DE GRUYTER

EVALUATING INTERRELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING AND DIALOGUE

METHODS AND FRAMEWORKS

Edited by Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Renáta Katalin Nelson

KAICIID DIALOGUE CENTRE

KAICIID – BEYOND DIALOGUE SERIES

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KAICIID – Beyond Dialogue Series

Edited by
Patrice Brodeur and Mohammed Abu-Nimer

Volume 3

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Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Renáta Katalin Nelson

Introduction

Evaluating Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding: Meeting the Challenge

1 Introduction

Religious and interreligious peacebuilding are emerging fields of practice and studies. A core component of interreligious peacebuilding is intra- and interreligious dialogue. As emerging fields of practice, religious peacebuilding, interreligious peacebuilding in general, and interreligious dialogue, have been slowly shifting from fields in which practitioners mainly relied on their faith and beliefs in the usefulness of dialogue and peace into fields with more professional communities that seek to systematically illustrate effectiveness[1]. Although these fields have come a long way in the last several years, they are still far from reaching maturity, namely the stage of professional and reflective culture of practice that entails detailed processes of programme development and integrated monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

The development of ethical and theoretical evaluation frameworks and procedures for religious and interreligious peacebuilding is not only an important step towards strengthening programmes and projects in the field, but also necessary for scholarly and professional recognition, as well as, communicating and engaging with policy-making circles and other agencies who influence the process of social change. Why evaluate interreligious peacebuilding? In general, monitoring and evaluation processes are typically invoked for two reasons: accountability and learning how to be more effective in achieving change. While often the focus on evaluation stems from the 'pressure' from donors, accountability is not limited to ensuring that the donors' financial contributions are well utilized. Rather accountability also refers to the accountability – or responsibility – to the stakeholders and actors directly affected by peacebuilding processes (Abu-Nimer, Section 1, 25 – 52). It is important to both monitor and evaluate proj-

1 The term interreligious peacebuilding is used as an umbrella term that includes other forms of intervention aiming to build closer relationships among different sides within and between faith communities, such as dialogue, nonviolent communication, peace education, conflict resolution processes, etc. (Gerrard & Abu-Nimer 2018, 6 – 7).

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ects and programmes to ensure that needs are met, projects are adjusted to address alterations in needs in the rapidly changing conditions in fragile contexts, and that peacebuilders adhere to the 'do no harm' principle. The second aim of evaluations is learning. Learning should, ideally, take place throughout the duration of any given project cycle – 'monitoring' – requiring indicators to be developed for different stages in a project and data collection to take place more frequently than at the culmination of the project (Rothman 2007). By monitoring, peacebuilders and beneficiaries (stakeholders) can learn from their efforts as they work and analyse the situation at different points in the project, allowing for managing risks and making adjustments. The final evaluation is not only valuable for the peacebuilders involved in measuring their success and learning how to improve future projects, but also for others in the field. It is important to also share failures and limitations, not just successes with others in these fields. Although it might be challenging to share limitations and obstacles that are faced both by programmers and evaluators of interreligious peacebuilding, this step is critical for the future development of this field.

There are a number of recent studies and reports that have focused on capturing the major developments of interreligious peacebuilding field.[2] It is important to recognize that the foundation for the growing interest in this area is unfortunately based on a wider attention to the role of religion in violent conflicts. The increasing manipulation of religious identity by both certain politicians and religious agencies since the end of the Cold War, has brought faith and its followers to open public debates and ideological conflicts on the role of religion in peace and violence.

The policies related to the events of 9/11 in USA, invasion of Iraq, civil wars in Middle East region, and massive refugee and immigrant waves into European countries, have led to a clear recognition among governments, donors, and secular peacemakers that religious and faith agencies have to be engaged in the processes of resolving these violent conflicts and their consequences.

However, the extent, scope, and level of such recognition varies based on region, nature of governmental agencies, and type of religious agencies involved. Some policy makers are less hesitant to engage with religious actors while others remain cautious observers. Nevertheless, today it is not strange to see policy makers calling for further engagement with religious leaders to confront and solve social and political problems.

2 For examples of these see Garred and Abu-Nimer (2018), whose introductory chapter briefly outlines four key areas in which these advancements have taken place: Engaging one's own faith, engaging with the 'other', engaging policy, and confronting injustice and trauma.

It is in this context that evaluation of religious and interreligious peacebuilding is highly relevant. Policy makers and religious agencies often speak different languages and have in some ways opposing operational frameworks to assess their contribution to solving problems.

Policy makers tend to rely on written results that are evidence-driven and action-oriented while the subculture of religious and interreligious peacebuilding tends to be oral, anecdotal, and relationship-oriented. Thus, religious communities and institutions, as well as faith-based organizations (FBOs) and interreligious peacebuilding organizations face a serious challenge in communicating their message and importance of their work to policy makers. Additionally, with the lack of monitoring and evaluation culture in these different religious environments, the policy makers' language of evidence and tangible results is often misunderstood and dismissed as an obstruction to their work and a refusal to cooperate.

The importance of measuring the outcomes and impact of religious and interreligious peacebuilding goes even beyond influencing policy makers or donors, but it is an effective way to persuade the public that religious identity is not a source of violence and exclusion. Furthermore, evaluation can provide clear proof that religious identity and actors can be influential keys in unlocking societal stalemates and in promoting social cohesion in divided societies.

In this global context in which religious institutions are under attack and major questioning of their role, evaluation of interreligious peacebuilding is no longer a secondary priority in the process of intervention, but it is an essential step in the process of effectively communicating the message of the religious agencies to the public.

Nevertheless, there are many questions that the interreligious field has to address in order to be able to present a coherent evaluation framework to be utilized by practitioners and donors too, some of these questions include:

1. What are the current methods of evaluation being utilized by the practitioners?
2. What are the challenges that face an evaluator in this field of religious and interreligious peacebuilding? Are they different from other fields?
3. What are the most effective tools and criteria that can be used by evaluators and practitioners to both monitor and evaluate interreligious interventions?
4. Do evaluators need new – unique – methodologies and frameworks in carrying out their design in the context of religious and interreligious peacebuilding?
5. What are the main research themes and gaps in the field that need to be addressed in order to further advance the monitoring and evaluation in this area?

In the overall spirit of sharing evaluative practices and their challenges, this volume is an attempt to respond to the above questions and it aims to contribute to the on-going learning for practitioners in the fields of religious and interreligious peacebuilding and interreligious dialogue.

2 Engaging with Religion: Not *if* but *how*

As mentioned above, it is no longer news that it is necessary to engage with religion and religious actors in programmes and projects across a variety of sectors – from development and environment to peacebuilding[3]. In the last couple of decades, the recognition of the importance of religion and the value of considering the views and advice of religious actors, as well as direct engagement with religious actors when working with local communities is increasingly prevalent in programmatic approaches of states, multilaterals and non-governmental organizations (Garred and Abu-Nimer 2018). With a significant percentage – more than 80% (Pew 2017) – of the world's population adhering to a faith and the fact that concepts of diversity, peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation are aspects of all religions, engaging religion is no longer a topic relegated to religious communities, institutions and faith-based organizations (FBOs). As members in networks or through other partnerships, national and international peacebuilding and development agencies have found benefits to working with religious agencies whether they be FBOs, religious leaders, institutions or communities to improve their work.

> There is now indisputable and solid evidence that religions and religious actors can successfully be invited into, and contribute to global development, which is also a trend that emanated from most of the literature surveyed (see among others Dan mission 2016b; Karam, 2017; Mandaville, P. & Nozell, M. 2017; Orton, A., 2016; UK Aid 2012; Swedish Mission Council 2016; Tomalin, E. et al. 2018). Thus, there is a clear consensus that religious actors should be recognized and legitimized as important players in achieving the SDGs and other sustainability objectives (Udenrigsministeriet 2019, 6).

The growing partner work with a variety of religious institutions and FBOs is amply evident with the creation and rapid growth of joint networks of FBOs, governments and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) working on different aspects of common themes in development and peacebuilding. Examples of

3 For a list of organizations working on Religion and Conflict internationally see Frazer and Owen 2018, 125.

such networks include: the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI)[4] founded in 2012 for increased knowledge exchange and evidence building; the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers[5] initiated in 2013 was founded based upon a report by former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon, which revealed that religious actors play a key role in conflict mediation processes; the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD)[6] was launched in 2016 by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit towards the achievement of the 2030 SDGs and focuses on SDG 3 (health), 5 (gender), 16 (peacebuilding) and 6, 13, 14 and 15 (water, environment and climate action); and the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development chaired by UNFPA launched the UN Faith-Based Advisory Council[7] with the heads of the top common UN faith-based and faith-inspired partner organizations – 28 organizations at the launch and more than 45 at the time of writing. Collaboration also is occurring among religious organizations, institutions, and FBOs, intergovernmental organizations, and governments through less formal partnerships on consortia and steering committees, such as the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Plan of Action[8] led by the UN Office for the Prevention of Genocide or the Moral Imperative Steering Committee led by the World Bank; and movements, such as "Faith Action for Children on the Move"[9]. In addition, KAICIID, the International Dialogue Centre, as an intergovernmental entity[10] has established five major interreligious networks in Nigeria, CAR, Myanmar, Arab Region, and Europe. These platforms are all engaged in different partnerships with local, national, or regional religious institutions and FBOs, too.

This rapid growth in partnerships, collaboration on platforms and networks linking faith-based organizations and secular entities has been advancing a systematic linking of religion and religious actors to peacebuilding and development processes, thus pushing interreligious dialogue, religious and interreli-

4 See Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (ND)

5 See The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (ND)

6 See PaRD International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (ND)

7 Although there is no official website for the Advisory Council, its launch is mentioned in Annex 4 of the 2019 annual report of the Executive Director of UNFPA (UNFPA 2019)

8 The Plan of Action was developed by the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect in partnership with KAICIID, The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, and the World Council of Churches (UNOGPRtP et. al. ND)

9 More information can be found about Faith Action for Children on the Move in World Vision's Global Partner's Forum Report (2019).

10 The four founding governments include Austria, Saudi Arabia and Spain the Holy See as founding observer.

gious peacebuilding more front and centre on the policy makers' and public agenda than ever before. This gradual shift also comes with a greater understanding of the need to address challenges of interreligious peacebuilding. One of the key challenges is how to monitor, measure and evaluate interreligious peacebuilding projects and programmes. As highlighted in 2016 when discussing interreligious peacebuilding as an emerging field, "[t]here are few studies on the mechanism and tools (design, processes, and evaluation of success) of interreligious peacebuilding, which will allow policy makers to engage religious leaders and their institutions in a systematic process of mediation, negotiation, or problem solving to respond to a concrete social or political problem" (Abu-Nimer 2016). Although a few years have passed since this observation was published on Oxford Group's website, monitoring and evaluation of the field remains in its initial phase of professionalization and unfortunately with few frameworks or tools to offer. Those tools that do exist or are being developed are not necessarily widely recognized or disseminated. The need to advance this area is only exacerbated by the rapidity with which increasingly more actors are engaging in interreligious peacebuilding.

This volume aims to 1) examine and address several challenges associated with developing monitoring and evaluation tools and practices for interreligious peacebuilding, and 2) provide an assemblage of examples of tools and practices that have developed and are being used on the field. The hope of the authors and editors of this volume is that this collection may serve a first step towards a collection of existing approaches, wider dissemination and thereby greater application of monitoring and evaluation practices in interreligious peacebuilding.

3 Interreligious and Religious Peacebuilding

What do we mean by interreligious or religious peacebuilding and how is it different from standard peacebuilding processes? It is firstly valuable to outline peacebuilding itself before looking at religious or interreligious peacebuilding. Peacebuilding "refers to activities intended to bring people together and address a conflict's underlying structural causes, regardless of the stage or dynamics of such conflict" (Garred and Abu-Nimer 2018, 6) Why do we do peacebuilding? "Peacebuilding aims to create conditions for lasting peace and the prevention of future conflicts through the positive transformation of the cultures, structures, systems, and other root causes that generate and sustain the conflicts into ones that promote peaceful coexistence among feuding groups" (Abu-Nimer, Section 1, 25 – 52).

While there is not one stand-alone definition of interreligious peacebuilding or religious peacebuilding, there are some key components that are inherent to both religious and interreligious peacebuilding. Firstly, both interreligious and religious peacebuilding draw on the spiritual values of the participants to work towards "individual transformation and healing, as well as to build greater social cohesion within groups" (Catholic Relief Services 2019). Religious and interreligious peacebuilding engage religious actors and communities in peacebuilding processes and often utilize religious scriptures and traditions in their peacebuilding work. These similarities are clearly illustrated by the definitions of religious and interreligious peacebuilding put forth in this volume. Neufeldt defines religious peacebuilding as "actions taken by individuals motivated by their religion or representing religious institutions to constructively and non-violently prevent, reduce or transform inter-group conflict"; and interreligious peacebuilding as "peacebuilding undertaken by people motivated by religion or representing a religious institution or confessional community and working between and across faith traditions to prevent, reduce or transform inter-group conflict" (Section 1, 55). Abu-Nimer describes religious and interreligious peacebuilding as drawing "its inspiration and motivation from the beliefs, values, practices, and rituals derived from the scriptures of one or more faith traditions; uses the institutional platforms, networks, and resources; or leverages the moral voice and authority of religious actors (including the clergy and lay persons and organizations working in the name of the faith) to facilitate the creation of the conditions for peace and the prevention of violent conflicts in divided societies" (Section 1, 28).

Steele and Wilson-Grau (Section 2, 137) break down two different roles in which religion can play in faith-based peacebuilding: interveners motivated by religion or faith; and "local actors whom the interveners wish to influence can be religiously motivated".

The processes used to achieve the transformation of participant and community attitudes and behaviours include but are not limited to interreligious, intra-religious and intercultural dialogue (horizontal engagement), mutual problem solving, joint community projects, mediation, and dialogue with policymakers (vertical engagement) (Catholic Relief Services 2019). At first glance many of the processes used in interreligious peacebuilding do not differ from standard peacebuilding practices. The critical differences lie in the fact that religious and interreligious peacebuilding draw on spiritual values and place a greater emphasis on dialogue processes and the role of religion in transformative change

It is also important to highlight that it is not sufficient to have religious diversity among the participants to classify or distinguish the programme as inter-faith or interreligious. Unfortunately, there are many organizations who design

intervention programmes (capacity building and crisis intervention initiatives) and classify or label such activities as interreligious or interfaith, despite the fact that such designs avoid any intentional spiritual or faith-based processes or content.

4 The Linkage of Dialogue to Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding

While one may at first envision the relevance of dialogue tied to conflicts – whether violent or otherwise – with a division along faith lines. Yet interfaith and intra-faith dialogue in religious and interreligious peacebuilding is neither limited to, nor only useful in such conflicts; "Interfaith dialogue can be of great value in promoting peacebuilding and advancing reconciliation even when religion is not the central cause of a conflict" (Uysal 2016, 265). Beyond active violent conflict and post violent conflict settings dialogue and interreligious and religious peacebuilding play a key role within the broader peacebuilding spectrum – including conflict prevention, education, dealing with root causes of conflict, ongoing tensions or latent conflict due to environment, lack of resources, etc. (Abu-Nimer 2007. Interfaith Dialogue in Middle East- USIP) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark lists among several reasons for engaging in interreligious dialogue: 1) "many people in the Global South have more trust in religious institutions than in governmental institutions"; 2) "religious actors can contribute to reducing tensions in communities, which enables more trust, safe zones for addressing other development challenges"; and 3) the challenges of sustainability, as outlined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, will make religious actors increasingly interdependent and entwined, thus making the need for enhanced dialogue necessary" (Udenrigsministeriet 2019, 5–6). Intra-faith and interfaith dialogue are also typically tied together with mutual problem solving and joint community projects. This link between dialogue and action follow in line with concepts such as the 3H or head, hand, heart approach used in training interreligious peacebuilders (Abu-Nimer 1999) or the 3Bs – Binding, Bonding and Bridging featured by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies' Contending Modernities' education and research initiative[11]. Both approaches aim to achieve attitudinal then behavioural change and are described in brief as follows:

11 See Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies (2021); and University of Notre Dame and Keough School of Global Affairs (2021).

> [This approach engages] all three dimensions of the attitudinal-change triangle: head, heart and hand (3H), which correspond to cognition, emotion and behaviour. Interveners are successful when they can influence the parties' thinking, engage them in a positive emotional experience, and show them ways to apply their new learning through hands on experience or chances for action (Abu-Nimer 2001, 689).
>
> The 3B method, comprised of Binding, Bonding, and Bridging activities, sets the stage for reconciliation by addressing personal barriers to peace, fostering communal understanding and voice, and generating pathways to constructively encounter the "other." This method pays heed to deeply held divisive narratives kept alive in hearts and practice, and better equips communities to develop local, pragmatic, and mutually agreed-upon conflict resolution mechanisms (Fitzgerald 2016).

As illustrated by several chapters in this volume, there is a critical linkage between the use of dialogue – interfaith or intra-faith – and achieving transformative change within interreligious or religious peacebuilding processes. Capturing these processes via evaluation is a common challenge that faces religious and interreligious peacebuilding, and peacebuilding in general.

5 Challenges

5.1 Speed of the Process

Dialogue and interreligious peacebuilding are not rapid processes. Since interreligious peacebuilding primarily relies on attitudinal and behavioural changes, its contribution to changes at the macro level – societal change – will take years to achieve or be observed. The nebulousness of success might best be exemplified in the following statement: "'[...] the quality of the dialogue [is] enhanced so that it improves mutual understanding and learning from difference, whilst also decreasing prejudice, promoting social cohesion and developing a common sense of belonging between those involved [...]'" (Orton et al. 2016). While there are indeed ways to measure various factors outlined, certainly no project owner applying standard indicators would have the realistic expectation of decreasing societal prejudice, increasing social cohesion and a common sense of belonging within the typical 3 – 5-year project cycle. The long term nature of the desired outcomes are demonstrated in a report by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Relying on the methodological framework of "Outcome harvesting", which assesses dimensions such as "output", "outcome" and "impact", a successful ID (Interreligious Dialogue) has achieved measurable results on an "outcome" and "impact" level, which would entail measurable *long-term* changes in behaviours, relationships and policies among involved drivers of change" (Udenrigsmi-

nisteriet 2019, 8).[12] Yet, most donors – and therefore most faith-based organizations as recipients of donor funds – have high expectations but seek visible or tangible results – as aspects that would make anyone aiming for SMART and FRU indicators shutter.[13]

This poses multiple obstacles, for example 1) being able to show results to donors in often short-term project or grant cycles; 2) managing donor expectations; 3) developing an evaluation process that not only maps change but also had clear enough indicators that provide enough information for the implementers themselves to learn from their work and make adjustments when necessary; and 4) not overlooking the need for data collection over the duration to also aim to evaluate the long-term change. Developing monitoring and evaluation processes need to take into account micro – individual or community level (micro) and macro level changes, but also how the changes link to one another in the short and long term. The delineation of what can be achieved in the short versus long term need to be made clear to donors as well to prevent the expectation of miracles.

5.2 Scepticism on Evaluation Need

Scepticism on the need of evaluations, as well as the evaluators involved may hinder the development of monitoring and evaluation processes and limit data collection. There is at times a scepticism or even lack of interest by religious or interreligious peacebuilders in applying monitoring and evaluation techniques. There are several reasons for this. In some instances, religious or interreligious peacebuilders see peacebuilding as a good in and of itself (Neufeldt, Section 1, 53–76). While there may be an acknowledgement of the need for accountability and to evaluate success, success in religious peacebuilding may not be tied to predefined results (Steele and Wilson-Grau, Section 2, 137–168). Even when there is an acknowledgment of the need for standard evaluation there might be a hesitancy to exclusively involve secular evaluators unfamiliar with interreligious peacebuilding in evaluation processes. Peacebuilding itself is already complex enough particularly given the existing challenges when work-

12 See also Abu-Nimer 2019, and Neufeldt & Lederach 2007

13 Indicators should both be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound) and FRU (Feasible: the data can be collected at a reasonable cost with a reasonable level of training, Reliable: No matter who collects the data, the same findings will be collected, and Useful: The information should help you make informed choices about your programme and contribute to learning) (Roberts and Khattri 2012, 33).

ing in conflict or post-conflict areas, but as expressed by understanding the nuances necessary to develop a useful yet respectful evaluative approach that takes into consideration the principles and values based upon the religious tradition(s) involved adds to this complexity (Garred, Herrington, and Hume, Section 2, 169–196; Steele and Wilson-Grau, Section 2, 137–168). Furthermore, the realization for the need of the evaluation may be seen as something more aimed at pleasing the donor. This can result in monitoring and evaluation being applied post-facto, hindering proper planning and data collection that would benefit improvement during the duration on the project, as well as overall learning for the peacebuilders themselves – let alone allowing for future learning by others.

5.3 Squaring the Circle

Evaluation practices used for traditional peacebuilding projects and programmes are not always a good fit for interreligious peacebuilding projects. This does not mean it is necessary to reinvent the wheel, yet it is also neither advisable nor seemingly effective to "cut and paste" standard evaluation criteria such as "outcome harvesting", "logical frameworks" or simple application of the OECD criteria onto interreligious or religious peacebuilding projects without modifications. This would ignore the transcendental or faith aspect of religious and interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue. "The evaluation methodology for ID (Interreligious Dialogue) seems to be in need of a boost, perhaps by innovating evaluation designs and developing new approaches" (Udenrigsministeriet 2019, 9). This is true of overall religious and interreligious peacebuilding processes.

5.4 Instrumentalizing or Downplaying Religion

There is a risk of instrumentalization religion as well as downplaying the importance of religion. The pattern of instrumentalization of religion to justify both war and peace by policy makers and religious agencies has been an integral part of the human civilization. This is not a new phenomenon, nevertheless in recent decades religious peacebuilding has been introduced as a means for countering violent extremism, too (Abu-Nimer 2018). Thus, there are "concerns about instrumentalizing religion, taking a reductionist approach and using religion as the means to a peacebuilder's end" (Neufeldt, Section 1, 54), as well as the risk of wrongly attributing successes or failures when the monitoring and evaluation processes are not well-developed. Recognizing the need to engage with religion should also influence the need to adhere to a nuances and respect-

ful approaches in engaging with religion. There is a risk of token engagement, compartmentalizing religious peacebuilding to a certain sphere of peacebuilding separate from greater peacebuilding processes, or engaging well-known yet not necessarily legitimate and relevant religious actors (Abu-Nimer, Section 1, 25 – 52; Garred & Abu-Nimer 2018, 15). Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental agencies organize activities under the labelling of interreligious dialogue or interreligious peacebuilding, however often these programmes have no relation to interreligious peacebuilding or to religion and religious traditions. Indeed, the participants might be from different religious backgrounds, yet the programmes, the design and processes tend to completely be devoid from faith or spirituality. Alternatively, there is the possibility of involving interreligious peacebuilders for only a specific aspect of peacebuilding processes for example engagement on limited interreligious dialogue rather than a holistic approach that requires action (the 3B or 3H methods as mentioned above).

5.5 Too Much Emphasis on Religion: Losing Sight on Root Causes

There is the risk of overemphasizing religion and losing focus on addressing the root causes of conflict. This challenge stands in stark contrast with the last one and strongly shows the difficulty in achieving a balance in clearly understanding the role of religion in peacebuilding in order to be able to effectively evaluate the peacebuilding processes. As illustrated by Hippolyt Pul in Section 1, 77 – 100 the religious identities of conflict actors and peacebuilders can mask the real issues of the conflict. If there is too much emphasis on the role of religion in any or all of the parties, there is a risk of not only derailing the peacebuilding processes from looking at conflict drivers such as power, politics, environment, ethnic and socio-economic dynamics, resources, etc. (Abu-Nimer 2018), but also overemphasizing the importance or misattributing/simplifying the role of religion in evaluations of conflicts and peacebuilding processes hinders the understanding of successes/failure and prevents learning from the evaluative process. In essence, it not only reinforces the media portrayal and overwhelming public perception that religion is typically the cause for most violent conflicts, when in fact the opposite is true. Most violent conflicts have a number of non-religious based root causes, yet due to the manipulation of religious identity many are exacerbated and deepened along religious divides. (Appleby 2000)

5.6 Gaps in the Literature

There is a significant lack of literature regarding monitoring and evaluation practices of religious and interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue (Neufeldt 2011; Abu-Nimer 2016, Orton 2016, Udenrigsministeriet 2019). In response to this lack of literature, in 2015 KAICIID initiated a special seminar for evaluators to examine the state of the field of interreligious peacebuilding evaluation conference.[14] The proceedings of this seminar pointed out very clearly for the need to hold further discussions and explore the challenges and possibilities for professionalizing this area of practice. The need for such an initiative emerged from five years of intensive work with religious institutions and leaders from the five major religion of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Throughout these activities, participants voiced their frustration and expressed their deep wish to gain skills and methods to help them articulate their success and effective work (KAICIID 2015. Project Report).

The lack of research does not necessarily mean that practitioners of interreligious peacebuilding are not evaluating their own work. However, it poses a challenge for information sharing of what is being done and as a result leaves out one of the critical aspects of monitoring and evaluation for a wider audience – learning. It is not only important to learn lessons from one's own work, but also from each other. With an extremely limited amount of literature dealing with the topic of evaluation and religious/interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue, it is near impossible to learn about existing methods, challenges, and how others deal with obstacles and risks. One such example of a means to fill this gap has been an ongoing process in the development of the Evaluating Interreligious Peacebuilding and Dialogue (EIAP) framework and its revised version (EIAP II), discussed by Garred, Hume and Herrington in this volume.

5.7 Recognition within the Field of Evaluation

The general field of evaluation is expansive in its diversity and coverage. The professional development and training of evaluators in social science methods and thematic specialization such as development, health, education, etc. are crucial for recognition by policy makers, donors and the public in general. In this context, the wider field of peacebuilding is still struggling in gaining such recognition and credibility within the field of evaluation. Evaluators have only

14 Section 2, 197–220, by Cohen, is built upon her initial presentation at this seminar.

in the past two decades begun paying greater attention to the evaluation of peacebuilding (see the various national, regional, and international associations of evaluation and the trend of neglecting peacebuilding in their conferences and memberships).[15] This difficulty is reflected even more in the subfield of religious and interreligious peacebuilding evaluation. In fact, it is hard to find any academic or professional development programme that offers any capacity building or certification of evaluators in this field.

6 Opportunities

While the current amount of available literature is limited to date, there are attempts to systematize analysis and monitoring and evaluation of religious and interreligious peacebuilding, and there are tools being developed. For example in 2018, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) published an analysis for religion and conflict and peacebuilding. The guide is part of a four-part series of analysis and action guides developed by USIP in collaboration with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers and the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice. They "are intended to have practical value, providing theory only to the extent that it helps with the assessment, design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of concrete interventions" (Frazer and Owen 2018, 6). The guide is particularly useful for practitioners in analysing what role religion plays in the society, the state and the conflict.

Some international entities such as the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers and the KAICIID Dialogue Centre have been working with religious actors for the last several years in conflict afflicted societies and have been developing monitoring and evaluation systems for their own work. In the case of KAICIID, the systems have been adopted from the development setting and modified to take into account the far less tangible nature of peacebuilding and dialogue. Furthermore, as pointed out by Garred, Herrington and Hume (Section 2, 169 – 196), even when not directly following monitoring and evaluation practices, interreligious peacebuilders have often looked at ways to learn from their projects to improve their work, which allows for the possibility of collecting case studies to be used as best practices. For example, KAICIID has begun

15 Major organizations working in development such as UNDP and EU have focused more exclusively on the evaluation of develop and paid limited attention to peacebuilding evaluation.

such a process of best practices harvesting through its "Promising Practices" project as part of the Dialogue Knowledge Hub[16].

7 Lessons Learned

In addition to the above common thematic areas, this compilation, while only representing a small contribution towards addressing the overall need for the professionalization of monitoring and evaluation in interreligious and religious peacebuilding, still provides us with a number of lessons.

1. Despite the progress made in recent years, we have a long way to go towards the institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation in interreligious peacebuilding. The greater interest in engaging with religion has rapidly expanded the field, yet there is still the need to tackle even basic challenges such as developing base line studies, increasing investment on long-term programme designs and thereby evaluations, the need to incorporate evaluation from the beginning stages – during the development of the programme design – rather than simply to placate donors.
2. The literature that examines religious and interreligious peacebuilding work, particularly that of inter and intra-religious dialogue, remains extremely limited. More analytical studies are needed and therefore more "case study harvesting" will also be necessary. There has also been the experience of some advocates of monitoring and evaluation of religious peacebuilding[17] that some faith-based peacebuilders express a lack of willingness to share reports with negative results. Negative results shouldn't be seen as a failure of the peacebuilders, but rather as an opportunity for learning. The need for a shared resource repository for religious and interreligious peacebuilding evaluation is essential for the professional development of this field. Practitioners and evaluators can have access to hundreds of evaluations and can produce macro evaluation studies that help in advancing the tools and frameworks of evaluation[18].
3. The role and inclusion of women and gender analysis in the interreligious peacebuilding field is not addressed in the evaluation frameworks provided

16 See Promising Practices on the KAICIID Dialogue Knowledge Hub Website (KAICIID ND)
17 As expressed in courses teaching the data collection, surveying and monitoring and evaluation design methods proposed by the EIAP II guide.
18 Mohammed Abu-Nimer conducted in 2012 a mega evaluation study that examined 16 peacebuilding evaluations reports (Sponsored by Center for Peacebuilding and Development, American University Washington DC).

in this volume. However, access to women in many faith groups is more challenging and thus needs to not only be recognized in programme design, but also in evaluation procedures. The lack of gender lenses in religious and interreligious peacebuilding is often explained by the nature of the formal religious institutions and their dominant male representation. While this is indeed an institutional and structural limitation, nevertheless there are alternative ways to compensate and provide limited remedies while engaging such formal institutions in religious and interreligious peacebuilding.

4. While developmental and secular peacebuilding frameworks have some relevance in capturing the spirit of interreligious peacebuilding work, there remains the difficulty of capturing the faith motivation behind religious peacebuilding and nuances associated with its application[19]. While this volume both presents some new models, it also emphasizes the need for the development of a greater number of innovative models and frameworks.

The current international, regional, and national interreligious platforms have the duty to advocate for the further development of their evaluation practices and agenda. Building their internal capacities is an essential step towards the advancement of their field. Through partnerships with academic institutes and graduate programmes in peacebuilding and conflict resolution that train the next generation of professionals, the field of religious and interreligious peacebuilding and its evaluation can greatly be enhanced. Such partnerships will support the processes of professionalization of both the field of peacebuilding and the subfield of interreligious peacebuilding.

8 In this Volume

This volume aims to contribute to this small and emerging body of literature by collecting a series of essays that look into the challenges and possibilities of monitoring and evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue. The book's chapters comprise two sections. Section 1 looks at the complexities of religious and interreligious peacebuilding and emphasizes the linkage of interreligious dialogue to these peacebuilding processes. This section further identifies several current challenges and implications in monitoring

19 As aptly pointed out in Neufeldt's chapter (Section 1, 53 – 76). A similar conclusion was also drawn by Garred and Abu-Nimer (2018).

and evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding. Section 2 offers a practical set of examples of unique tools that have been developed specifically for monitoring and evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding; and highlights the application of specific monitoring and evaluation models in different contexts in the broader field of peacebuilding.

8.1 Section 1: Evaluating Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding and Dialogue: Challenges, and Implications

Abu-Nimer opens the section in Challenges in "Peacebuilding Evaluation: Voices from the Field" with an overview of the challenges faced in peacebuilding evaluation in general. He looks at examples from the field, taking into account issues that arise both from peacebuilders themselves and from the side of donors. The issues range from the amount of evaluator experience, to practical dilemmas faced in conflict zone realities.

In "Vying for Good: Ethical Challenges in Evaluating Interreligious Peacebuilding", Reina Neufeldt delves into the nuanced yet complex nature of religious and interreligious peacebuilding. Focusing on different models of interreligious dialogue, she examines why the criteria monitoring and evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding needs to be and how they can be different from traditional secular peace building monitoring and evaluation criteria and the implications monitoring and evaluation have on the role of "awesome agency".

Using examples from his experience of interreligious peacebuilding in Africa, Hippolyt Pul illustrates the disconnect between actual evaluations and their intentions – accountability and learning. In his chapter, "My Peace is not your Peace – Role of Culture and Religion in What Counts for Peace", he details several of the numerous challenges that are faced in evaluating interreligious peacebuilding.

In "Values, Principles and Assumptions: Recognizing Power Dynamics of Religious Leaders", Khaled Ehsan picks up on recent focus of international NGOs on the role of power as an analytical tool in monitoring and evaluation and applies this lens to the power held by religious leaders and its implications on interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding processes. His theoretical framework provides practical questions and indicators that could be incorporated in monitoring and evaluation processes.

8.2 Section 2: New Models and Tools in Evaluating Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding

After examining the implications of the spiritual motivations – being faithful, religious traditions and their values – have on designing evaluation tools, selecting approaches and defining success in their chapter on "Transcendence and the Evaluation of Faith-based Peacebuilding", David Steele and Ricardo Wilson-Grau introduce a possible methodology for developing an evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding.

Michelle Garred, Elizabeth Hume and Rebecca Herrington present the Effective Interreligious Action in Peacebuilding framework as a collaborative effort to provide an evaluative design framework for both practitioners and evaluators. Their chapter, "Evaluating Interreligious Peacebuilding and Dialogue: Methods and Frameworks", presents the project and the learning processes that have ensued since its inception.

In her chapter, "Assessing the Impact of Interfaith Initiatives", Shana Cohen delves into the field of interfaith dialogue and interfaith relations. Citing the lack of innovation in dialogical methods and project designs, she presents a model for evaluating interreligious dialogue and applies the model to analyse current state of the field and the challenges it faces in the United Kingdom.

9 The Way Forward

As an attempt to contribute to the evolutionarily process of professionalizing the field of interreligious peacebuilding, this volume remains a modest attempt, only just barely scratching the surface. However, the editors of this volume hope that this attempt serves as an inspiration and opens a number of questions for others to build on these contributions, as well as to address a number of areas not touched upon in this volume. In closing, we would like to outline some future possibly areas of research.

A number of challenges to evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding are discussed, and examples of a few unique methods and frameworks are presented in this volume. However, not much is presented regarding what faith-based organizations themselves are doing or could be doing. More research is needed to examine what evaluative practices are being used by faith-based organizations, their merits and lessons learned. Furthermore, more could be explored regarding opportunities and ways for faith-based organizations and religious institutions involved in religious and interreligious peacebuilding to build and improve evaluation processes.

This volume is more geared towards religious and interreligious peacebuilders, or other practitioners using aspects of interreligious peacebuilding, such as interreligious dialogue. This is evident in the way several chapters in this volume examine the need and compatibility of monitoring and evaluation with religious and interreligious peacebuilding. However, the peacebuilders themselves are only one building block in the structure. Pul's chapter brings to light the disconnection between interreligious peacebuilding itself and the expectation of evaluators. Thus, future endeavours might look to examine how policy makers and donors can be more sensitive or be sensitized regarding the nature of evaluation in interreligious peacebuilding and the challenges facing the practitioners working in this area.

The roles of other members of society are only touched upon in this volume. For example, Ehsan details the implications of the power or religious leaders and how this could be taken into account in the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The opens the reader's imagination to question the roles and implications of other members of society involved in peacebuilding processes. Yet, the volume does not address the roles of gender, youth and children and how evaluative processes could be adapted to take into account these voices, which tend less visible in religious and interreligious peacebuilding.

Lastly, there is greater attention, interest and recognition of religious and interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue. The sector is overlapping and being integrated more and more with the programmes of secular organizations and donors. This has implications for these programmes themselves as the interests of these donors are incorporated in religious and interreligious peacebuilding processes. This includes the often-strong focus of states and intergovernmental organizations in countering and preventing violent extremism (CVE & PVE), as well as freedom of religion and belief (FORB). It will therefore be necessary to examine the implications for evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding in the context of CVE, PVE and FORB.

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Section 1 Evaluating Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding and Dialogue: Challenges, and Implications

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

Challenges in Peacebuilding Evaluation

Voices from the Field

1 Introduction

Due to the nature of the implementing organizations, the capacity of the programmers, and how peace work has been traditionally perceived (and many other factors), many peacebuilding programmes do not have a rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It is only recently that the field began focusing on the need to be more systematic; such focus has been triggered by both donors and policy makers who began investing more resources in the peacebuilding programmes, especially in post conflict areas. However, efforts in systematizing and evaluating peacebuilding programmes have been subject to numerous challenges. This article examines some of the core obstacles for evaluators to be aware of in developing and conducting evaluations of peacebuilding programmes and projects. The challenges in this article were described in detail by 32 international evaluators that were interviewed for a wider study conducted by the Salam Institute (see www.salaminstitute.org) between 2008 and 2012 (Abu-Nimer, Nasser and Ouboulhcen 2016). The article begins by examining some of the fundamental obstacles faced by evaluators in developing an evaluation including those challenges that lie with the donors or peacebuilding programmers themselves, and then moves to more structural challenges faced in conducting evaluations. While the list of challenges discussed is far from comprehensive, the article aims to bring to light and emphasize the importance and need for further research on peacebuilding evaluation.

Many peacebuilders in general often see peace work as morally superior to other forms of interaction or intervention in a conflict. In fact, often most outsiders to the conflict (also some people from within the conflict) express a sense of admiration and recognition of the need to work for peace. However, working from a moral advantage cannot compensate for the fact that the majority of peacebuilding implementers stumble and fall short in their attempt to produce

Note: This chapter also appeared in Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. (2020). "Challenges in Peacebuilding Evaluation: Voices from the Field." In *New Directions in Peacebuilding Evaluation*, edited by Estree, Tamra. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.

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evidence to convince the average person, donors, or policy makers that any given intervention has the potential to change the conflict dynamics in a country. As Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church lamented in the early 1990s when meeting with policy makers in Northern Ireland to convince them to shift more of their resources to peace work: "where is the stuff that I can pound on the table and say, and here's why we know this stuff works better than more guns on the street" (Church and Shouldice 2003). Instead, peace workers have often characterized their efforts as "planting seeds" for future peace, often noting that they do not necessarily expect to view or see the full results of these seeds in their lifetime.

The pressure to produce tangible results has been set by the rapidly advancing technologies, which have dramatically increased the ability of peacebuilding organizations and donors to collect and share data, in turn generating greater demand to demonstrate the impact and the effectiveness of their projects with quantifiable data. In addition, the greater awareness of civil society work and its potential capacity to advance social cohesion increases the demand for peacebuilding programmes to produce concrete results (Stern 2012). This is particularly visible in the emphasis placed on empirical evidence by both donors and policymakers; "donors are under a great deal of pressure by their policy makers to justify their foreign assistance budgets, and the trend towards big data has increased their desire for empirical evidence to support their requested levels of funding, prioritizing support for tangible results over peacebuilding needs. Yet, a very needs-oriented approach dominates the development field. "We know we all need peace and we easily want freedom, but that's not a tangible" (Riak 2009).

The need to develop more systematic and widely used monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding programmes is evident. However, the path towards creating strong evaluation systems faces a number of challenges ranging from difficulty in defining peacebuilding programmes, lack of evaluator experience on evaluating peacebuilding projects and programmes, and donor and programmer behaviour, to the very real obstacles faced by evaluators in conflict zones. Often these challenges are interlinked.

When evaluating peacebuilding programmes, one must examine a wider scale of influences on the success and impact of peacebuilding programmes. Evaluators of peacebuilding programmes have to explore linkages with other sectors, rather than just focus on their small and confined efforts of reducing direct forms of violence and advancing peacebuilding. The lack of clear definitions of both peace and peacebuilding on the one hand can make it difficult for peacebuilding programmers to create clear indicators of success and on the other for

evaluators to structure evaluations.[1] Pressure from donors to show quick tangible results clashes considerably with the aforementioned attribution of peace work as towards a moral higher cause and can heighten peacebuilders' resistance to evaluations.

A further dilemma is that peacebuilding work is often subject to two-year programme cycles that are dependent on donor funding. These issues are not made any easier by the fact the majority of the peacebuilding programmes are implemented by local partners but designed by international organizations (United Nations, European Union, African Union, OSCE, etc.) or donors (World Bank, USAID, DFID, etc.) a feature that adds to the complexity of carrying out an evaluation that is relevant to the local partners (Brown et al. 2015). This might also be true of most international development programmes as well, thus it might not just be a challenge specific to peacebuilding but international programming writ large. Nevertheless, the evaluator must take into consideration the meaning and impact of such factors in design and implementation on the hope for peace and commitment of local communities to peace when presented by such outside organizations.

Even when evaluators are able to navigate these obstacles and develop an evaluation methodology and tools for a particular peacebuilding programme or project, the challenges do not stop there. Often evaluators themselves lack expertise in peacebuilding which not only can pose an issue in evaluation development but also in conducting the evaluation in the field.

Furthermore, conflict zone realities produce certain conditions on the ground which affect people's behaviour and responses to everything around them. The proximity of the conflict and its consequences for communities and individuals produce an environment that affects any evaluation design and creates challenges and obstacles for evaluation teams. Identifying and devising strategies on how to handle these possible obstacles is crucial to the success of an evaluation.

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1 Definitions of peace (ceasefire, disarmament, new government elections, return to communities) and peacebuilding (government sector reform, security sector reform, establishment of clear state boundaries, transitional justice, reconciliation, dialogue and education, etc.) range from narrow to broad. Debates and varied usages of these terms exist in both academic and policy circles. This lack of clear definitions creates a challenge when developing evaluations. It therefore becomes important to clearly define these terms when developing an evaluation. In this article the term peacebuilding is used as an umbrella term that covers all types of intervention that aims to repair or respond to conflict issues in a peaceful method, such as: conflict resolution, post conflict stabilization programs, peace education, nonviolent direct action, diplomacy and negotiation, etc.

2 Challenges in developing peacebuilding evaluations

2.1 Lack of Consistent Definitions

When evaluating peacebuilding programmes, one must examine a wider scale of influence than the immediate effect on individuals, institutions, or communities. Evaluators of peacebuilding programmes have to explore linkages with other sectors. The need for broader perspective stems from the fact that peacebuilding occurs in volatile areas with complex situations with numerous factors that can affect the level of impact that any given peacebuilding programme can have. For example, without taking into consideration an external factor that leads to a further outbreak in violence, an evaluation could falsely interpret the effectiveness of the programme design or the reasons for delays in implementation. This has prompted some evaluators to work to expand the definitions of the field of peacebuilding and of peacebuilders. Michael Lund, for example, argues that it is a mistake to assume that operating in any level of Lederach's pyramid of intervention – bottom up, top down, or middle out– makes someone a peacebuilder and thus requires that this person has special criteria to be able to execute their specific part of the operation; conversely, being far from a narrow field, peacebuilding often requires the work of individuals in the process who are not peacebuilders (Lederach 1997). Projects targeting civil society groups, security organizations and military services for providing secure environments in a conflict also have peacebuilding impact and ought to be included in a definition of peacebuilding interventions. The lack of an agreed upon definition of what it means to work for peace or peacebuilding is a primary challenge in both designing and implementing as well as evaluating peacebuilding intervention.

The attempts at opening a wider definition presents further difficulties as to whether or not the project in question is solely a peacebuilding programme or if peacebuilding programming is integrated across all of the organization's projects. For example, according to World Vision or Catholic Relief Services, peacebuilding input and design is expected to be a component of all their development projects, in addition to their direct peacebuilding programming. An additional challenge is defining sub-groups of peacebuilding, such as interreligious or religious peacebuilding which draws its inspiration and motivation from the beliefs, values, practices, and rituals derived from the scriptures of one or more faith traditions; uses the institutional platforms, networks, and resources; or leverages the moral voice and authority of religious actors (including the clergy and lay persons and organizations working in the name of the faith) to facil-

itate the creation of the conditions for peace and the prevention of violent conflicts in divided societies. Evaluating these different types of programmes requires different strategies. Furthermore, when peacebuilding is integrated into development projects, it tends to be carried out by programmers who are not necessarily trained in in peacebuilding frameworks and therefore have limited awareness of definition, meaning, and strategies of peace.

In addition to the difficulty in defining what constitutes a peacebuilding programme, the lack of a clear definition of "peace" in most peacebuilding programmes is a major challenge for evaluators. Of the evaluators interviewed for the study, 30% mentioned that, conceptually, there is an inconsistent definition of "what builds peace" or conceptualization of what a good peacebuilding programme would look like in the field. Without a precise definition of how a particular intervention relates to accomplishing peace on a macro level, it is difficult for evaluators to link the programme's outcomes with the way that people, donors, and organizers in the conflict context understand peace. Thus, evaluators can be torn between various conceptual approaches of "what constitutes peace?" As Mary Anderson states:

> We don't really know what constitutes a good peace programme, we don't know what makes peace happen in any definitive way. Most assume, if one does peace, then you bring peace. We don't have clear set of benchmarks and that makes it really hard. It's an imperfect field, and it's hard to know. You have to make a good argument for this particular programme at this time as having some significant positive impact, or significant negative impact, or no significant impact at all in relation to an unknown state of being, which is the issue then of peace (Anderson 2009).

The above statements reflect the need to further clarify the links between how donors define peace work and its outcomes versus how practitioners and policy makers view the meaning and functions of peace work. The further the gap between these three stakeholders in defining "what constitutes peace?", the more challenging it becomes to both measure and capture the impact of peace intervention programmes.

2.2 Programme/Project Design Lacking Clear and Specific Objectives: "Good Things Happened" Syndrome

Another major challenge for peacebuilding evaluation can occur when the programme itself is not designed or planned with any clear or systematic view of change. In this study, 40% of evaluators interviewed indicated that the programmes they evaluated lacked well thought out, participatory programme de-

sign, goals, and indicators based upon conflict resolution and peacebuilding assumptions and principles. Because of financial or contractual constraints and/or lack of professional knowledge and experience, peacebuilders do not always articulate their theory of change and rationale behind their programme activities. Another issue is often that the urgent and critical need to respond to the conflict is the primary driving force behind peace worker's intervention. Thus, in many cases, very little effort is invested in a project's design. As stated by an international evaluator (who worked for international donors such as USAID, DFID, and others) in fact, "a lot of cases the programme design process was very sloppy, goals were not clear, and no analysis was done[2]. Team members don't have the same shared theory of change, no clear change was ever articulated for the programme, and things have evolved" (Kupperstein 2010).

