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The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding
CCDP Working Paper

Summary of Results for a Comparative
Research Project:

Civil Society and Peacebuilding

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Contents

Executive Summary	2
Acknowledgements	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Seven Key Findings	6
III. Three Main Policy Implications	8
IV. Next Steps	15
V. Background Information	16
The project's methodology	16
Summary of main findings along functions	18
Summary of main findings according to context variables	22
Annex: Comprehensive framework for the analysis of the role of civil society in peacebuilding	25
Further Readings	26
About the Author	28

Executive Summary

Civil society is widely assumed to be an important actor for peacebuilding. As such, substantive focus has been given towards building and strengthening civil society, especially in countries experiencing or emerging from situations of armed conflict. In such environments, civil society is understood as playing an important role in reducing violence, and in facilitating the conditions necessary for building a sustainable peace. However, despite this ever-growing emphasis on the role of civil society in peacebuilding, little systematic research has been undertaken to empirically support this assumption.

As an effort to systematically examine the role of civil society in peacebuilding processes, the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) has conducted a three-year comparative research project under the direction of Thania Paffenholz entitled "Civil Society and Peacebuilding." This report provides an overview of the findings thus far, and focuses explicitly on their policy implications.

The project began by developing a comprehensive framework through which the relevance and effectiveness of the role of civil society in peacebuilding could be more fully analyzed. This framework, derived from democracy, development and peacebuilding theory, outlined seven possible functions to be played by civil society within various stages of conflict. These functions are: protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialization, social cohesion, facilitation, and service delivery.

Through the comparative study of thirteen case studies, this project analyzed the performance of civil society in regards to the above functions within situations of both war and armed conflict. It also looked at the potential and actual role of civil society when a window of opportunity appears for peace negotiations, and when large-scale violence has ended.

The project found that civil society can play an important supportive role, though the impetus for peacebuilding comes in most cases from political actors and the conflict parties themselves. The findings of the research project demonstrate that the relevance of the seven civil society functions varied tremendously during different phases of conflict. However, activities of high relevance, such as protection during wars, were not necessarily equally implemented by civil society organizations. The effectiveness of activities also varied substantially. Overall, protection, monitoring, advocacy and facilitation related activities were of higher effectiveness, whereas socialization and social cohesion related activities were of low effectiveness across all cases. This finding stands in stark contrast to the actual implementation and funding level of these activities.

The project also found that there is a significant importance in recognizing other contextual factors that may limit or strengthen civil society's ability to fulfil a peacebuilding role. Important contextual factors include: the behaviour of the state, the level of violence, the role of the media, the composition of civil society, and the involvement of external political actors and donors.

From a policy perspective, this research distils three main implications: for every country of engagement, it is crucial to pay attention to the relevant functions for peacebuilding during the respective phase of conflict, to strengthen their effectiveness, and to also address important context factors.

The findings presented in this paper represent a first step in creating a more substantive knowledge base of how civil society can most effectively work for peacebuilding and be supported in order to increase its contribution. The project hopes to further stimulate reflection on civil society and peacebuilding amongst both academics and practitioners.

Keith Krause
Director, CCDP

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I. Introduction

With the proliferation of armed conflicts in the 1990s, and the rising complexity of peacebuilding efforts confronting the international community, the attention of donors and peacebuilding practitioners has increasingly turned to the potential role to be played by civil society. Although there has been a massive rise in peacebuilding initiatives aimed at strengthening civil society, these initiatives have not been accompanied by a systematic research agenda. As a result, we have known little about the role of civil society in peacebuilding, including its potential contribution to reducing violence, ending armed conflict and building a sustainable peace thereafter.

To address this knowledge gap, a three-year comparative research project entitled “Civil Society and Peacebuilding” has analyzed these pertinent questions. The project developed a comprehensive framework to analyze the relevance and effectiveness of the role of civil society in peacebuilding within different phases of conflict. Research was undertaken across thirteen countries. The framework is largely structured around seven potential functions of civil society in peacebuilding as presented in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Seven functions for civil society in peacebuilding

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection of citizens against violence from all parties; 2. Monitoring of human rights violations, the implementation of peace agreements, etc.; 3. Advocacy for peace and human rights; 4. Socialization to values of peace and democracy as well as to develop the in-group identity of marginalized groups; 5. Inter-group social cohesion by bringing people together from adversarial groups; 6. Facilitation of dialogue on the local and national level between all sorts of actors; 7. Service delivery to create entry points for peacebuilding, i.e. for the six above functions. |
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The project applied a broad conceptualization of *civil society*, understood as including a wide range of actors such as professional associations, clubs, unions, faith-based and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as traditional and clan groups. The media, businesses, and political parties – with the exception of their associations – were excluded in this understanding of civil society.

The following paper presents the main results and discusses the three most pertinent policy implications to be distilled from this project. Additional information about the project is presented in the background section of this report. The complete results, including the theoretical and empirical background of this project, are presented in a book: Thania Paffenholz (ed.), *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009.

II. Seven Key Findings

1. Civil society has an important supportive role for peacebuilding

Overall, our research stresses that civil society has the potential to play an important and effective role in peacebuilding during all stages of conflict, and has often contributed positively to the peacebuilding process. However, a careful look at the engagement of civil society – compared to the involvement of other actors – reveals that the role played by civil society is not necessarily decisive in building peace, but rather supportive in most instances. The central impetus for peacebuilding comes mainly from political actors, and above all, from the conflict parties themselves. These actors are often reinforced by strong regional actors such as the European Union in Europe and the Mediterranean, or India in South Asia. Nevertheless, the supportive role played by civil society can make a difference when performed in an effective way at the optimal time. Civil society groups often have contributed effectively to the reduction of violence, the negotiation of settlements, and the facilitation of peace in post-conflict environments.

2. There is a value to employing a functional approach in analyzing the role played by civil society in peacebuilding

Employing a functional approach to the study of civil society in peacebuilding helps to first identify *what* is needed, prior to an analysis of *who* has the potential to fulfill these functions in the short, medium and long term. Additionally, such an approach also allows for a broader look at all existing social forces that can contribute to peacebuilding, instead of a narrow focus on well known, pro-peace NGOs and groups.

3. The relevance of the seven civil society functions differs according to the phases of conflict

The relevance of the seven functions analyzed by this project differs tremendously according to the four phases of conflict: (1) war, (2) armed conflict, (3) windows of opportunity for peace negotiations, and (4) post-large scale violence. The peacebuilding potential of civil society in these phases also varies significantly (for details see policy implication 1 below).

4. There currently exists an imbalance between implemented civil society activities and their relevance for peacebuilding

In general, the project noted a significant imbalance between the level of civil society activities within a particular function and the relevance of these activities for peacebuilding. On the one hand, even when a function was highly relevant in a particular phase of conflict, it was not necessarily performed by civil society actors. The most striking examples can be seen with the functions of protection, socialization and social cohesion. While protection was always highly relevant during armed conflict and war, it was performed only to a far lower degree. On the other hand, functions which were not found to be highly relevant during violent phases of conflict were implemented widely, especially during a window of opportunity for reaching a peace agreement. Such was the case for social cohesion and socialization initiatives, including dialogue projects, conflict resolution workshops, exchange programmes and peace education projects.

