



# The Foundations for Peace Network

[www.foundationsforpeace.com](http://www.foundationsforpeace.com)

*Indigenous funders promoting the value of local peacebuilding*

Report on:

Expert Seminar: 7th September 2018, Maldrone Hotel, Belfast

## GLOBAL OR LOCAL? RESOURCING ACTIVISM IN AREAS OF CONFLICT

**The interface between development aid, conflict transformation and local philanthropy**

**Seminar context:** Since the Second World War there have been more conflicts *within* states than *between* states, and the numbers have increased alarmingly since 1989. These internal wars leave permanent and deep scars which are carried over the generations, isolating and alienating individuals and communities. They eventually become islands of hate. If the violence is erupting from within, the peacebuilding also should emanate from within the community.

Over the past decade, the world has changed beyond recognition. Alongside serious problems such as rising inequality and climate change, war has become the new norm, and peace and security issues dominate much of the globe. Many democracies are faltering, with a rising prevalence of failed states, conflicted or deeply divided societies, and stalled development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes 17 goals for all nations, seeking to attack the root causes of poverty, economic injustice and human rights' violations. In those countries where violence and conflict hold sway, these goals will not be realized unless top priority is given to the 16<sup>th</sup> goal:

**'To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.'**

The effects of war and conflict are widespread and debilitating. Countries at war tend to overlook social progress and deny human rights, a process that feeds suspicion, damages trust, and leads to more militarization and violence. This sets up a downward cycle of division that is hard to break.

The consequences of war affect all aspects of life. Psychological effects include personal and collective trauma and loss of identity or place. There are also social effects such as closed schools and health facilities, and economic effects such as loss of work, shortage of goods and damaged infrastructure. War also ends all normal politics, and those who are directly affected by violence and conflict, including women, children and other marginalized groups, typically have no voice in decision-making.

Studies show that, despite the best efforts of many organizations, the architecture surrounding development aid does not contribute to lasting peace in conflict-affected communities. Indeed, the aid system tends to undermine the autonomy of local activism, which is essential to transforming conflicts.

It is in this situation that independent indigenous funders, who understand local dynamics and are sensitive to political nuances, play a crucial role in providing access and resources for 'building bridges'. It is FFP's conviction that, for any sustainable development to happen in a conflict situation, peacebuilding should be the starting point.

Foundations for Peace, a network of ten local foundations rooted in their countries' contexts, supports community activists at local level over the long term, to open up space for the growth of civil society, to develop a new narrative, and to work on conflict transformation initiatives. Its values are based on respect for all identities and included are diverse voices and people who are often marginalized or demonized.

Our work, and the contribution of external Development Aid, would be much enhanced and sustained by working in partnership to build peace in local communities.

Over the past decade, the members of Foundations for Peace have worked together to build horizontal relationships across different conflict zones in the world, supporting one another in times of stress and building each other's skills, knowledge and expertise.

What are missing from the mix are the vertical relationships with large foundations, aid agencies and other resource holders to generate a coalition of interests around peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The seminar will begin this conversation.

### **Seminar Questions:**

- 1.** In your experience, what are the challenges to external development aid organisations funding in areas of conflict? What factors/issues should they be considering?
- 2.** What 'added value' dimensions would be helpful, in addition to financial resources, in an area of conflict?
- 3.** Can partnerships between external development aid organisations and in-country funders be effective in addressing issues of social justice and conflict transformation? If so, what are the essential requirements for such partnerships?
- 4.** What are the challenges/opportunities for partnership identification and working in areas of conflict?

### **Seminar Purpose:**

The Foundations for Peace Network will draw on the contributions to the seminar to develop a discussion paper to take forward these important issues within both the development aid and independent philanthropy sectors.

The Foundations for Peace Network (FFPN) is a network of community foundations working on social justice and peacebuilding issues in conflict areas within their individual countries. The membership spreads across Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Colombia, Serbia, Georgia and Northern Ireland. For more information, visit us at: [www.foundationsforpeace.com](http://www.foundationsforpeace.com)

### **Seminar Chair:**

Dr Avila Kilmurray, Social Change Initiative

## **Keynote Contributors:**

### **Speaker 1: Monica McWilliams, Belfast**

Emerging from conflict is a complex process as is the building of peace – I often think that there are a lot of ‘C’ words involved. From crisis to conflict to more crisis and coercive control or corruption, context (and each is unique) must be considered and this requires compassion, creativity and credibility. I’ve spent several years on the board of Trócaire, an international development aid agency, and know that we are a compassionate people as we donate £29m out of an overall budget of £76m to it.

Women can make an important contribution to both peacekeeping and peacebuilding yet are mainly excluded from these processes. In my opinion, if you are ‘on’ the table, you should be around the table, participating equally. I’ve worked for a long time in the women’s movement and on domestic violence issues. Women and children are significantly impacted by conflict yet are the mainstay of communities in difficult times. Protect the rights of women, and you protect the rights of the next generation. Very often it is the ‘elites’ who sit around the table to make the decisions and carve up the power. This compounds injustice and provokes local reaction and alienation from decisions made.