Many peacebuilding programmes tend to lack specific and concrete measures of progress and impact and instead focus on the lofty aim of achieving peace in places. A scholar-practitioner notes, "The problem was not that peacebuilding cannot be evaluated. The problem was that we were not designing peacebuilding programmes that were responsive to theories of change" (Scharbatke-Church 2010). This is only compounded when the evaluator is expected to deliver the judgment or the measurement of programmes that operated for years without much strategy of peacebuilding.

Practitioners and evaluators such as Jay Rothman, Marc Ross, and others have argued that practitioners, prior to the start of implementation, need to develop clear and specific definitions of the programme's goals as well as a plan for how to adjust such goals due to shifting conflict dynamics. This strategy would:

1. Help donors avoid imposing externally developed evaluation criteria and goals on programmers and beneficiaries.
2. Allow programmers to have ownership of the goals and reduce the level of alienation and resistance among the staff and beneficiaries when dealing with evaluation.
3. Assist in capturing the changes and monitoring the progress in a more effective way through action evaluation.

In most programmes, the evaluation is usually scheduled solely at the end of the project or with one additional mid-term internal evaluation. Limiting the evaluation to the middle and/or end of the project rather than already in the development of the programme/project design constitutes a major challenge for evalua-

2 Such conclusion was also confirmed by Blum, Andrew, and Melanie Kawano-Chiu, 2012.

tors in carrying out a useful process that will directly benefit the programmers or the organization. When evaluators only participate at the very end of a peacebuilding project, they miss the opportunity to proactively help the project in clarifying their goals and be more thoughtful and conscious about what they plan (Church and Rogers 2006; Van Brabant, Koenraad 2010). As stated by D'Estree: "This 'formative evaluation' process and mechanisms can be inserted explicitly in the design phase which will help programme managers better plan the design towards achieving their goals. The second objective of being involved early is to simply be able to collect data and form some baseline for comparison, instead of speculating or using proxy measures at the end of the project to capture how things were in the beginning of the project" (2010).

3 Capturing the Impact of Peacebuilding Programmes on Macro Peace

How does an encounter programme for Israeli Palestinian youth that has been taking place since 1993 affect the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and success of failure of peace negotiation? The above is a classic question that is often posed by the average person in the street, policy maker, donor, and even some peace workers. Seeking to link any peace programme with the macro peace processes is one of the most frustrating and challenging tasks that face peace practitioners. Responding to this question requires many considerations.

Capturing the impact of the peacebuilding programmes on macro peace processes is complicated and challenging. As an emerging field, its practitioners are still stuck focusing on the outcome, results, and monitoring. The peacebuilding approaches, processes and outcomes do not fit neatly into the logical framework approach in monitoring and evaluation, whose use is influenced by development and other fields. The high-level of complexity in peacebuilding programmes prevents practitioners from being able to measure tangible outcomes. Peacebuilding evaluators have to consider broadening the range of their impact evaluation in order to be able to maybe capture the potential contribution of peacebuilding programmes on the macro peace level.[3] Seeking tangible and causal linkages between peace intervention and macro conflict dynamics is too narrow a lens to identify the contribution of many peace programmes. Not broadening the range of the impact evaluation has a further consequence in

3 Beyond broadening evaluation there is also a need to broaden the design and methods to capture macro impact, as displayed by studies conducted by Stern *et al.* (2012).

addition to the prospect of mismeasurement; evaluations may simply be unable to identify and measure impact. The inability of projects to identify their impact is

> a problem because we are funding peacebuilding programmes, and we cannot measure them, or at least, we have a very difficult time measuring them. So, I am worried that peacebuilding is going to start getting a very bad reputation for being too amorphous, too grey, and too fuzzy around the edges and that does not have rigor because it is so multidisciplinary. They are not going to be able to come up with the rigor {design} to actually measure impact that is unique to that multidisciplinary approach (Wood 2010).

3.1 Identifying Success

A further difficulty in peacebuilding evaluation is how to identify success. While it is logical that donors or international organizations desire macro-level change, but successes (and failures) occur at different levels and require different timeframes. When describing the differences between measuring the successes of development programmes and peacebuilding programmes, Abi Riak, an international development and peacebuilding expert, stated:

> Success [in peacebuilding] is not just [the] vision of people reconciling or hugging in the streets. It's much subtler. Part of the [goal of] evaluation is to understand how to define success and to learn how to talk about success, so people understand what success is in peacebuilding. Maybe some people reconciled [because of the project], but macro changes are not taking place (Riak 2009).

While it does not mean that macro-level change goals and measurements should be set aside, it is valid to question whether it is realistic to expect macro changes in beliefs as a result of individual peacebuilding programmes. In addition to the constantly shifting context, there is a delayed effect with peacebuilding interventions, especially for training workshop programmes. The example that often suggested by peace practitioners in the Israeli -Palestinian context is the difficulty of relying on attitudinal changes that are measured immediately after three days encounter versus measures conducted after 6 months, five years, or even 20 years later.

Attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, convictions and societal structures are extremely difficult to measure and the evaluation tools resorted to for measuring behavioural change are often inadequate for truly demonstrating macro societal impact. In this study, 30% of the evaluators interviewed mentioned that the peacebuilding field lacks relevant tools to measure the aforementioned human processes and structures. Furthermore, the change in attitudes and belief is

hard to maintain and sustain over a longer period. It is also hard to change the ideological foundation of a person. A person may walk out of a workshop, dialogue intervention or other peacebuilding intervention with a change of conflict outlook, however:

> if beliefs can be changed in a five-day workshop, they can be as easily changed back. They can be irradiated, done away with, by the contextual forces. Look my grandson returns from a dialogue. He comes to a home, which is a peace-loving home, but then he goes to the classroom in school, and he encounters an environment where he is called a 'traitor.' The same is true of his peers, the Palestinian peers, who represent their classroom, or our own neighbourhoods and face an entirely different social context which negates what he has acquired in the wonderful peacebuilding workshop. In terms of collective narratives, he (the participant) brings for them (his peers) an entirely new fresh baby narrative. But, when he returns to his natural environment, with the media, politicians, etc., he faces a bold, very strong veteran collective narrative, and his baby narrative, the one he just required during peace work, stands a very slim chance of surviving in the face of the old, consensually collective narrative (Solomon 2009).

> If we accept such a premise, what should our realistic expectations be of a "one time" peacebuilding meeting or even 2–3 yearlong project? As Gavriel Solomon argues: the Catholic IRA terrorist from Northern Ireland who, after 17 years in jail, becomes a peace promoter is a rare case. Usually, participants will not come away with such extremely new and radically different views. So, how does this compare with a weekend of a meetings between Jews and Palestinians? What chance does a program have to change deeply held convictions? So, whoever believes that total transformation is possible, I don't know where he lives, certainly not in our region, or Northern Ireland, or Kosovo (Solomon 2009).

3.2 Methods

In responding to this challenge, we must not rely exclusively on quantitative data collection or analysis; such data often fails to capture the nuances of peacebuilding work, especially on sensitive change issues (for example national or religious identity framing changes).

Relying exclusively on surveys will often not reveal the full story of local people's perceptions of a peacebuilding project. Furthermore, surveys might actually offend or contradict local people's viewpoints on what needed to be done and how it should have been done. For example, in an evaluation of a Burundi conflict resolution workshop, participants refused to fill out the neatly designed survey. Instead, they insisted on face-to-face meetings with the evaluators to narrate their stories (Abdallah 2011).

Thus, as indicated by many scholars and researchers on the need to use mixed methodology when searching for empirical evidence, the case is the

same in peacebuilding evaluation (Bamberger 2012). The need to combine quantitative and qualitative measures in evaluation is overwhelmingly supported by the peacebuilding evaluators. "One very important recommendation for evaluation is you should not be satisfied with quantitative findings; you have to go with qualitative interviews and observations, too. If your data is from the previous morning, do not open a bottle of champagne. Wait for two months, repeat the measurements, and if then you find that your positive outcomes are still there, then write your mother a good letter" (Solomon 2009).

3.3 Too Narrow a Focus

Another challenge facing evaluators trying to connect peacebuilding programmes with macro peace is that majority of these programmes have the over-tendency to focus on local cross-community dialogue and conflict resolution programmes, without looking at the wider environment of the conflict. Organizations in conflict zones need to rethink their strategies of peacebuilding by examining the macro level of analysis. Local level impact may be occurring due to peacebuilding initiatives, but the situation may be the reverse on the macro level. The reality is that **"**no local level impact is going to be long lasting if you're going to be in a broader environment that's deteriorating," argues Robert Ricigliano, describing Mercy Corps' work in Afghanistan and their attempts to conduct a wider conflict assessment and analysis to demonstrate the impact of their projects. "The guiding questions were: how can we get a greater macro impact for our programmes? What do we need to have in place to achieve such an outcome?" (Recigliano 2009).

Raising such questions are crucial in the field of peacebuilding today, especially among the main peacebuilding donors or funders, such as the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In the case of USIP, for example, it is important to ask to what extent have its programmes in Israel-Palestine contributed to the macro peace between Israelis and Palestinians? What type of contribution has the organization had in advancing macro peace and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan? To what extent has it had an overall capacity to examine and conduct assessments of macro policies in these regions to be able to evaluate the effects of the organization's projects and programmes?

4 The Push and Pull Factors for and Against Evaluation Development

4.1 "The Donor Made Us Do That"

More and more donors are demanding more than a list of outputs and input activities and participants. The rising trend is to seek indicators of success and effectiveness and to identify the wider impact of peacebuilding programmes. While many peacebuilding programmers may not be interested in conducting an evaluation, they are forced by push factors such as the requirement of donors to provide empirical evidence or to produce a report showing progress, impact or success as a condition for continuing or sustaining funding. Pull factors include a greater access to more donors, grants and longer funding to be able to complete the project or programme, and practitioners pulled by the desire or need to truly be able to capture evidence showing they are effective beyond the small group of participants. Thus, the general attitude of the staff is often that evaluation is a burden or requirement from the donor, rather than a tool for learning or improvement of the design and implementation. Some staff members do not view the evaluation as instrumental to improve their intervention; on the contrary, they invest some efforts in painting an exaggerated positive picture of the project, by manipulating the evaluators, target audience, or evidence. This attitude often increases pressure on evaluators to focus on "self-serving and glowing reporting." For example, in several evaluations of projects in Sri Lanka, Egypt, and Israel-Palestine, the sponsoring organization requested two reports: an external document to share with donors and public and the internal document to share with their staff and board members.[4]

Such behaviour is influenced by the structural factors of limited resources and the need to pursue funds, especially in the form of governmental contracts.

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4 The defensive attitudes against evaluation can also stem from the situation in which the donor is not clear about the objective and possible expectation from the peacebuilding project. A former international development officer stated: "On a particular project that I worked on in Pakistan, the donor was always changing their mind about what they wanted the project to do, and the project started and stopped a lot of initiatives as a result. We also felt really defensive about some project failures that were a direct result of donor policy (for example, the project didn't complete any activities for 3 months while the donor refused to obligate more funds while they were deciding if they were going to cancel all contracts with international organizations and shift all funds to local organizations) (Interview, Barday 2017). See also Allen, Susan et al. 2014.

Thus, there is a chronic problem of needing to get money from donors, having adequate evaluations, and needing to ensure the next grant. Under these conditions, it can be difficult for peacebuilding organizations to see evaluations as a learning tool rather than a marketing tool. Similarly, donors are not exempt from a failure to recognize the true value and role of evaluation in peacebuilding intervention. Although the donors in the field of peacebuilding are trying to be more evaluative, they are trapped in their inability "to come up with all sorts of seemingly helpful measures" (Recigliano 2009). Donors also tend to treat the evaluation report as a "box to check" on the form of requirement for making their awards, and they are often not involved in the monitoring or the evaluation process.[5]

Some evaluators argue that donors have a responsibility to be more flexible in measuring the output and impact of the projects in deep rooted conflict areas in which people have been through great deal of suffering and loss and lack basic infrastructure. According to several interviewees, in the past, before donors increased their interest in evaluation, they used to provide programmers with some flexibility to assume certain positive outcomes would occur as a result of the mere existence of a peaceful intervention in conflict area. The guiding principle was just to make sure that funds were well spent, which resulted in giving programmers a significant amount of leeway. However, more recently, donors have become "very specific about what the deliverables were going to be and what the timelines were going to be" (Recigliano 2009). Richard Blue argues that this type of donor flexibility is needed when evaluating locally run programmes: "Putting organizations through the competitive open bidding process is mindless when you are talking about the kinds of folks who have been through 20 years of hardship, as in Liberia, and somehow expecting them to come up and start creating social impact. They can't do it and they shouldn't have to do it" (Blue 2010). In peacebuilding evaluation design imposing external criteria, frameworks, and indicators can be an absolutely disempowering process.

4.2 The Curse of the Two-Year Project Cycle

Projects in conflict areas tend neither to abide by the donor's expectations nor by those of the implementing agency. The constantly changing dynamics of the op-

5 According to an interviewee (international evaluator-requested to be anonymous) who worked with US agencies in Iraq between 2003 – 2010, an organization in Washington D.C. that awards over 2 million dollars in grants required two pages from each awardee. In addition, they never contact the fellows for any follow up once the grant is completed, and the reports are filed.

erating environment causes a project's progress to move forward, backward, and sideways, complicating the task of predicting a clear hypothesis for input and change. This fluidity subsequently complicates the evaluation process. For example, in its first year, the Christian-Muslim interfaith dialogue programme in Egypt, carried out by the Christian Evangelical Social Services (CEOSS) in 2010, was marked by great success and it had a promising potential in reaching out to policy makers and religious leaders. However, in the second year its success criteria completely shifted when the Egyptian revolution erupted and brought down the Mubarak regime. The programme was affected a great deal due to security, public opinion and atmosphere, and shifts in national priorities.

An intervention peace plan or project is not an instance or a singular event in the conflict context. Peacebuilding occurs in a violent conflict or post-conflict dynamics, thus there is a need to examine a longer timeframe if a project or program is expected to have forward moving progress and lasting impact, which is often the aim or desire of the donating organization. However, a majority of donors request and expect clear evidence for long term impact from short term and immediate designs. As stated by Kinghorn:

> To come in with a project that operates with a project framework that wants a forward-moving predictable, based-on-hypothesis of results, project is just ill-suited and so the two don't usually go well together. Projects don't progress on the year time frames, which is usually what donors want to give or usually the project duration is two years. Yes, usually it's a two-year horizon and so pretty much you need things to be moving around mostly a monthly, quarterly, biannual timeframe. You need to be seeing progress and substantial progress, two to five years depending on the project and because of the backwards-forward nature of this instable period, it doesn't usually happen. Now if a project was actually moving forward and not encountering any of these conflicts or situations, it could be that it's not – it could be that it's just not doing anything, it's not effectual, it's not actually addressing this instability or the conflict that it needs to address... That it's not actually getting in there and addressing the system that needs to change, it's marginalized. And so, because programs are so locked into this project delivery paradigm that's been set up, [the staff] is usually frustrated because they are not getting their results (Kinghorn 2009).

The limited project cycle approach is often based on a results-based approach, which itself poses the challenge of focusing on so-called end results, often without taking into account more subtle indicators that could show impact. One of the evaluators interviewed advocates for a systemic approach rather than a result-based approach:

> Due to the complexity and fluidity of the conflict situation, it is not possible to follow results only and determine success and failure based on these results. Evaluators ought to consider the whole system of a conflict and to what extent they are engaging in the system

> of conflict through the peacebuilding project. One can fail in achieving certain results but still engage the conflict system. A country director can get calls from the ministry officer and be blamed for certain outcomes of lack of results; however, these can be indicators that the project is engaging the conflict system and leaving certain marks on it (Kinghorn 2009).

4.3 Lack of Donor Interest in Evaluations

The assumption that, "good things will happen as a result of peacebuilding work," is not only held by many practitioners, but also by certain donors. As perceived by a number of evaluators:

> Donors who are careful about evaluation want to know how it was spent and look for clear indication that 'good things happened.' Nevertheless, it is not obvious that the donors are well-versed in what a good evaluation method is itself and how they should judge whether what we are hearing, for example, whether a survey done at the end of the workshop is really the right [form of] measure (Malhotra 2009).

It is also more challenging to conduct any systematic evaluation with accurate indicators of success when neither the practitioners nor the donors themselves are specific and clear about their expected outputs and impact.

In some cases, donors have added to the challenge of developing evaluations by not only not developing more specific goals for measurement of success, but also having the lack of interest in doing so. For example, in the process of reconstructing New Orleans, a foreign donor gave a large sum of funds to support the socio-cultural and structural development of the city. However, when evaluators approached the donor to examine the impact and outcomes from their funds, they said clearly and bluntly: "I do not care what they have done with the money. I gave it and that is my duty" (informal meeting with a donor representative in Washington, DC at American University 2008). The donor was referring to his faith commitment as a primary motivation for why he gave such a large amount for humanitarian relief aid in such context.

Some other possible explanations for the lack of interest in peacebuilding evaluation among certain donors include: the ideological or political commitment to support this type of work; the programme is too small for the donor's operation; the donor might have a low bar or expectations from the implementers or the design, etc., or a lack of awareness of the need or importance for evaluation. The general perception among such donors and even some practitioners that it is extremely difficult to evaluate peacebuilding programmes, especially dialogue programmes, can hinder a donor's willingness to fund valuable pro-

grams due to the lack of empirical evidence. The difficulty is tied into several of the previously mentioned challenges such as the short programme cycle, measuring behavioural change, and the wide range of factors that can affect peacebuilding processes. Some donors may then react by shying away from donating money to peacebuilding programs, which only exacerbates the problem of short programme cycles and difficulty in achieving macro-level impact. One international evaluator elaborates on this frustration:

> there is so much noise about the outcome variable, there is so much noise about the measure, yet what you have is meaningless. There is no way to know if there is an effect. Does that translate into 'you should not put any money in this'? No, it actually does not...then what you probably want to evaluate is the design of the workshop itself ... If you feel confident enough that you have done good stuff to start out, even if you cannot measure, if it is impossible to measure, you may still continue to do it because you have confidence in the setup ...[and]what you can do is to be very confident that you have put the right seeds in place and then in theory it should work (Malhotra 2009).

4.4 Resistance to Evaluation/Evaluators

Programme staff may also be resistant towards evaluation due to the general perception that outsiders are coming just to look for limitations, deficiencies, and ineffective factors. Thus, evaluation/evaluators can have an "oppositional framework" even before it starts.

Programmers may assume that evaluators are hired by the headquarters office with the main goal of identifying deficiencies and shortcomings of staff. Thus, the tension between home office staff and field workers may be heightened during the evaluation process if the evaluation and headquarters teams do not properly address these assumptions. This dynamic is dysfunctional for peacebuilders whose projects are based on partnership, trust, and relationship building. The typical evaluation approach of an outsider team spending a few weeks examining files and data contradicts the participatory (bottom-up) typical peacebuilding approach. "It's a fear that the people running the evaluation are looking for something wrong with the programme as they come in. They talk to people and distribute these instruments" (Ross 2009).

Programmers and implementers tend to resist the notion of evaluation for various reasons and assumptions too. One evaluator noted:

> In the ideology-driven peacebuilding field, many practitioners are doing what they do because they believe in it and believe that they are doing something good and necessary. So, they resist the evaluators who might question the effectiveness and the need or necessity of

> such a program or intervention. The notion of doing evaluation seems like a waste of time and resources, where practitioners question why they need to do [an evaluation] when they already know what they are doing (Carstarphen 2010).

While the lack of clarity with goals is problematic for an evaluator, and the evaluator may find themselves retrofitting goals and as the programme evolves readjusting them, however when programme staff is resistant even this can be difficult. Evaluators then have to engage the programme staff in a discussion to determine what they are trying to achieve and how they think that they were going to achieve those goals, and that conversation initiates a discussion among programme staff about their theory of change. This formative evaluation becomes an actual intervention in the programme and, if done well, it can help implementers clarify problematic design issues and assist in adjusting to the constantly changing context and may lead to become more effective over the next period. However, for some peacebuilding officers/managers, this methodology represents a challenge because the evaluator is perceived as an outside consultant who is acting as an intervener in their programme. Experienced evaluators have developed the capacity and skills to assume the two roles simultaneously: a program development consultant and an evaluator. Obviously, this evaluation role or approach does not correspond with the principle of "objective evaluation" where there is a clear and strict separation between evaluators and programme development consultants.

Evaluators in this study suggested various strategies to overcome resistance to evaluations, those included:

1. Pros and cons approach: Offer the programmers an appropriate and tailored description of the pros and cons of the possible evaluation approaches that they could utilize to evaluate their programme as opposed to imposing a set of requirements for one type of evaluation that was determined by either the donor, headquarters, or the evaluation team.
2. Invite staff and beneficiaries to the evaluation team: Involve some of the staff and beneficiaries in the actual evaluation process (not only selecting the design or approach), especially in design, data collection, interpretation of results, and recommendations.
3. Adjust your language: Avoid the use of evaluation jargon to reduce potential anxiety for many programmers who are not familiar with the process and might be overwhelmed by its technical aspects.
4. Acknowledge past mistakes: Burnout from previous external evaluation reports is a common source of resistance for a new evaluation. Acknowledge the range of possible mistakes in past evaluations and share previous reports to help reduce possible anxiety or frustration.

5. Be sensitive to local people's fears and worries: An external evaluator will be able to gain more entry if they acknowledge local people's worries or fears about evaluations. For example, in an evaluation of a project in Mindanao, one evaluator shared evaluation reports that a lead evaluator in another Muslim community produced with the Muslim beneficiaries of the project. In response, the leaders of the community asked directly: "Did you do work in other Muslim minority context? You know we Muslims who live among Christians are always threatened by outsiders who can come to our community disguised in many hats" (Evaluation Team Leader 2013)Their response demonstrates the fear of Christian missionary groups among Muslims in South Asia.

5 Challenges in the Field – Conducting Evaluations in Conflict Areas

Conflict produces scarcity of resources and a strong sense of victimhood among people. In addition, there are often a plethora of donors and development agencies who are constantly struggling (and competing) to meet the needs of the affected populations (OECD DAC 1991). Thus, the arrival of an evaluation team or a single foreign evaluator into this environment may raise expectations and cause community members and individuals to ask, what are we going to get out of this? To get accurate information and responses, an evaluator must convince project beneficiaries or wider stakeholders that he or she has no additional immediate funds or aid. Additionally, to elicit genuine responses, evaluators must reassure local people that any negative views that they express about the project will not necessarily result in ending the aid that they are receiving from the agency or organization.

5.1 Shifting Realities and Context

To evaluate the impact of peacebuilding programme, it is crucial to consider the context in which the programme has been implemented. Capturing the context through an early conflict assessment is certainly a helpful mechanism or necessary step, however in many conflict areas the context is constantly shifting, and the conflict dynamics and intervention priorities often change. Accounting for these shifting dynamics throughout the three years or five years of the project's life cycle is certainly a challenge. In this study, 33% of the evaluators identified

that the complexity and dynamic of conflict environment make the attribution of any macro or even micro impact more difficult.

Except for action evaluation methodology, there are few well-defined tools or measurements that can systematically capture the effects of the shifting context on the peacebuilding programmes design and implementation (goals, priorities, effect, and overall impact of the project during its various phases and development) (Rothman and Ross 1999). Evaluators attempt to contextualize their findings and report on impact by establishing a timeline or a list of chronological events that took place during the project. Additionally, they look at how certain events affected the project design and outputs. For example, the Office of Transition Initiatives at USAID (OTI) allocated certain funds for supporting Sri Lanka in its transition from war to peace in 2002. Local partners and programmers were encouraged to implement combined design by integrating peacebuilding and development projects. However, when the 2004 Tsunami hit Sri Lankan shores, there was devastation particularly in the conflict-affected areas. The OTI budget was raised from $3–4 million to over $20 million. In 2007, while the government launched its new war campaign against the LTTE (after the negotiation collapsed), the final evaluation report had to address questions such as: did the OTI operation in Sri Lanka contribute to the peace process? How did the Tsunami catastrophe influence the OTI project in Sri Lanka? What effect did such an event have on the objectives of contributing to the peace process?

Because conflicts are not static events but ever-changing organisms, often evaluations can only detail a project's impact in a specific moment of time. Evaluations, especially those designed only for a singular short-term project, highlight the impact right at that moment, but usually are not designed to analyse effects after the end of the project. However, peacebuilding projects in their nature are meant to have longer-term effects that are often either not felt or not fully embedded right at the end of the project.

> You can be satisfied with an evaluation only the morning after you have completed the workshop. There is a delayed post-test effect. After the evaluation is completed, there may be more than one violent attack, and in the months in between, many political issues and tragedies, which could have nothing to do with peacebuilding. You have no control over [these events], and most everything remains the same. However, in regions like [Israel-Palestine] events happen twice a week and what you get is a delayed post-test that may just reflect the recent events, more than anything else (Solomon 2009).

In addition to the shift in macro events, there are micro changes on the ground that can affect an individual's life and determine the extent of effect of a peace-

building project on his or her life. Most evaluation designs are unable to capture the effects of these events in any systematic way.[6]

5.2 Programme Staff is Stressed Out

Operating in a conflict area generates more stress and frustration among programmers than in other contexts. Thus, there are certain challenges related to the fact that in a conflict area:

> Although, [project staff] might not be traumatized in the same way as violent trauma victims, nevertheless, they are completely stressed out, because the project usually doesn't go well [as planned]...A lot of the staff that I have encountered, as soon as I go into this they wanted to justify their stance, [explaining] what happened, what went wrong and whose fault it was. [staff members], were on a justification standpoint or 'we are trying so hard', 'they don't appreciate what we are doing', 'look what's happening.' [managers/external or headquarters] are unable to see this (Kinghorn 2009).

The lack of recognition of the impact of conflict dynamics on the capacity of peacebuilding projects to demonstrate concrete and tangible impact often lead to frustration among field officers and even lead to certain level of resistance to result based approach as opposed to a system approach.

In this study, a few evaluators pointed to excessive staff stress due to a combination of a donor-imposed accountability paradigm, the conflict environment, and self-preservation issues as a challenge for evaluation.

> [Programme staff have a] professional investment in these projects. It's their job, this is how they spend their day. This is the majority of what they give their focus and energies to. So, when the project isn't going well, and they are not getting their results or they are getting conflicts because of their good work, they get completely stressed out and frustrated and angry (Kinghorn 2009).

An evaluator's approach ought to take staff attitudes and frustrations into consideration, especially with the data collection methods and design. Mechanical and detached social science approaches tend to produce more alienation among the staff on the ground and can increase the resistance to the evaluation.

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6 Such impact was also captured in more details on the study of OECD DAC (2012); CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2004)

6 Access: Security and Trust

6.1 Trust Concerns with Government or Security Force Involvement

Lack of security and distrust of others are two major obstacles in any conflict. As one Palestinian participant in Ramallah responded when asked for his honest opinion of evaluations: "We live in a reality in which you cannot trust anyone in your environment. Everyone might hurt you and threaten your sense of security." In this study, 27% of the evaluators identified that security concerns were a significant obstacle to conducting peacebuilding evaluations, and 27% of the evaluators specifically mentioned that dishonesty and mistrust can skew data results. Furthermore, 30% indicated that access to data, beneficiaries, or simple physical mobility inhibited the success of the evaluation.

Lack of trust in a conflict context is a product of the state of relations among people in conflict areas that influences relations with evaluators as well. Evaluators can offer reassurances that the evaluation is a confidential or anonymous process, but many people in a conflict area may not believe such assurances.

> Thus, evaluators have to gauge how much they can take what people say a face value by [determining] the general level of trust and confidence in the community or the group and [by considering] whoever is being interviewed or surveyed. If there is a high level of mistrust, the chances are there is going to be higher levels-of not necessarily dishonesty-but not complete honesty or complete information sharing (Carstarphen 2010).

The presence of government agencies, especially security forces, undermines the security of evaluation participants. For example, in an Egyptian focus group discussing the impact of an interfaith dialogue programme, the participants could not speak freely about the conflict or group relationships due to the daily presence of the security forces in their meetings and focus group discussions. Sitting at the end of the room, a government security officer took notes while evaluators posed their questions about the conflict and Muslim-Christian relationships in Egypt.[7] In response, the participants and the evaluation team had to develop certain codes and signals to communicate about sensitive issues that the government might perceive as political or problematic. The evaluation team then shifted their approach, using private, individual interviews to elicit more genuine and revealing information from the participants. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, a representative from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) forces sat listening in the

7 Based on experience of the author while working in Egypt between 2000 – 2016.

training room while evaluators posed their questions to measure the impact of a peacebuilding project in war zone areas in Baticaloa. Cognizant of the LTTE representative's presence, the focus group members began to praise the LTTE's operations while criticizing the Sri Lankan government's policies in the region. However, when the evaluators shifted their methodology and conducted anonymous interviews, participants felt freer to voice their criticism of the LTTE's impact on the project.[8]

Furthermore, government security forces and armed groups can affect participation in evaluations by taking a step further and trying to include their representatives in the evaluation team. "When the security forces in a Central Asian state suggested a facilitator to manage the list of contacts for interviews, this was a threat to evaluators and their interviewees from participating or collecting data" (Chetwynd 2010). In response, it was crucial to get a local researcher who was not connected to security to be the facilitator.

6.2 Conflict Group Dynamics

The asymmetric power relations and the various conflicting and non-conflicting groups interactions in any conflict situation affect how the individuals and their collectives perceive their relations and what constitute a successful intervention. Thus, when the evaluator is engaged in the process of capturing success and failure of the intervention, one of the obstacle or challenges is to diagnose, name, and identify the effect of the conflict group dynamics on the responses from each participant.

Managing focus groups in conflict areas can also become sensitive due to the conflict dynamics. Underlying ethnic issues and potential triggers require local facilitators to detect or avoid them in order to elicit genuine responses from participants. Such skills are not a necessary part of the typical "professional/researcher evaluator profile."

Evaluators must be sensitive to the extent to which the data collection methods and evaluation designs are affecting the power dynamics of the conflict. For example, a focus group discussion with Tamil and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka during an evaluation in 2010 could not be carried out due to the security restrictions and confidentiality concerns. The evaluation team had to find creative ways to gain access to the beneficiaries (phone interviews, a dinner party, an invitation for a wedding reception). In another case, data regarding the peacebuilding proj-

8 Based on the experience of the author in Sri Lankan context between 1996 – 2010.

ects involving the Muslim Peace Secretariat in Sri Lanka had to be gathered through more confidential tools of data collection due to the sensitivity of the content as security services were monitoring and blacklisting outspoken opposition members and there was an overall threatening environment. Surveys were also not possible due to security. Evaluators in this case chose to conduct individual interviews as the primary data collection method because they insured the highest level of confidentiality and trust for the interviewees.[9]

6.3 Mobility and Access

Security factors often prevent evaluators from reaching peripheral or less urban areas of a country (which are often less secure). Thus, evaluators in conflict areas find that they need to make sure that the sample of interviewees or stakeholders are more inclusive and pay special attention to the peripheral areas where security conditions are less conducive to travel or even limited to only basic communication for linguistic and/or security reasons. To reach a rural community while conducting an evaluation of a project in north-eastern Sri Lanka in 2009, one of the evaluation team members had to drive 80 miles into the non-clear areas (LTTE controlled area with no government troops or security). This evaluator found that in-fact in any LTTE-controlled Tamil area, evaluators and programmers could not access the local leaders without explicit permission from LTTE, thus limiting the type of leaders to which evaluators had access.

The limitation on travel often limits the scope of the evaluation to investigating the programme's impact on only a certain group of beneficiaries. As Anderson stated: "When we were doing the OECD evaluation, [we were limited to meeting with people who were] mainly in the capital city and then only people that speak English, anyway. You really don't get a perspective if you are staying in only talking to one side or one group, or one echelon of society" (Anderson 2009).

Mobility into the conflict area is also problematic when the conflict area is large and covers most of the country. Evaluators will not be able to get to certain parts of the country, in particular affected areas, and typically are only able to focus on the most accessible areas. It is very different to work on peacebuilding projects in a small, accessible country than in a large country lacking extensive infrastructure.

9 Based on the experience of the author in Sri Lankan context between 1996 – 2010.

> In Macedonia, it was fairly easy because Macedonia is small place and most of the conflicts occurred pretty close together. But in a place like Liberia where a lot of the conflict was in the big patches of the country, we had trouble getting around because of bad roads and everything else is that geographically you are constrained in the same way. In Sri Lanka, we were constrained by the conflict from getting to the places where there was active conflict or where conflict was still prominent (Blue 2010).

Local evaluation participants also face security concerns. In Pakistan, a group of 50 project beneficiaries could not meet in their region due to the threat of Taliban forces who opposed their Madrassa reform project, and they instead had to travel for two days by train and bus to Islamabad to discuss their Madrassa teacher training project and its impact on their community.[10]

In a conflict zone, the identity and the presumed religious affiliation of the external evaluators can restrict their access to entering and conducting a peacebuilding intervention in a country as a whole, or specific region. There are certain areas in which some external evaluators cannot have access without a local person acting as a facilitator. In Pakistan, while conducting an evaluation of a Madrassa teacher training project, it became impossible for the team of Western external evaluators access to the project's staff and beneficiaries operating in the Pashtun areas. The team then delegated a local religious clergy who had previously worked with the Madrassa project to manage the relationship and gather the necessary data. In this case, a western, Christian external evaluator would have not been able to gain access to any of these schools or teachers.

6.4 Fear and Distrust of the "Outsider"

Security is not the only obstacle that prevents access to data collection or interaction with participants. Suspicion and distrust of outsiders is often a major challenge to be overcome by foreign evaluators.

Access to certain social sectors may be an issue also. For example, in the case of evaluating peace education programmes in three countries (Armenia, Indonesia, and Albania), the evaluators could not meet parents, due to timing and other intervening factors. Thus, the entire evaluation of peace education and its impact of the children was completed without direct input from the parents (Ashton 2010).

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10 Based on the author's experience in conducting this evaluation in Lahore and Islamabad in 2010.

Even without the constraints of security and risks for peacebuilding programmers, many local partners feel a certain degree of alienation from and distrust of external foreign evaluators that requires evaluators to work to build relationships to be able to gain even minimal access for information. Building such relationships is a crucial part of the external evaluator's role in a conflict area. Overcoming the cultural and language barriers is the first task. However, that is not sufficient by itself; connecting with the staff and beneficiaries with respect and dignity is the gateway for getting relevant and reliable data. Unfortunately, in many cases evaluators do not have more than a few hours in the community to collect data (survey, interviews, or focus group discussion), a time that is insufficient to build trust, rapport or any form of relationships with the beneficiary or local staff. As a result, the responses are kept on the formal and surface level.

7 Lack of Baseline Indicators

The field of peacebuilding is still struggling to develop its generic set of indicators of success and clear and systematic baselines for measurement of indicators of peace (van Barbant 2010; Abu-Nimer 2003; Lederach, Neufeldt and Cuthbertson 2007). There is growing awareness of the need for programmes operating in conflict areas to take the time and allocate the necessary resources to develop their baseline data prior to their starting point (Chigas 2010). In this study, 40 % of evaluators agreed that there is a lack of appropriate tools, for example baseline data and for holding real focus groups as challenges in when working in conflict area.

The difficulty of developing a set of indicators and baseline data for a long-term evaluation also stems from the fact that peacebuilding is political more than many other areas of intervention, for example, health or other branches of development. It also tends to be more convoluted and nonlinear. "...I think [peacebuilding projects are] about politics at some level or another even if it does not appear on the surface to be political. So, you are really talking about finding the spaces where you can do things, so if you start planning for year one and you are laying out things for the next 5 years, it is not going to be very linear" (Blue 2010). Opportunities emerge or develop throughout the course of a peacebuilding project as a result of the fluid nature of the conflict and its politics. Therefore, when programmers decide to shift direction and change their course of action to capitalize on that window of opportunity, it is then difficult for an evaluator to develop baseline data or follow a set of standard indicators of success. At least 25 % of the interviewees in the study indicated that the political nature of Peacebuilding increases the inability to function due to do-

mestic and international government restrictions and/or negative response to this work i.e., complexity, structural problems, intervening variables.

Finally, the heightened concern for the security and safety of the staff or programmers might influence the choice of data collection. The higher stakes of succeeding in a conflict context can also require that evaluators pay more attention to how their evaluation will benefit the programmers in the field. An evaluator's decision to include certain groups and exclude other stakeholders from the data collections can influence and shape the results of the evaluation. For example, US government-funded projects and evaluators are prohibited from contacting groups that they define as terrorists, for example, the LTTE in Sri Lanka and Hamas in Palestine. Despite the fact that these groups and their constituencies have been affected by the specific peacebuilding projects implemented in their area of control, evaluators and programmers are not allowed to contact the leadership affiliated with in these areas.

8 Conclusion

Obviously, the above list of challenges is selective and non-comprehensive. The purpose of the discussion is to highlight the need to place such challenges on the current and future research agenda of the field of peacebuilding evaluation. While this article explored challenges that face evaluators of peacebuilding, nevertheless, some evaluators who were interviewed for the study argued that the above set of challenges can also be encountered in evaluating development, education, or and other area of social and economic development and not only in peacebuilding. Therefore, these is no need to identify a special set of challenges for peacebuilding. The serious risk of supporting this argument among donors, peacebuilding, and development agencies is the deployment of international and national evaluation teams to examine the impact of peacebuilding programmes. Such evaluators tend to use cookie cutter templates without fully understanding or being equipped with proper tools or qualifications to understand the impact of the conflict and its dynamics on implementing peacebuilding programmes. The results can be devastating to peacebuilding and donor organizations who, in many conflict situations, devoted their career and lives to promote peace and coexistence in their communities or society in general.

This is not a water tank project in a conflict area in which the evaluation team is examining if it was used efficiently or built according to certain technical regulations. For peacebuilders and their beneficiaries or stakeholders the stakes are very high if the evaluator/s fails to capture the impact of the immediate or long-term effect of their efforts on the promotion of peace. Thus, responding

to the above challenges and taking them into consideration in peacebuilding context becomes a more urgent factor in the design, implementation, or follow up of any evaluation.

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Reina C. Neufeldt

Vying for Good

Ethical Challenges in Evaluating Interreligious Peacebuilding

Faith-based peacebuilding has a long history. While the nomenclature of peacebuilding may be recent – its contemporary deployment often attributed to Johan Galtung (1976) – many pioneers who engaged in the peace activism, research and practice that shaped and produced contemporary peace and conflict studies programs and peacebuilding were faith-based actors motivated by their convictions. Looking at the 20th century, this ranged from early contributions by Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi, to mid-century voices such as Martin Luther King Jr., and later scholar-practitioners like Elise Boulding, John Paul Lederach, and the list goes on (e.g. see Boulding 1998, Miller 2000). Yet in the late 20th century, it seemed that faith-based peacebuilding was either radically new or not credible. Research and practice in mediation, negotiation, alternative dispute resolution, problem-solving workshops and other conflict resolution and transformation expanded and the religious or faith dimension of such work faded. In the 1980s and 1990s it became a small part of textbooks in peace and conflict studies, typically with respect to principled nonviolence, peace movements and just war theory (Barash and Webel 2002), religious militancy (Crocker, Hampson, and Aall 1996), or as part of understanding the cultural context in which an intervention occurs (Avruch 1998).

Then came the 21st century, with its rising spectre of religiously motivated terrorism and conflict that crossed borders. Explorations of the relationship between religion and statecraft, heralded by the work of Doug Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (1994), expanded. The rise in attention to religious peacebuilding was concomitant with concerns about religion and violent extremism. It included scholarly and practitioner work exploring fundamentalism (e.g. Appleby 2000, Juergensmeyer 2000), excavating particular religious traditions and their contributions to peacebuilding (e.g. Sampson and Lederach 2000, Abu-Nimer 2003, Bamat and Cejka 2003, Schreiter, Appleby, and Powers 2010) as well as broader synthetic reviews of the literature and practice (e.g. Little 2006, Omer, Appleby, and Little 2015).

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Over the last decade or so, calls for accountability accompanied the increased attention to, and spending on, religious and interreligious peacebuilding. It was no longer acceptable to be solely motivated by faith, it was important to demonstrate the effects of one's work. Concerns that faith-based peacebuilding was fluffy, unnecessary or even harmful were brought to the fore. For example, people critiqued high-level interfaith dialogues as superficial window dressing for political negotiations (e. g. Micklethwait 2007). There were also concerns that religious peacebuilding was understood simplistically as producing unidirectional, positive change (Omer 2015). Taking a strong stand, Susan Hayward argued:

> There is a pressing need for greater monitoring and evaluation of religious peacebuilding work—and peacebuilding generally—to understand better which interventions, led by whom, and in which situations, have the greatest effect. The lack of evaluation to demonstrate the value of religious peacebuilding work has fueled skepticism about its effectiveness, particularly among secular-biased peace organizations and diplomats, and being able to show that religious peacebuilding works will help the field better integrate with other sectors.... it is possible, and a moral imperative to ensure that religious peacebuilding efforts constructively affect societies. (2012, 8)

Religious peacebuilders were to demonstrate the value of their work by showing it produced constructive change.

In response to the call, new resources emerged in 2016 and 2017. These resources identified the unique challenges of monitoring and evaluating faith-based peacebuilding, and then offered guidance for how these efforts could be better designed, monitored and evaluated (Steele and Wilson-Grau 2016, Woodrow, Oatley, and Garred 2017). This volume too is part of the larger effort to evaluate faith-based peacebuilding, focusing on interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue.

I review this history to note variations over time, in terms of the relative activity of and prominence given to faith-based peacebuilding, as well as to signal the tensions that exist with calls to evaluate interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue. Most recently, the calls to account and demonstrate effect suggest that well-intentioned religious or faith-based peacebuilders must look beyond their intentions and beyond faith in the supernatural to assess human-based effects. This seems a reasonable and important call given the rise in attention to religious actors in peacebuilding and the problem of unintended negative effects. Yet there are also concerns about instrumentalising religion, about taking a reductionist approach and using religion as the means to a peacebuilder's end (Thomas 2005). Here the problem is that religious and interreligious peacebuilding are used for particular purposes, outside of faith traditions. These two cri-

tiques appear to be in opposition and an important question emerges: does the call for a certain type of accountability in peacebuilding evaluation reinforce the problem of instrumentalising religion and faith for purposes external to the religious tradition?

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the less visible effects that calls for accountability may have on interreligious peacebuilding, particularly in terms of effects on the moral values that guide interreligious work. Stated differently: how do the values embedded in (secular) peacebuilding evaluation criteria affect religious and interreligious peacebuilding? Examining this relationship involves three steps. The first step is excavating the moral values within the evaluation criteria. The second is looking at values within an example of interfaith peacebuilding; here I use interfaith dialogue with its divergent theories of change to help draw out the different ways religious actors see peacebuilding change happen, and what is valued in the process. Finally, we can take the third step to explore ways in which valuations in evaluation criteria are likely to influence the moral values of religious peacebuilding and discuss its import.

1 Clarifying Terms: Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding

Before going further, it is helpful to clarify the definitions of religion, religious peacebuilding and interreligious peacebuilding. The term religion is used here to refer to various forms of thought and behaviour around which people come together to become aware of or relate to the divine (Hick 1993). Religion includes theological beliefs, moral values and prescriptions for actions, ritual practices, behavioural expectations, confessional communities and the sacred (Appleby 2000, Johnstone 2016, 8 – 14). While some definitions emphasize organized religion, this definition does not, although it does require confessional communities.

Religious peacebuilding then refers to actions taken by individuals motivated by their religion or representing religious institutions to constructively and non-violently prevent, reduce or transform inter-group conflict. Interreligious or interfaith peacebuilding, which I will use synonymously, refer to peacebuilding that is undertaken by people motivated by religion or representing a religious institution or confessional community and working between and across faith traditions to prevent, reduce or transform inter-group conflict. This may include direct work on theological beliefs, moral values and behavioural expectations, or indirect involvement of ritual practices, theology and belief. Note that the defi-

nitions of both religious and interreligious peacebuilding rely on a secular definition of peacebuilding that is broad and reflects an emphasis on conflict transformation that builds on John Paul Lederach and Galtung's focus on changing or transforming systems of conflict as well as the relationships and institutions that generate and sustain conflict (Galtung 1976, Lederach 2005). Religious peacebuilding grows out of religious or faith-based motivations and focuses on engaging with religious actors, confessional communities, traditions, ritual practices, institutions and theological or belief systems, and/or some combination thereof.

2 Evaluation and Moral Value Judgements

Evaluation very explicitly involves making value judgements about what is good and right. Evaluators collect empirical data, analyse it and then interpret it in order to make judgements about "the worth, merit or value of something" (2005, 444). Did an intervention achieve good outcomes? Was the intervention the right thing to do? Deborah Fournier notes that, "It is the value feature that distinguishes evaluation from other types of inquiry, such as basic science research, clinical epidemiology…" (2005, 140 – 1). Evaluators weigh and choose amongst contending ideas about what is right and good, what is worthy and valuable. As I argue elsewhere[1] and draw upon here, weighing and choosing what is good and right also makes evaluation an exercise in moral judgement (Neufeldt 2016b).

