Thematic Review on **Local Peacebuilding**

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Thematic Review on **Local Peacebuilding**

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1 All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of acronyms 1
Executive Summary 3
1. Introduction: 5
1.1 What is local peacebuilding? 6
1.2 Terminology matters 8
1.3 The importance of local peacebuilding and the role of volunteers 10
1.4 Young people's engagement in local peacebuilding 13
2. PBF Support to Local Peacebuilding 14
2.1 Fostering more meaningful partnerships between implementing agencies and local peacebuilders 16
2.2 Identifying local implementing partners 17
2.3 Conducting participatory analyses for local peacebuilding 19
2.4 Monitoring and evaluating local peacebuilding initiatives 22
3. Approaches to PBF-funded local peacebuilding programming 25
3.1 Supporting local peace structures 25
3.2 Improving inter-community and state-society relationships 29
4. Recommendations for PBF, fund applicants and recipients 34
4.1 Investing in local peacebuilding organizations and networks 35
4.2 Partner selection and project design 35
4.3 Monitoring, evaluation and learning 36
4.4. Effective programmatic approaches to local peacebuilding 37
Annexes 38
Annex I: Bibliography 38
Annex II: Research approach, data sources and analysis 44
Annex III: List of 25 PBF-funded projects selected for in-depth documentary review 48

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CAR	Central African Republic
CAC	Comités d'Action Communautaire (in Burkina Faso)
CBO	Community-based organization
CSO	Civil society organization
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration
DFF	Dialogue for the Future (in the Western Balkans)
DPPA	UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
GA	UN General Assembly
GPI	Gender Promotion Initiative
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
GYPI	Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRF	Immediate Response Facility
JMC	Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Commissions
LDP	Local Dialogue Platform
LPC	Local peace committee
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUNO	Non-UN organization (recipient of PBF funds)
ONUCI	Mission des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire
PBF	(UN Secretary-General's) Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	UN Peacebuilding Support Office

PRF	Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility
PVE	Prevention of violent extremism
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RUNO	Recipient UN Organization (of PBF funds)
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office (in the Western Balkans)
SC	UN Security Council
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
ToC	Theory of change
UN	United Nations
UNCEG	UN Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNCV	UN Community Volunteer
UNDEF	UN Democracy Fund
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UN-Habitat	UN Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UNV	UN Volunteers programme
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
YPI	Youth Promotion Initiative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THEMATIC REVIEW ON **LOCAL PEACEBUILDING**

Thematic Review on Local Peacebuilding, commissioned by the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) in partnership with PeaceNexus Foundation and UN Volunteers (UNV) programme, provides a comparative analysis of local-level peacebuilding initiatives funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) from 2015 to 2021, and situates the Fund's work against global research and practice of local peacebuilding. Informed by four case studies led by young researchers recruited through National UN Volunteers modality in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, and the Western Balkans, the Review offers insights into how local peacebuilding is conceptualized and operationalized in a range of contexts and regions, with emphasis on the involvement of young people and volunteers in local peacebuilding initiatives. The Review outlines practical recommendations for the PBF and its fund applicants and recipients as well as the community of peacebuilding practitioners at large to help guide the design of future local peacebuilding programming.

What is local peacebuilding?

The definition of 'local peacebuilding' may seem intuitive, but in practice there is a lack of clarity about what distinguishes local from other types of action. Although a clearer distinction between local and national levels within UN policy documents has begun to emerge in recent years, the terms 'local' and 'national' are still occasionally used interchangeably. Consequently, the voices, goals and concerns of actors within conflict-affected communities may become muted while national leaders speak on their behalf. In contexts where tension between national authorities and local communities is the driving force behind conflict, conflating 'national' with 'local' peacebuilding in this way threatens to contribute to underlying exclusion and grievance. Within PBSO, local peacebuilding is commonly described as efforts at the *sub-national* level or as actions that engage *local civil society*. This should be distinguished, however, from the narrower definition of 'locally-led' peacebuilding which entails that peacebuilding interventions are both designed and implemented by local actors - the definition that applies to a smaller proportion of PBF-funded projects. Consultations with local actors as part of the Thematic Review also showed that local actors in areas *not* affected by recent fighting frequently reject the term 'peacebuilding' altogether and instead focus on ways in which legacies of past conflict may still be at play. Given these sensitivities, initiatives that explicitly label themselves as 'peacebuilding efforts' and employ jargon or associated fuzzy concepts such as 'social cohesion' frequently face resistance or incomprehension by those local communities.

Fostering more meaningful partnerships between implementing agencies and local peacebuilders:

While the approval of projects with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as direct recipients of PBF funds has risen steadily over the years, CSOs still receive a smaller fraction of overall PBF support, which reflects the primary mandate of the PBF to drive more effective, more strategic, and more cohesive peacebuilding action *of the UN Country Teams*. While the PBF as a centrally managed, global instrument may not be the ideal donor for small, grassroots organizations, the Review recommends the PBF to identify ways in which it can foster stronger and more meaningful partnerships between its fund recipients and local peacebuilders, enhancing system-wide accountability to conflict-affected populations. The Review found that the majority of PBF-funded projects are designed by fund recipients in a top-down fashion, without significant influence by local actors on project priorities and objectives. In pushing for greater engagement of and mutual accountability with local communities, the PBF and its fund recipients must be sensitive to questions about which organizations or actors get to speak on behalf of which communities.

Identifying local implementing partners and conducting participatory analyses:

While most PBF-funded projects do involve local CSOs or other local peacebuilding partners in the implementation of project activities, most proposals typically lack information on the nature of local implementing partners, how those partners were selected and whether or how they have contributed to proposal design. The exception to this finding is proposals received through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI) annual competitive call, which places a greater emphasis on transparency around local partnerships. The Review recommends the PBF to extend the lessons learned from the GYPI competitive call to its regular programming in order to hold fund recipients more accountable to inclusive and transparent project design. The Review also reveals that frequently, the same implementing partners – who are not always representative of relevant groups and social strata – are tapped over and over by the fund recipients, thus risking exacerbating unequal power dynamics, enabling corruption, or creating participation fatigue among the local stakeholders. The Review therefore emphasizes the need for a wider practice of conducting local stakeholder analyses, which are essential to be able to fully map and assess local actors' contribution to conflict or peace and to identify those who may potentially oppose the project's aims.

Measuring impact of local peacebuilding initiatives:

The Review notes that many PBF-funded local peacebuilding projects focus on measuring change narrowly at the activity level (such as the number of people trained), or at the output level (for example, whether training participants learned new information measured through pre- and post-training tests) and miss the more meaningful peacebuilding change that those actions were meant to produce. It is important, however, to be able to identify the strategic contribution of a given project to a larger peacebuilding landscape at the outset of a project development. The Review also notes concerns about the quality of indicators used to measure local peacebuilding which often miss the mark in measuring peacebuilding change that is meaningful to community stakeholders. The Review therefore recommends the PBF and recipient agencies to support community-led processes of measuring peacebuilding change at the local level, including through encouraging the bottom-up development of 'everyday peace indicators', conducting community-led perception surveys, as well as amplifying the voices of beneficiary communities by meaningfully engaging them in peacebuilding community-based monitoring and evaluation processes. The Review also recommends that PBF-funded projects should recognize volunteerism and the contributions of volunteers to help build sustainability, promote local ownership and leverage the networks and knowledge of local actors.

Approaches to PBF-funded local peacebuilding programming:

The Review identifies two predominant approaches used in PBF-funded peacebuilding projects at the local level: (1) supporting local peace structures, and (2) improving inter-community and state-society relationships. While local peace structures supported by PBF-funded projects have been mostly effective at resolving local conflict, these mechanisms often have limitations on the type and number of conflicts they can resolve. Nonetheless, through training and key action-oriented activities, and in the context of a structured mechanism, members often build their confidence and skills to resolve localized conflicts. To create sustainable change, the Review recommends the PBF to ensure that there is an alignment between 'the local' and 'the national' in project proposals regardless of where most activities will take place, and emphasizes that local-national linkages need to be deliberately built into projects and sufficiently resourced.

The Review also highlights that PBF-funded local peacebuilding projects that aim to improve inter-community relationships primarily focus on creating individual-level change, therefore, the impact of such interventions with regards to scale and contributions towards long-term conflict resolution remains unclear. However, such initiatives often bring together diverse groups of individuals for the first time which, in turn, helps elevate the role of particular segments of society such as women or youth. Local volunteerism also helps enhance inter-community trust, build social capital, promote inclusion, and enhance overall effectiveness of local-level relationship building interventions by international or national actors. The Review further notes that state-society relationship building is often difficult, particularly in circumstances of conflict where the state has eroded the social contract or has been the perpetrator of harm. The Review finds small grant facilities particularly helpful to build trust between citizens and government representatives as they work on co-creating concrete and tangible initiatives. Nonetheless, the Review warns about sustainability concerns, pointing out the extreme fragility of the trust that is built during the relatively short duration of projects which do not always provide enough time for this new trust to take root.

INTRODUCTION:

The impetus behind local peacebuilding and the role of youth and volunteerism

Over the past decade, the United Nations and the broader international peacebuilding community have committed to building stronger foundations for sustainable peace. In his 2020 Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, the UN Secretary-General acknowledged the need to not only focus on actors and peace processes at the central state level but also to support "locally owned, led and implemented peacebuilding capacities and activities."[2] The report underscored that for peace to be successfully built and sustained, efforts are needed to strengthen leadership, accountability and capacity to mitigate, manage, and settle conflict at the local, national, and regional levels. These efforts require a deeper engagement with local communities and partnerships with local civil society that are based on inclusive approaches and processes. Importantly, such engagement must also be inclusive and the UN's approach to local peacebuilding has maintained a particular emphasis on the engagement and leadership of youth and women, coupled with an understanding that successful local peacebuilding relies upon a foundation of committed community volunteers.[3]

Strengthening local peacebuilding has also been a priority of the UN Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) engagement in recent years: according to the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), more than 80 PBF-funded projects between 2015-2021 have had an explicit local peacebuilding component. These projects have supported a wide range of activities, from the restoration or extension of local state authorities to capacity building of local peacebuilders, strengthening local mediation capacities, and empowering the participation of young women and men in decision making at the local level. A 2017-2019 PBF Synthesis Review commended the results of PBF-funded local peacebuilding initiatives, highlighting "the critical role of national and local civil society actors for effective and sustainable peacebuilding."[4] The Synthesis Review also highlighted that "local non-governmental actors frequently have more direct and trusted access to critical locations and communities, and represent an ongoing presence in-country, as compared to international actors."[5]

In response, the PBF's 2020-2024 strategy commits the PBF to "supporting local-level and community-based processes to complement high-level mediation efforts" as well as ensuring "more flexible funding to local-level organizations, with modalities adjusted to different capacity levels from context to context."[6] In addition, in 2021 the Peacebuilding Fund's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI), for the first time, issued a call for proposals that explicitly focused on supporting local peacebuilding initiatives and encouraged the involvement of volunteer organizations in project design and activities.[7]

This Thematic Review on Local Peacebuilding, commissioned by the PBSO in partnership with PeaceNexus Foundation and UN Volunteers (UNV) programme, represents a commitment to continuous learning and to improving programming and financing for local peacebuilding initiatives. Its goal is to provide a review of the practice of local peacebuilding in PBF-funded projects from 2015 to 2021 and situate the Fund's work against global research and practice of local peacebuilding. It offers

2 Report of the Secretary-General, *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace* (A/74/976). 2020: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/203/77/PDF/N2020377.pdf?OpenElement.

3 UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). 2020. *UN Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un_community-engagement_guidelines.august_2020.pdf.

4 Ernstorfer, Anita. 2020. *Synthesis Review: PBF project and portfolio evaluations 2017-2019*, p. 23, New York: UN Peacebuilding Fund: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/synthesis_review_final_report.pdf.

5 Ibid., p. 6.

6 UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). 2020. *2020-2024 Strategy*: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_strategy_2020-2024_final.pdf.

7 UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). 2021. *Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives*: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/gypi-en.

practical recommendations to help guide future PBF investments in local peacebuilding programming, with particular attention paid to youth-focused and volunteer-engaging interventions.[8] The recommendations are intended to improve future programming design within the current PBF funding mandate and modalities.

The Review is based on a mixed methods research approach derived from three main sources of data. First, a detailed review of international academic, policy-oriented, and practitioner literature on local peacebuilding including a review of policies and practices within the UN system. Second, a desk review of 87 PBF-funded projects with a local peacebuilding component that were implemented from 2015 to 2021, and a more detailed document review of 25 selected PBF-funded projects that examined project documents, reports, and evaluations. Third, the Review is enriched by four case studies led by five young researchers recruited through National UN Volunteers modality.[9] The case studies provide in-depth insights into how local peacebuilding is conceptualized and operationalized in a range of contexts and regions, with particular emphasis on the views and involvement of young people in local peacebuilding initiatives. The case studies analyzed local peacebuilding in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, and the Western Balkans through 133 key informant interviews and 37 focus group discussions with staff from UN and civil society fund recipient organizations and their implementing partners, local authorities, and project beneficiaries. Nineteen (19) interviews and three group discussions with UN staff and global civil society representatives conducted by the lead consultant complemented research by the five local researchers. More details on the research approach are provided in Annex II. The list of 25 PBF-funded projects that were closely reviewed can be found in Annex III.

1.1 WHAT IS LOCAL PEACEBUILDING?

Peacebuilding as a concept dates back to the mid-1970s, when the term was coined by Johan Galtung as a method for creating an environment supportive of positive peace.[10] Approaches to developing this environment eventually split into two major schools, one espoused by then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his seminal work, *An Agenda for Peace*, and the other by John Paul Lederach in his twin publications, *Preparing for Peace* and *Building Peace*.[11] Whereas Boutros-Ghali emphasized the importance of rebuilding institutions and infrastructures, Lederach advocated for improving relationships as a means to engendering reconciliation. These two approaches, representing emphases on institutions and relationships respectively, have come to be known by the terms 'liberal' and 'communitarian' peacebuilding, with the former focusing on norms of good governance and the latter focusing on the importance of local traditions and cultures.[12]

By the mid-2000s liberal peacebuilding had become the dominant form of interaction supported by the UN and donors from the global north. Its advocates argued that it was the best available approach to supporting post-conflict and fragile states, and that its goal of encouraging functional states and good governance were vital to long-term peace and stability.[13] However, the many problems that came with liberal peacebuilding approaches led to

8 The Review adopted a contextually specific definition of "youth." While for the UN youth is defined as any person between 15 and 24 years of age, case study researchers utilized context-specific definitions and self-definitions by youth-focused project participants or youth representatives of civil society. In many societies any person up to their mid- to late 30s may be considered young or part of youth.

9 See short summaries of the case study conflict context and PBF-funded projects at the end of Annex II.

10 Johan Galtung, *Essays in peace research* (Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1975). Galtung also coined the terms positive and negative peace, noting that the latter was the absence of direct violence while the former was the absence of social structures that limited the life choices of certain individuals, or in other words, the absence of structural violence. See Brock-Utne, Brigit. *Feminist Perspectives on Peace and Peace Education*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1989 and Galtung, Johan. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." *Journal of peace research* 6, no. 3 (1969): pp. 167-92.

11 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An agenda for peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peace-keeping: report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the summit meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992* (New York: United Nations, 1992); John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures*, ed. Harriet Hyman Alonso, Charles Chatfield, and Louis Kriesberg, Syracuse Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); John Paul Lederach, *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 1997).

12 Donais, Timothy. Peacebuilding and local ownership: post-conflict and consensus-building, *Studies in conflict, development and peacebuilding*. New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 5.

