC process, 317 individual stakeholder stories were told and documented across twenty communities. Each person was asked to share as follows: 'Looking back over the last three years with the project, what do you think was the most significant change in the community? Why is this significant to you? What difference has this made now or will it make in the future?' Stakeholder groups then prioritized the stories that they felt best represented their experience, for broader discussion and celebratory recognition in large-group plenaries. The resulting stories were later analyzed according to the domains of change that they illustrate. Overall, 'change in conflict resolution process' was the most dominant domain of change found in the project. However, changes in 'addressing community needs' were strongly reported by women's stakeholder groups in thirteen communities. 'Personal change' and 'relational change' were very prominent within the faith leaders' stakeholder groups. Many local government leaders emphasized the significant changes brought about through engagement of faith leaders in land conflict resolution processes.

Table 10 presents a range of evaluation approaches that are to a greater or lesser extent complexity-aware, participative and sensitive to issues of faith and inter-religious aspects of peacebuilding. Each of the comments listed in the faith-sensitivity column is meant to be illustrative, not an exhaustive presentation of the ways in which a specific approach to evaluation can be used in a religious context. In fact, some of the specific items listed under any specific approach might well be as applicable to other approaches. The table also distinguishes between evaluation approaches focused primarily on **process** and those focused primarily on **change** or **outcomes**. The process-centered approaches tend to prioritize either the evaluation participants and decision makers or the eventual utilization of the evaluation over what is being evaluated. There is no implied preferential order in the way they have been presented.

Table 10. Evaluation Approaches: Faith-Sensitivity and Inter-Religious Peacebuilding Considerations¹⁰²

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>Theory-Based Evaluation (Change): A family of approaches that focus on why and how changes occur in inter-religious peacebuilding programs. They assess in different ways the implementation of a logic model or theory of change that explains how the intervention is expected, or was expected, to contribute to a particular chain of results to produce the intended effects in the short-term and longer-term.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Develop Programme Theory. Better Evaluation. Chigas, D, Church, M., Corlazzoli, V. 2014.</p> <p>"Evaluating Impacts of Peacebuilding Interventions Approaches and methods, challenges and considerations". DFID, p.31-38;</p> <p>Using logic models and theories of change better in evaluation, Better Evaluation.</p> <p>Theory-Based Approaches to Evaluation: Concepts and Practices, Better Evaluation.</p>	<p>Articulates assumptions and the rationale that underpin the work</p> <p>Uncovers differing views on theories of change or the "why"</p> <p>Allows the flaws in theory to be distinguished from poor implementation</p> <p>Enhances accountability for planned performance and results</p>	<p>May have a heavy up-front time commitment if the theory of change has not been articulated</p> <p>Innovative programs operating in uncertainty and dynamism may not have a solid theory. The focus on flawed theory leads to flawed findings.</p> <p>Limits the recognition of unplanned activities and the identification of unexpected positive as well as negative results</p>	<p>Can discern, accept and augment spiritually based motivations and beliefs about change.</p> <p>Can assess performance even when understanding of success and accountability are from religious perspectives rather than conventional evaluation.</p> <p>Supports testing of faith-inspired logics for peacebuilding.</p>

¹⁰² Adapted from Rogers, Mark M. 2012. "Selecting Evaluation Approaches. Options in Peacebuilding Evaluation." London: CARE International UK. <http://conflict.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/16+Feb+2012+Evaluation+Approach+Paper+-+Copy.pdf>. Chigas, Diana, Madeline Church and Vanessa Corlazzoli. 2014. "Evaluating Impacts of Peacebuilding Interventions Approaches and methods, challenges and considerations." London: DFID. http://dme4orpeace.org/sites/default/files/071114_Evaluating-Impacts-of-Peacebuilding-Interventions_DFID.pdf. Includes significant contributions by David Steele and Ricardo Wilson-Grau.

¹⁰³ Unless otherwise noted, the source for these sketches of the evaluation approaches is the wealth of information on www.betterevaluation.org.

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>Goal-Free Evaluation (Change): Involves gathering data on the <i>actual results</i> of an intervention rather than verifying the achievement of intended results. The evaluator makes a deliberate attempt to avoid all consideration of intended or emergent goals; only the project's actual outcomes and measurable effects are studied, and these are judged on the extent to which they meet <i>peacebuilding stakeholders' demonstrated needs</i>.</p> <p>Resources: Quinn Patton, Michael. 2010. "Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation", Sage, p.220. Church, Cheyanne and Rogers, Mark. 2006. "Designing for Results." Search for Common Ground, p.116-117.</p>	<p>Captures unintended negative and positive effects</p> <p>Limits effects of the bias of project team and inaccuracies in intervention logic.</p> <p>Helpful in clarifying project goals</p>	<p>Requires more time and funding than other approaches</p> <p>Results may not be sufficiently concrete to act upon</p> <p>May substitute the evaluators' bias in place of the intervention's bias</p>	<p>Is sensitive to a religious perspective that sees success as dependent on a process driven by a belief in the supernatural as well as human agency.</p> <p>Provides opportunity to discern the least visible signs of change in attitude or perception and utilize such data to inform efforts that encourage behavioral transformation of particular importance in inter-religious peacebuilding, whether or not they generate results (i.e., reach goals).</p>
<p>Utilization-Focused Evaluation (Change/Process): Employs the principal uses for the evaluation by its primary intended users to guide the evaluation planning and implementation in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance. Thus, inter-religious peacebuilders and the evaluator select the most appropriate content, model, methods, theory, and uses for their peacebuilding situation.</p> <p>Resources: Utilization-Focused Evaluation, Better Evaluation.</p>	<p>Increased likelihood that evaluation results will effect change in the peacebuilding process</p> <p>Decreases emotional barriers to the idea of results and measurements</p> <p>Helpful where there is resistance to evaluation</p>	<p>Requires more time at beginning of process</p> <p>Numerous decision-making steps within the overall process</p> <p>May backfire if the evaluator does not have the necessary facilitation skills</p>	<p>Can focus evaluation process on the beliefs and values of stakeholders and utilize these findings to more usefully interpret and analyze all types of data collected.</p> <p>Can draw conclusions and propose lessons learned that are consistent with insights and moral principles central to specific faith traditions.</p>

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
Quinn Patton, Michael. Utilization-Focused Evaluation Checklist .	Well-known to peacebuilding NGOs Well regarded in the evaluation community		
<p>Realist Evaluation (Change): Seeks to answer questions of what works for whom, and in which contexts or circumstances the intervention is implemented. Answers questions about what causal mechanisms are triggered by which elements of interventions and in what contexts. It identifies key change mechanisms (theory of change), contextual factors that influence the intervention or how it affects people, and outcome patterns, including how they differ for different groups of people. The 'CMOC package' (causal mechanism-context-outcomes configuration) is examined and subjected to 'systematic tests' using data collected to see if the model explains the 'complex footprint or outcomes left by the program.'¹⁰⁴</p> <p>Resources: Westthorp, Gill. 2014 "Realist Impact Evaluation: An Introduction." ODI. Realist Evaluation, BetterEvaluation.</p>	<p>Appropriate for new initiatives or interventions that seem to work but where 'how and for whom' is not yet understood</p> <p>Intervention previously demonstrated mixed patterns of outcomes that will be scaled up</p> <p>Understand how to adapt the intervention to new contexts.</p>	<p>Requires investment of human and financial resources</p> <p>Heavy focus on development of project theory and theory-based data collection</p>	<p>Supports examination of a variety of faith-inspired patterns of motivation for peacebuilding, including an emphasis on faithfulness to a transcendent process more than commitment to implementation of specific projects or programs.</p>

¹⁰⁴ Chigas, Diana, Madeline Church and Vanessa Corlazzoli. 2014. "Evaluating Impacts of Peacebuilding Interventions Approaches and methods, challenges and considerations." London: DFID, p.31. http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/071114_Evaluating-Impacts-of-Peacebuilding-Interventions_DFID.pdf.

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>Developmental Evaluation (Process): Provides <i>evaluative</i> information and feedback to inter-religious peacebuilders, and their funders and supporters, during the process of developing innovative interventions in complex, dynamic conflict resolution and peacebuilding environments. Asks evaluative questions, applies evaluation logic, and gathers and reports evaluative data, to inform adaptive development of the innovation with timely feedback.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Quinn Patton, Michael, McKegg, Kate, and Wehipeihana, Nan (Editors)., 2015 <i>Developmental Evaluation Exemplars: Principles in Practice</i>, Guilford,</p> <p>Quinn Patton, Michael. 2006. Evaluation for the Way We Work. The Non-Profit Quarterly, Spring.</p> <p>Quinn Patton, Michael. Developmental Evaluation. AEA365 Tip.</p>	<p>Flexible and adaptive</p> <p>Useful where there are no known solutions</p> <p>Relevant in socially complex contexts requiring collaboration</p> <p>Serious attention is given to assessing the unanticipated and the emergent as a fundamental evaluation function.</p>	<p>Peacebuilders must commit time to participate in an on-going evaluation process</p> <p>Requires trust and close collaboration between peacebuilders and evaluators</p> <p>Peacebuilders' openness to experimentation and adaptation and expertise of the evaluator are also required for success</p>	<p>Allows for spiritual guidance and inspiration to influence the on-going development and adaptation of tentative plans for peacebuilding within a complex environment.</p> <p>Encourages continual reassessment and seeking of re-direction to generate a process and results consistent with religious vision and values.</p>
<p>Participatory Action-Research Evaluation (Process): Applies the methods of action research — learning-by-doing — by involving inter-religious peacebuilders to generate action results in the form of change in their peacebuilding process, and at the same time develop research results in the form of increased understanding which informs the change and is an addition to what is known.</p> <p>Resources:</p>	<p>Participative, seeking to involve all the stakeholders as co-evaluators</p> <p>Encourages critical reflection by all stakeholders within a systematic but flexible process</p>	<p>Primary focus is on problem-posing and problem-solving during the inter-religious peacebuilding process and less on the gathering of evidence to prove results</p>	<p>Can collect and interpret subjective data on the entire range of participant perceptions and beliefs (including religious beliefs), utilizing them as indicators of underlying attitudes and resulting behavior – providing useful information for goal-setting throughout the peacebuilding process.</p>