In my experience as both a practitioner and an academic who works on learning and reflection in peacebuilding (sometimes in the form of evaluations, although I strongly prefer the language and approach of participatory and ongoing learning), evaluators and guidance for evaluators do not focus on the moral aspect of value judgements. The criteria and standards for judging things are based on criteria commonly set by funders of evaluations. Concerns are typically around accountability, the quality of an evaluation process, methodological choices and analysis of findings, as well as implications for use. While there are opportunities to engage with moral values, as Michael Morris (2007) identifies, this process tends to fall into the background in evaluations themselves as well as in training and support materials. For example, Michael Quinn Patton, in his influential tome *Utilization-Focused Evaluation,* discusses rendering judge-

1 This section draws on material produced for as a discussion paper for the Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium, called "Wicked Problems of Ethics: Confronting the challenge of what constitutes good peacebuilding done the right ways in peacebuilding evaluation" (Neufeldt 2016b).

ments as part of making meaning out of the evaluation findings in only a short, two-page section of his more than 600-page volume. He notes that judgements about whether or not the data and findings are good or bad varies "depending on the values brought to bear" (Patton 2008, 500). The discussion of judgement then moves quickly to who judges values and the question of whether evaluators should independently render judgements versus providing the data for stakeholders to judge, or some combination thereof (Patton's preference). The values discussion then comes to a quick end.

The values dimension of judgement in evaluation requires careful scrutiny as it is here that the real tensions with evaluating religious peacebuilding are attenuated and often elided.[2] Now, there are some who argue that empirical data can be gathered in order to inform rational decisions in a value-free way; this is rooted in positivist social science tradition. A common value-free assertion goes like this: if we collect the data then we will know what to do. This idea of being able to collect data that will simply tell us what to do is popular yet highly problematic as it suggests a binary that does not exist (Patton 2008, Scriven 2012). When we ask what constitutes good results or ask questions about what data was determined as important to gather, we glimpse at the moral values upon which claims regarding what is good or right are made. There are value-based assumptions that underpin the determination of what is important and why certain evidence is selected. For example, one criterion used to evaluate whether or not peacebuilding programs are good and worthwhile is *if* they generate data on impact from scaling-up. Here, what is valued is a greater number of people affected by an intervention over the quality of that intervention within a given locale. Or another value could be *if* the people involved in the initiative learn from and make adaptations based on the evaluation data and process. Here, adaptations and responsiveness are valued.

2 In a special 2012 issue of *New Directions for Evaluation*, titled "Promoting valuation in the public interest: informing policies for judging value in evaluation," authors discuss roles for evaluators and stakeholders in valuation, politicization, the role of associations like the American Evaluation Association, and the importance of context sensitivity in valuation. Michael Scriven's contribution aims to unpack the logic of valuing, and while questioning Hume and the distinction between value-free and value-based argument in evaluation, his emphasis on reasoned, critical thinking misses the connection with an area that does this purposively: moral philosophy.

3 Evaluation and the Push to Account for Consequences

In order to assess how interreligious or religious peacebuilding moral values may be affected in the process of judging good and right in peacebuilding, we need to look more closely at evaluation's valuation itself. Are there particular moral values that are elevated uniformly in peacebuilding evaluations? By drawing out the moral values that are prioritized in peacebuilding evaluations, we can begin to see more clearly what conceptions of good and right are prominent and their possible effects on interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue.

The values that guide judgements of what constitutes good or right in peacebuilding are usually identified in the terms of reference (TOR) for an evaluation, or perhaps in the statement of purpose for the evaluation. It is now commonplace for TOR to draw upon the criteria named by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Development Assistance Committee (OECD and DAC) (2008) as their foundation. These criteria for evaluation are broadly recognized and widely used by non-governmental organizations as well as by governmental and intergovernmental bodies. The 2012 publication presents a slightly revised set of criteria from those initially put forward for public use, testing and feedback in 2007–2008 (DAC Network on Conflict and DAC Network on Development Evaluation 2008). The five criteria identified to judge good peacebuilding are: 1) *relevance* to factors driving the conflict; 2) *effectiveness* vis-à-vis intended objectives and the degree to which results were achieved; 3) *impact* that includes intended and unintended positive or negative effects; 4) *sustainability,* which refers to the continuation of benefits when funding stops (e. g. community ownership of peace work or continued community resilience); and, 5) *efficiency* of resources used to produce effects (OECD 2012, 65–71). Two additional suggested OECD-DAC criteria, which are not on par with the preceding five, are coherence and coordination amongst intervenors or funders.

These five main OECD-DAC criteria are front and centre in recent materials for evaluating religious and interreligious peacebuilding. They are identified as the "criteria typically used in the professional evaluation of peacebuilding interventions" (2016, 7) in the thought piece by David Steele and Ricardo Wilson-Grau, titled "Supernatural belief and the evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding." Steele and Wilson-Grau add the caveat that the five criteria are "neither all obligatory nor exhaustive," and one or more might be chosen and prioritized in an evaluation (7). The 2017 guide produced for helping better design, monitor and evaluate inter-religious efforts by Peter Woodrow, Nick Oatley and Michelle Garred, also reproduces these five main criteria as central for evaluating interre-

ligious peacebuilding. They include as a sixth criteria "coordination and linkages," which is in-line with the suggested additional OECD-DAC criteria, and they add a seventh criteria titled "consistency with values" (Woodrow, Oatley, and Garred 2017, 106). There is general affirmation for the OECD-DAC criteria and some additional work to bridge them into religious contexts. Given their importance, we need to examine what these widely embraced criteria say about what is valued.

There is a strong, unifying moral claim embedded in these criteria, which is that peacebuilding programs or projects are good if they achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people or produce at least as good as any other course of action would produce. The consequentialist logic underpinning the valuation of what is good is clear and unsurprising. Effectiveness, impact, sustainability all refer to slightly different aspects of consequences upon which programs, projects or initiatives are to be judged good. Consequentialism is a moral theory of what constitutes good, which underwrites our ideas about what makes the first three criteria valuable. It involves a cost-benefit, comparative calculation that focuses on ends, not on the means to the end or the nature of the character or relationships between those who pursue the end. As a moral theory, it is attributed originally to Jeremy Bentham and his student John Stuart Mill, with variations over time (such as act and rule consequentialism), and right action is determined as that which produces the most intrinsic good for individuals – whose feel good individually but are calculated collectively. While aspiring to be universal, the origins of this moral theory were 18th and 19th Century England.

Two of the OECD-DAC criteria suggest attention must be paid to means or process considerations that effect the ends. The effects are judged better if they are produced in an *efficient* manner and are *relevant* to the drivers of conflict as identified in a conflict analysis. The efficiency criterion is clearly part of a cost-benefit calculation and noting that maximizing outputs in general are better if they use fewer financial resources. Relevancy is a variation of efficiency, in that the effects are efficient if they effect drivers of conflict. Both of these are, again, consequentialist in moral valuation.

Consequentialism is not the only moral theory that focuses us on assessing what constitutes right action. Deontology offers another way of understanding what constitutes good, which focuses on defining universal goods and principles prior to action, so that the good is defined independently and based on universal reason. For example, Immanuel Kant's humanitarian formulation of the categorical imperative identifies as universal the imperative that everyone must always treat people as an end and never as a means to an end. Kant's imperative is a variation of the golden rule identified in many religious traditions (Wattles

1996, Neusner and Chilton 2009). The injunction to treat others as one would like to be treated stands in stark contradiction to the valuing of efficiency, where it suggests that people are used as a resource to an efficient end by peacebuilders. This is one of the points of friction between deontological and consequentialist ethics and indicates one of the ways in which the criteria used by professional peacebuilding evaluators is skewed in its evaluation of what is good.

There is a related concern that ends-based consequentialist thinking, if taken as far as it goes, allows some harm to occur. For example, it might be, in the final calculation, alright for staff to continue to work even when they are emotionally burnt-out or engage in some minor criminal activity as part of peacebuilding, as long as the outcome is at least as good as any other course of action in the final assessment of consequences. Now, the OECD-DAC document includes a list of additional duties or principles that funders should pay attention to in choosing which projects or programmes to fund, which include the duty to "do no harm," to promote non-discrimination, equality of participation of men and women, and so forth (2012, 23 – 26). These principles are seen as universal and help to modify the OECD-DAC's emphasis on consequentialism at the start of an initiative, however they are listed separately as important principles for funders to follow but not directly considered part of the evaluation criteria, with the exception of "do no harm" (a rule-based consequentialist injunction). For example, equal participation of women might be generally viewed as a good principle to follow, but this principle is not factored into the project evaluation's focus on efficiency.

Separating principles or duties for funders from criteria for evaluation is consistent with a larger pattern in peacebuilding literature. Often ethics considerations are seen to refer to *how* actors engage whereas how one understands *ends* are not considered a value-informed choice (for example see Anderson and Olson 2003, or for further discussion see Neufeldt 2016a). It is a version of the idea that values and evidence are separate categories and obscures the idea that consequentialism actually invokes a moral value choice. Consequentialist moral thinking is one of the dominant lines of ethical analysis today and the OECD-DAC peacebuilding evaluation criteria are firmly in the tradition of Bentham and Mill's 18th and 19th century ideas.

It may be worth noting that there are other important ways of thinking about what constitutes good in moral philosophy and religious teachings. Virtue ethics, for example, focuses on character and personal excellence. Ethics of care is a relational moral theory that focuses analysis of the good on a foundation of responding to others' needs and emphasize moral agent interdependence rather than independence. Ubuntu ethics is likewise a relational moral theory. These

foci of good are also present in peacebuilding practice and literature yet do not figure in the widely used evaluation criteria.[3]

The literature on interreligious and faith-based peacebuilding added some content to the five main OECD-DAC criteria, which hints that the criteria should be more carefully scrutinized. Steele and Wilson-Grau added the caveat that the five criteria are neither obligatory nor exhaustive and, while emphasizing that professional evaluators use these criteria, they nuance the content and suggest that religious beliefs will influence how the criteria are conceptualized. This opens the door for recognizing that the criteria may be inappropriate or not fit with religious and interreligious peacebuilding, it also opens the door for those within a faith tradition to rethink external criteria using concepts internal to the tradition. This seems promising; However, it is mentioned in a short paper and the authors do not expand.

Faith Matters, the design, monitoring and evaluation guide for religious peacebuilding builds on Steele and Wilson-Grau. The authors add a seventh criteria, consistency of values, which again seems promising as a way of opening up a discussion on the given consequentialist criteria. The description of what they mean indicates that evaluators could assess whether the values embodied in a project were consistent with various religious values, such as dignity of the person, compassion, justice and so forth (Woodrow, Oatley, and Garred 2017, 112). Here the lens of religion has expanded considerations around the five consequentialist criteria yet clearly not displaced focus on the five as central for judging the value of religious and interreligious peacebuilding. The question then remains: what happens to moral values in interreligious peacebuilding and dialogue when those designing or supporting the dialogue are pushing to see the initiative be more relevant, effective, impactful, sustainable and efficient? Is there anything for faith-based peacebuilders to be concerned about? Are there problems that arise if consequentialism dominates our understanding of is valued as good and right in religious and inter-religious peacebuilding evaluation?

3 Evaluation resources are emerging to focus on principle-based evaluation. For example, Michael Quinn Patton has a new book called *Principles-Focused Evaluation: the GUIDE* (2017), which aims to help assess organization's based on their principles, abd assessing whether implementing the principles achieved desired results.

4 Accounting for Consequences: A Simple Secular-Faith Divide?

To restate, evaluation judges what is good and bad based on a set of values. And, to state the obvious, judgements of good/bad, right/wrong are also the purview of religion. Religious teachings provide foundations for moral values.

We might think that the push to judge, based on consequentialism, is actually a tension between religious moorings and the secular call to demonstrate positive consequences. While there are aspects of the above discussion that could be read as a secular perspective being brought to bear on religious worldviews, it is also clear that there are a range of ways of seeing and assessing what is morally good in religious traditions themselves. Simply focusing on Catholicism for the moment, there are clear examples of ways in which consequences are viewed as morally good which are in-line with consequentialist moral philosophy. To name just two examples, Thomas Aquinas explores the doctrine of double effect in Just War thinking in weighing moral responsibilities vis-à-vis the outcomes of war (e. g. see Dower 2009). Catholic theologian and peacebuilder Todd Whitmore has called on Catholic peacebuilders to broaden the understanding of moral accountability related to peacebuilding and development and its effects (Whitmore 2010). Considerations of ends are important in religious discourse, as are considerations of motives and core religious moral principles.[4]

Evaluations can raise internal arguments that exist within religions with respect to how to prioritize values or how to enact values in a given context and time. This means that the moral values are placed in direct tension with one another as choices are made about which values are the right ones by which to judge peacebuilding. For example, is it important to mediate or pray to pursue personal transcendence, or to engage in social action and effects?

To better understand what is at stake in the tension of values, the next section focuses on interreligious dialogue and looks at the values underpinning it, which may be affected by the ways values are prioritized in project design and evaluation. Interreligious dialogue is a subset of religious and interreligious peacebuilding, and often explicit in articulating religious values, as discussions of values are often part of the dialogue itself between traditions, which makes it particularly helpful to examine.

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4 It is also interesting to note the tension between competing moral values is not solely the domain of religious peacebuilding either, as we see similar tensions between those committed to duty-based responses and those who are looking at impact as producing the greatest positive consequences in more secular discourse (explored further in Neufeldt 2014).

5 Vying Values in Interreligious Dialogue: Awesome Agency, Faithful Followers, Earthy Ends

Interreligious dialogue itself is not uniform (e. g. see Abu-Nimer, Khoury, and Welty 2007). We see at least three types of dialogue enacted today that value different types of change through dialogue and understandings of agency by those engaged in the dialogue; these can be understood from a theological, political and a peacebuilding perspective (Neufeldt 2011). The descriptions that follow below briefly summarize the focus of each dialogue type, provide an example and distil over-arching moral values regarding social change processes in order to assess how the priorities in evaluations may affect interreligious peacebuilding values.

5.1 Theological Dialogue

The theological approach to dialogue emphasizes theological exchange and religious experience as the central "modes of dialogue".[5] This type of dialogue tends to be led by those with a background in theological and religious studies and aims to be largely apolitical in content although spurred by experiences of exclusion or violent conflict. The theological approach tends to focus on individual change and relationship development. Its purposes include increasing understanding of beliefs, doctrines, practices and values between groups; establishing areas of common values between faith traditions; probing areas of theological difference; engaging in active theology where new theologies might emerge; as well as developing relationships of mutual respect between members of religious traditions. Prayer, mediation and being open to Ultimate Reality or God as leading change are important in the process.

An example of a theological dialogue is the "Thinking Together" series that was organized by the World Council of Churches Office on Interreligious Relations and Dialogue. This dialogue series, which ran from 2000 to 2009, brought together a relatively small group of core participants to consider difficult questions from theological perspectives. The meetings included personal sharing and worship ritual. As one participant, M. Thomas Thangaraj (2003) relayed,

5 The descriptions of the three forms of interreligious dialogue draw on "Interfaith dialogue: assessing theories of change" (Neufeldt 2011).

"We were not simply talking, either; we prayed together and meditated together. Every morning persons in the group, in accordance with their own religious traditions, led us in prayer/meditation/singing." Through the dialogue, representatives of different religious groups (including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam) identified and explored theological concerns and differences utilizing the languages and methods of their respective religious traditions, developed new insights and forged bonds of friendship (Ucko 2001, 2005).

This model of dialogue valued religious and spiritual encounter, personal change and new insights generated through exchange as part of a transcendent process. The group periodically wondered about how to increase the effects of their work, and published collected volumes in an effort to make the group's deep exchange more widely available (Ucko 2005, Premawardhana 2015). However, the primary good was the experience itself, exchange, the insights generated and the opening of space to God or Ultimate Reality. In this type of dialogue, in the awesome presence of the divine, humans were not primary agents of change, but they were part of a change process made manifest. Here we see an ontological understanding of forces operating outside of the normal purview of monitoring effects. What is front and central is the awesome agency of the divine for faithful followers.

5.2 Political Dialogue

The political approach to interfaith dialogue typically occurs in response to active conflict although strives to be apolitical in content in terms of formal politics (e. g., political parties). The focus of these dialogues is to solidify the support of religious leaders for politically negotiated peace agreements or peace processes, and in so doing, generate more widespread grassroots support. Such events are often hosted by governments and include political representatives in the midst of highly placed religious leaders. There is a small element of theological exchange in that religious beliefs or tenets related to "peace" and "violence" are voiced by leaders, although typically they are framed as parallel monologues and the primary audience for each leader (at least as hoped by organizers) is their own faith adherents.

An example of a politically sponsored interreligious dialogue effort by the United States (US) occurred during former George W. Bush's administration and was led by then- Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes. She met with religious leaders at various "interfaith dialogue" events between 2005 and 2007, held around the world and in the US. Hughes stated the reason why the US government was interested in interfaith dialogue

and convened religious leaders was because "...faith plays such a critical role in the lives of so many people across our world. Governments would be foolish to ignore its power and impact or to leave the floor only to those who seek to use religion as a force to divide or destroy" (Hughes 2006). The goals of dialogue included: the desire to highlight the many voices speaking out against terrorism and for greater interfaith understanding; to demonstrate that all faiths believe in the sanctity of human life; and to give the world a more accurate picture of Muslims in America (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2006, Hughes 2007).

To illustrate further what was involved, at a 2005 meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, Hughes had a joint meeting with the Mufti of Istanbul, the Armenian Patriarch, the Chief Rabbi, the Syrian Metropolitan, a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and a Catholic Bishop in addition to a few others. At a press conference prior to the meeting, the Syrian Metropolitan Yusuf Cetin leader stated:

> ...I think that for world peace, religious leaders and politicians are the two parties that have very big tasks to fulfill, more than ever today. We need to pray much more for world peace, and politicians need to work much more seriously for world peace. Religious leaders, of course, are not politicians, but for world peace we are ready to discuss any topic, we are ready to be present at any gathering so long as it calls for peace to reign all over the world – because we have the tears and screams of war. These make all countries in the world very troubled. We believe that when there are good intensions in a meeting like this, God will hear our voice, respond to our goodwill and hopefully will show us good days in the future. (Hughes and Powell 2005)

This quote draws out the nature of the dialogue, which was not mutual transformation but rather persuasion of others regarding the right thing to do in order to work for peace. Religious and political leaders held distinct but important roles, and the power of prayer was mentioned but not directly tied to the dialogue itself. In the quote, the emphasis on good intentions and internal motivations as well as the consequentialist valuing of stability and cessation of violence are named. However, within the political approach to interfaith dialogue, the pragmatic brokering of peace – an earthy and observable end – takes priority over any sense of awesome agency. Dialogue and mentioning the divine is a step, a helpful means that faithful followers are willing to do, to prepare the way for a longer-term politically brokered peace.

5.3 Peacebuilding Dialogue

A third approach to interfaith dialogue emphasizes a broader commitment to religious peacebuilding that draws on peacebuilding and conflict transformation frameworks. In this approach, interfaith dialogue is an entry point and way of working towards multiple types of change. Peacebuilding initiatives integrate dialogue to build mutual understanding and respect, broaden peace processes to include community members, or function as a foundation for other types of community-level engagements that address economic and social drivers of the conflict. This approach attempts to value both the earthy ends of immediate cessation of violence and observable changes, as well as the awesome nature of the divine, and therefore includes joint rituals and sharing alongside other types of intervention activities. These efforts seek to deliberately affect the political environment and focus on political processes and actors as well as conditions that give rise to the conflict with a greater sense of agency than occurs in the political mode of dialogue. Religious peacebuilders operating in this mode are often motivated to do good peacebuilding work as an expression of their faith – they are devoted peacebuilders in terms of their commitment to peace efforts as well as their commitment to faith and religion. They tend to be rooted in the conflict-affected communities and want to see effects and change happen because of their efforts and so there may be a more immediate valuing of the earthy ends that are produced through peacebuilding.

An example of a peacebuilding interfaith dialogue is Mindanao's Bishop-Ulama Conference (BUC), which was originally called the Bishop-Ulama Forum. It involved Catholic, Protestant and Muslim clerics in a formal, interfaith dialogue that was initially intended to help contribute to peace following the 1996 negotiations with the Moro Liberation Front. Over the years, the format of dialogue evolved, moving from political dialogue to providing a platform for a variety of types of peacebuilding initiatives that included purposive peace education and grassroots projects, as well as behind-the-scenes involvement in peace negotiations (Bishop Ulama Conference undated, Fitzpatrick 2007). Additional dialogue groups, such as the Ustadz-Priests-Pastors dialogue and the Episcopal Commission for Inter-religious dialogue formed. There were culture of peace and peace education trainings, youth, academic, grassroots and church worker dialogue groups. Grassroots groups in particular developed initiatives to respond to their needs, such as through small income generation projects. The BUC expanded media attention for peace efforts in Mindanao, which enabled the peace movement to gain a greater profile elsewhere in the Philippines. The religious leadership themselves pursued peacebuilding training early in the formation of the BUC because they were interested in affecting larg-

er-scale social change. The inspiration was rooted in their faith, they continually engaged in theological dialogue and worship experiences, but they also wanted to respond to the needs around them effectively. In this mode of dialogue, it appears that the valuing of faith and a duty to do the right thing according to one's faith, was also modified by the valuing of earthly ends and outputs (decrease in violence, increase in solidarity, and so forth). In this approach, there is some effort to embrace both earthy ends as well as the awesome agency of the divine by faithful followers.

These three examples illustrate the point above – that the call to achieve good effects is not a secular value foisted upon religious actors – these actors themselves are interested in effects in this world, and this in part comes out of their faith. Members of the Bishop-Ulama forum members want to be good adherents of their respective faiths, but they also want to see peace – a just peace – built in Mindanao and perceive themselves to be agents of change in addition to, or because of, the divine. The multiple demands of being good faithful followers, who are transformed by the awesome, and want to achieve changes in this world is present to varying degrees in the theological and political forms of interreligious dialogue. The modalities that are suggested in response are then further informed by other religious values, such as reconciliation and a commitment to recognizing the sacredness of the other. Yet, we also see that across these three different types of interfaith dialogue efforts, there is some balancing of significant moral goods. Religious actors are doing their best to be faithful followers in the process of pursuing earthy ends. They are also conscious of awesome agency even while making an effort to achieve earthy ends. Awesome agency, earthy ends and faithful follower demands are variously prioritized in all three approaches. How might evaluation values alter or transform these vying goods in interreligious peacebuilding?

6 When Faithful Followers Prioritize Earthy Ends over Awesome Agency

What issues of concern arise when interreligious dialogue and interreligious peacebuilding more broadly embrace evaluation and the values therein? I offer this final section as a thought piece to help religious peacebuilders identify issues in advance, so that evaluation criteria may be developed in a more careful way and appropriate to the moral values content as well as context, as well as to recognize the limits of evaluation. With this caveat noted, I see three ways the

values of religious peacebuilders in interfaith dialogue are likely to be affected by evaluation criteria.

6.1 Dimming Awesome Agency

Evaluations that draw upon the OECD-DAC criteria (or other similar criteria) emphasize consequences and the moral value of earthy ends in interreligious dialogue, notably its effectiveness, impact and sustainability. One of the central views around change that is most likely to be ignored or pushed to the side is the ontological commitment to God or to Ultimate Reality as acting in human affairs beyond human comprehension. God's performance does not get evaluated per se. While people may ask questions like, "why didn't God act?" or "why did God act in that way?" or even note that one of the assumptions in a log frame is that "God will act" they do not expect answers in the form of empirical data, or to understand that which is wholly other.[6] Faith traditions require faith. The *awe*some nature of the divine will necessarily have to be bracketed, as one might bracket one's biases, in order to put the matter aside and assess what is accessible and empirical. Indeed, this is precisely what we see Steele and Wilson-Grau do, as they focus on belief and suggest "the primary question regarding belief in the supernatural is not how one measures the transcendent, but how one takes into consideration the effect of that belief" (2016, 5).

Of course, studies could be proposed to examine whether or not conflicts in which more people pray or meditate for peace effects change. However, there will not be controlled experiments to see if prayer and meditation improves things – as experiments in health sciences for angioplasty patients have attempted – because it is simply not possible to control how many people pray for and against any one side and any one outcome in a large-scale conflict and (more importantly), these efforts domesticate the divine. The other complication is that even if there are observable patterns, it does not mean we understand divine or awesome agency. If we see something that looks like Ultimate Reality or God intervening, it does not mean we understand, as the many holy texts, interpretive texts, meditative practices, theological works, and confessional community discernment processes indicate.

The implication here, then, is that the push to pay more attention to consequences such as effectiveness, impact, and sustainability, marginalizes an un-

6 For an example of an effort to include mention of God in a logframe see Rich Janzen and David Wiebe's (2011)"Putting God in the Logic Model."

derstanding that God or Ultimate Reality acts in this world in ways that may include humans but also go beyond. Awesome agency does not figure in the valuation for evaluation.

6.2 Commodifying Dialogue Exchanges

A second area to consider is with respect to the ways in which exchanges in dialogue are commodified from a consequentialist perspective. In particular, the effects of positing efficiency as a universal standard to be valued in interfaith dialogue and religious peacebuilding. The valuing of efficiency as a good in the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria offers an economic reading of peacebuilding where efficient uses of resources are prioritized over less efficient uses of resources. Commodities such as social capital are to be efficiently built with the minimum possible peacebuilder resources – financial, human, organizational. This may sound normal and right in North America where relationships are often commodified in financial terms (e. g., paying others to care for aging parents). However, the emphasis on efficient exchange comes into conflict with the valuing of moments of interchange and the quality of interactions as goods in and of themselves for faithful followers.

Todd Whitmore, an American theologian and peacebuilder, has observed the effects of economic and social context on Catholic social teaching in its articulation of the relationship between development and peace, as evidenced in Pope Paul VI's statement that the new name for peace is development, in the 1967 *Populorum Progressio* (2010, 172). This thinking, Whitmore notes, had its origins in Europe, and its primary audience was European. Catholic social teaching was speaking into a context that had experienced the industrial revolution, but which he notes is vastly inappropriate for other parts of the world such as sub-Saharan Africa. Whitmore forcefully writes, "Development as it has actually existed has not been an unalloyed good, or even a basically good set of activities that has been led astray by self-interest. It has been from the start, whatever else it has been, a tool for extracting labour and natural resources from indigenous peoples. This is the context in which any effort to empower the poor necessarily takes place" (2010, 175). In looking at the valuation of efficiently producing results, we see it reinforces an exchange dynamic, which represents the economic and political context of donor countries and can be read as part of a continuing problematic dynamic.

The value of efficiency as a moral good reinforces a commodified view of interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding. It cuts against elements of interfaith dialogue in which faithful followers experience a deeply religious encounter in

the presence of the divine or the quality of the experience, which are seen as good in and of themselves as illustrated in the theological mode of interfaith dialogue. We have here, then, the danger of valuing peacebuilding and peacebuilders without soul or quality.

6.3 The One, the Many, and the Connections Between

A third area to consider is less obvious in the criteria but relates to the ways in which individual agency is construed within theories of change and the emphasis on individuality over community and relationships. There is a subtle shift to emphasize individuals as agents leading social change as well as being the base unit for analysing the effects of an intervention in consequentialist analysis. As noted above, awesome agency is problematic to include in evaluations, what is left then is individual agency. Why individuals and not groups or communities? The answer relates to assumptions underlying the analysis of how change occurs. For example, the widely cited Reflecting on Peace Practice Project produced findings that highlighted the important role that key people play in affecting structural change to impact peace writ large (Anderson and Olson 2003). Works were clustered into initiatives that targeted either "more people" or "key people" – while this simplification was meant for analytic purposes it has powerfully shaped the imagination of how change happens and the role that communities and social structures may play. Key individuals are important actors in change. Effects are also measured based upon individual reports of change, and cumulative effects on individuals as occurs in utilitarian consequentialist calculations. This approach reflects Max Weber's (1978) methodological individualism in which individuals are the agents of social phenomena and the focus of sociological study.

Here again is the concern that what is valued as good is shaped more by the social and economic context of those pushing for evaluation based on consequentialist values than religious faith and moral beliefs about what is good and right, which are often communally inscribed. Further, the social and political context that produces these norms benefit from the current political and economic order. Miguel De La Torre, Professor of Social Ethics and Latino/a studies, writes:

> While the ethical positions held within the dominant culture are neither uniform nor monolithic, certain common denominators nevertheless exist, such as a propensity toward hyperindividualism, a call for law and order, an emphasis on charity, an uncritical acceptance of the market economy, an emphasis on orthodoxy, and a preponderance for deductive eth-

> ical reasoning. While such an ethics is congruent with the dominant culture, it is damning for those residing on the margins of society because of how it reinforces the prevailing social structures responsible for causes of disenfranchisement.

The push to evaluate can unintentionally reinforce individualism, perhaps even hyper-individualism. The valuing of individual agency and individual experience is, of course, also present in religious discourse.[7] We see this valuing of key individuals (religious leaders) possessing agency in the political mode of interfaith dialogue, with the anticipation that key people are able to effect larger-scale and institutional change. Yet many are concerned that this mode of dialogue is using religious actors for political purposes. Ends considerations have the potential to overshadow the valuing both of faithful followers and awesome agency – which the peacebuilding strand of interfaith dialogue tries to hold in the balance.

6.4 Implications

The three themes noted above all point to a side-lining of some of the values present most clearly in theological exchange as a likely outcome of efforts to monitor and evaluate interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding. What is most likely to happen is reinforcing an individualized subject (and object), a push towards economic modes of reading interactions between people in conflict settings, and a diminishing appreciation of the *awesome* in interfaith and religious peacebuilding encounters. The already difficult balancing of earthy ends, faithful followers and awesome agency, which we see in religious peacebuilding and the three modes of interfaith dialogue, give way to the dominance of earthy ends. The implication is that if the values that currently permeate evaluation discourse pervade religious peacebuilding it will lose its uniqueness. To answer the questions that I posed at the start of this chapter, on whether the call for certain types of accountability in peacebuilding evaluation reinforces the problem of instrumentalising religion, the answer seems to be yes, certain types of values in this call for accountability do instrumentalise religion. At stake, then, is no less than the soul of interfaith dialogue and religious peacebuilding.

Can anything be done to keep balancing awesome agency with faithful followers and earthy ends? Perhaps, but I am not confident. What it will take is for the criteria for evaluation to be only partially consequentialist. This part is not too challenging. We can utilize the values of faith traditions themselves, as sug-

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7 Indeed, Max Weber's analysis of the connections between Protestantism and the rise of capitalism reinforce this point in *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930).

gested by Woodrow and colleagues, if they are identified in a careful process of eliciting those values prior to planning an intervention, and in a way that does not emphasize consequentialist views. For example, did people come to care more for one another in the project, or did people enact their religious values in each engagement with "the other." We can choose to not use the OECD-DAC criteria, or use them only very selectively. We can value personal transformation as a good in and of itself, as Steele and Wilson-Grau note. We can value religious community participation and collective transformation as well to move away from hyper-individuality. For example, one creative effort to include discernment in evaluating a faith-based project in Canada adapted participatory action research methods for its approach as a way to open-up the process to community participation (Janzen and Wiebe, 2011).

However, we also need to value awesome agency on its own terms. Not just belief in awesome agency, but value that which is beyond belief: awesome agency that affects change on its own time and terms, beyond human understanding. It is this ontologically unique piece of interfaith dialogue, and other types of religious peacebuilding, that remains firmly outside of evaluation criteria and therefore lost in evaluation. While there is value in evaluation for many of the activities in and elements of the theory of change in interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding, evaluation is not an absolute good. Recognizing the things not evaluated but valued will be equally necessary if interreligious peacebuilding is to keep its soul.

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Hippolyt Pul

When My Peace Is Not Your Peace

Role of Culture and Religion in What Counts for Peace

1 Introduction

Evaluation connotes finding out the absolute or relative added value or contribution that an intervention brings to a given situation. Money, time, a target population, defined geographical areas, and a set of activities set the boundaries of measurement of the value of the change or contributions of the intervention outcomes. Of these boundary parameters, money is the major determinant of what project interventions can be carried out, where, when, how, by whom, with whom, and for how long. Hence, donors demand evidence to justify their investment of resources, and implementers focus on providing the evidence that demonstrates the quality and value of the investments (Scharbatke-Church 2011). In sum, the primary purpose of an evaluation is accountability; learning through knowledge generation from demonstrable proofs of practice and of theories of change comes second. In theory, "...accountability relationship classically flows upwards to the donor but can also be 'downwards' to programme participants or 'horizontal' to partners" (Scharbatke-Church 2011, 472). In practice, the direction of flow of accountability tends to be upwards only; it is donor-aimed and the responsibility for its delivery is implementing partner driven; seldom are project participants the audience of accountability reporting.

Learning outcomes are measured in two dimensions. Project interventions must result in "practical learning for improving theoretical learning to add to knowledge [and] accountability learning in order to prove the merit of one's effort" (Guijt 2008, 105). That proof of merit must be evidenced through the measures of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, especially in respect to cost and in comparison with the stated objective. Intervention outcomes and impacts, as well as sustainability are the other measures of success or failure. At the bottom line, quality and value are what count (Scharbatke-Church 2011). Hence, evaluations have become, in effect, the measure of the value of what change a given sum of money can make to an identified problem.

The search for valuable change presumes the existence of verifiable standards and measures of what was against what is or should be. By extension, those measures must fit into a dualistic worldview in which change has either happened or not happened; there are no in-betweens. This need for clear proofs

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requires that the supporting evidence must be quantifiable or at least objectively verifiable. Attribution or at least demonstration of contribution is important, as the observed changes must be traceable to the interventions initiated. Since the lifespan of peacebuilding projects are short (hardly beyond 3 years), interventions that prioritize the delivery of tangible products and countable outcomes are favoured over those that aim at building relevant peace infrastructure (Hopp-Nishanka 2012) and processes. This is "because it is easier to measure the result as product than the outcomes as process" (Lederach 1997, 133).

This approach to evaluation raises a number of questions that peacebuilding[1] evaluation and religious peacebuilding[2] evaluation in particular must confront – the fundamental social science question of validity: "Am I measuring what I think I am measuring" (Baker 1999, 109). In the context of peacebuilding, however, the challenge goes beyond the ability of the evaluator or the clients to answer that fundamental question satisfactorily, since defining peacebuilding is a challenge arising from the very broad and different dimensions that different actors choose to apply (Scharbatke-Church 2011). "What is religious peacebuilding?" is even more complex. Hence, in defining what is to be measured, a second level of challenge for peacebuilders is the ownership question – whose peace are we evaluating? This further leads to the questions: Whose definitions are being used to describe the peace? Is there consensus between donors, and/or implementers on whose peace are the interventions seeking to secure and what constitutes peace? A third layer of questions look at specifics of the evaluation: what are the definitions of quality and value in the evaluation? Does, what constitutes value and quality to donors, necessarily have the same equivalency for project participants? In other words, are there common grounds on what desirable change is and how that change is measured?

Additionally, the demands of objectivity in the establishment of the before and after conditions as proof of success or otherwise of the theory and practice of the intervention warrant that the planning, implementation, monitoring, and

1 Peacebuilding aims to create conditions for lasting peace and the prevention of future conflicts through the positive transformation of the cultures, structures, systems, and other root causes that generate and sustain the conflicts into ones that promote peaceful coexistence among feuding groups.

2 Religious peacebuilding draws its inspiration and motivation from the beliefs, values, practices, and rituals derived from the scriptures of one or more faith traditions; uses the institutional platforms, networks, and resources; or leverages the moral voice and authority of religious actors (including the clergy and lay persons and organizations working in the name of the faith) to facilitate the creation of the conditions for peace and the prevention of violent conflicts in divided societies.

evaluation of the interventions, including social engineering ones such as peacebuilding, adopt models and language of the military-scientific worldviews of intervention design and implementation. Accordingly, assessments, context analyses, and problem identification lead to clearly stated strategic objectives, intervention strategies, targets, benchmarks, indicators, outcomes, and impacts. In other words, "Projects are seen as discrete, concrete, and measurable units of activity bounded by parameters such as time and completion of tasks" (Lederach 1997, 130). These are to be achieved through precise military or surgical-like operations that pinpoint and remove problems with carefully planned interventions.

With increasing donor pressure for evidence that justifies investments, demonstrating high feasibility of value for money requires that indicators must be predetermined in very precise ways to secure access to the funding. Because the outcomes must be tangible, visible, measurable, or at least objectively verifiable, carefully crafted theories of change (Weiss 1995), logical frameworks, planning matrices, and intervention metrics establish and demonstrate the chain of causality between means and ends, in order to reassure donors their money will be well spent.. Prior statement of assumptions helps to narrow the scope of uncertainties and to eliminate all conditions that suggest the infeasibility of the project. The aim is to ensure near perfect conditions that would deliver planned results. In a self-fulfilling way, success is guaranteed through tight control of the scope of error and determinants of feasibility.

While some relief and development interventions, as in health, education, agriculture, and microeconomic projects, may lend themselves easily to such linear logic and rationalistic approaches to planning and evaluation, peacebuilding does not so easily fit this quasi-experimental approach to intervention planning and management (White and Sabarwal 2014). The focus on predetermining intervention outcomes with time-bound indicators runs counter to the process orientation of peacebuilding that emphasizes the creation of spaces of dialogue, healing, and the rebuilding of relationships (Lederach 1997; Ashworth 2014). To do otherwise is to sidestep the use of "traditional peacebuilding tools [that create] a safe place for telling and acknowledging the truth and [drawing] on local processes for reconciliation" (Ashworth 2014, 239). This turns peacebuilding into another quick-fix intervention that leaves no space for the slow and longer-term healing and reconciliation processes that religious peacebuilding in particular requires. Critically, the processes of bringing religious values and norms of acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation in alignment with the hurts of victims do not only take time, they are also highly individualized, as some people reach the point of forgiveness and reconciliation much earlier than others. Therefore, a one-size, quick-fix approach that fits into a particular time frame and activity

plan would not make peace happen on the scale that makes it evaluable in short periods of time.

Scharbatke-Church, (2011) laments that "[...] peacebuilding evaluations are generally not delivering accountability and learning in the manner in which they should [because] the average evaluation is not grounded in the basics of good evaluation practice [and] the core drivers of evaluation – accountability and learning – are rarely held at the heart of the process" (460). In other words, rather than focusing on "peacebuilding's perceived 'distinctiveness'" (Scharbatke-Church 2011, 460), greater attention to the techniques of evaluation would make peacebuilding as evaluable as any other social science, goes the argument. Incidentally, the adoption of a purely technocratic approach to ensuring the evaluability of peacebuilding projects, and religious peacebuilding interventions in particular to meet the needs for accountability and learning is where the sub discipline meets its nemeses. Unlike other social interventions that can produce externally observable outcomes, peace or the absence of it is in a large part intrinsic, experiential, and subjective; peace is not what we see; it is what we experience and believe to be true. However, the conventional approaches look at evaluation from the perspective of the "outsider" rather than the insider whose lives have been affected by the 'not peaceful' situations in which they are trapped or from which they have recently transited.

The outsider perspective risks equating the presence of presumptive enablers of peace such as the rule of law, freedom of speech, and even economic opportunities as measures of peace, regardless of the reality since their presence does not translate into equitable access to services, freedom from unjust and discriminatory practices, or the elimination of ineffective or unresponsive institutional performances that create more structural violence on segments of the population than meets the eye. The existence of these enablers does not mean they work to advance peace. As a respondent in an interview in Liberia observed, the liberation of the airwaves in Liberia after the civil war expanded the opportunities for freedoms of speech such that "[...] now people are no longer afraid to speak up their minds. But when you speak who listens? So, people speak, but no one listens. People come and make speeches, very good speeches, but there is no implementation" (Pul 2016, 28). In other words, the ability to speak freely does not lead to genuine communication and dialogue that promote introspection, truth-telling, repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. Similarly, a judiciary that is perceived to put justice on sale (Allafrica.com 2019; *Daily Observer* 2019; LICHRD 2014) does not represent the rule of law; neither does it ease the pain of victims of crimes of war, rape, and other forms of injustice for those who cannot afford the price of the justice system (Pul 2016). In such instances, invisible, intangible, and unexpressed but deeply felt suffer-

ing of the oppressed provide no indicators of peace or the absence of it. Similarly, the role of religion as the container that holds and manages the diffusion of the hurts may not be visible either.

Ignoring this deeply personal and experiential view of peace risks turning it into an external entity that can be objectively assessed outside the self. The assessor and the assessed are unconnected in their experiences of what happened, how life was and is being lived. The assessed responds to questions on what has changed, but do the assessors' noted outcomes of reported changes, usually in knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and practices connote longer term, internalized changes that "disarm the hearts" (Pul 2017, 15) of those affected by the incidents of war and violence? As Twose and Mahoney (2015) found in their study of reconciliation in Liberia, while individualized responses of study participants give off a certain impression on the state of peace:

> When all responses were considered together, the dichotomy between claims of individual reconciliation and perceptions of societal reconciliation was striking. The sharp difference forces one to wonder whether, when stating their personal views, people simply give the socially desirable, "correct" answer, while reflecting on the country at large may have enabled them to respond more honestly. As such, the number of people who claim to be reconciled and to have moved on from the past should be interpreted with some skepticism (Twose and Mahoney 2015, 103).

2 Disentangling Labels, Religiousness of Conflicts

If the literature on peacebuilding evaluation is replete with such kaleidoscopic accounts of the challenges of measuring change, it is because the evaluation efforts ignore the inherently distinct characteristics of peacebuilding in general and religious peacebuilding in particular that do not lend themselves to the conventional, decontextualized, and objectivized criteria of evaluation. In most indigenous religious worldviews in Africa in particular, the resolution of conflicts is grounded in religious beliefs, values, symbols, and practices that provide meanings and directions rooted in perceptions of the transcendental nature of relationships between the living, the dead, and the unborn; humans and nature, especially mother earth; and the eternal and the temporal. These factors govern how people choose to deal with conflicts. Conventional evaluation efforts also ignore the fact that the adoption of a purely technocratic approach to evaluating religious peacebuilding in particular throw up a number of challenges. Of the lot, four major ones, related to the need to disentangle labels and confront the

religiousness of conflicts; the fluidity of religious identities in conflicts; the symbolic and substantive nature and role of religion in peacebuilding; and the basic need to agree on what to measure, given the differing meaning of peace. These are discussed in this chapter.

Intervention designs set the boundaries for evaluations. In the field of peacebuilding, however, such boundaries are not only porous; they are also fluid. Indeed, there are no objective standards by which such analyses are conducted. Contexts change rapidly and actors can lithely switch roles between victims and perpetrators of violence. Besides, identity conflicts such as ones in which religion is involved, are socially constructed with interpretative boundaries that defy simple characterization. Preliminary questions such as how the conflict became defined as a religious one or a conflict that merits a religious approach to its intervention designs must be asked and answered. This calls into question who defined the conflict as religious? What in the conflict makes it a religious one? To what extent would the ordinary people trapped in the conflict consider it a religious one? Do they believe that the people championing the conflict are acting in defence of their faith or they are merely instrumentalizing religion as a tool for mobilizing conflict actors and resources? In other words, a good religious peacebuilding evaluation cannot sidestep asking the questions about how the conflict got labelled as a religious conflict? Who decided on the labelling? Does the religious label given to a conflict necessarily reflect how those involved see and relate to the conflict? In sum, the first challenge in evaluating religious peacebuilding is to establish how religious the conflict is and the peacebuilding process thereof.

On the intervention side, who determines what constitutes "religious" in the peacebuilding effort. Is the effort a religious one because of the issues at stake e. g. contentions over religious beliefs, values, and practices; the actors involved i. e. individuals and institutions clothed with religious functions who champion the peacebuilding effort; the objective of the conflict, e. g. contests over sacred spaces including fights over ownership of, access to, or inclusion in common sacred spaces of worship and veneration; or because of the instrumentalization of religion for political and economic ends, as when political and economic leaders use religious sentiments, sympbos, and affiliations as the leverage for mobilizing fighters and/or peacemakers?

Conflicts in Africa have suffered from labels that misdirect peacebuilding interventions and evaluations. The 2013 spikes in Central African Republic's (CAR) protracted political conflict gained notoriety as a religious conflict that pitched Muslims against Christians. This labelling became entrenched despite the prevailing evidence that "There is no long history of religious hatred in this country. It exploded out of nowhere after Muslim mercenaries from Chad and Sudan

joined the Seleka alliance that swept to power" (Wood 2013). Before that, "The Christian majority and Muslim minority had always lived in harmony until March 2013 when Seleka leader Michel Djotodia seized power" (Laeila and Dia 2013, 2). Indeed, at the height of the conflict many Muslims and Christians saved their neighbours of the opposite religion by alerting them on planned advance of armed groups (BBC News, 4 November 2013) or offered them protection from such attacks (Pul 2017; Laeila and Dia 2013). This labelling also ignored the fact that the existence of elements of local fighters, the Seleka and Anti-Balaka, predated the onset of the 2013 conflict were either instrumentalized or pressed into fighting under a religious banner (BBC 2013; Harding 2013; Pul 2017). This labelling further ignored the deeper historical, political, and economic discontent regarding issues of belongingness and citizenship; political and economic exclusion of geo-ethnic areas; intergenerational herder-farmer conflicts that have intensified, thanks to climate change and unstable political environments that have increased movement of cattle from Chad, Cameroun, South Sudan, and other surrounding countries, which locals resented as invasions into the lush pastures of CAR. Also masked in this religious labelling are the external political influences, some with deep colonial roots that created political instabilities and periodic outbreak of violence since CAR's independence, and all of which happened without any religious motivations imputed. Similarly, no one blamed the conflict on the state failure of CAR since independence that allowed for the sprouting of ethno-regional armed groups struggling for social, political, and economic inclusion.

In this labelling, the western press ignored the vehement protests of most Central Africans, led by religious leaders of both the Christian and Muslim sides (Reese 2014); as well as the warnings of discerning diplomats that rejected the religious label given to the conflict (Wood 2013). Ordinary Central Africans point out that calling their conflict a religious one is a misnomer that hides the real political and economic motivations around which the fighting gangs are mobilized. They point to the fact that among the so-called Christian front Anti-Balaka forces, there are Muslims, just as there are Christians in the fighting forces of the Seleka. Neither of them has claimed doctrinal allegiance to Christianity or Islam, and both Christians and Muslims were victims of their atrocities. In the eyes of Central Africans' therefore, the conflict that is described as a religious conflict is not theirs. In the words of a respondent in an evaluation field study in CAR:

> Before the conflict there was no problem between Christians and Muslims or the different ethnic groups. However, politicians introduced the conflict. Before Seleka came, there was no problem. When they came, they brought bad governance: they stole from Christians.

