

No. 173

November 2021

# à propos

The KOFF  
Peacebuilding  
Magazine



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Peacebuilding

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## editorial

Peacebuilding projects typically include an analysis phase at the planning stage and an evaluation phase at the end. However, these often focus on external results and “successes” rather than on the approach of the implementing organization. One reason is that these evaluations are frequently based on predefined results and indicators, which may have lost relevance throughout the project.

What can we learn from previous peacebuilding projects to make our work more effective in the future? Are we devoting enough (safe) space and time for self-reflection within the peacebuilding sector? Are we creating opportunities for sharing experiences and recommendations with our peacebuilding peers?

In this edition, the KOFF platform members bravely share their own lessons learned from failures, analyze well-known cases, and suggest ways forward.

Wishing you a pleasant read.

Sanjally Jobarteh, Editor of KOFF magazine

*By publishing the à propos magazine, the Swiss platform for peacebuilding KOFF creates a medium for its members and partners to communicate about their experiences and perspectives. The articles of this magazine reflect the views of the authors only and not those of KOFF or swisspeace.*

focus

# Lessons from Afghanistan's post-9/11 "Peacebuilding Project"



U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Autumn Sekely watches passing children while supporting a patrol in the Sangin district of Afghanistan's Helmand province, Dec. 7, 2011. Wikimedia Commons

Peace is an integral concept in the discourses and practices of International Relations (IR). There are varying definitions and “perceptions” of peace, especially when it comes to the material and conceptual divide between the Global North and the Global South. It is important to acknowledge the contributions of discursive constructions of peace, along with their operational usage in policymaking that emanates from Western scholarship. However, for those suffering from conflict and violence on a daily basis, the “reality” of peace and the desire to survive supersedes the (western) “perceptions” and operational definitions. There is also an ideological divide between the Global North and South in understanding how conflicts are “resolved” on a local level, especially in traditional societies. One such case, where these differences in the perceptions and realities of peace and justice were evident in recent years, was Afghanistan.

The (western) “peacebuilding project” in Afghanistan did introduce positive initiatives, such as democracy, education for all, and the inclusion of women in governance and decision-making processes. As a result, Afghanistan held several elections and, in 2015, adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) based around the pillars of participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. However, contrary to its own WPS (2019) strategy of prioritizing women in conflict, the US and its coalition

partners side-lined women from peace negotiations with the Taliban, who, after taking over Kabul, instantly excluded women from governance roles and decision-making bodies. On this situation, Professor Shweta Singh notes: 'It is time we re-think, reframe the politics of WPS agenda – let us agree for once that the celebratory liberal agenda, while has all the right P's, stands challenged on the ground- and this just doesn't hold true only for the Afghanistan of today, but across South Asia'.<sup>[1]</sup>

Similarly, in Afghanistan, local and indigenous structures – primarily village councils like *Jirga* (common in Pashtun areas) and *Shura* (common in non-Pashtun areas) – often take precedence over western forms of justice and conflict resolution. Several international research works and reports have argued that the Afghans put higher trust in *Jirgas* and *Shuras* than the (western) court system. Despite this higher trust, both these mechanisms are largely all-male bodies and lead to gender exclusion from decision-making processes. These cultural dynamics combined with (often inaccurate) religious justifications enable groups like the Taliban to exclude women from governance and peacebuilding institutions. This complexity, and reality, of (local) traditional justice and conflict resolution structures suggest that the Afghan “peacebuilding project” that sought to implement models based on a predominantly western understanding, even with its positives, was destined to face major barriers.

Nonetheless, the US/coalition failure of establishing “durable peace,” as perceived in the west, in Afghanistan provides several lessons for policymakers and peacebuilders:

- First, **legitimacy** is an important concept when it comes to peacebuilding in fragile states. For terrorist and/or militant groups, legitimacy amplifies both their message and influence, whereas for civilian governments, it helps establish the rule of law. Hence, once the Taliban gained this legitimacy through the Doha (Peace) Agreement in February 2020, the civilian government, established through successive elections, was instantly undermined. More importantly, progress made on the WPS agenda was automatically undone as women were largely excluded from the peace talks. A successful peacebuilding project, both in theory and practice, cannot succeed if groups that were perceived as terrorist outfits, with a known history of inflicting political violence, are ultimately acknowledged as equal stakeholders by the US and its coalition partners.
- Second, policymakers must consider and deal with both the **internal and external drivers** of conflict to achieve lasting peace. The conflict was, in many ways, imposed by external actors on the Afghan people since the 1980s. Even if concerted efforts were made to address some internal root causes of conflict, external causes – such as non-state and state actors (e.g. Afghanistan's neighbors) – were largely ignored by the US and coalition partners. Moreover, the focus of establishing peace largely remained on major cities such as Kabul, whereas the rural and remote parts were either contested, controlled by the