13 Paris, Roland. *At war's end: building peace after civil conflict*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

a number of critiques and attempts to rectify the practice. Foremost among the critiques is the notion that liberal peacebuilding is a top-down approach, wherein international actors direct peacebuilding priorities and approaches while the voices of national governments and local stakeholders are somewhat muted.[14] More recent variants of the top-down approach that seek greater grounding in "nationally-led peacebuilding" have over-emphasized the leadership of national actors while deemphasizing the voice and agency of local actors and communities. This disconnect between the international, national, and local led to what Mac Ginty has characterized as 'hybrid peacebuilding', where international actors push top-down projects and programs, while local stakeholders resist either taking full ownership or bending the programs to their own goals.[15]

The result of these tensions has been the emergence of a field known as 'critical peacebuilding' and a push for the inclusion and widening of local ownership, both academically and in peacebuilding practice, a movement that is widely described as the 'local turn' in peacebuilding research and practice. Although broadly described and, at times, widely critiqued, the local turn is best defined as "an everyday and emancipatory type" of peace that is informed by critical and post-structural approaches, post-colonial scholarship and practice, and the work of a broader range of states and scholars from the global south as well as the global north.[16] As such, the local turn is most concerned with hearing and amplifying the voices of those on the frontlines of peacebuilding, and with expanding notions of ownership by enabling local stakeholders to impact or guide the projects that are meant to improve their lives.[17]

The shifting focus of peacebuilding through the local turn begs the question of how local peacebuilding itself is defined. On the surface, the definition of 'local peacebuilding' may seem intuitive, but in practice a lack of clarity about what distinguishes local from other types of action as well as a blurring of lines between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding interventions can result in confusion and, occasionally, conflicting approaches or aims. Within global headquarters of international or multilateral institutions, or from the capitals of donor nations, a long-standing practice has been to refer to any intervention meant to sustain peace within a country setting as 'local', regardless of whether the locus of engagement is with national institutions and leadership or at the local community or village level.[18] Although a clearer distinction between the local and national levels within UN policy documents has begun to emerge in recent years, the terms 'local' and 'national' are still occasionally used interchangeably. As a consequence, the voices, goals and concerns of actors within conflict-affected communities may become muted while national leaders speak on their behalf. In contexts where tension between national authorities and local communities is the driving force behind conflict, conflating 'national' with 'local' peacebuilding in this way threatens to contribute to underlying exclusion and grievance.

Mirroring the conflation noted above within policy documents, some UN staff engaged in peacebuilding projects similarly consider any kind of peace-oriented work within a country as 'local peacebuilding'. Others consider any kind of work that focuses on or works through civil society, regardless of the level of the implementing agency, to be part of 'local' peacebuilding. More frequently, however, among UN staff engaged in the hands-on, project-based work that the PBF finances, local peacebuilding is understood through geographical or administrative distinctions. A common understanding sees local peacebuilding as any kind of activity that addresses conflict and longer-term peacebuilding at the 'sub-national' level, i.e. not related to the central state and its institutions. This definition typically has both a geographical dimension since it is generally implemented outside of a country's capital, as well as an administrative dimension insofar as it engages actors and institutions at administrative levels below that of the central state.

14 Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland: conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*, ed. Keith Darden and Ian Shapiro, Problems of International Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

15 Mac Ginty, Roger. *International peacebuilding and local resistance: hybrid forms of peace*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

16 Mac Ginty, Roger and Oliver P. Richmond, "The Local Turn in Peace Building: a critical agenda for peace," *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2013), p. 763, 769.

17 Ibid; Hancock, E. Landon. "Agency & peacebuilding: the promise of local zones of peace," *Peacebuilding* 5, no. 3 (2017).

18 Boutros Boutros-Ghali. 1992. *An agenda for peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peace-keeping: Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the summit meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992*. New York: United Nations: https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/A_47_277.pdf; *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (2000) (A/55/305–S/2000/809): https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/55/305; *Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in a More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (2004): https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/hlp_more_secure_world.pdf.

> *"Essentially, when we speak about local peacebuilding, it is the same peacebuilding, but in the communities and districts, the one which directly affects people. Local peacebuilding in this sense addresses the root causes of conflict and tries to transform the conflicts by changing the fundamental parameters of how the society functions."*
>
> – RCO staff, **Kyrgyzstan**

Within the PBSO, local peacebuilding is commonly described as efforts at the *sub-national* level or as actions that engage *local civil society*.[19] Civil society in this sense is understood as "any collective civic arena of individuals, organizations, social movements, networks or coalitions that act or organize formally or informally on behalf of, or to advance, shared interests, values, objectives or goals" and that are distinct "from government or private actors."[20] This includes any youth, women, or volunteer organization that is not part of the central government. In that sense, it includes all efforts, at any geographical level, that do not target central state institutions or private sector actors. An alternative to defining local peacebuilding by geographic or administrative level is to examine the process of designing an initiative and assess to what extent it is locally driven and owned, an approach often adopted by International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). PeaceDirect, for example, considers 'locally-led' peacebuilding to be initiatives in which "local people, groups and civil society organisations design their own approaches and set priorities, whilst outsiders may assist with resources." In this view, external actors provide funding and may facilitate processes, but the strategy and substance of local peacebuilding activities are defined and implemented by local peacebuilders.[21]

This Review pulls from both approaches to defining the 'local'. First, it recognizes that geographical and administrative level distinctions are helpful to determine where and with whom local peacebuilding initiatives should engage. It also underscores, however, that mere 'targeting' of appropriate levels is not enough. Instead, truly locally-led peacebuilding support must also engage actors at those levels in the prioritization, design, implementation, and assessment of such initiatives to ensure that what gets implemented responds to the concerns and aspirations of conflict-affected communities.

1.2 TERMINOLOGY MATTERS

Approaches to local peacebuilding that aim to partner with local communities must first and foremost be able to convincingly demonstrate their relevance and usefulness to community members in language that communities recognize. In this regard, the concepts used to describe the aims and approaches funded by external actors need to resonate with how local actors view their communities and articulate visions for the future. Respondents to this Thematic Review confirmed that use of jargon or fuzzy concepts, such as 'social cohesion' or 'reconciliation' for example, while common in academic literature or international peacebuilding, tend to be inscrutable to local actors and inhibit their participation.

In addition to the problem of so-called fuzzy concepts, local actors may view the problems in their communities very different from outsiders and may reject altogether others' descriptions of the situation and recommended approaches to resolving local tensions. The Review saw these two points coming together during consultations in

19 See, for example, the UN Peacebuilding Fund's 2021 Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative Call for Proposals and Guidance Note, with the theme of "promoting meaningful participation of women and youth in local peacebuilding": https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/gypi_call_for_proposal_and_guidance_note_2021._english_.pdf.

20 UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). 2020. *UN Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*, pp.5-6: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un_community-engagement_guidelines.august_2020.pdf.

21 PeaceDirect. 2019. *Towards locally-led peacebuilding: Defining 'local'*. London, UK: PeaceDirect: https://www.peacedirect.org/us/publications/towards-locally-led-peacebuilding-defining-local/.

the Western Balkans, where a regional initiative named "Dialogue for the Future" sought to engage young people across various ethnic groups and entity boundaries to break down stereotypes and encourage cooperative relations to build a better future.[22] While respondents reported that they were generally in favor of the initiative, when project managers initially described the aims of the project as 'enhancing social cohesion', it generated only a lack of clarity and confusion. An even greater barrier for young women's and men's participation was the use of the well-worn and politically loaded term 'reconciliation' in the Western Balkan context, which was rejected altogether by youth since they had not participated in the war and did not harbor grievances or resentments of the past that may persist in older generations. Instead, they recognized that as a consequence of the war they shared many of the same challenges as youth in other locations but had few opportunities to establish relationships or develop a common vision of the future with them. Hence, the main goals of the project were deemed relevant by stakeholders, but the terminology initially used to describe the initiative was an unnecessary barrier to stakeholders' early acceptance.

> *"Reconciliation has no place among young people. As they were not at war with each other, they do not need to be reconciled."*
>
> – Implementing partner, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

COST. (Belgium) - Cartooning for Peace

22 PBF/IRF-295, PBF/IRF-296, PBF/IRF-297: Fostering Dialogue and social cohesion in and between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113873.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PEACEBUILDING AND THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS

There is consensus among academics, policymakers, and practitioners on the general principle that peace must be built, and conflict mitigated or prevented, as much at the sub-national as at the national or supra-national level. Evidence shows that there are important reasons to address local-level conflicts. Almost 50 per cent of violent conflicts within countries reoccur at least once, while 35 per cent of them recur more than once and among the same actors.[23] These conflicts are known as 'protracted social conflicts', rooted in "religious, cultural or ethnic communal identity" and may lay dormant for years until triggered by underlying social conditions, resulting in renewed violence, repeated displacement, and humanitarian crises.[24] A recent European Union study on global megatrends – such as climate change, digitalization, and the fragmentation of global governance and their impact on peacebuilding – highlights the importance of localized interventions and solutions to mitigate the impact of these polarizing dynamics and to prevent the outbreak of future violent conflict.[25]

In addition to efficiency and effectiveness arguments for engaging in local peacebuilding, the impetus for local peacebuilding is also rooted in normative stances from a human rights perspective. The point of departure for the notion of a 'social contract', for example, begins by recognizing the universal rights of individuals from which formal institutions of the state – and through them the rule of law – emerge to adjudicate among the interests and actions of individuals.[26] Individuals' rights and opportunities to pursue goals and voice their own views, then, is the very foundation of a social contract. Open, transparent, and participatory governing processes, in fact, depend on the vibrant engagement of ordinary people – whether acting in their capacity as individuals or through collectivities in the civil sphere. Nowhere is this symbiotic relationship more evident than at the local level, where the actions of individuals and associations have the most direct and immediate impact.

As far back as the 18th century experiments in democracy, observers such as Alexis de Tocqueville have been struck by the willingness of individuals at the local level to engage in decision making, to bind together through mutual interests within associations, and to volunteer their time and money for the common good. This engagement at the local level, what Tocqueville referred to as 'the art of joining', was seen to ward off social and political ills such as excessive individualism, the tyranny of the majority, and the hyper centralization of bureaucratic states that are divorced from their populations and deaf to their goals.[27] The importance of volunteering continues to the present day and volunteers have become vital to the success of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts at the local level. This differs in many ways from national or regional-level peacebuilding initiatives, which are characterized by greater involvement of paid professionals. Therefore, any study of local peacebuilding efforts needs to pay close attention to the role of volunteerism.

For this Review, volunteerism is defined as "a wide range of activities undertaken of free will, for the general public good, for which monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor."[28] This definition is closely aligned with the concept of civic engagement. Volunteerism and civic engagement are key for community resilience and are especially important in contexts where state institutions are weak and formal civil society is spread thin. Individual volunteers and volunteer organizations can be particularly effective at the local level, where their close community ties help engender trustful relationships. Channeling Tocqueville's observations, they also often demonstrate greater motivation to engage on certain issues since their desire to positively contribute to their communities drives their actions, rather than an interest in material gain or personal advancement.

Evidence from evaluations of PBF-funded projects suggests that most project participants engage in activities on a voluntary basis and are motivated

23 Jarland, Julie; Håvard Mokleiv Nygård; Scott Gates; Emilie Hermansen & Vilde Bergstad Larsen. 2020. *How Should We Understand Patterns of Recurring Conflict?*, Conflict Trends, 3. Oslo: PRIO: https://www.prio.org/publications/12303.

24 Edward E. Azar, *The management of protracted social conflict: theory and cases* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1990)., p. 6

25 Mustasilta, Katariina. 2021. *The Future of Conflict Prevention: Preparing for a hotter, increasingly digital and fragmented 2030*. Chaillot Papers 167. European Union Institute of Security Studies: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/CP_167_0.pdf.

26 The concept of the social contract has seen a resurgence within the United Nations, following the Secretary-General's Report *Our Common Agenda* (2021) https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/, which outlined a vision of strengthened multilateralism and global solidarity based in part on renewed social contracts between Governments and their people.

27 De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. Saunders and Otley: London, 1835, Henry Reeve trans.

28 UN Volunteers (UNV) Programme. *Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism*: https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/volunteerism.

by altruistic values. For example, in South Sudan, young women who were trained by the project volunteered to de-escalate conflicts at water points. A project participant interviewed for the evaluation shared: ***"After receiving the knowledge and skills, I was able to speak with the older women about the skills in addressing the conflicts at the water points. They agreed with the suggestion that we should volunteer as supervisors to ensure that there is order at the water points."***[29] In Myanmar, a project participant shared: ***"I spent my own time and for example used my own car. I was not reimbursed any expense, but I was happy to do so because it is for peace."***[30] Research also shows that young people report gaining "valuable experience, self-esteem, awareness, voice, social status, and larger and more diversified social networks" from volunteering.[31]

The kinds of social capital that volunteers bring to their interactions with others imbues them with important personal characteristics, knowledge, and relationships that make them particularly effective in supporting local reconciliation and inter-group understanding. Volunteerism, moreover, has been shown to reinforce volunteers' own positive dispositions toward others. For example, research in Kenya has found that youth who joined volunteer peace initiatives reported more trust for members from other ethnic groups and stronger belief in the capacity of different communities living together peacefully.[32] In various contexts, youth volunteers take an active part in conflict or violence prevention efforts through early warning and response systems.[33] A recent large-scale study of volunteerism for peace and development in the Sahel, with responses from more than 58,000 volunteers in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, found that volunteers contribute in significant ways to fighting violent extremism and radicalization, supporting vigilance and self-defense committees, and providing legal assistance.[34] They also participate in conflict prevention, social cohesion, mediation, and facilitation of dialogue.

As more and more countries have explicit national volunteer strategies and policies, volunteers can also be mobilized for peacebuilding initiatives in more formal ways. Existing networks and volunteer organizations can be used to access broader groups of people, including very often young people, or provide outreach and access to wider audiences for pro-peace messages across countries and regions. Volunteerism may also work to transform negative dynamics or actions. In Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire, for example, youth involved in hate speech or violence during electoral cycles have been supported through volunteerism to shift away from violence and work toward prevention. Formal volunteering can also promote inclusion of other marginalized groups at the local level, for example, empowering women and ensuring women's participation at the local decision-making bodies through their formal engagement as community volunteers.[35]

In addition to enhancing trust, building social capital, and promoting inclusion, local volunteerism can also enhance the effectiveness of interventions by international peacebuilding actors or national institutions. Local volunteer actors can be connectors between these external actors and local communities; they can advise on community contexts, power dynamics and norms; they can connect to hidden or marginalized groups; and they can support long-term feedback mechanisms and monitoring.[36] For example, in some countries experiencing sustained periods of conflict, local volunteers have supported international aid organizations to deliver essential services by advising on needs, vulnerabilities, and key people with whom to engage.[37] It should be noted that engaging with local volunteer groups must be carefully considered to ensure existing power imbalances are not exacerbated.

29 Venturi, Bernando and Kuyang Logo. 2021. *Final Evaluation Report "Strengthening Young Women's Participation in Local and National Peace Processes in South Sudan*. Search for Common Ground. p.19, PBF/IRF-328: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00119222.

30 Banim, Guy Patrick and Tin Maung Maung Ohn. 2019. *Final Independent Evaluation of the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC) Support*, PBF/IRF-148: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00103670.

31 Simpson, Graeme; UNFPA; UN Peacebuilding Support Office. 2018. *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/youth/youth-web-english.pdf.

32 Example cited on UNV *Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism: Peacebuilding and Volunteering:* https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/peacebuilding-and-volunteering.

33 Ibid.

34 UN Economic Commission for Africa African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), UN Volunteers (UNV), Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF). 2019. *The Contribution strategy of Volunteerism to Peace and Development in the G5 Sahel Countries*: https://knowledge.unv.org/evidence-library/the-contribution-of-volunteerism-to-peace-and-development-in-the-g5-sahel-countries.

35 UN Volunteers (UNV) Programme. 2018. *State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2018: The thread that binds - Volunteerism and community resilience*, pp.62-63: https://unv-swvr2018.org/files/51692_UNV_SWVR_2018_WEB.pdf.

36 Ibid. pp. 58-69.

37 Ibid. p 68.

> *"We need to mainstream volunteerism among local action plans…it would guarantee sustainability and ownership, and basically responsibility for the local authorities to support certain volunteering actions, or to even allocate some budget for that."*
>
> – IOM staff, **Kyrgyzstan**

In recognition of its net benefits, volunteerism has been gaining traction as an important component across a range of UN-managed peacebuilding strategies, policies and guidance over the past decade.[38] In 2009, the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict" called for the support of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to identify civilian capacities in post-conflict environments and to establish a programme for deploying UN Volunteers with relevant expertise as peacebuilders. The Independent Review of Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict in 2011 built on these commitments to recommend more effective use of volunteers for strengthening civilian capacities for peacebuilding and identified UNV as a lead resource for such capacity within the UN system. The Review also identified volunteer mechanisms, such as community-based voluntary action and regional and subregional volunteer rosters, as effective means of augmenting peacebuilding capacity.[39]

The 2012 UN General Assembly Resolutions on integrating volunteerism into the next decade and beyond further call upon UN Member States and stakeholders to integrate volunteerism into "peacebuilding and conflict-prevention activities, as appropriate, to build social cohesion and solidarity".[40] The 2020 United Nations Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace advise peacebuilding practitioners to not "over-bureaucratize grassroot and volunteer-driven youth civil society actors" while building their organizational capacities and promoting engagement at the local level.[41] The 2020 Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system recognized that volunteerism "can be a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", calling for the promotion of volunteerism to enhance the sustainability of results.[42] The 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report also called for the use of volunteerism to build more equal societies by empowering marginalized groups and promoting their inclusion in collaborative decision-making.[43]

38 Despite this "net benefit", volunteerism is not without challenges and constraints. In many contexts, local volunteers are as much a part of local hierarchies, including the socio-economic and political power dynamics, as other actors in the local peacebuilding space. In addition to potentially supporting socio-economic or cultural hierarchies, volunteer associations may also reproduce unhelpful gender disparities. The Sahel survey noted above, for example, found fewer women within volunteer associations than men, and that national volunteering agencies mainly target people under 35 years of age. While engaging volunteers has the potential to advance social goods, peacebuilders must consider the question of who gets to volunteer and how.

