Future Generations
Engaging Citizens and Communities to Create Peace and Security
Research Framework

Summary

The Challenge: There is an urgent need for effective approaches of how citizens and communities can engage in building peace in contexts of instability or post-conflict reconstruction. Peace agreements do not make peace. Neither does the arrival of international peacekeepers. It is the transformation of relations within and between the state and society that secures lasting peace. Peace agreements and international intervention are often necessary stimuli but achieving stable state-society relations requires the partnership of people and government. The role of state-building and international intervention has been extensively addressed by scholarship. While track two and three peacebuilding initiatives have recently received greater attention[1]—the role of *how* to effectively stimulate broad-based, community-driven peacebuilding is less understood, yet is widely acknowledged as essential.

With support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Future Generations is engaged in a multi-year global study of the role of engaged citizens and communities in building peace. This project will join the collective experience of scholars and practitioners engaged in bottom-up peacebuilding with Future Generations own insights and experience in promoting partnerships between communities, governments, and external actors. The research phase will seek to answer the question of *how* citizens and communities have been effectively engaged in building peace. Primary data will come from case studies of "positive deviance"[2] – instances where citizens and communities have worked across divisions and achieved a positive impact on peace writ large.

The project will be carried out collaboratively by a management team centered at Future Generations, scholar/practitioners from selected countries, and an advisory network. The management team will lead and coordinate the project and draft the final report. The scholar/practitioners will be responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing field data based on a research framework. The research will be guided by an advisory group of scholars and practitioners from the international peacebuilding community organized by Future Generations. The advisory group will review the research framework, help identify cases for the study and local researchers,

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[1] Paul van Tongeren and others, *People Building Peace II* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005). and Mary Anderson and Lara Olsen, "Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners," (Collaborative for Development Alternatives, Inc., 2003).http://www.cdainc.com/rpp/archives/2003/01/confronting_war.php.

[2] The idea of positive deviance comes from nutrition research and refers to households or communities that achieve significantly higher outcomes than the norm for their group, holding other factors constant. The positive deviance movement seeks to study and learn what is behind such successes. Future Generations is exploring the possibility of identifying positive deviance of peace and security from the conflict monitoring database of Swisspeace.

help promote complementarity with other work in the field, provide guidance on the interpretation of results, and aid with dissemination to the policy community.

New insights and understandings from this project will be disseminated to the academic, policy, and practitioner communities. While the results of the study will be published and disseminated through traditional channels, one of the ways it will be made useful to communities is through further application, research, and scholarship by scholar/practitioners enrolled in the Future Generations Master's Degree program.

Future Generations: Future Generations is dedicated to achieving equitable, sustainable social change through research, field demonstrations, and education.[3] A registered NGO and nonprofit educational institution founded in 1992, the organization teaches and enables a process of change that emerged out of a collaborative global research effort it supported in the early 1990s. The focus was on what had worked in the field of development over the last one-hundred years, specifically on how to take community-based pilot projects to regional scale, and how to sustain their momentum. The process, known as SEED-SCALE, is used by Future Generations and its partners to support communities and partners worldwide through an integrated approach of 1) researching how communities change, 2) demonstrating a process of community change in four countries (Afghanistan, China/Tibet, India, and Peru) and 3) teaching the scholarship and application of community change to local leaders through a Master of Arts Degree in Applied Community Change and Conservation.

Research Project on Citizen & Community Engagement in Peacebuilding

With support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Future Generations is engaged in a multi-year global study of the role of engaged citizens and communities in building peace. With growing threats to human security[4] and nearly an equal likelihood that countries emerging from violent conflict will revert within five years,[5] this project's ultimate goal is to demonstrate how to enable citizens and their communities to join with governments (local and national) and international change agents to craft a state-societal relationship that creates the local context for peace and social stability.