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>Dick, Bob, The Snyder Evaluation Process: An Overview (a participatory, action research methodology) http://www.aral.com.au/resources/snyder-b.html.</p> <p>Chevalier, Jacques M. and Buckles, Daniel J. 2013. Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Planning and Evaluation. BetterEvaluation.</p> <p>Dick, Bob et al, <i>Action Research: FAQ</i>, Action Research & Action Learning for Community & Organizational Change. http://www.aral.com.au/resources/arfaq.html#a_faq_1.</p> <p>Ross, Marc Howard. 2001. Action Evaluation in the Theory and Practice of Conflict Resolution. Peace and Conflict Studies: Vol. 8: No. 1, Article 1.</p>	<p>Values iterative learning and decision-making processes as a means for dealing with complexity</p> <p>Facilitates project adaptation to changing environments</p>	<p>Requires a considerable investment of time from most if not all stakeholders</p>	<p>Can track reframing of beliefs that explain and legitimize potential changes in attitude and behavior – providing additional information to use in ongoing redesign of peace initiative.</p>
<p>Empowerment Evaluation (Process): Based on social justice, democratic participation, self-determination and capacity-building principles, provides inter-religious peacebuilders with the tools and knowledge that allows them to monitor and evaluate their own performance. Evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings are designed to help inter-religious peacebuilders help themselves to improve their intervention by building local ownership and facilitating engagement while building evaluation capacity.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Empowerment Evaluation, Better Evaluation.</p> <p>Cox P.J, Keener D, Woodard T, Wandersman A. 2009. Evaluation for Improvement: A Seven-Step Empowerment Evaluation Approach for Violence</p>	<p>Mainstreams evaluation within project cycle</p> <p>Effective where staff are resistant to evaluation</p> <p>Builds staff M&E capacity</p> <p>Combines internal and external expertise and perspective</p>	<p>May be deemed less credible to some stakeholders such as donors, due to the high involvement by staff</p> <p>Not all evaluators will be comfortable playing an empowerment role</p> <p>May need to deal with differences between community and funder interests</p>	<p>Can be used to encourage discovery and use of faith-based trauma healing processes that can assist people to find hope, acquire resilience and develop more effective action strategies to address the causes of the suffering within turbulent, volatile environments.</p>

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>Prevention Organizations. Atlanta (GA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p>			
<p>Most Significant Change (Change): Collects and analyses through cycles of discussion personal accounts of change for learning about what changes are most valued by individuals and groups involved in the peacebuilding intervention — and why. Enhances learning about the similarities and differences in what different stakeholders value explaining how peacebuilding change comes about (processes and causal mechanisms) and when (in what situations and contexts).</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Most Significant Change, Better Evaluation.</p> <p>Davies, R and Dart, J. 2005. The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique.</p>	<p>Useful for understanding values among different stakeholders</p> <p>Works best in combination with other options for gathering, analyzing and reporting data.</p>	<p>Data confidentiality must be respected</p> <p>Not a quick option, requires learning infrastructure</p> <p>Can be challenging to get engagement of the different groups involved in the process and to maintain their interest.</p> <p>Facilitation and prioritization skills are necessary</p>	<p>Can encourage self-reflection on the part of religious groups or individuals (including leaders) to reassess the degree to which the most important changes for the people they strive to influence are consistent with the espoused values in their peacebuilding intervention.</p> <p>Can help to uncover if and how the most significant understandings of religious identity and belonging (including the parameters of inclusion/exclusion) have been challenged. Can also uncover if and how perceptions of identity and belonging have been reframed by the peacebuilding intervention – either in ways that expand or restrict the perception of who “belongs.”</p>

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>Outcome Harvesting (Change): Outcome Harvesting collects ("harvests") evidence of what has changed ("outcomes") and, then, working backwards, determines whether and how an intervention has contributed to these changes. Reveals the patterns and processes of change that the peacebuilding intervention influences. Especially useful in complex situations when it is not possible to define concretely most of what an intervention aims to achieve, or even, what specific actions will be taken over a multi-year period.</p> <p>Resource: Outcome Harvesting, Better Evaluation. www.outcomeharvesting.net no link</p>	<p>Identifies unintended as well as intended outcomes</p> <p>Answers questions with concrete, verifiable evidence</p> <p>Uses a common-sense, accessible approach that engages informants easily</p> <p>Employs various data collection methods</p>	<p>Facilitation and evaluation skill and time</p> <p>Only outcomes that informants are aware of are captured</p> <p>Participation of those who influenced the outcomes is crucial</p> <p>Counterintuitive, unconventional approach that may generate resistance</p>	<p>Can identify religious changes and their interrelationships — positive and negative, intended or not — within a spiritual tradition's particular understanding of belonging.</p> <p>Can help to discover if and how those who claim the same identity, yet affirm some differences in values, beliefs or practices are influencing others, and being influenced themselves, to change what they do in significant ways.</p> <p>Can also stimulate examination of how "the other" (groups not claiming the same identity) is being affected by an intervention based on the spiritual tradition's own narrative.</p>
<p>Outcome Mapping (Change): Unpacks an initiative's theory of change, provides a framework to collect data on immediate, basic changes that lead to longer, more transformative change, and allows for the plausible</p>	<p>Can be adapted to a wide range of contexts.</p> <p>Enhances team and project</p>	<p>Requires skilled facilitation as well as dedicated budget and time</p>	<p>Can identify which of the desired changes rooted within a spiritual tradition's understanding of belonging</p>

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>assessment of the initiative's contribution to results via 'boundary partners'.</p> <p>Resource: Outcome Mapping, Better Evaluation. Earl, S., Carden, F, Smutylo, T. 2010. Outcome Mapping Facilitation Manual. Outcome Mapping Learning Community.</p>	<p>understanding of change processes</p> <p>Improves the efficiency of achieving results</p> <p>Promotes realistic and accountable reporting.</p>	<p>Often requires a "mind shift" of personal and organizational paradigms or theories of social change.</p>	<p>and belief have been achieved.</p> <p>Can help to formulate desirable peacebuilding changes based on differences in values, beliefs or practices, and assess to what extent they have been achieved.</p> <p>Can also stimulate examination of how to treat "the other" (groups not claiming the same identity) based on the spiritual tradition's own narrative.</p>
<p>Impact Evaluation (Change): Provides information about the difference between what an inter-religious peacebuilding intervention achieved (the factual) and what would have been achieved without the intervention (the counterfactual).¹⁰⁵ Establishes causal attribution (also referred to as causal inference) for the changes produced by a peacebuilding intervention – be they positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect.</p>	<p>When possible to study a situation of conflict or violence similar to the one where the peacebuilding intervention takes place: Can be convincing and useful in policy</p>	<p>Requires a substantial investment of resources, qualified evaluators and situationally appropriate mixed methods</p> <p>Requires high degree of technical</p>	<p>Where the context allows, this approach can provide quantitative measures of causal effects of inter-religious peacebuilding interventions and practices. This approach could provide robust evidence for the effectiveness of inter-religious action on levels of</p>

¹⁰⁵ Note that there are many interpretations of what is "impact" and what constitutes an impact evaluation. In this table, impact is the difference between what an inter-religious peacebuilding intervention achieved and what would have been achieved without the intervention. That is, impact evaluation as we define it assesses, indeed measures, the causal attribution of primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a peacebuilding intervention. This may but does not necessarily require experimental and quasi-experimental methods that use a counterfactual.

EVALUATION APPROACH ¹⁰³	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	FAITH-SENSITIVITY
<p>Resource:</p> <p>Impact Evaluation, BetterEvaluation.</p> <p>Chigas, D, Church, M., Corlazzoli, V. 2014. Evaluating Impacts of Peacebuilding Interventions Approaches and methods, challenges and considerations. (Experimental and quasi-experimental designs: variable based approaches), DFID p.23-29.</p> <p>Rogers, P. 2012. Introduction to Impact Evaluation, InterAction.</p>	<p>development and learning</p> <p>Attempts to determine the changes in the conflict or context that are attributable to a given intervention.</p> <p>Causality focused evaluation.</p> <p>Systematic and defensible data collection and analysis of evidence</p>	<p>knowledge on behalf of the evaluators</p> <p>May not be appropriate for many conflict contexts because of the ethical, political and financial consideration of using experimental or quasi-experimental methods to establish the counterfactual.</p>	<p>violence, degree of trust developed between conflicted communities, and levels of understanding and tolerance among divided communities.</p>

4.8 Establish an evaluation budget and timeline

Questions of cost of the evaluation or evaluations should have been considered at the outset of the project when the project was designed and budgets were developed. It is always important to make sure that costs have been identified and funding set aside to conduct both monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation budget.¹⁰⁶ Key considerations include: 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? Are some evaluation approaches more expensive than others—and can we afford our preferred approach? Can we afford the rates of the evaluators with the appropriate skills and experience?

Evaluation timeframe. Is the project 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 considered?

4.9 Building an evaluative culture for effective evaluation and results management

Within many organizations, a weak evaluative culture undermines many attempts at building an effective evaluation and results management system. Smaller, faith-based organizations may not have thought of ways to build and support an evaluative culture, where information on performance is deliberately sought to learn how to better manage and deliver programs and services. Faith-based organizations should aim to create a climate where evidence on performance is valued, sought out and seen as essential to good management. Without such a climate, adherence to systems and procedures can dominate attitudes towards results management and evaluation.

An evaluative culture deliberately seeks out information on the organization's performance to use that information to learn how to better manage and deliver its programs and services, and thereby improve its performance. Such an organization values empirical evidence on the results—outputs and outcomes—it is seeking to achieve. Other terms used for such a culture include a results culture, a culture of results, a culture of performance, an evaluation culture, a learning organization and a culture of inquiry.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ For more information, see Horn, Jerry. 2001. "A Checklist for Developing and Evaluating Evaluation Budgets." http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/tools/checklist_evaluation_budgets

¹⁰⁷ Mayne, John. 2008. "Building an Evaluative Culture for Effective Evaluation and Results Management." Institutional Learning and Change Brief 20. http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/example/building_evaluative_culture/building_evaluative_culture_example

Culture is comprised of the structures, practices and actions that establish the expectations for how to get along in an organization. Mayne¹⁰⁸ suggests several elements shown in the box below are needed to build such a genuine 'culture of inquiry'.

Leadership is probably the most important factor in organizational culture. Strong senior leadership in building an evaluative culture can be evident through such actions as:

- Supporting the results management regime, including demonstrating the benefits of using evidence, and supporting results management with resources;
- Providing consistent leadership in results management, including consistent and regular communication on results management, and acting consistently with an evaluative culture—walking the talk; and
- Managing expectations for results management, through setting out reasonable yet challenging expectations for success, proceeding gradually and with modesty, and balancing accountability with learning.