39 *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict: Independent Report of the Senior Advisory Group* (A/65/747-S/2011/85). 2011: https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/747.

40 *Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond* (A/RES/70/129). 2015: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/438/95/PDF/N1543895.pdf?OpenElement.

41 UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). 2020. *UN Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*:https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un_community-engagement_guidelines.august_2020.pdf.

42 *Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system* (A/RES/75/233). 2020: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/381/87/PDF/N2038187.pdf?OpenElement.

43 UN Volunteers (UNV) Programme. 2021. *State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2022: Building Equal and Inclusive Societies*, p.5: https://swvr2022.unv.org/.

1.4 YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL PEACEBUILDING

> *"The added value of engaging young people in peacebuilding is that youth are less bound to the emotions of the past events but are still raised in circumstances that are a product of those. In this way, they are the actors that can be very useful in peacebuilding."*
>
> – Excerpt from a focus group discussion with RYCO project beneficiaries, **Western Balkans**

Passage of the 2015 Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security (UNSCR 2250) formally recognized what many had long known to be true: young women and men play crucial positive roles in sustaining peace despite frequently being overlooked or stigmatized as either instigators of conflict or as victims. Young people's inclusion in peacebuilding initiatives recognizes that for peace to be sustainable, it must be inclusive of everyone's views, goals and unique challenges. Recognition of young people's right to participate and lead peacebuilding initiatives, however, occasionally clashes with cultural or traditional practices that subordinate young people's voices and actions to those of elders. Even when the positive role young people play has been recognized, they have often been included as subjects of peacebuilding efforts rather than as agents who articulate their own visions and drive change. This type of programming takes a top-down approach to the relationship between 'adults' who develop and promote such programs and youth who participate in them, approaches that mirror the same custodial logic that has characterized critiques of liberal peacebuilding as a whole, namely that young people are often treated as passive recipients, lacking the capacity for agency. For these reasons, UNSCR 2250 offered a groundbreaking shift and committed the UN and other actors to enhancing support to youth-led and youth-responsive peacebuilding initiatives.

Examples of young people's engagement from locales as diverse as Colombia,[44] Israel-Palestine,[45] Kosovo,[46] Bosnia and Herzegovina and Northern Ireland,[47] moreover, illustrate the activism of youth and their desire to have a hand in addressing the past and shaping their own destinies. Young people have been involved in social transitions and nonviolent movements in different contexts, including the April 6 movement in Egypt and the Kmara ("Enough!") movement in the Republic of Georgia, to name a few. Moreover, there are strong linkages between youth peacebuilders and volunteerism, with up to 97 per cent of personnel of youth peacebuilding organizations being volunteers.[48] This emphasizes young people's willingness to be proactive participants in shaping their communities' peaceful present and prosperous futures.

Since 2015, youth engagement and leadership has come to be seen as essential for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustaining Peace Resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282). The UNSCR 2250 and the 2018 Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security[49] provide a comprehensive agenda for a more systematic involvement of young people in peacebuilding, while a handbook on implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda commissioned in 2020 by UNFPA, UNDP and PBSO with support from Folke Bernadotte Academy, provides practical

44 Masullo, Juan. Civilian Noncooperation as a source of Legitimacy: Innovative Youth Reactions in the face of Local Violence, in *Local Peacebuilding and Legitimacy: Interactions between National and Local Levels*, ed. Landon E. Hancock and Christopher Mitchell. London: Routledge, 2018.

45 Lazarus, Ned. Evaluating SEEDs of Peace: Assessing Long-Term Impact in a Volatile Context, in *Peace education evaluation: learning from experience and exploring prospects*, ed. Celina Del Felice, Aaron Karako, and Andria Wisler. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2015.

46 Summary Report, "Kosovo Consultation for the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security." 2017: https://www.youth4peace.info/node/281

47 Helsing, Jeff et al., Young People's Activism and the Transition to Peace: Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Israel, in *Troublemakers or peacemakers?: youth and post-accord peacebuilding*, ed. Siobhán McEvoy-Levy. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

48 Simpson, Graeme; UNFPA; UN Peacebuilding Support Office. 2018. *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*, p.41: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/youth/youth-web-english.pdf.

49 Ibid.

suggestions for how to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate youth-inclusive peacebuilding.[50] These policy and guidance materials are grounded in the recognition that young women and men are often active members of society who would be ready to engage if offered the space and means.

The UN-wide emphasis on the role of young people in peacebuilding has been supported by the PBF since 2016, through its annual Youth Promotion Initiative (YPI), a competitive call for proposals for youth-focused peacebuilding projects, the only UN funding mechanism specifically dedicated to financing implementation of UNSCR 2250. The PBF has approved more than $105 million through 83 YPI projects between 2016-2021, including through funding to international, national, and local civil society organizations.[51] PBF's investments into YPI projects continue to increase year-on-year, and the PBF now requires its fund recipients to allocate at least 40 per cent of the project budget to national or local implementing partners, particularly women- or youth-led civil society organizations. A scan of YPI projects since 2016, moreover indicates that the majority of PBF-funded youth-led initiatives are aimed at peacebuilding changes at the local level.

> *"Young people are very important for peacebuilding, and therefore it is important that they are equal implementing actors, and not just beneficiaries."*
>
> – Implementing partner, **Burkina Faso**

In recognition of the central role young peacebuilders play, especially within their local communities, this Review maintains a focus on the degree and quality of their engagement and analyzes outcomes at the local level based on their participation. This Review, moreover, extends PBSO's commitment to supporting young peacebuilders' implementation of local peacebuilding initiatives by carving out a leading role for young researchers in the data collection and analysis that contributed to the evidence base for this Review. By partnering with young researchers, the PBSO seeks to model good practice in the active role of young people throughout all phases of peacebuilding programming, from conceptualization to the evaluation of outcomes.

2. PBF SUPPORT TO LOCAL PEACEBUILDING

The PBF was established by twin resolutions of the General Assembly (GA) and Security Council (SC) in 2006, with the Terms of Reference that emphasized the leadership and ownership of national authorities in determining the scale, scope and thematic focus of PBF's support.[52] Member States established the Fund to resolve a problematic gap in financing for the UN's support to countries seeking to implement peace agreements in the wake of conflict. In these settings, humanitarian financing instruments rightly draw down as the emergency triggered by the conflict subsides. Funding for development work, however, is typically slow to materialize, creating a fiscal cliff at the most critical time, when transition governments need to demonstrate the benefits of peace to war-ravaged populations. The PBF was established to fill that gap and ensure that UN Country Teams in these settings have timely access to funding in order to support fragile peace.

Reflecting the tendency to privilege the priorities of national authorities, in those early days the Fund's mandate was driven by the notion of 'peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict' and was set up to drive more cohesive and effective UN support to national governments' implementation of peace agreements after war. Tensions over whether and how to engage in preventative work and – even more controversially – to support early peacebuilding

50 United Nations and Folke Bernadotte Academy. 2021. *Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook*. New York: United Nations: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/yps_programming_handbook.pdf.

51 For more details on the GYPI annual call for proposals see https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/gypi-en.

52 *UN Peacebuilding Fund's Terms of Reference*, rev. 2009: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/tors_-_pbf_0.pdf.

efforts in the midst of conflict emerged from the beginning, as peacebuilding actors quickly recognized that conflicts do not progress in a neat, linear manner nor are conflict dynamics the same across different sets of communities and territories even within the same country. The PBF would have to wait until 2016 for the recognition of a more holistic approach to peacebuilding through the passage of the concurrent GA and SC Resolutions on Sustaining Peace (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282). The resolutions recognized that conflicts are neither linear nor uniform throughout a territory and encouraged a more context-specific and inclusive peacebuilding before, during and after conflict. This UN system-wide policy change, in turn, prompted a healthy shift within the PBF that has resulted in increasing engagement of local communities and investment into their efforts to sustain peace.

The same year that the PBF began this shift toward a more nuanced approach to localized peacebuilding, it also began to direct funding to CSOs for the first time in its ten year history. In clearing the way for direct funding to CSOs, the PBF was in part acknowledging that inclusive peacebuilding benefits from the relative but quite different strengths of UN and CSO actors. UN actors, with their closer ties to line Ministries and Governments, are well positioned to encourage institutional and policy reforms meant to ameliorate structural or institutional inequalities that drive grievances and exacerbate conflict dynamics. Oftentimes, however, the success or failure of national government's policies on conflict prevention, reconciliation or social cohesion rests with how these policy initiatives are received by local communities. Extending its funding to CSOs, which are typically more grounded in local communities, was viewed by the Fund as a complement to its funding to UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, and a change that could help UN Country Teams build stronger partnerships with local communities, while encouraging CSOs to engage beyond the community level. Since its first allocations to CSOs in 2016, the PBF has aimed to strike a balance between these distinct relative advantages, acknowledging the need to reflect the needs and visions of local actors while at the same time encouraging farther-reaching systemic change that goes beyond individual actors and communities.

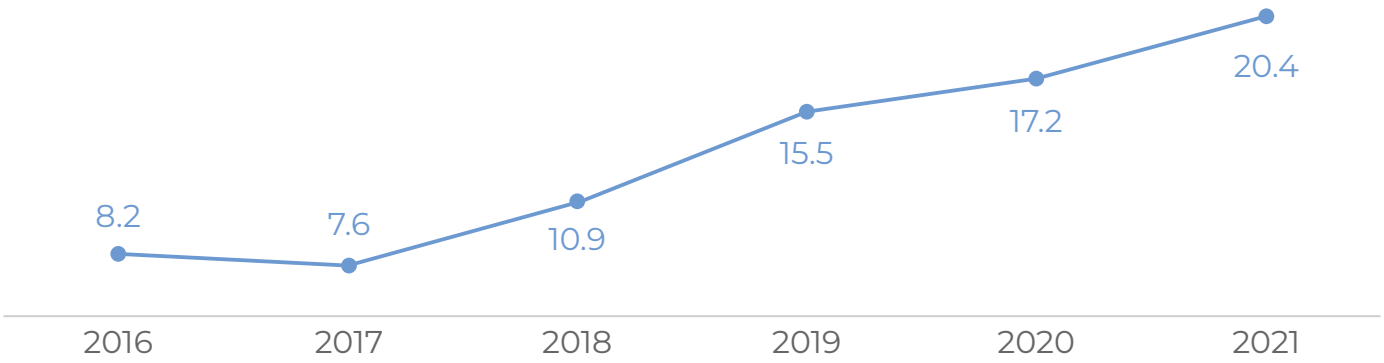
The shift to sustaining peace and the promotion of a "prevention agenda," while opening up the PBF's mandate to work in a more nuanced way, also presented some challenges that have important implications for work at the local level, particularly with CSO partners. In recent years, for example, much has been made of shrinking civic space in many countries supported by the PBF, while arbitrary arrests, coups and assassinations point to the very real dangers facing local peace activists in many locations. In such contexts, where engagement with national government may be difficult, the PBF has occasionally pivoted its support from national institutions and actors to the local, opting to fund CSOs rather than UN entities that may be more constrained by their closer relationships with national leadership.[53] Such a strategy may be effective and justified, as it provides a lifeline to local peace activists at a time when other donors may shy away. The approach, moreover, may shore up pockets of peacebuilding capacity that will be crucial once civic space begins to open once again. As compelling as this strategy is, however, the Fund must also recognize the weight of responsibility that comes with such an approach, as activists may suffer backlash and need protection. As much as the notion of sustaining peace has expanded the PBF's and the larger UN's mandate to engage in such settings, it must be prepared to advocate for and, if need be, protect local partners.

53 See, for example, "Third Portfolio Evaluation of the UN Peacebuilding Fund Support to Burundi (2014-2020)": https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_burundi_portfolio_eval_final_101521.pdf

2.1 FOSTERING MORE MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES AND LOCAL PEACEBUILDERS

While CSO approvals have risen steadily over the years (see graph below), they remain a smaller fraction of the overall PBF support. Despite possessing a legal pathway to funding CSOs, the lower amounts of funding to CSOs reflects the primary mandate of the PBF, which is to drive more effective, more strategic, and more cohesive action *by the UN*.

PBF DIRECT FUNDING TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS BETWEEN 2016-2021 (MILLION, USD)



Unequal access to PBF funding, moreover, extends to differences among CSO actors, with INGOs and larger national CSOs typically better able to meet eligibility requirements. Smaller, more local organizations, on the other hand, have been largely unable to meet the institutional requirements for accessing PBF funds established by its administrative agent, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO). CSO applicants must demonstrate minimum organizational annual budgets of $400,000 for at least two years prior to an award and possess a track record of support by the UN or its donors. In addition, CSOs must provide audited financial statements by an internationally or nationally recognized audit firm and provide organizational annual reports that confirm the organization's presence in the country where the proposed project is to be implemented. Such stringent eligibility requirements impose significant limitations with respect to which organizations can access funding and puts direct access of PBF funds out of reach for most local peacebuilding organizations.[54]

The high organizational bar to access PBF funding has met with criticism from many sides, including donors, evaluators and local CSOs themselves. Such critiques, however, typically do not reflect the PBF's institutional set up as a global fund with a small organizational footprint or to appreciate that its mandate to first and foremost drive UN's effectiveness may not make it the ideal funding instrument for small, grassroots organizations. Instead, the PBF should be encouraged to identify ways in which it can – within the limits of its organizational set up – foster stronger and more meaningful partnerships between its fund recipients and local peacebuilders and enhance system-wide accountability to conflict-affected populations.

Along this vein, the PBF has been experimenting in recent years with different policies and approaches to encourage UN and INGO fund recipients to be better partners to local actors. Within its annual call for proposals through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, the Fund requires 40 per cent of project budgets to be implemented in partnership with national or local CSOs. In 2021, the PBF established an innovative mechanism in the Sahel to test a small grant facility that can both help build the administrative capacity of smaller, more informal CSOs, and offer project and core support to their efforts.

54 During the Local Peacebuilding Thematic Review finalization and preparation for publication in April-May 2022, MPTFO is updating the guidelines and eligibility requirements for CSO recipients of PBF funds.

Pilot initiative to channel funding to grassroots peacebuilders in the Sahel

In 2021, the PBF began rolling out a pilot project in the Sahel to test the efficacy of establishing a third-party managing agent to provide direct funding to grassroots organizations. Established through the INGO Mercy Corps, the facility will channel small grants of between $2,500 and $20,000 to grassroots peacebuilding organizations operating in the Liptako-Gourma border area that straddles Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The pilot is based on a mapping exercise by the INGO PeaceDirect that identified nearly 300 grassroots organizations in Liptako-Gourma as potential grant recipients. While it is still too early to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of this arrangement, by indirectly strengthening its partnership with smaller, local organizations, the PBF hopes to provide support to initiatives that, through stronger grounding in localized conflict analyses, will be able to more effectively address the ways in which local tensions interact with political and cross-border conflict dynamics.

Despite these efforts, persisting challenges to true partnerships with local communities and activists remain, challenges that have less to do with direct access to funding by CSOs and more to do with the degree of importance PBF's fund recipients place on partnership with local communities. The PBF, for example, requires consultations with populations targeted for support prior to project approval. Although this is a requirement and part of the Fund's quality review when deciding whether to fund a proposal, such consultations frequently are conducted only after project approval or are conducted in a heavy-handed manner. In fact, this Review found that the majority of PBF-funded projects are designed in a top-down fashion, without significant influence by local actors on project priorities and objectives, a finding that was confirmed by project implementing partners, local authorities, and youth consulted for this Review. In Burkina Faso, for example, a local government official and project partner lamented that *"We are not involved in the design of the projects. We are told: 'This is what we do!'; but never 'What do you want us to do?'. We are usually invited to inaugurate an infrastructure or to preside over the opening ceremony of a workshop, but not to make any decisions."* Lack of meaningful engagement extends to the civic space, as one female civil society representative in Gourma province in Burkina Faso added that youth and women are only consulted during the pre-project phase "when there is a need for basic information," but not for genuine input on project direction. Instead, PBF-funded projects examined by this Review in Burkina Faso were more frequently designed by a UN or a CSO direct recipient of PBF funds in Ouagadougou who began involving local actors only once projects had been approved and activities were about to be implemented.