Taliban, or run by warlords. As a result, multi-tier local conflicts – including resource, ethnic and intra-tribal conflicts – were given little consideration, which ultimately resulted in the peacebuilding project’s failure.

- Finally, decades of war and instability reshaped the Afghan society, especially in the rural and remote parts where tribal chieftains and elders, widely respected, were replaced by hard-line clerics and **warlords**. The warlords gave rise to the war economy, which persisted even after the US/coalition invasion and control of Afghanistan. The rent-seeking warlords ensured that true domestic and political reform never replicated and extended to the rural parts of the country. Hence, a peacebuilding project that decided to “live with” this presence of warlords, was, therefore, always destined to fail.

The (western) peacebuilding project in Afghanistan had some major positives; especially in terms of education, (some form of) democracy, free media, inclusion in governance, and more professional opportunities for women. However, achieving durable and lasting ‘peace’ in Afghanistan, as perceived in western scholarship, the US-led, and coalition supported, peacebuilding project was destined to fail since its inception due to the difference in “perceptions” and “realities” of peace.

[1] Shewta Singh (2021). *Twitter*. Accessed 18 September, 2021, from [https://twitter.com/shwets\\_singh/status/1438850080354697226](https://twitter.com/shwets_singh/status/1438850080354697226)

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reports

# Joint learning requires safe spaces



Especially in our peacebuilding operations, where we are working in fragile environments, the circumstances affecting our work can change very quickly. Being able to be innovative, adapt fast and react flexibly to the changing context are important skills. It is also important for organizations to learn from experience that has been gained and ensure that this knowledge is institutionally embedded. That's why many organizations ask themselves: how can we best support collective learning processes within and between organizations?

Within organizations, one important requirement is to establish a culture of open dialogue, one in which employees have the confidence to take risks and address mistakes. Because mistakes are associated with unwelcome emotions like shame, fear or uncertainty, people's first impulse is to hush them up. A special relationship of trust is therefore needed if people are going to be able to talk about mistakes. It requires psychological security. We need to feel confident (within our team) that our openness will not be punished or used against us. A culture of psychological security can best be summed up in two words: honesty and appreciation. That's why terre des hommes Schweiz addresses the following questions in its team development process: How can we encourage intelligent failure? How can we try out new things, get feedback early and quickly bring fruitless projects to an end? How can we make it clear that it's okay to make mistakes, but it's not okay not to acknowledge them or learn from them? How can we closely monitor our meetings to ensure that we are creating a safe space for open dialogue?

In a work culture that is dominated by a performance-driven society, most of us are conditioned only to show our strengths in our professional behavior and conceal our weaknesses. By deliberately revisiting our communication patterns and meeting formats, we can practice overcoming entrenched habits of competitive behavior and instead establish an organizational culture that encourages collective learning and embraces constructive errors.

In addition to the collective learning processes within organizations, encouraging institutional learning between different organizations offers tremendous potential – while at the same time presenting something of a challenge. The Intervision Group introduced by

KOFF is an excellent example of how forums for sharing experience between organizations can constitute a safe space in which people can talk openly, including about their challenges, failed projects and mistakes. The group has jointly come up with clear ground rules for their meetings, covering issues such as constructive feedback and confidentiality. Because these meetings are explicitly set up to be a safe space, the dialogue within the Intervention Group is of a different nature in terms of learning together compared with other such NGO networking sessions where, all too often, the focus is on showcasing and raising the profile of one's own organization. Deliberately defining a safe space is of enormous value in encouraging collective learning processes and helping everyone to move forward.