5. The effectiveness of civil society varies substantially from function to function

Another striking finding of this project indicates that when performed, the functions of protection, monitoring, advocacy and facilitation were often quite effective. Conversely, efforts aimed at socialization and social cohesion generally had a very low level of effectiveness in terms of reducing violence, contributing to agreements and sustaining peace. This was due to the way most initiatives within these functions were conducted, and the way they were impacted by certain contextual factors.

6. Addressing the different conflict lines within societies is a matter of violence prevention

Although our project has not analyzed the phase of prevention prior to the outbreak of violence, we found an interesting result in this regard: in all analyzed cases, civil society tended to pay the most attention to the main conflict lines within a given society. Disregarding other cleavages and tensions in societies, however, has proven to be dangerous and may lead to future outbreaks of violence. The case of the violent uprising in the Terrai region of Nepal immediately after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 is a case in point.

7. Context matters

The context of each case strongly influences the space for civil society to act and thus strengthens or limits its overall effectiveness. The main contextual factors to be considered are: the behavior of the state; the level of violence; the role of the media; the behavior and composition of civil society itself (including diaspora organizations); and the influence of external political actors and donors.

III. Three Main Policy Implications

Three central policy implications can be derived from this research:

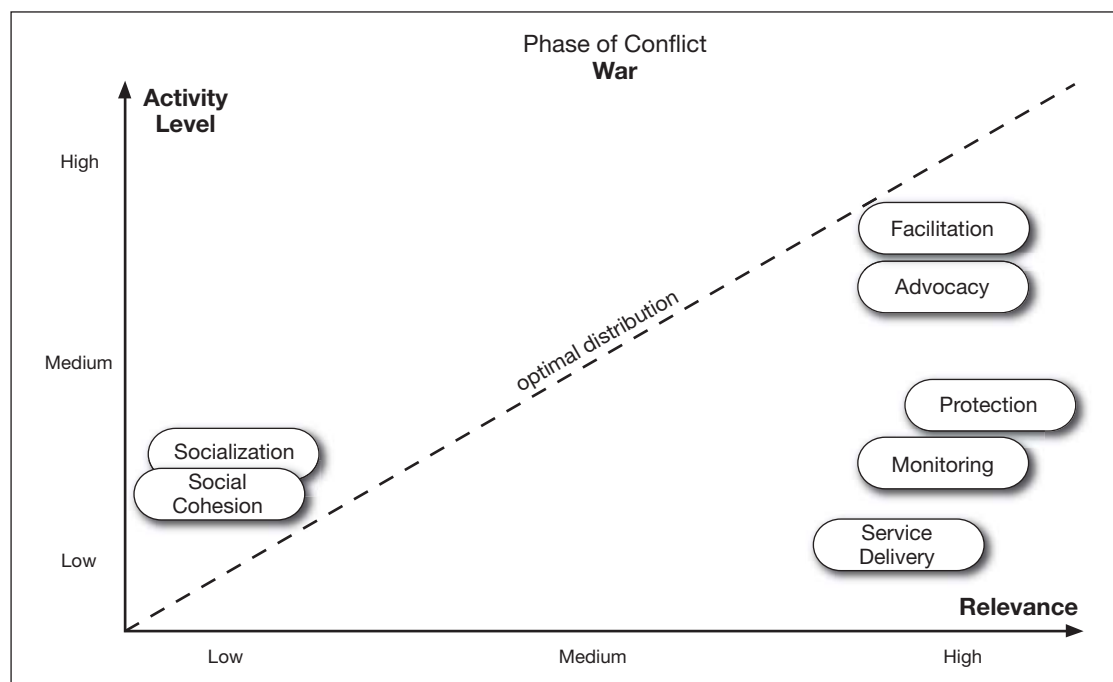
1. The focus of attention and support should be directed towards the most relevant functions of civil society, given the respective phase of conflict;
2. The effectiveness of these relevant functions should be strengthened;
3. Equal attention should also be paid to the contextual dynamics that can impact the role played by civil society.

Policy implication 1: Focus attention and support towards the most relevant functions

Given the general results, the first policy implication is to implement and support those functions that are particularly relevant to a specific phase of a conflict. The next four figures below show the changing relevance of the functions in reference to the four analyzed phases of conflict.

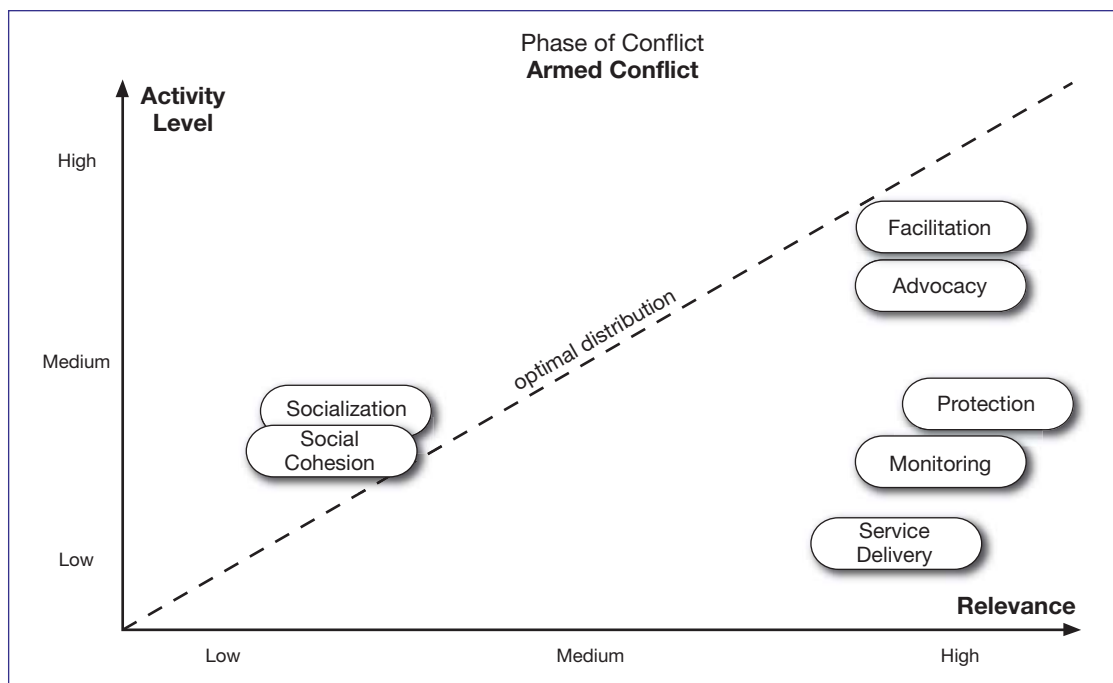
a. *During phases of war*, the space for civil society to act is reduced drastically. The main goal during this phase is to lessen violence. Civil society can monitor human rights violations, advocate and facilitate a dialogue for the protection of civilians, and ultimately protect people from suffering due to the war. As such, the functions of protection, monitoring, advocacy and facilitation are of particular relevance within this phase. Service delivery can also be of high relevance, when used as an entry point for the functions mentioned above. Thus, aid projects can also use their presence in a conflict zone to protect people by performing monitoring functions and informing other organizations about the situation, or else by engaging in direct protection measures.