Barriers to accessing communities outside of capitals because of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic or the outbreak of violent conflict, moreover, have created additional challenges to conducting meaningful consultations. In addition to shortcomings around pre-proposal community consultations, donors to PBF have noted the absence of effective community-driven feedback loops, while evaluations and Synthesis Reviews have highlighted the need for more context-adaptive and locally sensitive project design and implementation. All of these critiques point to a continuing need for the PBF to develop platforms for more meaningful partnership with local communities and for it to seize the opportunities it has through its funding to amplify the voices of local actors in decision-making mechanisms like its in-country Joint Steering Committees. In pushing for greater mutual accountability with local communities, however, the PBF and its fund recipients must be sensitive to questions about which organizations or actors get to speak on behalf of which communities.

2.2 IDENTIFYING LOCAL IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

It may seem axiomatic, but the selection of the right implementing partner can make a difference on identifying and implementing initiatives at the local level that meet local communities' visions of change and are conducted by trusted actors, rather than rolling out activities that are disconnected from local realities. When the latter happens, it can have a multiplier negative effect on populations' confidence

in peace initiatives and ramp up grievance, as local actors may feel that they are not only burdened with unwanted or unnecessary support but are also excluded from decision-making about what kind of support is needed in the first place.

Given the importance of identifying the right partners and affording them the chance to shape local peacebuilding project approaches, it seems clear that funding proposals should detail not only who the partners are but also how they have been brought into the prioritization and design process. In reality, however, while most PBF-funded projects do involve local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or other local peacebuilding partners in the implementation of project activities, most proposals typically lack information on the nature of local implementing partners, how those partners were selected and whether or how they have contributed to proposal design. The exception to this finding is proposals received through the GYPI annual competitive call, which places a greater emphasis on transparency around local partnerships. Lack of information within project proposals outside of the GYPI hampers PBF's ability to adequately assess the nature and quality of engagement and consultation with local organizations. The PBF should be encouraged to extend the lessons learned through the GYPI competitive call to its regular programming in order to hold fund recipients more accountable to inclusive and transparent project design.

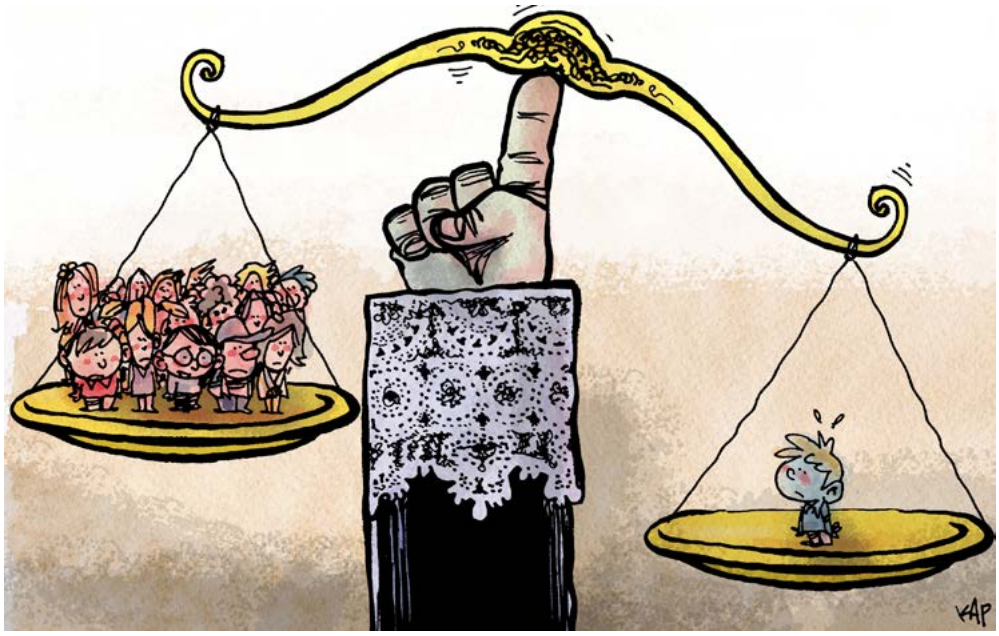
A review of implementing partners revealed that frequently, the same implementing partners are tapped over and over by the same fund recipients. There are multiple reasons for this, ranging from the justifiable to the unhelpful. First, much like PBF's review of civil society organizations at the global level, fund recipients at the country level also must undertake an assessment of potential local organizations' technical and financial strength prior to partnering with them. These processes, while not as stringent as the PBF's requirements, take time and effort on the part of all involved. Once a local organization is approved, fund recipients have incentives to repeatedly partner with approved organizations in order to take advantage of the efforts spent in bringing them on board. Additionally, since the signature of government officials is required on all PBF project documents, government counterparts often seek to influence which local actors PBF-funded projects are able to engage with. Even when this level of influence is not sought, local partners must at the very least be acceptable to the government counterparts who will sign the project documents. Thus, local organizations with a history of opposition to government or those that are connected to marginalized groups, such as ethnic, religious or sexual minorities, may find themselves excluded from partnership even if they can meet fund recipients' eligibility requirements and are best placed to support local action. Limitations such as this, in turn, can raise questions about a local peacebuilding project's relevance, and negatively impact implementation.

Partnership fatigue in Kyrgyzstan

A PBF-funded project entitled "Youth as Agents of Peace and Stability in Kyrgyzstan" implemented by Search for Common Ground from 2017 to 2020 aimed to work through high schools to encourage young people's involvement in public decision making.[55] While the aim of the project was sound and based on a solid conflict analysis, local mayors and government officials intervened in the selection of partner schools to ensure that the highest performing schools were tapped. Once involved in the first project, these schools were subsequently targeted by two other PBF-funded projects - those focused on fostering trust across ethnic divides, and preventing the spread of violent ideologies, respectively. The same schools were targeted to such an extent that local youth activists consulted for this Review suggested that school administrators, teachers, and students became burned out from their involvement in so many projects with similar activities on similar topics and questioned why other, more relevant schools were not included.

55 PBF/IRF-155: Youth as Agents of Peace and Stability in Kyrgyzstan: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00104795.

Concerns that PBF local implementing partners are not always representative of relevant groups and social strata were heard across the case studies that informed this Review. For example, while high-level consultations with youth representatives of national youth-led NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia took place during the design of the regional Dialogue for the Future (DFF) project,[56] membership of these NGOs was drawn from well-educated, English-speaking young women and men based in state capitals who are already predisposed to cross-group exchange and solidarity. The very nature of the NGOs that were included in the consultation, then, excluded a broader set of young people with less access to information, resources and decision-makers and less opportunity to build trustful relations with others from different ethnic groups. While it is commendable that consultations with youth occurred prior to the design of the initiative, both UN staff and young women and men who participated in the project suggested that the conclusions of the consultations likely ignored the views and challenges of young people from less advantaged backgrounds. This example underscores that it is not sufficient to merely hold consultations prior to project design but to establish the right partnerships in order to truly reflect peacebuilding priorities at the local level.



KAP (Spain) - Cartooning for Peace

2.3 CONDUCTING PARTICIPATORY ANALYSES FOR LOCAL PEACEBUILDING

Identifying meaningful interventions and implementing them through effective partnerships with local actors requires a nuanced understanding of local conflict and peace dynamics. Projects that are based on detailed analyses of local contexts and dynamics have a better chance at focusing on specific, local conflict drivers and can have a more nuanced geographic and demographic targeting. Locally-led conflict analyses can even be the first step in a local peacebuilding process since, if it is truly locally-led, it can bring people from different sides of the local conflict together and open new channels of communication between them while jointly analyzing the context.[57]

56 PBF/IRF-295, PBF/IRF-296, PBF/IRF-297: Fostering Dialogue and social cohesion in and between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113873.

57 Autesserre, Séverine. 2014. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 55.

While the Fund recognizes the importance of conflict or context analysis that is sensitive to local dynamics in various guidance documents, the level of detail of analyses in PBF project documents varies significantly from project to project. Among the weaker project documents, analysis remains quite general, outlining the overall context and broad national-level conflict drivers or risk factors, even when the project aims to positively influence a deeply local dynamic. The most effective and relevant PBF-funded projects, though, are based on sound and detailed analyses of different levels of conflict, including dynamics that pertain to specific local communities.[58]

Strong analyses in a PBF-funded project in Yemen

The "Water for Peace" project in Yemen implemented by FAO and IOM in 2018-2020 stands out with its comprehensive conflict analysis.[59] The project document describes a specific context - the Wadi Rima valley and region - with nuanced challenges related to access to water for agriculture, specifically for women who are primarily engaged in water fetching activities, and provides concrete data on local water-based conflicts and their causes in that locality. In addition to a sound analysis within the project document, a detailed, 30-page context analysis report including an identification of conflict drivers and a stakeholder mapping was conducted for the project. This context analysis also examines conflict dynamics at all levels – the national, regional, and local – and their interaction, and it provides details about the target area where interventions were planned to take place. This detailed analysis allowed the project to develop context-specific, problem-driven interventions and led to a decision to specifically target women as mediators of water conflicts.

Part and parcel of locally oriented conflict analysis is local stakeholder analysis, which is essential to be able to fully map and assess local actors' contribution to conflict or peace and to identify those who may potentially oppose the project's aims. Such analysis of actors can assist not only with better identification of the project's ultimate beneficiaries but also can help inform a project's thematic focus as well as selection of implementing partners. In the absence of a solid stakeholder analysis, project managers are left in the dark about whether they have chosen the most suitable partners and aims, or merely those that are the most convenient. Given that many PBF-funded local peacebuilding projects provide training and awareness raising campaigns or mobilize youth and women around activities on peaceful coexistence or conflict management, it is incumbent on those designing and implementing such efforts to determine the best groups to target and how their inclusion will contribute to the project's aims.

A comprehensive stakeholder analysis that is sensitive to local dynamics, moreover, can help to better understand how influence, interests or perceived bias may emerge through interaction between various actors. An evaluation of a UNFPA-UNDP project in support of a local conflict early warning, response, and management infrastructure in Côte d'Ivoire,[60] for example, found that among focal points tapped to participate in early warning mechanisms were the representatives of political parties with clear political interests, or local traders or landholders with economic interests related to local conflicts which they were asked to mediate. Thus, they often were not trusted to be impartial mediators and occasionally were suspected of being 'spies' for state or commercial interests. Such suspicion not only undermined these actors' roles in mediation but also compromised the early warning mechanisms themselves.[61]

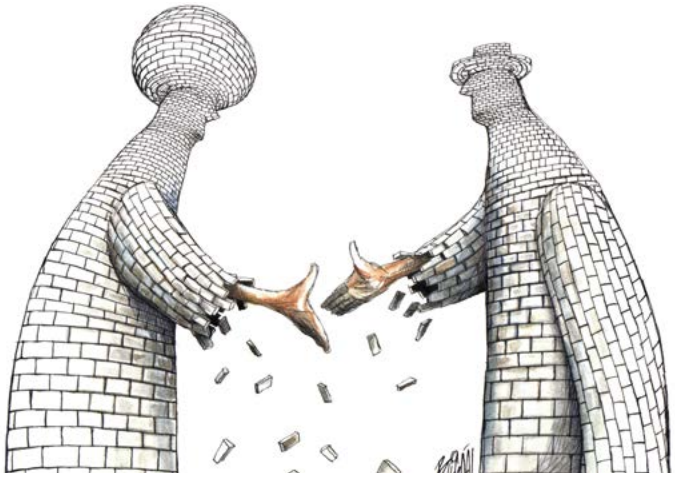
58 See, for example, the PBF Theory of Change Guidance Note (2020): https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/toc-english, or the PBF Guidance Note on Cross-Border and Regional Programmes (2020): https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/guidance-note-pbf-cross-border-and-regional-programmes.

59 PBF/IRF-256: Water for peace in Yemen: Strengthening the role of women in water conflict: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113031.

60 PBF/IRF-199: Appui a la pérennisation des outils de prévention et de gestion des conflits en Côte d'Ivoire: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00108200.

61 Kouamé, Yao Séverin et Cynthia Bailly. 2020. *Rapport d'Evaluation du Projet d'Appui à la Pérennisation des Outils de Prévention et de Gestion de Conflits en Côte d'Ivoire*. Abidjan, pp.15-16; pp. 25-26: PBF/IRF-199: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00108200.

There are numerous useful frameworks for stakeholder analysis available throughout the UN system that can help PBF fund recipients avoid these pitfalls, including guidelines on stakeholder analysis by UNDP/the UN Development Group, UNICEF, and the UN System Staff College.[62] Several of these analyses draw on approaches by civil society actors and peacebuilding scholar-practitioners. These include CDA Collaborative Learning Projects' "key people versus more people" framework, which helps to assess whether the right actors and groups are targeted for a given intervention.[63] Jean-Paul Lederach's "Levels of Action" pyramid can also help to categorize whether interventions target the national elite at the top of the social pyramid, civil society or religious leaders at an intermediate level, or local grassroots actors.[64] Many PBF-funded projects would benefit from applying these analytical frames in order to strengthen the analysis upon which projects are based and ensure that projects' aims speak to the views of local communities.



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Detailed and locally specific conflict analyses and stakeholder mapping set the stage for participatory project design processes, which can help ensure that what gets prioritized and planned reflects local community priorities. However, many UN fund recipients consulted for this Review mentioned that, due to a lack of designated funding and dedicated staff, they often do not have the time and resources prior to project start to organize participatory local assessments, consultations, or joint project development and design workshops. The PBF should consider how it can facilitate participatory analyses and design processes either before projects start or as part of a clearly defined project inception phase.

From engagement with local communities while identifying key peacebuilding priorities, to working with them to determine the best approaches to addressing those priorities, participatory design not only drives change that is meaningful to local stakeholders but also prompts designers to tease out their assumptions behind why a specific change is important to a given setting. In other words, participatory processes for conflict analysis and project design help inform better quality theories of change. Strong theories of change (ToC) lay out a project's rationale and assumptions and problematize unfounded or unexamined project approaches that may not be appropriate to the local context. In 2020, the PBF issued a Theory of Change Guidance Note to provide step-by-step instructions for developing evidence-based theories of change.[65] Since then, fund recipients have begun to reflect more deeply about taken-for-granted assumptions about how change is meant to work within a given project approach.

62 See UN Development Group (UNDG). 2016. *Conflict and Development Analysis*: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDP_CDA-Report_v1.3-final-opt-low.pdf; UNICEF. 2016. *Guide to Conflict Analysis*: https://www.unicef.org/media/96581/file/Guide-to-Conflict-Analysis.pdf; Oliva, Fabio and Lorraine Charbonnier. 2016. *Conflict Analysis Handbook: A field and headquarter guide to conflict assessments*. Turin, Italy: UNSSC: https://www.unssc.org/sites/default/files/unssc_conflict_analysis_fabio_oliva_lorraine_charbonnier.pdf.

63 CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. *Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics. A Resource Manual*. Cambridge, MA: CDA, pp.34-47: https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/reflecting-peace-practice-rpp-basics-resource-manual/.

64 Original resource: Lederach, Jean Paul. 1998. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace (USIP).

65 UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). 2021. *Guidance Note on Theory of Change*: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/toc_guidance_note_en.pdf.

Developing a Theory of Change for a local peacebuilding project in Sierra Leone

A project implemented by WFP and UNDP in Sierra Leone entitled "Mitigating localized resource-based conflicts and increasing community resilience" provides one example of how to develop a well-crafted Theory of Change for a local peacebuilding project.[66] The project focuses on a clearly circumscribed area of the country in Moyamba and Pujehun districts with a recent history of violent clashes between local communities, mining companies and security forces. The ToC is derived from a detailed, localized analysis that identifies the nature of the conflict, conflict drivers, actors involved as well as specific needs and demands by certain population groups. These needs, in turn, were validated during four local stakeholder consultations organized prior to the project's start, in collaboration with a local civil society organization. During each stakeholder consultation, local actors were brought together, and designated sessions were organized to listen to the specific concerns of different groups, with attention to age, gender and other markers. This sound process led to a detailed ToC that spells out concrete changes envisioned for designated locations while targeting appropriate actors.