[terre des hommes schweiz](#)

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links

- [terre des hommes schweiz](#)



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reports

# Is anything possible, if only I truly want it?



Picture courtesy of Artlords

## *Personal reflection*

What do we learn from our mistakes, from the experience of failure, from difficulties, obstacles, and detours? This question is central to peacebuilding. An honest appraisal of this issue is a prerequisite for innovation and continued development. It is also important for managing expectations during the peace process in a transparent and (more) realistic way. And it aids in the critical examination of the neoliberal understanding of control and feasibility.

This question can be asked on a number of different levels: It is relevant to national and international peace processes which, sadly all too often, are failing or have failed to bring about the desired result. Guatemala, Columbia, Syria and Afghanistan are examples of this. In peace efforts, the question arises at grassroots level when projects and initiatives are not working or have (unforeseen) negative effects. Finally, it is central to organizations, collectives and individuals who sometimes begin to experience doubts, or even crumble, when faced with the challenges of peace work. Here I would like to offer a personal example relating to the context mentioned above.

A few years ago, I signed a contract for the evaluation of a peace project in Kabul, Afghanistan. A strong interest in the country, the exciting approach adopted by the project

and my desire to broaden both my geographical horizons and my experiences in international peacebuilding were the driving forces behind my decision to apply for the post. Naturally, I was proud and excited upon finding out that my application had been successful.

Now that it was time to make concrete plans for my trip, I started asking myself: Where can I find secure accommodation? How will I obtain reliable information? Should we hire a bullet-proof or regular car? Who will be my emergency contact? How will I react in the event of an abduction? What should happen to my remains in the event of my death? I quickly noticed that the questions arising in my mind were causing me to become unwell. It became more and more difficult to sleep, I had nightmares in which I was catapulted into Afghanistan in a rocket. Even those around me became concerned. “Do you want to travel to this unfamiliar, high-risk area alone?” My emotional state rapidly deteriorated. Nevertheless, I pressed ahead with preparations, organizing my flight, hotel and visa. Because I had made a promise, I now had to deliver. I had signed a contract. I wanted to progress my career. I wanted to succeed in my work.

It took several weeks and numerous conversations with those closest to me, a security expert and a psychologist before I realized that I could – and had to – get out of the rocket. It was about my life and my health. So I turned down the offer, despite the contract and my ambitions. This took courage, but the immediate feeling of having my life back again confirmed, on an emotional level, one of the most important lessons I have learned thus far: how to recognize my own feelings and limits, take these seriously and stand up for myself.

Sometimes we need to push ourselves to our limits in order to further ourselves. But in order to grow, you also need to admit, both to yourself and those around you, when you have gone beyond these limits. This requires a private and institutional environment that promotes (self-)trust, thereby enabling us to learn from our mistakes. It requires safe spaces for (self-)reflection and exchange in which people are heard, even when things are not going so well. And it requires an understanding of self-care, where it is not about taking a spa day to recover from our endeavors, but about finding the courage to stand up for oneself and for others, despite pressure to perform obligations and ambitions.

This type of emboldening (self-)reflection on mistakes and this understanding of self-care are to have their own place at KOFF as part of the “internal networking” strategic focus. Through this, we hope to view the initial question regarding mistakes and failures as an opportunity to learn, grow and further ourselves. As people, as organizations, as networks and as movements that advocate for social change with dedication, courage, and joy.

## KOFF

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## links

- [KOFF - The Swiss platform for peacebuilding](#)

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# Learning from North-South university partnerships in practice



End of funding, but not the end of working together. Institutions present: CDE, HAFL, SwissTPH and swisspeace, August 2021. swisspeace

In 2016, five Swiss institutions of higher education and three universities in the Global South received seed funding to work on sustainable development through **education and research in contexts affected by conflict**. Looking back at more than four years of coordinating this university network, here are some lessons learned from challenging situations:

- **Identifying common interest across disciplines**

In the beginning, it was tricky to jointly launch initiatives towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – ideas brought forward by individual partners just evaporated in the air because the other partners didn't see their interests and competencies reflected in them.

However, once we had identified common ground, i.e. which SDGs we wanted to contribute to from different perspectives, we could develop a specific topic to work on. Individuals within each institution rallied around the respective cause. Since we came from a variety of disciplines such as peacebuilding, natural resource management, engineering, and agriculture, these commonalities rather emerged on a methodological and didactical level,

such as curriculum development, practice-oriented teaching, problem-based learning combined with expertise on conflict sensitivity and in a specific context, such as South Sudan or Palestine.