Figure 2: Relevance and activity level – war



b. During *phases of armed conflict*, (understood as generally having a lower level of violence compared to phases of war), the relevance of certain functions over others is much the same as during phases of war. The difference between the two phases is mainly seen with the increased relevance of the socialization and social cohesion functions. Initiatives to socialize people towards peace values – such as peace education or reconciliation and dialogue efforts – are not relevant *during* war. They cannot contribute to violence reduction at this stage because their long-term goal of changing certain behaviors does not work in a climate of hatred and violence. However, these initiatives may become slightly more relevant during armed conflict, if they are accompanied by a low level of violence and facilitated by the general situation in the country. Thus, in certain cases of armed conflict, the relevance of these two functions can be slightly higher than during war.

Figure 3: Relevance and activity level – armed conflict



Interestingly, in the thirteen cases we have studied, we found that the actual level of civil society activity did not match their respective relevance. Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate this: while protection, monitoring, and service delivery were of high relevance, they were not adequately taking place in the analyzed case studies. The situation was slightly better for facilitation and advocacy, whereas many social cohesion and socialization activities were often conducted by civil society, despite their lower relevance in most situations of armed conflict and war.

During war and armed conflict, there should be more initiatives developed that aim at providing protection, i.e. direct protection, monitoring of human rights violations, advocacy for and facilitation of protection initiatives. Aid projects in war zones should also systematically integrate this goal.

c. During a window of opportunity for peace negotiation, civil society can take up very important – and in some instances – crucial roles in facilitating the onset of negotiations, or in advocating for the inclusion of pertinent issues into a peace agreement. While the relevance of all other functions remains similar to the phases of conflict previously outlined, the relevance of advocacy is higher in this particular phase.

Two types of advocacy become especially relevant within this phase:

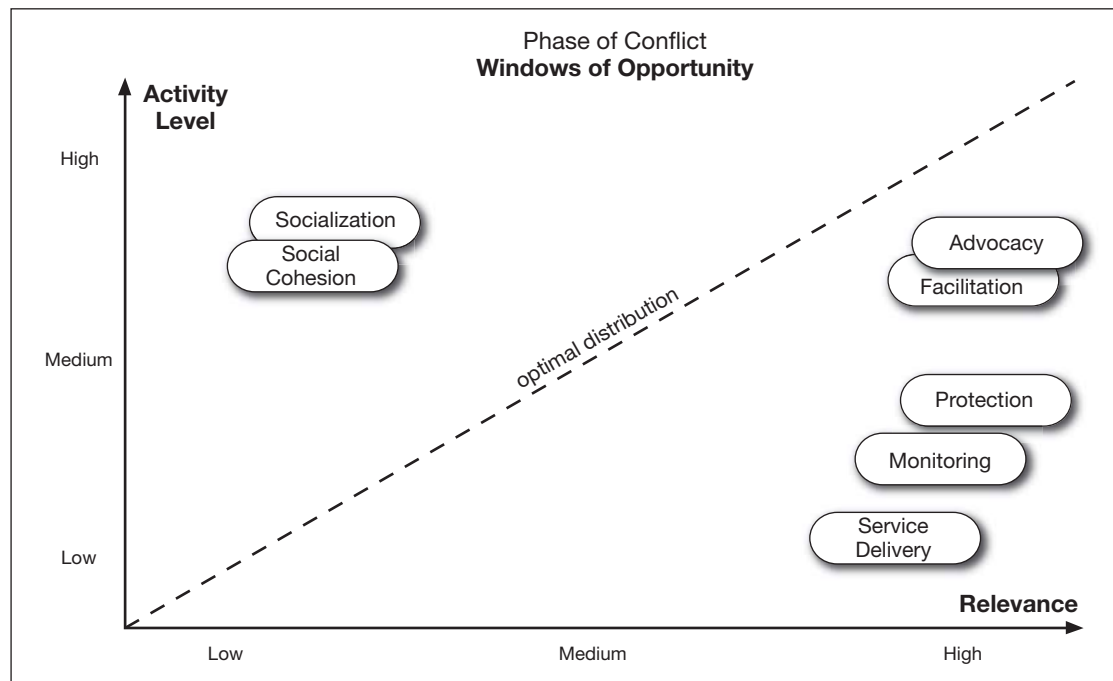
- Mass mobilization in support for the agreement or for system change, often in the form of large-scale street agitations, such as can be seen in the cases of Nepal, Northern Ireland and Cyprus.
- Agenda setting through targeted advocacy campaigns for the inclusion of relevant issues into the peace agreement as seen in Guatemala, Northern Ireland and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The high relevance of advocacy often corresponds with the actual activity level within this function, particularly in the cases mentioned above. Sometimes, however, this was not the case. In Sri Lanka, for example, pro-negotiation peace groups were by far outnumbered by pro-war groups.

In general, long-term social cohesion and socialization initiatives reached the highest activity level during this phase. This spike in initiatives occurred especially in well-known conflicts such as Israel/Palestine, Sri Lanka, Cyprus and Northern Ireland. The quantity of activities, however, was often not matched with their actual relevance.

During a window of opportunity for peace negotiations, both mass mobilization and targeted advocacy campaigns are important; facilitation is also quite relevant during this period, whereas the functions of socialization and social cohesion are of less utility.