Robust and validated ToCs, in turn, enable meaningful monitoring of the project. Even when project ToCs are strong and validated with local communities, however, all too often it is seen merely as a helpful heuristic device for the project design stage and is quickly forgotten once project implementation is underway. This, however, represents a missed opportunity to monitor whether the assumptions articulated in the ToC continue to hold. Rigorous and ongoing monitoring of ToCs with local stakeholders can help catch critical changes in the operational context that can ultimately impede a project's success while also contributing to broader knowledge about what works and does not work in supporting local peacebuilding.

2.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATING LOCAL PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

Weaknesses in monitoring at the outcome level are common to many peacebuilding projects but are more pronounced among projects aimed at a local peacebuilding change. In part, this stems from the more granular nature of such programming, which typically involves smaller-scale activities aiming to produce more micro-level changes. By contrast, peacebuilding efforts focused on national dialogue, institutional strengthening and reform or broad policy changes may have an easier time connecting project activities with higher-order peacebuilding change because the goal of the project is a clear institutional-level or broad societal-level change. In the absence of higher-order goal setting and monitoring, many local peacebuilding initiatives struggle to demonstrate their effectiveness and undermine their ability to contribute to the knowledge base.

A review of PBF-funded local peacebuilding projects confirms these challenges: of the 87 projects analyzed for this Review, many focused largely on change at the individual level, such as measuring participants' acquisition of new information or skills in workshops, trainings, and conferences, or the accrual of personal benefits such as improved access to livelihoods or basic services. Rarely do projects with such approaches manage to link these individual-level changes with peacebuilding change, such as improvements in inter-group relations or greater confidence in local institutions. The vast majority of UN staff interviewed for this Review, moreover, recognized these weaknesses and noted that much of the evidence available on local peacebuilding outcomes is largely anecdotal and seldom triangulated.

These weaknesses are reinforced by the fact that in most contexts there is a dearth of higher-level data, whether from UN or other sources, on the evolution of conflict and progress toward building peace, particularly at the more granular local level. In response to this challenge, many peacebuilding actors – including the PBF – have encouraged perception surveys to capture change among stakeholders on topics as varied as confidence

66 PBF/SLE/D-2: Mitigating localized resource-based conflicts and increasing community resilience: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00117938.

in government institutions, cooperation with or openness to members of other groups, or changes in the security situation, to name but a few. This Review found good examples of how perception surveys can help assess how well-targeted and coordinated local peacebuilding projects have achieved concrete outcomes and may have contributed positively to broader peacebuilding dynamics. Côte d'Ivoire, for example, offers relatively good data on peacebuilding outcomes through perception surveys. Perception surveys have been conducted with PBF funding since 2016 in the communes of Abidjan and departments in the west and north of the country that historically have been conflict hotspots and the focus of PBF funding since 2010. Data collection on communes targeted by PBF-funded projects, as well as communes not targeted, have enabled rich comparisons between so-called 'treatment' and 'control groups', enabling evaluators to better capture the contribution of PBF-funded projects to improved local community perceptions of peace and security.

Perception surveys, moreover, can be done in a more participatory manner through project activities that can in themselves produce their own peacebuilding outcomes. As part of the PBF-funded project in support of the Western Balkan Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), a comprehensive perception survey was carried out among 5,400 young people aged 15-29 across Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.[67] The survey offers insights into a wide range of issues relevant to peacebuilding, including on reconciliation, interethnic understanding and hate speech. This youth perception survey is a positive example of how perception surveys can be organized with significant youth input and offer valuable insights into young people's concerns and views on contentious issues at the local level that might be difficult to discuss otherwise.

Perception surveys, however, are not a panacea to all local peacebuilding monitoring problems. Perception surveys are notoriously sensitive to recent events, which means that respondents' answers may vary significantly depending on the last message they may have heard on television or over social media. The list of questions that respondents are compelled to answer, moreover, may be generated by outsiders with specific interests in mind, which may render the questions either unimportant or unintelligible to local actors. Finally, when fund recipients launch perception surveys, they are often the only data available at the outcome level. Over-reliance on perception surveys, however, often makes it impossible for project managers and evaluators to know whether improved perceptions translated into improved behavior. An extreme example of this problem can be found in an evaluation of the PBF-

67 UN Development Programme (UNDP). 2021. *#SharedFutures: Youth Perceptions on Peace in the Western Balkans*: https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/democratic_governance/shared-futures--youth-perceptions-on-peace-in-the-western-balkan.html.

funded project "Supporting Youth Participation in Preventing the Repetition of Mass Atrocities of Côte d'Ivoire" implemented by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). A perception survey conducted as part of the evaluation indicated that 100 per cent of youth actors expressed that they believed youth engagement in social cohesion and peace had increased, a data point that was later used to demonstrate the project's success.[68] Without linking such perceptions to more objective measures of local change – for example, the reduction in conflict incidents or at least observable changed behaviors or concrete action taken by certain actors – one learns little about the true contribution of local-level interventions to peacebuilding.

The Review also notes concerns about the quality of indicators used to measure local peacebuilding in project results frameworks. As noted above, many project proposals are designed with little or no stakeholder involvement. As a result, the development of project-level results frameworks are frequently an intellectual exercise among project managers rather than an opportunity for meaningful discussion with local community actors about how best to articulate and measure peacebuilding change. In some instances, UN Agencies, Funds or Programmes' headquarters have developed global indicators, to which a project must respond, regardless of whether the indicators speak to local peacebuilding visions. This type of process, which imposes measurements of local peace dynamics from the outside, has been criticized by academics and local peacebuilding activists. A recent publication by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) concluded that "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace cannot be effectively measured through a global policy framework - instead, the measurement should be context-specific and locally-informed, locally driven, inclusive and operationalised through the early warning and early response (EWER) monitoring and evaluation frameworks attached to action at the field level."[69] Others concur and have made concrete proposals for locally-defined results frameworks and peace indicators, reflecting the concepts and terminology of 'everyday peace' that are meaningful to local peacebuilding actors.[70]

Support for locally identified 'everyday peace' indicators has been growing from within the PBF. In early 2020, in partnership with PeaceNexus Foundation, the Fund issued guidance on community-based monitoring and perception surveys.[71] This guidance, which largely saw community-based monitoring as a data collection exercise, will be updated in 2022 to deepen PBF's partnership with local communities and amplify community actors' voices in decision making. The revised approach capitalizes on lessons learned from several project-level initiatives in Somalia and Guatemala, where community actors provided feedback on their priorities and satisfaction and were able to shape project implementation.

DONNELLY (USA) - Cartooning for Peace

68 PBF/IRF-283: Supporting Youth Participation in Preventing the Repetition of Mass Atrocities of Côte d'Ivoire: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113453.

69 Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). (no date). *Strengthening the Implementation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Bridging the gap between global policy objectives and programming at the country level*:https://www.gppac.net/strengthening-implementation-peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace.

70 Firchow, Pamina. 2018. *Reclaiming everyday peace: local voices in measurement and evaluation after war*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Firchow, Pamina, and Roger Mac Ginty. 2017. Measuring Peace: Comparability, Commensurability, and Complementarity Using Bottom-Up Indicators, *International Studies Review* 19 (1): pp.6-27.

71 UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). 2020. *PBF Guidance Note: Strengthening PBF project monitoring and implementation through direct feedback from communities: perception surveys and community-based monitoring:* https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/pbf-guidance-note-perception-surveys-and-community-based-monitoring.

One PBF-funded project in Somalia, "Midnimo II (Unity) - Support for the Attainment of Durable Solutions in Areas Impacted by Displacement and Returns in Galmudug and Hirshabelle States,"[72] implemented by UNDP, ILO and UN-Habitat, established a community-based monitoring and evaluation mechanism that included all sets of stakeholders to ensure that tensions over access to scarce resources did not impede displaced persons' and refugees' return. A final project evaluation of this initiative indicated that project stakeholders expressed high degrees of satisfaction with the return efforts, noting that they felt empowered to shape what initiatives were put in place, and were more understanding when the project implementers were not always able to meet all of their needs. This outcome is consistent with research that confirms that adaptability is an important project characteristic to ensure that local peacebuilding initiatives remain relevant and are able to respond to often volatile local conflict contexts.[73] Based on this and other positive examples, the PBF should be encouraged to more systematically support participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices that include regular listening and learning sessions to analyze and interpret monitoring data and ensure that projects adapt to changing situations and remain relevant, including through the rollout of community-based monitoring and evaluation schemes.

3. APPROACHES TO PBF-FUNDED LOCAL PEACEBUILDING PROGRAMMING

As noted above, while the PBF's mandate may have originated in the notion of liberal peacebuilding, with its emphasis on formal institutions and the role of the state in setting the peacebuilding agenda, it has evolved to support complementary efforts aimed at a more communitarian understanding of peace. In large part, this shift has been in response to the evolving sustaining peace agenda, which compels actors to better understand the commonalities and differences of conflict dynamics from the national to the local level.

While each project responds to unique conflict dynamics and connections with nationally-led efforts and actors, this Review has identified some recurring programmatic approaches under the banner of local peacebuilding projects funded by the PBF. The projects reviewed represented different geographies and implementing partners, and focused on addressing a range of peacebuilding themes, such as peace agreement implementation, establishing national and inter-group political dialogue, managing conflict at local level, restoring state authority, supporting electoral processes and conflict management (including conflicts around natural resources), supporting civic engagement and good governance, improving peace dividends through service delivery and income generation, and improving the security sector. Regardless of the theme or end goal of the projects, this Review observed two predominant approaches when it comes to advancing local peacebuilding: (1) supporting local peace structures, and (2) improving inter-community and state-society relationships.

3.1 SUPPORTING LOCAL PEACE STRUCTURES

Many PBF-funded local peacebuilding projects focus on establishing new or enhancing existing and more traditional local structures to prevent or resolve local conflict. This is particularly relevant in contexts where citizens do not have access to reliable dispute resolution mechanisms, especially those that are inclusive and participatory. In many cases, such projects create or strengthen community-level 'local peace committees' (LPCs)[74] made up of a range of local actors and decision-makers. The LPCs can be formal or informal and may consist of one single structure or different types of mechanisms dealing with specific types of local conflict, such as land or water conflict. They may also be linked to formal

72 PBF/SOM/A-3: Midnimo II (Unity) - Support for the Attainment Of Durable Solutions in Areas Impacted by Displacement and Returns in Galmudug and Hirshabelle States: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113980.

73 Joakim Öjendal, Hanna Leonardsson, and Martin Lundqvist, *Local Peacebuilding - Challenges and Opportunities*, School of Global Studies University of Gothenburg. Stockholm: till Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA), 2017: https://eba.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Local-turn-of-peacebuilding-webbversion.pdf, p. 16, 98; DeConing, Cedric. 2018. Adaptive peacebuilding, *International Affairs*, Volume 94, Issue 2, March 2018, pp.301–317.

74 Odendaal, Andries. 2010. *An Architecture for Building Peace at the Local Level: A Comparative Study of Local Peace Committees*. UNDP: https://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/UNDP_Local%20Peace%20Committees_2011.pdf.

state structures, such as local administrations or central state institutions. The LPCs use a variety of conflict resolution tactics ranging from mediation to working with key state actors, such as security forces or local government officials, depending on the type of conflict drivers they address.

The objective of most PBF-supported LPCs is to resolve local conflict peacefully and provide a convening platform for key stakeholders, such as women and youth, especially in contexts where these segments of the population are excluded from decision-making. A wide range of projects are directly aiming at the resolution of local conflicts related to natural resources or transhumance, including in cross-border areas. The projects often strive to resolve local conflict by building local peace infrastructure to prevent, mitigate or resolve conflict; improving skills and confidence of LPC participants to resolve conflict; and creating space for local actors to advocate for local needs.

There is strong evidence to suggest that LPCs can resolve local conflict. There are numerous examples of prevention and resolution of local conflicts across the broad spectrum of PBF-funded projects. One sector in particular where LPCs are effective is solving transhumance-related local-level conflicts. In Burkina Faso, for example, the Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) issued more than 60 conflict alerts in 2021, half of which have been resolved.[75] Similarly, the UNDP-led cross-border "Projet de Promotion de la Sécurité Communautaire et de la Cohésion Sociale au Liptako Gourma", which was implemented in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, led to 950 violent incidents recorded and resolved by the local peacebuilding monitoring cells.[76]

In Guatemala, the Mercy Corps-led project "Paz, Oportunidades y Diálogo: Mujeres comprometidas para tener resultados" (PODER) created spaces for women and men to come together that reportedly increased social cohesion while also leading to an increase in resolution of local conflicts.[77] In Liberia's "Inclusive Security: Nothing for Us Without Us" implemented by IOM, UNDP and UN Women, the final evaluation concluded that the four 'peace huts' funded by the PBF were well functioning.[78] These 'peace huts' were modeled after the traditional Liberian 'palava hut' informal dispute resolution mechanisms, and supported women's peacebuilding work at the grassroots level, while linking them to national-level governmental structures and advocacy platforms. Dialogue processes between the women belonging to the 'peace huts' and security sector actors led to discussions on community-level security issues,[79] which according to the evaluation, enabled communities to hold security sector institutions accountable in keeping communities safe. The peace huts also addressed conflict related to the rise of drug abuse, illicit trade, and human trafficking in the border areas.[80]

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the UN-Habitat-IOM-UNDP-led "Pamoja Kwa Amani" project adopted a multi-prong strategy to resolve local conflict through LPCs. On the one hand, it created and built the capacity of five formal local branches of the Ituri Land Commission. These formal institutions were staffed by land facilitators that were able to resolve 400 land conflicts.[81] On the other hand, the project also revitalized and strengthened 18 Local Peace Initiatives to mediate social conflicts that divided families. An agreement between the Ituri Land Commission's branches and the Local Peace Initiatives helped define which types of conflicts each group would mediate.[82] The evaluation attributed the success of the mediation initiatives to "an inclusive, participatory, multi-ethnic approach, that was free of charge to the beneficiary."[83] The mediation services were also supported by social behavior change messaging via the land facilitators and through radio shows that advocated for and educated on the benefits of peaceful cohabitation, dialogue, and land laws.[84]

75 Internal 2021 annual strategic report to the PBF from the UN Resident Coordinator in Burkina Faso, 2021.

76 Kabore, Bila Roger, et al. 2020. *Rapport Final de l'Évaluation Finale - Projet de Promotion de la Sécurité Communautaire et de la Cohésion Sociale au Liptako Gourma (PSCCS).* UNDP, p.48, PBF/IRF-180: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00106947.

77 Van Engelen Caal, Birkat, Berganza Marroquin, Virginia; Ba Pacay, Janeth, and Macz Gonzales, Erick Vinicio. 2018. *Evaluación Final del Proyecto "Paz, Oportunidades y Diálogo: Mujeres comprometidas para tener resultados – PODER".* Mercy Corps, PBF/IRF-157: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00104797.

78 Bela, Viviane Tassi and Thomas Kanneh. 2019. *Final Evaluation of the Project: Inclusive Security: Nothing For Us Without Us.* UN Women, PBF/IRF-216: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00108312.

79 Ibid, p. 30.

80 Ibid, p. 2.

81 Bouvy, Alexis and Jean-Louis Nzweve. 2020. *Evaluation des Pamoja Kwa Amani au Sud Irumu (Ituri) et Pamoja Kwa Amani na Maendeleo dans la zone de Kitshanga (Nord-Kivu) - Projets PKA and PKAM.* UN-Habitat. p.28, PBF/COD/A-2: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00106218.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid, p.29.

Many of the projects that aim to create or strengthen LPCs include skills and capacity building components. **There is evidence gathered through project evaluations to suggest that individuals who are part of the LPCs learn and effectively use the training material.** For example, in Guatemala's PODER project, women who were trained used their new knowledge and skills to denounce cases of domestic violence.[85] The training also increased the capacities and confidence of women to participate in dialogue processes.[86] In Liberia's "Inclusive Security: Nothing for Us Without Us", the evaluation found that women who received peacebuilding training applied their new knowledge and skills to resolve conflicts within their communities and to avoid escalation, particularly at the household level.[87] While the sustainability of many activities is hard to measure in 18-month-long projects, evaluations alluded to the fact that skills building and relationship building efforts created through the LPCs are unlikely to disappear.[88] That said, the ability of individuals to use the new knowledge effectively and beyond the life of the project depends on the enabling environment, the sustainability of LPCs, and conflict context.