This project will join the collective experience of scholars and practitioners engaged in bottom-up peacebuilding with Future Generations own insights and experience in promoting partnerships between communities,

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[3] See www.future.org

[4] Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[5] Paul Collier and others, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2003).

governments, and external actors. The research phase will seek to answer the question of *how* citizens and communities have been effectively engaged in building peace. Primary data will come from case studies of "positive deviance"[6] – instances where citizens and communities have worked across divisions and achieved an overall impact on peace. Additional data and insights will be gathered through workshops, literature reviews, and secondary case reviews. The project will explore whether there was a common set of challenges and principles operating across various stages and types of conflict and whether this ultimately points to workable approaches that can be applied with communities in countries facing conflict and instability.

Building peace in contexts of rising instability or fragile post-conflict environments needs to be informed by the dynamics of the context and a vision of what peace would mean to contending groups in that society.[7] Since much violent conflict rests on inter-group relations, this project's vision of conflict transformation and peacebuilding rests on how elements come together to build social cohesion – trust, reciprocity, cooperation, active coexistence, and tolerance – in divided societies. While building relationships may be necessary for re-knitting the social fabric in war-torn societies, it is not a sufficient condition for a durable and lasting peace. Larger economic, political, and security forces are key factors as well. This research ultimately concerns how the multiple and varied actions of people and communities come together and add up in the overall dynamics of stability and peace.

At a program and project level, many organizations apply tools, approaches and methodologies to build peace in divided and post-conflict societies. Some methods see peacebuilding as simply humanitarian and development work performed in conflict-affected environments arguing that the root causes of many conflicts lie in social or economic deprivation. Some in this camp apply "conflict sensitive" approaches[8] to a wide range of traditional sector-based projects (e.g. education, health, economic development, infrastructure, environment, water and sanitation, etc.) or target groups in society whose needs are deemed critical to a peaceful transition such as vulnerable women and children, male youth who are potential recruits for recalcitrant factions, or demobilized soldiers who need to be reintegrated into civil society. In addition, there are those activities that more directly target the relational dynamics of conflict such as psychosocial trauma

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[6] The idea of positive deviance comes from nutrition research and refers to households or communities that achieve significantly higher outcomes than the norm for their group, holding other factors constant. The positive deviance movement seeks to study and learn what is behind such successes. Future Generations is exploring the possibility of identifying positive deviance of peace and security from the conflict monitoring database of Swisspeace.

[7] See Larissa A. Fast and Reina C. Neufeldt, "Envisioning Success: Building Blocks for Strategic and Comprehensive Peacebuilding Impact Evaluation," *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 2, no. 2 (2005).

[8] See for example: Africa Peace Forum and others, *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack* (London: International Alert, 2004). At http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/node/98

rehabilitation, 'culture of peace' and reconciliation projects,' dialogue clubs, community security projects, peace communication and media, participatory action research, and others.[9] This project seeks to learn from cases in which these various programmatic approaches have been applied.

Given the prominent role of external actors in development and humanitarian situations in addition to the strong tradition of third-party mediation in the conflict resolution field, many of the aforementioned programmatic approaches feature a strong external actor element. This can undermine or even overwhelm the local capacities for peace that exist within societies and are the first line of defense when facing violent conflict.[10] Traditional cultural practices can prove effective and sustainable for communities attempting to prevent, end, or recover from conflict.[11] This project will pay particular attention to such local capacities and traditions and to the dynamic cultural contexts in which they are embedded.

The extent to which communities experience peace and security also depends upon structural factors that lie beyond direct community control. There are experiences in which local communities and actors, through mobilization, partnership, and coordination, have been able to impact macro level dynamics. Mary Anderson and her colleagues in the Reflecting for Peace Practice project have identified some of the dynamics of peacebuilding projects that have had such impact. Another perspective is provided from the study of social movements as the strategic manifestation of civil discontent and action against violent, oppressive, and unjust systems.[12] The role of social movements in creating political opportunity, social frameworks, and mobilization can provide insight into how engaged citizens and communities influence macro level systems and structures as demonstrated in the recent popular mobilizations in Nepal and the "color revolutions" in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

Some Definitions and Key Concepts

This project accepts the following definitions of peacebuilding to guide this study:

> "Peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, transform and help people recover from violence in all its forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest. At the same time, it empowers people to foster relationships at all levels that sustain them and their environment."[13]

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[9] Tongeren and others., op. cit.