> Anti-Balaka did the same thing, stealing from Muslims mainly. Therefore, the conflict qualified as a religious one, but it is not; it has nothing to do with religion (Pul 2017).

The CAR experience parallels the Nigerian context where the perceptual split of the country into "the Muslim North and the Christian South" is grossly misleading to the point of inaccuracy, convenient though it may be for the journalist" (Onaiyekan 2012, 3). It is an aberration that has, nonetheless, perpetuated "the unfortunate tendency to overlook the very important fact that in the normal lives of our people, there is a commendable measure of peaceful and harmonious living together across religious lines" (Onaiyekan 2012, 4). This misnomer also masks the reality that it is "The failure of the state [that] gave rise to terrorist groups in all regions of the country" (Niworu 2013, 245); a development which is not "[...]unconnected with the search for political power, a sure avenue to economic power and influence in the society" (Niworu 2013, 246) by groups seeking a foothold in a state that makes little room for them.

Critically, the Nigerian example challenges peacebuilding evaluators to isolate the transposition of default religious characterization over ethno-regional, political, economic and cultural grievances that underwrite the conflicts. As is the case in other colonies, British colonial policy in Nigeria reserved and actively supported the spread of specific brands of religious creeds in different parts of the country (Brukum 1997; Bening 1990). Therefore, different geopolitical regions took on imposed ethno-religious characters – a predominantly Muslim north and a predominantly Christian south. It is perhaps pertinent to note, also, that Sudan's pre-2005 civil wars were invariably characterized in the same terms as Nigeria's – the Muslim north against the Christian south. And yet fighting in Sudan and South Sudan has not stopped after the separation of the two. With a slight twist, the same quick-fix religious labelling occurred in northern Ghana's 1994 ethnic conflict, famously referred to as the Guinea Fowl War. Although Assefa (2001) acknowledged that "the conflict was not about religion per se" (184) he nonetheless found justification to argue that "[...] religion also played a role in reinforcing the fault lines in the conflict [since] the leadership of the acephalous groups is predominantly Christian [...] while the chiefly groups are primarily Muslim" (167). Given the imposed nature of these religions, should the fight of a group for socio-political and economic inclusion in the state gain an automatic religious tag because their fighters are predominantly drawn from one religious group or because they use their religious values to inspire and justify their cause of war? Be it as it may, the danger inherent in the categorization of conflicts as religious ones on the basis of ethno-regional dominance of exogenous creeds may indeed mask the deeper and more destructive non-religious factors that fuel and sustain the conflicts.

3 Fluidity of Religious Identities in Conflicts

The tendency to read religion into geo-ethnic conflicts when that is not the case, runs against the reality that the exogenous religions, Christianity and Islam, introduced by trade and missionary enterprises never seeped deep enough into the psyche and cultural set up of ethnic groups in Africa to make them fight in defence of the exogenous faiths. This is because in many parts of the continent, "The Africans often had a rather flexible approach to Christianity" (Rothermund 2006, 127) and Islam because "[...] Islam like Christianity could not replace traditional African religion" (Brukum 1997, 14). So pervasive is the lack of depth in the roots of these exogenous faiths in the traditions across Africa that "[...]some anthropologists question whether imported religions – Christianity and Islam – have really affected African ancestral beliefs or given Africans different ways of understanding the contemporary societies in which they live (Etounga-Manguelle 2000, 67).

This notwithstanding, the propensity to see the religious configuration of Africa only in the Christian-Muslim paradigm leads to a dualistic categorization of its participants in conflicts – fighters and victims alike – as belonging to one or the other religious categories; they can only be Muslims, Christians, occasionally Hindus, Buddhist, or Animists, but not hybrid believers. Once placed in this religious straitjacket, they cannot be one and the other at the same time; they must be either one or the other. In this dualistic worldview, religion and culture are viewed as asynchronous or even mutually immiscible realities in which a person has to shed one identity in order to embrace the other. This goes contrary to the experiences of those whose peace donor-sponsored interventions seek to salvage and protect, as their religious reality is different. As a respondent in a recent evaluation fieldwork in CAR explained in respect of religious belongingness and participation in peacebuilding efforts:

> The only religious leaders who did not participate are the animists, but that can be explained – the animists are not many. The fact is that they are mixed into or subsumed among the Christians and Muslims. The problem is that people are socially compelled to belong to either Christianity or Islam because of burial rites when they die. However, belonging to either of these is actually a practice of mixed beliefs, as people comingle their acquired and declared faiths with their ancestral ones (Pul 2017, 32).

In such contexts, membership of a religious category does not stem from what you believe in; it is what you were born into. In practice, religious identity is fluid, as membership of multiple religious categories or cyclical migration across religious lines is often a norm, not an exception. This is because religion, in

much of Africa is a functional tool and the practice of poly-route monotheism (Pul 2016) is the order, not the exception. In other words, although one may believe in the existence of one God in accordance with a professed creed, one also holds that there are many routes to the same God. Hence, when a practicing fetish priest walks into a Catholic Church in Ghana and takes the microphone to ask "[...] worshippers to join him in thanking God for his mercies towards him" (The Chronicle Newspaper 2013, 1) few are surprised or scandalized, since the practice of being "Christian during the day and voodoo at night" (Fihlani 2017, 2), as is the case in Benin, is not uncommon a practice. Similarly, in Liberia being a Christian or a Muslim and participation in the rituals and ceremonies of the indigenous religious-cultural Poro and Sande Secret societies are not deemed incompatible. In the same way, it is not seen as apostasy for Christians or Muslims to seal a peace agreement with the performance of traditional religious rituals, as in the burying of the okro stick for some ethnic groups in northern Ghana, which entails ritual sacrificing of animals or the chewing of the cola to bond and bind the parties (Issifu 2017; Mohammed 2014). In one such instance, the Christian church that sponsored the peace process saw no wrong in providing financial support to the performance of the rituals because it is the only way to make the commitment to peace hold. In the same way, when Christian and Muslim fighters go to battle strapped with amulets and other forms of spiritual protection against bullets, they received from the fetish priests, it is not a denial of the God they worship on Sundays or Fridays. It is a seamless continuation of what they believe and practice.

In such fluid religious environments, a dyadic categorization of people as members of one religion or the other is not only misleading, such categorical assignment of issues and actors may not reflect the realities of those whose peace we seek to secure or evaluate. Indeed, nailing down the religious identities of individuals or groups can be all but simple. Even names often belie the religious identities of actors in conflicts and peacebuilding. In CAR, people frequently have Muslim names, but are Christians, and vice versa. For instance *Michel* Djotodjia, whom the Seleka propelled into power as interim President in 2013, *Sylvain* Bordas and *Sylvain* Adamu Ndale, both Seleka rebel commanders, are all Muslims bearing Christian names while *Mamadou* Nalie is a Christian with a Muslim name (Pul 2017). In field interviews, respondents never missed a chance to point out that among the Selekas, there were Christians, and among the Anti-Balakas, there were Muslims as well. No census of membership of either group exists to establish the proportionality of cross-religious membership of the armed groups. Nonetheless, the evidence from fieldwork, however small, cautions against the categorical characterization of conflicts as religious only by rea-

son of the perceived dominance of one religious group over the other in the composition of the groups at war.

4 Ensuring Relevance and Validity

Indiscriminate acceptance of religious labels of conflicts sets the traps for failing the validity test in the evaluation design, providing yet another example of how evaluations often fail "to create opportunities to see the conflict through the eyes of that community and [to identify] the community's own resources for addressing or transforming conflict, as well as for healing trauma and reconstituting relationship" (Ashworth 2014, 239). For instance, the labelling of the CAR conflict did not only "misrepresent what began as ethnic and political violence" (Wood 2014, 2); it misdirected peacebuilding agencies to focus on a conflict that did not exist, in the eyes of the victims of the violence. The result is that the theories of change and intervention strategies that were elaborated based on these assumptions became irrelevant to the intervention needs of the communities that were targeted. It took the midterm evaluation of Mercy Corps' two-year USAID sponsored ASPIRE project to realize the target population did not accept the religious labelling of their conflict. The implementing partner had to change course to focus its interventions "on economic development through the micro project and to use joint Christian-Muslim groups for the enterprises [because] "[...]. the conflict is no longer seen as a Muslim-Christian conflict (Pul 2017). In sum, the design and evaluation of peacebuilding interventions have a task to go past the simplistic religious labels foisted on conflicts. Beyond isolating how religion is a cause of conflict, evaluators must also confront the challenges of deconstructing religion as a solution for peace.

5 Nature and Role of Religion in Peacebuilding

The challenge lies in isolating what constitutes a religious action for peace versus actions derived from cultural, secular, or other values and belief systems that are not necessarily derived from an institutionalized religious creed. In the current literature, the role of religion as represented by systems of beliefs, symbols, and values, is seen in multiple dualistic terms. It is either a factor of conflict or an instrument in peacebuilding; religious actors are either promoters or inhibitors of peace; they cannot be one and the same. This dualistic way of viewing actors ignores the reality that to put groups in conflict situations in identity silos amounts to denying the reality that is their lived experiences. In seeing re-

ligious actors in conflict and peacebuilding as neither nor, donors, implementers, and evaluators fail to see the duality and fluidity of the roles that religious actors play in conflicts or in peacebuilding.

Additionally, most western theories of the causes and resolution of conflicts take individualized, adversarial, and competitive perspectives (Abu-Nimer 1996; 2003; Avruch 1998). They emphasize the rights of the individual over the interests of the community; retribution over restoration; justice over mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. Accordingly, they stand diametrically opposed to the collectivized and collaborative approaches to resolving conflicts in other non-western societies where individual interests may even be submerged in the interest of the collective good.

Western conflict resolution systems through arbitration, the courts, mediation, and negotiation emphasize establishing who is right versus who is wrong; retribution over restoration; and punishment of the wrongdoer and reparation to the victims over forgiveness. On the contrary, an important "[...] distinguishing African characteristic [of conflict resolution] is the positive-sum integrative thrust of the practices [with a very strong] emphasis on recuperation and reinsertion of the errant member back into its place in society [to promote] restoration of the harmony and integrity of the community" (Zartman 2000, 220). Even in cases of arbitration or adjudication, the chiefs or council of elders that preside over the processes and have the power "[...] to make binding judgments [for the feuding parties always aim to] "[...] reintegrate the offender in the community and its norms" (Zartman 2000, 222). In this emphasis on restoration rather than retribution, members of the larger society take responsibility for any commissions or omissions that may have contributed to the "defection" (Zartman 2000, 221) or errant behaviour of the member or group. This is because in these cultures, conflicts are not about individuals or groups; it is a collectivized experience that radiates from the individual protagonists to the family, clan, lineage, and to out-groups with which the parties may have affinal or conjugal relationships (Wilson-Fall 2000). In such societies, socio-political and economic organizations, culture, and religion are intertwined so much so that "The sacred and spiritual [are] an indistinguishable part of a total way of life of social, political, economic, and moral dimensions" (Dubois 2008, 1). Accordingly, in peacebuilding, these "indigenous legal traditions, [which emphasize] mechanisms for acknowledgement [of wrongs], truth telling, accountability, healing and reparations, continue to assume a prominent role in the lives of African societies and individuals" (Mekonnen 2010, 101)

Time is another important factor in religious peacebuilding. In cultures where "it is often the traditional perspective that is used as a model to resolve conflicts" (Wilson-Fall 2000, 50), such conflict resolution processes are founded

on "a concern for long-term rather than short-term solutions" (Wilson-Fall 2000, 49). This is why "...peacebuilding faces the task of linking the long past with the emerging present [since peacebuilding] must simultaneously be long-term slow and short term intensive" (Lederach 1997, 131). Unfortunately, most projectized peacebuilding interventions have limited time and budgets for achieving peace that resonates with what the target population counts as peace. Because of their short-term, fast paced nature, external interventions may actually destabilize internal and indigenous conflict resolution processes, allowing some or all the parties to externalize their responsibilities for building peace. Rather than working at it,as they look to "external actors to change the balance of power, thereby undermining the mutual interests involved" (Deng 2000, 124) in the search for authentic and durable solutions.

The interference of external actors usually sidestep the existence of cultural and religious common ground that could have served as the nursery bed for homegrown solutions to the conflicts. In the example of the protracted conflict in the Dagbon Chieftancy disputes (Yendi Peace Center 2011; Agyekum 2002)and the Sudan conflicts (Bereketeab 2015),, religion which was a binder within and between the feuding groups had no place in the externalized mediatory efforts. More than 90% of the people of Dagbon are Muslims. Many in community-level peacebuilding workshops highlighted the need for intra-Dagbon dialogue leading to forgiveness and reconciliation, devoid of external interferences because "a dialogue between the two gates is the only way out to the Dagbon crisis" (NCCE ND, 4). They argued that "the government should be using the Dagbon traditional methods of conflict resolution to tackle the dispute" (Conteh 2015, 1) instead of relying on external agents such as the Otumfuo Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the Dagbon crisis. This is because [...] for healing and reconciliation to occur, those who played any role in the death of the Ya-Naa and other people should be identified and that their acceptance of responsibility be used as the base for building reconciliation [because that is what will] enable us get to the truth of what happened so that we can put the past behind us. (Boi-Nai et al. 2011, 1).

Similarly, Christianity was a binder and rallying force for the South Sudanese during the wars of independence with the north. Religious leaders and institutions that played pivotal roles in maintaining the semblance of a unified front of South Sudanese during the war were side-linedafter the attainment of independence (Onger and Wilson 2014). They continued to cry out for peace but were largely ignored in the game plans of the local war leaders and their international supporters and mediators. As in the case of Dagbon, the shared beliefs and values of religion have failed to create the common ground for dialogue, reconciliation, and peace. In sum, religious identities are not fixed, neither are the

values and the roles that individuals with a religious cloak may play in any given conflict context. Hence a snapshot approach to evaluating religious peacebuilding may miss the ever-changing nature and roles of issues and actors clothed with religion in such conflict or peacebuilding processes.

6 Agreeing on What to Measure

Another challenge that interreligious peacebuilding evaluation has to deal with is reconciling the meanings of peace. Appleby (2000) notes that the world's religions do not have "a universal set of values or priorities in pursuing peace [instead] religious traditions hold different worldviews and emphasize different peace-related values" (141). The lack of consensus on how to pursue peace initiatives poses challenges for establishing commonly accepted and objectively verifiable measures for evaluating peacebuilding in general, and interreligious peacebuilding in particular (Anderson and Olson 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004). Hence, even when communities and donors agree that there is a religious dimension to a conflict and its resolution, agreeing on what change to look for and how to measure it remains a challenge for evaluation purposes. A number of reasons account for this.

6.1 Differing Meanings of Peace

Peace is experiential and therefore subjective in its definition since what is considered peace is relative to one's experience, not an observation of what has gone before, is taking place now, or is anticipated for the future. It is not some objectively verifiable phenomenon because those looking at a conflict situation from the outside have only snippets of the view of what has gone on before; they have not lived it. As a respondent in a research interview in Liberia put it, "Looking at it from the outside and saying Liberia is peaceful is just not enough. It is what people are feeling inside; what their perspective is; what their problem is" (Pul 2016, 17). This personal and subjective definition of peace means peace does not only have different meanings that are contextualized; the experiential view of peace makes evaluating it more difficult, especially from a religious peacebuilding perspective, where its definition is rooted in the lived religious experiences, values, and beliefs of those who participated in or survived the periods of violence. Peace is what they live with, not what another can tell them they have; it comes from within, not without; it emanates from the experience of interior peace first before radiating outward to the neighbour, the

group, the community, the society. It is the product of the experiences of reconciliation, forgiveness, penance, etc. In this, personal beliefs, values, and motivations are more the primary determinants of the experience and definition of peace. Hence, from a religious peacebuilding perspective, the beliefs, values, and doctrines of actors add other layers of how peace is defined, as their views, voices, needs, and interests define its colour, tones, and contours.

For those affected by violence, regaining a sense of peace is a process, not the products of events or short-run projects. On the contrary, evaluations are snapshots, not movies. They capture an assessment of the situation at a given point in time and with a given methodology. They do not provide the panoramic view that captures fully the historical and ever evolving nature of the conflict and the associated peacebuilding efforts; neither do they capture in full the experiences of those who have lived through the conflict. Unlike other social sector interventions that have relatively stable operating environments, the contexts of peacebuilding can swing rapidly, widely, and in unexpected ways. For people who have lived with these swings of the war environment for a long time, any slight movement towards the state of life before the conflict is read as a return towards peace, even if the external assessors disagree with them. This is because those who have lived through violence have the view of the movie – movies in which they are active participants, not distant spectators – while the outsiders hold onto the snapshot perspective. A religious leader in the DRC captured this perspective succinctly when he described the conflict situation in the country in October 2010 as follows: "If you look at the situation from the perspective of a snapshot, you would say there is no progress. However, if you view it from the perspective of a film, you will definitely see that there has been some progress towards peace" (Pul et al.2010, 29).

This perception of peace in relative terms requires that peacebuilding evaluation capture the various images, moods, and voices of the movie in a snapshot without losing sight of the past scenes and the unknown ones of the future. Unlike the elements of secular peacebuilding that have clearly defined objectives, activities, timeframes, and concrete deliverables, those of religious peacebuilding have indeterminate objectives, activities, timelines, or set deliverables. Achieving forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation do not happen at the sound of a gavel; they are individualized processes that go with the pace, moods, and experiences of those involved. The initiation of the process may be as important, if not more important than the results; and the fact that victims and offenders agree to talk may be more important than the outcomes of the talks – outcomes that may never materialized.

6.2 Differing Measures of relevance

The challenge to religious peacebuilding is the level of outcome tracking and measurement. Evaluating peacebuilding in general is difficult enough because of the challenges of developing "[...] concrete, tangible, and easily measurable [...]" indicators. Hence, secular peacebuilders often settle for "more abstract [...] approximators of the intangible changes" (USAID 2010, 7) rather than objectively measurable indicators, in order to fulfil their obligations to demonstrate results that account for the resources received from donors. On the contrary, the preoccupation of religious peacebuilders is often not about seeing approximations of objectively verifiable evidence of change or the attribution of any change to what they have done. They act out of "[...] a response of necessity and a multiplicity of potential activities" (Lederach 2010, 31) in which their objective is to take care of the wounded and displaced, console the hurting, reconcile the estranged, rebuild relationships, and make peace happen. The aim is not the achievement of some tangible, time-bound results; it is an effort to give those most affected the possibility to "[...] feel as though they are persons again" (Lederach 2010, 41). Religious actors, in such instances, are on "[...] a journey to restore basic humanity [that] is needed and ordained by God" (Lederach 2010, 44).

In this journey religious peacebuilders do not see themselves as the ultimate agents of peace or their efforts as time-bound interventions to deliver peace. They see peacebuilding as an investment for eternity and a lifetime commitment. Motivation is intrinsic, not extrinsic. Whereas secular peacebuilders are likely to abandon the course once donor-funding dries up, religious peacebuilders will engage in peacebuilding work in the way they know best and with whatever resources they have. They may do less with fewer resources in less effective and efficient ways, but they will do what they have to do all the same, with or without external support. In that conception of duty, time is not finite, and the focus is on rebuilding relationships – with neighbours and the higher creator; not in signing peace agreements or achieving some tangible results. They do not see themselves as the source of any change and so may not actively look out for, much less design their interventions to lead to specific observable changes. As such, they do what they do and can and leave the rest to God.

This is because the process of healing, repentance, and "forgiveness is something that comes from God" (Starken & Caritas Internationalis 1999, NP). As such, the conflict actors and the facilitators of peacebuilding are both instruments, not actors *suis generis*, in the processes that lead up to forgiveness and reconciliation. They understand that "We do not forgive because we have to, or should, or have no other choice. We forgive because we have been able to come to see the world, even in its brokenness, from the perspective of God"

(Starken & Caritas Internationalis 1999, NP). This is because in a God-led process, "all reconciliation comes from God [...]" (Caritas Internationalis 2002, 15) and the steps towards its achievement put reconciliation before repentance and forgiveness, instead of the "repentance (followed by) forgiveness (followed by) reconciliation" (Starken & Caritas Internationalis 1999, NP).

To be sure, religious peacebuilders would also love to see the return of visible peace in the course of their work, but t achievement of this is not the reason why they labour. Indeed, they will most likely not attribute whatever achievement there is to their work; it is seen as the work of God – work whose design, execution, and results go beyond their human capacities. This self-effacing predisposition poses challenges to conventional measures of attribution or contribution of project investments in evaluations. Since religious peacebuilders may not have set out specific performance and outcome indicators for their work, any assessment of the contribution of their work to peace will have to come through outcome mapping processes rather than direct measures of progress and achievement. Evaluators must glean the contributions that religious peacebuilders make to a conflict situation from their stories of what they did, how, and why, rather than from indicator tables and carefully documented results.

6.3 Accountability: Whose Accountability and to Whom?

The transcendental view of religious peacebuilding evaluation adds a challenge of determining the stakeholders and criteria for accountability. The grounding question is whose accountability is the evaluation seeking and to whom is accountability due? Accountability goes with ownership, or stewardship of the ideas, processes, and resources destined for the implementation of the interventions. Only those who hold positions and resources in trust for others have a duty to account for their stewardship. Those in whose name the resources are acquired and managed are seldom responsible for or recipients of accountability. Hence, in peacebuilding evaluations, those most affected by the lack of peace are seldom involved in accountability reporting except when providing information to questions they are asked. Beyond that, "it is not yet common for peacebuilding agencies even to share the results of an evaluation with those who they seek to aid" (Scharbatke-Church 2011, 465).

The reality, in most cases, is that this category of participants is not only seen as a source of extractive information at the evaluation stage; they are also largely viewed as end-users in the entire project conceptualization and implementation processes. This is because donors and implementers of peacebuilding interventions narrowly define the criteria and direction of accountability to

ensure an upward flow only of responsibilities of accountability; a flow from project implementers to donors (Campbell 2018). Seldom are those most affected by the conflict viewed as persons to whom accountability is due, even though both donor agencies and their implementing partners used their conditions and names to secure and use the project resources.

The neglect to include end-users in the ownership of project interventions and definition of accountability responsibilities from them and due them triggers another level of challenge for determining accountability for inter-religious peacebuilding. Unlike with secular organizations, the involvement of peacebuilding individuals and institutions clothed with religious tag is often derived from their perception of a vocation rather than a project as the motivation for engagement. In other words, they don't engage because resources have been made available for engagement; they do so because they see a need, and they jump into it, often with limited resources and expertise; but they do it, nonetheless. Such religious peacebuilders have different levels of accountability than donors and intervention implementers. For them, accountability is to a higher other than project financiers. In their view, time is not a boundary setter for accountability and money is but a catalyst, not the *raison d'être* of their engagement in peacebuilding. They will do whatever they can for peace because it is their calling, not because it is a project with objectives that they have to achieve. The scale on which they do it may be smaller; the speed slower, the range of activities much more restrained and non-technical but they will do what they feel called to do. For some in this category, they are accountable to none but the ultimate master they serve. And since God has no measure for his achievements in time and money, they see no need to provide any measures for their success either. They don't gauge their contribution to peace because theirs is but an insignificant drop in the infinite plan of the creator. They tend to deprecate their roles and contributions and so have no measures for them. For them, accountability does not equate to the countable or verifiable; it is good enough to have done what they did.

In Sudan church leaders played very active and central roles in the search for peace during the wars of independence from 1983–2005, in the run up to the elections in 2010, and in the referendum in 2011 that granted the south its independence. They have continued to be active in the search for peace, since the outbreak of the civil war in December 2013 between politico-ethnic groups in what is now South Sudan. Despite their influential role, "Church leaders [have not] consider[ed] themselves "peace-builders". They considered themselves pastors and shepherds, whose first obligation was to reflect Christ's fidelity to the Church through their own fidelity to the people" (Ashworth 2014, 241). As heads of churches in South Sudan have noted, they are engaged in the search

for peace because "As Shepherds, we experience the suffering of our people, their pain is our pain, and it propels us to work towards peace" (SSCC 2017, 1). The leadership of the Episcopal Conference in South Sudan would add that they feel compelled to go "between the warring parties and [...] stand in the gap" of dialogue because they "have a spiritual, ethical and moral responsibility to help our nation out of this endless political crisis" (ECSS 2017, 3). In parallel, religious leaders engage in the public sphere even though "We are not politicians and we do not want to give detailed political recommendations. Nevertheless, we dare to speak to political leaders as Jesus instructed us" (SSCC 2017, 3). In other words, their primary obligations are to the people, and they are accountable to God, not to donors for their actions or inactions in the face of conflicts.

To the extent that project interventions and resources help them expand their reach, increase their speed of intervention along that path to accountability, and/or enhance their effectiveness in service delivery to their target populations, they are receptive and thankful. Beyond that, they would not see donor funding and associated project interventions as the only means to that end. They would continue do what they believe is a duty to do and in the best way they can even if with little resources, less impact, and less visibility; it is a vocation, not a job. A respondent in a field study in CAR echoed this with the view that "The Inter-Religious Platform takes the lead in organizing intercommunity dialogues because their leadership has a deeper and permanent connection with the people. These religious leaders are largely members of the community and will remain and work here long after the project funding ceases to exist" (Pul 2017, 26). Their engagement is timeless because religion "is an institution that never disappears. It is an institution that will be there forever. People will continue to be believers; therefore, they will be a sustainable source of peacebuilding" (Pul 2017, 35). They seek little rewards because "religious peacebuilders are not discouraged by their modest achievements, but instead see their role as responsible to God to do what they can, rather than to be successful in material terms." (Funk Deckard 2012, 14). In short, they count nothing to be accountable; they just do what they have to do. For them, accountability does not equate to countable; it is about doing your best and leaving the rest to God.

7 Conclusion

Evaluations seek to isolate changes that project investments make to a problem situation. Donor demands for verifiable changes lead implementing partners to emphasize categorical diagnoses of the problems to produce metrics that are measurable. In peacebuilding, the need for quick frameworks of analysis leads

to the mislabelling and distortions of the conflict narratives, especially when religious tags are used. This masks the real issues and interests of the conflict leaders and deflects the objectives of peacebuilding interventions and evaluations to focus on issues that do not reflect the lived experiences of the people whose peace the interventions seek to secure. The misdiagnosis of conflicts is exacerbated when religious identities from historical accidents are used to pigeonhole the parties in conflict, without regards to their non-fixated and instrumentalist approach to how they view and practice religion. It masks the reality that religious identity itself is very fluid in many contexts, allowing for spiritual and ritual migrations across faith lines in the search for healing, reconciliation, and peace.

In such contexts, the views of donors and implementers on what to measure as indicators of peace is often fields apart from that of beneficiary communities. Hence, what counts as peace for the insiders may be discounted in the metrics of the outsider and vice versa. Additionally, the use of individualized and dyadic frames for viewing the conflicts and the parties involved blurs the reality that in non-western societies conflicts are seldom individual affairs or simply secular versus religious. The secular and the sacred are always intertwined and in ways that link the dead, the living, and the unborn of the feuding communities. Hence, the search for peace is neither secular nor sacred; it is both, and resolutions that do not pacify the dead and account for the unborn will not hold. For local religious peacebuilders who understand this, time is not of the essence in their efforts for peace. Accordingly, while access to donor resources is welcome help, it does not set the targets, pace, or accountability standards for them. They do not work to the dictates of donor timeframes and accountability is to a higher order. For the conflict-affected, true measurement of their peace requires more community-centred and open-ended methodologies that minimize cases where participants give responses that please donors, implementers, and evaluators while suppressing the simmering pains of conflicts in their hearts.

Evaluators of religious peacebuilding must be wary of reliance on conventional approaches to evaluating religious peacebuilding that focus on using verifiable metrics or their approximations to track and report change. They must approach the task with open minds, recognizing that those who have lived through conflict know best what to call peace. In other words, those who commission evaluations and those who carry them out must be aware of their own cultural frames of peace and how such frames may cloud their judgement of what constitutes peace or its absence, when protected onto contexts dissimilar from theirs. They must learn to bracket their own expectations and definitions of peace. To arrive at this, theories of change of religious peacebuilding interventions in particular must be derived from the expectations of peace as defined

by those who have lived with and experienced the evolution or movie view of the conflict and witnessed to the role of religion in its triggering, sustenance, or resolution. This calls for theories of change to be grounded in the expectations and measures of peace that the affected populations define, instead of some generic, abstracted metrics. The use of grounded theory approaches, which are akin to outcome harvesting methods of evaluations, in which those who commission or carry out the evaluation do not begin with a theory of change and try to prove its validity or otherwise, is recommended. This is because evaluating religious peacebuilding will be better served if evaluators begin with an exploratory approach and allow the theory of change and associated indicators to emerge from the data so mined. A good baseline study done using this approach can provide a participants' list of grounded indicators that better measure what changes in their contexts are meaningful measures of peace. It is the only way to tease out from the participants, what role religion has played in their definitions of what is peace and their engagements towards achieving and sustaining it.

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Khaled Ehsan

Exploring Power Dynamics of Religious Leaders

The Need for Objectivity

> "The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics" – Bertrand Russell (1938, 10)

1 Introduction

While power is the result of action, it is also, in turn, a condition for the possibility of action. Action not only has the most intimate relationship to the public part of the world common to us all but is the one activity which constitutes it. Acting together in concert is constitutive of the public, political realm in which action itself takes place. Insofar as one's identity as an actor is only fully realized in and through action in the public, political realm, and the public political realm is constituted by power, it makes sense to see power as a condition for the possibility of (the full achievement of) agency. It is, therefore, important to recognize that power dynamics set the tone at almost every level of human interaction. They influence individual actions, shape an organization's approach to engaging its members, and even guide the ways in which a government treats its citizens, responds to dissent, and enforces reforms. We all internalize and externalize power relationships in unique ways; yet our individual differences are often perceived through shared assumptions about power passed down to us by the histories of our own societies and individual experiences.

Foucault wrote that power "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" (Foucault 1980, 30). The importance of power, according to him, was its substantive effects on individual and collective behaviour or practices in general. Thus, although power emerges out of individuals acting together, it also makes possible such collective action by providing the space within which such actions can be carried out. And, insofar as power is constitutive of public space, it also serves as a precondition for agency, since one's identity as a religious actor, for instance, can only be fully achieved through action in public.

When evaluators use value claims based on religious symbols or texts as part of criteria for assessing the role of religious leaders in peacebuilding,

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they have to make certain assumptions.[1] This inevitably involves – to a considerable degree – subjective judgements by the evaluators. Although the potential value-ladenness of such criteria has been extensively problematized in evaluation literature, it has not so far led to a systematic strategy for analysing this value-ladenness with reference to the underlying role of power. In a similar vein, one could try to fully apply – even if that were possible in a particular conflict situation – some of the 'suggested' and hard to apply OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria (OECD ND)as an alternative to the five standard criteria (i.e. Linkages, Coverage, Consistency with peacebuilding values, and Coherence). While these might prove useful at some level in helping to analyse the conflict and peace environment and specifying the peacebuilding 'needs', they do not allow us to readily appreciate either the power differentials within the peacebuilding regime, or the power differentials among religious leaders.[2] I try here to explore this issue – how to effectively link objective evaluation measures to the relevance of power dynamics among religious leaders using social anthropological and sociological frameworks, where the concept of 'self' or 'self-identity' as well as notions of the 'other' are part of social construction that form the basis for shared assumptions about reality whereby people rationalise their experience by creating models of the society they belong to and share and reify these models primarily through language and other symbols.[3] I argue that for religious leaders to be agents of social and political change towards peace and coexistence, a reconceptualization of power and power dynamics and a critical discussion about the consequences and limitations of instrumentalist approaches in evaluative work are needed. Based on the foregoing analysis I offer some suggestions on how to incorporate a conceptualization of power and power dynamics in evaluation and how it may be used to help inform programme design or further studies.

2 How Values, Principles and Assumptions Shape Objectivity

Before embarking on the power dynamics among religious leaders, there is a need to clarify what we actually mean by values, principles and assumptions in so far as they relate to objectivity in general and evaluation criteria in partic-

1 See, for instance, the concepts of "Merit" and "Worth" in Steele and Wilson-Grau (2016).
2 For example see Ofir (2017)
3 For example see Berger and Luckmann (1966).

ular – especially what is sometimes referred to as 'consequentialist' OECD DAC evaluation criteria – or mainstream evaluation practice. This is relevant because the terms values, principles, and assumptions are sometimes used as if they all mean the same thing – the underlying truths on which we base our dealings with the world. In fact, although they are all "truths" to some extent, they are different in meaning and substance. Understanding the difference can help us sort out when we're operating on facts or well-examined experience (objective criteria), when we're applying moral or ethical rules or judgments and/or symbolic values (mainly subjective or supernatural criteria), and when we're responding to emotion or bias or unexamined "knowledge" that may or may not be accurate.

Values are our guidelines for living and behaviour. Each of us has a set of deeply held beliefs about how the world is or should be. For some people, that set of beliefs is largely dictated by a religion, a culture, a peer group, or the society at large. For others, it has been arrived at through careful thought and reflection on experience and is unique. For most of us, it is probably a combination of the two. Values often concern the core issues of our lives: personal relationships, morality, gender and social roles, race, social class, status and the organization of society, to name just a few.

Principles, on the other hand, are the fundamental scientific, logical, or moral/ethical "truths," arising from experience, knowledge, and (often) values, on which we base our actions and thinking. They are the underpinning of our understanding of the truths that shape both our reasons for taking action on something, and the action itself. Scientific and logical principles are derived from experience and experiment, from knowledge (which itself comes from experience and experiment on the part of someone else), from logical analysis, and/or from theory.[4]

Moral and ethical principles are where values come in. These principles grow out of deeply held beliefs and values and are often the principles upon which peacebuilding and/or humanitarian work is founded. Devotion to democratic process, to equity and fair distribution of resources, to a reasonable quality of life for everyone, to the sacredness of life, to the obligation of people to help one another – may be in adherence to injunctions or commandments from a "Higher Being" or Deity; for many such injunctions come from religious ideas and precepts, while for others, for instance, atheists, they are simply part and parcel of humanism. Yet, all these ideas do not necessarily come from logic or scientific experiment, but from a value system that puts a premium on things that range from notions of human dignity and relationships to transcendent re-

4 See Webster Dictionary (2020).

ligious knowledge, laws and principles. At the same time, people may hold the same principles, but interpret them through different value systems. Two individuals may both believe, for instance, that all humans are created equal. For one, this may mean that she has a duty to treat everyone as an equal, and to try to gain equity for all. For the other, it may mean that since everyone starts out equal, anyone who doesn't achieve or do well is at fault for his or her failure, and therefore deserves no help or respect.

To be sure, even scientific principles are, to some extent, based on values (Kuhn 1962). The use of the scientific method, the adherence to empirical evidence (i. e. evidence actually observed or experienced), the willingness to believe the evidence even when it conflicts with religious or cultural assumptions – these are all characteristics of a value system that puts a high priority on logical and scientific thinking and on the pursuit of a kind of knowledge in the real observable world. However, many people around the world subscribe to different values, which place much more importance on religious or cultural traditions and see the work of science as of a lesser order when it conflicts with those traditions. Thus, for instance, there are a number of practicing Christians and Muslims worldwide that do not necessarily believe in evolution theory.

This brings me to the notion of assumptions, which are the next level of truths, the ones we feel we can take for granted, given the principles we have accepted. If we accept, for instance, that life is an "inalienable right" – a right of every human being that cannot be taken away – then we will usually assume that killing another person is wrong, or at least that we don't have the right to do it. Assumptions are often unexamined. They are the facts or beliefs that we don't question, because we "know" they're accurate, even though they may not be. It is nevertheless true that we all bring assumptions to what we do, and the context of interreligious peacebuilding work is no exception. We hope our assumptions are based on carefully thought-out principles and try to re-evaluate them from time to time to make sure we are not operating on false premises.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary 'assumption' is something that you accept as true without question or proof. For instance "People tend to make assumptions about you when you have a disability" or "These calculations are based on the assumption that prices will continue to rise".[5] Assumptions are sometimes made by evaluators when they have different spatial, temporal or system scales that need to be bridged somehow. Assumptions can be made explicitly or implicitly. Often, an assumption explicitly made by the evaluator, automatically implies additional, implicit assumptions. There are at least three

5 See Cambridge Dictionary (2021).

reasons why we need to deal more explicitly with assumptions: first, assumptions can lead to biased evaluations (value-ladenness mentioned earlier), secondly, assumptions can limit the quality of results in evaluations, and thirdly, dealing more explicitly with assumptions can improve certain uncertainty assessment practices in evaluation. Since assumptions by definition cannot be objectively determined (since something is assumed), there always is an element of subjectiveness in assumptions. Two analysts assessing the same issue will not necessarily make the exact same assumptions in the calculation chain. Consequently, an evaluation is not made up of objective, value-free scientific facts alone. For this reason, virtually all evaluations of social groups and institutions can be considered to be value-laden to a certain degree and, as such, they seldom reflect an exact science.

Numerous studies from the history and sociology of science have problematized the classic distinction between facts and values since Kuhn's influential work highlighted above. Scientific facts and knowledge claims, especially when produced at the science-policy interface, have been shown to be at least partially socially constructed and co-shaped by implicit or explicit negotiation processes. Observation has been shown to be theory-laden and cognitive authority of science is ultimately produced by boundary work and negotiation at different levels. Attention is paid to the assumptions that are made and to the communication with regard to these assumptions. Thus, although the value-ladenness of assumptions has been extensively problematized in evaluation literature, this has not so far led to a systematic strategy for dealing with this problem. The central question here is how assumptions in peacebuilding interventions of the implicit influence – power – of religious leaders and their actions can be systematically identified, measured, and prioritized, in order to assess the potential value-ladenness of important assumptions and to deal with these potentially value-laden assumptions in an explicit and transparent manner.[6]

For this purpose, we need to zoom in on the value-ladenness of assumptions, starting from the viewpoint of the evaluator carrying out the evaluation. In many instances it has been shown that choices made by an evaluator are affected by a range of factors. The choices are influenced by knowledge, perspectives and situational factors. Arbitrariness can also play a role, in situations where the evaluator has no reason to prefer one particular assumption to another. Based on the nature of factors influencing the choice for a certain assump-

6 See, for example, Nkwake (2015). In this fascinating study we see many examples showing how assumptions can be coloured through the eyes of the evaluator and lead to a biased evaluation.

tion, one can distinguish four different types of value-ladenness of assumptions: value-ladenness in a general epistemic sense (e. g., assumptions are coloured by the approach that the evaluator prefers), in a disciplinary-bound epistemic sense (e. g., assumptions are coloured by the discipline in which the evaluator was educated), in a socio-political sense (e. g., assumptions may be coloured by political preferences of the evaluator), and in a practical sense (e. g., the evaluator is forced to make simplifying assumptions due to time or other mundane constraints). At first glance it may look strange that we include constraints having practical reasons in the typology of value-ladenness, but assumptions that are justified by a practical constraint can still lead to biased assessments as there is a potential to exploit references to such constraints to introduce assumptions that favour a politically desired outcome of an assessment. Also in case that there is no intentionality, practical constraints can introduce assumptions that lead to assessment results unduly favouring one position in a discourse over another.

A recent meta-review of 'Interreligious Peacebuilding Program Evaluation' undertaken by the Alliance for Peacebuilding critically looked at the design aspects of 'seven evaluations that assessed programs in six different countries, conducted by a total of 15 different organizations.' The main objective was to 'assess the "state of play" in evaluation of inter-religious action' so as to improve methodologies in peacebuilding evaluations and evidence-based policy and practice. While nearly half of the evaluations reviewed included questions or data sources specifically related to various inter-religious initiatives, these were not free from selection bias that distorted the findings of these evaluations:

> Only three evaluations used religious leaders as main data sources, although those leaders were also the direct beneficiaries of the programming. Unfortunately, the evaluations that did ask questions about changes in attitude or behaviour through inter-religious programming still suffer from many of the problems discussed in this report; data points were mostly self-reported through interviews and in two cases a survey, and little effort was put into triangulating that data with other methods. Future areas of interest in this area would be to explore theories of change in inter-religious programming. (Vader 2015)

In such cases in addition to a focus on theories of change in inter-religious programming, it is important to stress the need for extended peer review, in which stakeholders and citizens are involved in the review process of evaluation results where facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high, and decisions urgent. In summary, it can be concluded that transparency, diversification of assumptions, extended peer review, and insight into the influence of assumptions on the outcomes of the evaluation are seen as important elements in a strategy for dealing with value-laden assumptions. A relatively simple method for analy-

sing explicit and implicit assumptions in the calculation chain is to follow three basic steps in evaluation design: an analysis step, in which the assumptions are identified and analysed; a revision step, in which the evaluation is altered or extended based on the analysis results; and a communication step, in which it is determined what should be communicated with respect to the assumptions in the evaluation, based on the analysis. The relational aspects between values, principles and assumptions and their significance in evaluation and in defining sources of power dynamics and indicative measures are further elaborated in the subsequent sections.

3 Changing Role of Religious Leaders and Institutions

Taken collectively religious communities are the largest and most deeply imbedded institutions in the world, claiming the allegiance of billions of followers that often cuts across race, class and nationality. More than any other kind of representation, religious leaders often have the experience of establishing and leading such communities. Their expertise can greatly benefit the global peace efforts; they are often the most respected figures in their communities. For instance, Buddhist monks and nuns, imams, pastors, priests, pujaris, and leaders of different religious communities play a powerful role in shaping attitudes, opinions and behaviours because their followers trust them.

In most societies worldwide, community members and political leaders listen to religious leaders. Especially at the family and community level, religious leaders have the power to raise awareness and influence attitudes, behaviours and practices. In many ways, they are shaping social values in line with faith-based and religious teachings that are relevant to social cohesion and peacebuilding initiatives and practices. More importantly, religious leaders and institutions also have the power to advocate and support public policy on a number of issues that may be directly or indirectly related to social cohesion efforts to bring people together using interreligious dialogue, such as:

1. Mobilise youth and other groups towards peaceful coexistence.
2. Bring religious dialogue into different kinds of organizations to promote tolerance, diversity and pluralism.
3. Magnify the voices of the marginalised and/or poor when and where laws and policies are made.
4. Influence policymakers to put in place policies that protect marginalised groups.

5. Advocate to relevant government and other institutions not to support or create policies likely to contribute to divisiveness in society and/or discrimination of certain people.
6. Make it harder for certain religious leaders or institutions to promote extremism, intolerance and hate speech for political reasons.
7. Speak out for sustainable development as they are well placed to add their moral and spiritual leadership to local and global efforts.

These are just some emerging issues where they can make a significant difference. Efforts towards promoting dialogue on such issues imply that to be more impactful, they must be able also to participate in the formulation of public policies; get involved in relevant function in governmental administrations; work with non-governmental organizations; and represent their governments in international fora – all of which have significant capacity development implications to enhance their representation, leadership and influence in various areas of civic engagement. However, within this context, there is a need for a better integration of power variables and the role of religious leaders that for too long have been treated as opposing and contentious issues. I would argue that there is a difference between positive and negative uses of power by religious leaders and institutions and these are valid subject matters for any serious evaluation. The following perspectives illustrate this point quite clearly:

> Case 1:
> The crisis of leadership today in Nigeria provides a formidable challenge to political and other social scientists. Between 1999 and 2015 several elections have been held with many leaders elected and sworn into office; with interactions between religion and politics the ongoing subject of academic analysis...Political office holders often drew on religious ideas, practices and symbols as a tool of negotiation with the electorate during political campaigns. As a result, candidates were often selected based on their religious rhetoric and affiliations. Thus the debate about Muslim/Muslim or Muslim/Christian tickets emerged as a key issue in the elections. Religious leaders are often political actors in the elections. There were several media allegations that some religious leaders were complicit in compromising and corrupting the electoral process (Oguntola-Laguda 2015)

> Case 2:
> Multiple actors—from the Taliban leadership to local commanders—have played a key role in creating and shaping the movement's policy in Afghanistan. Taliban policymaking has been top-down as much as it has been bottom-up, with the leadership shaping the rules as much as fighters and commanders on the ground. The result is a patchwork of practices that leadership has increasingly sought to exert control over and make more consistent. This became possible as the Taliban put structures and mechanisms in place, particularly after 2014, to enforce compliance among its ranks. However, although the rules may be set at the top, local variance, negotiation, and adaptation is still considerable. Policymaking

has been driven by military and political necessity: the Taliban needed to control the civilian population and compel its support. Beyond this, a mix of ideology, local preferences, and the practical exigencies of waging an insurgency have guided policymaking and implementation (Jackson and Amiri 2019).

Case 3:
Fear, the pursuit of power, and an approach to public policy built on an unhealthy dose of nostalgia have plagued evangelical politics for a long time. Since the 1970s, the Christian Right has followed a well-known political playbook. Its members want to elect the right president of the United States who will appoint the right Supreme Court justices who will then overturn decisions that the Christian Right believes have undermined the republic's Christian foundations. In the past, this playbook was inseparable from the moral character of the candidate. In 2016, however, the Christian Right executed the playbook in support of a candidate known for his sexual escapades, nativism, deceit, xenophobia, racism, and misogyny. This is a new development. The playbook survived despite the candidate. This is a testimony to the playbook's power and the role that Christian Right leaders such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson played in reshaping American political culture (Fea, Gofford, Griffith and Martin 2018).

Case 4:
Dilemmas of a secular state: The use of religion for political purposes was almost non-existent at the time of independence. Since the '60s, Indian politics has seen drastic changes in style, language, modes of behaviour, reflecting the actual cultural understanding of rural Indian society rather than the Western ideals of the elite which inherited power in the Nehru years. There are two consequences of this amalgamation of religion, politics and public administration. First, it has given prominence in public life to religious leaders like "saints" and "mahants", "imams" and "priests". They have started playing an active role in governmental decision-making. The interference of religious leaders in administrative matters can prove dangerous to India's secular democracy (Singh 2019).