To deliver development aid effectively, local partnerships and local knowledge are critical. This may present initial challenges for INGO’s but, if impact and sustainability are to be enabled, local collaboration is essential. Success is much more likely when local people are part of the process as they know best how needs can be met. Sustainability of peacebuilding is absolutely linked to developing local leadership and promoting indigenous efforts. Competition for resources seems to be the motivator for many agencies and rarely leads to positive impact. It is essential to take the time to build consensus and get the best process in place.

We also need to move away from creating a notion that aid is built around charity and move to a culture of aid based on the notion of ‘citizens’ entitlements’. Work to build a culture of rights, which also means challenging the culture, which discriminates against minorities; we need to prioritise the most vulnerable through a culture of care and

compassion by challenging impunity; coercive control of political violence and domestic violence.

Campaigning and advocacy are key components and INGO's can help this process not just on the ground but by also lobbying for political change at the government level.

**BIO: Monica McWilliams is Professor of Women's Studies in the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University.**

Monica co-founded the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition political party, was elected to the multi-party peace talks, and became a signatory to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. She was a Member of the NI Assembly until 2003 and Chief Commissioner for the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission from 2006-2011. In 2017, Monica was appointed to the Independent Reporting Commission on the disbandment of paramilitary organisations. She has undertaken capacity-building workshops with women in a range of conflict areas. Her publications focus on domestic violence and human rights and include a longitudinal study on violence against women and political settlements. She is a joint recipient of the John F Kennedy Profile in Courage Award and holds an honorary doctorate from University of York.



**Speaker 2: Karol Balfe, Christian Aid Ireland**

**1: Who we are:** In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. If current trends persist, by 2030 — the horizon set by the international community for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — more than half of the world's poor will be living in countries affected by high levels of violence.<sup>1</sup>

Much of this violence however is due to reoccurring violence and protracted conflicts. Of the 259 armed conflicts since the early 1950s, 159 were recurrent, while the remaining 100 involved a new group. Estimates show that 135 different countries have experienced conflict recurrence in which issues and grievances remain unresolved, and hostilities are simply restarting or transforming into another form — a pattern that is deepening.<sup>2</sup>

Christian Aid is an international development organisation established in 1945 by British and Irish churches to help refugees following the Second World War. Since then, we have provided humanitarian relief and long-term development support for poor communities worldwide. With our supporters and partners, we aim to expose the scandal of poverty, help in practical ways to end it, and challenge and change the structures and systems that favour the rich and powerful over the poor and marginalised.

Christian Aid works in 37 developing countries, a majority of which are conflict — and violence-affected. We work with people of all faiths and none. Peace and justice matter to us. As a faith-based organisation we cannot ignore the reality of violence and seek to respond to the real challenges of building peace with integrity, respect, courage and hope.

1. OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2015. *States of Fragility 2015: Meeting Post-2015 Ambitions*. Paris: OECD.

2. Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2016, *Conflict Trends*, <https://www.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.aspx?id=9&type=publicationfile>

## 2: Challenges to funding in areas of conflict:

**The way donor mechanisms are set up to be project based, Results focused over long-term process, short term, inflexible.** Key challenge of how these mechanisms restrict risky, innovative, process focused peace work. Contextual changes create opportunities (e.g. Angola and Zimbabwe this year) but partners can 1) struggle to respond rapidly, and 2) not have enough flexibility to do so. Much of this is set out in a new learning paper, co-published with ODI, on applying an adaptive approach describing and drawing out lessons from our programme's first year of experience.

Please find the report here <http://caid.ie/learningtomakeadifference> and here <https://www.odi.org/publications/11191-learning-make-difference-christian-aid-ireland-s-adaptive-programme-management-governance-gender>

In November 2016, we updated our [global peacebuilding strategy](#), with Christian Aid Ireland leading for the entire Christian Aid family. Our works stretches across 18 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Our peacebuilding and conflict reduction activities take place in the following countries: Angola, Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Colombia, DRC, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (IOPT), Iraq, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria and Zimbabwe.

'From Violence to Peace' lays down our hopeful vision that a more peaceful reality free from poverty, violence and injustice is possible. Our work covers violence in multiple contexts. We deliberately do not narrowly define our work as set in 'post-conflict' or fragile contexts in recognition that violence is a destructive reality in contexts such as Central America as much as it is in contexts such as the DRC.

Rather we understand peace more broadly. Peace is much more than the settlement between parties to an armed conflict and the cessation of fighting. The ideal of peace – the absence of violence in all its forms and the ability of a society to resolve its conflicts in a non-violent manner and ensure access to justice and sustainable development — is our ambition. In this we recognise that peacebuilding work will not be achieved by addressing poverty and doing development alone. To build peace we recognise that working 'around' or 'in' conflict is not the same as working 'on' conflict. We therefore explicitly seek to work 'on conflict' and make a clear and explicit contribution to peace.