Our initial hypothesis was confirmed, namely that combining more than one SDG and approaching them from an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary way can make a particularly beneficial contribution to quality education and, thus, to sustainable development.

- **Reconcile divergent realities**

Already among Swiss universities and higher education institutions, we soon noticed our different planning horizons and semester schedules. Identifying common timelines became even more complex for and with our partner institutions in the Global South who had to deal with contextual challenges, navigating remote communication even in pre-pandemic times. Failing to reconcile these different realities has been one of the major causes that put our collaboration repeatedly to a halt.

When it came to planning joint missions, the partners involved had to show great flexibility and compromise on what they would normally schedule for the process, including preparation, etc.

- **Make use of positive side-effects in a crisis**

With the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide lockdowns early 2020, all the partners had to shift their focus towards securing core business. For institutions of higher education, this meant reorganizing teaching under the new parameters of closed lecture halls. External partnerships in this first phase of the pandemic lost attention and were stalled. This almost led to a failure of implementing the different initiatives of the consortium.

However, North-South partnerships also gained relevance as everyone moved into the digital space. This suddenly made meetings and workshops much easier than before, as most institutions had invested resources into infrastructure and skills. Moving to remote teaching even opened up new opportunities for exchanges among partners from the North and from the South. This experience among sub-groups put North-South-exchanges technically on a level playing field.

Thus, the university network now exists not only in the form of an anonymous mailing list, but as a group of researchers, lecturers and professionals who know one another and who will hopefully pursue their collaboration beyond the funding period.

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reports

# Peacebuilding in Afghanistan — between fragmentation and omissions

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Derivative of Creative Commons “1/28/2020 Healing Afghanistan Through Art” by U.S. Institute of Peace  
(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usipeace/49483708582/>)

The Taliban takeover of Kabul on 15 August 2021 forces us to critically reflect on peacebuilding efforts over the last 20 years. Peacebuilding efforts were often fragmented, with some NGOs involved in troublesome rivalries and competition. As argued in a swisspeace (2019) mapping of peacebuilding actors in Afghanistan, many NGOs evolved in a competitive, donor-driven, and project-oriented environment; activities remained project-focused and often lacked a clear link to a long-term vision for peace.<sup>[1]</sup> Peacebuilding

activities, including for example, education, conflict resolution, and consultations undertaken at national and local levels and in different geographical areas, lacked coordination and were implemented in parallel, leading to duplication of efforts.

Since 2018, peacebuilding efforts also focused strongly on ‘negative peace’ to retake the famous phrase by Johan Galtung as the U.S. administrations began engaging in a political process with the Taliban. The primary objective of the process was ensuring the safe withdrawal of U.S. military troops and incorporating the Afghan Taliban in an administrative setup, thus ending armed conflict in the country.<sup>[2]</sup> Following these objectives, many peacebuilding activities focused on consultations and dialogues’ at the national level to identify issues that should not be compromised in negotiations for a political settlement, including constitutional amendments, or fundamental rights (especially women’s rights). Discussions on how Afghanistan might find *positive peace* at the local, everyday level where reconciliation must be grounded for a more peaceful social and political reality to emerge were far less frequent.

An even bigger problem was the relative absence of peacebuilding activities explicitly focusing on the *role of religious civil society*. Religious actors have considerable influence in Afghan society in questions of morality, ethics, and politics. However, while civil society was considered central to the post-2001 peacebuilding process, international actors paid limited attention to the role religious actors could play in peacebuilding. This is partly because Afghan religious authorities are often informal and not organized as NGOs, thus ‘invisible’ to western donors. The values of religious and ‘secular’ civil society may also be in conflict.<sup>[3]</sup> However, acknowledging and engaging the *role of religious civil society* in peacebuilding would arguably have had a greater impact. Unfortunately, now with the Taliban in power, the space for peacebuilding might have closed completely.