Mayne argues that to be successful in creating an evaluative culture, senior managers need to oversee the results management regime through:

- *Agreeing* on a results framework for the organization, and results frameworks for programs and policies;
- *Challenging* theories of change behind programs, and the evidence gathered on performance;
- *Approving* feasible yet challenging performance expectations;
- *Using* results information in approving programming decisions and for holding managers to account;
- *Overseeing* key aspects of results management: evaluation and monitoring systems, results-informed learning, and results reporting by project managers; and
- *Reporting* on organizational performance.

If your organization commits to creating an evaluative culture you also need to build results measurement and results management capacity. Staff need to be equipped with the skills to be able to articulate and measure results, have a capacity to understand how results information can be used to help managers, and have some level of in-house results management support. This capacity can be developed by providing ongoing training to managers and staff in the various aspects of results management, identifying and supporting peer champions, integrating results management training into the regular management training project; including self-evaluation as part of the results management training; providing clear and effective guidance to managers on results management; and using results management networks to share lessons and foster an evaluative culture.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

MEASURES TO FOSTER AN EVALUATIVE CULTURE¹⁰⁹

Leadership

- Demonstrated senior management leadership and commitment
- Regular informed demand for results information
- Building results measurement and results management capacity
- Establishing and communicating a clear role and responsibilities for results management

Organizational support structures

- Supportive organizational incentives
- Supportive organizational systems, practices and procedures
- An outcome-oriented and supportive accountability regime
- Learning focused evaluation and monitoring

A learning focus

- Build in learning
- Tolerating and learning from mistakes

Many larger organizations have the luxury of having a Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to champion this area of work. Many organizations also develop evaluation policies and procedures that govern how projects will be monitored and evaluated. Although this may be out of reach for many smaller faith-based organizations, you should think about the ways in which you can strengthen both the culture and capacity within your organization to promote evaluative practice.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

5.

IMPLEMENTING AN EVALUATION

This section addresses issues necessary to consider when commissioning an evaluation, including which criteria to use, developing clear objectives and clarifying the purpose of the evaluation, establishing specific questions for the evaluation, deciding on what approach to take to the evaluation, developing terms of reference and selecting an evaluator. This section also addresses the question of how to use the results of an evaluation.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

This section will be most useful to **those commissioning, planning, or conducting evaluations as well as policy and project staff preparing to be involved in or learn from an evaluation.**

5.1	Identifying the purpose and use of the evaluation or evaluations	105
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5.3	Developing Terms of Reference (Scope of Work)	113
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5.5	Selecting an evaluator: desirable attributes of an evaluator for inter-religious programming	114
5.6	Determine data collection and analysis methods	115
5.7	Utilization of the evaluation	118

In undertaking an evaluation, it is important to decide what the organization/project wants to achieve with the evaluation (and for whom), and make decisions about who will be involved, how it will be conducted, and when it will take place, and at what cost. The objectives and design of the evaluation 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 throughout Section 5 are in approximate sequential order, but may occur in a different sequence or repeat.

5.1 Identifying the purpose and use of the evaluation or evaluations

What is to be examined through an evaluation? What are the learning objectives? Where is the initiative or demand for an evaluation coming from? How does it connect to the beliefs and motivations of those working in faith-based organizations? Is the project relatively new, or is it near a mid-point or appropriate moment for reassessment (suggesting a formative evaluation)? Or is it near or at the end (implying a summative evaluation)? Does it need both a mid-term evaluation as well as a final evaluation (usually for longer projects)? If it is a final evaluation, one question that should also be asked, is whether the project is properly prepared to end or whether a follow-on project is needed to complete the work. Using the evaluation to make recommendations on the form the follow-on project could take can be valuable for donors and implementers alike. All these issues influence the nature of the evaluation to be conducted. Some of the most common purposes of evaluations include:

- Assessing progress and informing decision making to improve or adapt the project;
- Determining the “value” or results of a project 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 project—to gain buy-in/commitment and improve outcomes;
- Understanding to what extent the project contributed to changes in the context or conflict;¹¹⁰ and
- Informing decisions on whether and how to continue or expand or even replicate the principles of the project 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 the organization is doing an evaluation and what different stakeholders hope to gain from it.

¹¹⁰ This point emphasizes ‘contribution’ not ‘attribution’ of changes to a project. 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.

5.2 Deciding on the criteria for evaluation

You should determine the most important and relevant criteria for meeting the evaluation's objectives. These criteria are useful when planning, developing lines of inquiry, developing specific questions, preparing the Terms of Reference for an evaluation and conducting an evaluation.

Consideration should be given to the following seven criteria:

1. Relevance
2. Effectiveness
3. Efficiency
4. Impact
5. Sustainability
6. Coordination and Linkages
7. Consistency with Values

The first six criteria were developed by the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation's Development Assistance Committee.¹¹¹ This Guide has adapted the criteria for inter-religious peacebuilding, including adding a new criterion related to *consistency with values*. We have examined how these criteria apply to inter-religious action and provided sample questions that can be used to guide the lines of inquiry and development of specific questions for the evaluation (see Table 11). It is not necessary for an evaluation to consider all these criteria. Rather, the appropriate criteria can be selected based on the objectives of the evaluation.

One way of ascertaining whether a project is having a *visible or immediate impact* on the larger peace and conflict dynamics (Peace Writ Large), is to use the [CDA's Criteria of Effectiveness, or Building Blocks for Peace](#) to develop markers or provide indications that projects are making progress towards the larger peace.¹¹²

CDA identified five intermediate Building Blocks that can support progress towards Peace Writ Large. These can be used to assess, across a broad range of contexts and programming approaches, whether a project is making a meaningful contribution to Peace Writ Large. These criteria are not only useful for evaluations, but can be used in project planning to ensure that specific project goals are linked to the larger and long-term goal of 'Peace Writ Large.' They can also be used during project implementation to reflect on effectiveness and guide mid-course changes. The five building blocks are:

¹¹¹ OECD-DAC. 2012. "Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results." Paris: OECD. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/evaluating-donor-engagement-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility_9789264106802-en

¹¹² See CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. "Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual." <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/reflecting-peace-practice-rpp-basics-resource-manual/>

1. The effort results in the creation or reform of political institutions to handle grievances in situations where such grievances do, genuinely, drive the conflict.
2. The effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own peace initiatives in relation to critical elements of context analysis.
3. The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence.
4. The effort results in an increase in people's security and in their sense of security.
5. The effort results in meaningful improvement in inter-group relations, reflected in changes in group attitudes, public opinion, social norms, public behaviors, etc.

Table 11: Evaluation Criteria¹¹³

CRITERION	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GENERAL QUESTIONS	QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING
Relevance ¹¹⁴	<p>Strategic alignment to addressing key drivers of conflict</p> <p>Context-appropriateness</p>	<p>Why and how are we conducting the initiative? Is it suited to the situation, and to the priorities and policies of the stakeholders involved?</p> <p>Is the initiative based on a quality analysis of the conflict?</p> <p>What are the key conflict drivers and peace factors revealed by the analysis? How is the initiative addressing them?</p> <p>Do the objectives and activities logically support the overarching goal in this context?</p>	<p>Which of the key conflict drivers and peace factors have aspects that are related to religion? How does the initiative recognize and address them?</p> <p>Does the initiative align with the contextual values and understanding of the faith groups involved? Does it meet their felt needs with regards to the issue being addressed?</p> <p>What has motivated the religious actors involved to pursue this project?</p> <p>Do the objectives and activities support the overarching vision and goal endorsed by the religious actors and the parties to the conflict?</p> <p>Does religion relate to any of the other peace initiatives present in this context? If so, how? Does it enable/enhance or inhibit them?</p>

¹¹³ Adapted from criteria originally proposed by OECD-DAC. 2012. "Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results." Paris: OECD. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/evaluating-donor-engagement-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility_9789264106802-en. Includes significant contributions by David Steele.

¹¹⁴ See Rogers, Mark M. 2012. "Evaluating Relevance in Peacebuilding Programs." Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/evaluating-relevance-in-peacebuilding-programs/>

CRITERION	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GENERAL QUESTIONS	QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING
Effectiveness	<p>Assessment</p> <p>Implementation process</p> <p>Anticipated results</p> <p>Unanticipated results</p> <p>Adaptation to changing context</p>	<p>How well has the initiative achieved its stated objectives?</p> <p>And what has the initiative achieved that was not anticipated?</p> <p>How well have the planned activities been implemented?</p> <p>Did the initiative adapt appropriately when necessary to changes in context?</p> <p>Were any components of the initiative considered to have 'failed?' If so, what can be learned from this 'failure?'</p> <p>What were the positive unanticipated outcomes of this project? The negative unintended consequences?</p>	<p>How do the religious groups involved understand 'accountability?' How do they define 'success?'</p> <p>Do the initiative participants attribute any of the results to supernatural activity or intervention? If so, how? What do they see to be the relationship between supernatural agency and human agency?</p> <p>Are there any results that seem spiritual/intangible and therefore particularly difficult to measure? If yes, what are they? What type of alternative evaluation methodology might be useful in assessing intangibles related to attitude change and beliefs?</p> <p>Was the timeline sensible and feasible from the perspective of the religious actors involved? Is there openness to changes in expected timeframe to better align with the expectations of the religious groups involved?</p>
Efficiency	<p>Cost-efficiency</p> <p>Time-efficiency</p> <p>Quality of management</p>	<p>How economically have resources been converted into results (compared to other options for supporting peace in this context)?</p>	<p>Do the religious groups involved invest significant amounts of their own networks and resources (including skills, money and time) in this initiative? If so, how do they view the value of this investment?</p>

CRITERION	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GENERAL QUESTIONS	QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING
		Does the initiative meet common efficiency standards?	<p>How do the religious groups involved assess this initiative against their own religious values on the appropriate use of these resources?</p> <p>Would all the partners involved choose to invest resources in the same way again? If not, how and why would they invest differently?</p>
Impact¹¹⁵	<p>Contribution to Peace Writ Large¹¹⁶</p> <p>Early indications of emergent contribution toward Peace Writ Large</p>	<p>What are, or will likely be, the long-term results?</p> <p>Are individual changes in attitudes and behaviors likely to endure over the long term?</p> <p>Has the effort prompted people to increasingly resist provocations to violence?</p> <p>Have individual changes in attitudes and behaviors been mobilized to contribute to positive change at the socio-political level?</p>	<p>How do the religious groups involved describe their vision of long-term impact?</p> <p>What are the religious or spiritual aspects of any individual changes in attitudes, behaviors and one-on-one relationships?</p> <p>How does the religious or spiritual tradition perceive mobilizing such inner spiritual transformation for influence at the socio-political level?</p> <p>Are new behaviors and actions being integrated into religious institutions? How?</p> <p>Has there been creation or reform of religious practices to address key grievances that drive</p>