[10] Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

[11] See Alcinda Honwana, "Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Rural Mozambique," in *The Mozambique Peace Process in Perspective*, ed. Jeremy Armon, Dylan Hendrickson, and Alex Vines (London: Conciliation Resources, 1998). as well as Chapter 18 of Tongeren and others., *op. cit.*

[12] Alan Scott, *Ideology and the New Social Movements* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 26.

[13] Lisa Schirch, *The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2004), p. 9.

> "Actions taken to prevent violent conflict from erupting and to
> end violent conflict and subsequently transform relationships,
> interactions, and structures after violence subsides.
> Peacebuilding activities can be undertaken on many "tracks" and
> in many sectors whether by development agencies, community-
> based organizations, the media, business, or political leaders.
> The goal is to create, support, or enhance healthy and
> sustainable interactions, relationships, and structures that are
> tolerant, respectful, and constructively respond to root causes
> and symptoms of conflict over the long term"[14]

There are several aspects of these definitions that are pertinent for this
project. First, they do not conceptualize peacebuilding as strictly a post-
conflict intervention as the term is traditionally used by some international
organizations and the United Nations.[15] The term is therefore equally
applicable to other situations, from societies that are susceptible to violent
conflict but where armed violence is still latent to those that find themselves
in the midst of war. This distinction is important because at a practical level
many contemporary conflicts are complex, multi-dimensional, and often
"low-intensity" rendering the idea of beginning and end quite tricky.
Furthermore, many so-called post-conflict situations are almost as likely to
be simultaneously latent or pre-conflict as reflected in the high incidence of
failure of peace agreements.

Second, they recognize that the type of conflict that preoccupies us most is
violent conflict, while accepting that conflict more generally (as
contradictions, contention) is a natural element of social change. Thus,
conflict itself is not to be denied or squelched, but to be utilized as a force to
transform the underlying problematic relations that threaten violence if not
effectively engaged.

Third, they recognize conflict's expression in the form of direct violence as
well as *structural and cultural violence*. Structural violence describes
institutions that cause or perpetuate welfare disparities for specific groups
based on an attribute such as ethnicity or economic status. Cultural violence
refers to the social norms and beliefs that allow structural violence to exist.
However, this study accepts Lund's caution not to reduce peacebuilding to a
"grab-bag of unfulfilled human wants" or to equate all forms of structural
oppression with "root causes" of conflict. [16] Interventions that impinge on
the factors and dynamics that directly threaten violent conflict must be

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[14] Fast and Neufeldt: p. 24., *op. cit.*

[15] See Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventative Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peacekeeping,*
Report of the Secretary General to the United Nations Security Council, UN Doc A/47/277 – S/24111 (31 January
1992) and the supplement to the *Agenda for Peace* (3 January 1995).

[16] Michael Lund, *What Kind of Peace Is Being Built? Assessing the Record of Post Conflict Peacebuilding,
Charting Future Directions* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2003), pp. 23-24.

differentiated from those that simply address one of the myriad deficiencies that exist in conflict-affected environments but do not threaten the breakdown of social peace and security. Put another way, while there is overlap between peacebuilding and development, they are not the same. What contributes to building peace and security is context-dependent and must place primary value on the perspectives expressed by the domestic stakeholders at various levels in a given society.

A common theme in these definitions is that peacebuilding ultimately concerns *relationships*. These relationships manifest across societies horizontally and vertically. The most pertinent horizontal relationships are those that cut across the fault lines of identity (e.g. religion, ethnicity, sect, clan, nation, regional affiliation, etc.) along which societies often fracture, mobilize, and fight wars. Vertical relations are those that exist along the axis of the asymmetrical power between people, their leaders, and institutions of the state. These problematic vertical and horizontal relationships can be codified through constitutional and statutory law and through the policies and actions of states toward their citizens. With its emphasis on relationships, this project's vision of peacebuilding is clearly grounded in conflict transformation theory and practice and, from an inquiry focused on the citizen and community level, will naturally tend toward examining encounter-based approaches to peacebuilding.[17]