Figure 4: Relevance and activity level – windows of opportunity

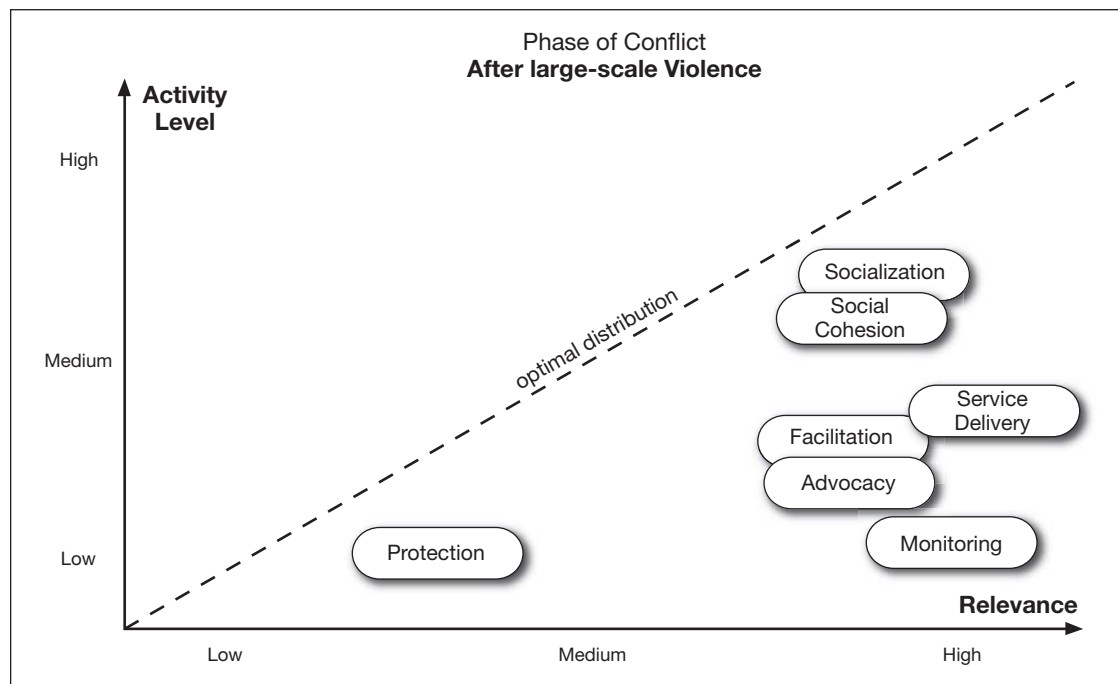


d. After *large-scale violence comes to an end*, the need for protection generally declines. It is still important to account for context, however, because high levels of violence can continue past the formal termination of hostilities, albeit often in other forms (such as increases in crime or household violence). The role of civil society in monitoring continues to be relevant, as does facilitation and service delivery. Once the war is over, social cohesion and socialization increase in relevance as people are able to focus on issues other than their immediate survival. At this point, it is most useful to begin initiatives that aim at rebuilding

relationships as a means of preventing future conflicts. Particularly, service delivery can create entry points for bringing people together from former adversarial groups in the provision of a common interest (such as water or other community matters). Although some of the aforementioned functions indeed increase in terms of their actual activity level, more attention should be paid to their implementation during this time, as a reflection of their high relevance for peacebuilding. For example, civil society was rarely engaged in the monitoring of peace agreement implementation across the analyzed case studies. This function was only performed when included explicitly in the agreement, such as in Northern Ireland.

After large scale violence has ended, monitoring, social cohesion and socialization are needed. Facilitation continues to be relevant. Creating entry points for social cohesion through aid programmes is of particularly high relevance.

Figure 5: Relevance and activity level – after large scale violence



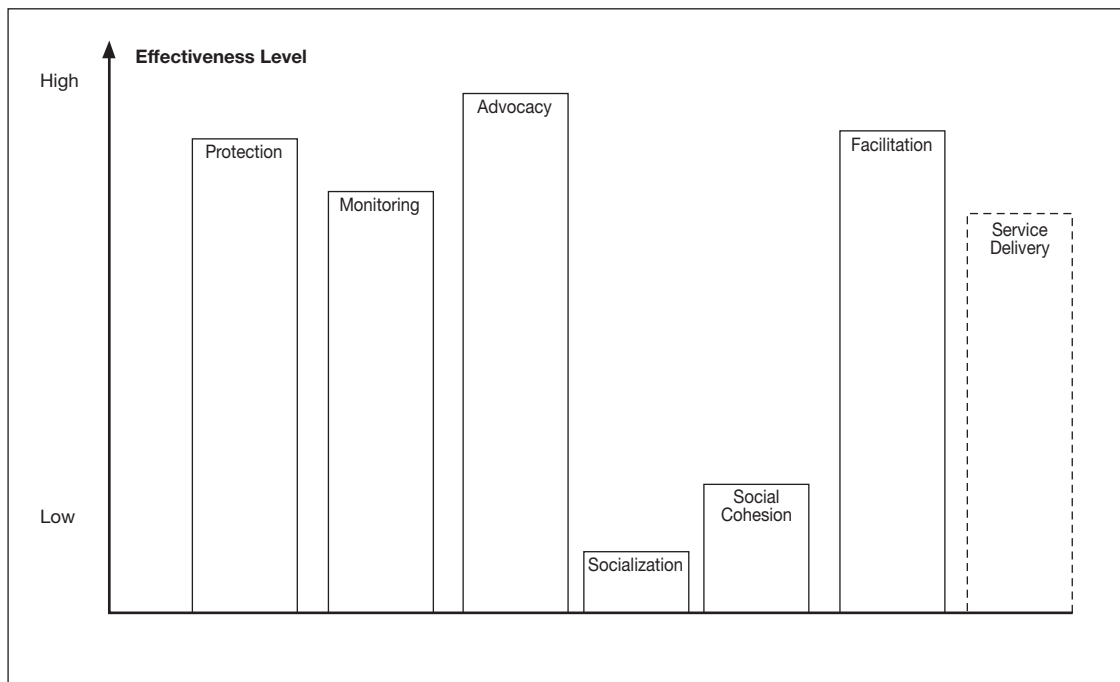
A sound assessment of conflict phases and the corresponding relevance of functions for civil society is the starting point of any decision regarding the types of initiatives that should be implemented or supported in peacebuilding. Thus, a systematic analysis is always required.

Policy implication 2: Strengthen the effectiveness of relevant functions

The second policy implication is the necessity of increasing the effectiveness of activities in the relevant functions. The effectiveness of each function differs significantly according to phases and context. Figure 6 below shows the differentiation of general effectiveness across cases and phases of conflict in a highly aggregated manner. It demonstrates that protection, monitoring, advocacy and facilitation – when performed – often reach high levels of effectiveness, while social cohesion and socialization initiatives were on the whole less effective in terms of both short and long-term goals. In the case of the latter, we found that the low effectiveness of these functions was not only due to implementation at the “wrong” time, but also impacted by the way in which these initiatives tend to be conducted and the context within which they operate.

When used systematically as entry points for protection during armed conflicts and wars, and when building social cohesion following large-scale violence, aid projects can also be effective. These findings are especially true when compared to social cohesion projects with direct peace or reconciliation goals. The activity level of service delivery projects aiming to create entry points for other peacebuilding functions was, in fact, very low. Thus, a proper assessment of the effectiveness of these activities was not possible. Figure 6 below outlines these results and shows an estimate based on our existing samples.

Figure 6: Aggregated effectiveness of functions across cases and phases



When analyzing effectiveness, we found that the more successful initiatives within each function showed common patterns. Hence, we could identify a number of factors important for enhancing effectiveness overall. Below is a short presentation of our findings along each function.

Protection: The effectiveness of protection initiatives can be enhanced when they are systematically combined with monitoring activities and advocacy campaigns; equally needed for effective protection is an integrated media outreach strategy and cooperation with international networks.

Monitoring: The effectiveness of monitoring can be enhanced when activities are designed to reinforce protection and advocacy initiatives. In addition, outreach to national and international networks can also foster effectiveness. Monitoring should take place during all phases of conflict, and additional monitoring activities should be organized around the implementation of peace agreements.

Advocacy: The effectiveness of advocacy initiatives increases when reinforced by knowledge of how to organize effective campaigns, and additionally accompanied by monitoring initiatives and targeted media strategies. Drawing the attention of the international community through collaboration with the media and international networks can additionally enhance overall effectiveness of civil society advocacy.

Socialization: The precondition for effectiveness of socialization initiatives is a low level, or the absence of, violence. It is essential to engage with influential pre-existing institutions, such as schools or associations, even if they continue to reinforce existing divides within society. This engagement can be effective when performed as a long-term process, rather than as short-term isolated initiatives taking place outside important institutions. Additionally, supporting organizations can be particularly helpful, when they promote democratic values externally and reflect these same values internally within their own structure. Finally, in-group socialization of marginalized groups is more effective when the empowerment takes place in a sensitive way that avoids fostering radicalization.