**Institutional donor requirements** also make it very difficult to fund genuinely grassroots organisations that do not have the required financial oversight capability.

**The challenge of silos** and not connecting with other interventions or reinventing the wheel.

**The challenge of doing peace well** when often humanitarian needs and the face-changing face of conflict mean it's hard to look at transformation, hard to prioritise peace when there's mass displacement or violence (DRC, South Sudan). Operationally it's hard to build in the time needed to reflect — to look at conflict sensitivity, robust conflict analysis. Eg: significant eruptions of violence in Myanmar, the DRC and ongoing violence

in South Sudan presented significant challenges to the programme of work, including the effort to make gains in resilience. The humanitarian catastrophe in Rahkine led to delays in providing assistance to IDPs; implementation plans were revised. Violence in both Rahkine and Kachin led to programme changes and delays; implementation plans were revised and some changes made. The space to engage with the government became more curtailed overall due to their hostility to international attention, particularly in Rahkine. Restriction on access to programme areas curtailed Christian Aid's staff ability to monitor and support local partners. Increased instances of armed violence and conflict in Eastern DRC and Kasai resulted in a spike in IDPs (from 2 to 4.1 million) and increased the fragility of the most vulnerable communities, including women and girls, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups with diverse vulnerabilities. Humanitarian needs quadrupled and the programme expanded its geographical focus in response. Persistent violence in South Sudan has continued to displace millions of people from their homes, destroying livelihoods, increasing morbidity and mortality rates, and resulting in severe food insecurity with higher rates of malnutrition.

**Access can be an issue** — which leads to all kinds of complications (Syria, Iraq) in terms of developing partnerships, understanding interventions and getting money in. This is particularly challenging as accompaniment and in-country mentoring have been the most successful models of technical support.

**The challenge of integrating peace into other programmes.** To integrate that into another programme, when there are challenges it is the peace part that suffers. E.g. Iraq project in Kirkuk — Where projects focused on linking the peacebuilding programmes to income-generation and economic opportunities, it was unclear by which logic income-generation activities would reduce violence and promote peace. A move, from assumptions about to evidence of positive effects, is needed.

**Being truly transformative** as a civil society actor is really difficult. It's unclear for many teams how to link local activities to national and global actions around tackling violence and building peace, to achieve transformative change. Local projects have played an important role in disseminating what national policy means to local levels (awareness-raising), but only managed to a lesser extent to translate the lessons learned and impacts felt at local level up to regional or national level. Many of the contexts have long-term, protracted conflicts — either characterised by high levels of direct violence (e.g. Central America, Colombia, DRC, South Sudan) or latent violence with potential to escalate quickly (e.g. IOPT, Angola, Burundi). In reality, we are laying the foundations for transformation of violence to peace that will take a generation to achieve in most countries.

**Monitoring and evaluation** is particularly challenging in violence-prevention work and a clear area for stronger support and improvement.

**Protection** is a perennial issue for projects dealing with violence and conflict, and this emerged most clearly in projects which had taken on a role of **violence monitoring and reporting**. Likewise with restrictions on civil society space.

**The challenge of addressing trauma.** Trauma is pervasive, impacting on communities, partners and staff alike. CA has incorporated psychosocial support training, and projects focusing on community-based psychosocial support, including with additional funding, to complement the material relief effort. This also ensured that staff have access to additional counselling support if needed.

**Risk** — that you often have to choose between the less of two evils when everything is risky. Security risks might mean you do remote management, which creates all sorts of operational risks (even if done well) because the capacity for oversight is reduced. ‘zero tolerance’ on corruption and the prioritisation of safety of staff are sometimes in conflict.

### **3: What are the ‘added value’ dimensions that are valuable, in addition to financial resources, in an area of conflict?**

- Provision of support that is flexible, coordinated, integrated, longer planning timeframes, support to high-access but more informal organisations.
- Overall CA research found that the added value as seen by partners was: Christian Aid adds value by (1) empowering civil society, (2) brokering multi-stakeholder coalitions, (3) leveraging resources, (4) enhancing advocacy and (5) protecting partners.
- In conflict, protection is critical but also advocacy and speaking out. Because of access issues, partners in the frontlines are typically unable to say something on policy.
- Our programme staff see our added value as (6) supporting strategic reflection, capacity building and peer learning. Programmes also reported in the survey: partner capacity/confidence on violence and peace increasing, or new partners on board (7); New strategies on violence to peace (8).