The idea of vertical and horizontal relationships is closely related to *social capital*, understood as "...the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of society that enable people to coordinate action and to achieve desired goals."[18] Social capital is increasingly accepted as a critical factor in the study of why some societies function well and others break down and collapse. Social capital serves three primary functions that are important for peacebuilding. *Bonding* social capital helps people of a community come together for mutual assistance and a commonly-defined good. Recognizing, however, that bonding can exclude or oppress those outside a group on the basis of some "otherness" and thus potentially threaten social peace, a relational perspective on peacebuilding would emphasize *bridging* social capital among groups of different identities. The challenge is to discover the interaction of bonding ties and cross-cutting bridging ties that support interdependence and active coexistence among groups that otherwise are separate and prone to conflict. Since it is also understood that state structures affect the generation and distribution of bonding and bridging social capital, horizontal networks must interact effectively with the state to promote both the socioeconomic welfare of individuals and the broader public good. This interaction with state institutions and larger political constructs is embodied in the idea of vertical, or *linking*, social capital. The interaction of bonding, bridging and linking

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[17] See John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: USIP, 1997), p. 26.

[18] Deepa Narayan, *Bonds and Bridges: Social Capital and Poverty* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1999), p. 6.

social capital across all levels of society expresses itself in overall *social cohesion*.

Finally, the study will address the notion of *community* in several of its manifestations. The first and most obvious is the spatial/geographic notion of the "community" or "grassroots" level of society. While this is the most obvious conceptualization, it is equally important in the context of peacebuilding to recognize other notions of community that exist at the micro, meso, and macro levels of society in conflict; most notably, communities of identity groups. It is along these lines that political leaders often mobilize for war and that fear, hatred, and insecurity towards other communities is expressed. Identities in this way are not fixed or immutable and interact with the geographic sense of community in dynamic ways since people at odds in today's intra-state conflicts have a long history of living together peacefully prior to the outbreak of violent conflict. Some case studies have pointed to the flexibility of identity and its creative use as a tool to deny the intrusion of violent conflict into a community.[19]

Citizen and Community Impact on the Macro Level

The role of civil society and communities in building peace is not an unstudied field. However, cases in which locally-driven peacebuilding have influenced area-wide or macro-level conflict dynamics have been few and therefore have received much less attention. Some studies have, however, examined the issue. One wide-ranging study found many well-run programs that engaged in building peace at many levels using diverse strategies.[20] Some concentrated on mobilizing large numbers of people while others focused on key leaders and influential actors. Others focused on changing relationships at the local level while others sought to change social and political institutions and policies. The sobering conclusion was that even when many individually successful projects operated in a particular area, these efforts did not "add up" to an impact on "peace writ large." The evidence showed that impacts on "peace writ large" came when programs that emphasized "more people" were linked with those that focused on "key people." Approaches that built individual relationships of trust across fault lines affected broader peace only when they were linked to the socio-political level.

Another study reviewed several programs designed to prevent conflict through community development projects.[21] It concluded the programs did

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[19] See the case studies on the role of identity in the Tuzla community during the Bosnian war and of Muslim Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda at http://www.cdainc.com/publications/steps_case_studies.php.

[20] Collaborative for Development Action, Inc, *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*, 2004.

[21] Michael Lund and Natasha Wanchek., *Effectiveness of Participatory Community Development in Managing Conflicts: Local Democracy, Social Capital, and Peace: Lessons from a Literature Review and Three-Country Study* (Washington D.C.: MSI, 2004), Draft report.

not reduce the structural drivers of conflict or build trust among communities. Most projects were "marriages of convenience around funded benefits" that had few demonstrable impacts on bridge building between communities, the promotion of healing, or the reduction of cultural separation and the underlying sources of inter-group conflict. Among these projects, the seeds of potential success existed in settings where two to three current or formerly antagonistic identity groups lived in close proximity, engaged in everyday interactions, and had open channels of communication and political space that could be built upon.