Social cohesion: The precondition for the effectiveness of social cohesion initiatives is again a low level, or an absence of, violence. The effectiveness of social cohesion increases when initiatives aim at bringing people together for a common cause. Effective initiatives thereby aim at behavioural, instead of attitudinal, change. Long-term systematic initiatives are more effective than short-term sporadic events, especially when they focus on all cleavages and also attempt to bridge difficult groups in society.

Facilitation: Local facilitation is performed at all times and does not necessarily need special attention or support. This also seems to hold true for national facilitation by eminent civil society groups. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of existing initiatives can be enhanced when targeted – rather than general – training is provided. For example, targeted community mediation training for refugee return in Bosnia was very effective, while general mediation training given to a variety of groups proved to be ineffective. In general, people did not know what do with the acquired knowledge.

Service delivery: Service delivery is only effective for peacebuilding when it creates entry points for other functions. During war and armed conflict, aid projects often take place in conflict-affected areas. The systematic use of such projects for additional protection purposes can enhance their peacebuilding effectiveness. After large-scale violence ends or during period of low levels of violence, aid projects can be very effective in creating common platforms of cooperation and dialogue for adversarial groups.

Policy implication 3: Pay attention to the context

The third policy implication to be distilled from this project is the importance of accounting for the social, economic and political context in which civil society operates. Because context potentially can severely limit the effectiveness of civil society activities, it is thus important to counterbalance these factors in the following ways:

Reduce violence: Violence is the most important factor limiting the ability for civil society to play a meaningful role in peacebuilding. The correlation is simple: the higher the level of violence, the more that the space is reduced for civil society to act. As a consequence, coherent policy and operational measures to reduce violence independently from civil society initiatives need to be systematically explored.

Address the behavior of the state: Next to violence, the behavior of the state is also significant to limiting the potential capacity of civil society. First, the behaviour of the state – and the government in particular – can be a source of armed conflict. Second, the more repressive a state is towards civil society actors, the more limited the space is for civil society to act; third, the more that governance is democratic, the broader the space will be for civil society to act; fourth, the more state institutions fulfil their traditional functions like protection and service delivery, the more civil society can concentrate on other functions. Addressing the state as an important actor through both policy dialogue and pressure should therefore be part of a coherent strategy to facilitate the role of civil society in peacebuilding.

Work with the media: The mass media are among the opinion leaders within society. Hence, they can tremendously strengthen or limit the role of civil society in peacebuilding. Without positive media coverage, many civil society initiatives will receive significantly lower public attention, and experience diminished chances of success. This is especially true for protection, monitoring, advocacy and socialization functions. The media can often play a destructive role due to biased reporting, leading some donors to only support so-called “peace media”. Yet these outlets often have little impact, as their audience can be very limited. Thus, it is important to include the mass media as part of any civil society support strategy.

Pay attention to the composition of civil society: The composition and characteristics of civil society also influence its effectiveness; the more civil society is polarized and dominated by radical tendencies, the more difficult it becomes for civil society to contribute positively to peacebuilding. A solid analysis of civil society groups, including diaspora organizations, is therefore recommended prior to formulating a support strategy.

Provide sensitive funding: Funding enhances many initiatives and can contribute to the professionalization of peacebuilding activities. Yet, funding has also contributed to the “NGOization” of peace work, the reduction in voluntarism, and the shift of accountability from local and national constituencies to international NGOs and donors. A sensitive funding strategy is thus required, which enables peacebuilding initiatives, and limits any negative consequences.

IV. Next Steps

As a next step, this project aims to engage further in a process of research-policy transfer. With the help of systematic dissemination and discussions of the results from the project, we hope to stimulate further reflection and discussion among donors, international NGOs, and local civil society organizations on their work with civil society in peacebuilding contexts.

Because changing practice does not happen easily, the writing of this project report is meant only an initial step. A more targeted and systematic initiative is needed in order to facilitate an effective research-policy transfer for the benefit of civil society peacebuilding efforts.

Moreover, the findings of this research project has provided answers to many pertinent questions but has also raised many new ones. Therefore, we see a need for further research in the following areas:

- *Socialization*: Analyzing initiatives that focus on major socialization institutions such as schools or associations, or that work with difficult partners;
- *Social cohesion*: Assessing the long-term effectiveness and impact of initiatives including their theories of change (such as attitude versus behavioral change), as well as exploring the possibility for bridging other divides and tensions within societies;
- *Facilitation*: Analyzing the structures and processes of local facilitation, as well as the effectiveness of national facilitation by eminent civil society persons;
- *Interaction*: Analyzing the relationship between state, regime character and civil society space;
- *Media*: Assessing the actual coverage of civil society activities, the reporting quality and the audience reception, including the negative and positive contributions of the media to socialization;
- *Structure of civil society organizations*: Understanding the effectiveness of different civil society structures and organizations – for instance, whether they are voluntary and professional organizations, or democratic versus non-democratic in orientation;
- *Theory link*: Undertaking further research into the implications of our findings for existing peacebuilding theories;
- *Research-Policy link*: Producing additional documentation and applied research into the policy relevance of our project as a means to generate insights into research-policy transfer processes and methodologies.

V. Background Information

The project's methodology

Understanding of key terms

Civil society is understood as including a wide range of actors from professional associations, clubs, unions, faith-based organizations (such as churches or Islamic charities), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as traditional and clan groups. Excluded groups include the media, businesses, and political parties, with the exception of their associations. Hence, we have applied a much broader understanding of civil society than is often used in peacebuilding and development discourse, where civil society is mainly equated with NGOs. The focus of analysis within the project is on local and national civil society groups. The project has neither explicitly looked at global civil society campaigns, nor at international NGOs or other civil society groups that are not part of the national or local arena. However, it has explored the links between national civil society and its international partners.

The understanding of *peacebuilding* is also broad: peacebuilding aims at preventing and managing armed conflict and sustaining peace after large-scale organized violence has ended. Peacebuilding is a multi-dimensional effort; its scope covers all activities that are linked directly to this objective over 5-10 years. Peacebuilding should ideally create conducive conditions for economic reconstruction, development and democratization, which are understood as preconditions for legitimate democratic order.

Civil society peacebuilding is understood in the logic of the functional approach used by this project. It is important to note that the analysis undertaken by this project was not limited only to those civil society activities that were labeled "peacebuilding"; rather, a variety of activities undertaken by civil society actors were explored that contributed directly or indirectly to the overall goals of peacebuilding.

Process

In 2006, the first phase of the project developed an analytical framework of seven civil society functions derived from democracy, development and peacebuilding theory and practice, as well as from existing case study knowledge (for more information, see Paffenholz & Spurk, *Civil Society, Civic Engagement and Peacebuilding*, the World Bank Social Development Paper No. 100/2006 and Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction paper No. 36/2006).