**BIO: Karol Balfé** is Head of Tackling Violence and Peacebuilding at Christian Aid Ireland and is responsible for the strategic development, coordination, management and delivery of Christian Aid’s global peacebuilding efforts including programme, funding and policy work on violence and peacebuilding. She has been with Christian Aid since 2012. A key focus has been developing its new global strategy on violence and peacebuilding to underpin the commitment to tackle violence and to promote just and lasting peace and security where it works. The strategy is informed by its work in countries across the globe and reflects the aspirations and vision of local partners. Karol has co-written several papers including a learning paper on civil society’s role in conflict transformation and a research paper on land dispossession. Before joining Christian Aid Ireland, Karol worked for six years with Amnesty International managing a programme related to economic, social and cultural rights in Ireland and campaigning on human rights issues such as gender-based violence, the death penalty and human rights in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, and prior to that worked with Oxfam. Karol has an MA in Globalisation and International Relations from Dublin City University.



### **Speaker 3: Aisha Mansour, Dalia Foundation, Palestine**

*(Aisha’s powerpoint presentation is attached with this report).*

Main points:

1. International aid does not always address local and grassroots needs and issues, nor does it always respect community control and participation. For this reason, the Dalia Association was established.

2. Community philanthropy is critical in any development initiative as it focuses on the assets within the community, rather than their lack of it. We truly believe that everyone has something to contribute. Self-help is at our core. It is part and parcel of the culture of the Palestinian people to help each other and to work as communities for the betterment of all. That is our DNA. It is essential to us that we protect our culture, customs, communities and inclusiveness.
3. And as such, community philanthropy democratizes giving, everyone is at the table giving and deciding together no matter the size of the contribution. The process is inclusive, and democratic, and the added value beyond money is knowledge, expertise, volunteerism, linking, and networking.
4. I hope our discussion today will enable us to find international NGO's with similar values and principles and that we can work through how we can work better together and how to jointly advocate for systemic change to Big Aid.

**BIO: Aisha Mansour** is the Executive Director, Dalia Foundation, Palestine and has 15 years of experience working in health policy, hospital management, and public administration. She has served on the board of the Farashe Yoga Center for three years and was recently nominated to serve as chairperson. Aisha was a co-founder of Sharaka Community Supported Agriculture, a volunteer group focused on food sovereignty and preserving Palestine's traditional agriculture. In her free time, she tends to her baladi chickens and baladi dog, Sam. She 'volunteer' teaches a weekly Pilates class at Farashe and experiments with her own food sovereignty.



**Dalia Foundation is a member of the Foundations for Peace Network**

#### **Speaker 4: Kathryn Tomlinson, Conciliation Resources UK Global or Local? Resourcing activism in areas of conflict**

**Conciliation Resources:** Established in 1994, Conciliation Resources is a London-based, international non-governmental peacebuilding organisation working with people in conflict contexts to help them find creative and sustainable solutions for peace.

It was established by staff who had worked at another peacebuilding organisation, to focus particularly on working in **partnership** with people and organisations based in conflict-affected contexts.

Conciliation Resources' practice can be described as 'accompaniment partnership', in which the INGO plays an accompanying role to partners in conflict-affected contexts by offering solidarity, facilitating dialogue and bearing witness, as well as providing technical support and access to resources. Partnering offers:

1. Advice and accompaniment, including in policy processes
2. Capacity building in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, as well as organisational support
3. Opportunities for comparative learning, joint planning and networking
4. Space for dialogue and reflection between groups.

Our partners are individuals, civil society organisations (CSOs) or networks with whom we are collaborating on short or long-term programme objectives, with or without a permanent financial relationship. Conciliation Resources jointly manages projects and programmes with its partners, or supports partners to implement their own projects. We work in partnership at all levels of conflict and some examples are detailed below with more information on our website.

### **Grassroots and community-based organisations**

*YPPs in Nigeria:* In northeast Nigeria, young people are largely excluded from decision-making and as a result have become increasingly disengaged from society. This disillusionment has made them vulnerable and ideal targets for mobilisation by Boko Haram and other armed groups, in turn leading to the stigmatisation of youth.

*Young people affected by LRA in DRC:* We support those who are often marginalised – in particular young men and women – to develop skills which enable them to deal with the trauma of their past and contribute to building more peaceful societies in the future.

### **Bridging national and community peace processes**

*Representing women and indigenous people in Colombia:* Our Colombian partner CIASE (Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica) is a feminist organisation composed of men and women working for peace and human rights, and has been our main partner in Colombia since 2012.

### **Supporting mediation of national and international conflicts**

*Mediation support and ONLF for Ogaden in Ethiopia.*

We work in:

**Caucasus:** Georgian-Abkhaz context, Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia and Azerbaijan)

**Colombia**

**Pacific:** Papua New Guinea (particularly Bougainville), Fiji, but also comparative learning of peacebuilding across the Pacific

**Philippines**

**South Asia:** the Jammu-Kashmir (India and Pakistan); exploring work in Afghanistan

**East and Central Africa:** Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan

**Horn of Africa:** Ethiopia (the Ogaden conflict), Kenya (mostly Garissa - the Somalia region).

**West Africa:** currently north eastern (Boko Haram) and Plateau state of Nigeria, but have ongoing links in Sierra Leone, Liberia.