¹¹⁵ See Rogers, Mark M. 2012. "Evaluating Impact in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programs." Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/evaluating-impact-in-conflict-prevention-and-peacebuilding-programs/>

¹¹⁶ For more information on contributions to Peace Writ Large, and indications of emergent contributions toward Peace Writ Large, see CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. "Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual." <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/reflecting-peace-practice-rpp-basics-resource-manual/>

CRITERION	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GENERAL QUESTIONS	QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING
		Has the effort meaningfully increased people's security and sense of security?	the conflict? If so, how effective have these been?
Sustainability	<p>'Ownership'</p> <p>Resilience to shocks</p> <p>Sustainability of finances and other essential resources</p> <p>Sustainability of human capacity</p>	<p>Do local actors have the capacity to continue their current efforts indefinitely? On what basis is this determined?</p> <p>In the case of external assistance, will the benefits endure after the funding ends?</p> <p>Have any 'spoilers' been identified? To what degree has their behavior been addressed?</p>	<p>Which faith groups are involved in the initiative? What part does each play? What additional roles might each perform?</p> <p>What does sustainability look like from the perspective of each religious group? What role does spiritual guidance play in determining how each faith community facilitates sustainability? How do religious groups and individuals retain their spiritual motivation for working in difficult circumstances?</p> <p>Do participants remain committed to inter-faith relationships and actions even in moments of crisis? Are participants now developing their own initiatives?</p> <p>Are there religious practices or processes already being used and/or relationships being tapped in moments of crisis?</p>
Coordination and Linkages	<p>Coordination among implementing partners</p> <p>Coordination with internal and external stakeholders who influence success</p>	Has the initiative's impact been enhanced through coordination and linkages where necessary and feasible?	<p>What is the nature and quality of the communication and coordination among religious groups working together to implement this initiative?</p> <p>In inter-faith initiatives, are intra-faith relations also being adequately addressed?</p>

CRITERION	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	GENERAL QUESTIONS	QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING
	<p>Linkages between individual and socio-political levels</p>	<p>Do all partners feel they have appropriate 'say' in design, implementation and results of the initiative?</p> <p>Which human networks have been utilized? What has been the result?</p> <p>Where appropriate, have policy makers been engaged, and with what result? The media?</p>	<p>What sorts of communication exist with extremist groups or spoilers? How are these links used?</p> <p>Where appropriate, how well have inter-religious actors collaborated with secular initiatives?</p>
<p>Consistency with Values</p>	<p>Identification of and alignment with core values</p> <p>Respect & dignity</p> <p>Inclusion</p> <p>Non-violent action & communication</p> <p>Participation</p>	<p>Does the initiative consistently demonstrate and live out the same values that it claims to promote?</p> <p>How effectively are values differences understood and addressed?</p> <p>Is the initiative consistently conflict-sensitive?</p>	<p>How would the religious groups involved describe the core values underlying the initiative?</p> <p>What specifically does each faith community mean when they espouse general values like peace, justice and compassion? What practices are derived from those meanings?</p> <p>Are the objectives of the initiative consistent with its underlying religious values?</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 values or needs of diverse participants?</p>

5.3 Develop Terms of Reference (Scope of Work)

The **Terms of Reference** (or Scope of Work) for the evaluation draw upon the purpose, questions and approach described in Section 4 above. The Terms of Reference describe what is expected of the evaluator, from the point of view of those commissioning the evaluation. It is, essentially, the job description for the evaluator and evaluation team. While the Terms of Reference 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" that proposes how to address these key elements for consideration and approval. See [BetterEvaluation](#) for a sample template of a Terms of Reference.

NOTE: TERMS OF REFERENCE/SCOPE OF WORK AND THE EVALUATION REPORT

One issue that should be addressed in the Terms of Reference concerns the nature of the anticipated evaluation report. How long or detailed it should 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?

5.4 Role of the evaluator

Different approaches to the evaluation process imply different roles for the evaluator, and different relationships of the evaluator to the project team and stakeholders; this too will shape the evaluation process significantly.¹¹⁷

In utilization-focused evaluation,¹¹⁸ 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.

URUZANIA: 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 project strengthening, as well as to reassure the donor that funds are being used wisely.

The team posted an announcement of the evaluation on the internet and asked for evaluator candidates to indicate interest. They received fourteen applications from a wide range of people, only a few based

¹¹⁷ For more information, see Bronte-Tinkew, Jacinta, Krystle Joyner, and Tiffany Allen, 2007. "Five Steps for Selecting an Evaluator: A Guide for Out-Of-School Time Practitioners." Washington: Child Trends. <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/five-steps-for-selecting-an-evaluator-a-guide-for-out-of-school-time-practitioners-part-2-in-a-series-on-practical-evaluation-methods/>

¹¹⁸ Quinn Patton, Michael. 2008. *Utilization-Focused Evaluation, Fourth Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

in Uruzania, 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 project team and David, the evaluation team proposes to use a Most Significant Change methodology, which would allow them to elicit from a range of stakeholders how they see the project and its outcomes (and can also be done without precise 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.

5.5 Selecting an evaluator: desirable attributes of an evaluator for inter-religious programming

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 are 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 must 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?

In addition to these standard questions to consider in selecting an evaluator, there are additional desirable attributes of an inter-religious peacebuilding evaluator that should guide your selection. These unique aspects relate to the issues set out in Section 2.1 on faith-sensitivity in evaluations. 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. What is the evaluator's own worldview, and how might this influence the process?
- 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 religious 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, to adjust accordingly.
- Treat religious traditions and practices with genuine respect and interest (whether he/she agrees with them, or not).
- Have sufficient "religious literacy" to be able to understand the core concepts that inform religious peacebuilding in each of the religious traditions involved, ask insightful questions, and communicate in ways that make sense to religious actors.

5.6 Determining data collection and analysis methods

Data collection and analysis methods vary widely, so it is important to make informed choices based on the goals of the evaluation being undertaken.

5.6.1 Data collection methods.

Careful attention to data collection avoids bias and sets up the evaluation to best reflect what is 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 sections, and to ensure that the evaluation findings will be considered valid. 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. This discussion should take place in light of the Inception Report.

The Inception Report is a critical report that the evaluator writes in response to the Terms of Reference. This report contains much more detail than the Terms of Reference, and it provides the evaluator an opportunity to go into detail about key areas of the evaluation, including framework and methodology, lines of inquiry, an explanation of data collection methods, including risks and limitations and a detailed workplan and evaluation plan.

Which data collection methods are chosen will depend on several 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 project wishes to learn whether reduction in violence in a community is *attributable* to the project, it may be necessary to compare similar communities that were not touched by the project.
- *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?

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 project documents and interviews and focus group discussions 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.¹¹⁹ It should be noted that qualitative data can be analyzed using social science software that permits

¹¹⁹ Leeuw, Frans, and Jos Vaessen, 2009. “Impact Evaluations and Development: NONIE Guidance on Impact Evaluation.” Washington: NONIE. <http://www.alnap.org/resource/8194>

systematic searches, comparisons, frequency of key concepts, etc. These examples are discussed in Section 5.6.2 below.

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 projects 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.

5.6.2 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, collated and interpreted. These might be elements of the project 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 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.¹²⁰ Qualitative data analysis tools assist with qualitative research such as transcription analysis, coding and text interpretation, content analysis, and discourse analysis. CAQDAS is Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis. CAQDAS has features for coding tools, linking tools, mapping or networking tools, query tools and writing and annotation tools.

There are two sources of free software listed in the footnote. For more elaborate analysis of qualitative data there are proprietary software systems like [Sensemaker](#) that some organizations have used to powerful effect (see for example [Globalgiving's pioneering work](#) of this tool in their development work)¹²¹.

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

¹²⁰ Predictive Analytics Today: “Top 21 Free Qualitative Data Analysis Software and University of Illinois.” <https://www.predictiveanalyticstoday.com/top-free-qualitative-data-analysis-software/> “Qualitative Data Analysis: Your Options for Programs: Free Software.” <http://guides.library.illinois.edu/c.php?g=348074&p=2346107>

¹²¹ GlobalGiving's Storytelling and Sensemaker Tools <https://www.globalgiving.org/story-tools/>

data analysis in a form and using language that will be understandable and meaningful to the religious actors and communities concerned?

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.

URUZANIA: SORTING THROUGH A MOUNTAIN OF INFORMATION FOR THE GPP EVALUATION

The evaluation team conducted a series of individual interviews, focus groups, and workshops—also carefully recording what people said, with the permission of participants. The lead evaluator, Professor Kano, and his graduate student, Mariama, then faced a huge amount of information to analyze. Anticipating this challenge, the professor had arranged 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 the information and identified the main themes, including the usage of religious language and symbols and the occasions for celebration and rituals that often incorporate religious elements. The team then went back through the material and coded each document or record according to those themes, using 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 valuable, as it permitted comparison of local participant and staff perspectives with quantitative information on frequency of violence.

5.7 Utilization of the evaluation¹²²

The greatest value of evaluation is in the use of the data and analysis produced. Evaluation utilization is the process by which the findings of an evaluation are shared, learned and institutionalized. It provides information for decision-making and for improving projects. This is particularly important in the complexity of fragility and conflict, where things rarely go to plan and in which unexpected outcomes or dynamics may arise that can be capitalized on in future programming.

Evaluation utilization considerations are best considered at the design stage of the evaluation – not tackled ad-hoc with the delivery of the final report. The objectives of the evaluation must be aligned with how the key stakeholders/audiences will use the findings to improve their work. Securing user buy-in from the outset of the evaluation is essential. If staff and key stakeholders

¹²² This section draws on Corlazzoli, Vanessa, and Jonathan White. 2013 "Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-affected Environments." London: DFID.
<http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/back-to-basics-a-Compilation-of-best-practices-in-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-environments/>

are invested in the evaluation from the beginning, which can be done by identifying their learning needs when designing the evaluation, then they are more likely to value and use the findings.

