

# Introduction

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### Our approach

In its programmes, Interpeace works in partnership with local institutions to reinforce existing structures to manage conflict peacefully. We help societies address the most fundamental issues that make or break the peace, to overcome these differences through constructive dialogue and to generate home grown strategies for lasting peace. Re-establishing trust and achieving peace can often be a non-linear process. We have developed a methodology that is adapted to the local context in order to achieve peace that can be sustained.

### Starting a peacebuilding project (Country Analysis and Research and Development)

Our work is demand driven. We receive requests to engage in conflicted societies from a range of sources &ndash; the government and/or civil society of the country concerned, from donor countries, UN agencies, international organizations and our Governing Council members. On the basis of consultations with these parties, priorities are set by the Interpeace Governing Council. Before accepting to engage in a given country, we assess whether our approach would have a positive impact. Our analysis is based on in-depth consultations with local, national and international sources and through exploratory visits. We initiate projects when the key national players are willing to participate in the process, when the political and security situation permits, and if the necessary human and financial resources are available. We work in close partnership with the United Nations, formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding and in our structure as a Joint Programme Unit for UN/Interpeace Initiatives. This enables us to act either as an independent non-governmental organization or as a UN initiative, depending on the prevailing conditions in the country under consideration.

### Creating the change agent for peace: Forming a local peacebuilding team

To form a peacebuilding team we often partner with an existing NGO or research centre, or work closely with UN missions on the ground. Our teams are made up of researchers and facilitators under the leadership of a consensus figure. Consensus figures are known for their integrity, fairness, independence and command respect from all parties. Teams vary in size depending on the situation and are selected from a broad range of local professionals aiming to ensure a credible balance of conflicting forces. A painstaking vetting process is undertaken to ensure that the national team is of high calibre and is seen as credible and trustworthy by all sides.

The selection and preparation of the peacebuilding team is one of the most important elements in the preparation of a

project as the team's credibility and reputation is key to its success.

Finding common solutions to common problems.

The local peacebuilding teams seek out and collect views on the most pressing issues that will make or break the peace from all sectors in society: the government, opposition, civil society, private sector and even the diaspora.

This interactive dialogue and "research" lays the foundation for a national self-portrait that documents the history of the conflict, details the current state of relations between people and defines the priority issues.

Our role is to facilitate this process, and to support the deliberations with objective, verifiable research conducted by our team made up of nationals of the country concerned and supported by Interpeace international staff. We help people understand the often complex challenges to peace, prioritize main issue areas, find agreement on the solutions, and assist with their implementation.

#### Creating sustainable institutions

Interpeace is committed to ensuring that local people and organizations carry on the work once the programme is complete. These institutions become a national resource to sustain peace and stability and to respond effectively to new challenges as they arise over the long run.