From 2007-2008, the second phase of the project began testing the framework in regards to five cases: Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Nigeria, and Israel/Palestine. It looked specifically at particular aspects of civil society and peacebuilding, including the media, networks, gender, and youth. The framework was then enlarged and subjected to in-depth country case study research in thirteen case studies. These case studies were: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, Nigeria, Somalia, DR Congo, Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Guatemala and Tadjikistan. The final cases were selected on the basis of the availability of pre-existing substantive data sets. If needed, the project provided a travel fund for additional field trips to collect missing data. The cases represent a wide range of different types of conflict settings.

The analysis focused on:

- The overall context of each case study, and the understanding of peacebuilding;
- The status and composition of civil society in each case;
- Other relevant factors such as the state, the media, and gender issues;
- The seven core functions of civil society in peacebuilding;
- The main supporting and limiting factors for civil society to fulfill these roles in each of the case studies.

A number of workshops were also organized for all involved researchers and external experts to discuss the analytical framework, the case studies and the conclusions. The entire project was comprised of 30 researchers from 16 universities and research institutes, 4 external advisors/experts, and 22 external reviewers, as well as support staff. The project was coordinated by Thania Paffenholz.

The results of the project are presented in the form of a book and this paper. They are additionally being discussed within the community of peacebuilding practitioners during events and workshops in donor countries, as well as in most of the case study countries.

For more information on upcoming events related to this project, please see:
<http://www.graduateinstitute.ch/ccdp>

Methodology

The project applied a comparative theory and empirical research approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. While all case studies identified a number of context-specific phases of both conflict and peacebuilding, overall we distinguished between four main phases. These phases are (1) *war* (higher level of violence with more than 1000 battle related death), (2) *armed conflict* (with lower number of casualties), (3) *windows of opportunity for peace negotiations*, and (4) the phase *after large-scale violence* has ended (it is worth mentioning that the third phase tends to overlap with the first and second phases in terms of timing).

The effectiveness and relevance of the role played by civil society in peacebuilding was assessed against the ability of different civil society actors to contribute to the peacebuilding goals in each of the four phases of conflict/peacebuilding. Specifically, the project looked at the contribution of different civil society initiatives to the reduction in violence, to reaching a negotiated agreement, to sustaining a peace agreement over the medium to long term, as well as to the improvement of conditions for society at large.

For each function, a variety of methodologies have been applied to assess effectiveness. Content analysis of particular peace agreements was used to verify whether the themes that were discussed by civil society groups have been taken into account. The project used evaluation studies or the results from public opinion polls to assess attitude change of groups at particular times of an initiative or process. Interviews were also conducted by researchers specifically for our project.

The results of all cases were then subjected to comparative quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify and analyze common patterns throughout cases. The project also applied an intensive quality control process through an internal and external review process.

Summary of main findings along functions

(1) **Protection** is always of high relevance during armed conflict and war, and decreases in importance in most cases after large-scale violence has ended. Cases like Cyprus and Guatemala demonstrate that it is the level of violence that determines the importance of protection, rather than the existence of a peace agreement. In Cyprus, the presence of a UN peacekeeping force has led to a frozen conflict situation with no violence, and in Guatemala the level of violence – in the form of general insecurity due to crime, political and household violence – still makes protection highly relevant even ten years after the peace agreement.

Interestingly, the theoretical relevance of the function during violent phases of conflict is not matched with the actual level of performed activities. Only in one-third of the cases analyzed was protection conducted, either by local (often traditional and religious) actors, or by professional protection NGOs. When combined with monitoring and advocacy campaigns – some of which were picked up by the media and international networks – protection can be effective not only in saving lives, but can also contribute to accelerating peace agreements.

A special form of protection chosen by some civil society actors was related to the issue of migration. When the space for civil society activities diminished in size, activists and civilians tended to leave the country in question. However, many civil society activists continued their work from outside the country, often partnering up with international NGOs or other organizations.

Protection also becomes a key precondition for civil society to act and perform other functions. The case of Somalia demonstrates this well: even under difficult circumstances during phases of armed conflict, civil society actors could still fulfill many functions. However, when war broke out again after the Ethiopian intervention in December 2006, and the conflict parties became increasingly aggressive towards civil society actors, the space to act for civil society almost vanished.

The main limiting factors for protection are hence a high level of violence, but also a coercive state with dysfunctional rule of law institutions, and a lack of funding for professional initiatives.

(2) **Monitoring** is always relevant, but the issues to be monitored change according to the phases and context of a conflict situation. The main focus of monitoring during armed conflicts and wars is on human rights violations. The central actors involved are local and national professional organizations and research institutions that are often linked to international human rights organizations. The monitoring of specific issues was also successful in many cases. In Northern Ireland, the monitoring of the treatment of war prisoners, combined with advocacy, brought this situation to public attention and later into the peace agreement.

The high relevance of monitoring again did not correlate with the actual level of activities. Monitoring was either not performed in all cases or only performed to a limited extent. The effectiveness of monitoring, when performed, was fairly high in most cases, albeit never as a stand-alone function. Monitoring became the precondition for protection and advocacy. In the case of protection, its effectiveness was higher when the activities of civil society were picked up by the media. In contrast, when media freedom was extremely restricted, monitoring activities were less reported and thus less effective. Still, once international attention was created, monitoring organizations already linked to international organizations could act more effectively.

The main limiting factors for effective monitoring are, as with protection, the state restrictions put on the space for civil society action or restrictions imposed by other conflict parties, as well as the extreme levels of violence.

(3) **Advocacy** is not only highly relevant for peacebuilding, but was also conducted in many instances by civil society with a high level of effectiveness throughout all phases of conflict. Next to advocacy for protection-related issues, civil society groups advocated for the inclusion of relevant issues into peace agreements, such as land reform in Guatemala, human rights provisions in Northern Ireland, or legal issues aimed at the recognition or implementation of rights of marginalized groups such as the Mayas in Guatemala, Kurdish minorities in Turkey, and Muslims in Sri Lanka. Civil society also advocated for issues related to the implementation of peace agreements such as the return of refugees in Bosnia, or the establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions. Women's groups are often successful in bringing minority and gender issues onto the agenda. In general, if targeted advocacy campaigns are combined with monitoring, media attention, and the support of international networks, their effectiveness is at its highest. An example can be seen with advocacy for protection initiatives, when they combine the initiatives of community groups, local NGOs or traditional leaders. In Afghanistan during the Taliban rule, a NGO anti-landmine campaign led Mullah Omar to issue a *fatwa* banning the use of mines.

The most effective form of advocacy, according to our studies, is mass mobilization for large-scale change, such as the end of war or authoritarian rule. Civil society organizations were also in many cases very effective in bringing issues to the negotiation agenda. The most visible and successful case was the systematic advocacy of civil society groups organized in the *Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil*, which operated parallel to the two-year official peace negotiations in Guatemala. Here civil society organizations successfully managed to put important topics onto the negotiation agenda; two thirds of the proposals found their way into the peace agreement.

The main limiting factors for advocacy are again linked to the shrinking space for civil society to act. Other possible limiting factors include a highly restricted media, the lack of specialized knowledge, or the lack of capacity for managing successful campaigns.