The sharing, learning and institutionalization of evaluation findings may occur at the individual, organizational or field-wide levels. Utilization frequently occurs in three phases:

1. **Reflect and generalize.** What worked? What didn't and why? What should be changed in the future?
2. **Apply.** Adapt the project, or similar projects, accordingly.
3. **Share internally and externally.** Offer new thinking to the office, organization and broader fields.

Utilization completes the evaluation process by ensuring the findings and their implications are incorporated into future programmatic decisions, thus helping to improve programming (or if it is an interim evaluation, help improve the design and activities for the remainder of the project). As practitioners, we need to constantly learn, otherwise our projects will not improve – and there is always room for improvement. Evaluation utilization facilitates this need, which is heightened in complex environments.

Two dimensions of this learning process can be identified. **Use** of the findings and recommendations 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 project, future programs, or similar programs elsewhere. Some key questions for project staff might be:

- 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 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. As the evaluation comes to an end, it is important to debrief and discuss the evaluation process and findings with relevant project staff and, ideally, respective community members and other key stakeholders. This is particularly important when you have an external evaluator. Key tips for this reflection and learning process are:

- Appoint a learning facilitator to lead the utilization process for the evaluation findings.

- The process should involve key stakeholders, including project staff and staff working on similar projects, supervisors, and partners, to come together and collaboratively identify the key lessons and their implications for future programming.
- Help users identify options for what the findings imply for their work, but let the evaluation users decide what actions will be taken, how, when and with whom.
- Develop a follow-up plan. As you discuss how the evaluation will be used, also consider the timeline by which the lessons and recommendations will be institutionalized and operationalized.
- Don't let the evaluator leave without giving a presentation of preliminary findings to the key stakeholders. Allow staff time to give and receive feedback to the evaluator on the findings of the evaluation.
- Be creative in ways that findings can be shared with different audiences, such as through twitter, Facebook, websites, case studies, bullets or presentations.

Table 12 is a checklist, meant to assist evaluation managers, commissioners, and, critically, users, to ensure that the evaluation process, from start to finish, is conducive to use by intended users.

Table 12: Evaluation Utilization Checklist for Evaluation Users¹²³

Evaluation Preparation	Key users consulted throughout the evaluation preparation stage.
	Key user priorities are clearly reflected throughout the evaluation design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation purpose includes an explicit emphasis on learning, why, and explains how learning will be accomplished; ▪ Evaluation objectives are conducive to learning; ▪ Evaluation objectives are aligned with key user learning needs; ▪ Key user needs are clearly and explicitly identified, either in the TOR or upon hiring the evaluator(s).
	Terms of Reference includes an explicit requirement that evaluator either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate him/herself learning and utilization throughout implementation and upon the delivery of the final report; and/or ▪ Collaborate with an appointed utilization facilitator to draw out key findings and implications in a presentable manner to the key users

¹²³ Corlazzoli, Vanessa, and Jonathan White. 2013 "Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-affected Environments." London: DFID, p.66-67. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/back-to-basics-a-Compilation-of-best-practices-in-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-environments/>

Evaluation Management & Implementation	Key users consulted and feedback incorporated into evaluation design on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation hypotheses, indicators, methods; and, ▪ When, how, to whom and with what frequency the evaluator is to report
	Key users actively appraised of progress throughout the evaluation.
	Key users involved in interpreting data and drawing conclusions.
Evaluation Report & Findings	Finalization of evaluation report includes input from evaluation manager and key users.
	Evaluator-led presentation to and/or discussion with key users on the findings including facilitated Q&A on the implications of findings for current and future programming.
	Dissemination mechanisms and strategies consistent with key user needs.
	Evaluator prepared action brief responding to and detailing how findings will be used. End of evaluation assessment by evaluator to appraise key user satisfaction on the evaluation process, its findings and their inclusion throughout. Post-evaluation assessment by evaluator to determine if, how, and why key users have used evaluation findings.

A final question is who gets copies of the final evaluation report and will it be openly accessible? The Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium has been working to encourage more openness and greater sharing of the findings of evaluations. We encourage you to consider posting your evaluations on your website and uploading it to the DME for Peace website.

URUZANIA: 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 offer 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 project plan to Global Endeavor. Kiki, Ahmed and the Executive Director of the Interfaith Peace Platform 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 project plans.

Annex A: Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Checklist

This checklist¹²⁴ is designed to help practitioners of inter-religious peacebuilding programs consider key steps involved in design, monitoring, and evaluation. It follows the steps set out in Sections 3 and 4 and aims to bring together all the key actions in to a practical checklist. Each step includes reflection questions to help make design, monitoring and evaluation processes as effective as possible.

DESIGN

- Ground Design in Key Principles Throughout
 1. Does the design reflect religious beliefs of causation among key actors?
 2. Is there a high degree of inclusive participation at all stages by representatives of the target group(s), national and international staff with varied roles, partner organizations, etc.?
 3. Have you focused on the highest level of impact or effects that are still realistic?
 4. Are elements of the project logically and causally connected wherever possible?
 5. Have you explored how your efforts interact with others in the systems in which you operate?
 6. Is an evaluative, adaptive, and iterative culture being built from the start of the project? (see Section 4.9)
 7. Have you included periodic reflection points for adapting design and implementation?
- Conduct Necessary Context/Conflict Assessments
 1. Do assessments include a conflict analysis? (see Sections 2.3 and 3.2)
 2. Do assessments draw on past evaluations and lessons from similar projects and/or projects operating in your context?
 3. Have assessments explicitly included groups with different identities (men, women, sexual and gender minorities, children and youth, persons with disabilities)? (see Section 2.4)
 4. Are there plans for updating the conflict assessment during the life of the project?
- Formulate a Clear Project Goal and SMART Objectives (see Section 3.3)
 1. Did design start with defining a goal based on desired impact, rather than a set of activities?
 2. Do objectives focus on desired "effects" (i.e., change in behavior, attitude, knowledge, or relationships among the target population) rather than merely a description of activities?
 3. Are objectives specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, and time-bound (SMART)?

¹²⁴ Adapted from Mercy Corps. 2005. "Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Guidebook."
<https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/file1157150018.pdf>

4. Do objectives logically contribute to achieving the goal?
 5. Have you considered adding an objective directly focused on collaborating, learning, and adapting the project with the associated budget and personnel?
- Articulate a Theory of Change (see Section 3.4)
 1. Does the level of change, scale of effort, and timeframe for the project make sense given available resources and role of the organization in the context? (see Sections 3.5.1-3.5.3)
 2. Do the indicators reflect the assumptions you made in the theory of change?
 3. Have you considered exploring and testing more than one theory of change, especially when conducting a pilot or innovative programming element?
 - Select Appropriate Activities, Outcomes and Outputs
 1. Have you specified outcomes that are realistic and feasible given the timeframe and resources devoted to the project?
 2. Do outputs representing deliverables or final products reflect those you are responsible for?
 3. Have activities described the key actions you'll carry out to achieve the outputs and outcomes?
 4. Do outputs and activities logically contribute to the SMART objectives and desired outcomes?
 - Identify Indicators (see Section 3.6)
 1. Have you used the smallest number of indicators possible to directly measure performance against objectives, outputs and outcomes?
 2. Have you identified appropriate progress markers for the changes in the behavior of your targeted boundary partners if you are using outcome mapping?
 3. Are you including relevant standard indicators and consulting appropriate specialists and resources?
 4. Have you considered using a few context indicators that would point to a change in the system or context and prompt further investigation?
 - Formulate the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan (see Section 3.8)
 1. Have you laid out key management and implementation tasks for the M&E, persons responsible, and clear targets for achieving them so that you can manage planned activities?
 2. Did you include monitoring as a key management activity and make resources available to carry it out (including roles and responsibilities, time for baselines, and regular data collection, review and reporting)?
 3. Does the M&E plan align with the workplan and allow space and time to pause, reflect, and adapt the project based on evidence generated (e.g., quarterly review meetings)?
 - Complete final products
 1. Have you used a Log Frame to organize your goal, objectives, outputs, outcomes, activities, and indicators (if this is needed)?

2. Have you clearly identified risks associated with the indicators and ways that these risks will be monitored so that indicators can be changed and adapted during the project if necessary?
3. Have you completed the first version of the Work Plan and M&E Plan?

MONITORING

Ground Monitoring in Key Principles Throughout

1. Does the monitoring system account for religious beliefs of causation among key actors?
2. Is our monitoring as participatory and inclusive as possible (incl. data review and reporting)?
3. Are you regularly checking that monitoring activities are safe for all those involved?
4. Have you focused on learning/adaptive management as well as accountability?
5. Are you paying attention to the quality of the data?
6. Is the monitoring system and the data generated helping build an evaluative and adaptive culture? (see Section 4.9)
7. Are you updating monitoring systems when they do not provide information you need?

Set Up the Monitoring System (see Section 3.10)

1. Are you monitoring context, processes, and results? (see Section 3.8)
2. Does your mix of approaches fit the purpose of the project and your information needs?
3. Does your system include standard approaches for more predictable changes as well as emerging or adaptive approaches where there is more uncertainty? (see Section 3.10)
4. Have you chosen approaches that are within your capacity?
5. Have you sought out comparison groups and ways to triangulate data?

Conduct Monitoring Cycles at Chosen Intervals

1. Are you collecting, reviewing and reporting on data related to project indicators, targets and other donor requirements per the Work Plan and M&E plan?
2. Are you comparing actual results against targets/progress markers when you review data?
3. Are the right people (incl., project decision makers, target groups) reviewing data?
4. Does your timing of data review reflect the reality of when you expect to see changes?

Disseminate and Use Monitoring Information

1. Are you clearly communicating the actual and planned performance for each objective, analysis of monitoring results and plans for next steps in project reports (to donors, HQ, and others)?
2. Is information from the monitoring system used to refine and adapt project approaches? Are decisions made based on monitoring data?