LPCs can also be effectively used as a platform to advocate for local needs. For example, Educare Liberia's "Strengthening Women's Rights and Participation in Peacebuilding in Liberia" project worked in mining and forest concession areas. It established relationships between some peace huts and local governments with the aim to advocate for women's rights with regard to mining companies and large plantation owners.[89] In Sri Lanka, the Humanity and Inclusion led project "Empowering Women for an Inclusive and Sustainable Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Process" created a set of women's platforms at district and national levels to raise awareness of transitional justice and reconciliation. Women from grassroots platforms presented their needs and contested how 'justice' is understood to key decision-makers, particularly on issues related to land.[90]

FACTORS THAT CAN INFLUENCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL PEACE STRUCTURES

There are several factors and challenges that can impede the effectiveness of local peace structures in the short and long term. Three relevant factors are (a) financial independence of LPCs, (b) limitations of types of conflicts that LPCs can resolve, and (c) level of impact that LPCs can have on national policy or peace agreements.

(a) Financial Independence.

Financial independence of LPCs may be a key factor in LPCs' sustainability. There are some important risks to consider with the over-reliance on volunteerism, particularly when it comes to strengthening or creating local peace structures and working with female peacebuilders. For example, the evaluation of the UN-Habitat-IOM led project in Somalia highlighted that the project was able to train several groups on key peacebuilding skills and knowledge. But it noted that "these groups cannot operate without donor or government support since they work on a volunteer basis, do not have offices, and are not paid allowances for transportation nor salaries."[91] The evaluation of the project in South Sudan led by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) noted that LPCs made up of women may need "small economic activities so they can continue to finance their peacebuilding efforts. Many of the women involved were preoccupied with the sustainability or the replicability of their initiatives due to financial constraints."[92] Therefore, LPCs that are able to become financially independent, are more likely to continue to operate than those that are not.

85 Van Engelen Caal, Birkat, Berganza Marroquin, Virginia; Ba Pacay, Janeth, and Macz Gonzales, Erick Vinicio. 2018. *Evaluación Final Proyecto "Paz, Oportunidades y Diálogo: Mujeres comprometidas para tener resultados – PODER".* Mercy Corps, PBF/IRF-157: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00104797.

86 Ibid

87 Bela, Viviane Tassi and Thomas Kanneh. 2019. *Final Evaluation of the Project: Inclusive Security: Nothing For Us Without Us*. UN Women, p.31, PBF/IRF-216: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00108312.

88 Paaskesen, Lise and Tanguy Martial Ouakouma. 2020. *Final Evaluation Report of 'Alternative Violence: Strengthening Youth-led Peacebuilding in Central African Republic Project.* War Child UK, PBF/IRF-276: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113450.

89 PBF/IRF-160: Strengthening Women's Rights and Participation in Peacebuilding in Liberia: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00104810.

90 Robins, Simon. *Final Evaluation of the Project: Empowering women for an inclusive and sustainable transitional justice and reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.* Humanity and Inclusion, PBF/IRF-154: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00104794.

91 PBF/SOM/D-1: Midnimo (Unity) - Support for the Attainment of Durable Solutions in Areas Impacted by Displacement and Returns in Jubaland and South West States: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00103708.

92 Venturi, Bernando and Kuyang Logo. 2021. *Final Evaluation Report "Strengthening Young Women's Participation in Local and National Peace Processes in South Sudan*. Search for Common Ground, PBF/IRF-328: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00119222.

For example, in Liberia's project "Inclusive Security: Nothing for Us Without Us", the evaluation observed that the project built a mechanism for the LPCs to have economic empowerment through the Village Savings and Loan Association. The evaluation concluded that "the infusion of funds into peace huts and the accompanying capacity-building related to fund management were found to be impactful."[93] Setting a system that could lend and recover funds to LPC members helped ensure sustainability of the group and supported women as they used the loans to invest in businesses and pay for children's education. The evaluation concluded that "Financial sustainability plans developed for the peace huts were found to be critical to sustaining the huts' activities."[94] In contrast, the DRC's "Pamoja Kwa Amani" project's final evaluation noted that there were not sufficient resources to cover the operational, maintenance, and staff costs of the local peace structures.[95] The evaluation concluded that "the use of volunteerism carries the risk of (individuals) becoming discouraged over time or neglecting their interventions. Serious and professional work requires fair remuneration as a matter of principle, especially since the work of the Ituri Land Commission and the Local Peace Initiatives is recognized as important by the communities."[96]

(b) Limitations to the types of conflicts LPCs can resolve.

LPCs can resolve conflicts at the local level, but there are limitations to the types and number of conflicts that LPCs can manage effectively, especially if not immediately connected to their mandate or the drivers of conflict they are addressing. The DRC's "Pamoja Kwa Amani" project evaluation showed some of the limitations to the type of conflicts that the Local Peace Initiatives could mediate. It noted that while these mechanisms could mediate land conflict, more complex conflicts related to herders and farmers were outside of their scope due to the complexity of those conflicts.[97]

(c) Limited impact LPCs can have on national-level peacebuilding initiatives.

As widely recognized in literature, a key limitation of bottom-up strategies that focus on supporting local peace structures is the level of impact and sustainability of their efforts vis-à-vis broader political dynamics. The Western Balkans case study found, for example, that in several instances advocacy messages and papers from local dialogue platforms under the "Dialogue for the Future" regional project[98] were developed and submitted to relevant political authorities, these were one-time efforts and lacked any follow-up. As a result, most of these attempted linkages had little concrete influence on higher-level reform efforts. For such efforts to be impactful, a more explicit and sustained involvement into national advocacy or reform efforts may be needed. There are cases, however, where LPCs are recognized by local authorities or even institutionalized or effectively linked to central-level decision making. One example is The Gambia where, with UN support, the government has validated a roadmap to create an Infrastructure for Peace that will be anchored upon a new National Council for Peace and Social Cohesion.[99]

> *"What often happens in our work is that we lay the groundwork for peacebuilding at the local level, but where peacebuilding fails is at the political level."*
>
> – Local implementing partner, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

93 Bela, Viviane Tassi and Thomas Kanneh. 2019. *Final Evaluation of the Project: Inclusive Security: Nothing For Us Without Us.* UN Women, p.82, PBF/IRF-216: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00108312.

94 Ibid.

95 Bouvy, Alexis and Jean-Louis Nzweve. 2020. *Evaluation des Pamoja Kwa Amani au Sud Irumu (Ituri) et Pamoja Kwa Amani na Maendeleo dans la zone de Kitshanga (Nord-Kivu) - Projets PKA and PKAM.* UN-Habitat. p.29, PBF/COD/A-2: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00106218.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 PBF/IRF-295, PBF/IRF-296, PBF/IRF-297: Fostering Dialogue and social cohesion in and between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113873.

99 Internal annual strategic report to the PBF from the UN Resident Coordinator in The Gambia, 2021.

It is important to recognize that local peacebuilding does not automatically lead to or support high-level peacebuilding changes and objectives, despite the common assumptions.[100] Local-national linkages need to be deliberately built into projects and sufficiently resourced to create sustainable change, and spaces need to be built for national- and local-level efforts to interact.[101] In projects that emphasize national-level objectives with complementary local initiatives, local activities often receive less attention. National-level actors may draw all the attention and resources, leaving less room and funding for local actors to be meaningfully involved. This was, for example, the case in Somalia where an evaluation of the UNDP-UN Women "Strengthening women's role and participation in peacebuilding - Towards just, fair and inclusive Somalia" project found that "most of the work was operated at a political level and was weakly accompanied with work at the community level."[102] Similarly, in Mali's UN Women-UNFPA led project "De Victimes a Actrices de la Paix", monitoring and alert cells were meant to monitor women's participation in the peace process and the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. However, the monitoring and alert cells' effectiveness was mixed, and lack of monitoring and financial support were identified as key factors preventing the implementation of community-led action plans.[103] These examples highlight that a poorly resourced local peace infrastructure is unable to meaningfully contribute to national-level priorities.

3.2 IMPROVING INTER-COMMUNITY AND STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS

Many local peacebuilding projects that aim to improve inter-community (horizontal) relationships and state-society (vertical) relationships often start by shifting the capacities and skills and improving individuals' knowledge about conflict and peace-related issues. Individuals learn about the causes and dynamics of conflict, conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence, reconciliation, and social cohesion. This is often done through training, small projects, and awareness raising campaigns. In many instances, the activities and approaches are similar to those used in strengthening local peace structures.

Innovative approach to improving state-society relationships in the Sahel

A successful initiative of linking a group of citizens with government institutions and mechanisms took place in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The FAO-IOM cross-border project aimed to reduce the source of tension and violent conflict by better managing cross-border cattle migration (transhumance).[104] The project brought together key government and civil society actors representing pastoralists in all three countries to revive existing frameworks for cross-border cattle migration. A surveillance system that tracks transhumance movement was put in place relying on IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)[105] infrastructure. The system involved 90 community focal points in villages along the borders between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The surveillance system was able to generate alerts when unusual or unusually large cattle movements occur, which have the potential to trigger conflict. Community focal points also raised alerts about intercommunal tensions or natural disasters, which had an impact on the transhumance system and migration patterns. This system issued 280 alerts, including 66 alerts related to communal conflict, of which 50 per cent were addressed and successfully resolved.[106]

100 Ernstorfer, Anita, Diana Chigas and Hannah Vaughan-Lee. 2015. From Little to Large: When Does Peacebuilding Add Up?, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, 10:1, pp. 72-77.*

101 Ibid.

102 Jambrina Rodríguez, Fernando (no date). *Final Evaluation: Strengthening women's role and participation in peacebuilding - Towards just, fair and inclusive Somalia*, p. 22, PBF/IRF-119: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00096145.

103 *Rapport Final Evaluation "De Victimes a Actrices de la Paix: Renforcement de la Participation des Femmes dans la mise en oeuvre de l'accord de paix et l'amelioration de la cohesion sociale."* UN Femme, p. 28-29, PBF/IRF-146: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00103090.

104 PBF/IRF-353: Promotion d'une transhumance pacifique dans la région du Liptako-Gourma: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00120162.

105 See https://dtm.iom.int/.

106 Fonds des Nations Unies pour la Consolidation de la Paix au Burkina Faso. 2020. *Rapport Annuel 2020 du Portefeuille*, pp. 17-18.

Local peacebuilding projects may also include aspects of intergroup contact theory.[107] Contact theory interventions bring people across the conflict divide through facilitated dialogue, joint training, or the creation of a small joint project. The activities may bring together people that have different roles within the community, such as citizens and government representatives, especially in contexts where weak state institutional presence and the lack of inclusion and participation are considered to contribute to perceptions of exclusion and inequality and low trust in institutions. A number of projects bring together local youth clubs and local government officials around joint strategies for youth integration in local decision-making or conflict resolution strategies. The aim of these activities is to reduce tension and build social cohesion while improving state-society relationships. These types of activities provide a safe environment to have discussions, reflect on roles and grievances, and envision a joint future. Some of the expected outcomes of these activities are to provide a space to address prejudice, increase mutual understanding, and gradually build trust between groups. In Chad, for example, mayors, local government officials, civil society, and youth have come together to strengthen youth participation in local structures which has then led to the elaboration of a *Charte de Confiance* to prevent and manage community level conflicts.[108]

Youth volunteers improving inter-community and state-society relationships

In Kyrgyzstan, PBF supported young volunteers to staff youth centers in southern towns near the border with Uzbekistan to provide locations where young people can meet and organize activities and develop greater inter-communal understanding. Each youth center established working groups of at least ten young volunteers who raised issues important to their villages with their local administrations and looked for ways to jointly solve them.[109] In Kosovo, a PBF-funded project also strategically engaged volunteers as bridge builders between local administrations and youth by placing UN community volunteers (UNCVs) in municipal employment offices within 19 municipalities in the Pristina and Mitrovica regions and in three local non-governmental organizations. The UNVs helped the local offices to reach out to a wider range of young people while at the same time making the local government's work more relevant to the needs of the local youth.[110]

107 Christ, Oliver, and Mathias Kauff. 2019. *Intergroup Contact Theory*. In: Sassenberg, Kai, and Michael L.Z. Vliek (eds). Social Psychology in Action. Springer, Cham.

108 Internal annual strategic report to the PBF from the UN Resident Coordinator in Chad, 2021.

109 PBF/IRF-258: Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113043.

110 PBF/IRF-285: Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous, and Sustainable Future in Kosovo: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113581.

Projects that aim to improve relationships also create additional outcomes, such as bringing together individuals to create new relationships, shifting how communities perceive certain segments of the population, or their local government representatives, and enhancing communication through local dialogue. These outcomes are summarized below.

Local peacebuilding projects that focus on improving relationships often bring together diverse groups of individuals for the first time. For example, in the Central African Republic's (CAR) "Alternative to Violence" project led by War Child UK, 300 young people associated with armed groups and 300 other vulnerable young people participated in joint peacebuilding training. According to the project evaluation, mixing the groups "provided opportunities for young people to engage in discussion and dialogue, increasing their sense of belonging and contributing to peacebuilding and enhanced wellbeing."[111] In Mali, UN Women supported the creation of discussion groups made up of women affected by the conflict (victims and non-victims) in the project "De Victimes a Actrices de la Paix". The inclusion of victims and non-victims in similar groups avoided stigmatization and demonstrated to the victims that they can live together.[112]

Involvement in peacebuilding training and civic engagement can help elevate the role of a particular segment of society, such as women and youth. Individual testimony from various project evaluations confirms this positive effect. A female participant in the ICTJ project[113] "Supporting Youth Participation in Preventing the Repetition of Mass Atrocities of Côte d'Ivoire" noted: ***"Thanks to the project activities, I manage to express what I want without fear. With the training and seminars we attended, I can say that we, the women, we can speak up. We are now invited to community meetings. That was not the case previously."***[114] A youth leader from southern Kyrgyzstan interviewed for this Review offered a similar view: ***"Now there are youth leaders in our community, there are youth who can convince the local population. They attend the meetings of local deputies and discuss existing problems with the local authorities."***

Community members, including state officials, can change their traditional perceptions of women and youth by witnessing youth-led and women-led peacebuilding initiatives. For example, in the Solomon Islands' project led by UNDP and ILO, "Empowering Youth as Agents for Peace and Social Cohesion in Solomon Islands," young people's participation in key activities helped shift community leaders' and tribal leaders' perspectives, particularly of young women. Youth were involved in regular community meetings on social and economic issues and community affairs, leading community and tribal leaders, as well as religious leaders, to observe a positive change of youth taking the initiative to address problems.[115] Significantly, preliminary reports indicate that youth of the Honiara settlements targeted by the project played an important role in discouraging their peers from engaging in violent protests and riots which occurred in Honiara in November 2021.[116]

PBF fund recipients occasionally employ activities that are tied to the identification of local priorities and the implementation of concrete local small or micro projects. The projects may be implemented by intra-groups or a combination of local actors and state administrators. **Within these approaches,**

111 Paaskesen, Lise and Tanguy Martial Ouakouma. 2020. *Final Evaluation Report of 'Alternative Violence: Strengthening Youth-led Peacebuilding in Central African Republic Project*. War Child UK, p.5, PBF/IRF-276: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113450.

112 *Rapport Final Evaluation "De Victimes a Actrices de la Paix: Renforcement de la Participation des Femmes dans la mise en oeuvre de l'accord de paix et l'amélioration de la cohésion sociale."* UN Femme, p. 14, PBF/IRF-146: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00103090.

113 PBF/IRF-283: Supporting Youth Participation in Preventing the Repetition of Mass Atrocities of Côte d'Ivoire: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113453.

114 Djané, Adou. 2020. *Soutenir la Participation des Jeunes à la Prévention de la Répétition des atrocités de Masse en Côte d'Ivoire : Evaluation finale du projet*. ICTJ en Côte d'Ivoire, pp. 12-13, PBF/IRF-283: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113453.

115 Jilani, Khurram. 2021. *Final Evaluation Report: Empowering Youth as Agents for Peace and Social Cohesion in Solomon Islands Project*. UNDP-ILO, p. 35, PBF/SLB/H-1: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113271.

116 PBF/SLB/H-1: Empowering Youth as Agents for Peace and Social Cohesion in the Solomon Islands: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113271.

the inclusion of small grant facilities may enable decision-makers to demonstrate their ability to deliver on some of the demands expressed by citizens, which can create short-term goodwill among the local population. For example, in southern Kyrgyzstan, high school students and municipal administrations increased young people's confidence and ability to interact with local officials.