[1] *Dieser Trend wurde bereits in der Afghanistan EU Country Roadmap Afghanistan EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2018 – 2020*, which included a section on conflict prevention and peacebuilding and Durand, M. (2015). *Panorama of civil society organizations in Afghanistan: From the perspective of coordination*, ACBAR report. See <http://www.acbar.org/upload/1471243125467.pdf>

[2] <https://www.cfr.org/article/what-know-about-afghan-peace-negotiations>

[3] <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionglobalsociety/2018/09/peacebuilding-in-afghanistan-the-role-of-religious-civil-society/>

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reports

# Learning journey on systemic changes in African authoritarian contexts

*An interview with Annonciate Ndikumasabo, Senior Regional Governance Advisor (SDC), about the learning journey of the Eastern and Southern Africa Division (ESA) and the Democratization, Decentralization and Local Governance Network (DDLGN) of the SDC. [\[1\]](#)*

## **Why did the SDC decide to engage in a learning journey on systemic changes in African authoritarian contexts?**

It all started in 2017 when our ESA division decided to join forces with the DDLGN to overcome the challenges posed by the lack of democracy, hampering the effectiveness of development cooperation. We launched a first learning journey on governance in fragile contexts and organized a regional workshop on the shrinking space for civil society in 2018. Considering that authoritarianism was gaining ground in Eastern and Southern Africa (according to Freedom House, 5 of the eight countries we worked in were ranked as not free, and three were and are still classified partly free), we shifted our focus on seeking relevant strategies and approaches to increase effectiveness in such contexts. Based on knowledge generated, in 2020, we went further and launched a learning journey on systemic changes to figure out how to influence progress on human rights and democratic governance and achieve systemic transformational changes.

## **On what contexts did you focus? Why?**

The annual reports from our field offices revealed increasing trends of authoritarianism in Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, Egypt, and Rwanda. We, therefore, took these five contexts as case studies. We analyzed their political systems through political economy analyses to

find out relevant entry points and types of change required in our approach to influence positive governance. We reviewed our assumptions regarding the type of impact that we were expecting in such contexts and asked ourselves if they were still valid.

**Could you name a few outcomes of your learning journey on how to increase development effectiveness in authoritarian contexts in ESA region?**

First, it was necessary to underline that working in an authoritarian context is a deliberate and purposeful choice. We agreed that all the involved parties, including teams and partners (be it on the field or at the headquarters), should understand and accept the challenges of working in such contexts. We also agreed on the need to increase our knowledge of the constantly evolving contexts on which we work. Our learning process thus recommended several strategies, including conducting systematical political economy analysis and policy research to stay up to date at key moments of strategic programming; strengthening domestic accountability and enhancing checks-and-balances; cautiously integrating governance as a transversal theme in other sectors when it becomes difficult to work on political issues; understanding regional dynamics to overcome the inability to influence change at the national level; regularly analyzing the governments' openness to reforms, the quality of policy dialogue, space for civil and political rights, and impact on people's well-being; taking care of the security of SDC local staff and partners exposed to a high level of pressure.

**What can you conclude from this learning journey? Based on this experience, does the SDC plan to embark on another one?**

We can already see the added value of this learning journey at the internal level. It helped us move from a limited approach to governance to a more comprehensive one. At the impact measurement level, we are now analyzing if and how we can achieve systemic changes in such contexts and how SDC interventions can generate needed transformations to improve the livelihood of the population. The idea is not to move from a learning journey to another one, but to incrementally engage in constant learning for adaptive management.

[\[1\] The Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development \(SDC\), Federal Department of Foreign Affairs \(FDFA\)](#)

[Interview of](#)

Annonciate Ndikumasabo, senior regional governance advisor, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

[Interview by](#)

Sanjally Jobarteh, communication officer, swisspeace

[links](#)

- [SDC](#)

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# Lessons learned or best practices? Both indeed!



Failure or success: are these notions peaceful? When we hear about “the fight for peace” the contradiction is too big to bear. Fighting is too close to violence and short-term solutions. Instead, we should work for peace. It can be a tiresome job and endless work too often poorly paid (if not paid by violence or repression), yet it has an inevitable goal: a peaceful, and so, a sustainable world.

Peace does not come only by chance. It is a process, a culture requiring accurate means to make it live. It may encounter setbacks in processing. Yet from these, there are lessons to learn and changes to make in behavior, attitudes, policy, and sociopolitical structures, reaching best practices and the highest possible standards of peace.

To gain an overall vision of peace, its progress, and areas where it still needs to progress, Steven Pinker’s “The better angel of our nature. A history of violence and humanity” is a fair head start: a long story told short, “yes, peace is possible, and it does progress!”. From there, one shall ask: “why isn’t peace done yet?” and add “how to sustain peace once acquired?”.