It is worth mentioning here that Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in India, now has Yogi Adityanath as its Chief Minister. His fiery brand of communal politics and promotion of the most virulent form of Hindutva reflects a new kind of alliance between Hindu religious leaders and the state under the BJP government.

Case 5:
The assessment of religion's importance in Myanmar's politics has now completely changed, as a violent and exclusionary religious nationalism appears to be on the rise across the country ... . The violence has also coincided with the rise of Buddhist nationalist networks and organizations, including the 969 Movement and the Organization for the Protection of Race and Religion (MaBaTha, in its Burmese acronym), both groups with prominent monastic leaders or spokesmen (Walton 2015, 507).

In general, religious leaders have been known to use political tactics that arise from the use of different power sources, which are framed in the change litera-

ture either as dirty tricks to be avoided or as astute strategies for advancing a change towards peace objectives. Despite the underlying discomfort of many with the use of manifest individual charismatic power in evaluating the role of religious leaders, it is necessary to recognize that there is sufficient empirical evidence to suggest that more often than not such leaders frequently draw on these power bases to sustain their image and role in society.

Kadayifci-Orellana identifies three distinct levels for interreligious dialogue, namely high, mid and grass-roots levels that have certain strengths and limitations. The high level includes religious figures like the Pope, a Chief Rabbi, Mufti or Monk. Despite their high-profile visibility and credibility, such figures are not easy to access by others and are unable to devote themselves to the time needed for sustaining effective dialogue. Mid-level dialogue leaders include clergy as well as religious scholars. While they do not have the visibility or reputation of high-level leadership, they usually have strong links with both high- and grass-roots levels, making them ideal candidates for interreligious dialogue. The grass-root level dialogue leaders include, among others, ordinary community level clergy who can play a transformative role at this level, which is considered significant for ensuring lasting peace (Kadayifci-Orellana 2013, 155 – 156). What is singularly important here is that the distribution of power may differ from one level to another, from one type of religious leader to another; nevertheless, power remains an important tool in achieving their individual goals and objectives. Leaders must recognize their power, must know how to use it effectively and how to precede its positive or negative effects. By learning how power operates in society and various institutions, they are better able to use that knowledge to become more effective leaders.[7]

4 Framing Individual and Collective Power Dynamics

While the role of power affecting institutional change in society has been recognized as being important for many decades now in mainstream Social and Cultural Anthropology (as well as other disciplines), the conceptual thinking about the relationship between power and religious leaders in peacebuilding and inter-

7 It is worth noting that age and gender play a key role in the leadership of interreligious dialogue; it still remains a largely masculine activity since the most typical role in this category of leaders tends to be a male in most parts of the world, with perhaps a few exceptions where women are beginning to assume such role.

religious dialogue has only started to evolve and has been enriched by different underlying theoretical assumptions.[8] To explore various different approaches to understanding power and change and the role of religious leaders, the analysis here has been structured around an approach that differentiates two different types of power, namely *individual charismatic* vs *collective structural* power. By conceptualizing these two fundamentally distinct but interrelated dimensions of power, various different aspects of institutional or transformational change can be appreciated. As highlighted in Table 1 below, they are not mutually exclusive, and most actions in society are based on a blend of these strategies whereby power is ultimately actualized through *force, influence or authority* (Gerth and Mills 1958, 249 – 250). The tension between individual charismatic and collective structural power is well articulated in social science literature and informs the earliest developments in theories of organizational power. Giddens describes it in the following way:

> One is that power is best conceptualized as the capability of an actor to achieve his or her will, even at the expense of others who might resist him-the sort of definition employed by Weber among many other authors. The second is that power should be seen as a property of the collectivity (1979, 69).

This tension rests on dualisms in social theory such as between volunteerism and determinism or between individual action and structure (e. g. Reed, 1988). Proponents of the individual agency perspective argue that individuals have free choice to pursue and use power wilfully towards some intended objective. This perspective deals with observable and intentionally used authority and legitimate power of agents. Personal power is required to make change happen in organization or society. This view is rooted in a social psychological research tradition that investigated power bases. The two perspectives and the change implications I review are not fully comprehensive, yet they offer an interesting outlook on how we assess the role of religious leaders in the interreligious dialogue field. Moreover, they do not exclude each other but can be used in combination in reviewing or evaluating institutional change processes in peacebuilding efforts. I am relying on the notion of polarity to help us analytically review certain differential aspects of power; rather than assert the dominance and legitimacy of one aspect of power, the notion of polarity suggests that opposites necessarily coexist.

8 See, for example, Haynes 2001, McDuie-Ra and Rees 2010, and Moksnes and Melin (eds,) 2013.

Table 1: Sources of Power Dynamics

Individual Charismatic Power vs. Collective Structural Power	
Individual Charismatic Power	**Collective Structural Power**
Basis of Power: Exceptional personal attributes, such as heroism, mysticism, revelations, or magic; charisma allows a person to lead or inspire without relying on set rules or traditions.	**Basis of Power:** **Economic Power** is based upon an objective relationship to productive resources, a group's condition in the labour market, and its chances; it refers to the measurement of the ability to control events by virtue of material advantage. **Social Power** is based upon informal societal or community opinion, family position, honour, prestige and patterns of consumption and lifestyles that may sometimes take precedence over economic interests. **Political Power** is based upon the relationships to the legal structure, party affiliation and extensive bureaucracy. Political power is institutionalized in the form of large-scale state systems and bureaucracies that are usually controlled by elites or select, privileged groups.
Both source of power underpinned by values, principles, assumptions, beliefs etc. actualised as power through force, influence and authority	

On the collective side of the debate are those who say that the social structure (e. g. roles, rules, and resources) determines, or at the very least constrains, the use of power. They argue that structurally determined power can explain behaviours in organizations and societies that were previously attributed to individual qualities. Others suggest that culture (e. g. values, principles, assumptions, beliefs etc.) constrains individual agency. From this perspective, power is a property of a social group and sources of power are shaped by the observable structures and taken-for-granted culture of the collectivity. An interpretative worldview and studies of culture by social anthropologists and sociologists, for instance, have led to an increased understanding that power also resides in the more latent or subtle and unobtrusive operation of language, symbols, myths, and a range of other meaning-making activities.

In this latter perspective the focus shifts towards the less observable and unconscious forms of power use. Central issues here from a practical view are the construction of perceptions, values, and norms through identification and management of meaning. At the level of deep structures of power, certain issues and conflicts are prevented from arising at all and the existing order of things is seen as natural and unchangeable. If power operates in an invisible or latent way, then questions of resistance and acquiescence are surfaced. Foucault (1977)

and other postmodern theorists have also echoed this, deepening our understanding of power and its invisibility in dominant discourses.

5 Individual Charismatic Power

This is one of the best understood and widely shared conceptions of power and is primarily informed by Weber's conceptual framework as well as the work of other scholars such as Dahl (1975). According to Weber charismatic power or leadership implies extraordinary characteristics of an individual, whose mission and vision inspire others and who might also be seen as possessing certain religious 'qualities' or 'power' that could be used to lead any social or political movement. However, charismatic leadership is considered relatively unstable as it is related to faith and belief; once these diminish, the authority and leadership also tend to dissolve. Thus, charismatic power or leadership depends on the extent to which a religious or political figure is able to maintain moral influence over his followers (Gerth and Mills 1958, 53). Basically, from this perspective we say power is a force: person A has more power than B to the extent that A can get B to do something they would not otherwise do.

Apart from social anthropologists and sociologists describing power bases of individuals in society, where power is viewed as the potential ability of an individual agent to influence a target within a certain system or context, social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven created a typology of power sources – all of which are both manifest and identifiable. They were concerned with two fundamental questions: i) how do people lead, guide, direct, influence or control other people? And ii) what methods do they use? In a study published in 1959 they proposed five bases, or sources, of social power that people use in leadership: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, referent power. A sixth, informational power, was later added by Raven. According to them "The phenomena of power and influence involve a dyadic relation between two agents which may be viewed from two points of view: (a) What determines the behaviour of the agent who exerts power? (b) What determines the reactions of the recipient of this behaviour?" (French and Raven 1959, 150). Their approach, which was primarily focused on how people run organizations or corporations, have proved to be equally relevant to individuals and institutions in society at large. Their idea of social influence and power is that "social influence and power is limited to influence on the person, P, produced by a social agent, O, where O can be either another person, a role, a norm, a group of a part of a group" (French and Raven 1959, 151).

Based on their famous analysis Table 2 below defines the power that derives from expertise, legitimate authority, referent power, rewards and coercion, and informational power that requires association with other powerful people. Reward power increases with the magnitude of the reward, the bigger and better the award, the more that P perceives O can mediate for him. Reward power depends on the ability of the giver to administer positive feedback and remove negative outcomes and responses. Coercive Power is the same as reward power, only it uses negative cohesion instead of positive, it uses punishment instead of rewards. French and Raven say that "the strength of coercive power depends on the magnitude of the negative valence of the threatened punishment multiplied by the perceived probability that P can avoid the punishment by conformity, i.e., the probability of punishment for nonconformity minus the probability of punishment for conformity" (French and Raven 1959, 157). Legitimate power is the most complex of the different types; it is induced by some internalized norm or value. It stems from internalized values in one which indicates that another has a legitimate right to influence one who is obligated to accept this influence. The main basis for this power is the cultural values that one individual has over another. Referent Power is a feeling of oneness of one with another, or the desire to want this identity. If someone is attracted to something about someone else, that person will want to become closely associated with that person. Expert Power is the strength that knowledge and perception which one person attributes to another within a given area. Expert power results in primary social influence on one's cognitive structure and probably not on other types of systems.

Table 2: Elements of manifest individual charismatic power

Basis of Power [Generic evaluation criteria]	Sources and Definitions [these include positive or negative values, principles and assumptions]
Coercion/Reward Power	Behaviours that reward or hurt others but also ensure compliance and buy-in
Legitimate Power	Formal position of power and roles that define responsibilities and appropriate scope of activity
Referent Power	Power that comes from trust and commitment given to the individual because of his/her personal traits and characteristics, including notions of an authentic existence or belief system
Expert Power	Power as knowledge and skills that others see as relevant to the peace process and which the individual religious actor is seen as possessing
Informational Power	Association with powerful people affords direct and indirect information

It is important to note that all five sources of power either rely on, or are strengthened by, belief of the followers. The actual power that leaders possess in granting rewards, punishing, or issuing orders is significant, but not as significant as the beliefs that followers have about them. Even if leaders do not truly have the power to reward, punish or control others, they can exert influence if their followers believe or *assume* they have such power. The same is true of the two forms of personal power – Expert Power and Referent Power. The leader may not have superior expertise, but if his followers believe he has, they will grant the leader power over them – at least for a while.

Similarly, if the leader is not someone to be trusted, followers will let him lead if they've been fooled by a positive image – until they discover he cannot be trusted. A key point here is that power does not depend only on the leader; it depends also on the perceptions that the followers have of the leader. The taking and giving of power stems from a relationship between leader and follower, and how the followers perceive the leader. Let us now turn to the attributes of Legitimate Power and Expert Power from Table 2 as they reflect the most relevant variables for religious leaders working in peacebuilding contexts.

5.1 Legitimate Power

A religious actor who is also an authority figure might be able to use his authority and effect changes by using legitimate position power. Such power stems from the religious actor's formal position and implies the legitimate authority to use, if deemed necessary, positive and negative sanctions such as rewards and coercion. Thus, legitimate power mostly refers to the existing organizational or institutional hierarchy that provides religious leadership with the ability to control the behaviour of others and to either change the organizational structure and processes or maintain status quo. This use of power is observable and direct. In order to employ sanctions it is necessary to know to what extent such religious leaders perform the required actions.

The power embedded in formal organizational structures and processes are usually directed at domination. Decision-making is often based on the exclusion of others and the one-sided realization of interests of certain specific groups or individuals that may or may not use such power-coercive strategies to enforce change. When a religious leader is protected by his legitimate power in a social system and is able to use certain sanctions, he could, in principle, use power-coercive strategies to effect changes that he considers desirable, without much questioning on the part of those with less power. In these situations a power-coercive way of decision-making is accepted as in the nature of things and is seen

as functional for the state. The limitations of this power model of change are related to the strong top-down approach, where there is limited participation of others – even from the religious community.

5.2 Expert Power

Expert power as the main basis of power usually involves a process of change that is often initiated, coordinated, and controlled by people's perceptions of religiosity, spirituality or magical attributes of an individual, including religious leaders, who may be seen as a leader attempting to promote peace. As a change agent the religious actor is seen to play this important role where success depends, among other things, on his religious 'knowledge' and 'experience' to assist or support groups in the peacebuilding process. The educational background of the religious actor also seems to be connected to the way problems are analysed and solved. Here, a key element of the strategy depends on religious knowledge as a legitimate source of power. The desirable direction of influence is from the religious experts, that is, from those who know, to those who do not know through processes of dissemination of information and rational persuasion.

Sometimes the problems with the expert power approach to change lie in an insufficient consideration of the cultural and other political impediments and the emergence of resistance to positive change within the specific peacebuilding context. In such a situation a religious actor might develop an explicitly political strategy that begins with a complete assessment of all the potential manifest-individual power bases highlighted in Table 2. This might ultimately lead to a process where the religious actor aligns himself with those in power and then influence them to desire and accept the changes towards peace. To do this, he or she must convince the powerful that the change is in their self-interest. In general, religious leaders as change agents can employ many tactics, such as increasing their referent power by expanding their social networks and having lunch or coffee with key people. Becoming an assistant or staff adviser to board members in government, for example, can enhance personal expert power through advice giving.

Understanding personal power and developing tactics for using it, however, are not always enough and constant monitoring of the political activities of others is required because this will allow the religious actor to develop, adapt, and modify his/her political strategies based on carefully selected goals. A power audit, identification of targets, an inventory of tactics, adequate resources, and monitoring with a commitment of time and energy are key ingredients for successful implementation of a peacebuilding process.

In other words, it is critical for religious leaders to begin with an understanding of the sources of power for himself and exploration of the mechanisms by which such resources may be controlled and used tactically within the peacebuilding process. A wise religious leader will manage the impressions he creates in order to generate stature and will form multiplex relationships with key figures in the political arena. Timing of interventions and building of credit are two key political tactics that will build on identified power bases and these include aligning with powerful others, using a neutral cover, limiting communication, and withdrawing – as necessary. One might also argue that while they can either play down politics or avoid them, it is better to use them to effect ends that are going to positively impact on the peacebuilding process.

5.2.1 Spiritual and Symbolic Considerations

Within the notion of Expert Power, there are latent power elements that require further clarification; some evaluators may see these elements as distinct or intrinsic to the role assumed by religious leaders. However, in what I am calling spiritual and symbolic considerations there is recognition of the deep and pervasive operation of religious symbols that often, if one takes these at the level of the psyche, are connected to what many consider to be spiritual or sacred elements. While there is no one school of thought in this area, there are efforts by many to apply the insights that grow out of recognition of latent personal power using various subjective evaluation criteria[9]. This approach to change sometimes uses interventions that work at the level of the unconscious in ways that engage the myth-making processes of the society or culture within which the peacebuilding process is located. Methods for engaging the deep meaning systems drawing on psychological and other disciplines are being explored to enhance understanding and integration. However, addressing the unconscious and spiritual aspects of religious dimensions simply cannot be framed in objective terms; by their very nature they must remain subjective, making comparisons extremely difficult, if not impossible.

This perspective on power has its roots in the psychoanalytic, postmodern theories (Thompson 2004). It is not a look at how structures or cultures constrain agency but how individuals themselves come to limit themselves and to unquestioningly obey. Here, there is the assumption that power is inherently diffused and shared among individuals located anywhere within a social system. This dif-

9 See for example the chapter by Steele and Wilson-Grau in this volume.

fusion allows individuals to potentially become active agents who can deploy their power even if they are at the bottom of the hierarchy or relatively powerless. Second, implicit in this approach to power is the recognition that power relations are often latent or even unconscious and they then become embedded in the actual psyche of the individual. To the extent that an individual is unconsciously complicit and has internalized various mechanisms of control and obedience is the extent to which their freedom to act according to (or even to know) their own values and beliefs is constrained. From this perspective, for example, members of oppressed groups could be asked to understand or explain how they collude in maintaining the very systems that oppress them.

Alternatively, as suggested by Foucault (1977, 27), the disciplinary mechanisms of the dominant groups also play a part through the use of surveillance, examination, and normalization in ways that are so subtle that people may not readily realize that they have internalized them into a type of "panoptic consciousness". This aspect of disciplinary power according to Foucault may even become normalized overtime in shaping people's self-image or identity, further contributing to power as a means of 'keeping tabs' on people and controlling them.

In the face of these types of latent control mechanisms, there are a number of sources of power, which can be mobilized by the individual. Some of these have been identified in Table 4 with certain indicative measures. For example, attempting to be authentic and acting in congruence with one's own values and beliefs. This involves not only honestly identifying one's powerlessness and complicity with the dominant systems but also owning one's taken-for-granted power and privilege. Authentic existence requires those with power and privilege to make this explicit and then act on the consequences of this unearned advantage. Another source of deep personal power is the development of a critical consciousness that Freire (1970) defines as a perception of the social, political, and economic contradictions inherent in society.

It is assumed that an attitude of focused scepticism and critical detachment is necessary if an individual is to utilize latent-personal power. Only by standing outside the dominant discourses and seeing how one has unconsciously carried them within himself can he unlearn these mechanisms of power. Through a process of questioning and de-familiarization, one can replace an attitude of deference to power with an ability to make autonomous choices. Often the ability to develop a detached and sceptical attitude is facilitated by exposure to other systems and styles of organizing, for example, from outside the society of which we are members as well as outside our own religion. Experiencing contradictory structural principles will often allow us to move in directions that are in contradiction to the dominant cultural or social rules of which we are a part. Hence, the role of interreligious dialogue – whereby individuals can 'import'

the experiences they have with other external institutions with different beliefs, rules, values, and resources – becomes all the more critical to help religious leaders and their followers develop a critical consciousness.

6 Collective Structural Power

Social relations are characterized by a typical structure and culture, based on rules, habits, institutions, language, communication, use of symbols, and definitions of reality, which serve as a foundation. Culture represents relative stability in a society and is related to power because power relations come to be seen as natural and unquestionable. Perceptions, cognitions, and preferences of individuals and groups are shaped by culture that, in turn, prevents them from seeing alternatives. Thus, cultural artifacts, language, rituals, and values construct meaning for members of a society, including those who simultaneously work to suppress conflict, prevent issues from being identified, and control, the actual agenda for decision-making and non-decision-making. In these ways, power relations become entrenched in the society and those who can set the agenda, who manage the meaning systems and who have others believe their definitions of reality, have more power than those who do not. Thus, power is increased to the extent that the group, which defines reality has others accepting their definition in unquestioning and taken-for-granted ways.

In this perspective on power the emphasis moves away from personal power that is ascribed to the individual, towards an understanding of the power that rests in the position or location that an interest group, community or organization holds in society. Thus, power potentially belongs to any collectivity in a particular structure regardless of their members' personal traits or characteristics already described above. There are various underlying dimensions that determine collective structural power bases; Table 3 simply highlights the three key ones first proposed by Weber (1958), namely *Economic Power*, *Social Power* and *Political Power.* Here, structural factors become the major influence in understanding power relations, where both cooperation and competition are seen to characterize relational networks of interdependent groups. As such, these could also be used as the main evaluation criteria since social and political issues are influenced by them.

The existing structure and the distribution of power are often characterized by stability, which usually results from a commitment to decisions or interests of those holding power. This kind of structural power is believed to be natural or 'given' while still being largely latent and observable if appropriately evaluated. In societies, there is a balance of power between the interests of individuals and of the in-

Table 3: Elements of manifest collective/structural power

Basis of Power [Generic Evaluation Criteria]	Sources and Definitions linked to positive or negative values, principles and assumptions
Economic Power – Control of scarce resources	Ability to allocate resources (information, uncertainty, money, people, etc.) among groups with competing interests
Social Power – Criticality/relevance	Roles and tasks that are essential in the peacebuilding process and that have the potential to cause the process to break down
Social Power – Flexibility/autonomy	Positions that are characterized by discretion in decision-making that are not always visible in the public sphere
Political Power – Visibility	Positions that are seen by those of power and influence in the society, community or organization
Political Power – Coalitions	Power that comes from building support from groups with similar interests

terdependent groups. Sometimes these interests are at odds and this can result in conflicting political issues, objectives and controversies in decision-making. The tension between the interest of individuals and groups is viewed as inevitable and as a normal part of the way of getting things done. This perspective on power is also known as the pluralist view, which is related to the exchange theory in social psychology in which the power of an actor is derived from the possibilities this actor or his or her group have of providing others with relevant resources.[10] The implication here is that groups have to cooperate and that agreement between them is necessary for their functioning and to warrant their continuity. Negotiation and exchange of resources tend to characterize the power process.

7 Applying Power Dynamics in Monitoring and Evaluation

A postmodern perspective can be usefully applied to identify and respond to power dynamics in monitoring and evaluation. It can also help oppressed or marginalised groups attempt to reveal, expose, deconstruct, and question the ideological assumptions embedded in organizational discourses and show how they suppress conflicts. From this perspective, power is assumed to be taken-for-granted and latent. Some would even argue that it is a cultural artifact that becomes entrenched in the hands of certain dominant and privileged

10 See, for example, Homans 1961; Blau 1964; and Strauss 1969.

groups. This dynamic exists to the extent that the meaning systems in which the relations of power are embedded are shared collectively by various interest groups and are reproduced through discourses, practices, and routines within societies. Religious leaders have the opportunity, perhaps more than others, to give meaning to events and in doing so contribute to the development of peaceful norms and values in a crisis or conflict situation. In some ways, this could be seen as the management of meaning as a process of symbolic construction and value-use designed both to create legitimacy for one's own peaceful demands and to de-legitimize the non-peaceful demands of others.

Management of meaning involves the ability to define the reality of others. Thus, religious leaders can be powerful agents who could create shared meanings, ideas, values, and reality through communication and the manipulation of symbols where power is seen as an interpretative institution and pervasively hegemonic. Lukes (1974) argues that sometimes people accept the status quo and their role in it because they view the current systems as natural and unchangeable. The role of ideological hegemony is important to understand as we see that existing organizational and societal structures are supported by inherently classed, gendered, and raced assumptions and values.

In recent years there has been increased interest among certain international NGOs to focus on 'power' as an analytical tool for monitoring and evaluation. Oxfam, for instance, offers extensive case studies of successful policy, advocacy and learning initiatives around the concept of power that are based on four key strategies:

1. Learning how a political system works to understand what need to change to address an identified problem, who has the power to achieve change, and how to achieve change.
2. Designing, framing, timing and adapting the presentation of evidence to the changing context to maximise its influence on target audiences.
3. Using additional insider or outsider strategies to influence policy and practice.
4. Embracing trial and error.[11]

Other organizations have utilized *power analysis mapping* or *drivers of change* approaches to evaluate the different levels of power that may exist among stakeholders in an intervention. Most of these efforts have focused on power dynamics

11 "Oxfam and its partners have been effective at evidence-informed policy change, usually as part of wider alliances and networks. It uses evidence to influence policy and to understand how to do so more effectively, via evaluation and lesson-learning" (Mayne, Green, Guijt, Walsch, English and Cairney 2018).

in multi-stakeholder processes in order to develop a common understanding of how issues relating to power and privilege act as barriers as well as opportunities in societies.[12] But so far there are few cases where power variables or criteria have been explicitly used as a methodological tool for conducting evaluations. Most of these approaches are related to international NGO programmes concerned with human rights, accountability for marginalised groups, and the assessment of civil society strengthening and participation. However, there is no justification for not extending and adapting these approaches to objectively assess the role of religious leaders in peacebuilding. Power dynamics discussed so far requires our applying a framework for context analysis and strategizing in evaluation that could significantly contribute to more nuanced readings of reality and to the refinement of strategies or the consideration of new entry points for programmatic action.

To be sure there is no single approach to undertake power analysis in an evaluation, as it fundamentally depends on the scope of the evaluation and context. However, the answers to the following key questions can offer useful information to help develop an evaluation strategy around power dynamics of religious leaders:

1. What is the purpose of the proposed power analysis?
2. What kind of power analysis is required, why and how will it be used?
3. What actors and relationships do you need to understand?
4. What are the core issues and questions that need to be explored?
5. How to link such issues and questions with indicative measures?
6. What forms of power need to be considered?
7. What can be learned from existing studies?
8. What approaches and methods will be helpful in establishing baselines?
9. What process will enable voices and perspectives of religious leaders and other stakeholders to be included?
10. What political sensitivities are there likely to be in undertaking such an analysis and how will these be managed?
11. What people, time and resources are available?
12. What is the proposed evaluation timeline and how does it fit with the consultation process?
13. How can the process of power analysis build staff competencies, or improve the skills and understandings of other key actors involved with the evaluation process? (e. g. consultants, partners and participants)

12 See, for example, Magaña, Castillo, Spotnitz and Piña 2017; DfiD 2005; and Brouwer, Hiemstra, Van der Vugt and Walters 2013.

The criteria developed by French and Raven can be used once there is clarity with regard to the above. Power is dynamic, so individuals and groups may experience it differently from one moment or place to another. In order to identify opportunities, obstacles and risks for effective peacebuilding it is critical to understand how power works, who it benefits and how it can be changed. The criteria can help to explore power variables among religious leaders, including their multidimensional sources, both in terms of individual charismatic power and collective structural power, where each has distinct implications in so far as evaluation finding is concerned. Some of the sources of indicative measures highlighted for individual charismatic power and collective structural power in Tables 4 and 5 respectively are well developed and tested. Others are newer and emerging as we struggle to create change in peacebuilding contexts that are embedded in complex, latent, subtle, and fragmented power relations. Understanding the broader peacebuilding change process requires attention to both the individual charismatic and the collective structural dimensions of power to help us analyse how religious leaders participate or resist, adapt or rebel to bring about change with reference to these two notions of power.

While contradictory in fundamental ways, if a situation can be looked at first from the lens of the individual vs. collectivist views, then rich new potential for change can emerge and be enabled. As evaluation of peacebuilding contexts becomes more uncertain, varied and complex and the mechanisms of power both more entrenched and more difficult to understand, it is fair to say ignoring the dimension of power or having an uni-dimensional and undifferentiated approach to power has serious limitations to how we look at the role of individuals in general and religious leaders in particular.

As shown in Table 4, sources of indicative evaluation measures for different types of power should be linked to an analysis of basic strategies utilized by religious leaders; the analysis should clarify the underlying dynamics or power constellations that make such leaders behave in certain ways. The aim is not to sort out all underlying motives or constellations, but rather to identify factors that are central to those leaders that have the ability to influence dynamics and developments within the society. Religious leaders' influence in terms of power base, intentions and goals should be identified. Preferably, they are to be divided into either connectors with positive impact, or dividers with negative impact on the specific context or conflict. Thereafter, the indicative measures need to be developed and systematically monitored overtime.

As power dynamics hold the keys to societal transformation, it is important to recognize the polarities or dialectics of power within peacebuilding evaluation, i.e. we need to specifically focus on the tensions created by such a multifaceted conceptualization. Given the difficulties of transformational change and

Table 4: Sources of indicative measures for manifest individual charismatic power

Basis of Power [Generic Evaluation Criteria]	Basic Strategies	Sources of Indicative Measures
Coercion/Reward Power	Accumulating or disseminating things of value to others or punishments which can harm others	Data/perceptions on coercion and reward being applied by religious leaders, whether at personal or impersonal level
Legitimate Power	Ensuring roles and role expectations are clear and recognized as legitimate; demonstrating focused scepticism and critical detachment	Data/perceptions on political status and/or formal official title or position of religious leaders influencing legitimacy of reciprocity; individual capacity to refuse; make choices to take action against oppressive elements of reality as it is constructed
Referent Power	Build respect and trust through personal integrity, charisma, and group affiliation; being able to work in ways that reflect one's own and experience and which take into account both power/privilege and powerlessness/ oppression	Data/perceptions on individual character, awareness and charismatic qualities; data/perceptions on demonstrating both personal power and powerlessness
Expert Power	Obtaining credentials or ongoing experiences that others respect and/or consider divine/magical; showing critical consciousness – engage in a deep learning process which facilitates a search for religious internalization of political issues/awareness (e. g. theatre of the oppressed, liberation education, notions of justice, well-being, equity, human rights)	Data/perceptions on religious/spiritual/ magical attributes, credentials or powers; leader's perception on social, political, and economic contradictions and inequities with reference to mainstream ideas of beliefs; leader's ability to stand apart from the dominant discourses, micro-practices, and disciplinary mechanisms to overcome deference to power
Informational Power	Networking and developing connections and associations	Data/perceptions on scale and scope of informational networks being utilized

the complexities of power, we are challenged to name and understand the multiplicity of approaches to change. If we can value and celebrate differences and nurture alternative change potentials, we are more likely to enable transformational change. If, however, we rely on one set of assumptions about change or, worse yet, suppress, deny, or devalue some perspectives, then the status quo is actually reinforced.

Additionally, power analysis can be used for looking back at moments of policy or political change and drawing lessons on why things changed and what can be learned for the future. The monitoring and evaluation of power dynamics of religious leaders needs to be based on strategies to engage effectively in their own policymaking environment, such as to identify which policymaking 'venues' are making key decisions, and the rules of those venues in so far as the engagement of religious leaders is concerned with reference to both individual charismatic power and collective/structural power.

In Table 5 each power variable is a generic evaluation criterion that corresponds to a distinct set of strategies for which sources of indicative measures are highlighted. The latter, in turn, can help formulate the development of specific pre-determined indicators for enhanced objectivity in assessing efforts or actions not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice. It is critical that the indicative measures are based on principles that are as "objective" – as free of bias, untested assumptions, etc., and as firmly based on provable fact or reasoned analysis – as they can be and are considered true until proven otherwise. However, indicators can only help to point out to what extent progress has been made in an intervention or a desired change is happening; they are not to be taken as 'proof' of change because they cannot tell us why an intervention has made a difference or why and how change occurs. That requires substantive analysis of the specific context or issue being evaluated. Moreover, indicators are sometimes used to support a predetermined position for political or tactical reasons. Ideally, indicators should be used as a tool to illustrate concepts, helping to change the understanding of an issue. They should be used to measure the impact of certain decisions, and when used to measure effectiveness, they should be instrumental in changing policies. Otherwise, they are redundant.

In this sense, indicators developed through power analyses can be inextricably linked to a function of monitoring and evaluation leading to observations on what has happened or is happening, what is being done about it and what could be done better. While the proposed analytical framework around power typologies and their sources are sufficiently flexible and can be applied to different categories of individuals and groups in society, it provides useful markers or generic evaluation measures – in addition to the standard OECD DAC Criteria – to effectively assess leadership role and power dynamics of religious leaders in peacebuilding and other contexts. Each of the power-based criteria represents fundamentally different sets of assumptions, implications or what might be called paradigms of power, and some or all of the generic evaluation criteria may be applied, depending upon the scope of an evaluation.

Table 5: Sources of indicative measures for manifest collective/structural power

Basis of Power [Generic Evaluation Criteria]	Basic Strategies	Sources of Indicative Measures
Economic Power – Control of Scarce Resources	Obtain and maintain positions which are responsible for distribution and allocation of resources; reveal (or establish) repeated processes for resource and task allocation which leave certain assumptions unexplored and unquestioned	Data/perceptions on distribution and allocation of resources; data/perceptions on mundane, historically instituted processes and tasks which benefit certain groups over others, but which are not questioned
Social Power – Criticality/ Relevance	Obtain positions responsible for the most critical roles and tasks essential to key peacebuilding and/or survival goals; Use organizational procedures and events to symbolically signal which issues are important and how decisions will be made	Data/perceptions on roles and tasks of religious leaders in upholding peace; data/perception on control of the language, symbols, rituals, and values which are culturally embedded, and which unconsciously determine behaviours
Social Power – Flexibility/ Autonomy	Seek out roles and tasks that are not routine and that contain autonomy and room for independent decision-making	Data/perceptions on level of flexibility and independent decision-making by religious leaders
Political Power – Visibility	Seek out roles and tasks which have high profile in the society, community or organization; control of the agenda – cultivate power which comes from being able to define the issues which are important and will be acted on	Data/perceptions on visibility of religious leaders and institutions among major powerbrokers and influential groups; data/perceptions on direct attention and energy towards peace which align with own group's interests (these are likely to alternatively suppress or generate conflict)
Political Power Coalitions	Systematically seek support from others based on an analysis of their interests; the determination of what is 'sayable' (known) through the construction of discourses and discursive practices within coalitions	Data/perceptions on level of support received by religious leaders from others; data/perceptions on issues being made visible and prioritized, giving voice to alternative/suppressed knowledge claims and challenge the objectification of knowledge claims of certain (sometimes dominant) groups

Furthermore, as well as revealing different options for change, applying power dynamics in monitoring and evaluation also calls on change agents in general to personally ask different questions of themselves and their role. The questions

change, for example, from what should be done to improve the situation? Or how does one get key leaders or constituencies on the side of peace? To whose meaning systems are we to support? And how do people perceive a given role – whether it is secular or religious? If a change effort is seen as an intervention in the peacebuilding process, how does a religious leader's role impact on these processes and towards what ends? Unless such issues are sincerely addressed, chances are that change agents could lose their power by being seduced themselves into the worldview of the powerful. A key proposition here is that any peacebuilding negotiation outcome is a function of the context the negotiators find themselves in and the characteristics of the negotiators themselves. Contextual characteristics are fixed elements of the negotiation environment, e. g. dialogue functions between the parties, time pressure, whether negotiation occurs through a third party, or bilaterally. The fact that the concept of power lies at the confluence of multiple fields in the social sciences, it is necessary to understand how power is leveraged (sometimes even increased) by religious leaders to their advantage and the contingencies of when conflict is a blessing and a curse for a person or institution.

Perhaps the most critical aspect of what is being suggested here is that tough questions must be addressed, bearing in mind the relevance of values, principles and assumptions underpinning such questions. For example, when the manifest perspectives on power are identified in a given peacebuilding context, whether at the individual or collective level, it becomes necessary to change our language and address questions of oppression, inequity, abuse, neglect, collusion and accountability. Yet such language is not often found in the discourses of traditional peacebuilding evaluation literature.

8 The Importance of Objectivity in Dialogue and Negotiation for Change

Conflict management and negotiation tend to characterize the change approaches or models that draw on both manifest individual charismatic and collective structural aspects of power described above. Hence the basis of these aspects of power can also be used as critical objective evaluative criteria to assess change in peacebuilding contexts. All interest groups play their roles in the change process, based on their position in the society or community, their specific power sources, and their own interests. In change processes, both the structure and systems of the community or society and the balance of power are brought up for discussion or negotiation. In such a process, different groups

or coalitions will direct their attention at securing their interests, objectives, and power positions.

Resistance to change is seen as a result of the exercise of power and can be understood as a struggle to achieve power or to escape from it. The main agents in the peacebuilding process focus on preventing conflict in the change process by regulating participation of the groups involved or by negotiation about the objectives of the change process and the way it is organized and managed. Most peacebuilding strategies imply that a change agent sets the conditions for the way change is realized by providing the material or other means. Positive outcomes are for parties who accept the change. The exchange strategy appeals to the comparison of costs and benefits parties make and it stresses what will be gained by the change. Negotiations are directed at smoothing opposition, tensions, and differences in opinion between parties and the goal is to accomplish an agreement that does justice to the interest of all involved parties. In such a change process, most of the negotiations are visible and parties are aware of the power processes. In the negotiations, many of the power bases described above are used to secure a good starting position and to influence the process by building good arguments, getting control of scarce resources, coalitions, gaining a position of visibility or flexibility, or controlling the procedures.

Religious leaders, like political leaders, may not always possess the necessary amount of structural power, but they can certainly use their power bases to win conflicts and to strengthen their position in the negotiation process. This increases the chance that their interests are realized at the expense of the interests of other parties involved in the change process. The use of positive spiritual or religious values and principles, as part of an exchange strategy aimed at negotiations, seems suitable in politically charged peacebuilding situations. If multiple parties with opposing interests and relatively balanced power are involved in a change process, negotiations will be needed to come to an agreement about things such as goals, the way the change is going to be implemented, and the role of the different parties in the change process.

Yet, the pluralist view has been criticized by some scholars because it suggests or assumes that all involved parties can defend their interests in the negotiation process. The power embedded in formal structures in societies generally tend to support the interests of the most powerful than those of others. Organizational structures, rules, regulations, procedures, decision-making, and negotiation are seen as products and reflections of a struggle for control that puts the most powerful in a privileged position (Giddens 1979). In the critical modernism of Habermas (1984), which takes the ideal of emancipation through dialogue, knowledge is seen as having the potential to counteract the realities of domination and allow for emancipation based on unrestricted freedom. This can be ach-

ieved by critical reflection and independent thought and by way of thoughtful evaluation of various viewpoints and arguments in an open dialogue. It is assumed that in dialogue and open discussions, based on good will, rational argumentation, and questioning, consensus can be reached about desirable objectives. Learning with a strong emphasis on participative design and development and democratic dialogue are approaches to change that can be used in the sense that Habermas intended. However, some people use these methods in a way that explicitly recognizes the latent power dynamics inherent in dialogue while others ignore power and attempt to use the methods in a power-neutral or blind fashion.

Ultimately, what is of critical importance is ensuring that objectivity is maintained in evaluating the contributions of religious leaders and institutions in peacebuilding outcome – taking into account the underlying realities, especially the power dynamics of a given context. This means paying special attention to the question of 'construct validity', and it is a challenge in all impact evaluations. In peacebuilding it is more difficult because here outcomes (e.g. governance, reconciliation, trust, cohesion) usually tend to be 'hard-to-measure' in quantitative terms, which is where experimental approaches tend to focus their attention. However, it should be emphasized that objectivity is a means rather than an end in itself. Improved decision-making should remain the ultimate goal. Thus, greater objectivity should ideally be promoted as part of the overall evaluation planning process to ensure policy relevance and practical application.

9 Conclusion

Ideas from postmodernism, social anthropology, sociology and social constructionism offer new perspectives that could be usefully incorporated into analyses of power dynamics in peacebuilding evaluation. When we include them, we must also ask questions such as change towards what, and towards whose ends? It is, however, naive to assume that because we do not explicitly deal with these questions that they are not relevant and are not currently being answered in the silence. We often know whose power is currently being enhanced and we are learning how to expose silences in the dominant discourses. For instance, liberation education techniques, first used by Paulo Freire, are now being utilized in many other contexts to help individuals break silence and value their own experience and voice. Once silence is addressed, then we can also name the abuse and oppression that is being ignored. Likewise, this type of dialectical model challenges change-agents, including religious leaders, to ask whose interests

they are serving, what ends are served through their interventions, and how aware are they of their own internalization of existing power relations and their own unconscious privileges?

Thus, addressing power dynamics within the context of interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding should be considered a key characteristic of credible evaluation – regardless of whether it is a process evaluation looking at implementation issues, an outcome evaluation investigating changes in peoples' knowledge, skills, attitudes, intentions, or behaviours, or an *impact* evaluation trying to determine any broader, longer-term changes that have occurred as a result of an intervention. New approaches and evaluation criteria need to be developed from the margins as well as lessons learned from the application of the standard OECD/DAC criteria. The question of how to link interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding to power dynamics will continue to increase as the role of religious leaders and institutions become more prominent and extensive overtime.

In conclusion, I want to re-emphasize the importance of holding both ends of the polarities in dynamic tension in order for transformative change to be understood and enabled. For example, groups and individuals must engage in deconstruction and resistance at the deeper levels in order to reveal oppression and raise awareness. But to make meaningful change, it is also necessary to use the surface sources of power and change strategies associated with restructuring and personal action. The manifest sources of power must inform the latent and the latent inform the more manifest. Likewise, individual agency must be mobilized while simultaneously acknowledging the role of the collectivity. Religious leaders can work as active agents, but we also need to understand the constraints and limits imposed by the systems of which they are a part. We must also understand how power is concentrated in the hands of the dominant groups and through understanding of shared oppression and privilege look at how subordinated groups can work together collectively and politically to create change. I am proposing this as a way of informing and enriching our understanding. Recognizing the complexity, diversity and relevance of power sources and need for objectivity is obviously the first step.

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Section 2 New Models and Tools in Evaluating Religious and Interreligious Peacebuilding

David Steele and Ricardo Wilson-Grau

Transcendence and the Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding

1 Introduction

There is very little research on professional evaluation[1] of religious or faith-based peacebuilding (terms we will use interchangeably), despite the existence of a variety of efforts over centuries to promote peace within many faith traditions. Therefore, this chapter will address pertinent concepts and principles related to the perception of transcendent experience that, to varying degrees, influences any intervention in which religious conviction plays a role. There are three specific roles which religion can play: (1) the interveners, either indigenous or external, can be motivated by faith-based perspectives; (2) local actors whom the interveners wish to influence can be religiously motivated; and (3) the context can be one in which religion plays a significant role in the society as either a conflict driver or mitigator. Therefore, when speaking of faith-based actors, we include any interveners or those they support who are motivated by religious conviction, whether or not religion plays a significant role in conflict dynamic. When speaking of a faith-based context, we refer to any situation in which religion plays a major role in the social dynamic, whether the role is negative, positive or of a mixed character and whether or not the interveners are themselves motivated by a faith commitment.

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1 "Professional evaluation" refers to the norms and practices promoted by over 188 (end of 2013) national, regional and international evaluation associations and societies. See International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (2016). The use of this terminology, however, is not meant to ignore the important professional role of religious leaders or diminish the value contributed by faith-based actors involved in peacebuilding.

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In each of these cases, it is important that evaluators, whether they are religious or secular, understand the concepts and principles related to a perception of transcendent experience and conviction based on the particular faith tradition and worldview held by those involved in faith-based peacebuilding. The chapter will address the application of these conceptions to evaluation practice. It is the authors' intention to provide guidelines for peacebuilders and evaluators, both religious and secular, as well as policymakers and donors who frequently play an important role in the design, monitoring and evaluation process.

We aim to contribute to the growing effort to learn, share and collaborate between religious and secular peacebuilders, supporting both with perspectives they can incorporate into the evaluation of their work with faith-based communities and within religious contexts. Furthermore, since intra-faith conflicts between different entities within one religion can also be deep rooted and equally intractable, the framework and methodology we present can apply to intra-religious as well as inter-religious contexts. Differences based on identity, authority structures and interpretation, can influence worldviews and various faith-based practices, adding significantly to the complexity of a conflict and to the processes employed to address it effectively.

So far, however, cooperative exploration among religious and secular actors and evaluators has engaged only a part of the full spectrum of faith-based peacebuilders – those who have been integrated into the Western-dominated world of non-profit NGOs. Many more traditional faith-based entities exist across the world and work primarily within their own networks. For these religious peacebuilders that have not participated in professional evaluations, the paper will potentially serve them as well since many in our audience will work with them.

The primary factor that distinguishes religious from secular peacebuilding is the conviction that one's experience and comprehension transcend the ordinary or the normal. What distinguishes faith-based or religiously motivated actors is a conviction that those involved in the process are part of a reality greater than the sum of all human endeavours. Their transcendent worldview implies the existence of a reality beyond the natural world, a realm they also refer to as the supernatural. We will, therefore, use the terms transcendence and supernatural interchangeably to refer to a perception of a presence that defies normal explanation.

In addition, there are a number of other factors that contribute to the distinctive nature of faith-based peacebuilding.

1. Its primary focus on personal transformation aligns it with only certain parts and priorities of secular peacebuilding practice.
2. Religion is fundamentally about narrative and symbol that explain the meaning of life and death and its aftermath, the cosmos and human nature.

From this the faith-based peacebuilder derives morality, ethics, religious laws or a preferred lifestyle. The centrality of narrative and ritual, which focus on storytelling and symbolic dramatization, have only more recently been incorporated into the wider peacebuilding arena.

3. The existence of religious hierarchy adds a different context in which determination of mission and accountability might be understood.
4. One of the most distinctive features of faith-based peacebuilding is its access to extensive networks, many worldwide. Collectively, faith communities connect with all sectors of most societies, linked to both the most powerful and the most marginalized. (Gopin 2009)
5. At the same time, many individual faith communities are very locally oriented.
6. Unlike most secular peacebuilding programmes, usually religious communities have very long-standing relationships to their societies and view their activities through a long-term lens. Consequently, they tend to view the key element of personal transformation as a long-term process, and many of their peacebuilding efforts are not project or programme oriented.

All of these factors have implications on theories of change, definitions of success, criteria used to measure progress, and other aspects of professional evaluation methodology when applied to religious peacebuilding.

Nonetheless, conviction of the existence of the supernatural, however defined, is the only factor that is unique to faith-based peacebuilding. It is the one that most profoundly influences the distinctive nature of a number of the other factors listed above. Religious peacebuilders from all faith traditions, whether mono-, poly- or non-theistic,[2] are motivated by their sense of connection with supernatural agency, whatever it may be called: divinity, ultimate reality or superior, transcendent good. Consequently, if evaluation is going to be relevant to faith-based peacebuilders, it must provide ways to monitor and evaluate faith-based action that is grounded in a perception of the existence of a powerful, transcendent presence.

2 In addition to the monotheistic (Jewish, Christian or Muslim) and polytheistic (Cao Dai, Paganism, Hinduism, Shamanism, Shinto, Wicca), there are non-theistic (Mahayana Buddhism and Jainism). In each religion, we also find a wide range of religious practice or non-practice among both the nominal and devoted within a particular faith. For example, there are those who are culturally influenced by aspects of a given religious tradition's worldview and values, but do not engage in regular religious practice or belong to a local faith community.

2 Principal Features of Faith-Based Peacebuilding and Evaluation

There are five distinct features of any faith-based activity, due to the perception of a transcendent or supernatural presence, that are especially relevant. Later in the frameworks section of this chapter, each of the following features is associated with one of the typical criteria used in professional evaluation of peacebuilding. The presentation of these features, as well as other characterizations of faith-based actors, are based on general tendencies. Not every viewpoint attributed to religious conviction or practice can be applied uniformly to every faith-based individual or group.

