

Mid Term Review of WSP International

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Executive Summary

The WSP International Advisory Council commissioned this mid-term evaluation in 2003 and formed a Task Force of five members to act as a steering committee. The five members are Canada (chair until Oct 2003), The Netherlands (Chair from October 2003), Sweden, Switzerland, and UNICEF. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which WSP International has lived up to the expectations that underpinned the decision to create the organisation in December 1999, and to allow for a possible reorientation at the mid-point of its seven year mandate (2000-2007).

The terms of reference for the evaluation specifically excluded "the fundamentals" of WSP International – its mandate, its mission and its statutes – as this is reserved for a final evaluation scheduled for 2007.

This mid-term evaluation examined six broad questions:

- Is WSP International achieving its original objectives?
- What is WSP International's niche of excellence?
- What is the relevance of WSP International to its stakeholders?
- What is the impact of WSP International's work?
- What is the mid-term assessment regarding the institutional development of WSP International?
- Is there any reorientation necessary?

The evaluation team reviewed WSP International's documents and conducted individual and focus group interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (within WSP International, the Governing Board, Advisory Council, other organisations and with many stakeholders at the national level). The team visited Guatemala and Rwanda to observe WSP International's operations at the country level, but was not asked to undertake an evaluation of the country projects. The assessment of the organisation was primarily carried out in the fall of 2003. The evaluation team presented its preliminary findings at a January 2004 meeting with WSP International management and the Evaluation Task Force.

General Conclusions

WSP International is making a substantial contribution to the peace-building sector, both internationally and through its work at the country level. The organisation's innovative approach, the vision of its leadership and staff and its established niche form a sound basis for WSP International to achieve significant results over time. WSP International will need to continue developing its organisational capability to manage growth and respond to new opportunities in a timely manner.

The international environment offers opportunities and threats for the peace building approach being pursued by WSP International. The fragmented nature of the peace-building sector and the renewed significance given to the issue of creating more durable societies lends greater importance to the work of WSP International.

WSP International has created a strongly defined niche that distinguishes it from other organisations in the same field. Its relationship with the UN is an important feature of WSP International despite some difficulties associated with this "hybrid" status.

The organisation has a strong management team and a well defined strategic plan. The finance and administrative infrastructure still lags behind what is required for a fully effective organisation, and this contributes to the financial pressures that the organisation is facing as it attempts to quickly expand its programming activities. The appointment of a Director of Finance and Administration is an important requirement to complete the senior management team. WSP International will need to build a reserve fund to enable to operate more effectively.

The commitment of staff members to the goals and values of the organisation is a major strength of WSP International, and some recommendations are made on steps to ensure further development of staff expertise. In particular, the Operations programme and the Outreach & Learning programme will need to develop a high degree of cooperation.

While there are some areas that need to be further developed, WSP International is generally on track to achieve the programming objectives that were set out at its creation. It is seen as a relevant organisation in terms of the:

- Greater importance attached to peacebuilding on the international agenda;
- Interest shown in its work (both by donors in the field and at senior levels in the UN); and by various stakeholders at the national level where WSP International is active

WSP International's approach, in which country operations are at the heart of the organisation, allows for creativity and innovation in the application of its participatory research methodology and for drawing important lessons from comparisons between different country programme experiences.

External actors saw WSP International as having a positive impact in a number of countries where it is operating and in terms of the knowledge that it is developing which can improve understanding and more responsive programming.

The ultimate change that WSP International's programmes may have at the national level is an issue that it will need to monitor and assess over time. The durability of peace being built, the impact from implementation in the field, the sustainability of trust and the consensus building process, and the impact on international agency practices are difficult to assess in the short term, particularly given the limits of existing measurement tools.

WSP International has a complex and demanding agenda in terms of the number of issues it is addressing with existing resources. There is considerable scope for expansion into some new countries, in further testing and refinement of its approach, and the identification of lessons and outreach related to its present programme. WSP International should be cautious about further extending its reach into new areas, particularly in expanding the O&L programme into the broader set of issues involved in peacebuilding.

Findings of the Evaluation

Finding 1: WSP International has a clear niche in the peacebuilding sector. This is based upon the organisation's unique methodology, its positioning in relation to the UN, and its objective of transforming the relationship between national and international actors in the sector.

Finding 2: WSP International has a well-defined strategic plan and a process that allows for systematic review and updating of its strategy.

Finding 3: The value-based organisational culture of WSP International, reflected in the staff's strong commitment to the ideals of WSP International, is a significant factor in improving the organisation's effectiveness.