Catherine Barnes and her colleagues note that very often the primacy of stopping violence through cease fires leads to peace agreements among combatants that are little more than a division of the spoils of war. These accords neglect the crucial structural and cultural causes of violence and can sow the seeds for renewed conflict. While the vast majority of peace agreements do not create the space for citizen engagement, she examined emerging evidence of alternatives to "elite pact-making" where citizens assert their right for a role in peacemaking processes. Examples include Mali where local traditions of community decision-making allowed thousands of people to directly engage in inter-community peacemaking that opened the door to national peace. In South Africa, a strong tradition of mass movement politics provided the vehicle for people's participation. In Guatemala, the Philippines, and Columbia the role of church leaders and other moral authorities was critical. These processes used direct involvement, consultative mechanisms, and representative participation to engage people and in some cases used democratic referenda to ensure broad acceptance of the result.[22]

Notwithstanding the insights offered by the aforementioned studies and others, there is a long way to go before the global community has proven methods that can be deployed to create contexts of peace and security in situations of rising instability and post conflict reconstruction. In particular, despite the growing awareness of the importance of local participation, a peacebuilding approach that is deeply rooted in the local context, informed and implemented by local communities and groups, and, simultaneously, universally applicable has yet to be discovered.

Methodology

As noted, the case study component of this project seeks to cover a specific niche. Much of the academic literature on peacebuilding privileges the role of state and international actors while the focus of the gray literature is on the programs and projects of sponsoring institutions and represents primarily the latter's view. In addition, many of the projects evaluated are those

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[22] Catherine Barnes, ed., *Owning the Process: Public Participation in Peacemaking* (London: Conciliation Resources, 2002).

which remained localized and did not have a larger impact. Since this project will review and draw from this wider literature and ultimately seeks insights on how to support and nurture change that builds from a local base, *the case studies will draw upon the insights of local and community actors in situations where it is believed that locally-owned and –driven initiatives by citizens and communities have had a meaningful impact on the prevention, resolution, or transformation of violent conflict.* The role that social and economic networks have played in these cases will be of particular interest. Notwithstanding this emphasis, it will be crucial for the case studies to examine the role of domestic and international state and non-state actors. In addition, specific programmatic or project interventions, where relevant and decisive, should obviously be covered.

Future Generations has identified several interesting cases from Guyana, Burundi, Nepal, Somalia, and Afghanistan that fit this basic profile. Future Generations will contract with consultants or organizational partners with the requisite understanding and access to local actors to research and write the case studies. Local researchers will be provided a research framework (below) to guide their research and writing. Subject to topical appropriateness and available resources, research techniques are expected to include desk study, literature review, key informant interviews, survey questionnaires, and focus groups. A research plan and schedule will be developed with each case writer that tailors the framework to local specifics. As a first step, each case writer will be asked to draft a 3-5 page overview that provides the basic outlines and overall scope of the case while identifying more specific questions that need to be answered by the research. Subject to timing and available resources, Future Generations plans to convene a workshop of case study writers to discuss preliminary results and seek common themes and contextualized principles.

Framework for Case Studies

This section provides an outline for the case study research and consists of, in effect, the questions that each researcher will "ask" his or her case. A common format is provided in order to ensure consistency of approach across the case studies and to aid in final synthesis and drawing out of lessons learned. The specific questions within each heading are offered to guide the case authors in the inquiry, although it is not expected that every question will be equally applicable to each case.

Two reminders are appropriate here. First, the questions below are shaped by the type of case being examined. The cases chosen consist of situations in which locally-driven peacebuilding initiative(s) are believed to have had an impact on the larger conflict in society. However, this does not suggest the initiative(s) in question had the only or even the most decisive impact. Other contextual factors may have been at play and the framework gives space for

the researchers to explore these. In the end, it is important not to make claims of impact that cannot be logically sustained. Second, the framework embeds assumptions about what theory might suggest has influenced success. This provides an opportunity to test whether or not these initial ideas are on the mark, but case writers should not feel bound by the framework if their case points to other factors or directly contradicts any of the initial assumptions.