EVALUATION

- Ground Evaluations in Key Principles Throughout (see Sections 4.4 – 4.8)
 1. Does the evaluation include a focus on religious beliefs around causation among key actors?
 2. Is the evaluation designed to yield insights and learning as well as performance data for accountability?
 3. Is the evaluation as participatory and inclusive as possible?
 4. Are key stakeholders ready for, available during, and supportive of an evaluation?
 5. Will key users be consulted throughout the evaluation? (see Section 5.)
- Designing the Evaluation
 1. Have you explored what evaluative options are appropriate for this project? (see Sections 4.1-4.3 and 5)
 2. Have you included the appropriate dimensions/criteria in your evaluation (including lines of inquiry that are related to inter-religious activities?) (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2)
 3. Have you focused the evaluation and approach(es) around utility, the local context, and answering pressing management questions? (see Sections 4.4-4.5)
 4. Will the evaluation yield lessons learned for similar programming?
 5. Have decision-makers determined the reporting format that best meets their needs?
 6. Do the Terms of Reference, budget, and timeline clearly reflect decisions related to the questions above? (see Section 5.3)
 7. Have you selected an evaluator that reflects the desirable attributes for an evaluator of inter-religious programming? (see Section 5.5)
- Implement the Evaluation
 1. Are the purposes of the evaluation clear to all involved? (see Section 5.1)
 2. Have you collaboratively clarified the main criteria for the evaluation, considering consistency with faith values alongside other criteria? (see Section 5.2)
 3. Have you explored and determined key evaluation questions, including those related to religious practice? (see Section 5.3)
 4. Do the data collection and analysis approaches fit the evaluation questions?
 5. Does the evaluation include standard approaches where more is known about the changes sought and emerging approaches where there is more uncertainty? (see Sections 5.6)
- Share Lessons Learned and Use of Evaluation (see Section 5.7)
 1. Are reports completed in draft form and discussed with project staff while the evaluation team is still in country?
 2. Is the report short but informative (usually no more than 20 pages plus attachments)?

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3. Has the report been widely disseminated among key audiences within and outside of our organization with an aim of ensuring lessons are learned?
 4. Have you made and shared an action plan for how lessons should be used to adapt future project designs in this (sub)sector or context?
 5. Have you produced a 2-page summary in simple language for online dissemination?
 6. Have you scheduled an After-Action Review to reflect and learn from the evaluation process itself and its effects on the project?

Annex B: Project Reflection Exercise

This Reflection Exercise is intended for use mainly by project teams engaged in inter-religious action for peacebuilding, as a process for self-assessment or review.¹²⁵ It can be used as the basis for an informal participatory self-evaluation with or without external facilitation. The reflection process can be applied during initial planning, conception or project development phases to examine underlying assumptions and various aspects of project design. Once implementation is underway, this exercise can also be performed at a staff meeting or in a formative evaluation process—in which case, the review would include not only design considerations, but also issues of implementation and the immediate effects of project activities.

The Reflection Exercise is recommended as a group exercise, usually composed of people from within the implementing agency and partners, plus a few relevant “outsiders” who can provide useful perspectives. To engage in the exercise, participants will need the project title, location, problem or conflict analysis, statements of goal(s) and objectives, brief description of key activities, and expected outcomes. If there is no external facilitator, you may wish to choose a facilitator from within the group and a note taker. (Note: the facilitator should not be the main staff person whose project or project concept is being discussed!)

The essential steps of review are the following (further elaborated in italicized text boxes at each step in the scenario):

1. Review or generate a conflict analysis or problem analysis (depending on how the issue is framed)—and identify points of intervention/leverage for change.
2. Review/generate the project goal and key objectives.
3. Identify several proposed or actual project activities, intended changes and associated theories of change.
4. Explore the project strategy.
5. Assess the project's theory(ies) of change.
6. Explore the project logic—how the different elements add up to the desired changes.
7. Assess the potential or actual interactions between the project and the context: conduct a conflict-sensitivity and faith-sensitivity assessment of unintended negative consequences.
8. Reflect and recommend changes in project design and/or implementation.

¹²⁵ This exercise was developed by the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Project at CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, and applied the main RPP tools and concepts. It has been adapted here for application to inter-religious peacebuilding. The complete, original version is found in Ernstorfer, Anita et al. 2016. “Thinking Evaluatively in Peacebuilding Design, Implementation and Monitoring.” Washington: Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium. <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/thinking-evaluatively-peacebuilding-design-implementation-monitoring/>. Several of the tools and exercises are also explained more fully in: See CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. “Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual.” <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/reflecting-peace-practice-rpp-basics-resource-manual/>

Each of these steps is explored, in the scenario of Kiki and Ahmed in Uruzania. Note: use your judgment to determine whether you need to perform all the steps; you can select those most relevant to your situation.

Getting Ready for the Reflection Exercise at the Grassroots Peace Project

As we know, David Barrassa, the Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist from the regional office of Global Endeavor, has agreed to come to Uruzania to facilitate an internal reflection exercise, which will be conducted in a workshop format over two days. David has consulted with Kiki Mara and Ahmed Hussein about who might be engaged in the review workshop. Certainly, the Advisory Council (a bishop, a pastor, and two imams) must be involved, along with the Director of the Interfaith Peace Platform (Kiki and Ahmed's boss). In addition, they decide to invite at least one religious leader from each of the partner organizations in the neighborhoods of the capital and the six districts of Alta Province. In all, that will make a group of over fifteen people, plus the six staff members in the GPP team. To bring another set of perspectives, they also invite a Muslim professor of social psychology from the national university and a Christian professor of faith and society from a local seminary, each of whom have provided technical advice to the project over time. While twenty-five is getting to be a large group, they are committed to a participatory process—and plan to do a lot of the work in small groups to keep discussions manageable.

As David wishes to participate fully in the reflection process, he, Kiki and Ahmed have identified a skilled local facilitator, Jonas, who will keep the group on task. David meets with him before the workshop to introduce him to the concepts and processes. Jonas also meets with several members of the Advisory Council, staff and partners' organizations to get familiar with the project.

The Reflection Workshop

The workshop opens both mornings with Christian and Muslim prayers. At every break, participants are invited to offer a prayer, a poem, song, or a religious chant. On occasion throughout the workshop, David, Kiki and Ahmed lead the group in “energizers” that are fun and cause a lot of laughter and good-natured teasing. While there is serious business at hand, this is also a time for celebration and building stronger bonds among partners.

To get the workshop started, David goes over the steps involved in the Reflection Exercise, explaining in brief what is involved in each. Although some are doubtful they will be able to get through all the steps in two days, they are willing to try. Jonas invites the group to get started with Step 1.

Step 1. Review of conflict analysis and identification of points of leverage.

Step 1: Project design and periodic review should be based on an up-to-date conflict analysis. This step is aimed at ensuring the “relevance” of the project—that is, whether it is working on the right issue with the right people at the right time using an appropriate methodology.

- If you have not performed a conflict analysis, do so, or obtain one or more relevant analyses done by others and combine/select information to inform your own analysis. Is it current?
- Does the analysis identify the key driving factors of conflict and key actors? Key driving factors are factors without which the conflict would not exist or would be significantly different. Key actors are people or groups that can significantly influence the conflict dynamics.
- Does the analysis identify actual or potential factors **for** peace? What are the forces in the situation that can be built upon to promote movement towards peace? What connects people across conflict lines?
- What needs to change? Who or what needs to change to transform a negative and destructive dynamic into a more constructive one?
- Within the analysis, what are possible points of leverage to create change in conflict dynamics? Given the nature of your organization, what are you positioned to do? How can your efforts be complemented by other efforts?
- **If the project is already being implemented:** Has an updated conflict analysis been performed? Does the basic approach or project focus need to change as a result?

1a. Review conflict analysis

Ahmed presents the “problem analysis” that was included in the original project proposal. While this is not a formal conflict analysis, it does provide a good picture of the situation at the beginning of the project. Beyond that, the workshop group acknowledges that they do not have a formal analysis. Rather, they have depended on the deep experience of the Advisory Council members, staff and project participants. David notes that such an implicit analysis is valuable—but making the analysis explicit and known to all, helps ensure that everyone is working from a common understanding of the problems they are trying to resolve. A shared analysis will also provide the basis for determining if they are working on the right issues at the right time with the right people.

Although there is not time in the two-day workshop to perform a full analysis, the group agrees that staff should work with partners to develop an analysis in the coming period. Meanwhile, they get the process started by identifying a preliminary list of “key drivers” of conflict, key factors for peace and key actors in the situation. They use a simple “Three-Box” tool to do this, brainstorming to identify the factors and actors (see Figure 1).

1b. Points of Intervention or leverage for change

If this was a planning exercise for a new project, the group would use the conflict analysis to discuss points of entry or intervention for the organization(s), answering the question: “*Given our understanding of the conflict, and given who we are, what factors or actors can we engage to make positive change?*” However, for this review of a project that is already in place, the group indicates which factors and actors it is working with—its main areas of concern and entry points.

The group considers the lists of factors for and against peace and key actors. They note in green the main elements they are working with, in all three categories. Secondary or indirect project elements are noted in blue. In discussion, they agree that, as religious groups and leaders, they are probably working with the right issues and actors. However, they also acknowledge that could be doing more to strengthen or even revive local dispute resolution mechanisms to address key issues of competition over resources. They might also use the progress made in some communities to encourage a welcoming attitude towards returning IDPs—which might require some direct outreach to the IDP camps, something religious leaders would be well-positioned to do.

Figure 1: Three-Box Analysis of Conflict in Uruzania

FACTORS FOR PEACE →	← FACTORS AGAINST PEACE	KEY ACTORS
<p>Fatigue re war/violence</p> <p>Presence of UN and regional peace keeping forces → reduced violence</p> <p>Traditional structures mostly in place and functioning at local levels (outside of urban areas)</p> <p>Traditional dispute resolution processes (chiefs and elders)</p>	<p>Manipulation of religious identify by political actors</p> <p>Domination of all politics by only two of 32 tribes</p> <p>Political/social/economic marginalization of minority tribes</p> <p>Competition over scarce resources (land, water, development funds)</p> <p>Creation of militias for “self-defense” (lawlessness)</p> <p>Animosity/resentment and trauma re atrocities, killings, destruction of property (8,000 deaths)</p> <p>Displaced people (current: 125, 000)</p> <p>Weak governance and poor or missing services (health, education, transport)</p> <p>Rampant corruption</p> <p>Insecurity, lack of government presence outside of capital</p> <p>Extra-judicial killings, citizen “justice”</p> <p>Weak national identity (vs. tribal or religious affiliations)</p> <p>Isolation and difficult access to some minority groups in hinterlands</p> <p>Porous borders and cross-border movement of armed groups, drugs, illicit trade, etc.</p>	<p>Political leaders of main factions</p> <p>Religious leaders</p> <p>Military leaders and militia chiefs</p> <p>Traditional tribal leaders and elders</p> <p>UN administration</p>

Step 2. Review or generate the project goal.

Step 2: Project goals should be articulated as intended changes at an appropriate level of ambition.