2.1 Accountability

Both secular and religious groups are concerned with evaluating their effectiveness, leading them to emphasize the need for accountability. However, religious peacebuilders have their own perspective on "accountability." In many instances, it is not tied to achieving predefined results. Often, the primary sense of accountability is about faithfulness to a supernatural presence, to the faith tradition, or to a personal sense of calling that has been legitimized within their faith community. Religious peacebuilders frequently value motive, loyalty and relationships more highly than common secular perspectives regarding efficient use of resources or effectiveness in reaching specific pre-determined outcomes. From the perspective of many faith-based peacebuilders, this frees them from the need to demonstrate observable results within a set time period.

Being less project oriented or time bound, religious peacebuilders also often enjoy greater flexibility to change strategies and objectives. The theories of change, and consequent approaches to evaluation, are determined by their values. For many, this reflects the priority placed on personal transformation. Yet, there is also a perspective common to most faith traditions that full consequences, whether they be positive or negative, can be postponed indefinitely in this life and sometimes beyond it. Whether it is due to a conviction regarding divine judgment or grace, karma, or a debt/merit relationship with deceased ancestors, there is the possibility that cause and effect can be postponed to a distant future, including the afterlife. In this light, the fact that faith-based understandings of accountability are measured primarily by faithfulness to the religious tradition and its values, is of paramount importance for evaluation.

2.2 A Distinctive Value System

The focal point of any religious value system is a framework of meaning that makes sense of life and one's place within it, a worldview that provides a moral compass from which a code of conduct is derived. The religious peacebuilder's worldview is intuitive, not primarily rational.

Most faith traditions hold some generalized values in common with each other, as well as with much of secular society. One can find adherents within most religions that claim to value peace, justice and compassion. Different religious communities, however, give particular meanings to those values. Since the actual practice of a given community is influenced more by the particular, rather than the generalized meaning given to the values, conflict can arise. For instance, Christians, Buddhists, Sunni and Shia Muslims can have different perspectives on peace, conflict, justice, compassion and reconciliation, as can different secular societies.

In cases of conflict driven by values differences, it is important to understand the particular meanings given to those values and the specific practices derived from them. Practices involving concrete issues like land ownership and women's rights, based on very specific faith-based understandings of justice, are at the heart of local conflicts all across the world. Effective handling of different values between faith communities or with secular groups requires sensitivity for each tradition's framing of values and a search for areas of compatibility. In such a context, it is wise to engage local participants in a discussion of key concepts and elicit the language and meaning upon which they can agree, rather than impose external religious or secular perspectives.

2.3 Understanding of Success/Failure

The ways in which religious communities traditionally define and measure success are, in some ways, quite distinct from the methodology and criteria developed by the professional peacebuilding evaluation community. For the faith-based person or group, success is not understood solely in temporal, material terms. Ultimately success (or failure) is understood as transcendent. Religious actors traditionally see themselves as part of something beyond the natural world. Faithfulness to a calling, or a full awareness of (or alignment with) ultimate reality, is often the standard by which success of human effort is evaluated, rather than more easily measured objectives.

Yet for the religious peacebuilder, success is never based solely on the religious actor's performance. A basic assumption is that their initiative is only a

small part of a larger intervention process in which supernatural agency influences other human actors and has impact throughout the process, well beyond the reach of any human activity. Developing scientific mechanisms to measure that magnitude of transcendence is not possible. Nonetheless, an understanding of this perspective is essential in evaluating what is achieved and how, what is understood and recorded, and what has been learned. For example, it enables the evaluator to understand the difference in outlook that allows a Mother Teresa to labour for years among the poor without much sign of measurable success, or why liberation theologians continue the struggle for peace and justice when their secular revolutionaries desist.

2.4 Motivation

As illustrated by the above examples, supernatural direction, guidance and calling, via scripture, spiritual mentor, or meditation, can be a major factor in determining what a faith-based person does. A strong conviction that the supernatural can act independently from the action of any part of the faith community or even the entire human race has great influence over what direction faith-based actors follow.

Faithfulness to one's religious tradition can, in some cases, mean a willingness to live within the status quo rather than pursuing efforts to solve an issue or change an inequitable system. Such a commitment can even motivate some religious propel to resist any intervention by others. Within many faith traditions, there is an emphasis on perseverance in the face of suffering and injustice. Usually it involves more than merely "staying the course." For devotees within many traditions, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."[3] There are many faith-based practices, including various forms of meditation and lament, which are specifically designed to enable the faithful to find an inner way to live in hope, despite troubles which might appear unsurmountable and unending. Ultimately, most of these religious practices do enable reengagement, though frequently after considerable time spent in contemplative practice and occasionally never outside their religious community. For example, the only activity of some cloistered monastic orders is to pray for the world, depending on supernatural agency alone, or perhaps on the inspiration of their spirituality, to move others to action. In most cases, however, the actions of faith-

3 A verse from the Bible, Hebrews 11:1 (RSV), though a sentiment shared widely among religions.

based peacebuilders are based on a combination of human and supernatural agency. There are multiple ways in which one might conceptualize the balance, all of which can have various effects on motivation.

2.5 Faith-Based Transformation

Religious transformation has its ultimate sights set on the whole world and beyond. If one listens to the vision, common within many religious traditions, of an ultimate solution, one hears of a transformation that can have no bounds. Sometimes, such a vision moves faith-based actors to attempt the seemingly impossible, despite evidence to the contrary. Yet, the kind of transformation seen as primary often differs from that stressed by secular peacebuilders. The most common religious theory of change assumes that peace will be built to the extent that people-to-people efforts are in accord with a transcendent vision, design or transformation process. That is, a religious peacebuilder is not tied only to a specific human agenda, even when it is the funder's!

Therefore, faith-based actors prioritize outcomes that are more often related to change of an individual person or a primary group, rather than at the sociopolitical level. In fact, many faith-based peacebuilders see their people-to-people efforts as the most effective way to facilitate structural change and sustainable peacebuilding. They may even resist pressure from secular peacebuilders to redirect their attention. This distinction between secular and religious peacebuilders, however, is one of emphasis since many religious peacebuilders also work directly for social and structural transformation.

In sum, evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding must provide ways to assess action that is grounded in a conviction regarding the existence of the supernatural, a powerful, transcendent presence as manifest in five distinct features. The religious peacebuilder understands accountability as faithfulness to a transcendent process more than a commitment to implementing projects and programmes. The faithfulness is rooted in a distinctive value system which provides a specific worldview and moral code. Success (or failure) is determined in light of supernatural, as well as human, agency. The faith-based peacebuilder is motivated by sense of supernatural guidance and direction, leading the religiously motivated actor to become part of a uniquely faith-based process of transformation. So, for evaluating religious peacebuilding, the primary question is not how one measures the transcendent, but how one takes into consideration the effect of that conviction. How does one factor that consideration into the way one designs and implements the entire evaluation process?

3 Three Common Components within Religious and Secular Peacebuilding Experience

Psychologist Jonathan Haidt, in his book, *The Righteous Mind* writes about the nature of religiosity – the function of experience, activity and belief within religion:

> Supernatural agents do, of course, play a central role in religion, just as the actual football is at the centre of the whirl of activity on game day... But trying to understand the persistence and passion of religion by studying beliefs about God is like trying to understand the persistence and passion of... football by studying the movements of the ball. You've got to broaden the inquiry. You've got to look at the ways that religious beliefs work with religious practices to create a religious community (Haidt 2012, 290).

Haidt goes on to describe *believing*, *doing* and *belonging* as three distinct, complimentary components of religiosity, each influencing the other (Figure 1). He proposes that one cannot understand the faith phenomenon without examining the interactive relationship between these three. In fact, he claims that *belonging* is the most fundamental, while the purpose of believing and doing is to support the faith community to which one belongs. He proposes that the specific role beliefs and conviction play in this relationship is to create rational explanations designed to support both of the other two – what the believer does and, most important, where the believer belongs.

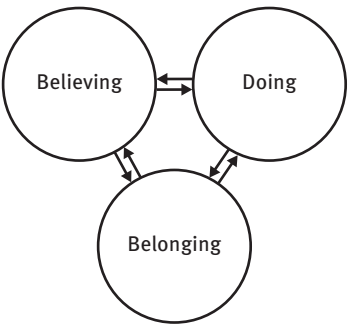

Figure 1: Haidt's components of religiosity

We have here a creative presentation of the role of the supernatural within religious faith – as a belief, but more than that, a presence that provides an ultimate experience of belonging, and a source of motivation that pervades what the believer does. Finally, there is the faith community to which one belongs, which shares the belief and legitimizes one's activity.

It is important to note that these three dynamics operate on all members of a community, whether they see themselves as religiously motivated or not, as they inform the underlying value systems and social norms that are passed on to all. We can, therefore, draw parallels with the secular field of peacebuilding which certainly has its own forms of belief or conviction and identification of the proper activities that constitute the work of building peace. Within peacebuilding, there is also emphasis placed on belonging, not only to the community of actors with whom one works, but to the many communities which the secular peacebuilder seeks to heal, strengthen and empower. In this case, one might also conclude that peacebuilders' convictions are formed in response to what they do, and most importantly, the quality of belonging they help to create and to which they belong.

Certainly the process of evaluation within both religious and the secular peacebuilding must take into account the interrelationship of these three: beliefs and convictions, activities in which we engage, and the communities of belonging we seek to enhance, often framed as "improving social cohesion" among secular peacebuilders. Within both peacebuilder networks, there is an ongoing assessment of all three, albeit using different lenses, which sometimes emphasize the dissimilarities.

How to do this? First, when working within faith-based contexts, peacebuilding and professional evaluation must respect indigenous religious frameworks of believing, including assumptions about the supernatural. Any effective evaluation of a peacebuilding process and its results, therefore, will assess the degree to which the desired transformation is informed by the wisdom and values found within the indigenous faith tradition. Such an assessment requires an examination of the role played by beliefs and their underlying values in the process of attitude change. The importance of this kind of inner personal transformation, and the specific way in which beliefs become important indicators is explored in the last part of the following section presenting a framework for evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding.

Second, professional evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding should examine the doing. – the activities performed in order to facilitate all the levels of transformation – inner personal, inter-personal, social and structural. This must include faith-based adaptations of traditional peacebuilding practice and various categories of distinct religious practice (addressed separately in the rest of the chapter).

Third, to broaden and deepen the sense of belonging within faith-based contexts, the evaluator must address the fundamental basis upon which each specific faith community's identity and solidarity is based, as well as its understanding of its moral commitment to "the other." All faith traditions include some

vision of a desired, wholesome relationship within and beyond their in-group. The way this vision is understood within one specific faith tradition can vary greatly depending on its status within a given society and the interpretation given to its defining narrative. Effective faith-based peacebuilding evaluation must begin by asking questions about their perspective rather than assuming the superiority of the non-indigenous perspective.

4 A Framework for Evaluation of Faith-Based Peacebuilding

4.1 Purpose

Jonathan Haidt, in the previous section, proposed three essential components of religiosity, each of which is also very important to peacebuilding and professional evaluation. Insights from these key components of religiosity fit well into basic frameworks developed by professional evaluators. In fact, the field of professional evaluation of peacebuilding has much to contribute that supports and augments such an approach to the evaluation of faith-based peacebuilding.

Evaluation of a peacebuilding initiative can be understood as an effort to support accountability, understanding and learning by determining the merit, worth or significance of what has happened and been achieved.[4] These three foci, derived from professional evaluation, are also relevant to faith-based peacebuilders, because they can be applied to the distinctive nature of religious peacebuilding (as presented in Table 1 and described in detail in the rest of the chapter). Merit, worth and significance correspond to the three interconnected components of faith experience – believing, doing and belonging.

Table 1: Foci of Professional Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation

Focus of Professional Evaluation	Focus of Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation
Merit is about intrinsic qualities, ***performance*** or results of an intervention – how well the activities implemented meet the needs of those it intends to serve.	*Excellence* of ***performance*** of the religious peacebuilding process, including use of faith-based practices and religious networks, as described below, to facilitate personal and communal transformation. (Doing)

4 See American Evaluation Association (ND).

Table 1: Foci of Professional Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation *(Continued)*

Focus of Professional Evaluation	Focus of Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation
Worth is the extrinsic quality of an intervention or its results – the ***value*** of the programme for the broader community or society.	***Value*** of the results of peacebuilding efforts, whether they are in line with the faith tradition's vision of community and sense of purpose, as informed by its worldview, values and source of motivation based on the faith's understanding of human and supernatural agency. (Belonging)
Significance is the potential ***importance*** of the intervention or the **influence** of its results – the prospect that the programme will have more or different merit or worth.	***Importance*** of what has been done and achieved in light of the faith-tradition's understanding of accountability and standards for measuring success, both of which are ***influenced*** by belief in the transcendent intervention of the supernatural as described below. (Believing)

As previously noted by Haidt, the distinctive role played by belief, including affirmation of the supernatural, is to explain or legitimize any activity undertaken as well as the understanding of belonging, the ultimate objective. Discerning (but not measuring) the influence of belief helps establish the significance of the peacebuilding effort. Religious belief, then, can influence the way in which faith-based actors conceptualize each of the following criteria typically used in the professional evaluation of peacebuilding interventions:[5]

1. Efficiency measures how cost-effectively resources used in a peacebuilding effort are converted to results. Religious actors' sense of motivation affects how they will view efficiency.
2. Effectiveness measures the extent to which a peacebuilding activity attains results within its immediate environment. Religious actors' understanding of accountability influences how they view effectiveness.
3. Impact refers to the wider effects produced by a peacebuilding intervention – positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. Religious peacebuilders' understanding of success/failure affects how they think about impact.
4. Relevance is the extent to which the peacebuilding activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the parties in conflict, the peacebuilders and

5 Adapted here from OECD, Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results, 65–71.

other stakeholders. The distinct sets of values, held by each group – religious or secular, will influence relevance.

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

These five criteria are neither all obligatory nor exhaustive. In each evaluation, one or more are chosen or prioritized. Furthermore, other criteria may be added, such as coherence and coordination. In addition to providing an assessment of the purpose for an evaluation and guiding the selection of criteria to be used, the framework needs to address the type of activity to be evaluated.

4.2 Types of Activity

Many of the types of activity involved in faith-based peacebuilding (e. g. mediation, conciliation, dialogue, educational efforts, advocacy, problem solving, or structural reform) are also performed by secular peacebuilders. In particular, religious actors will adapt their efforts in order to fulfil the specific needs of faith communities. For example, advocacy efforts are likely to include specific religious activities such as preaching or fasting. Intermediary efforts might include faith-based storytelling, interfaith dialogue sessions or inter-religious round tables that produce joint statements.

However, some distinct categories of religious practice are used by faith-based peacebuilders, sometimes as part of traditional activities, sometimes as stand-alone activities. Five such practices are of particular significance: expressions of piety, education/proclamation, rituals, reconciliation processes and faith witness, living out one's faith in the world. These practices will be explored in detail in the next section on selecting an evaluation methodology.

4.3 Importance of Attitudinal Change

Professional peacebuilding evaluation has increasingly recognized the importance of personal and public attitudes, especially within fragile contexts. In fact, the OECD DAC guidelines for professional evaluation recognize the importance of assessing this kind of subjective experience (OECD 2012, 64 – 65):

> Many interventions work to build peace and prevent conflict by creating change in people's attitudes, thought processes, and relationships. In such cases, it may be necessary to collect attitudinal data, conduct interviews, workshops, or focus group discussions with stakeholders, or carry out surveys to collect quantitative data. Measuring intangible changes in areas such as perceptions through interviews requires the same triangulation vetting as other types of data.

Changes in attitude are especially important in faith-based peacebuilding. The identification of significance, as one of the central foci of effective evaluation, requires asking what the parties involved see as high priority in the process of transformation. Given the centrality of inner personal transformation – individual and collective – to faith-based peacebuilding, it is essential to assess when, why and how people's attitudes change and how to utilize such data to inform future intervention efforts. For religious peacebuilders, attitudinal change is not merely a precursor to behavioural change. Instead, it is viewed as a central, underlying dynamic that pervades the entire transformation process. Much of the time it is less visible, yet can play a critical role, especially prior to the emergence of the more visible behavioural changes.

For the faith-based peacebuilder, the task of discerning even the least visible sign, just the possibility, of change in peoples' perceptions is very important. Faith-based actors are less likely to abandon a hoped for significant behavioural change, when they sense, in themselves or others, even the slightest beginning of a change in someone's mental outlook. For example, even a minor lessening of acrimonious remarks may be just enough expression of openness for a religious peacebuilder to see it as an initial steppingstone to a not yet seen behavioural transformation. Yet, attitude change is also seen as useful, in itself, even if there is little or no apparent behavioural change.

For the evaluator of religious peacebuilding, the challenge is to take into account attitudinal changes perceived through intuition and insight beyond what is known through the five senses. For example, informants declaring "I sense their attitudes are changing" must be seen as process indicators because the belief or conviction in changing attitudes can be the key to moving forward (or backward) in religious peacebuilding.

The role of belief in relation to attitudinal formation and change is especially relevant to faith-based peacebuilding. Expressions of belief can be important indicators of underlying attitudes, both negative and positive. Identifying patterns of belief can be used to point to either constancy or change in someone's perspective. Yet, even changes in belief often take time to emerge. Once the reframing of beliefs has begun, however, it can signal the presence of even deeper changes in attitude toward other groups and serve the important role of explaining and legitimizing new patterns of behaviour. Designing a process that will as-

sess these kinds of changes in participant attitudes about beliefs can provide extremely important data to be fed into a major learning process which can help redirect the faith-based intervention.

5 Selecting a Religious Peacebuilding Evaluation Methodology

5.1 Overview

Professional evaluation gathers and analyses quantitative and qualitative data[6] to inform learning, decision-making and action. The field has been conceptually visualized by Marvin Alkin[7], as a tree with three main branches: methods, values and use (see Figure 2) (Alkin 2010). An evaluation theory, or approach prescribing how to evaluate "must consider: (a) issues related to the methodology being used, (b) the manner in which the data are to be judged or valued, and (c) the user focus of the evaluation effort." (Carden and Alkin 2012, 103) Most evaluators are influenced by the theoretical approaches represented by all three branches, but individual evaluators tend to emphasize one over the others.

In the methods branch, scientific research methodology is the central focus. Although there are many quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, evaluators who emphasize methods as central to evaluation tend to demand rigorous adherence to experimental and quasi-experimental designs that determine causation by establishing the difference between what an intervention achieved (the factual), and what would have been achieved without the intervention (the counterfactual).[8] These experimental approaches to evaluation are inappropriate for

6 Quantitative data can be statistically aggregated and numerically compared and contrasted to produce broad, generalizable sets of findings presented succinctly. In contrast, qualitative data produces a wealth of data usually from a relatively small number of people responding to open questions. This increases the depth of understanding but reduces generalizability. The "quanti-quali" data can be complimentary, for example, when you need to know *what* happened but also *so what* does it mean to people. (Patton 2015, 22).

7 Marvin C. Alkin's research includes *Evaluation Essentials: From A to Z, Debates on Evaluation, Evaluation Roots*, and the four-volume *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*. Dr Alkin is currently co-section Editor of the American Journal of Evaluation.

8 These evaluations require random controlled trials (RCTs) using a "treatment" group and one or more comparison groups. In these evaluation modes, causation in religious peacebuilding work would be determined by comparing the results of interreligious peacebuilding in one population (of individuals, groups, communities, or countries) with the same results in a similar population not subject to those peacebuilding activities.

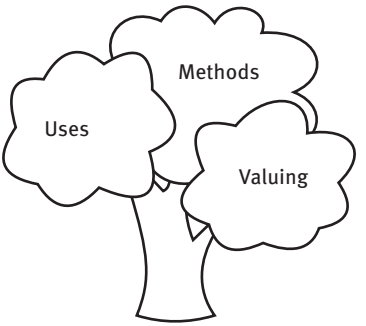

Figure 2: Alkin's evaluation tree

religious peacebuilding because attempting to establish experimentally that there has or has not been the presence of the supernatural in a faith-based peacebuilding intervention will be, not only a fruitless task,[9] but not relevant to an evaluation of the role such beliefs play. Furthermore, most if not virtually all religious peacebuilding falls within the 70% of development interventions that cannot be evaluated experimentally.[10]

As presented in the introduction of this paper, evaluation which is relevant to faith-based peacebuilding needs to provide ways to evaluate a religious peacebuilding initiative that is grounded in belief in the supernatural. For this purpose, the two other branches of evaluation theory are relevant. The *valuing* branch emphasizes that evaluation is basically about making value judgments. The *use* branch stresses the utility of evaluation for the stakeholders of the project, programme or organization being evaluated. There are dozens of evaluation approaches informed by each of these branches.

9 There have been at least two rigorously experimental studies of supernatural causation in religious interventions. One study concludes that "the findings are equivocal" about proving or disproving supernatural intervention. "...although some of the results of individual studies suggest a positive effect of intercessory prayer, the majority do not, and the evidence does not support a recommendation either in favor or against the use of intercessory prayer. We are not convinced that further trials of this intervention should be undertaken and would prefer to see any resources available for such a trial used to investigate other questions in health care." (Roberts, Ahmed and Davison 2009)

10 Bamberger, Rugh, and Mabry (2012) estimate that experimental methods are applicable, at best, in 5% of development interventions and quasi-experimental in between 10% and 25% of interventions.

5.2 Key Components of an Evaluation of Faith-based Peacebuilding

In selecting what approach or mix of approaches is appropriate for evaluating a specific faith-based peacebuilding initiative, three essential components must be considered: complexity-awareness, participation and the qualitative nature of the data.

5.2.1 Awareness of Complexity

Religious peacebuilding must be complexity-aware because, like all peacebuilding efforts, it contends with an uncertain and volatile, i. e., complex, reality. This is how Michael Quinn Patton characterizes the challenge of complexity for evaluation:

> Complex dynamic situations are characterized by high uncertainty about how to even define the nature of the problem. Often there is great disagreement among diverse perspectives about what the issue is and strong disagreements about what to do. The situation is turbulent, dynamic, ever-changing, and variable from one place to another; non-linear interactions exacerbate the problem and search for solutions within a dynamic system. Key variables and their interactions are unknown in advance. Each situation is unique and in flux. Causal explanations are elusive (2018, NP).[11]

Faith-based peacebuilders face this substantial uncertainty and lack of agreement at the moment of planning their initiative and dynamism during its implementation. In fact, introduction of supernatural agency, however understood, adds an infinite dimension to complexity. The relationships of cause and effect necessary to plan in the conventional manner what to achieve, and how to do it, often are unknown until they emerge, sometimes with unknown degrees of effect. Equally important, no situation is 100 % complex.

Religious peacebuilding is an area of work in which there is considerable uncertainty and often a lack of agreement about the nature of the challenge and how best to address it. To a large extent you do not know what will work and what will not work, and furthermore, you expect things to change, often dramatically, as you work towards peace. Thus, beyond the outputs related to implementation of planned activities with a reasonable degree of feasibility – organ-

11 From the draft of chapter 1 of Michael Quinn Patton's forthcoming book *Principles-Focused Evaluation.*

izing a conference to re-examine the peace-related values within a faith tradition or a workshop to train lay people in faith-based approaches to trauma healing —, as a faith-based peacebuilder, you would naturally be inclined to depend on some kind of inspired direction in order to assess what else to attempt faced with a very unstable environment. Given the high degree of uncertainty facing efforts to turn these training initiatives into significant accomplishments, you follow the guidance you believe you have received. You devise a tentative plan of action and see what is effective in generating the results you believe are consistent with the guidance you received. The greater the complexity the more frequently you have to take stock, seek re-direction and make decisions on what to do next – i.e., practice spiritually inspired adaptive management.

5.2.2 Participation

In religious peacebuilding where process is as important as results, inner personal transformation is central. Thus, it is essential to have the actors involved in religious peacebuilding provide information and insights into when, why and how their attitudes and behaviour change. In fact, in faith-based peacebuilding, attitudinal change tends to be more important than new knowledge and skills in explaining changes in behaviour. Participatory evaluation methods generate credible data on attitudinal change with which to assess the kinds of value systems and dynamics typical of faith-based peacebuilding evaluation. Participatory methodologies provide key stakeholders with a voice and an opportunity to present more of their perspective than is typically the case in conventional evaluations. For example, Appreciative Inquiry, Most Significant Change and Outcome Harvesting are approaches that can provide stakeholders with a voice to inform an evaluation with data, analysis and interpretation and enable evaluators to arrive at more solid evidence-based answers to evaluation questions.[12]

5.2.3 Use of Qualitative Methods

The collection of subjective data – how an individual person perceives change, or the lack of it – is important information for the faith-based peacebuilder and evaluator to understand the inner transformation process. Finding effective ways

12 See "Approaches," Better Evaluation (ND) for more information.

to track such changes is important to achieving the purpose of learning and taking action to improve performance and results, and in the process demonstrating accountability to donors. Consequently, in addition to being complexity sensitive and participatory, appropriate approaches for faith-based peacebuilding will use a variety of *qualitative* data-gathering methods: review of documents such as reports, chronicles and personal and communal histories, storytelling, opinion surveys, observations, interviews, and focus groups.

6 Design of Faith-based Peacebuilding Evaluation Questions

In order to generate evidence of merit, worth or significance of peacebuilding and the influence of belief in supernatural intervention, a first step in an evaluation process is to identify appropriate *questions* to be answered through complexity-aware, participative and qualitative evaluation approaches that will fulfil the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. For example, this is a generic question when the purpose is to understand the *results* of a religious peacebuilding project or programme: To what extent are the outcomes achieved by our peacebuilding practice in line with the faith tradition's values, vision, and peace mission?

These questions guide the process of designing and implementing an evaluation of a religious peacebuilding initiative. In the first column of Table 2 below, we present sample evaluative questions that can be asked about five different categories of religious peacebuilding *practice*,[13] each of which is influenced by belief in the supernatural, the most distinctive factor of religious versus secular peacebuilding.[14] These evaluation questions could guide the implementation of the evaluation when its purpose is to generate understanding about the faith-based peacebuilding process.

Those questions must not be confused, however, with the questions that will be asked of informants when collecting the data through surveys, interviews, questionnaires, in focus groups and so forth to generate credible data with

13 These categories are the designation of one of the authors, David Steele. The publication of his that comes the closest to capturing some of this perspective is Steele, "An Introductory Overview to Faith-Based Peacebuilding."

14 These are not exclusive categories. They are based on David Steele's experience teaching and facilitating religious peacebuilding. For an original, though somewhat different, formulation, see Steele (2008, 22–35). Reference to this same formulation, though with less detailed, can be found in an upcoming publication by Patton and Steele, *Action Guide on Religion and Reconciliation*.

which to answer the evaluation questions. In the second column are samples of these questions that might be asked of informants who were participants in the faith-based peacebuilding process in order to obtain data with which to answer the evaluation questions. We emphasize that all of these questions are samples. In fact, many of the issues covered within one category could as easily apply to another – for example questions about whether it led to mitigation of conflict or transformation of relationships, or what kind of impact or value was realized.

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice

Expressions of piety: through worship, sacrament, prayer, meditation.	
Significance: Direct encounter with the supernatural, as both beneficiary and respondent – the ultimate arena in which the interaction of human and supernatural agency is experienced. Frequently, this is the context within which one is reminded of the ultimate, unparalleled potential impact of all supernatural intervention, as well as one's own potential role as part of the process. Piety leads to a sense of motivation, guidance, direction or calling to which the believer can respond.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
1. What is the purpose for which a specific expression of piety was designed? 2. What changes do participants believe happened, in themselves or others, as a result of participation in acts of piety? 3. How effectively was the experience of piety reflected upon and used to foster further transformation of individuals or of relationships between disparate parties?	– In what ways did participation in (x) act of piety change your attitude toward other groups? Or toward specific individuals within other groups? – What caused such changes? – Following participation in (x) act of piety, what changes have you noticed in attitude or behaviour on the part of other members of your group toward other groups or individuals—if any?
Education/proclamation: through use of scripture, teaching, preaching, moral edicts, public statements.	
Significance: More than imparting of information and skills, the intent is formation and internalization of a worldview, framework of meaning, value system – derived from the faith tradition's basic narrative found within its foundational, spiritual source material.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
4. How effectively has the faith tradition's narrative laid a foundation for participants to internalize the peace-related values and concomitant ethical behaviour inherent within their spiritual tradition?	– How do you evaluate the extent to which through this peacebuilding activity you have understood and internalized your tradition's peace values and behavioural norms?

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice *(Continued)*

5. To what extent have participants succeeded in mitigating conflict dynamics by acting in accord with their tradition's peace-related values?	– In what specific ways did your understanding of your faith tradition's peace related values motivate you to be a peacebuilder? – What kinds of action did you attempt in an effort to mitigate the specific conflict situation? Did your faith tradition provide you with insights that helped you to assess the peacebuilding problem? How? – Has your perception of your faith's perspective on tolerance changed? If so how? Toward whom? – Has your perception of your faith's call for compassion or hospitality changed? If so, how? With whom? – Did your faith offer you any insight about what kinds of structural change you promoted in this peacebuilding activity? Or how to approach this task?
Rituals: (rites, symbolic expression, customs, ceremonies) which can be used either to promote or inhibit transformation: fasting, funerals, weddings, purification rites, rites of passage or membership, healing rituals, ceremonies of celebration or dedication, observance of holy holidays.	
Significance: Sequence of sacred, customary activities involving gestures, words, and objects dramatizes the human/supernatural encounter, connecting past tradition with present context that fully engages the participant in remembrance, affirmation of belonging, catharsis, reassessment of perspective, reframing of worldview and values, or formalization and celebration of agreement.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
6. How effectively has the use of ritual led to noticeable change in participants' or members of adversarial groups' emotional response to memorable events, or to proposals for reconciliation or dispute resolution?	– Following participation in a given ritual in the peacebuilding initiative, has there been any noticeable change in emotional response to memorable events on the part of participants' or members of adversarial groups? Whose response (doesn't have to be an individual, could be particular gathering, etc.)? What happened? – Did anyone propose reconciliation or dispute resolution? Who proposed what, when and where? – What changes have occurred in participants' perceptions of historical wounds or recent losses, dysfunctional or disrupted relation-

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice *(Continued)*

	ships, possible alterations in their worldview? – What are the implications of specific values inherent within their faith tradition?
Reconciliation Processes: Examples: TRCs (S. Africa and elsewhere), Islamic Sulha, Jewish Teshuva, and Buddhist mindfulness meditation.	
Significance: Spiritual practices involving dialogue and mediation enable adversaries to move toward the restoration of right relations – frequently helping parties to mourn losses, face fears, accept "the other," admit wrongdoing, forgive, repent (commit to change), engage in restorative justice, and enter into joint problem solving.	
Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	**Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers**
7. What were the most significant behavioural transformations for participants and others that resulted from the reconciliation processes in which they participated? 8. Why do the faith-based participants believe some transformations they experience during or following reconciliation processes are more significant than others? 9. To what extent did the reconciliation process assist, or have the potential to assist, conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values?	– In which kinds of faith-based reconciliation processes have you participated? What motivated you to take part? – In what context (within or outside the intervention being evaluated)? – Which kinds of processes were included? (handling grief, admitting wrongdoing, repenting, forgiving, engaging in restorative justice?) – What benefit do you believe you received? What about other participants? – What parts of the experience were difficult? Why? – To what extent did the process cause you to change your views or actions or those of other participants? – How effectively did it enable you to relinquish any bondage to hurt and resentment? – Do you believe this reconciliation process has the potential to assist conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values? – Do other participants believe this? Which kinds of conflicts? Any specific ones? How might this process help resolve such conflicts?
Faith witness: Living out one's faith in the world through storytelling, religious music/drama/art, diapraxis (combination of dialogue and collaborative action), problem solving and structural reform.	

Table 2: Questions to Use in Evaluating Faith-based Peacebuilding Practice by Categories of Religious Practice *(Continued)*

Significance: A response to participation in a sacred presence transforms oneself, builds community and leads to implementation of guidance or calling. Sometimes involves patient waiting or action motivated by hope, based ultimately on a transcendent promise.[15]

Sample questions for the evaluation to answer	Sample questions for evaluators to ask participants to obtain the answers
10. How effectively does participation in a given act of faith witness provide a healthy sense of belonging – bonding with one's own identity group and bridging the divides between groups?	– Has your participation in a specific act of faith witness in the peacebuilding activity influenced your understanding of belonging to your own group? How?
11. To what extent does participation motivate the believer to engage in the kind of dialogue that leads to peacebuilding activity?	– Has it influenced your understanding of communal solidarity with members of other groups? How?
12. What do participants consider is the value of their faith witness?	– Has it helped you to see potential ways to bridge the divides between groups? How? – How did you view the waiting process before any results can be seen? – What kept you committed? – What did you learn? – What did you hope to achieve? – What do your answers to these questions say about the potential value of your faith witness?

The specific mix of religious practices that are used in peacebuilding depends on the challenge and context, just as do the results they achieve. This is also true for the evaluation questions that, in addition, must be customized to the specific faith-based peacebuilding initiative and its context.

The questions asked in Table 2 focus on evaluating both attitudinal and behavioural change in relation to five of the most important practices found in religious peacebuilding that incorporate normative peace values. The primary reason for using these questions would be to gain an understanding of the role the five religious practices played in a specific peacebuilding process. A change in the way a belief is understood or applied can be an important indication of significant attitude change. Once a change in basic outlook is discerned, then what might be

15 Examples: The film "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" (story of Muslim and Christian women gathering to pray, sing and calling for peace in Liberia), Accompaniment of victims (Mennonite peacemaker teams), Interfaith choirs (Pontanima Choir in Sarajevo), non-violent peaceful protest (Gandhi; Martin Luther King Jr.; People Power in Philippines; Bringing down communist regimes in Eastern Europe; Arab Spring.)

called the reformed parameters of belief can play a critical role in searching for ways to bring behaviour more in line with the revised understanding of faith. The inherent sacred insights and moral principles, now realigned, can assist in explaining and legitimizing the new set of behaviours. Even small steps of behavioural change, taken with this degree of faith-based authenticity, have the potential of evolving into a significant, specific peacebuilding outcome.

Throughout the process, the role of the evaluator is to collect and analyse important data related to degrees of change in belief, attitude and behaviour. In addition, the evaluator can assist faith-based facilitators in the interpretation of the data and exploration of its application, in light of the particular belief and value system of the stakeholders. Of course, the accommodations to worldview, language, symbols and rituals must encompass all of the faith groups implicated – which adds to the complexity, especially if the different groups involved have markedly different perspectives and interpretations. Yet, a redesigned faith-based peacebuilding initiative, enlightened by an evaluation, would be better positioned to enhance the attitudinal and behavioural transformation necessary to build sustainable, inclusive and peaceful community.

7 Illustration of an Evaluation Process Within a Faith-Based Context

Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE)[16] is one methodology that is especially promising for evaluating faith-based peacebuilding. Michael Quinn Patton, the principal architect of this evaluation theory, says in the fourth edition of *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* about the utilization-focus: "epistemologically, the orientation of pragmatic qualitative inquiry is that what is useful is true." In other words, the purpose of the methodology is to apply evaluative thinking and generate data to serve the principal uses of the primary intended users in order to enhance the process and enrich the findings of the evaluation. Utilization-Focused Evaluation focuses on obtaining "actionable answers to practical questions to support programme improvement, guide problem-solving, enhance decision-making, and ensure the utility and actual use of findings."[17] This ap-

16 See Utilization-Focused Evaluation (ND)

17 In addition to Patton's pragmatic, utilization-focused evaluation criteria, there are others that may be promising for evaluating peacebuilding in faith-based contexts because they privilege the experiences of the participants in an intervention. Social construction and constructivist approaches take into account multiple perspectives on participants' experiences. Artistic or

proach can utilize the data collected from questions that relate to beliefs and perception of belonging, as well as those that are focused on assessing attitudinal and behavioural transformation as long as the role of each type of question is clear. Not only can these evaluation questions provide useful data, the questions regarding belief and values can play a crucially important role in the process of interpreting and analysing the data as well as proposing lessons learned which are consistent with the insights and moral principles of the participants' faith traditions.

Outcome Harvesting is a utilization-focused approach that is complexity-sensitive, participatory and qualitative.[18] Here we will use it to illustrate an evaluation with respect to faith-based reconciliation based on a real case. The subject of the evaluation is the fictitious International Inter-Religious Reconciliation Initiative (IIRI), an effort by secular and religious, indigenous and external peacebuilders in a tense, faith-based context.

1. The primary intended users – the IIRI executive council – clarify that their uses for the evaluation process and findings are to obtain evidence between early 2011 and mid 2018 with which to take decisions to improve their reconciliation efforts. In the light of that use, the users affirm that they need answers to reconciliation questions 7, 8 and 9 (Table 2) above.
2. With the evaluator, the users agree what information is required to answer the three questions:
   a. The outcomes achieved
   b. Their significance
   c. How the users' intervention contributed to the outcome
   d. The role, if any, that belief in the supernatural played
3. Through interviews with the participants in IIRI's reconciliation programme, the evaluator obtains the information presented in Table 3.
4. The evaluator verifies the accuracy of the data with independent, authoritative sources.
5. With credible, verified data about the religious peacebuilding process and results, the evaluator provides evidenced-based answers to the three reconciliation evaluation questions.

Here in Table 3 we exemplify the collection of data. After the table, we present answers to the three evaluation questions informed by that data.

"connoisseurship" evaluation evokes participants' experiences. Participatory and collaborative evaluation modes involve participants. Critical change approaches empower participants (Patton 2015, 698).

18 See the community of practice website Outcome Harvesting (ND).

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example[19]

Instructions: Describe the following four dimensions of faith-based peacebuilding coordinated by the International Inter-Religious Reconciliation Initiative.

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
What was the change in behaviour that represents progress towards reconciliation? **When** did **who** do **what** and **where, as** a result of IIRI's reconciliation work?	Why do you consider the behavioural change represents progress towards reconciliation?	How did IIRI influence the outcome? **When** did IIRI do **what** specifically that influenced the change in behaviour described in the first column?	To what extent was supernatural agency present in the outcome and the intervention?
1. In February 2011, 10 exiled Sunni religious, tribal and community leaders return to their home village to meet with 10 Shia counterparts from the same village.	In 2006, during one of the peaks of Sunni-Shia violence in Iraq, these Sunni religious and tribal leaders had fled their integrated community just south-west of Baghdad.	In early 2011, IIRI ends a year of building relationships with the Sunni and Shia groups and brings some of the Sunnis back to the village to participate with their Shia counterparts in an IIRI led dialogue.	No effort is made to assess influence of belief in the supernatural.
2. In the course of 2011 – 2012, most of the Sunni exiles move back to their village from Jordan. Inter-religious committees form to establish co-operation in education, sports, business enterprises and with other social sectors.	The Sunni residents of this village had lived as refugees in Jordan for five years, afraid for their lives if they returned.	From early 2011 to early 2012, IIRI with a couple of their Iraqi facilitators who lived near that community, met regularly with both Shia and Sunni leaders to engage in reconciliation dialogue.	In late 2012, people from both Sunni and Shia communities publicly thank Allah for relieving them from overwhelming, crippling fear and providing a window of hope.
3. In June 2014, the ISIS militia overruns this village and kills or forces into exile the local leadership of the	The reconciliation effort not only falls apart, but the killing surpassed the Sunni-	Through 2013, IIRI had promoted reconciliation unaware of the danger of ISIS.	ISIS influenced a number of young men, claiming that Allah had spoken directly to the leaders of their move-

19 All references to specific entities in this illustration are fictitious with the exception of ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) and the Shia Popular Mobilization Units.

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example *(Continued)*

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
reconciliation programme.	Shia violence of ten years ago.		ments, the Shia Popular Mobilization Units and Sunni ISIS (in both cases led by influential clerics with hereditary claims to special status and educated within extremist theological schools).
4. In March 2015 the Iraqi army ended ISIS control in this village.	About 60% of the previous Shia population will return. However, relations are very tense. Suspicion is at an even higher level than it was in 2011.	In early 2014, IIRI assured the Iraqi government that it would return to work in the same village if ISIS is pushed out.	After serious self-reflection about the disastrous end of their reconciliation programme, the leadership of IIRI reaffirm their belief in Allah's call for *zakat*, which purifies the believer who fulfils the obligation to contribute to the care of those in need, especially to protect and provide for all Muslims.
5. In early January 2017, two newly appointed Sunni and Shia mullahs decide to each send 4 representatives (2 clerics and 2 influential lay persons) to an inter-faith reconciliation workshop.	This is a breakthrough step because there had been a mutual experience of exile and the suffering, including since 2015 more executions by opposing extremist militias and the killing of both former mullahs in this village. Resistance to reinstating any reintegration effort continued high on both sides.	In June 2016, IIRI sends representatives to the village. IIRI's Iraq staff then spends six months deepening relationships with the mullahs as well as lower-level clerics and influential lay people in both traditions within this village. With support from the Iraqi parliament and the local facilitators, IIRI decides to sponsor a reconciliation workshop.	IIRI staff spend some time in intercessory prayer with Sunni and Shia Iraqi Muslims, together with foreigners from both Muslim traditions and a variety of Christian denominations to receive wisdom to know how best to reply and to plan.

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example *(Continued)*

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
6. The third week of January 2017, all eight representatives of the mullahs give glowing reports of the workshop and share the concern, embraced by a parliamentary committee to replicate this reconciliation process.	Despite just about everyone's relief over the ending of ISIS, the general communal perspectives of Sunni and Shia had remained distrustful and intra-Muslim violence continued. The apparent success of the reconciliation meeting begins to give some people hope.	During the 12 – 14 January 2017 intra-faith, Sunni-Shia reconciliation workshop, IIRI leads, participants through various stages of an Islamic reconciliation process. This includes the Muslim practices of lament and mutual acknowledgment of wrongdoing, restitution and forgiveness based on the Islamic practice of Sulha.	When all their representatives returned with such glowing accounts of this second reconciliation workshop, both Mullahs say privately that they believe that Allah has begun to touch the hearts of a few of their people and their own suspicion and fear begins to turn into a tentative conviction that Allah may be opening a new pathway of hope.
7. In July 2017, the Sunni and Shia mullahs of the previously ISIS controlled Iraqi village commit themselves to meeting to discuss an end to intra-Muslim, Sunni-Shia violence.	Since the end of ISIS control of the village, although overall violence had decreased, there had been five instances of eye-for-an-eye retributive killings between Shias and Sunnis in this village. These incidents had directly affected the families of both current mullahs.	Since the beginning of 2017, IIRI had offered to host the meetings in a neutral venue.	Both mullahs believing that Allah often works in mysterious ways beyond human understanding or expectation, came to the conclusion that Allah was calling them to follow in the steps of their wise successors.
8. Between September and December 2017, the two mullahs meet five times.	These are the first times that these mullahs have spoken with each other about the vengeance killings.	The IIRI had arranged for a well-known non-Iraqi Muslim cleric to facilitate the encounters.	Both mullahs believe that although the Qur'an does condone retributive violence, it also encourages reconciliation amongst Muslims.
9. In the first week of March 2018, the Shia mullah issues a fatwa	Another vengeance killing took place in December 2017, when	In the beginning of 2018, discussing the results of the facilitat-	The Shia mullah cites his spiritual leader, the Iraqi Shia ayatol-

Table 3: Fictitious Outcome Harvesting Example *(Continued)*

1. Outcome	2. Significance	3. Contribution	4. Belief in the Supernatural
prohibiting vengeance killing and requiring reconciliation.	a Sunni farmer was beaten to death by a Shia shopkeeper. Some Shia defended the action.	ed dialogue between the two Mullahs with the Shia mullah, the IIRI offered to encourage the Sunni mullah to respond in kind if the Shia cleric issued a fatwa.	lah, emphasizing the well-known Qur'anic perspective that any use of violence must be a last resort and the intention must always be to create a pathway toward reconciliation. This convinced the Shia mullah to publicly declare that "*reconciliation with our Muslim brothers was an integral part of Allah's will and vengeance killing was a dire violation of it.*"
10. In the second week of May 2018, the Sunni mullah issues a fatwa requiring just, non-violent reconciliation for vengeance killings.	Following yet another murder of a Sunni by a Shia shop owner, the Sunni community is convinced that reconciliation will only work if the aggrieved party believes that justice has been done.	Both the Iraqi Sunni and Shia staff members of IIRI meet with the Sunni mullah three times in March and April 2018 following the Shia mullah's fatwa. They encourage the Sunni mullah to consider what kind of fatwa he might be able to issue after prayerfully bringing the matter before Allah.	The Sunni mullah remembers learning that Allah does not simply excuse wrongdoing. Heinous acts, such as murder require an accounting. Therefore, he decides to publicly declare that restitution, reparation or some other punishment levelled upon the guilty party, followed by full reconciliation, is Allah's will.

Based on this outcome information, which would be duly substantiated with knowledgeable, independent third parties, the evaluator would answer the three questions for which they collected outcome data as shown in steps 7, 8 and 9 of Table 2:

7. What were the most significant attitudinal and behavioural transformations for participants and others that resulted from the reconciliation processes in which they participated?
   Following a turbulent five years (2011–2015) of Sunni return from exile, incipient reconciliation with their Shia neighbours, and the violent takeover and exile of the Shia community by ISIS, the religious leaders of this community took solid steps to renewed reconciliation and an end to intra-Muslim violence. Over a year and a half (January 2017–June 2018) the Sunni and Shia Mullahs and their representatives changed their positions on reconciliation from passive resistance to active support, which took the form of two fatwas prohibiting intra-Muslim vengeance killings and requiring believers to engage in reconciliation.
8. Why do the faith-based participants believe some transformations they experience during or following reconciliation processes are more significant than others?
   In the first and last transformative actions taken by each Mullah, they agreed that Allah had intervened. Although the intermediate actions were religiously based – "intra-religious violence is morally wrong" and the Koran "encouraged reconciliation amongst Muslims" –, it was their belief that Allah had opened the way which sparked them to issue the fatwas as "the will of Allah".
9. To what extent did the reconciliation process assist, or have the potential to assist, conflicted parties to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts of values?
   Although the two Mullahs both issue a fatwa by mid-2018, these fatwas are not identical, and they are not issued simultaneously. The Shia fatwa (outcome #9) is issued first and prohibits vengeance killing and requires reconciliation. The Sunni fatwas (outcome #10) is issued later, and, unlike the Shia fatwa, there is a condition placed on the ban of vengeance killing. That fatwa requires accountability to justify a non-violent reconciliation process because, the mullah says "*Allah does not simply excuse wrongdoing. Heinous acts, such as murder, require an accounting.*" The fact that the Sunni population has experienced even greater trauma than has the Shia community may explain why that mullah emphasized different portions of the Koran representing a difference of values.
   In sum, the IIRI staff contributed to an outcome that did not eliminate the differences completely but allowed for the expression of difference while affirming the major goal of encouraging these two religious leaders to publicly call for an end to vengeance killings.