1. Introduction (2 pages max)
   - Brief introduction to the country of focus.
   - Brief description of the conflict.
   - Brief description of the peacebuilding efforts to be analyzed.
   - Describe the overall aims of the study.
   - Outline the chapter structure of the case study.

2. Describe the nature and course of the conflict (3-4 pages)
   - Provide a chronological summary of the conflict and any stages through which it might have evolved.
   - What is the nature of the conflict?
   - Who are the key antagonists?
   - What are the major interests at stake according to key groups and actors?
   - What other important actors are involved in the conflict?
   - What larger structural factors and cultural attitudes influence the conflict?
   - What has been the involvement of external actors (positive and negative) in the conflict?
   - Describe what would be considered local capacities for peace. What groups, processes, institutions, and norms have helped to mitigate the conflict? What have helped fuel the conflict?

3. Describe the peacebuilding initiative(s) of interest (4-5 pages).
   - Who were the key communities, groups, actors involved in the initiative(s)? What features or capacities did they possess that helped position them to play a constructive role? What prompted these actors to take action? How were they structured and organized?
   - How did the "national" conflict impact these communities, groups, and actors? Were other types of conflict are pertinent to consider (e.g. local, regional)? At what stage of the conflict did the peacebuilding initiative(s) coalesce?
   - What action was taken at the grassroots level to prepare communities for engagement in the peacebuilding initiative(s)? What were the incentives for these communities to engage?
   - Did mobilization and collective action play a role in the peacebuilding initiative(s)? If so, how was it organized and by whom? What

obstacles did this action face within and outside the community and how were they addressed?
- Did this mobilization cross communal boundaries? How did this come about? What was the nature of any pressures from within and outside each community against this action and how was it addressed? What social and political structures militated against such bridging?
- How was a larger social consciousness or constituency for peace created? Did formal and informal social and economic networks or associations play a role? Did media play a role?
- Were any new organizations, networks, or channels of communication and cooperation created or did the peacebuilding initiative(s) rely on existing mechanisms?
- What was the role of state or governmental authorities at various levels? What constructive linkages were developed between the state and citizens/communities/networks?
- Did the groups receive assistance or support from international actors? What did these partnerships entail?

4. What was the impact of the peacebuilding initiative(s) in terms of peace and security? (10-12 pages)
   - What was the impact of the initiative(s) on the relationships among key groups in the conflict?
   - How was this impact manifested at various levels of society (local, regional, national, international)?
   - How significant was its impact at the macro level? Through what channels and pathways did it affect the larger conflict dynamic?
   - Did the peacebuilding initiative(s) shape public attitudes toward the conflict?
   - Did the initiative(s) influence actions or decisions of key political and military (or other) actors?
   - Did the initiative(s) have an impact on any of the structural factors driving the conflict?
   - Did communities experience a change in attitude toward other social groups as a result of the initiative(s)?
   - How strong and resilient were any cross-cutting ties that were created?
   - How strong and resilient were the linking relationships between groups and the state?
   - How sustainable are the results of the peacebuilding initiative(s)?
   - Describe any negative or unintended consequences of the peacebuilding initiative(s) and how significant they were?

5. What factors explain the positive impact witnessed on the overall level and course of the conflict? (8-10 pages)
   - Describe the impacts that are the result of or were influenced by the peacebuilding initiative(s) itself?

- Describe the role that other contextual factors played in influencing the overall level and course of the conflict? These might include the influence of domestic events and actors (e.g. political, military, socio-economic, environmental) or international events and actors (e.g. international organizations, neighboring countries, etc.).
- What key contextual factors reduced the impact of the initiative(s) and how could they have been mitigated?

6. Conclusion: What general and contextualized principles can be drawn from this experience? (3 pages)
   - Summarize the keys to the success of the peacebuilding initiative(s) as a result of the analysis.
   - What do these principles and lessons suggest for the role outside actors can play in supporting locally-driven peacebuilding processes that hope to have a scale-level impact?