At the core of the peace zone, things are peaceful. At its border, violence prevention and constructive thinking are required: “where do we come from and what still hinders or threatens peace?”.

Most people want peace. Yet, we all need tools to make it more effective: education, mediation at all levels, nonviolence practice and refusal of violence. A solid work to bridge the gender gap, bringing equality and liberty (as concepts and practices) to all, so forth enabling a shift in the use of power: from force and manipulation into cooperation. These are deep systemic changes, largely or partly underway. They are possible through universal care for each and all – human rights in all relations, all made peaceful – and through more

public participation.

The United Nations are peace-oriented: war is illegal (except for self-defense and peace operations), the Organisation works its best towards effective peace. In between the people and the UN, entrenched deep in our sociopolitical structures, the Nation-State, and the economy hold and often cling to might and power. How shall these be used, and what, whom shall they serve? Nations-States are not warlike; there are 26 army-less countries; the flaw is not the State, it is the manner. The Charter of the UN requires them to be “Peace-loving Nations.” Some ways to walk indeed. The economy can be generous. Both the economy and countries have the duty to improve the situation of peace worldwide and enhance the human condition for all. With our help, they will. These duties will massively increase because of climate change and the economic crisis that may emerge from the pandemic.

Beyond the lures of hope, it is in our structures and institutions that we need to invest as active citizens to help them grant and implement our right to peace. And as active consumers, it is the world’s fortune we need to attribute to the world’s well-being. Feasible? Although necessary, peace is not an easy task: it is a necessary one and we have the tools needed to succeed.

APRED

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links

- [Apred on the right to peace](#)
- [The UN Charter, peace-loving nations, article 4](#)

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in depth

# Getting to change — a delicate formula



PN's 2019 Staff Retreat. PeaceNexus(PN)

PeaceNexus is a private Swiss foundation dedicated to strengthening organizations contributing to peace in fragile contexts. The foundation is distinctive in that it funds organizational change processes rather than projects or activities. For selecting its partners, three criteria apply: 1) a strong track record – or proven potential – in terms of peace impact or contribution to locally-led peacebuilding, 2) alignment with PeaceNexus's geographical focus and conflict analysis, 3) readiness to change. That last criterion, evaluating applicants' change energy, is usually the most difficult to assess – and where we most often get it wrong.

Organizational development academics have developed a “change equation” that shows the level of dissatisfaction, combined with a shared vision for a better future and some first steps towards it, must be greater than internal resistance for change to occur. However, assessing each of these elements remains a difficult art.

Dissatisfaction can be found in every organization, but the question is: does this frustration come from a commitment to the mission? Has it become generalized negativity, or is it underpinned by creative energy and change champions ready to step up? We are often surprised by who ends up in a leading role, and we can also easily underestimate the resistance of those threatened by change. Such processes inevitably lead to a reallocation of power and resources. Although we cannot predict how organizational dynamics will be affected, seeking to understand them helps us assess to what extent and from where resistance may emerge.

However, frustration from within is sometimes not enough. Pressure from external sources must increase the cost of the status quo. A “donor darling” that is not held accountable for its impact may prefer to tolerate a high staff turnover rather than question its approach. PeaceNexus may hold a mirror, that reflects on internal consultations but the feedback may still not be fully heard unless they already translate into direct consequences. In such cases, it is wiser to walk away. And while an organization may not be “hurting enough” to

launch an authentic change process, the window of opportunity may also close fast: if facing an existential crisis, especially a financial one, it will not be in a position to engage in strategic thinking and medium to long-term reform efforts.

Finally, PeaceNexus' support has often revealed dysfunctional practices but also fundamental disagreement on the role and future of the partner. While consensus can eventually emerge, we have learned that failing to identify it early enough and address it directly, including at the board level, can limit the impact.

Most of the foundation's accompaniment comes down to helping its partners better understand the change equation and use its elements as a lever to move forward: to acknowledge staff's frustration and use it as fuel, to courageously name differences in vision, and commit to developing a shared new one, to consistently nurture long, challenging processes by breaking them down into manageable steps and reporting back regularly to share progress, as well as to engage those who undermine it. And looking back after more than ten years of trial and error, what we have found to be true in assessing change energy for organizational development processes turns out to be relevant to designing peacebuilding interventions more broadly.