As seen in this Outcome Harvesting evaluation example, the ongoing attention of IIRI staff to the facilitation of self-reflection played a major role in the choices made. Based on belief in the supernatural by themselves and both key stakeholders, they assisted various actors, at different points, to reassess their own perspectives and assist others in that process. Furthermore, there is evidence that this introspective process led, quite directly, to legitimation and explanation, passed from actor to actor. Each stage in this reflection, explanation, legitimation process played a key role in determining the next contribution and influencing the subsequent outcomes. The final fatwas issued by the two mullahs would likely not have been feasible without the role played by supernatural belief.

Naturally, the ten outcomes contain a wealth of information that can be used to answer the other nine evaluation questions about the peacebuilding process. This example illustrates how an evaluator of faith-based peacebuilding can generate data related to peacebuilding activities, perception of belonging and beliefs that explain and legitimize both. It also illustrates how the data about beliefs can help the evaluator to interpret and analyse this data in order, finally, to draw conclusions and propose lessons learned that can provide faith-based guidance for ongoing revision of the peacebuilding activities which will better align with the vision of inclusive communal solidarity and sustainable peacebuilding.

8 Conclusion

In sum, we are convinced that the faith in the presence of supernatural agency is at the core of religious peacebuilding, along with a process of attitudinal change. This peacebuilding can be evaluated by applying appropriate methods for registering and appreciating how beliefs in a supernatural presence influenced different people to take action, or not. For this, complexity-aware, participatory and qualitative approaches are particularly applicable to focus on activities and results, including attitude change, while taking into account what motivates religious peacebuilders within distinct value systems to pursue transformation. The influence of religious belief on this process should be apparent in the way the entire evaluation process is designed and implemented – how criteria are understood, theories of change viewed, indicators determined, results interpreted, and lessons learned applied. In that manner, professional evaluation can help assess the process and results of peacebuilding and explain what motivates religious peacebuilders within distinct value systems to pursue faith-based transformation. Such learning efforts can, in turn, enable religious actors to remain

appropriately accountable and ultimately explain the success or failure of their interventions.

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Linking Evaluators and Inter-Religious Peacebuilders

The Making of an Evaluation Guide

> "At a time when religious differences are often used to fan the flames of violence, the role of faith-based initiatives in building peace can be pivotal...However, inter-religious action—as a key approach to sustainable peace—still has not recognized its full potential as a force for sustainable peace."
> —Melanie Greenberg, President and CEO of the Alliance for Peacebuilding, 2011–2018[1]

With funding from the GHR Foundation, the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) and its partners CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG), in collaboration with a Global Advisory Council, led the Effective Inter-Religious Action in Peacebuilding Program (EIAP) project between 2015 and 2017.[2] The project's substantive learnings to date are captured in its primary publication: *Faith Matters: A Guide for the Designing, Monitoring & Evaluation of Inter-Religious Action for Peace*[3] (hereafter referred to as the *Faith Matters* Guide). This chapter complements the *Faith Matters* Guide by exploring the underlying human learning processes that made the substantive learning possible. In bringing together representatives of two very different stakeholder audiences, evaluators and inter-religious actors, this project set in motion a mutually transformative exchange. Both groups are essential for progress, and yet previous communication and collaboration had been minimal. Therefore this chapter analyses what inter-religious peacebuilders and evaluators learned from each other during EIAP, unpacking the victories, tensions and challenges they encountered, to help illuminate the next phase of effort. The chapter also identifies real-world ways forward in developing evaluation approaches that both evaluators and inter-religious peacebuilders can embrace.[4]

1 See Alliance for Peacebuilding (2021).

2 This chapter was written in mid-2017 near the end of EIAP's initial three-year phase. It reflects developments up to that time, unless otherwise noted.

3 Woodrow *et al.* 2017. The guide is available at: https://www.dmeforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SEPT-26-JF-EIAP-GUIDE-FINAL-UPDATED.pdf. The guide addresses design, monitoring and evaluation, but the primary focus throughout most of its development process was on evaluation.

4 The authors appreciate constructive feedback from: David Steele, Nick Oatley, Peter Woodrow, Sumaye Hamza, Khaled Ehsan, Benjamin Medam and Dilshan Annaraj.

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1 Background: The Effective Interreligious Action in Peacebuilding Project

EIAP was driven by the belief that inter-religious action can play an important role in both religious and secular peacebuilding. The supporting objectives included developing a framework for learning, establishing a nascent community of practice, developing guidance on how to evaluate inter-religious action (the focus of this chapter), and advocating for policies that support inter-religious action in peacebuilding. EIAP began by exploring the 'state of play' in the field, including reviews of relevant literature (Schmidt *et al*. 2016) and current evaluative practice (Vader 2015). The overarching findings indicated that, despite high levels of activity and commitment in the inter-religious peacebuilding field, examples of good evaluation practice and customized tools for carrying it out were exceedingly scarce. Those findings shaped the priorities for EIAP action.

1.1 EIAP Activities

Early in the project, the Global Advisory Council (GAC) was created, consisting of religious leaders and practitioners of multiple faiths, to advise and provide intellectual continuity for EIAP activities. The three lead partner organizations recognized this faith-based community of practice as critical, particularly since the lead partners themselves are all secular organizations. The community of practice was supported by SFCG's launch of an online interface (DM&E for Peace 2015) to provide an opportunity for practitioners, evaluators, academics, and donors to share resources and lessons learned.

Beginning in 2016, CDA produced an initial draft of the *Faith Matters* guide, incorporating a range of tools, processes and methods for application in widely differing contextual and organizational circumstances. The field-testing of the guide by seven organizations became a central component of EIAP. Three testing organizations were selected through a competitive mini-grant process: Sindh Community Foundation (in Pakistan), the Rossing Centre for Education and Dialogue (in Jerusalem), and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda. Additionally, four larger organizations agreed to test the Faith Matters guide using their own resources: SFCG (in Kyrgyzstan), Mercy Corps (in Myanmar), World Vision (in Kenya and Lebanon), and a multi-regional programme at Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

Throughout the project, AfP engaged donors and policymakers in the United States and Europe to share principles for effective evaluation of inter-religious

action, including how policies and donor practices can promote or inhibit inter-religious action in peacebuilding.

1.2 Challenges Encountered

The sheer diversity of EIAP stakeholders is vast: practitioners and advisors, religious and secular, grassroots organizations and global networks, seasoned veterans and new voices. Nonetheless, when viewed in overarching terms, EIAP has two primary audiences – the largely secular evaluation community and the inter-religious peacebuilding community. The relationship between these two main stakeholder groups is pivotal, because both groups are necessary to strengthen evaluation practice in the inter-religious peacebuilding field. However, past communication between the two groups has been minimal and hampered by misunderstanding. Neither audience is a monolith; there is variation and overlap, and there are individuals who don't fully identify with either group. Nonetheless, EIAP's overall trajectory represents an outreach from the evaluation community toward the inter-religious peacebuilding community. The rich interchange of learning between those two audiences manifested itself consistently throughout EIAP. Looking beyond EIAP, this is a relationship that will help shape the future of the peacebuilding field.

One of EIAP's most ambitious objectives was to develop a utilization-focused evidence base concerning effective inter-religious peacebuilding. The challenge was to both compile the evidence base and help inter-religious actors apply those learnings in the three-year timeframe of the project. In practice, it was not possible to move so quickly from identifying evaluation best practices to implementing them. A longer process is required to overcome the gaps between the evaluation and inter-religious peacebuilding communities. A limited number of inter-religious programmes are designed in ways conducive to traditional evaluation, and evaluations are scarce (Vader 2015). Thus, the EIAP lead partners opted to invest more time in developing best practices, recognizing that implementation will follow. Indeed, even during EIAP's first phase, several of the GAC and *Faith Matters* Guide field-testing organizations began to incorporate EIAP learnings into their programmes. For example, Peace Catalyst International, represented on the GAC by Dr Rick Love, made development of a monitoring and evaluation system a key goal within its current strategic plan.[5]

5 Strategic Plan 2017–2020, Peace Catalyst International.

The demanding process of carrying out project activities revealed that inter-religious peacebuilding is more broad, diffuse and complex than the secular lead partners had anticipated. It proved difficult to locate inter-religious peacebuilding among the network of prominent international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) with whom the lead partners typically work. Despite the increasing recognition of religion's importance, INGOs funded by the US government are wary of the legal 'separation of church and state,'[6] so they may avoid explicit inter-religious action. Additionally, many secular INGOs still do not have experience working with religious actors. When the lead partners began to reach beyond their usual network to engage inter-religious peacebuilding specialists, their comments on the draft documents pointed out complex issues that required additional time and expertise to address. Among those issues were the nuanced diversity within each faith tradition, the importance of intra-faith relations, and the theme of violent extremism.

The development and testing of the *Faith Matters* Guide itself, became a centrepiece of the EIAP experience, involved additional conceptual and practical dilemmas. There were numerous rounds of discussion among EIAP lead partners on the key question of who is the primary audience for the guide: evaluators or inter-religious peacebuilders? The eventual pivotal decision was to write for both audiences. Given the barriers that still exist between these two communities, progress requires addressing them both together. There were also debates regarding the purposes and appropriate approaches for evaluation, since evaluators and inter-religious peacebuilders tend to view those issues differently. The question of how to make evaluation 'faith-sensitive,' and to acknowledge the influence of belief in the spiritual realm, also proved to be more far-reaching than the EIAP lead partners expected, crystallizing much of the mutual learning described in this chapter. The narrative returns to those key themes in depth later in the chapter, after first exploring the mindsets, experiences and skills that both evaluators and inter-religious peacebuilders bring to the collaborative process.

6 This is commonly called the 'establishment clause' of the First Amendment to the US Constitution. See US Constitution (2010).

2 How Evaluators Approach Inter-Religious Action in Peacebuilding

Measuring, monitoring, and evaluating have not been common activities in inter-religious action for peacebuilding. Those who have tried to engage in these efforts have struggled with the complex nature of peacebuilding work, the difficulty of understanding the influence of belief in the divine, and the challenge of protracted conflict contexts. The donor-driven shift over the past decade towards accountability-focused evaluation has also made inter-religious actors less inclined to invite those who are perceived as not understanding their work to pass judgement on it. However, even before evaluation was professionalized, there have always been those attempting to explain how change happens, trying to articulate the influence and impact of their work. Evaluation, as a systematic and technical approach for capturing and utilizing such learnings, has a lot to contribute to the growth of inter-religious action in peacebuilding.

Evaluators are one of the two key audiences of the EIAP project, the other being inter-religious actors. For the purpose of this chapter 'evaluators' refers not only to full-time evaluators, but also to a broader spectrum of people engaged in assessment or review work, including evaluative thinkers within NGOs, donor agencies, and other implementing actors who have monitoring and evaluation capabilities. This includes internal evaluators and considers evaluation to be an attainable practice, requiring some technical skills that should be considered an intertwined component to conducting work that claims social good. This section of the chapter provides a grounding in how evaluators have been approaching the inter-religious space and considers key competencies for M&E staff or consultants.

2.1 Why Evaluate?

There are traditionally two complementary motives for evaluation. One is evaluation's ability to ensure *accountability*, shining light on whether the claimed impact from a particular effort has been achieved, and whether it was on time and on budget. The other component to evaluation is *learning*, surfacing the how and why of change, and helping to understand what works and does not. Both of these components provide significant and distinct value added to inter-religious action in peacebuilding.

Activities that claim to achieve a social good are strengthened by reviewing the interconnections between the work they are doing and the outcomes they

aim to achieve. Evaluators believe that activities which claim to achieve a social good are obliged to conduct evaluation as a way to remain accountable to the people who are supposed to benefit from that social good. This is also a core belief of the EIAP convening organizations, and a key motivating factor in the pursuit of a stronger understanding of how evaluation is perceived and works in the inter-religious peacebuilding community. Knowledge is power and knowing what does or does not cause a desired social change enables those invested in that change to adapt their efforts to be more effective. Evaluation can also facilitate the development of a systematic way to share the value of inter-religious work, so that inter-religious efforts in peacebuilding will be perceived as valid and trustworthy by other actors on the global stage.

There is an ongoing tension among donors, implementing actors, and the evaluation community regarding the 'correct' balance between the accountability and learning motivations of evaluation practice. Most evaluators, especially those that work in sectors that require a more qualitative lens like inter-religious action and peacebuilding, acknowledge the importance of the accountability component, but are more heavily focused on learning. As this field emerges, the accountability component is seen by evaluators as contributing to the broader, global conversation about the effectiveness and value of inter-religious work. The learning component is seen by this audience as paramount to understanding the complexity of inter-religious action, and how change happens amidst the innumerable variables, improving practice in an iterative fashion, and moving towards identification of best practices for the sector.

When pursuing evaluation for learning purposes, it is important to recognize that many evaluators want to see evaluation findings used for improving the activities and pathways through which positive change happens, even if facilitating utilization of findings is outside their mandate. Some evaluators have a personal interest in improving the practice of inter-religious action for peacebuilding, given their own experiences or identity; evaluative practice is their specific contribution. These evaluative learning efforts stand to make a significant contribution to the peacebuilding field, since this programming has been traditionally less well-documented, and learnings have yet to be broadly disseminated.

2.2 Religious or Secular Evaluators?

One important consideration frequently discussed among EIAP stakeholders is the capabilities and experience needed for those conducting evaluation of inter-religious processes. Whether the evaluator is a team member responsible for monitoring and evaluation work or an external evaluator coming in for a dis-

crete evaluation, there are competencies to look for that facilitate a nuanced and respectful approach to evaluating inter-religious activities. Given the complexities of inter-religious action, it may be necessary to comprise a diverse team, in order to capture the perspectives, experiences, and expertise that one evaluator working alone could not provide. Involving local religious actors or stakeholders on the evaluation team, or at the very least, in consultation regarding the evaluation design is a particularly helpful strategy to ensure a well-rounded, representative, and sensitive evaluation effort. There is sometimes an assumption that evaluators for inter-religious action need to have a personal faith themselves, either directly related to the activities or not. Grounding in a personal faith is perceived by some audiences as crucial to the understanding of the complexity, nuance, and divine influence in inter-religious action. In EIAP's view, while personal faith is an advantage for certain types of programming and certainly changes the personal lens of the evaluator, it should not be a blanket requirement. There are both pros and cons of evaluators who have their own faith-based experiences and/or beliefs, which should be taken into consideration when determining the best skillset match for what type of efforts are to be evaluated.

Evaluators who possess a personal faith can bring additional knowledge and an understanding of the importance of faith into their interpretation of data and generation of findings. Such evaluators are also more likely to be open to the influence of belief in the divine in achieving individual transformation and broader social change. A personal faith is often a significant motivating factor for evaluators engaged in inter-religious peacebuilding work, fuelling their desire to see 'proof' of impact that they know would be accepted by a more secular community. Evaluators and donors often see such proof as a necessary part of the journey to legitimizing and expanding inter-religious peacebuilding activities on a larger scale. On the other hand, the complexities of personal faith can sometimes limit faith-inspired evaluators in their evaluation of inter-religious action. The cultural context of an evaluator's beliefs, how their faith intersects with other faiths, and their own level of knowledge and openness toward other faiths can significantly bias their evaluative efforts. This can lead to unfair interpretation of findings, biased sampling and interactions with implementers, and even harm, if the evaluator asks questions or takes actions that reignite inter-religious tensions.

Likewise, there are pros and cons in involving secular evaluators in inter-religious action in peacebuilding, even though secular evaluators are less likely to see and admit the implications of their personal beliefs on their evaluation practice. Some secular evaluators perceive their secular beliefs as being 'neutral' and the only way to ensure an unbiased evaluation. However, due to personal expe-

riences and cultural influences, secular evaluators are just as likely to be biased against religion, or against a particular religion, as religious evaluators. Secular evaluators also might not recognize the importance of personal faith experience in understanding inter-religious efforts, or the influence of belief in the divine. Depending on the context, some inter-religious efforts will call for a secular evaluator who is experienced and willing to delve into the nuances of faith-based efforts. Other evaluative efforts will call for a faith-based evaluator who can relate to the personal experiences of individual and inter-personal transformation. Either way, an honest conversation about the impact of the evaluator's beliefs is beneficial to selection of the evaluation team and conducting responsible evaluation.

The emerging consensus among EIAP stakeholders is that, whether or not the evaluator(s) has a personal faith related to that of the activities being evaluated, it is essential for the evaluator(s) in question to properly prepare for and orient towards both the context and the faiths involved, taking stock of their personal perspectives, experiences, and lenses, and readily acknowledging how that may or may not impact their work. The evaluator(s) should have 'religious literacy' which enables them to understand the core concepts that inform faith-based peacebuilding, as well as each faith community they will interact with. Finally, it is very important that the evaluator or evaluation team all recognize that each individual – including evaluators – brings their own beliefs, value systems, and biases into the work. These attributes will help to facilitate communication and implementation of evaluative activities in ways that make sense to the religious actors involved.[7]

2.3 Leveraging Evaluation to Look Beyond Individual Transformation

The evaluative mindset offers another complementary perspective that is advantageous for inter-religious peacebuilders. Some inter-religious work has a tendency to overemphasize individual transformation of attitudes and behaviours. Sometimes this is the end goal, and other times the activities are meant to build collectively towards larger social transformation. In the case where the aim is larger social transformation (Chigas and Woodrow 2009) there is a need to capture the process of change and transfer efforts from individual transformation to socio-political impact. Evaluation activities can home in on the process of

7 For more information, see Section 5.5 of the *Faith Matters* Guide.

this transfer, looking at whether, how, and why it is happening. Learnings from these evaluation activities can help to strengthen and adapt inter-religious activities to make stronger connections towards social transformation and prove the interlinkages regarding how the work is affecting that change.

On the other hand, it is important to note that some larger INGOs have also fallen into the trap of measuring only higher-level changes, ignoring the impact and contextual implications of individual transformation. In the *Faith Matters* guide testing process, both Mercy Corps and World Vision International discovered that they had initially looked for change at the community level, to the exclusion of transformation taking place among individuals. They found shifting the unit of analysis to be beneficial in drawing out learnings regarding individual transformation, as a building block of higher-level change. Especially in contexts of identity-based conflict, it is crucial to leverage evaluation to look at multiple levels of change and their interconnections. Failing to track the shorter-term foundations of individual transformation that are necessary for longer-term socio-political change is just a problematic as assuming that individual transformation is indicative of higher-level change in the absence of supportive evidence.

2.4 How Do Donors Fit In?

Evaluation is increasingly required by most governmental and even private foundation donors. Donors are interested in a return on investment, ensuring their money is making the desired impact and effectively contributing towards the identified, desirable social change. There are often political, economic and other social motivations involved as well, sometimes on a geopolitical scale, depending on the donor. Because of this desire to prove effective use of funds, donors tend to sway the tension between accountability and learning more towards a focus on accountability as the primary use of evaluation. However, recently, there are some donors who are recapturing and promoting a better balance and focus on the learning component as well.

Although not all inter-religious programming is funded by typical international development funding mechanisms, a portion of it is, and is therefore beholden to new requirements for monitoring and evaluating. As inter-religious action in peacebuilding is increasingly recognized on a global scale, there are more funding opportunities available for this type of work through international development mechanisms that come with monitoring and evaluation requirements. Capturing successes from inter-religious work through evaluation can enable organizations and actors doing inter-religious work to apply for this type of fund-

ing, leveraging larger funding pools to expand their work when they can speak to quantitative results. Informed inter-religious actors can also help shape the requests and expectations coming from donors by requesting more learning-driven approaches and demonstrating documented programme improvements from such efforts.

It can sometimes appear that some donors do not understand the complexity of inter-religious action in peacebuilding, when they are overly driven by accountability concerns, when their rhetoric is intentionally secular, or when they fail to acknowledge the impact of shifting conflict dynamics on implementing activities in inter-religious contexts. However, donors can serve as an impetus to capture learnings, results, and build on what is already being done. There is movement in international development towards influencing donors to work with programmes, providing additional support, resources, and tools, previously unavailable to the organization. Approaching donors as partners, rather than gatekeepers, will benefit inter-religious action in the immediate and long term.

3 How Inter-Religious Peacebuilders Approach Evaluation

As an EIAP audience, the term 'inter-religious peacebuilders' refers to the faith-based people and groups that implement inter-religious action for peace. Importantly, they may or may not call their work 'peacebuilding' – a term which tends to be associated with the secular peacebuilding sector. They may consider peace to be only one among their multiple objectives. Nonetheless, the focus on peace is intentional and often intense, just as it is for secular peacebuilders. The differences lie in their motivations and mindsets, and in the types of organizations and networks that are engaged in the process.

3.1 Who Are 'Inter-Religious Peacebuilders?'

Seen through EIAP's lens, the inter-religious peacebuilding audience is broad and diverse, with their degree of connection to secular peacebuilders ranging from strong to non-existent. At the least connected end of the spectrum, there are a multitude of peace-promoting communities of worship and faith-based organizations (FBOs) that may not be aware of the existence of the secular peacebuilding community. Such organizations may have engaged in decades of ongoing inter-religious action supported only by religious institutional budgets, or

sometimes by no formal budget at all, because they hold a conviction that promoting peace is necessary in their context and is part of their role as believers. Their peace training may come through religious teachers and literature as part of their own faith formation. Their size may range from small grassroots communities of worship to international religious networks. Many inter-religious peacebuilders have no awareness of the evaluation practices of the secular peacebuilding field, though they certainly have an interest in doing their work effectively and a desire to see positive change.

At the most connected end of the spectrum, there are faith-based organizations that figure prominently within secular-leaning fields of endeavour, as CRS does in the humanitarian and development sectors. CRS is known not only for excellence in integrating inter-religious peacebuilding into their work, but also for excellence in monitoring and evaluation approaches. Occupying the middle of the spectrum are numerous hybrids and crossovers. For example, there are FBOs that work with external donors, such as religious or secular foundations, and conform to their evaluation requirements. There are faith-motivated individuals working seamlessly inside secular, evaluation-oriented organizations (including the EIAP lead partner organizations). Faith-based motivations and worldviews typically remain highly significant for faith-based actors engaged with secular peacebuilding, though they may be less vocal, or express themselves differently, than peacebuilders working exclusively in the religious sector.

3.2 Global Advisory Council

Within EIAP, if the 'evaluators' audience is represented by the three secular lead partner organizations, then the 'inter-religious peacebuilders' audience is represented by the Global Advisory Council (GAC). The GAC was composed of eleven prominent inter-religious peacebuilding practitioners, representing Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist traditions[8] across ten countries of origin. In some EIAP processes, the Council was joined by other recognized experts in inter-religious peacebuilding.

The GAC's formation and voice required some time to develop. The first face-to-face GAC meeting, in Washington DC in 2015, focused on the current state of play in inter-religious peacebuilding programming and evaluation. However, at the second meeting in Istanbul in 2016, the faith-based influence of the GAC began to make itself heard, fuelled by a preliminary draft outline of the guide.

8 EIAP staff also tried without success to recruit a Hindu member for the Council.

At a humorous level, GAC members noted that the name originally envisioned for the guide – the Guide for the Assessment of Inter-Religious Action (GAIA) – represented the Greek goddess of the earth and would evoke many types of unintended connotations within the audience of inter-religious peacebuilders.[9] On a more substantive level, GAC members also observed in Istanbul that the preliminary draft outline of the guide, and the meeting agenda itself, were framed primarily around secular evaluation concepts, such as the OECD-DAC (2012) criteria for peacebuilding evaluation. Some important questions came to the fore: This content is all interesting, but what specifically does it have to do with *inter-religious* peacebuilding? What is unique about evaluating *faith-based* action? How can evaluation content be made relevant and accessible to the vast numbers of faith-based actors who work at grassroots levels? At this point, it became clear to everyone involved that the need for evaluators to learn from inter-religious peacebuilders was deeper and more extensive than the secular EIAP lead partners had originally envisioned.

David Steele, a (Protestant) Christian pastor, professor and conflict resolution expert, gave an insightful presentation in Istanbul on faith-based reconciliation processes, in which he began to identify key distinctions between faith-based and secular action. Shortly thereafter, he teamed up with EIAP advisor Ricardo Wilson-Grau to write a paper[10] on the implications of these faith-based distinctions for evaluation practice. Ricardo[11] was a highly respected evaluator advocating the importance of religious sensitivity and literacy in evaluation. He was, interestingly, also a non-theist. Ricardo was assertive, and he got the attention of the evaluation community in a way a faith-based peacebuilder alone probably could not have.

3.3 Faith-Based Distinctions

The work of David and Ricardo (Section 2, 137–168) highlighted the following distinctions in emphasis between faith-based and secular peacebuilding:[12]

1. *Value system*. Faith-rooted values including peace, justice and compassion are often what motivates inter-religious action for peace. Such values have

9 The name of the guide was changed to *EIAP: Guide to Program Evaluation* during the pilot testing phase, and finally to *Faith Matters* prior to publication.

10 Steele and Wilson-Grau 2016.

11 Ricardo Wilson-Grau passed away on 31 December 2018.

12 Adapted from Steele and Wilson-Grau (2016). See also *Faith Matters* Guide, Section 2.1.

corollaries in secular practice, yet they may differ significantly in the nuance of their meaning and the way they are applied.

2. *Motivation*. Spiritual direction, guidance and calling, via scripture, meditation or a mentor, can be a major factor in determining what a religious person does. There may also be a strong conviction that spiritual beings or forces can act on their own, implying a different view of causation from that typically seen among secular actors.
3. *Understanding of Success/Failure*.[13] From a religious perspective, success can be understood from the transcendent perspective of faithfulness to a spiritual calling. For secular peacebuilders, success is more likely to be defined in ways that emphasize performance against materially measurable goals.
4. *Accountability*. Accountability for faith-based actors is often about long-term faithfulness to a divine calling, or a faith community. For secular peacebuilders, accountably may revolve more around the aims of a particular project, meaning a time-bound set of predefined objectives supported by a particular donor.
5. *Faith-based transformation*. Faith-based peace practitioners often emphasize individual spiritually inspired changes in attitudes, which can lead in turn to changes in expressions of belief and behaviour. Secular peacebuilders tend to place less emphasis on attitudinal and more on behavioural changes, especially those that have a clear and direct impact at the socio-political level.

Of course, most of these distinctions are matters of degree or emphasis, not binary differences between faith-based and secular peacebuilders. Even so, the overall implication is that faith-based and secular actors may have vastly different ways of understanding the peacebuilding work that they do, and different frames of reference when considering evaluation or evaluative ways of thinking. For this reason, Steele and Wilson-Grau highlight the importance of certain evaluative practices: participatory methodologies to give religious actors a voice to present their own perspectives, qualitative methodologies to deepen understanding of the intangible aspects and processes of faith-based peacebuilding, and awareness of complex causation, as described in Section 4 below.

It is worth noting that the different experiences and competencies of religious actors and evaluators have frequently led each group to politely question the capacity of the other. The EIAP project design documents, crafted by evalua-

13 For an additional, extended exploration of faith-based distinctions centering around the motivation for action and the understanding of success/failure, see Reina Neufeldt (Section 1, 53–76). Neufeldt posits that the impact-focused consequentialism of secularly-derived evaluation criteria may be fundamentally at odds with the values of faith-rooted peacebuilding.

tors, assert not only a need for better evidence of the effectiveness of inter-religious peacebuilding, but also a need to improve the effectiveness of inter-religious peacebuilding work itself.[14] On the other hand, one of the inter-religious peacebuilders involved in EIAP recently expressed disappointment in a similar (but unrelated) project as follows:

> ...an amazing (if somewhat random) selection of religious leaders...An important...sign that Western governments are finally waking up to the importance of religious peace building – but I feel the conference itself could have been so much more constructive if the organizers, let alone the participants, knew a bit more about effective interreligious peacebuilding. So important and frustrating at the same time.[15]

Indeed, both evaluators and inter-religious peacebuilders recognize that coming together is important, if occasionally frustrating. The next section describes what happened when these two very different audiences began to work together consistently over three years' time through EIAP.

4 Tensions and Transformations

The Faith Matters Guide was outlined, drafted, pilot tested, and revised for publication between June 2016 and September 2017. Throughout these processes a fascinating learning journey unfolded, as evaluators and inter-religious peacebuilders combined their strengths and learned from each other. The learning was characterized by several areas of tension and transformation, which are relevant far beyond EIAP, because other collaborative efforts that bring together inter-religious peacebuilders and evaluators are likely to encounter similar dynamics.

4.1 Who Are We Writing For?

The distinction between EIAP's audiences as explored in this chapter is not an idle observation – rather it was a question actively explored during the EIAP process. From the moment EIAP staff began drafting the outline of the *Faith Matters* Guide, there were many conversations and re-writes prompted by the ques-

14 "...inter-religious action initiatives will improve in both quality and impact." EIAP project proposal, p. 9.

15 Email communication to Michelle Garred, 22 May 2017.

tion of identifying the primary intended readers. What pre-existing knowledge and skill set would we assume that readers would bring? Were we writing this guide for experienced inter-religious peacebuilders who need to learn how to approach evaluation? Were we writing this guide for experienced evaluators who need to learn to adapt to inter-religious peacebuilding?

At one point, it was tentatively decided that it was impossible to write for both audiences, so the first guide would be geared toward evaluators, and another publication designed for inter-religious peacebuilders would come later, if possible, in a future phase of the project. However, that decision was quickly challenged as potentially extractive,[16] and later discarded. The EIAP staff team then decided that it was necessary to write the *Faith Matters* Guide for both audiences,[17] knowing full well it would be difficult – and indeed it was. The guide pilot testers affirmed this decision as early as their pre-testing workshop held in Kathmandu in November 2016. They observed that mutual transformation between inter-religious peacebuilders and evaluators, as described below, is made possible by bringing both audiences *together* to exchange their perspectives and experiences.

4.2 What Is the Purpose of Evaluation?

As described above, there is currently a great deal of emphasis in secular peacebuilding circles on evaluation for the purpose of accountability toward donors. In contrast, some inter-religious peacebuilders do not currently work with large external donors bearing evaluation requirements and may have little interest in doing so in the future. Further, inter-religious peacebuilders tend to view meaning and accountability in spiritual rather than material terms. Seen from their perspective, evaluation for purposes of donor accountability may hold limited relevance. Evaluators who present evaluation primarily as a means of donor accountability, or as a source of evidence to justify future investment, may be seen as representing someone else's interests and therefore not fully trustworthy. Inter-religious peacebuilders may accommodate such evaluators when called

16 'Extractive' here refers to the ethically questionable practice of one partner requesting another partner's knowledge, and then using it to their own advantage, typically in a way that exacerbates power differences.

17 The *Faith Matters* Guide later recognized a third category of readers: organizational staff charged with developing M&E plans or commissioning evaluations. They are important readers, but they do not represent overarching EIAP constituencies in the same way that 'evaluators' and 'inter-religious peacebuilders do,' so they are not emphasized in this chapter.

upon to do so, even as their posture remains guarded and they decline to fully 'own' the evaluation process or its findings.

On the other hand, EIAP's experience indicates that when learning is foregrounded, and learning and accountability are viewed as complementary, uptake naturally increases. Inter-religious actors want to make a difference, so most are keen to learn about the effectiveness of their efforts. When learning was emphasized, *Faith Matters* guide pilot testers in the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda reported seeing evaluation through fresh eyes. Julie Nalubwama expressed that she felt more interested and increasingly confident to engage evaluation on her own terms – by asserting what her organization needs to learn from an evaluation process, and how. Joshua Kitakule articulated a newfound appreciation for the value of collecting meaningful data, as evidence to inform the improvement of practice.[18] Further, a multi-faceted understanding of accountability, which can include accountability toward host communities, programme participants, staff, partners and ultimately to the divine, is highly compatible with a faith-rooted commitment to learning for purposes of ongoing improvement.

4.3 Which Evaluation Approaches are Appropriate?

When the first draft of the *Faith Matters* Guide was shared with pilot testers and other stakeholders in November 2016, it was warmly received, but it also caused a bit of a stir among traditional evaluative thinkers due to its lack of emphasis on 'indicators,' which some criticized as impractical. The initial omission of indicators was intentional, reflecting a belief among the early author team that certain evaluation approaches (goal-free and indicator-light) were more appropriate than others (results-based evaluation) for inter-religious action. Results-based approaches, which are generally considered traditional in the Monitoring and Evaluation field, emphasize advance planning, using measurable indicators (such as changes in behaviour or the success rate of conflict resolution mechanisms) to assess the degree to which programme results align with pre-determined goals, objectives and outcomes. Results-based approaches are prominent in the development assistance sectors, which increasingly integrate with and influence secular peacebuilding. On the other hand, goal-free and complexity-based approaches assume a complex operating context in which cause-and-effect relationships are not linear or predictable. A goal-free evaluation seeks to

18 Workshop plenary, EIAP guide testers' consultation, 14–16 November 2016, Kathmandu.

assess what outcomes have emerged and how the programme has contributed, without reference to pre-determined goals or targets.[19]

There is still a debate in the field, and there was a significant debate among the three EIAP lead partners, about these approaches. What follows is an illustrative sample of real-life conversation between a results-based (RB) evaluator and a goal-free (GF) evaluator, while providing input to the *Faith Matters* Guide.[20]

- *R-B Evaluator:* In order to assess change in the work of peacebuilding, we need a common yardstick. Without that, our conclusions become very subjective, and we don't know whether a programme is effective.
- *G-F Evaluator:* I agree on the need for a yardstick – but the yardstick does not need to be predefined. Most peacebuilding work takes place in complex contexts – and where that work is faith-based, the importance of intangible factors such as spiritual practices, and the active belief in divine agency, can add additional layers of complexity. It is impossible to specify the causal chains in advance, in a way that informs the development of meaningful goals, indicators, baselines and targets.
- *R-B Evaluator:* When results-based approaches are used properly, they are not rigid! In a complex setting, one has to discern between what can and cannot be measured as progress. In a quality programme, the people involved will adapt their goals to fit the changing context, often monitoring indicators for a signal of the need to adapt, rather than getting stuck in a predetermined way of working.
- *G-F Evaluator:* In my experience adaptation is not enough, so the pre-defined results frameworks often need to be discarded. Also, many faith-based peacebuilders do not plan time-bound projects in the same way that secular peacebuilders do – their planning is emergent, but it's still important and worthwhile to assess their effectiveness. That's why I prefer to assess what a program has actually achieved, without reference to pre-defined goals.

19 For more information on goal-free evaluation, see Youker and Ingraham (2014).

20 EIAP internal email communications, May and June 2017. The colleague arguing for results-based approaches comes from a strong religious tradition, while the goal-free colleague would be considered secular – an illustration of the individual diversity within each of these identifiably distinct communities.

4.4 Methodological Balance and Inclusion

After extended reflection on the question of appropriate methodologies, the EIAP team decided that the appropriate approach for the *Faith Matters* guide was balance and inclusion. Whatever one's individual opinions, the reality is that both results-based and emergent design approaches are currently used in inter-religious peacebuilding, and that is unlikely to change in the near future. A broad-based guidance on evaluation should therefore be relevant to both approaches. The guide was significantly revised to speak to both approaches, including the addition of a section (Sect. 3.6) on indicators and the pros and cons of their use, including sample indicators tested by CRS and other organizations.[21] Even so, the level of balance and inclusion was subject to healthy debate right up to the time of publication.

While these debates are not easy, the benefits of balance and inclusion can be seen in the methodological growth reported by the pilot testing organizations. For example, Mercy Corps in Myanmar was developing the M&E strategy for their *Some Hmat* community-based inter-communal peacebuilding project. They had originally planned to focus on mostly theory-based approaches and quantitative indicators. However, they increasingly considered the relevance of goal-free impact evaluation approaches (i.e. Most Significant Change) and decided to expand that plan to include more qualitative data gathered through participatory processes, so that project stakeholders (community leaders, government officials and inter-faith religious leaders) could voice their own interpretations of project experiences and results.

For Mercy Corps, the process of incorporating these changes involved adding semi-structured interviews to elicit stories, and training staff in how to facilitate this new form of data collection and highlight individual behavioural changes. It also involved convening programme participants to discuss the purpose of participatory M&E, and to collectively identify the best way to tell the story of the project's impact. This greatly increased religious leaders' understanding, ownership, and active participation in the evaluation process, and reduced suspicions about the investigation of topics as sensitive as peace and religion. The Mercy Corps team still planned to analyse the findings according to their traditional results framework, but they expected those findings to be more robust and meaningful.

21 In addition to the shift in positioning on indicators, this revision of the guide also included a significantly strengthened and expanded focus on practical tools, in response to stakeholder feedback.

4.5 How Do We Approach 'Violent Extremism?'

In recent years, programmes aimed at countering or preventing violent extremism (C/PVE) have become increasingly prominent in response to an increase in civilian attacks attributed to extremist motivations, particularly those that claim to be religiously inspired. As C/PVE programmes have become more closely linked to peacebuilding, they have also become more contentious. Addressing violent extremism in peacebuilding is not new, however the rebirth of C/PVE work in large part through a Western and counterterrorism, and even securitized, lens has been a cause for widespread debate, in particular among peacebuilders, questioning its compatibility with peacebuilding given the new philosophical underpinnings.[22] There has also been a sense among peacebuilding practitioners that it is not known 'what works' in C/PVE programming (Ris and Ernstorfer 2016). Nonetheless, there is now evidence for the effectiveness of community-based approaches rather than the targeting of at-risk individuals, and for the importance of meaningful youth engagement in the community (Alliance for Peacebuilding 2018).

Among faith-based peacebuilders there is a widespread (though by no means universal) chafing at the assumptions regarding the roles of religion that are embedded in many C/PVE programs:[23] first, that religion is more a driver of conflict than it is of peace; and second, that the most problematic religion is specifically Islam. Not only Muslim peacebuilders object to this implicit assumption. Many peacebuilders of other faiths also see the focus on Islam as a biased interpretation of a reality in which all religions can be understood and practiced in either peaceful or violent ways—as amply demonstrated throughout history.

For all these reasons, C/PVE was one of the most consistently difficult themes throughout the EIAP experience. There were natural disagreements about how much attention C/PVE should be given on a particular meeting agenda. For example, C/PVE was significantly less prominent in the EIAP meeting in Vienna 2017 than it had been in the meeting the previous year in Istanbul, to the relief of many GAC members. Further, EIAP's preliminary literature review was significantly delayed by the fact that many of the religious themes were more nuanced than the lead partners originally envisioned – not least the theme of C/PVE. However, a mutually acceptable middle ground was found for the literature review, and then carried forward into the *Faith Matters* Guide. C/PVE was simply positioned as one among many common approaches to peacebuilding,

22 See for example Peace Direct (2017).

23 See for example Jayaweera (2018).

giving it no more attention than the others, and acknowledging briefly the sharply differing perspectives described above. The guide also mentions the practical priority of participant protection and conflict-sensitive practice (Sect. 3.4), because the risks of C/PVE programming to participants and communities can be particularly high.

4.6 What is the Role of 'Faith Sensitivity?'

The evaluation-oriented EIAP lead partners often used the term 'faith sensitivity' to express their ongoing effort to explain and adapt secular evaluation practices in ways that are appropriate for use in faith-based settings. This term served the necessary function of signalling a need to question the usual ways of doing things, and to consider doing something different to be more relevant to one's colleagues. At the same time, the notion of faith sensitivity was also contested, because the mention of faith sensitivity can appear shallow or tokenistic in the absence of genuine mutual understanding.

In practice, the influence of faith sensitivity gradually expanded. For example, in the early days of EIAP, it was thought that the way to make the OECD-DAC (2012) peacebuilding evaluation criteria faith-sensitive would be to add a criterion on 'consistency with values.' That criterion was indeed usefully added, but it was also recognized over time that every other criterion in the OECD-DAC framework could be unpacked in ways that reveal the perspectives of faith-based actors and the unique dynamics of inter-religious action. Similarly, the faith sensitivity content of the *Faith Matters* Guide, which comprised a discrete handful of pages in the pilot test version, had expanded to become more significant by the time the guide was published in September 2017. This transformation of thinking is still underway.

5 Emergent Challenges and Opportunities

The *Faith Matters* Guide, launched in September 2017, was richly strengthened by the ongoing interchange between evaluators and inter-religious peacebuilders, in both conceptual development and field testing. The AfP, SFCG and CDA are hopeful that this new resource will add value to the field. At the same time, everyone involved is keenly aware the learning process is far from over. This section highlights some of the challenges and opportunities that will continue to characterize our learning, as evaluators and inter-religious peacebuilders work together in collaborative initiatives.

5.1 Clarifying 'What's Unique'

Much of the mutual learning process that evolved between EIAP's secular and religious stakeholders revolved around the question of what makes inter-religious action distinct from other forms of peacebuilding. The difference was greater than originally anticipated. Key distinctions common to faith-based mindsets have been identified (as described above). It is also increasingly clear that the role of religious hierarchies and networks can distinctively shape who gets involved in peacebuilding (or not), through which points of access and influence, and how the patterns of the peacebuilding process unfold. However, there is not yet a comprehensive answer to the question of how these distinctions influence the practicalities of evaluation.

For example, when assessing indications of improvement in inter-group relations, evaluators involved in EIAP have understandably wondered whether inter-religious relationships differ significantly from other relationships formed across the lines of an identity-based conflict. Indeed, inter-religious progress often looks very much like inter-ethnic or inter-cultural progress, at least on the surface. Further, these different aspects of identity often overlap demographically to involve the same people—for instance in Sri Lanka where Sinhalese are predominantly Buddhist and Tamils are predominantly Hindu.

However, many of EIAP's faith-based stakeholders see the inter-religious aspects of the process as distinct, because of the spiritual processes involved. In conservative religious contexts, the boundaries between (and within) faith groups may be experienced as existential, such that interaction with 'the other' threatens a person's status in ways that are not only social but also spiritual. This involves:

> ...deep-seated fears of punishments, rewards, day of judgments, and all other beliefs that touch the core psyche of the person's existence...For a Muslim or Christian person who has been raised to avoid interacting with anyone outside of his or her faith group, meeting the other can be a terrifying experience that will shake his or her core being (Garred and Abu-Nimer 2018, 11).

The improvement of those relationships involves a spiritual process of reframing one's most deeply held beliefs, usually through the discovery of new theological interpretations within one's existing faith tradition.[24] This requires a lengthy transformation process – yet an evaluation that misses the spiritual aspects of this process could be considered incomplete. Evaluators need deepened guid-

24 See for example Patel 2018.

ance in order to better discern the uniquely spiritual aspects of an inter-religious process – which means that inter-religious peacebuilders need to take the initiative to help identify, articulate and explain those spiritual aspects.

5.2 Tuning in to Marginalized Voices

Another unique nuance of inter-religious peacebuilding evaluation is the need to come to grips with the ways in which certain voices can be missed. Unfortunately, the marginalization of groups including women, children, youth, sexual and gender minorities, and persons with disabilities is a widespread problem that affects many expressions of peacebuilding. However, it can manifest in unique ways in religious settings, because marginalization of particular groups may be sanctioned (or even mandated) by certain interpretations of religious teachings and reinforced by a hierarchy of religious leaders who function as de facto 'gatekeepers.'

In evaluation, the concern should not be simply to assess the extent to which faith groups have practiced inclusion – a challenging task in and of itself, given the diversity and sensitivity of the socio-religious norms involved – but also to make the evaluation itself inclusive. *Faith Matters* Guide tester, Joshua Kitakule of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, described how, in his experience, the contribution of women to inter-religious peacebuilding projects is easily overlooked in an evaluation process, because gatekeepers consider it relatively insignificant. This deprives the practitioner community of the opportunity to learn based on what those women have accomplished, including potentially ground-breaking innovations that differ from the male-dominated 'mainstream.' Evaluations that exclude women can legitimize exclusion from future programming in a self-reinforcing negative cycle.[25] To break this cycle, evaluators need the religious literacy and communication skills to not only identify where exclusion is a problem, but to successfully negotiate inclusion of women (or other marginalized groups) in ways that inspire rather than offend the religious gatekeeper'.

25 Workshop sharing of examples, EIAP Global Advisory Council consultation, 8 – 10 May 2016, Vienna.

5.3 When There Is No 'Project'

One of the oft-raised issues in considering application of M&E to inter-religious efforts is that many of these activities are run by religious organizations with little external funding and outside the time-bound 'project cycles' typically used in international development work. A great many of these organizations are small and local. In the EIAP context, the issues surrounding non-existent 'project cycles' were raised by the inter-religious peacebuilders within Global Advisory Council and the guide-testing cohort, because they were concerned that traditional monitoring and evaluation approaches might not apply. However, monitoring and evaluation need not be confined to a project cycle as one may think. Since one of the key purposes of M&E is learning, there are many mechanisms and tools through which to establish systematic learning, feedback loops, and capture results that do not require the formalized structure of a project cycle to be effective.