(4) **Socialization of the population at large** with general democratic and peace values is mainly relevant in phases with low levels of violence (or no violence). High levels of violence and the radicalization in society during armed conflict and war works against these initiatives. We found that in all cases, the existing socialization institutions in society are the most influential factors towards how people learn democratic and conflict behavior. These institutions of socialization are schools, religious and secular associations, clubs, work, and families, which tend to re-enforce existing divides, and thus often foster radicalization. This finding holds for conflicts with a small number of defined adversary groups as Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka or Israel/Palestine. It is also highly relevant in conflicts with more differentiated divides like Guatemala, Nepal, Afghanistan, Congo or Nigeria. In Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Nepal or Guatemala schools are representing the divides in society.

We also find radical movements within civil society that openly foster an enemy image against the other group, such as settler movement in Israel or veteran associations in Bosnia, ethnic community associations in Nigeria, Sinhala nationalist organizations in Sri Lanka or the Orange Order in Northern Ireland. Interestingly, peace agreements in adversarial multi-group settings often perpetuate war-time divides through the inclusion of power-sharing mechanisms. Thus, there should be an understanding as to when such arrangements will come to an end and society and politics can be based on values over group identity.

These findings stand in stark contrast to the actual activities performed by civil society organizations. We found that most NGO peace education initiatives are haphazardly organized in the form of workshops, training, public seminars or peace media, often taking place outside available socialization institutions within society. It is therefore not astonishing that these activities overall tend to not be effective.

The specific in-group socialization of particular groups in a conflict situation has proven to be effective in many instances, as a generation of civic leaders have been empowered through training and capacity building (such as Maya activists in Guatemala or Dalith organizations in Nepal). However, the strengthening of group identity has also had negative effects; it can reinforcing existing conflict lines, and sometimes even facilitate radicalization, as demonstrated by some ethnic groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(5) **Social cohesion:** The relevance of activities that bring people from adversarial groups together depends largely on the context in which these activities take place. At first glance, these initiatives always seem relevant in group conflicts like Northern Ireland, Bosnia or Sri Lanka. Here the focus is on bridging divides between the main groups, such as Protestants/Catholics, or Singhalese/Tamils. However, in societies like Guatemala or Afghanistan, where there are less clear divides, there seems to be a limited need for this function. A deeper analysis reveals that all conflict societies are facing divides between different groups that go beyond the main adversarial groups. In Israel, there are divides between the religious orthodox and secular Israelis; in Afghanistan, the cleavages exist strongly between religious and secular groups, between different religious schools and doctrines, between tribal and modern parts of society, and between various ethnic identities. Once a destructive approach to dealing with conflict has penetrated a society, there is a high risk that other conflict lines will also transform into violence. It thus becomes a matter of violence prevention to address these cleavages as well. The uprising of violence in the Terrai region of Nepal immediately after the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 is a case in point. The focus on the main conflict line between the Maoist movement and the government obviously neglected other tensions, and may have even reinforced ethnic divides.

These findings do not correspond with the actual activities performed by civil society groups within the social cohesion function. Aside from a few exceptions, activities have focused primarily on the main visible conflict lines, as well as on the well-known inter-group conflicts like Israel/Palestine, Cyprus, Bosnia or Sri Lanka. Social cohesion initiatives are quantitatively the most performed civil society initiatives (beyond general service delivery). Such activities reached their peak in the mentioned cases often immediately after a peace or ceasefire agreement, and as a result of high level of external funding.

In summary, the effectiveness of conflict resolution workshops, dialogue projects, and exchange programs is limited due to the following reasons:

- Radicalization within society hinders this type of peace work;
- The main focus of most initiatives is on the main conflict lines only;
- Most initiatives are of a scattered, short-term and fragmented nature;
- Most participants are English-speaking, elite-based representatives who are often already “converted” to the idea of positive images of the other group;
- People-to-people programs do not reach the society at large as they only focus on the individual level;
- The apolitical nature of most initiatives frame a deeply political problem as a relationship problem, something that can often be misleading, and result in little acceptance and ownership within society;

- Many initiatives aim at changing attitudes, yet even over the long-term, this seems ineffective. Existing evidence from Bosnia, Cyprus and Israel/Palestine demonstrate that attitude change might not be necessary for behavior change. Instead, work-related activities, which brought people from different groups together, proved to be more successful than peace-related work. Here people expressed positive experiences from working with the other group, often producing concrete outcomes or common work initiatives.

However, it was noted that participation in such initiatives was an act of empowerment in most cases for the marginalized groups.

(6) **Facilitation.** Local facilitation by civil society groups is highly relevant during all phases of conflict/peacebuilding. We find that facilitation often takes place on the local level and is performed by community leaders (such as traditional or religious leaders) or by local NGOs and associations. They facilitate dialogue between the conflict parties and the community, between aid agencies and the conflict parties or between communities and returning refugees. The effectiveness of facilitation is naturally contingent upon the context but our research still observed many successful initiatives. In Afghanistan during the Taliban regime, traditional mediation was the only resource for facilitating communication between the Taliban and various local communities. During the armed conflict in Nepal, local groups successfully facilitated the release of prisoners in villages. Their success was greatly helped in many cases by the monitoring and advocacy work of Nepali NGOs.

In general, a high level of violence or intimidation from the conflict parties is the main limiting factor for civil society activities. On the flipside, cooperation between traditional and “modern” forces has in many instances enhanced effectiveness.

National Facilitation between the main conflict parties is less of a civil society task. On the whole, this function concerns political actors and some business people. However, eminent civil society persons (often religious or other community leaders) can be very effective in paving the way to official negotiations and supporting the official mediators in times of deadlocks. Religious leaders have been involved in facilitation in Guatemala, Northern Ireland, and Sri Lanka. These initiatives have been particularly important during a window of opportunity for peace agreements or in the breakdown of official negotiations when no other channels of communication were available.

(7) **Service delivery** proved to be only a function of peacebuilding when used as an entry point for other civil society peacebuilding functions. While NGO aid projects received most of the external funds, few projects created entry points for peacebuilding. This comes as a surprise after years of conflict sensitive aid and “do no harm” awareness.

Our research shows that where aid initiatives were systematically used for peacebuilding, they often created important entry points for protection, monitoring and social cohesion. The relevance of the function seems to depend on two main factors: the number of entry points it can create for other civil society peacebuilding functions; and the state’s ability to provide services for the population. The cases of Cyprus and Somalia are illustrative of this point. In Cyprus, civil society provided almost no service delivery due to the presence of a functioning state and the absence of violence. Therefore service delivery was not a function for peacebuilding in this context. In Somalia, on the contrary, the total absence of a state for almost two decades induced civil society to perform service delivery as a main activity. Islamic charities and local NGOs were in many instances successful in creating entry points for peacebuilding by expanding their network across clan and regional lines. On the negative side, service delivery – especially when heavily funded – can divert energy and resources from other civil society activities.