**Funding peacebuilding:** Below, we outline a little on our understanding of the funding environment. Conflict transformation is people-intensive. It's all about relationships, and peacebuilding is all about process – the way you do something in peacebuilding is as important as what you do. And that includes how something is funded... So as a sector we're constantly negotiating the challenge of matching how to fund what we do with the ethos of doing what we do.

As an INGO we get the majority of our funding as restricted funds from official donors (bilateral, multilateral) some of which we sub-grant to our partners.

- In UK less than 5% of non-profits carrying out international humanitarian work received aid from official donor, while there were 12,000 gift-based INGOs registered in the UK.
- Only a relatively small proportion of INGOs receive official aid – normally the larger, high-profile INGOs with established track record of working with official donors.
- In UK in 2014 it was estimated that only about 400 UK-based INGOs received significant official funds. (INTRAC 2014).
- Only about 1% of all official aid, and an even smaller portion of humanitarian assistance, goes directly to the global south (article 2015).
- Unpublished research into private foundations suggests that they channel the majority of their funding through organisations in the global north.

Some of the reasons for this are:

- Lack of capacity in southern/smaller CSOs to administer grants
- Lack of capacity in donors to administer multiple small grants (EU wanting us to submit applications for €1m plus)

(leading to a preference for working with few trusted partners who can manage risks and administration for them)

- Anti-terror and anti-money laundering rules which restrict who donors can grant to
- Domestic pressure to grant to home country organisations
- Increased donor risk adversity and concern about public representation (leading to increased due diligence processes and hence reduced ability for local CSOs to carry this burden).
- Increased donor focus on project funding rather than unrestricted funding (see the end of DFID's PPAs).
- Shifts in focus of donor interests to migration/crisis response and places/issues where there's a return on investment (aid in the national interest).

We don't necessarily like any or all of this, but it is the environment in which we – and through us, our partners – operate and seek funds.

What does this mean for our peacebuilding partnerships? How do we make sure that our approach to peacebuilding, and to peacebuilding partnership, is not driven by the drivers of the funding approach?

My view is that the multiple actors in the peacebuilding funding chain can be seen as the scales of a fish – overlapping, all essential, but all placed in separate places with separate roles.

As your (FFP) *Small Money Big Impact* report flags, 'Local funders can provide the R&D of peacebuilding, but they can also identify the scaffolding around which international funders and development experts can construct their larger-scale programmes. There can be a positive synergy between the two approaches.' (2009, p.34)

**Positive partnerships:** We've recently undertaken research on how and under what conditions can partnership between international non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations and networks in conflict-affected contexts support inclusive and transformative peace processes and peacebuilding.

We believe that the solutions, and the agency to transform conflict, lie primarily within the societies experiencing conflict. Therefore, it is vital to understand how partnering with an INGO works best to support them.

## **Our key findings were:**

### **1. An 'accompaniment approach' to partnering is particularly suited to flexible, adaptive and long-term peacebuilding**

Partners are not seen as implementers – indeed, implementation was understood as a joint endeavour. Instead, partners are given the space to respond autonomously to emerging issues as and when they arise. Projects were seen as a way – but not the only way – to pursue change. We found that this broader understanding of partnership, which allows for flexibility, was vital in enabling adaptability and responsiveness to changes in complex, unpredictable and often volatile environments.

Creative thinking and risk-taking are essential in order to make breakthroughs in peace processes. This trust has developed in many cases through deep personal relationships between programme leads and individual members of the partner organisation – relationships often characterised by mutual honesty, respect and critical challenge.

Partnerships do not necessarily stop when the financial relationship ends.

### **2. A diverse set of partner organisations with different mandates and profiles is a strength in peacebuilding**

*Diversity as a strength:* Some of Conciliation Resources' partners operate at the grassroots community level, while others may be civil society organisations at the local and/or national level, research organisations or even local enterprises. Some have different political aspirations. Partners consulted in the research emphasised the importance of maintaining shared peacebuilding values, which can provide an anchor for diverse organisations to work together towards peace.

Conciliation Resources and partner organisations bring complementary mandates, profiles and skillsets to their joint peacebuilding initiatives, as well as access to different constituencies, allowing each partner to achieve results that would not be possible alone. For example, one of Conciliation Resources' partners in the Caucasus saw its expertise in film production, which it used to develop analytical documentaries on conflict, as a natural complement to Conciliation Resources' convening power, which helped to bring the documentaries to a wider audience in the region.

*Unresolved question: how to partner with informal networks?* There may be limitations to partnering solely with professional or semi-professional civil society organisations, given

the fact that local informal networks or movements also play a role in transformational change and could benefit from INGO support. However, the level of organisational capacity and staffing required by international donors can mitigate against partnerships with such networks, potentially limiting the range of local partners for peacebuilding.