- Is the project goal, as stated, 'robust'? Is it change-oriented, realistic, time-conscious?
- Is the project goal too general (at the long-term vision level) or too ambitious (overclaiming)? Or is the project goal too specific—that is, more of an activity?
- How does the project goal relate to the dynamics of conflict and peace as analyzed?
- If the project goal envisions changes at a personal or local level (peace writ little), how might it create linkages to wider peace at the societal level (Peace Writ Large)?
- **If a project is already being implemented:** Is the project making reasonable progress towards the goal? What kind of feedback (monitoring data) indicates such progress? Is the goal still appropriate—or has the situation changed significantly, requiring redesign?

In preparation for the workshop, David has worked with Kiki and Ahmed to identify the overall project goal and objectives, as expressed in proposal documents.

Goal: *The project aims to support the ability of local communities to maintain social cohesion and address local level conflicts in the capital city and in Alta province, which was severely affected by violence.*

Objectives: The project will:

1. Improve understanding, trust and cooperation among Muslim and Christian religious and community leaders in the capital and in Alta Province.
2. Increase the ability of religious actors to facilitate nonviolent conflict resolution and mobilize for peace.
3. Reduce the recruitment of people (mainly young men) to violent groups on both sides, and increase the ability of religious actors to mobilize communities for peace

As the group discusses this formulation of the project goal, they note that it is broad—and not measurable as stated. They probably need to identify a series of more specific and achievable medium-term objectives. They work in small groups, each one assigned to work on one of the three bullet points above, they agree on the following:

Overall Goal of the Grassroots Peace Project (GPP): The project engages religious leaders and their community members in the capital city and in Alta province to enhance the ability of local communities to build social cohesion, resolve disputes, and diffuse tensions.

GPP Objectives:

1. By 2020, the partner communities will experience an increase in inter-group cooperation, as shown in expanded marketing/trade among groups, cooperative community projects, intermarriage, and participation by all groups in community decision making—against a baseline survey of key indicators.
2. By 2020, 80% of all non-criminal disputes in the partner communities will be handled by local Peace Committees (either enhanced traditional means or new structures fully supported by community leaders of all groups). The Peace Committees will focus on inter-personal, property, land and water issues. These community level mechanisms will be connected to the court system, as it becomes operational over time.
3. By 2020, each partner community will have established a Conflict Prevention Council, representing religious leaders from all groups, traditional chiefs and elders, women's' groups, and youth leaders. Local government (police and administration) will be included as they establish local presence. Each CCP will be trained to intervene to address rumors, handle incidents of inter-personal violence that threaten to spread. Each will keep a record of its activities, to track the number, severity and effectiveness of conflict prevention activities.
4. By 2020, the number of young people joining groups dedicated to violence will decrease by 30% (against a baseline to be established as of 2017), with further decreases of 10% annually thereafter.

Looking back at the conflict analysis, the group noted that this overall goal and more specific objectives were more closely linked to several key factors in their analysis. It was also clear that the effort would continue to draw on positive factors, such as traditional structures and religious leaders, which has been a primary project approach from the beginning.

Step 3. Identify the project activities, intended changes and theories of change.

Step 3: This step uses the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Four-Column Chart showing activities, expected changes, theory of change, and other assumptions.¹²⁶

- In the top row of the chart, enter the goal/objective of the project and the associated overall theory of change at this level.
- Identify five or six key activities in this project? Enter them in the first column of the Four-Column Chart.
- In the other columns, identify the actual or expected change from each individual activity, as well as the theory of change and other assumptions associated with the activity.
- What is the overall assessment of progress against the expected changes? What has gone well or presents a challenge? Are the theories of change proving valid?

¹²⁶ See blank chart at end of this Annex and an example in CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. "Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual." <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/reflecting-peace-practice-rpp-basics-resource-manual/>

Before the group engaged on this topic, Kiki presented a compilation of information from several sources, including recent monitoring data. She acknowledged that the project had not had a robust monitoring system from the beginning—but staff have been collecting information more regularly in the past six months. Also, in preparation for this Reflection Exercise, each staff member was asked to conduct a focus group in the area in which he/she was working, posing a short series of open-ended questions in the spirit of “most significant change” inquiry. Therefore, the information provided for the first eighteen months of the project is based on quarterly reports and notes from staff meetings and Advisory Group meetings. More recent information is drawn from the focus groups, as well as regular collection of official and unofficial records of incidents of violence, GPP records regarding the number and demographic breakdown of workshop participants, as well as follow-up interviews regarding application of workshop skills—especially in the context of Peace Committees. The group is also provided with an assessment of the status of each Peace Committee, the number of disputes they have handled—and whether the issues were resolved successfully or not.

As expressed in the original project proposal, the principal activities of the GPP include:

1. Dialogue and training for faith-motivated actors (both religious authorities and faith-inspired people);
2. Joint action by religious leaders and faith-inspired community leaders in the various neighborhoods of the capital and in six districts and 23 communities in Alta province;
3. Establishment of multi-stakeholder Peace Committees to promote dialogue, social cohesion and reconciliation, as well as to prevent future violence;
4. Provision of training to religious leaders on conflict transformation, social cohesion, human rights, personal responsibility, forgiveness, mediation and conflict analysis; and
5. Support to religious leaders to work together to lead further trainings at the community level, facilitate dialogue, resolve disputes and mobilize social cohesion activities, mainly through the Peace Committees.

As the group reviewed these activities and associated monitoring information, someone noted that the activities no longer match the restated objectives. He also wondered whether the reliance on training was realistic. What is being done to follow up on training to make sure that those trained can apply the learning? Participants considered this question—and heard from those in the group who had received training. They confirmed that it was often difficult to translate training into action without additional support. While GPP staff can provide accompaniment, they are stretched thin across many communities. Several religious leaders noted that it is difficult for them to train local people (Peace Committee members) as mediators or facilitators when the religious leaders themselves don't have direct personal experience mediating disputes.

Some local religious leaders also remarked that local chiefs and elders have sometimes resisted the efforts to establish Peace Committees, as they see them as undermining their traditional role in settling disputes in their communities. They are particularly protective of their role in allocating land—which has, at times, reinforced the isolation/marginalization of minority groups (one of the important conflict factors). Going forward, as the project

engages in new communities, it will be important to include community leaders from the beginning. In those communities where Peace Committees have been set up already, the project staff and religious leaders will need to involve the chiefs and elders in a discussion regarding the intended role of the Peace Committees and how the traditional authorities might become directly involved.

Out of this discussion, the group decided that they should adopt a somewhat different approach to capacity building, based on a process of co-training with experienced people (staff or one of the more skilled religious leaders), as well as a mentoring process for mediators/facilitators that pairs an experienced person with a less experienced person. They therefore revised the activities and inserted them into the Four-Column Chart shown below.

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This is as far as the workshop participants got during the first day. To move the process forward more quickly, they asked Kiki, Ahmed, and David to work with two workshop participants (one male, one female) to complete the other columns of the chart during the evening. That small group presented the completed chart to the full group during the first session of the second day. The group appreciated the good work, and made some suggestions that were incorporated into the chart. The resulting chart is presented below and was used for several of the next steps.

RPP FOUR-COLUMN CHART: Identification of Activities, Changes and Theories of Change & Assumptions

<p>Project Goal: The Grassroots Peace Project engages religious leaders and their community members in the capital city and in Alta province to enhance the ability of local communities to reduce violence, build social cohesion, resolve disputes, and diffuse tensions.</p>		<p>Overall Theory of Change: Local religious leaders are in a vital position to provide guidance that will enable local communities to improve their ability to identify and handle immediate disputes, and to embrace difficult history and longer-term issues requiring deliberate processes of reconciliation. By enhancing the skills of religious leaders, we can reinforce the processes of dispute resolution and reconciliation.</p>		
	<p>PROPOSED/COMPLETED PROJECT ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>ACTUAL/EXPECTED CHANGES, DUE TO ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>PROJECT THEORY</p>	<p>OTHER ASSUMPTIONS</p>
1.	<p>Train local religious leaders in basic conflict resolution, negotiation, mediation and facilitation skills and approaches.</p>	<p>Religious leaders gain or enhance skills in conflict resolution and increase confidence for working together for change.</p>	<p>If religious leaders enhance their conflict resolution skills, they will become even stronger advocates for positive change.</p>	<p>Religious leaders are a key group of community leaders that can inspire and mobilize their constituencies.</p>
2.	<p>Engage local authorities, tribal chiefs and elders in development of local Peace Committees (roles, structures, scope, relation to authorities, etc.)</p>	<p>Greater buy-in and support for more effective dispute resolution mechanisms.</p>	<p>If local traditional leaders are asked for input and given an ongoing role, they are more likely to support dispute resolution processes.</p>	<p>Traditional leaders want to improve dispute resolution.</p>
3.	<p>Accompany/co-train religious leaders in training PC members. Provide for co-mediation/facilitation of new mediators/facilitators.</p>	<p>Community members in Peace Committees gain skills to mediate inter-personal, land and other resource disputes.</p>	<p>People learn best through action with appropriate support from more experienced colleagues.</p>	<p>Staff or other experienced mediators will be available to provide mentoring and co-training.</p>
4.	<p>Over time, initiate inter-group dialogue and problem solving, convened and facilitated by religious leaders (with mentoring or other support as needed).</p>	<p>Project moves beyond individual change to address broader issues of intergroup tension at the community level. Ability to address the past enhanced.</p>	<p>If key leaders from all groups engage in dialogue and problem solving, they will be able to identify shared problems and develop joint approaches to addressing them.</p>	<p>Groups that have experienced tension and past violence are ready to participate in reconciliation processes. Imams and pastors are actively engaged.</p>
5.	<p>Out of the dialogue/problem solving, identify joint community projects and establish conflict prevention efforts.</p>	<p>Inclusive groups demonstrate the possibility of solving problems together and taking joint action to improve community conditions.</p>	<p>If groups engage in joint action, it will reinforce newly regained trust and contribute to social cohesion.</p>	<p>Minority groups can participate as equals and dominant groups do not control processes.</p>

Step 4. Examine the project strategy as a whole. (Plot the project goal, activities, and changes onto the RPP Matrix.)¹²⁷

Step 4:

- Does the project aim to create changes at the individual/person level—or does it seek to generate changes at the community level (or other levels)? Which activities support these different levels of change?
- If the project seeks changes in individuals, who is involved? Key leaders (“key people”)? The broader population? Subgroups within the communities involved? Their leaders?
- If the project aspires to changes in the community, what will be changed: social norms, public opinion, structures/institutions, culture? Do such changes involve key decision makers or the larger public?
- Note: for a project already being implemented, what changes have already occurred—at what levels of change and with key decision makers or with broader populations? With what results?