A good starting point is adaptive management.[26] Adaptive management is a systematic process of reflection, results capture, adjustment of activities in response to learnings and shifting contexts, and smaller evaluative efforts that are intertwined with the day-to-day implementation of activities. Thus, adaptive management is a process with a suite of tools that can enable inter-religious action to apply forward-thinking learning without conforming to a project cycle. The easiest way to think about adaptive management is to build in systematic steps and look for tools that help organizations to (Ladner 2015):

1. Review what has happened, identify what changes have affected outcomes, and document any existent but individual learnings;
2. Assess this information to determine what priority opportunities and risks need to be addressed to strengthen the work being done;
3. Adapt, as necessary, strategies, operations, and activities based on that assessment; and,
4. Document how and why the revisions were made, as well as any consequences of adaptation. Then repeat!

It is worth noting that adaptive management can be practiced nearly cost-free. Where budgets are limited, the Reflection Exercise shared in Annex C of the *Faith Matters* Guide is another possible tool with off-the-shelf usefulness for inter-religious peacebuilders who may not have a 'project.'

26 For an explanation of adaptive management see USAID Learning Lab (2018).

If there is significant funding available for learning exercises, but still no defined project, another tool worth considering is developmental evaluation (DE).[27] DE is a non-traditional evaluation approach that provides evaluative thinking and timely feedback to inform ongoing adjustments, as needs, findings, and insights emerge in complex, dynamic situations. DEs are also designed to help facilitate moving from looking at the question 'what are we learning from our work?' to 'how do we leverage what's working and overcome any challenges?', taking stakeholders from learning to adaptation through collaborative processes. DEs require the regular engagement of a dedicated evaluator who accompanies a project for a defined period of time. They are not a fit for every type of work, but are particularly useful when dealing with unknowns, such as untested theories of change, rapidly changing contexts, complex structures and/or relationships, and innovations. DEs are increasingly being utilized in a wider variety of contexts, with new guidance on implementation and lessons learned emerging quickly.[28]

5.4 Where and How to Build Capacity

This chapter does not assume that inter-religious peacebuilders will quickly develop an international network of highly skilled evaluators within their own ranks. EIAP does see a role for appropriate external resource people that can lead evaluations as well as highlight entry points for enhancing internal evaluation capacity within the participating organization(s). There is need to build capacity on both fronts, achieving two very different objectives.

With regard to external evaluators, one well-trained evaluator can evaluate many inter-religious efforts in peacebuilding. If these evaluators are truly well-qualified, religiously literate and equipped to train, they can also build the capacity of inter-religious actors along the way. In a resource-constrained environment, it may be necessary to put the burden on evaluators to orient themselves to this sector and build the necessary skills to address the nuances and distinctive nature of inter-religious action in peacebuilding. This will enhance the capacity of the sector writ large to apply more formalized evaluation efforts, especially those that speak to results and are perceived as rigorous enough to influence the global conversation regarding religion, peacebuilding, and development. Further, increasing the demand for evaluation experts who understand

27 For more information, see Gamble (2008).

28 Quinn Patton *et al.* 2016.

the subtleties and complexity of inter-religious work will increase the availability of such experts.

On the other hand, evaluation goes beyond formalized, end-of-programme assessments, to the more iterative, learning-centric approaches and tools used by practitioners. As such, building the internal capacity of inter-religious actors in evaluation is also an important consideration. Individual staff who are trained to think evaluatively and have a strong toolbox available can help integrate systematic learning into activities and contribute to stronger programming and sharing of learnings. This strategy requires more resources, as there are more staff to equip, so in particularly resource-constrained environments it may be beneficial to equip leaders through a training-of-trainers approach so that they can build capacity and institute new norms about evaluative thinking across their own organization. Future EIAP work would consider both types of capacity building needs, through raising awareness and building capacity among external evaluators (e. g., working through the regional evaluation associations), and by working with inter-religious organizations to develop their capacities for effectiveness and evaluative thinking.

5.5 Looking Ahead

As noted at the outset, EIAP was launched and led in 2015 – 2017 by three secular evaluation-oriented organizations: AfP, SFCG and CDA. Strong inter-religious influence came through the GAC and the faith-based organizations among the guide testers. The result was a very dynamic interplay of learning. The changing relationship between evaluator and inter-religious peacebuilder was not unlike the change process of successful inter-faith dialogue, in which one small, uncertain step followed by another leads over time to significant growth in mutual respect and understanding.

Since the time of writing, EIAP has entered a dynamic second phase. AfP in collaboration with SFCG now aims to improve the evidence base of effective inter-religious action by enhancing the internal capacities of inter-religious actors for design, monitoring and evaluation. EIAP is further using evaluation processes to generate evidence of macro-level social and/or political level change, to increase the visibility of inter-religious action in peacebuilding. Such visibility will increase the likelihood that inter-religious actors, including those working at local grassroots levels, can gain a seat at the global table to influence the future of peacebuilding.

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Shana Cohen

Assessing the Impact of Interfaith Initiatives

1 Introduction

In 2011, I began working at the Woolf Institute, which focuses on interfaith relations in the United Kingdom and is based in Cambridge. Shortly after starting the job, the Director of the Institute and I sat down with a professor at Cambridge to ask about pursuing a research project on inter faith dialogue. "Interfaith dialogue is not a field of study," the professor retorted, "it's a practice." Perhaps a year later, I attended a lecture by one of the most well-known scholars of faith and social action in the UK, Adam Dinham. Professor Dinham labelled interfaith dialogue "A pragmatic cobbling together of people who already want to work together". Referring to the 2007 Labour government initiative Face to Face/Side by Side, he commented that it had disappeared under the Coalition government "entirely without comment." This initiative, launched by the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears, was intended to provide an "opportunity to reflect on how Government should support this [interfaith relations], where and in what circumstances interfaith works best and how we can work in partnerships with faith and non-faith-based communities and organizations" (Blears 2007). For Dinham, government consultations like this reflected the interests of "policymakers more than lived reality."[1] In practice, without committed leadership, buildings, and basic tenets, forums could only attract those already deeply motivated on a personal level. They offered little for those individuals who rejected communication with other faiths.

I often thought about Professor Dinham's comment when listening to the anxiety and discomfort of interfaith activists in the years following the meeting. These activists frequently repeated an observation that dialogue had become about 'Bagels and Samosas', or food and entertainment, rather than more profound efforts to improve understanding. This disillusionment was echoed amongst policymakers and in policy documents, which cited slow integration of migrant communities and patterns of segregation between minority and majority communities as evidence of the failure of interfaith dialogue. The 2016 Casey Review, a report on ethnic and religious diversity in the UK commissioned

1 From a lecture at the University of Cambridge, Westminster College, 2014.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110624625-008

by the Conservative government (2016 – 17) and led by Dame Louise Casey, claimed that divisions continued and that "cultural and religious practices in communities that are not only holding some of our citizens back but run contrary to British values and sometimes our laws" (Casey 2016, 5). Indeed, the report lamented the same reduction of interfaith dialogue to 'samosas and bagels' and criticized the government for its neglect of diversity as a salient political and policy issue and thus deserving of innovation and investment. The report states:

> Since 2010, cohesion policy has largely been squeezed out, with Government only willing to act exceptionally over the issue, falling well below its stated ambition to "do more than any other government before us to promote integration" ... Government's policy consisted of a relatively small pot of funding going towards small scale exemplar projects such as interfaith dialogue, training curry chefs or cross community social events such as the 'Big Lunch' and 'Our Big Gig'. This has been described to us as amounting to "saris, samosas and steel drums" for the already well-intentioned. These are worthy and enjoyable projects which should continue but they are not enough on their own, nor should they be a substitute for tackling difficult issues (2016, 149).

I ask in this chapter if and how interfaith initiatives can be re-examined to determine their value in improving relations between ethnic and religious groups. Do the projects criticized in the Casey Review make any worthwhile contribution to interfaith relations that can inform wider policy efforts? How do we evaluate this contribution?

As the Casey Review and other analyses[2] have targeted interfaith dialogue and related projects in general, the evaluation framework I discuss here responds in turn, looking across projects to understand the ideas that underpin them and the activities they have inspired. Similar to the widely used evaluation methodology Theory of Change (ToC),this approach analyses assumptions about the expected impact of activities. According to the Center for Theory of Change, Theory of Change dissects the assumptions underpinning a social intervention and its expected impact. Theory of Change is "essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or "filling in" what has been described as the "missing middle" between what a programme or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved" (Center for Theory of Change 2019). On practical level, pursuing a ToC approach means "first identifying the desired long-term goals and then works back from these to identify all the con-

2 See Hussain (2014) as an example.

ditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur."

Rather than focus on the argument underpinning a particular project, as is the case with ToC, I suggest exploring the theories, rooted in theology and philosophy, that have influenced at least the majority of interfaith initiatives and asks if the practical interpretation of these theories has limited the innovation necessary to attract new participants and have a greater impact on relations. The 'theory of change' is thus applied across the field, with programme objectives and expected impact linked directly to external factors like policy and assumptions about how change occurs contextualized within policy debates, resources, and institutional behaviour.

In pursuing this analysis, the chapter draws on some elements of field theory, developed by physicists and extended by social scientists to interpret individual and organizational behaviour. In a review of field theory (2003), John Levi Martin writes that in general, "we may say fields emerge whenever we find a set of institutions that individuals tend to traverse in predictable ways with minimal dislocation of subjectivity. In all cases, the field is something that spans and coordinates institutions by allowing individuals to understand their past, current, and future situations in terms of position, trajectory, and similarity or closeness (Turner 1974, p. 139; cf. Mohr 1994)." (2003, 42) In other words, we can understand individual, or organizational, decisions through locating their position within the field. In other words, they make life choices and understand their own position and that of others in relation to institutions in areas like education, employment, and religion. Martin concludes by stating that, "Field theory disappoints us in remaining vague as to precisely how this occurs, and we hope that it can be eventually surpassed in this regard. Yet it promises the chance of combining rigorous analytic insight with attention to the concrete" (2003, 42).

Martin is building on the efforts of a number of social scientists (Bourdieu 1984, 1985; Meyer and Rowan 1977, Fligstein 2001) who want to understand how individuals and organizations make decisions in relation to their context. I am developing upon these ideas but applying them in a very practical fashion to social action. In addition, despite Martin's lament that causality remains vague, I am attempting to explain how fields emerge and are reproduced, or maintain sets of relations and power between actors, and likewise frame how they perceive themselves and each other.

A field of social action could concern any social issue, from adult literacy to unemployment among young people from vulnerable backgrounds to local relations between diverse ethnic and religious groups. A field is constituted by policy – which itself is based on a particular ideological approach or theory of social and economic order; availability and investment of financial and other resour-

ces; and institutional behaviour. It influences 1) how and which organisations survive, as well as their relations with each other; 2) the designs and expected impacts of specific initiatives; and 3) capacity to innovate or establish initiatives that conflict with predominant ideas and practical activities. Innovation would, in turn, challenge the constitution of the field, and thus the space for differentiation between initiatives is important in assessing the ability of fields to adapt to crises and evolving social issues versus the imperative of reproduction.

For instance, interfaith initiatives have primarily utilized dialogue as their methodology for improving communication and trust. The absence of variation reflects a lack of research and political interest and institutional (religious) support regarding new ideas for better relations. In a 2013 interview in London, an Anglican bishop who had been engaged with interfaith relations told me that dialogue had declined as a priority for the Church of England, in part because the current Archbishop, Justin Welby, was not as interested as his predecessor, Rowan Williams, and in part because younger generations found other local projects more appealing. He stated, "If you have two projects, one to clean up a park and one to understand each other better, I would bet on the park."[3] He did emphasize that interfaith relations remained an issue but lacked a framework for communication about diversity. Programmes like Near Neighbours (2011– the present),[4] which is managed by the Church Urban Fund and financed

3 In fact, parks and other outdoor spaces frequently served as platforms for interfaith cooperation amongst Near Neighbours projects. For example, one project for Near Neighbours involved cleaning up a church garden in London where a violent assault had occurred, in part because the overgrowth shielded the attack. Austerity also provoked cooperation; an interfaith activist in London recounted how she and other residents decided to maintain the local park after the local authority cut funding for maintenance. She and her neighbours borrowed equipment from the authority and maintained the part for two months and then a government contracted service would come every third month.

4 The Near Neighbours programme was established in England in 2011 in order to further cooperation between different ethnic and religious communities. The Near Neighbours programme targeted key locations in England known for high levels of ethnic and religious diversity, and in some cases tensions between groups. There were two stages of Near Neighbours, the first in 2011–13 and the second in 2014–16, with an extension to March 2017 and another in 2018. The programme described its principal objective as bringing "people together who are near neighbours in communities that are religiously and ethnically diverse, so that they can get to know each other better, build relationships of trust, and collaborate together on initiatives that improve the local community they live in." The two 'key objectives' were to promote greater social interaction and social action. These objectives were achieved through small grants, ranging from £500 to £5000, meant to serve as 'seed funding'.
The application process was supported by a local coordinator and local Anglican (Church of England) clergy and deliberately avoided setting targets, encouraging instead the development

primarily by the Department of Communities and Local Government/Housing, Communities and Local Government, have supported grassroots interfaith initiatives centred on social action. Reflecting on Near Neighbours specifically, he commented, "what is suffering are the dialogical aspects of it. You know, about getting along better."

In sum, because the field has depended on a narrow set of funding bodies and institutions and benefited from only a few policy proposals, it is facing irrelevance without radical renovation. At the same time, because of this status, the field of interfaith relations represents a potentially useful case study for evaluating a field, rather than a single project. Understanding how the field has evolved and why it is in trouble can lead to the transformation it needs to survive. The chapter first describes the research the article relies upon and then examines common interfaith initiatives in the UK to show how individual project evaluation cannot explain the disenchantment cited above, despite evident need. The third section outlines a field approach, suggesting that in the case of interfaith relations, this approach indicates both why the field has remained limited in scale and how it can alter to generate better relations between diverse ethnic and religious groups.

2 Analysing the Field of Interfaith Relations

2.1 Research on Interfaith Relations

My analysis of a field of interfaith relations is based on four evaluations of Church Urban Fund programmes, including three of the Near Neighbours Grants, and research conducted while at the Woolf Institute on trust and interfaith relations between 2013 – 2017. I conducted the Near Neighbours evaluations with Kasia Narkowicz and one evaluation of their Together Grants, which support church-based projects fighting poverty (The Woolf Institute 2016),[5] with John Fahy. The research on the impact of interfaith initiatives on trust between different ethnic and religious communities was conducted largely in London while the evaluations covered different cities in England, including Nottingham, Greater Manchester (Bury and Prestwich), Birmingham, Luton, and East and West Lon-

of projects organic to the area, with goals suited to the particular context and status of local relations between religious groups and between religious and secular residents.

5 The evaluations conducted by Drs Cohen and Narkowicz occurred in five areas: East London, Birmingham, Bradford/Oldham/Burnley area, Luton, Nottingham, Rochdale, Bury and the Black Country. Dr Fahy helped with the Together Grant evaluation in 2015.

don. The research involved interviews with faith leaders and with organizers of grassroots interfaith projects, overlapping methodologically with the Near Neighbours evaluations.

The interviewees for the evaluations and the more academic study, like Professor Dinham, often expressed cynicism or wariness concerning the impact of explicitly interfaith initiatives. For example, when I mentioned to a young vicar in Tottenham, one of the most diverse areas of London and site of the 2011 riots, that I was going to see Rowan Williams, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, give a talk about interfaith relations, he retorted, "Why?" His view was that interfaith relations occurred when he walked out the door of his parish church. Another vicar categorized interfaith relations as an important academic exercise, away from the daily experience and needs of individuals and communities. In the evaluations, project organizers occasionally observed that practical forms of engagement contributed more to relationship-building than exchanging knowledge about religious beliefs. The latter could come later, after gaining trust and confidence through shared experiences that had more immediate and tangible impact. A vicar in one of the Near Neighbour areas commented that local residents usually thought it was 'great' that the church and the mosque worked together, they were not necessarily interested in joining an interfaith dialogue. However, if the interfaith work was targeted towards meeting the practical needs of the local community, participants expressed more enthusiasm as they perceived greater personal and collective benefit: "I think practical action on something like that, bringing together mosque and church and others is, for me, a more profitable use of near Neighbours really. Because I think often dialogues start at a practical level." The appeal of local activism seemed particularly applicable to younger generations. Remarking on disinterest among youth in interfaith dialogue, a Catholic activist in South London stated flatly, "I don't think I have had any impact on young people at all. The only event that attracts them is the Westminster Interfaith Peace Walk (in June)." He also remarked, "Talking is great but action is very important."

2.2 How Did the Field Come About?

Interfaith relations as a field of practice emerged from theology and religious studies, identifying the absence of authentic communication, or exchange of knowledge and subsequence increasing in understanding of the Other, as the critical problem in interfaith relations. The most important theologians for the emerging field of interfaith relations, Wilfred Cantwell and Martin Buber, emphasized the necessity of listening to the 'Other' and taking seriously the beliefs and

existential meaning inherent to other faiths (Buber 1937; Cantwell 1981). The 'I and Thou' relationship conceived by Martin Buber particularly influenced the format of interfaith forums. He emphasized that authentic communication, where the participants hear what each other says, has no institutional or ideological framework. He wrote:

> The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou. The memory itself is transformed, as it plunges out of its isolation into the unity of the whole. No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between I and Thou ... Every means is an obstacle. Only when every means has collapsed does the meeting come about (1937, 10 – 11).

In other words, pre-fixed ideas, prejudices, or the historical legacy of encounters should not interfere in the actual, lived, immediate encounter. Diane Eck, a student of Cantwell Smith's and the Director of Harvard University's Pluralism Project, has described interfaith dialogue as having "a range of meanings, all of which involve ways in which we handle our encounters with religious difference—dialogue in daily life, dialogue in learning, dialogue in community, and dialogue in faith and theology" (2017, 27). 'Dialogue' itself signifies "a mutuality of speaking and listening, the kind of communication that rises above, or perhaps penetrates beneath, the chatter of words and the shrill media discussion. It suggests a genuine openness to hearing the concerns of the other in his or her own voice, just as we wish to be heard" (2017, 27). Dialogue surmounts the barriers present in everyday communication by directing conversation toward exchange and explicitly focusing attention on the subjective perceptions of participants regarding each other.

2.3 Evaluating Individual Initiatives

Statements like Buber's or Eck's have underpinned the development of practical interfaith initiatives, which emphasize the importance of open discussion and listening and of a neutral space that facilitates building trust in the Other. The objectives of these initiatives can remain vague. For instance, Interfaith Week, a national government sponsored initiative organized annually in November by the Interfaith Network,[6] states as its aims (1) 'strengthening good interfaith relations at all levels', (2) 'increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the con-

6 See the Interfaith Week Network of the United Kingdom (2021).

tribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society' and (3) 'increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs'. The activities bringing together members of different faith and belief communities that are run during Interfaith Week, like the national Jewish volunteering event Mitzvah Day, are assumed to be the mechanism of change. Yet, there has been little research on how or if this change happens. Both the impreciseness of objectives amongst existing initiatives, so necessary for evaluation in other fields, and the lack of social research on the long-term implications for attitudes and behaviour of participants in interfaith initiatives have had continued spill over effects on project design. As Renee Garfinkel puts is, "So far there has been very little research on their [interfaith initiatives] effectiveness. This is unfortunate, because those who design and implement interfaith programs need feedback to determine how to maximize their efforts and resources" (2004, 9). The creator of Theory of Change (ToC), Carol Weiss, warns against using ToC under these conditions: "Theory-based evaluation is one approach that has a great deal of promise. But trying to use theory-based evaluation is difficult when programs do not have any explicit—or even implicit—theories, when programs are amorphous, or when they shift significantly over time" (Horsch 1998).

Though initiatives like Interfaith Week, or for that matter, most local interfaith forums lack precise objectives and methodologies, over the past twenty years, three specific kinds of initiatives have evolved that are based on explicit theories of change. These are theological, educational, and social initiatives that are often located in public institutions, like schools and universities, or associated with churches and religious organizations. The most prominent form of theological interfaith dialogue is called scriptural reasoning. Founded by retired Cambridge University professor David Ford, scriptural reasoning brings together clergy from different faiths to read religious texts together and relate the teachings to contemporary issues. According to Jeffrey Bailey, scriptural reasoning refers to the following:

> [G]roup study of scriptural texts from the three Abrahamic religious traditions. At any given meeting, with roughly equal numbers of each faith represented, passages from the three scriptures are read. A theme (say, debt relief) usually relates the texts together. A few introductory comments about a scripture passage are made by a member of that faith, and then the entire group attempts to understand what the passage is teaching, and how it ought be applied to today's context (Bailey 2006, 37).

In practice, scriptural reasoning as a form of interfaith dialogue consists of four steps: participants identify a theme based on a common concern or interest; they select a relevant passage from each scripture (Muslim, Jewish, and Christian);

they then read and explain the passage to the other participants; and finally, with the help of a facilitator, participants discuss the passages and reflect on their meaning (Rosecastle Foundation, ND). The outcomes should be greater knowledge of other faiths, especially how the scriptures of each faith speak to contemporary issues and more awareness of how others see one's own faith. The longer-term impact should be moving beyond preconceptions of the other two faiths and the development of relationships that can lead, in turn, to ongoing collaboration to address shared problems.

Whereas scriptural reasoning is often oriented toward clergy, or lay leaders with prior knowledge of texts, dialogue within schools is obviously meant for young people. These projects assume that exposure to the practice and beliefs of other faiths will increase respect and knowledge. As with scriptural reasoning, a facilitator brings together representatives of the different faiths and beliefs to ensure the participants are at ease, or the 'neutrality' evoked in the original theorization of dialogue. In contrast to scriptural reasoning, however, educational dialogue can also refer to culture, and not just religious tenets and texts, and the need for social encounters across diversity.

The Faith and Belief Forum, formerly known as Three Faiths Forum, is the most prominent British organization engaged in educational work. Their projects include linking schools associated with different religious traditions and running workshops. The workshops can bring together a panel of speakers of different faiths and beliefs that is led by a professional facilitator. The speakers share their own experiences of faith and respond to the pupils' questions. In one report, the organization claims that such a workshop helps young people by increasing their knowledge of religion and belief and making them more comfortable with individuals of different religions and beliefs than their own. The workshop should make students appreciate diversity and to seek out relationships with people of different backgrounds. Finally, students who have participated in the workshop should become defenders of religious tolerance and freedom and champions of diversity within British society.

In contrast to the explicitly theological focus of scriptural reasoning or interfaith education based in schools, the third category integrates interfaith relations with another field, most often, social action. The Near Neighbours programme claims two principal objectives: "*Social interaction* - to develop positive relationships in multi-faith areas i. e. to help people from different faiths get to know and understand each other better," and "*Social action* - to encourage people of different faiths and of no faith to come together for initiatives that improve their local neighbourhood" [Emphasis adapted from the website] (Near Neighbours 2019). Similarly, the vision of the national Jewish day of volunteering in the UK, Mitzvah Day, is "of Jews and non-Jews coming together to build more cohesive neigh-

bourhoods and to strengthen civil society" (Mitzvah Day 2021). Sadaqa Day (Sadaqa Day, ND), the Muslim equivalent, is defined as "A date in the calendar when individuals, mosques and other places of worship, schools, women's and community groups, scouts and guides groups can get involved."

When first launched in 2011, the then Secretary of DCLG, Eric Pickles, explained that the purpose of the programme was to overcome the "isolation and misunderstandings which are not healthy for local communities, when by and large, irrespective of creed or faith most people want the same thing, for their neighbourhoods to be better places to live" (Ministry of Housing 2011). On a practical level, Near Neighbours required applications for funding to involve at least two faith groups. Most applications exceeded that, as approximately 90 % of grants awarded included at least three faith groups or those of no faith (Near Neighbours 2017a, 2). Between September 2011 and March 2017, Near Neighbours funded 1433 projects, of which 733 were run by faith groups and 700 by secular community groups (Near Neighbours 2017a, 2).

Overall, Near Neighbours awarded £5,329,894 to 1635 projects across England in this six-year period (Near Neighbours 2017b, 1). The programme operated in nine hubs: Birmingham, the Black Country, West Midlands, Luton, West London, East London, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Lancashire (Near Neighbours 2019). The types of projects that Near Neighbours funded included cooking and archery classes in Luton; exercise and Hebrew classes in Bury; provision of English language skills, a soup kitchen, and a Roma engagement project in Nottingham; and faith tours in Tipton as well as coffee mornings organised on a housing estate for neighbours to get to know each other better. In awarding grants, Near Neighbours emphasized engaging people in projects who might feel excluded from the local community; 50 % of Near Neighbours projects involved unemployed people and a third worked with refugees and asylum seekers (Near Neighbours 2017a, 5).

The timeframe for the grants was relatively short with most grants expected to take place within a year or less from the date of award.[7] The distribution of grants reflected the existing level of civil society engagement. Where grassroots activism already was strong, such as in Nottingham and Luton, the programme received more applications and consequently, more projects were awarded. In Bury and Tipton the interest was significantly lower, reflecting the lack of community activism, and the grants tended to be awarded to the handful of groups already doing work in the local area.

7 In 2015, a total of 133 projects was funded by Near Neighbours in the five areas: 7 grants were awarded in Tipton, 7 in Bury, 25 in Rochdale, 41 in Nottingham and 53 in Luton

In the evaluations we conducted, the Near Neighbours projects that were unable to continue cited a lack of funding as the main barrier. There is no data on overall project survival rates, though the evaluations indicated that when the projects survived, it was often because organizations adapted them to accommodate financial constraints. For example, a project based in East London that organized a dance class for men who had tested positive for HIV/AIDS kept shifting the location of the class and finding different instructors because of limited resources. Perhaps more importantly, participants in the Near Neighbours funded projects conveyed that the positive impact on relations remained even if the projects themselves no longer existed.[8] According to the most recent evaluation of Near Neighbours, which surveyed programme participants in 2018, nearly 50 % of respondents indicated that "because of their involvement with a Small Grant-funded project they have since started volunteering in other community projects" (Bremner 2018, NP).

Yet, returning to the cynicism cited at the beginning of the chapter, if the impact of Near Neighbours was to make volunteering, or implicitly social action and not dialogue, more appealing, what does this say about the potential of dialogue for improving relations across diverse groups? In fact, over the four years of conducting evaluations, projects became increasingly oriented toward social action and not organizing intercultural events or interreligious forums. Organizers openly diminished the role of religion in their activities, preferring to concentrate on social relations and shared interests.

For example, in 2014, tensions in the Middle East meant that Muslim and Jewish groups in Greater Manchester, one of the locations where Near Neighbours operated, would not interact with each other, much less collaborate on a project. A year later, however, young, religious Muslim and Jewish women had organized an exercise class funded by Near Neighbours. They claimed that their project had succeeded because "We are friends, there is no politics, it is so refreshing." Their shared religiosity facilitated cooperation, as participants understood practices like wearing the veil or marrying and having children at a young age. But the organizers were frank in their desire not to discuss religion. Similarly, a rabbi who organized a café with local Muslim leaders in Nottingham described her motivation as practical. Though she had learned about Islam through the project, she stressed the value of collaboration in a social project for understanding, rather than directly engaging in a conversation about religious belief.

8 Ibid.

Does this wariness of prioritizing religious belief in activities mean that interfaith dialogue may continue to benefit religious and lay leaders or enhance school curricula but not evolve further than a secondary consideration of social action? What can be done, if anything, to extend the scope, and ideally, the impact, of interfaith initiatives?

3 Assessing the Field of Interfaith Initiatives

I suggest a more fruitful approach than evaluating single initiatives may be to assess the field itself. This approach would mean, as explained above, asking which initiatives survive and which do not and why not; how organizations relate to each other, specifically, if they compete for scarce resources and/or partner in advocacy and projects; are there prevalent project designs and expected impacts; and is there a space to innovate, or challenge the dominant ideas of the field? Patterns across the field can reveal how the field is reproduced, the effect of this reproduction on kinds of impact, and the necessary changes in initiatives to improve impact.

3.1 How Has a Field of Interfaith Initiatives Come About?

Responding to this question entails determining how different factors – policy, institutional behaviour, and availability of material and human resources – influence both the decision-making of organizations and their survival and the design, implementation, and impact of projects. How do these factors influence the conception of the problem across diverse initiatives and the activities they deliver? How do they lend to the dominance or, inversely, marginalization, of particular initiatives? Returning again to the doubts expressed by activists, academics, and policymakers alike about the significance of interfaith dialogue, has the field of interfaith relations relied too heavily on dialogue as a method and likewise, circumscribed capacity to proffer alternatives?

3.1.1 7/7 and the Rise of Interfaith Dialogue

In the UK, interest in interfaith dialogue peaked after the July 7, 2005 bombings in London (7/7). Faith-based organizations had already benefited from the Labour government's commissioning agenda, desire to build government-voluntary and faith-based organization partnerships, and support for regionalism. The

partnership efforts were consolidated under the Local Strategic Partnerships (Communities and Local Government 2009). and the Local Area Agreements[9] and regionalism institutionalized through the establishment of regional development agencies (Robson, Peck and Holden 2000). Following these policy strategies, the government created regional faith councils to enhance the capacity of faith-based organizations at a local and regional level. For example, the East of England Faiths Council identified its mission as facilitating "the major faith traditions [to be] represented in the region in making input to relevant strategy and issues, to act as a clear point of contact for public, private and voluntary bodies; to support local inter faith and faith activity; and to promote the contribution of faiths to the life and well-being of the region (ND)." In other words, the Council should act as an intermediary, developing the capacity of FBOs and interfaith initiatives to work in partnership and providing advice and guidance to the public sector on how to engage effectively with organizations and indeed, religious identity.

Integration of faith-based initiatives into public sector investment and policy strategies provided more funding and arguably, status, for interfaith work. More specifically, government directives on how to engage with faith-based organizations reinforced the predominance of particular methods of intervention, namely religious literacy and involvement of different faith groups. The Home Office's report "Working Together: Cooperation Between Government and Faith Groups" (2004), which aimed to provide guidelines for closer cooperation between faith communities and the local and national government, instructed government officials to respect faith and belief and learn more about religious diversity. The guidelines for government included 'pursuing faith literacy,' enrolling in training, developing networks, and ensuring representation from different faith groups and women, youth, and older people. The implication for interfaith initiatives was that they were expected to deliver activities that provided knowledge of different faiths and their impact was, albeit primarily informally, assessed by the inclusion of representatives of diverse religious groups. The policy agenda and availability of resources thus determined both the activities and the

9 The National Audit Office described the LAAs as "a new form of contract between central and local government and were designed to devolve greater power over public services to local communities." Indicating the ambition of these partnerships, the NAO added, "The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the nine Government Offices for the Regions (GOs) have worked to introduce LAAs over the past three years and by April 2007 every local authority in England had one. The amount of public expenditure covered by the agreements is expected to reach around £5 billion in the next three years" (Beardsley *et al*. 2007, 2).

inherent assumptions about their impact, or that encounters aimed at increasing knowledge would lead to better relations between groups.

3.1.2 Austerity and the Decline of Dialogue

The decline, even demise, of the regional faith councils, and the emerging identification of interfaith relations with social activism reflect the trajectory of policy support and government funding since the financial crisis in 2007–2008 and the introduction of austerity measures under the coalition government (2010–15). The coalition government (Conservative – Liberal Democrat) ended public sector growth and initiated an era, still ongoing, of continuous cuts to local government and other sources of funding (Lupton, et. al. 2015, 2–4). The government abolished regional development agencies altogether, as well as investment in the regional faiths councils (EEFC closed in 2013) and moved away from the substantive aim of creating public – voluntary sector partnerships in favour of promoting local social action (Tizard 2012).

At the same time, the rapid rise of social problems created by the cuts and economic insecurity, whether from changes to benefits or precarious employment or both, also meant that faith-based organizations were under pressure to address local social demand. The new focus for religious institutions and faith-based organizations was perhaps most noticeable in three trends: government investment in Near Neighbours, the rise of food banks, mostly supported through the Christian organization Trussell Trust, and the expansion of faith-based volunteering days in the UK, which now include Mitzvah Day (Jewish, est. 2005), Sewa Day (Hindu, est. 2010), and Sadaqa Day (Muslim, est. 2015). Near Neighbours received £5 million for the first stage, launched in 2011, and £4.5 million more for another stage that began in 2014 and was extended in 2016 for another year, and then, most recently, £1.5 million in 2019.

Private foundations did not elect to substitute for public investment as it diminished, shying away themselves from prioritizing interfaith relations. The Interfaith Network, a national umbrella organization, continued to receive government funding, in addition to member fees. The other prominent national interfaith organizations, like Three Faiths Forum (3FF/ Faith and Belief Forum, have relied on relationships with a small number of British and foreign private foundations and individual donors, as well as occasional support from organizations like the British Council and government departments. The Cambridge Interfaith Programme (CIP), which was founded by Professor David Ford, is housed at the University of Cambridge and has received private funding as well as funding from the American-based Coexist Foundation (Coexist Foundation 2019).

For the majority of interfaith initiatives, the loss of government and philanthropic support represented more than access to material resources. It was also politically symbolic, just as the past interest in interfaith relations gave legitimacy to initiatives. As a vicar based in London explained to me around 2013, "At one point there were a lot of interfaith forums. This has diminished because of the funding." However, he also added, "It's not just the funding. The previous government was really into the notion of faith communities working together and they thought, all the sort of spin was they could impact hard to reach communities. All that was understood is that they had a bit of power. It is certainly completely out of fashion now except for Near Neighbours." On a practical level, the notion inherent in interfaith forums that knowledge of other religions and social encounters, facilitated by shared holidays and other events, would generate familiarity, trust, and cooperation, had lost the confidence of policymakers.

3.2 The Implications for Interfaith Initiatives

3.2.1 The Few Organizations that Have Survived Have Relied Primarily on Established Private Sources of Funding and Have Offered a Consistent Range of Activities

The organizations engaged in interfaith relations that have survived in the post-financial crisis period, or over the past decade, have been those in existence for over several decades, and thus relatively well established even before the spike in government interest after the 7/7 attacks. These organizations are linked to stable sources of funding, especially private donors and universities. Significantly for the field, they have maintained the same activities, for instance, the Cambridge Interfaith Programme (est. 2002) has always centred its work on scriptural reasoning. 3FF/Faith and Belief Forum (est. 1997) primarily concentrates on educational activities and the Interfaith Network (est.1987), which does receive government funding, runs activities like Interfaith Week, which is held in November and consists of interfaith activities around the country, and organizes meetings between religious and lay leaders and community representatives. With the closure of regional faiths councils after the financial crisis in 2007–08, the Interfaith Network became the only body able to bring together members of different communities for formal activities.

Conversely, in my research, the local interfaith forums still in existence must rely on volunteers who often possess a long history of involvement in interfaith relations. For example, a Catholic interfaith activist who I interviewed in 2014 had led a forum for interfaith dialogue in South London for decades. Describing

his role, he said, "I have got a lot of people together. I have improved communications ... I have very patiently built up my group at the Cathedral. I had a meeting the other week and 30 people came up to me. I have become known. I wanted to put on the map that the Catholic Church is very committed to interfaith." The Muslim-Jewish Forum in Manchester (est. 2004) also depends on voluntary leadership of local Muslim and Jewish activists. Similarly, projects funded by Near Neighbours, at least in the evaluations I conducted, struggled for other funding unless supported by an institution or organization. For example, a mother-toddler group run through the Salvation Army lasted past the NN funding because the Salvation Army assumed the costs.

3.2.2 Collaboration is Beneficial in a Resource-Limited Field

The well-established organizations mentioned above, with the exception of the Inter Faith Network, have regularly collaborated. They form a small cluster (3FF/Faith and Belief Forum, Coexist, CIP, and Goldsmiths) able to seek out new areas of influence through training and other activities and, in effect, affirm each other's position within the field. As mentioned above, CIP has partnered with Coexist Foundation and with 3FF/Faith and Belief Forum to establish religious literacy projects in the Middle East. CIP has also collaborated with Coexist on a number of leadership training and cultural projects (Cambridge Inter Faith Programme 2021) and shared donors and staff members. CIP and Coexist have partnered with Adam Dinham at Goldsmith's University, for instance, on religious literacy training for Ernst and Young (Coexist House 2017).

3.2.3 There is Little Variance within the Field in How the 'Problem' of Interfaith Relations is Conceived

The resemblance between mission statements of interfaith initiatives, regardless of size, illustrates how dominant the conception is within the field that greater understanding in a neutral venue can overcome tensions and lead to positive relationships. For instance, the Birmingham Council of Faith's (est.1974) website states that they "organise events throughout the year to facilitate harmonious relations between people of different faiths in the city. This includes promoting the study of all religions so that the followers of one religion may have a better understanding of the other religions and be alert of issues, peace, justice and tolerance in our city (2021)." The Bedford Council of Faiths (est. 2004) lists the following aims: "to promote religious harmony, dispel ignorance and prejudice

about beliefs, foster religious understanding and mutual respect and encourage friendships across religious boundaries (Bedford Council of Faiths 2020)." Similarly, The Inter Faith Network states that they work with "faith communities, inter faith organisations, educators and others to increase understanding and cooperation between people of different faiths and to widen public awareness of the distinctive religious traditions in the UK (2021)." The Faith and Belief Forum creates "spaces in schools, universities, workplaces and the wider community where people can engage with questions of belief and identity and meet people different from themselves. Enabling people to learn from each other in this way is often the most effective way to tackle ignorance and challenge stereotypes – and create understanding and trust between people (2021)." In sum, despite differences in longevity, location, and resources, initiatives make the same assumptions about intervention and impact.

3.2.4 Innovation Has Been at a Grassroots Level and Primarily Unsustainable

The grassroots nature of projects funded by Near Neighbours or local interfaith forums means that they often are time-limited, volunteer-led, and dependent on manipulation of scarce resources. For instance, a sewing circle for migrant women in London benefited over several years from government support and Near Neighbours funding but still faced closure in 2017. The staff had stopped receiving salaries to help the organization survive but it was unclear it would last. At the same time, the initiative had succeeded in accessing highly marginalized groups, including migrants, asylum seekers, and women with disabilities by running sewing circles in a high street store. The project organizer related how a Muslim woman came to one of the circles dressed in scant clothing. The other women asked her why she was dressed, at least for them, inappropriately, and she responded that she had accepted the only clothing on offer at the shelter where she was staying. The other women responded by finding clothing for her to wear. The story was intended to demonstrate how relationships, and forms of social support, had emerged from the circles. Its demise would mean that a platform for generating relationships, especially amongst these populations, would disappear.

Two other initiatives, mentioned above, brought together Muslim and Jewish leaders in Nottingham to run a café for low-income residents and religious Muslim and Jewish women seeking a single-sex exercise class where their attire and life decisions, such as early marriage and children, would not be questioned. Again, the initiatives relied upon volunteers and local contributions. Yet, their impact extended beyond interfaith relations in an explicitly religious sense, as

they encouraged interaction between two communities subject in their relationship to ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

3.3 Reconceiving the Field

Reconceiving a field involves responding to external factors that are stymieing constructive change, such as declining funding opportunities and shifting policy priorities. Reconceiving the field also means challenging interfaith initiatives to contemplate a new conceptualization of their work and to renew themselves as organizations. Moving away from Buber's emphasis on neutrality, the effort to mobilize resources in order to help others locally could be interpreted as the 'living will' that Emmanuel Levinas, a philosopher-theologian, highlights when analysing the work of another Jewish theologian Franz Rosenzweig (1990). Levinas writes that Rosenzweig wanted an alternative interpretation of the individual's position in history to that of philosophers like Hegel (or Marx), where "the significance of a work is truer in terms of the will that wished it into being than the totality into which it is inserted ... the living willing of will is indispensable to the truth and understanding of the work" (1990, 200).

Assigning the effort to help others its own value, even transcendent to the actual 'help' itself, resembles Kant's Formula for Humanity as well, where Humanity is a means and an end. (Korsgaard 1986) Of course, both philosophical considerations lack reference to religious belief, but then much of the intention of grassroots activism is to acclimate residents to cooperation across diversity and then encourage gaining an understanding. The point is that the prioritization of religious belief does not hold in grassroots activism, but rather, has to be integrated into a conceptualization of how individual action to benefit others can alter attitudes and relationships. As a vicar working at a church in East London said to me in 2016, the renewal of the Church of England, long in decline, would only come about from connecting the practice of community organizing to theorizing a different social role for the Church as an institution. He explained that the Church was "Moving in a positive direction but largely what we are about as the Church of England is gathering people together to serve their kind of needs. When we talk about reaching out, what we are talking about is growing our church. There is a lot of evidence that one of the features of growing a church is to be socially engaged." He argued that:

> What is really required is a theology of social engagement that is.... about what we are about as Christians. That is one of the positive things about this austerity period, churches have gotten their hands dirty ... people have not been doing stuff but have started to think

> this feels like real Christianity. This gives me the opportunity to make connections, what society is like, how do I relate to it, how do I share love.

The 'love' he wants to share reflects his belief but also recognition of humanity in everyone, regardless of their belief. In Kant's terms, humanity is 'unconditionally good'. As Korsgaard writes, "The possession of humanity and the capacity for good will, whether or not that capacity is realized, is enough to establish a claim on being an unconditional end" (1986, 197). The objective of good will toward others is for those individuals to realize their own capacity through the interaction, in essence, acknowledging through social relations the humanity of all participants.

Engaging theoretical ideas should not be beyond the work of practitioners and applied research, as this engagement prevents obscuring often ideologically driven assumptions within policy about individual behaviour, inequality, social obligations, and so on. Thinking theoretically also allows for critiquing language, such as 'service user', which again neglects the critical importance of social relations to the quality and effectiveness of intervention (Oxfam 2009; Cohen 2014). What constitutes 'theory' may differ by field, for instance interfaith initiatives are derived from theological and philosophical analysis. More importantly, negotiating the relationship between ideas and practice diminishes the boundary between the two, as the two forms of knowledge, academic and practical, respond to the other.

Redesigning interfaith activities that go beyond neutral forums and religious literacy could, if premised on the will and effort to help others and recognition of a common humanity, emphasize the process of cooperation. Buber does offer guidance for how the relationships developed within the cooperation can be conceptualized. He notes that relations between I and Thou develop in the present, and that the present is "continually present and enduring." Other relations, or not in the present, are instead characterized by "cessation, suspension, and breaking off and cutting clear and hardening, absence of relation and of present being" (12–13). These terms imply closure and stagnation, rather than continued interaction and spontaneity.[10]

Following this explanation of Buber's, the process of cooperation could both account for specific relationships within the local context and provide a 'standardized' framework across interfaith initiatives. Cooperation would provide a foundation for continuous interaction, respect, and openness, with expectations based on participation and shared will. Adopting this flexible, contextualized

10 See also Vollmer (2013).

approach to interfaith work means that some initiatives could offer religious literacy, perhaps because they are located in areas where faith communities are segregated, and others would assume existent knowledge and thus stress other areas of work like public institutional reform and rights. Concentrating on cooperation as the project design would ideally increase practical impact and elevate public awareness of the values of openness and respect the field represents. Impact assessment would continue to be based on participation rates across diverse groups, but it would evaluate types of participation as well, commitment of time and resources, the effects of cooperation on quality of life and emotional well-being, translation into advocacy, and interreligious understanding.

Reconceiving a field of social action involves responding to external constraints and opportunities in instigating change across initiatives and likewise, redesigning initiatives to address problematic trends characterizing the field and limiting impact. In the case of interfaith initiatives, effective change in attitudes and behaviour may come not just through participation in collective local activism but also by approaching faith and belief from a more complex philosophical perspective. In other words, behaviour toward the Other may relate more to ethics, and then understanding of religious difference, rather than just understanding. More specifically, devising a response entails 1) rethinking the theoretical and philosophical ideas that have informed design, management, and evaluation and 2) integrating these ideas with a new approach to practice that addresses characteristics of the field like the sustainability of a particular type of organization or the range of diversity in service design. Finally, the reconception demonstrates for funding bodies and policymakers, as well as relevant institutions like the Church of England, needed support.

4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have offered a potential direction for assessing interfaith initiatives by analysing the field itself, or how it has become sustainable in its current form, the predominant conception of the problem and appropriate responses, categorization of impact, divisions and contradictions within the field, and trends in participation. The assessment should reveal potential for reconceiving the field and individual project aims, designs, and impact. In brief, the paper makes the following recommendations:

1. Conduct evaluation at the level of a 'field' to understand constraints and opportunities regarding interfaith initiatives.

2. Focus on indicators like the diversification within the field; distribution of resources across different-sized projects and organizations; and collaboration and cooperation between organizations to analyse how a field is constituted and is sustained, as well as the kinds and depth of impact of specific projects.
3. Likewise, connect policy, institutional behaviour, and access to material resources with project implementation and delivery and the experience of participation in order to understand the impact of a field and how it needs to change.
4. Encourage shared information, as with collective impact and other models, across organizations but not just to have consistent approaches to evaluation, in part to influence policy, but also to rethink the field itself and the role of policymakers, service users, staff, and other stakeholders in designing future interventions.

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Elizabeth (Liz) Hume is the Vice President at the Alliance for Peacebuilding, where she oversaw the development of the Effective Interreligious Development in Peacebuilding program. She has over 20 years' experience in senior peacebuilding leadership positions in Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa. From 1997 – 2001, Liz was seconded by the US Department of State to the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo as the Chief Legal Counsel and Head of the Election Commission Secretariats. After 9/11, Liz worked for the International Rescue Committee in Pakistan and Afghanistan where she established the Protection Department for Afghan refugees and returning IDPs. Starting in 2004, Liz was a Senior Conflict Advisor and helped establish the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation at USAID. In 2007, Liz was the Chief of Party for Pact, where she managed a USAID funded conflict resolution and governance program in Ethiopia. She also served as a Technical Director at FHI 360 where she managed a USAID funded peacebuilding

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Ricardo Wilson-Grau[1] was an independent, non-theist, areligious evaluator with experience evaluating Jewish, Lutheran, Quaker and Roman Catholic, as well as secular, peacebuilding. From 2003, he concentrated his work on the evaluation of innovative projects and programmes of international development donor agencies, networks and associations, NGOs, community-based organizations, research institutes, and government.

1 Ricardo Wilson-Grau passed away in December 2018.

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