Some of Conciliation Resources' partnerships suggest that it can be possible. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Conciliation Resources supported ROFU (Réseau des Organisations de Femmes des Uélés), an umbrella network of 18 separate women's organisations, first to come together and later to secure legal recognition and formalise. ROFU is now able to run significant joint peacebuilding projects, using international funds, that are preventing and resolving conflict at the local level and beyond. But this has required the establishment of a new organisation, thus changing the nature of the relationships. Is this unavoidable?

### **3. Remote partnering with an international non-governmental organisation has distinct advantages for civil society working on conflict in terms of ownership, agency and practicality**

Remote partnering has distinct advantages for local civil society: it can create more equal and mutually satisfactory partnerships, build local ownership, and enable peacebuilding across conflict divides. Giving space to local CSOs to take a lead on many programme activities, including activities such as policy advocacy, helps to build local peacebuilding agency and longer-term ownership of initiatives.

**No INGO offices:** Conciliation Resources' preference not to establish in-country offices is a deliberate choice – a way to nurture and preserve local capacities for transformational change and to avoid displacing or disempowering local organisations. However, explaining and justifying this remote partnering arrangement to international donors, which sometimes prefer INGOs to have a permanent in-country presence, can be difficult.

**Analysis role:** Partners agreed that it was appropriate that they, as local experts with deep links in their communities, play an equal or more prominent role in conflict analysis. Conciliation Resources is seen to bring comparative and thematic knowledge and expertise, as well as a deep understanding of the history and politics of the conflict.

**Convening across divides:** Where peacebuilding takes place across physical conflict divides, such as in Kashmir or the Georgian-Abkhaz context, Conciliation Resources' base outside the region is seen as an advantage, giving the organisation the ability to engage impartially with partners (and authorities) across conflict divides, or act as a convenor for partners and other societal actors who may be constrained by political or logistical barriers.

**Using our unfair privilege:** Inevitably, the issue of power arose in different ways during the consultations. In certain spheres, Conciliation Resources has privileged access to influential decision-makers, access which is not available to partners. While unfair, it was agreed that Conciliation Resources can and does offset this by using this access to open doors for partners. In so doing, Conciliation Resources can help otherwise unheard voices come to the fore in policy advocacy; some partners encouraged Conciliation Resources to create more such opportunities for joint advocacy.

#### **4. Balancing the contractual aspects of partnership with activism for change is not straightforward, but it is important**

**Managing the administrative burden:** Partners feel that we can play the role of 'buffer' to insulate local partners from complex or competing donor demands relating to the administration and management of resources. This spared some of Conciliation Resources' partner organisations, particularly those with less organisational capacity, from the most time- and resource-intensive donor processes and procedures, allowing them to focus on having an impact on conflict.

**Content and structure:** Our accompaniment relationship is sometimes focussed on the content of peacebuilding, the analysis, the mediation skills, and the convening of conflicting actors. But it's also focussed on the necessary structural aspects of the relationship, building financial management, strategic planning, Board composition, and structured reporting. Not all peacebuilding entities can or should acquire these skills, and an ongoing challenge for Conciliation Resources and other INGOs is how to, or if to, support networks or other informal actors.

**Leaving it to you?** It may be that we should not, and we should leave this space to foundations, indigenous or otherwise, whose approach tends to be of granting unrestricted funding, with fewer transactional costs, aligned with peer support and peer challenge approach.

**Seminar Workshops:** Promoting progressive social change and community-based activism in conflict-affected regions faces challenges on how best to develop effective and sustainable strategies, approaches and partnerships at local level

**BIO: Dr Kathryn Tomlinson** is Director of Programmes: Conciliation Resources. Kathryn manages the programmatic work of Conciliation Resources, an independent international organisation working with people in conflict to prevent violence, resolve conflicts and promote peaceful societies. She oversees peacebuilding partnerships in Colombia, the Caucasus, east and central Africa, Horn of Africa, Nigeria, the Pacific, the Philippines and South Asia. Kathryn has a PhD in social anthropology on the experiences of displaced Muslims in rural southern Russia. She previously spent six years at the BBC's international development charity, BBC Media Action, as Regional Director, Asia overseeing the operations of six country offices. She has worked in a number of education and conflict research roles, for research institutes, INGOs and the UN, including four years at the Ministry of Defence and a year in Aceh, Indonesia with Peace Brigades International.



#### **Speaker 5: Kamala Chandrakirana, Indonesia for Humanity The Interface between Development Aid, Conflict Transformation and Local Philanthropy**

My talk is based on personal insights gained from experiences addressing multiple conflict situations in Indonesia, in a context where these conflicts are mostly unrecognized

by the international community and sometimes even by the national government. Many of these conflicts have been unresolved for decades, including one which occurred more than 50 years ago, involving mass killings of more than half a million people. Other conflicts occurred in the context of an authoritarian regime and military control over certain regions of our archipelago with armed liberation movements, such as in Aceh, Papua and what used to be the annexed province of East Timor.