> *"We never thought that we – youth – can approach local authorities. Now we frequently interact with the mayor and other local government officials regarding our problems."*
>
> – Excerpt from a focus group discussion with 10th grade students, Jalal Abad, **Kyrgyzstan**

Improving state-society relationships through small grants in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Small grant facilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the UNDP-UNICEF-UNESCO projects "Dialogue for the Future" I and II allowed local youth and civil society groups to develop and implement joint projects with municipal leaders. The projects covered a wide range of topics and issues, including combatting discrimination against local Roma populations, promoting the collaboration between youth of different ethnic communities, advocacy for reforms to promote gender equality, and projects bringing high school students together over cultural activities. According to the final project evaluation of the "Dialogue for the Future" phase II project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such small grants-based interventions that brought together youth and local government officials were considered most successful since they were "more integrated than other aspects of the programme, developed a wider range of linkages with responsible authorities at different levels of government, which looks like a more convincing approach to policy advocacy." [117]

Local dialogue platforms can enhance communication. Numerous projects in Côte d'Ivoire supported community dialogue sessions between youth and local administrations to create greater understanding and open communication channels between young people and local decision-makers. Dialogue sessions were often combined with advocacy efforts by youth. For example, under the ICTJ project "Supporting Youth Participation in Preventing the Repetition of Mass Atrocities of Côte d'Ivoire", youth leaders organized dialogue sessions with some local authorities and wrote letters to others with whom physical meetings were not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In each locality, youth then developed advocacy plans to follow up on their demands with the authorities in the future.[118] While the cumulative effect of these smaller local-level achievements is difficult to determine, the portfolio evaluation of PBF's support to Côte d'Ivoire noted that PBF-funded interventions contributed to a decrease in the intensity of conflict in areas where there are active dialogue frameworks between populations, local administration and security forces, with positive effects also observed on the level of trust of the populations toward law enforcement authorities.[119] Stakeholders consulted in Bosnia and Herzegovina for this Review also greatly appreciated the Local Dialogue Platforms (LDPs) between civil society organizations and municipal authorities since they opened channels of communication that would otherwise not exist.

117 Vracic et al. *Final Project Evaluation, "A More Equitable Society: Promoting Social Cohesion and Diversity in BiH (Dialogue for the Future II)"*, p.32, PBF/IRF-190: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00108015.

118 Djané, Adou. 2020. *Soutenir la Participation des Jeunes à la Prévention de la Répétition des atrocités de Masse en Côte d'Ivoire : Evaluation finale du projet*. ICTJ en Côte d'Ivoire, p.4, PBF/IRF-283: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113453.

119 Faria, Fernanda; Diaz, Belén, and Guy Oscal Toupko. 2019. *Évaluation du portefeuille de projets du Fonds de Consolidation de la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire (2015-2019): Rapport final*. Konterra Group: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf-ci_executive_summary_eng_2015-2019.pdf.

> *"Local dialogue platforms allowed people to decide their own priorities, and we liked that approach because it was not a tense atmosphere. They allowed us to see that better living conditions are a priority for us all. It was very good to know that we are each other's priority."*
>
> – Excerpt from a focus group discussion with project beneficiaries, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

FACTORS THAT CAN INFLUENCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS

There are several factors and challenges that affect local peacebuilding projects that aim to improve relationships. Some of the key factors include (a) shifting entrenched attitudes takes time to change, (b) activities need to expand beyond the individual level and involve the entire community, and (c) structural changes are needed to shift state-societal relationships.

(a) Shifting entrenched attitudes takes time to change. Some societal changes may take significant time and effort to change. The work that is needed to shift attitudes and social norms often goes beyond the span of an 18-to-24-month project. For example, in South Sudan's SFCG's "Strengthening Young Women's Participation in Local and National Peace Processes", transforming attitudes and behaviors of older women towards younger women and their role in peace and security was difficult. According to the evaluation of the project "such desired changes needed specific programming with close attention to cultural dynamics and constraints."[120] While providing skills to individuals, such as youth and women, is critical, long-term accompaniment may be necessary to have long-term peacebuilding effects. For instance, in War Child UK's "Alternative to Violence" project in CAR, youth did not feel ready to lead community dialogues themselves and at the end of the project still required external support.[121]

FALCO (Cuba) - Cartooning for Peace

(b) Activities need to expand beyond the individual level and involve the entire community. Inter-community relationship building is rarely effective solely by working at the individual level and needs to integrate inter-community reconciliation. Burkina Faso is a good example of moving from individual to community relations. Traditional women-led Community Action Committees (CAC) in the center-north of the country helped build an alliance for peace and social cohesion involving two districts. Due to these initiatives, the two previously separated neighborhoods have regained harmony. Mediation has also led to the reconciliation between the villages of Sanrgho (Moose) and Nienega-Foulbé (Peulh) which were in conflict since 2020.[122]

120 Venturi, Bernando and Kuyang Logo. 2021. *Final Evaluation Report "Strengthening Young Women's Participation in Local and National Peace Processes in South Sudan*. Search for Common Ground. p.6, PBF/IRF-328: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00119222.

121 Paaskesen, Lise and Tanguy Martial Ouakouma. 2020. *Final Evaluation Report of 'Alternative Violence: Strengthening Youth-led Peacebuilding in Central African Republic Project.* War Child UK, PBF/IRF-276: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113450.

122 Internal annual strategic report to the PBF from the UN Resident Coordinator in Burkina Faso, 2021.

Project documentation reviewed suggests that community-wide sensitization campaigns[123] are needed to move beyond targeting the individual and working with the community. However, it is unclear to what extent they have an impact at an aggregate level. The concrete medium- or longer-term outcomes of awareness raising activities and their contribution to higher-level peacebuilding remain unknown since most often there is no independent data provided to support the self-reported claims about their effectiveness. If, indeed, sensitization campaigns are needed, attention should be paid to ensure that the right communities are targeted and that the scale is adequate for the broad effect that is sought.

(c) Structural changes are needed to shift state-societal relationships. State-society relationships-building are often created through the implementation of small grant projects. However, these are often one-off or short-term interventions that do not last beyond project periods. For example, several UN staff with long experience in the Western Balkans have pointed out that local small grants projects to increase inter-ethnic understanding have been implemented for many years in various Western Balkan countries and territories. While generating short-term satisfaction for participants, these have not generated major improvement to interethnic relations in light of fierce, ethnically based, political competition, and largely divided political institutions. The positive results achieved by small grant facility projects thus mostly stayed at the local level in the absence of higher-level political buy-in.

The usefulness of small grants projects as a peacebuilding tool has a limited scope, which can only reach a few hundred people at best. For example, 24 small grant facilities initiatives were implemented across all of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of its second "Dialogue for the Future" project, most of them directly targeting several hundred people.[124] As one UN interviewee suggested, ***"We don't know what a critical mass is to achieve higher-level change."*** **These small grants projects also carry certain sustainability and trust risks**. Project reports and evaluations regularly raise concerns about the sustainability of project activities aimed at improving vertical relationships between young people or women and public decision-makers. They point out 'the extreme fragility' of the trust that has been built during the relatively short duration of projects, which is not sufficient time for this new trust 'to take root.'[125] Some warn of risks of raising undue expectations by mobilizing young people and women who may already be skeptical of local government for advocacy efforts without their needs being actually addressed. If public authorities fail to act on advocacy items or jointly developed plans, the groups targeted might become more disenchanted with public decision-makers and disengaged from public processes.[126]

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PBF, FUND APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS

The Thematic Review has uncovered trends and factors that may affect the effectiveness of local peacebuilding interventions. These trends highlight the need to continue improving project design and implementation while working towards ensuring the sustainability of outcomes, all of which should be underpinned by more meaningful partnership with local communities themselves. As a result, the Review proposes the following recommendations for the PBF, fund applicants and recipients:

123 The Review uses the terms "awareness raising" activities and "sensitization" synonymously to describe peacebuilding-related communication interventions, including radio or TV programs, community concerns, participatory theater, celebration initiatives or activities engaging influencers or celebrities.

124 Vracic et al. *Final Project Evaluation, "A More Equitable Society: Promoting Social Cohesion and Diversity in BiH (Dialogue for the Future II)"*, p.72, PBF/IRF-190: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00108015.

125 UNDP and IOM. (no date). *Evaluation du Projet d'Appui à l'Amélioration de la Confiance Entre l'Administration, les Forces de Défense et de Sécurité (FDS) et les Populations dans le Nord et le Sahel du Burkina Faso*, p. 47, PBF/BFA/B-1: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00115098.

126 Djané, Adou. 2020. *Soutenir la Participation des Jeunes à la Prévention de la Répétition des atrocités de Masse en Côte d'Ivoire : Evaluation finale du projet*. ICTJ en Côte d'Ivoire, p.23, PBF/IRF-283: https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113453.

4.1 INVESTING IN LOCAL PEACEBUILDING ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS

Commit to longer-term financial partnerships. Sustainability and durability of local civil society organizations appears to be a building block of effective and efficient local peacebuilding. To the extent possible, PBF fund recipients and their national partners should aim to establish longer-term and more flexible funding mechanisms to directly support local peacebuilding organizations or networks and nurture their sustainability, beyond the timeline of a PBF-funded project.

Encourage partnerships between local governments and local civil society. PBF-funded projects should aim to facilitate the partnerships between local governments and volunteer associations and networks, as volunteers appear to be key to sustainability of project results and can be a driving force behind early warning networks, local peace committees, or advocacy efforts beyond the project's scope and duration. The PBF should offer greater funding opportunities to projects that demonstrate more intense engagement of local actors, in favor of sustained support for local partners – including volunteer-involving organizations – throughout the duration of the project.

4.2 PARTNER SELECTION AND PROJECT DESIGN

Increase transparency and diversity in partner selection. PBF fund applicants and recipients should increase transparency of partner selection through open calls, ensuring wider outreach and clearer communication through multiple channels about the call for local partners. The PBF, in turn, should require robust methods for partner selection in project proposals, including specific requirements for the selection process in project documents prior to approving funding. These requirements may include but are not limited to a clear analysis of local stakeholders, and pre-identification of local partners with a brief rationale for their selection. It should be clear from project documents who the local partners are, what are their comparative advantages, what has been their exact role in proposal design and what will be their role in project implementation, for which activities they are responsible, and which share of the funding they will receive. Fund applicants' and recipients' selection criteria for local partners should aim to diversify partnerships in order to pair up with local organizations and actors who both understand and are accepted by the local communities in which projects are implemented.

Strengthen country-wide stakeholder mapping. The PBF can facilitate project-level stakeholder mapping and analyses by investing in portfolio-level (country-wide) stakeholder mapping exercises with a focus on local conflict hotspots. Such a mapping can inform local partner selection by all PBF fund recipients. This could also promote the diversification of local implementing partners and help ensure that selection of partners goes beyond the well-connected, capital city based national or local elite organizations, and extends to those who represent the spectrum of actors and social groups who are relevant to local conflict dynamics and populations. The stakeholder mapping should ensure that less formal local peacebuilding actors are represented, notably youth- and women-led and volunteer grassroots organizations or networks.

Explore inception phase support for more informed and inclusive project design. The PBF should consider making it a requirement for local peacebuilding programming to be undertaken with the close involvement of local stakeholders in project conceptualization and design, including in context or conflict analyses, needs assessments and prioritization. Project results frameworks and indicators, moreover, should reflect locally defined notions of peace that have been identified by and resonate with local actors. The PBF should also consider providing pre-project grants during project inception phases to involve local partners from the earliest stages in defining priorities and determining intervention strategies and activities. Inception phase grants would allow PBF fund recipients to organize systematic partner engagement processes during the project development phase.

Connect with, mobilize, and recognize volunteers. All stakeholders engaged in PBF-funded projects in one capacity or another should recognize volunteerism and the contributions of volunteers within respective strategies, guidance, project documents, progress reports, and evaluations to help build sustainability, promote local ownership and leverage the networks and knowledge of local actors. This will also further develop an evidence base of where and how volunteer actors, including young people, can best support local peacebuilding initiatives.

Use terminology that reflects local views and language. PBF fund applicants and recipients should aim to avoid jargon when defining or describing the local peacebuilding changes to which their initiatives aspire to contribute. The closer and earlier partnership with local actors noted in the above recommendations, where local community members play an active role in defining local peacebuilding priorities and approaches, should help fund applicants and recipients avoid the jargon trap and develop proposals that are intelligible not only to international peacebuilding agents but also to the local communities such projects are meant to serve.

4.3 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Theories of Change should make explicit the structural, cultural, or institutional change to which local efforts aim to contribute. PBF fund applicants should ensure that theories of change are more explicit about what kind of change and at what level their local peacebuilding initiatives are expected to achieve. Changes at the level of individual beneficiaries need to be logically linked to changes at higher levels. Desired changes at each level, and the assumptions that underpin them, need to be monitored through clear, measurable and locally meaningful indicators.

Expand the use of participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation. In parallel with closer engagement of local communities in project conceptualization and design, including the identification of 'everyday peace indicators', the PBF should continue to encourage more participatory monitoring and evaluation, as these have been shown to better measure local-level outputs and outcomes and provide feedback for adaptation. Specifically, the PBF should support the expanded use of community-based monitoring and evaluation and perception surveys among its fund recipients. It should also continue to explore ways to work with local organizations and volunteers for data collection and feedback efforts and provide methodological guidance and advice.

Promote project implementation that is more flexible and adaptive to local conditions and goals. By tapping the participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation noted above, the PBF should work with its fund recipients to encourage less rigid implementation of local peacebuilding projects. Fund recipients should be encouraged to work within their own systems to drive more context-adaptive, community-responsive implementation, initiating system reforms where necessary to support more flexible programming approaches.

4.4. EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES TO LOCAL PEACEBUILDING

Support financial independence and institutional strengthening of local peacebuilding partners for sustainability of project results. Integration of economic and income generation activities may provide one avenue for sustainability as individuals will have monetary means to remain engaged in local peace structures. This is particularly important in projects that mobilize women, considering their various roles and responsibilities and comparatively limited access to capital and loans. To ensure sustainability, and in line with the earlier recommendation on embedding volunteerism into project design, fund recipients should also consider how volunteer-based structures will mediate or resolve conflict beyond the life of the project.

Keep in mind activity sequencing, reach, scale, and how best to create systemic change. Joint training, inter-group small projects, and local dialogues may not be sufficient to create the environment conducive for peace or to support long-term conflict resolution strategies. When designing advocacy or sensitization initiatives, avoid one-off engagements or advocacy events that do not lead to concrete changes. Consider launching such efforts in tandem with other approaches that address issues of accountability, institutional capacity, or other underlying drivers of exclusion and grievance.

Deliberately build local-national linkages into peacebuilding projects and sufficiently resource both levels of interventions. While the duration and limitation of funding may prevent working on systemic structural changes at the local level, projects should nonetheless identify change beyond the individual level to which they will contribute. When aiming to enhance state-society relationships, peacebuilding projects need to move beyond small projects and individual change and explore ways in which their efforts can be catalysts for more structural or institutional change. During the design phase of projects aiming to support local peace structures, fund applicants should consider how these mechanisms interact with local and national institutions and national peacebuilding strategies. Due consideration should also be given to strengthening data collection and analysis on local-national linkages during project implementation.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ANNEX II: RESEARCH APPROACH, DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

The Review, based on a mixed methods research approach, derived from three main sources of data: (1) a scan of international academic, policy-oriented, and practitioner literature on local peacebuilding; (2) a desk-review of 87 PBF-funded projects with a local peacebuilding component that were implemented from 2015 to 2021, and a more detailed document review of 25 selected PBF-funded projects that examined project documents, reports, and evaluations; and (3) analysis of four case studies (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, and the Western Balkans) led by five young researchers recruited through National UN Volunteers modality.

REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL PEACEBUILDING CONCEPTS, APPROACHES, AND PRACTICE

The scan of the international theory and practice of local peacebuilding relied in large parts on a desk review of documents and literature available. The desk review particularly drew on studies, reports, strategy documents, program frameworks and programmatic guidance by bilateral or multilateral donors, implementing organizations, and academia on how to define local peacebuilding, how to translate concepts into program designs, and how to implement local peacebuilding initiatives.

REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL PEACEBUILDING CONCEPTS, APPROACHES, AND PRACTICE

This PBF-focused part of the Review started with a desk review of relevant UN and PBF documents, including UN policy documents on peacebuilding such as Security Council Resolutions and reports by the Secretary-General and various Panels of Experts over the years, PBF-specific policy and strategy documents as well as programmatic guidance. The reviewers then conducted an assessment of the PBF global portfolio. This was done by a broad desk review of the 87 PBF-funded projects with a local peacebuilding component in the period 2015-2021. It provided an overview of the main technical approaches to local peacebuilding used and the types of partnerships, beneficiaries, and local actors that the projects engaged with. The analysis was then deepened by a more detailed review of 25 selected projects. This analysis was based on a review of project documents, progress reports, and final evaluations.

The Review has adopted the framing of local peacebuilding developed by PeaceDirect that proposes that local ownership of peace initiatives can be understood on a spectrum of three different types: (a) **"locally-led" initiatives**, in which "local people, groups and civil society organisations design their own approaches and set priorities, whilst outsiders may assist with resources;" (b) **"locally-managed" initiatives**, in which "the approach and strategic direction comes from the outside but is 'transplanted' to local management;" and (c) **"locally implemented" efforts**, which are "primarily an outside approach, including external priorities that local people or organisations are supposed to implement."[127] When applying this framework to assess to what degree local peacebuilding projects have genuine involvement of local actors, most of the PBF-funded projects (79 of 87 reviewed) fall at best in the locally-implemented category with eight projects that can be considered locally-led or locally-managed.[128]

Among the PBF fund recipients, Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs) largely dominate with 19 different RUNOs participating in 63 of the 87 projects reviewed. Non-UN organizations (NUNOs) were involved in 24 projects, among which 14 were implemented by international NGOs (INGO), four

127 PeaceDirect. 2019. *Towards locally-led peacebuilding: Defining 'local'*. London, UK: PeaceDirect: https://www.peacedirect.org/us/publications/towards-locally-led-peacebuilding-defining-local/.

128 If we applied strict criteria proposed by PeaceDirect, none of the projects would be genuinely locally-led since local partners never fully control the project design and all implementation. The funding recipient and the national government always play a significant role in the project design phase and thus influence designs. Project implementation is also done through sub-contracting, in which the RUNO or NUNO retains significant control of projects and project outcomes. The eight projects categorized as "locally-led" or "locally-managed" here had significant involvement from local partners in the project analysis and design phase as indicated in project documents. All project documents which explicitly spelled out that projects were "locally-led" or "youth-" or "women-led" or had significant project components that were labeled such or which mentioned that projects were "co-created" together with a CSO (they were all NUNO projects) were considered to be "locally-led" or "-managed." Where no details on the processes of analysis and creation of the project were clearly specified in the project proposal, it was assumed that projects were locally-implemented only.

by national NGOs, and six by a RUNO and a NUNO (all INGOs) jointly. Of the 87 projects reviewed, there were 33 projects funded through the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) window, which is only open to countries declared officially eligible by the UN Secretary-General. PRF projects can be up to 36 months and have no a-priori budget ceiling. They are usually implemented in conjunction with a number of other PRF projects contributing to the same strategic priorities and objectives. PRF projects are generally implemented by UN Agencies, Funds, or Programmes.

The Immediate Response Facility (IRF) was used as a funding instrument in 54 projects with a local peacebuilding component. IRF projects are single projects with specific outcomes and can be implemented in countries that are not formally eligible for PBF funding. They are limited to 18 months (with the possibility of a six months no-cost extension) and have budget ceilings of up to $3 million. Twenty-five (25) of these IRF projects reviewed were funded under the Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI) and 15 under the Youth Promotion Initiative (YPI). GPI and YPI projects are allocated through periodic, global calls for proposals and are open to applications from UN organizations, international NGOs, or national NGOs from the list of eligible countries a given year and have to receive an endorsement by the government. Since GPI and YPI projects are funded through the IRF facility, they are also limited to 18 months with a maximum budget of $1.5 million per individual project. GPI and YPI projects are much more likely to be implemented by NGOs; and all NGO-implemented projects in the sample were GPI or YPI projects, most of them with an INGO as recipient agencies and only a handful with a local NGO as fund recipient.

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF PBF-FUNDED LOCAL PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES THROUGH CASE STUDIES

The in-depth case studies were identified by the Review partners prior to commencing this Thematic Review, namely Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, and the Western Balkans, the research for which was led by young and emerging researchers recruited through National UN Volunteers modality. The review of the PBF-funded local peacebuilding projects in the case study locations also relied on desk reviews of relevant, location specific UN and PBF strategic documents as well as all the documentation available for each project under review. While the case study researchers assessed all projects with a local peacebuilding focus suggested by the hosting organizations and the PBSO/PBF, they also conducted more in-depth reviews and collected primary data on five projects in Burkina Faso, four projects in Côte d'Ivoire, four projects in Kyrgyzstan, and four projects in the Western Balkans. Relevant context-specific studies and evaluations of the peacebuilding context, international strategies and interventions, as well as relevant perception surveys, academic, and civil society studies and reports were also consulted.

Each case study researcher conducted semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) across the full spectrum of actors involved in overseeing, managing, implementing, and collaborating with PBF-funded projects. This included actors at the policy level, relevant PBSO/PBF staff, Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and UN Country Team (UNCT) staff, Peace and Development Advisors (PDA), PBF Secretariat Coordinators, bi- and multilateral donor representatives. At the project level, KIIs targeted project managers and other relevant project staff, implementing partners, and beneficiaries.

To gather views and perceptions of beneficiaries, including female and male youth involved in or benefiting from PBF-funded initiatives, project beneficiaries have been consulted during focus group discussions and group consultations (FG/GDs). Focus group discussions and group consultations mainly targeted project beneficiaries using semi-structured discussion guides with a mix of open-ended and more specific, close-ended questions. Less structured consultations were held with youth representatives or members of volunteer organizations who have not participated in specific PBF-funded project activities to gather general views by local youth on questions of conflict, peace, and their experience with internationally-funded local peacebuilding initiatives. Interviews were partly conducted online via Zoom, Teams, Skype, or over the phone via WhatsApp. This was particularly the case for the Western Balkans and Kyrgyzstan. In the Western Balkans even focus group discussions were held online given restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most interviews and all focus groups conducted in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire were in-person. Interviews during field missions were generally conducted in-person by all local researchers. Local researchers conducted 133 KIIs

and 37 FG/GDs altogether, according to the below breakdown. The local researchers/National UNVs benefited from technical support and advice through two Zoom sessions by Professor Landon Hancock, who has been serving as Local Peacebuilding Advisor with the PBF, during the field data collection phase. Topics discussed were interview and group discussion techniques, taking notes and organizing and analyzing qualitative field data.

The senior researcher/Team Leader conducted 19 additional qualitative key informant interviews and 3 small group discussions between September 13 and November 5, 2021, with staff from UN headquarters and UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes involved in local peacebuilding activities or who were familiar with PBF-funded projects. All interviews led by the lead researcher were held online via Zoom or Teams.

The breakdown of all interviews and (focus) group discussions conducted is as follows:

Location	Key informant interviews			(Focus) Group Discussions		
	Total #	Female	Male	Total #	Female	Male
Burkina Faso	27	4	23	18	43	46
Côte d'Ivoire	17	6	11	5	14	27
Kyrgyzstan	38	23	15	7	21	10
Western Balkans	51	34	17	7	14	14
Global	19	11	8	3	7	0
TOTAL	**152**	**78**	**74**	**40**	**99**	**97**

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDY CONTEXTS

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is at a moment of heightened fragility, due to a spill-over of armed group activity from neighboring Mali since 2015. Attacks by armed groups against civilians have led to large-scale displacement and humanitarian crises especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country. These conflict dynamics have increasingly destabilized local communities and militarized existing local conflict over access to land and pastures between herders and farmers in border areas with Mali and Niger. Against this backdrop, much of the PBF investment in Burkina Faso has addressed issues of capacity building for conflict management in communities affected by violence and insecurity. Another emphasis has been on trust building between citizens and state institutions, notably the security and defense forces through regular dialogue, greater respect for human rights standards, and general strengthening of local state capacity for better service delivery. The project sample for this Review had a strong focus on the involvement of youth and women, and included projects with a cross-border dimension.

Côte d'Ivoire

Two military coups and two civil wars between 1999 and 2011 have left deep divisions in Côte d'Ivoire about citizenship rights, land ownership, and elections. This resulted in a lasting conflict that became regionalized and ethnicized between northern, southern, and western parts of the country. Large-scale violence ended in 2011 with the help of the UN Peacekeeping Mission ONUCI which was supporting Côte d'Ivoire from 2004 to 2017. Given the importance of the localized conflict over access to land and political power, many of the PBF-funded projects in Côte d'Ivoire have targeted communities and

particularly young women and men in western and central Côte d'Ivoire, where fighting was particularly intense during the 2011 war. The projects selected for this Thematic Review focused on localized approaches to conflict management, prevention, and peacebuilding with an emphasis on youth involvement, prevention of electoral violence, and management of land and other natural resources related conflicts.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has remained largely peaceful since major inter-communal violence broke out between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbek populations in the south of the country in June 2010. However, while Kyrgyzstan does not suffer from open conflict, many structural factors that led to the violence are still present, with additional stressors added on top. A conflict and peace analysis undertaken by PeaceNexus in 2019 identified challenges related to creating a shared civic identity in a multi-ethnic country, weak dialogue mechanisms between the government and the population, persistence of gender-based violence and exclusion of women and young people, and weak local capacities for conflict prevention as the core peacebuilding issues in the country. The PBF has been engaged in Kyrgyzstan since 2010 providing funding to improve inter-ethnic relations through strengthening the rule of law, human rights, local self-government bodies, and multilingual education and civic identity, and addressing the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) through various youth-leadership and governance-focused interventions. Research for this Review's case study primarily focused on projects around civic engagement of young people and cross-border programming in the south of the country.

Western Balkans

The last three decades have been a period of significant change and transformation for the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia for the purpose of this Review), following the violent breakup of former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Yet, despite decades of investments in economic and institutional reforms and significant strides toward political stability, several challenges to positive peace and regional stability remain. Across the region, unresolved historical and political disputes find expression in divisive political rhetoric. Continuing ethno-nationalist polarization and limited constructive dialogue, are further amplifying the existing differing narratives regarding the past, present and future, including issues pertaining to war crimes, missing persons, minority rights and border demarcations. PBF-funded projects in recent years – including the four projects analyzed for this Review - have focused on connecting local, national, and regional initiatives and on engaging young women and men in intercommunal initiatives, joint projects and advocacy across territories and boundaries to address the lack of interaction of young people along communal lines and frequent divisive rhetoric by political and opinion leaders.

ANNEX III: LIST OF 25 PBF-FUNDED PROJECTS SELECTED FOR IN-DEPTH DOCUMENTARY REVIEW

Country	Funding Type	Project Code	Project Title	RUNOs/ NUNOs	Start Date	End Date	Approved budget
Peace agreement implementation							
Mali	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-146	De victimes a actrices de la paix: Renforcement de la participation des femmes dans la mise en œuvre de l'accord de paix et l'amélioration de la cohésion sociale	UNFPA, UNWOMEN	20 Oct 2016	31 Mar 2018	$1,000,000
Myanmar	IRF	PBF/IRF-148	Support to JMC Support Platform	UNDP	14 Dec 2016	13 Dec 2018	$2,363,641
South Sudan	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-328	Strengthening Young Women's Participation in Local and National Peace Processes in South Sudan	Search for Common Ground	12 Dec 2019	11 June 2021	$1,398,463
National/inter-group/political dialogue							
Burundi	PRF	PBF/BDI/D-1	Consolidation des acquis de la paix par les théâtres axés sur les valeurs UBUNTU	UNICEF	26 Apr 2016	30 June 2018	$1,000,000
Sri Lanka	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-154	Empowering women for an inclusive and sustainable transitional justice and reconciliation process in Sri Lanka	Humanity & Inclusion (HI)	31 Mar 2017	30 Apr 2019	$750,000
Sudan	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-409	Strengthening the Political and Peacebuilding Role of Women in Sudan's Transition	Search for Common Ground	17 Feb 2021	16 Aug 2022	$899,288
Conflict management and/or prevention (at the local level)							
Colombia	IRF-YPI	PBF/IRF-401	Young and female peacebuilders in northern Cauca. Tradition meets innovation in community-led approaches to protection and conflict transformation	Norwegian Refugee Council	11 Feb 2021	9 Aug 2022	$1,500,000
Haiti	IRF	PBF/IRF-227	Appui à la résolution des conflits et à la promotion de la cohésion sociale dans la ville de Jérémie à travers les organisations de jeunes	IOM, UNWOMEN, UNDP	10 Jan 2018	31 Jan 2020	$3,000,000
Niger	IRF	PBF/IRF-352	Femmes et gestion des conflits liés aux ressources naturelles	UNDP, UNWOMEN	31 Jan 2020	31 Dec 2021	$1,643,159
Sierra Leone	PRF	PBF/SLE/D-2	Mitigating Localized Resource-based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba districts	WFP, UNDP	1 Oct 2019	30 Mar 2022	$3,000,000
Yemen	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-256	Water for peace in Yemen: Strengthening the role of women in water conflict	FAO, IOM	12 Nov 2018	30 Nov 2020	$1,500,000
Restoration of state authority							
CAR	IRF	PBF/IRF-129	Appui au Redéploiement de l'Administration publique et à la Revitalisation Socio-Économique des Communautés	ILO, UNDP	27 Nov 2015	31 Dec 2018	$3,000,000
DRC	PRF	PBF/COD/A-2	PAMOJA KWA AMANI "Ensemble pour la paix" (UNDP MA function portion)	NGO/UNDP	13 July 2017	30 June 2019	$4,565,160

Electoral processes & conflict management/prevention							
Gambia	PRF	PBF/GMB/D-2	Young women and men as stakeholders in ensuring peaceful democratic processes and advocates for the prevention of violence and hate speech	UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO	23 Nov 2020	18 Nov 2022	$2,160,500
Guinea	PRF	PBF/GIN/D-7	Projet d'appui à la participation des jeunes à la prévention des conflits en période électorale et la pérennisation des Synergies locales des acteurs de paix	UNDP, Search for Common Ground	8 Mar 2020	9 Mar 2022	$2,026,890
Papua New Guinea	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-204	Empower women and youth for a free, fair, transparent and violence-free Referendum	UNFPA, OHCHR, UNWOMEN	18 Dec 2017	31 Dec 2019	$2,000,000
Civic engagement, good governance, accountability							
Chad	PRF	PBF/TCD/A-2	Habiliter les jeunes vulnérables du centre du Tchad à devenir des agents de consolidation de la paix	IOM, WFP	7 Nov 2019	7 May 2022	$3,947,437
Guatemala	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-157	Peace, Opportunities and Dialogue: Women Engaged for Results - PODER	Mercy Corps (MC)	31 Mar 2017	31 Jan 2019	$1,000,000
Niger	IRF	PBF/IRF-181	Promotion de la sécurité communautaire et de la cohésion sociale dans la région Liptako-Gourma - Cross-border Initiative (Burkina, Mali, Niger)	UNDP	13-Sep-17	31 July 2019	$1,000,000
Solomon Islands	PRF	PBF/SLB/H-1	Empowering youth as agents for peace and social cohesion in the Solomon Islands	ILO, UNDP	4 Dec 2018	30 June 2021	$1,798,483
Somalia	PRF	PBF/SOM/D-1	Midnimo (Unity) - Support for the Attainment of Durable Solutions in Areas Impacted by Displacement and Returns in Jubaland and South West States	UNHABITAT, IOM	14 Dec 2016	31 Aug 2019	$4,500,000
Peace dividends through service delivery, employment creation, income generation							
Cameroon	PRF	PBF/CMR/A-1	Stabilisation et relèvement des communautés affectées par la crise sécuritaire à l'Extrême-Nord	UNFPA, FAO, IOM	21 Jan 2020	17 July 2021	$2,200,327
Sri Lanka	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-215	EMPOWER: Building peace through the economic empowerment of women in northern Sri Lanka	ILO, WFP	9 Jan 2018	31 Dec 2019	$2,000,000
DDR and security sector							
CAR	IRF-YPI	PBF/IRF-276	Alternatives to Violence: Strengthening Youth-led Peacebuilding in CAR	War Child UK	14 Dec 2018	30 Sept 2020	$1,248,911
Liberia	IRF-GPI	PBF/IRF-216	Inclusive Security: Nothing for Us Without Us	IOM, UNDP, UNWOMEN	9 Jan 2018	30 Jun 2019	$2,000,000

PEACEBUILDING FUND

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