[PeaceNexus](#)

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- [PeaceNexus](#)

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news

# Last chance to register for the Religion & Conflict Transformation course

What role does religion play in various conflicts around the world, such as in Myanmar, Nigeria, or the US? Who are the religious actors, and what can peacebuilders learn from and about them?

With the [Religion & Conflict Transformation course](#), swisspeace offers practical tools and methods for transforming conflicts with a religious dimension.

This course will take place virtually:

**Monday 6 to Friday 10 December 2021**

(five half-days, 14h00 – 17h45 CET)

[links](#)

- [Apply by 15 November 2021](#)

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calendar

# Events

## **KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE**

Upcoming events organized by KOFF member organizations can be found on our [KOFF MEMBER NEWS SITE](#).

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LECTURE AND HEARING – RETHINKING SECURITY: FROM MILITARY TO CIVIL SECURITY POLICY – A SCENARIO UP TO THE YEAR 2040

**19 November 2021 at the VPOD, Zürich**

Dr. Theodor Ziegler, Algsheim (Alsace)

Dr. hc. Barbara Haering, Zurich: Rethinking security

Questions about the German scenario and impulses for Swiss security and peace policy

Anna Leissing, Bern: Q&A

Questions to the speakers and moderation

Markus Heiniger, Meilen: Conclusion for peace policy in Switzerland

Peter Weishaupt, Editor PEACE NEWSPAPER: Closing words

[Details and registration](#)

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WORKSHOP FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN AN PBI ASSIGNMENT ABROAD

**20 November 2021, at the COMUNDO office (Freiburg)**

Would you like to volunteer for human rights in Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia or Mexico? Then take part in the workshop day, learn about PBI's peace work and find out if volunteering is an option for you.

[Details and registration](#)

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PBI CELEBRATES ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

**4 December 2021, Villa Bernau, Bern**

For 40 years, PBI has been committed to peace and human rights in crisis areas. Join us for its anniversary party with games, discussions, chili sin carne and live Colombian music.

[Details and registration](#)

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HEKS/EPER LAND FORUM 2021 – PUTTING PEASANTS RIGHTS INTO PRACTICE

**10 December 2021, Waisenhausplatz 30, Bern**

Based on the [study](#) "Switzerland's Foreign Policy and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants", published by a coalition of Swiss NGOs called "Friends of the

Declaration” and the Geneva Academy, this event will come up with proposals to guide Swiss governmental and civil society activities, so that they implement the rights enshrined in UNDROP through their international engagement.

[Details and registration](#)

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<b>Publisher</b>	KOFF
<b>Contact</b>	Steinengraben 22, 4051 Basel, Switzerland, Phone: +41 (0)31 330 12 12
<b>Editing</b>	Sanjally Jobarteh, Chiara Lanfranchi
<b>Translation</b>	Übersetzergruppe Zürich, Furrer Übersetzungen
<b>Cover</b>	Graffiti: bird on decaying wall

## KOFF

Die Schweizer Plattform für Friedensförderung  
La plateforme suisse de promotion de la paix  
La piattaforma svizzera per la promozione della pace  
The Swiss platform for peacebuilding

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KOFF is a dialogue and exchange platform facilitated by swisspeace. It is jointly supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the following Swiss NGOs which are members of the platform:

ae-Centre	HEKS	Schweizerischer Katholischer
Alliance Sud	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	Frauenbund
APRED	IAMANEH Schweiz	Solidar Suisse
artasfoundation	Interpeace	SOS Children’s Villages
Baha’i	Lucerne Initiative for Peace and	Stiftung für Integrale
Brücke · Le pont	Security (LIPS)	Friedensförderung
Caritas Switzerland	medico international schweiz	Swiss Academy for Development
Caux – Initiatives of Change	MIR Switzerland	Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund
Coexistences	mission 21	Swiss Peace Council
Foundation	miva – transporte l’aide	Swiss Red Cross
cfd	Peace Brigades International	Swiss Refugee Council
DCAF	Switzerland	SWISSAID
Eirene Suisse	Peace Nexus Foundation	Terre des Femmes Switzerland
Fastenopfer	Peace Watch Switzerland	terre des hommes schweiz
Fondation Hirondelle	PeaceWomen Across the Globe	Women for Peace Switzerland
Grains of Peace	Quaker United Nations Office	
Green Cross Switzerland		
Group for a Switzerland without an		
Army		