Summary of main findings according to context variables

The context in which civil society operates is crucial for its ability to act and fulfill a constructive role in peacebuilding. The following influential factors can support or reduce the space for civil society, while also impacting its effectiveness:

The behavior of the state

In our case studies, we found that the institution of the state is crucial for both conflict and peacebuilding. First, it largely determines the space in which civil society can operate. Second, the behavior of the government in particular can become a source of conflict, especially when it excludes a certain group from decision-making, thereby depriving them of their political, social and economic power. Such marginalized groups often turn to violent means. Third, the state's effectiveness in fulfilling its functions, such as protection or service delivery, can also have an effect on civil society's capacity to fulfill other functions. In the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, for instance, the state previously only allowed service delivery as a civil society activity. However, as soon as the European Union pressured Turkey to open the space for civil society action and financially supported different civil society initiatives, there was a rise in monitoring, advocacy and protection initiatives.

The level of violence

With the increase of violence, the space for civil society peacebuilding decreases. First, violence destroys and disrupts existing forms of social organizations and social networks by spreading fear, distrust and intimidation. It is important to note that violence-induced changes not only affect the possibilities of civil society peacebuilding at a particular moment, but may also change the very structure of civil society. Second, violence limits the possibilities of civil society actors to fulfill their roles, as many become targets of violence. At the same time, violence can be a central motive for civil society organizations to advocate for peace. In many armed conflicts and wars, the spill-over of violence to everyday life led to the establishment of human rights groups, victims' organizations, and even peace movements.

The media

The media can influence the effectiveness of civil society protection, monitoring and advocacy. It can do so directly and in a positive manner during armed conflict, war, and immediately after long-term violence. First, the media can support and strengthen civil society efforts via positive media coverage. This finding also holds true for advocacy, even long after peace agreements have been reached, or major violence has halted. Without positive media coverage, civil society initiatives show a significantly lower success rate. Secondly, the media can play an important role in socialization (and partly in social cohesion) by strengthening particular images and stereotypes in society. Our case studies showed, however, that the media has often contributed to reinforcing enemy images and enhancing radicalization.

Behavior and composition of civil society

Civil society tends to be a mirror of society. Thus, it is not astonishing that civil society organizations are just as divided as society along power, hierarchy, ethnic or gender lines, and can show moderate, as well as radical, images and behaviors. Civil society organizations are in general led by male leaders from dominant groups within society. Exceptions are women's and minority organizations. In general, women's groups have mainly addressed women and gender issues, along with minority rights and justice issues. In some instances, such groups have also been at the forefront of bridging divides, as in the case of Somalia. In many cases, their initiatives have been quite successful. However, one should not forget that women in civil society are naturally as divided as society at large.

The participation in civil society is an act of building social capital. Thus, the norms and values permeated into members of important civil society organizations determine to a large extent the behavior of these members. In some of our case studies, we observed that civil society groups promote norms, values and interests that are undemocratic, repressive and intolerant. This often comes as a response to a persisting situation of political, economic and social crisis. The emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan is an extreme example of the transformation of a civil society force into a political, highly repressive, undemocratic, and violent regime. In deeply divided societies we often find civil society membership organizations representing only one group. Though often democratically organized, the majority of these organizations reinforce radical tendencies within societies. In the cases of Nigeria and the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, however, some of these membership organizations – those which are democratically organized – contributed considerably more to developing peace and democracy values than did non-democratically organized groups. This is a very interesting finding, for which we do not have sufficient evidence across our case studies to come to firm conclusions. More systematic research is needed here.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, we cannot fully understand civil society unless we also look beyond the boundaries of a particular state. Several of the conflicts we studied had given rise to large diaspora populations. Sizable Afghan, Israeli, Palestinian, Kurdish, Sri Lankan Tamil and Somali immigrants reside in Western countries, and have established a multitude of organizations there. We have also seen examples of what is sometimes called the "near diaspora" – migrants residing in neighboring countries – who continue to be part of the conflict dynamics "at home." Diaspora organizations engage in advocacy work, media production, and support relief, as well as development work in the "homeland." Just as in the homeland, civil society in the diaspora consists of forces that support non-violent conflict resolution, and forces that promote extreme nationalism and military confrontation. It is not rare that diaspora organizations take on more extremist positions than civil society in the homeland. Irish expatriates in the United States are one example of this. Through the Irish Northern Aid Committee, they channeled significant funds to the military struggle of the Irish Republican Army. Likewise, Tamil expatriates have been a key source of income for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka.

External Political Actors

There are many important external political actors that can influence war or peace. In our case studies, we mostly found strong regional political actors to have the power to create suitable conditions for civil society peacebuilding. They can do so in two main ways: by influencing the peace process, and by using both political influence and donor support to push for more space for civil society to act. The EU, for example, has become one of the major actors in the Mediterranean and has mostly produced a positive, peace-enabling effect on the peace processes, as well as on civil society peacebuilding. The EU membership debate with Turkey has also become a major variable for peacebuilding. The list of demands put forward by the EU for opening negotiations has placed a high emphasis on democratic institutions and behavior. Turkey's bid for EU membership has in turn positively changed the behavior of the state vis-à-vis civil society groups working on the Kurdish Question.

Donors

Donor resources are a key element that enables civil society initiatives. Different civil society actors, however, depend on donor support in very different ways. Mass-based membership organizations, as well as movements, hardly depend on external funding. Still their resources also decrease in times of armed conflicts, when members are less capable to pay their dues. Modern NGOs are the most dependent on external funding. Although many NGOs work with volunteers, many activities would simply not take place without additional funding. This development has contributed to a professionalization of peace work.

Originally seen as voluntary work performed by traditional civil society entities, peace work has witnessed the exponential growth of civil society initiatives since the 1990s. This growth has enabled organizations to make use of both voluntary and professional staff. It has also contributed to an enhanced capacity for organized campaigns and a generally higher level of professional performance.

These developments, however, have come at the expense of building social capital for peacebuilding in societies. The professionalization and formalization of activist networks may be viewed as the “taming of social movements” through the “NGOization of social protest,” as all our case studies reveal. One consequence of this has been the decline in voluntarism. In Guatemala, broader social movements have formed into NGOs in order to access funds from international donors. This has undoubtedly enhanced their professional performance, but has also increased competition between organizations and shifted accountability from the societies concerned to the donors themselves.

In sum, civil society support cannot replace political action. Our case studies have shown that the main enabling and disabling conditions for civil society come from the possibility of a coercive state, the level of violence, and the level of influence from strong regional actors. Thus, the engagement of the international community in initiatives that can reduce violence and enhance protection, while putting pressure on repressive governments and seeking support from powerful actors could secure the fundamental preconditions for civil society to act.

Annex: Comprehensive framework for the analysis of the role of civil society in peacebuilding

IDENTIFYING CIVIL SOCIETY FUNCTIONS IN PEACEBUILDING	ASSESSING RELEVANCE OF FUNCTIONS IN CONTEXT ALONG PHASES OF CONFLICT	IDENTIFYING ACTIVITIES BY ACTORS INCL. NON-CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS ALONG PHASES OF CONFLICT	ANALYSING EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVITIES ALONG PHASES OF CONFLICT	CONCLUSION: FROM SINGLE CASES: LINKING FUNCTIONS WITH CONTEXT
1. Protection				
2. Monitoring				
3. Advocacy				
4. Socialization				
5. Social Cohesion				
6. Facilitation				
8. Service Delivery as entry point for peacebuilding				

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CONCLUSIONS FROM ALL CASES AND THEMES

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