In introducing this step, David explained the two dimensions: first, the level of change (individual/personal change vs. socio-political change), and, second, the question of who is engaged (“key people” or those with power to decide vs. the broader population or “more people”).

In discussion, the group felt that the religious leaders, while not ultimate decision makers in most cases, are, nonetheless, influential, with links to key people and strongly connected to the communities where they work as well. The renewed emphasis on engaging tribal chiefs and elders is seen as an effort to work more directly with key decision makers at the local level, while the Peace Committees could include both respected members of the community and some more influential people (elders or other community leaders among women and youth). The Peace Committees, if successful, could be considered a new community institution, building on and enhancing traditional dispute resolution mechanisms—and available to all. Similarly, the proposed new Conflict Prevention Councils would engage key leaders from civil society and local government and work with the broader population to make sure that tensions do not escalate to violence.

As the project moves into intergroup reconciliation efforts, these initiatives will require involvement of key leaders from all groups—as well as many of the community members who have experienced trauma and loss of family members and/or property. Reconciliation will not work as an elite-only process.

¹²⁷ The RPP Matrix is explained in the RPP Training Manual. The questions posed here address the issues explored through the Matrix. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. “Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual.” <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/reflecting-peace-practice-rpp-basics-resource-manual/>

Step 5. Assess the project's activity-level theories of change.

Step 5: Theories of change operate at different levels. They can relate to micro level changes, usually associated with specific activities. Or they can describe how an overall project approach and goal will be achieved—as well as how achieving the goal will contribute to Peace Writ Large. For this step, use the filled-in Four-Column Chart regarding the theories of change associated with specific activities.

- Are all the theories of change appropriate and realistic in the context? Will change come about in the ways envisioned because of the planned activities?
- Will changes occur at the individual/personal level as planned? What about expected changes at the community level; are those realistic? Can any higher-level changes be expected?
- **If the project is already being implemented:** Have the activities completed so far resulted in the expected changes? Are there any unexpected positive or negative outcomes? Are the theories of change proving viable in the context—or is rethinking indicated?

Since the project has been in place for several years, the discussion focused on whether the theories of change—as identified in the chart—have proven realistic and whether the theories, activities or project approach needs to be adjusted. At this point participants looked again at the monitoring data that had been made available—particularly the police statistics on the level of violence in the communities where GPP has been working—as compared to other communities. They also reviewed information on the Peace Committees.

Participants pointed out that they had already improved the project goals and objectives and recast the activities earlier in the workshop. Those changes were based partly on realization that the project was not progressing as well as desired in some areas. They are hopeful about the renewed plan. However, while he supported the project adjustments, the professor of social psychology expressed some doubts about some of the theories of change. For instance, he was not sure that engagement with local chiefs and elders would succeed in all cases, given that issues of power, authority and control over resources are involved. He is hopeful that by moving carefully and relying on the moral authority of religious leaders, this approach can succeed.

A similar exchange occurred regarding activity #4 that involves dialogue and reconciliation efforts among groups that had done violence to each other during the war. The theory of change in the chart makes it sound as though this will be a relatively easy process, but the levels of distrust and history of exclusion and violence will make this quite challenging. As the project moves into these activities, it will be important to monitor the process closely—and to prepare the ground carefully. Again, this is a place where the active spiritual presence of the imams and pastors will be crucial. The group agreed to add a new assumption regarding the involvement of religious leaders.

Step 6. Explore the project logic.

Step 6: This section uses the Four-Column Chart, discussion of the project strategy and theories of change together (Steps #3, #4 and #5 above). In addition to reviewing the theories of change associated with individual activities in the previous step, it is important to make sure that the overall project will add up to the intended goal.

- Examine the logic between the activities and the goal. Would achievement of the activities lead to the goal? Is anything missing?
- Are there unexamined assumptions underlying the links between the different activities, such as willingness, availability, external events etc.?
- What kinds of obstacles might the project encounter in its implementation? Who/what might get in the way? How might such obstacles be overcome?
- Will successful achievement of the project goal contribute to the realization of Peace Writ Large (in the larger society)? If so, how?
- Are there “leaps in logic” or gaps between activities and desired results? What activities might be added to strengthen the likelihood of reaching the desired changes, goals and objectives?
- **If the project is already being implemented:** Is the project on track to achieve its goal/objective? Have new gaps in project logic or other obstacles appeared during implementation, requiring adjustments in the future planned activities or a new approach?

Considering the overall theory of change, the group was comfortable with the statement in the chart as developed by the small working group. But, like the discussion of activity-level theories of change, participants expressed a “wait-and-see” attitude, and suggested that the workshop group should meet again in six months to examine monitoring and tracking information and test whether the activity level and overall theories of change were unfolding as expected.

The group was also impressed by the number of assumptions built into the project—some of which are likely to prove untrue or only partly true. In fact, some assumptions about community level dynamics have already been shown to be questionable. Again, the need to pay attention to the reactions of local citizens and their leaders will be crucial. This suggests improving the ability of the project to collect feedback from community members, chiefs and elders from each of the groups involved on a regular basis. Participants noted that the five activities in the chart are still at a very general level. Staff and community partners must develop detailed work plans customized to the conditions in each community.

Step 7. Conflict-sensitivity and faith-sensitivity review: effects of the project on the context.

Step 7: Any project that is proposed or implemented in the context of conflict or fragility must consider the potential or actual impacts of the project on conflict dynamics. In inter-religious action programs, it is also necessary to ensure sensitivity to the needs of each faith group. At a minimum, programs should avoid any unintended negative effects. Even

peace programs can generate negative effects, although their aim is to contribute to peace!

- Has the project design examined common causes of unintended negative effects, such as the choice of project partners, contractors, suppliers, location of the engagement, distribution of benefits, timing of the programming?
- Does the initiative include conflict-sensitivity questions (mainly possible unintended negative impacts) in its monitoring and evaluation system?
- Is the project consistently faith-sensitive—considering the needs, religious and cultural practices of all faith groups involved?
- Do staff and partners have skills in conflict-sensitive project implementation and/or training in Do No Harm approaches—especially as applied to an inter-religious context?

A member of the Advisory Council, Pastor Otano, notes that the GPP has been careful to hire staff in pairs—always adding one Muslim and one Christian together. They have also deliberately worked at the local level with both Christian and Muslim organizations. A participant from Alta Province points out that there are people in the rural areas who adhere to traditional practices and do not consider themselves belonging to either religion. Or, they are nominally Christian or Muslim, yet engage in traditional rites in their communities. Some tribal chiefs and elders would be in this category—which could be one source of the resistance felt in places.

Another participant observes that most of the partners and staff of the GPP, while balanced in terms of Christians and Muslims, include very few from the minority tribes, those who experience real marginalization and exclusion, a potential driver of violence over time. As the project takes up inter-group reconciliation efforts, visible leadership from minority groups will be important. Steps should be taken to improve diversity in this direction.

One of the Muslim women present notes that the project sometimes causes tensions within families, as women are asked to take on non-traditional roles in their communities. While women make personal choices to support the work—and join Peace Committees, for instance—the project must be sensitive to the potential dilemmas and ways that meetings and specific work needs to be organized to account for the position of women within their faith communities. This is true for both Muslim and Christian women, although in different ways.

The group suggests that the Advisory Council, staff and partners all take part in conflict- and faith-sensitivity training. David assures them that Global Endeavor can provide experienced trainers.

Step 8. Reflect and recommend changes in project design and/or implementation.

Step 8: The fundamental purpose of this reflection exercise is to strengthen project design or to encourage changes in direction or implementation.

- What insights have you gained regarding this project? What challenges have been raised?

- Based on all the previous steps and associated reflections, how might this project or its continuation be strengthened or its concept further elaborated?
- Does this project need to link more actively with other agencies, with other efforts? Which ones and why?
- Considering the context and of what you know about the peace efforts of other actors/agencies:
 - Is this project 'big' enough, does it have enough 'scale' to have some meaningful influence?
 - Is this project moving at the right pace, not too fast and not too slow? Why?
 - If this project achieves meaningful influence and impact, can this be sustained?
- If you are proposing changes to the project design or implementation process, are you confident that the redesigned project will be indeed stronger or more effective? Why?
- Will it be necessary to seek approval for project design changes from others or from a primary donor? If donor approval is needed, what will be the best strategy for gaining it?
- Assess this Reflection Exercise itself. What was helpful or not so helpful? What suggestions would you make for improving the process?

David pointed out that the group had already made a lot of progress in strengthening the project design, based on the experience of the past several years, and responding to the questions posed in the Reflection Exercise. However, a few useful questions remain in this step.

A participant from Alta Province noted that he has seen spillover violence both from and to other provinces—and wondered what efforts are being made in those neighboring areas, as GPP has been limited to the capital and Alta. Should GPP expand to new areas, or link more closely with other organizations that might be working in those places? The group encouraged the staff and the parent organization of the Interfaith Peace Platform to find out what else is being done and how to either support it more actively or, where there is unmet need, consider expanding GPP to other areas, if funding can be found. Some members of the group cautioned that we are still learning from the GPP (see the discussion in this workshop!) and we should not try to expand too quickly, while we still have a lot to learn. One of the imams in the group suggested that the project approach the Islamic and Christian seminaries to offer a course in conflict resolution from a faith base. That would help prepare religious leaders as they move out to communities all over the country.

In finishing the formal session, David notes that it will not be difficult to convince the donor that the project changes are needed and appropriate, and thanks the group for their time and excellent thinking. Kiki suggests that she and Ahmed will have a lot of work to do to capture all the good thinking—and working with staff and partners to turn it into concrete plans!

At the end of the workshop, Imam Bubakar shyly notes that during the night he has written a poem, "Bridges to the Future." The final lines of the poem read:

*Our feet are rooted in the cool banks of the river,
Our hands stretch to meet across the water,
Our fingers touch;
Do I hear rejoicing in paradise?*

FOUR-COLUMN CHART: Identification of Activities, Changes and Theories of Change & Assumptions

PROJECT GOAL:		OVERALL THEORY OF CHANGE:		
	PROPOSED/COMPLETED PROJECT ACTIVITIES	ACTUAL/EXPECTED CHANGES, DUE TO ACTIVITIES	PROJECT THEORY	OTHER ASSUMPTIONS
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Annex C: Bibliography

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