Our recent period of democratization has also not relieved us of violent conflicts, now taking the form of inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence. Indonesia's experience is consistent with a regional trend in Asia where, a study by The Asia Foundation found that conflicts here last an average of 45 years and occur at the subnational level.

From my vantage point, I understand conflicts to be evolving and multiple; peace to be episodic and flawed; and peacebuilding to be a continuous and intersecting process.

Conflicts are evolving and multiple. Through our work in conflict transformation, I have learned that there is never just one conflict going on, there are multiple conflicts occurring simultaneously, even as only one of them receives the most attention – usually because it is the one with the arms – and in which peace agreements are forged. Over time, when the root causes are not sustainably addressed, conflicts do not end up disappearing and simply evolve in form. Conflicts around secessionist struggles may evolve into religious-based violent extremism and inter-religious conflicts, for example. In Indonesia, these are trends that I have witnessed in the border provinces of Aceh and Papua.

Peace is episodic and flawed. A recurring pattern in Indonesia is peacemaking that involves high-level political settlements, which do not necessarily resonate beyond the negotiating table let alone in the grassroots. When the inter-religious conflict in the eastern islands of Maluku ended, for example, people found themselves living in segregation rather than in reconciliation. The religiously-mixed communities of the past disappeared and, to date, there is no avenue to rebuild trust and live side-by-side anymore. More importantly, narratives of distrust continue to flourish as identity politics dominate not only Maluku but the country as a whole.

Peacebuilding is continuous and intersecting. Given how complex conflicts are and how flawed and episodic peacemaking is, efforts in peacebuilding must necessarily be continuous over an extended period of time and intersecting across multiple aspects of life. For example, peacebuilding is not just about rebuilding trust in divided communities but also about reconstructing local economies so that they are more inclusive and sustainable. Such work can only be done when one is located deep within the community and engaging based on shared experience and aspirations.

Given all this, it makes perfect sense that local institutions play a crucial role in building and sustaining peace.

Our challenge is that current international aid practices seldom create the necessary conditions to enable and empower local institutions working in conflict-affected communities. Although intentions of support are expressed and partnerships are declared, the modalities of large-scale aid are more often counter-productive for local institutions concerned about maintaining their distinct identities, roles and engagements. Here are some observations about the different ways large-scale aid interventions and local institutions work:

- Large international aid interventions are delivered in the form of defined projects with high-value input and time-bound implementation. In the meantime, local institutions are actors occupying specific space in an ecosystem of diverse local actors. Their effectiveness depends much on volunteerism and responsiveness to expressed need, often not always involving sophisticated planning. Their currency is trust, not large funds.
- Large international aid projects are success oriented and invest much energy to ensure evidence of success even when their stated objectives are huge and complex in any social environment. Meanwhile, local institutions operate more through adaptive processes in small but continuous steps, carrying out experimentations and taking risks where unpredictability is more the norm than not. In fact, experience of local institutions is more about failure and learning from failure than success.
- Large international aid interventions contribute to global discourse and global forums often inaccessible – because of distance and language – to the local institutions. Meanwhile, local institutions must direct their focus on local narratives and local momentum within communities in a complex engagement towards cultural transformation and economic and political restructuring.

How do we reconcile or overcome these gaps? If we are to create a suitable infrastructure to better support local institutions in their peacebuilding work and engagements, I would think that the role of local philanthropic organizations that are embedded in their communities' social movements is critical and strategic. We can make good use of the new opportunities arising from the SDGs Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies as well as from the Addis Ababa 2030 Financing for Development which recognizes the role of philanthropic giving.

More specifically, we must address the serious knowledge deficit about the form, place and dynamics of local institutions in peacebuilding. We need to build recognition of the local as integral and necessary for peacebuilding to succeed and be sustained. It is a particularly important moment for this, especially given the multiple crises being faced by global institutions today, including the growing distrust and cynicism against them.

We need to build solid grounding to address the gaps and obstacles that have so far hindered the advancement of local institutions' effectiveness, growth and sustainability. For this, we need to revisit our assumptions about peace and social change: the scope and time frame for initiatives to matter. We need to overcome our bias against the small and the local and review the logic that aid must be delivered with an 'economy of scale' and through a 'trickle down' process from the centre to the peripheries. We need to address the current structure of competition over expertise and resources in which the local always loses its good people to the high-paying international contractors and aid agencies. We must ensure that even as we embark on knowledge-building initiatives we do not simply replicate the dominant practice of extractive information gathering from local actors, in which the local gains no access to the findings, analysis and final knowledge product.

There are pathways already in place to build on. We should aim to enhance existing good practice in partnership models among international, national and local institutions

in which all actors stand equal in an ecosystem that is both supportive and adaptive under a framework of long-term relationship building.

**Bio: Kamala Chandrakirana** is an Indonesian advocate of human rights, justice and democracy, and sees growing the resource base for activism towards social transformation as a critical agenda. In this light, she initiated the founding of Indonesia's first women's fund, *Pundi Perempuan*, in 2003, under the auspices of the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women, where she was Secretary General (1998-2003) and Chairperson (2004-2009). She is currently on the Board of Directors at *Indonesia untuk Kemanusiaan* (Indonesia for Humanity), based in Jakarta, and the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF), based in Oakland, California, USA – two activist-led grantmaking organizations for the resilience of social movements. Additionally, Kamala is a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice; a founding member of the Asia Pacific Women's Alliance on Peace and Security (APWAPS) and Musawah: A Global Movement for Equality and Justice in Muslim Family; and, the coordinator of Indonesia's Coalition for Truth and Justice for Past Human Rights Violations.



#### **Seminar Chair, Avila Kilmurray: Key points raised by the speakers**

**Monica** posed the question: What do you really transform when you come out of conflict? Transformation takes courage, credibility, creativity and the ability to challenge coercive control;

It is a restrictive space (both positive and negative) but must embrace human rights defenders, freedom of movement, freedom of information;

Consider cultural and structural norms;

Who benefits from the peace? Who is at/not at the table? Voice of Women/ young people?;

What issues are on the table / what is left off and why?;

Local activism / resilience / legacy;

Collaboration v competition.

**Karol** talked of the refugee crisis and the issues globally. There is place for a development organisation in this sphere;

Challenges: institution building, funding v developmental work with regulation;

Results based management approaches; no understanding of complexity;

Need for adaptive approaches and a minimum five-year commitment. Short-termism results in failure;

Risk-averse approaches have no lasting impact;

Humanitarian aid drives out peacebuilding at coalface of violence when it is most needed but conflict sensitive PB essential in times of hopelessness;

Respect for human rights and justice;

Critical to have local partners and peer-learning support.

**Aisha** talked of external and internal political agendas competing and the negative impact on civic society;

External Aid resources many projects but is usually dictated by their agenda and not focused on meeting local needs which often creates dependencies and control of communities;

Asset building, participation and partnerships with communities more sustainable;

Commitment to process and inclusion essential.

**Kathryn** spoke of the need to build relationships with people v process;

How you do things v What you do; empowerment and progress results from relationships and planning to meet real needs; Flexibility is essential in an unstable environment;

**Kamala** spoke of the need for inclusion and partnership with local, indigenous NGO's; Peacemaking excludes local; peace work must include local;

Recognise that conflict is episodic and peace can unravel if key issues are not dealt with;

Communities are resilient but so is conflict; learn from mistakes/ change the dynamic for peace and the way to create sustainable local peacebuilding by empowering and resourcing local communities.

### **Avila Kilmurray, Reflections on the day**

What do you need to transform coming out of conflict – peace agreements are not a line in the sand – conflict is episodic – and we must learn from ourselves and other situations. Peer learning is essential. Rarely a consideration of Development Aid or things would already be radically different.

Conflict transformation requires bravery, courage, compassion, credibility and creativity. It needs to be inclusive and bring in all actors – whether perceived as bad or good.

Money is important /support is essential / knowledge sharing and expertise/local knowledge is crucial.

Creativity is essential to finding new ways to deal with apparently intractable issues/ barriers.

Local actors must take the flack for their decisions/ external actors just walk away.

International interests and agendas often squeeze local needs/priorities.

INGO's often dictated to by national governments.

Work through the terms of reference for working in partnership – each brings something to the table. Partnerships should not be for funding only as this brings a competitive aspect that is divisive and excluding.

Sometimes external others/international NGO's can ask difficult questions that local NGO's cannot.

Donor requirements differ – need to differentiate – multi-lateral aid donors and smaller external donors often have different approaches/agendas. They may be less risk averse and more flexible about outcomes/outputs/ or the need for quick success.

Intermediary organisations can sometimes take the burden of bureaucracy to let local organisations get on with the work on the ground although experience has shown that this often is disempowering and leads to a huge imbalance of resources allocation. Don't rush to parachute in academics while you have access to practitioners.

Learn from each other/share experiences.

Knowledge is political / even acknowledging conflict is political/ everything a local funder does is seen as political / local is accountable.

**BIO: Dr. Avila Kilmurray**, Social Change Institute, Belfast, Northern Ireland. Avila is currently an independent consultant working on migration, refugee and peacebuilding issues. She was Director of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland from 1994-2014. Prior to that she worked in the community sector and the trade union movement in Northern Ireland, being Women's Officer of the Amalgamated Transport & General Workers' Union (1990-1994). In her voluntary capacity, Avila was a founder member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and part of the Coalition's negotiating team for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Avila recently published a book - 'Community Action in a Contested Society: The Story of Northern Ireland' (Peter Lang 2016).



**Avila was a founding member of the Foundations for Peace network.**