- Finding 4: The Finance and Administration system is improving.
- Finding 5: Without an adequate financial reserve, WSP International is unable to achieve optimal efficiency in its use of management or financial resources.
- Finding 6: There are divergent views about whether WSP International should grow rapidly, to spread its impact, or consolidate and grow slowly, to retain its quality in programming.
- Finding 7: The Governing Board represents an important asset for WSP International in terms of its credibility and the access to decision makers that the Board members provide.
- Finding 8: The Advisory Council is a useful vehicle to develop support for WSP International and to inform donor agency specialists on WSP International's experience.
- Finding 9: WSP International's links with the UN are important, particularly the political links which provide important benefits to both WSP International and the UN.
- Finding 10: WSP International is on track and has the potential to exceed the programming goals set for it during its transition from a UN project to an organisation.
- Finding 11: The WSP International value-based approach to its country programmes is critical in defining the organisation's niche, but this is not always coherently articulated or marketed, due to the significantly different applications of the WSP methodology in different country contexts.
- Finding 12: WSP International's participatory research is a powerful tool for opening up discussion and for breaking logjams in consensus-building processes across very diverse societies.
- Finding 13: WSP International is creating 'neutral' forums and broader societal spaces where dialogue about difficult and sometimes taboo subjects can be openly debated. However, national WSP staff face a constant tension between being 'impartial' and being actors in their own national processes.
- Finding 14: While the durability of trust and relationships forged through WSP International's approach cannot be easily measured, WSP International's country programmes have achieved some success in forging these relationships between various stakeholders.
- Finding 15: Where 'neutral' spaces for dialogue can only be preserved through compromising accountability for past human rights violations, this may create significant risks for sustainable peace.
- Finding 16: In some cases, the selection of country teams and consensus figures has been instrumental in the success of the project. In others, reliance on a consensus figure has proved problematic.
- Finding 17: WSP International appears to be setting an innovative and concrete example of how international agencies can better relate to national actors.

Finding 18: WSP International's programmes use both broad national agenda entry points and more confined issue-based entry points. As yet there is no clear-cut evidence of the long term consequences or comparative advantages of either path.

Finding 19: The timing of WSP International's interventions is a factor in the organisation's effectiveness in its country programmes.

Finding 20: : Although not part of WSP International's mandate, the policy-implementation gap at the country level runs the risk of ultimately undermining WSP peacebuilding projects.

Finding 21: : WSP International recognises its responsibility to facilitate ongoing funding support and capacity development of WSP country projects to promote sustainability, but there is no single strategy on how country processes or institutions should continue once the WSP process has ended.

Finding 22: There is the potential of an emerging divide between Geneva and WSP International's country programmes, based on a distinction between strategy and policy making responsibilities on one hand and operational or implementation responsibilities on the other.

Finding 23: The relationship between Outreach & Learning and Operations has not yet been sufficiently defined and developed.

Finding 24: WSP International currently has no way of measuring the gains it is making in influencing and assisting international actors in engaging in national peace processes.

Finding 25: WSP International is making an important contribution to the peacebuilding sector by prioritising horizontal learning between national actors.

Finding 26: WSP International will need to work with others to develop new measurement criteria, since most existing efficiency benchmark indicators are not appropriate in post-conflict situations.

Finding 27: The O&L programme will need to develop a process to strengthen WSP International's ability to be a learning organisation.

Recommendations

Recommendation 3.1: WSP International should consolidate and deepen its niche by focusing on its proven country methodology, strengthening its relationship with the UN and UN departments and in testing and refining different approaches to influence international actors.

Recommendation 4.1: WSP International's Board should establish a fixed term of office for the Executive Director.

Recommendation 4.2: WSP International's management should appoint the Director of Finance and Administration as a member of the SEG.

Recommendation 4.3: WSP International should develop a staff training policy that allocates resources to continuous updating of staff capability.

Recommendation 4.4: WSP International should establish a policy of employing more staff from developing countries to provide additional insights and diversity of experience.

Recommendation 4.5 WSP International should refine its procedures for recruitment; performance management of staff linked to a functional job grading system; staff development and career path strategies; and induction and succession planning procedures.

Recommendation 4.5: WSP International's donors should support the establishment of a 10% reserve of WSP International's total budget.

Recommendation 4.6: WSP International should refine its guidelines for the use of unrestricted funds, and establish a minimum ratio of core to project funding that it will attempt to maintain.

Recommendation 4.7: WSP International's Board should consider adding specialised expertise in financial oversight, and appoint one member of the Board as Treasurer.

Recommendation 4.8: As a strategic objective, WSP International should continue to strengthen its relationship with the UN, both at the senior level of the UN and, where useful, with UN organisations in the field.

Recommendation 4.9: WSP International's end-of-mandate evaluation should be commissioned well in advance of the end of WSP International's seven-year mandate.

Recommendation 5.1: WSP International should try to establish a country programme in Asia.

Recommendation 5.2: The distinction between the core values that underpin cross-country continuity in WSP International's approach and the flexible application of its methodology needs to be more explicit in the marketing of the organisation's work, and should be a targeted objective of Outreach & Learning.

Recommendation 5.3: To maximise the benefits of its flexible participatory research, WSP International should evaluate the quality of the consensus produced in different countries that shape participation differently in their research processes.

Recommendation 5.4: It is important that WSP International effectively documents and analyses its successes and failures in building trust in societies. This should not be a purely retrospective process.

Recommendation 5.5: WSP International must engage more comprehensively and actively with initiatives grappling with transitional justice models as a means for societies emerging from intense conflict to deal with past human rights violations.

Recommendation 5.6: As over reliance on credible leadership figures can impact negatively on country programme operations, WSP International should try to separate the political and project management functions at the field level.

Recommendation 5.7: WSP International should outline the principles that shape its approach to collaboration and strategic partnership with both governmental and civil society initiatives at local and regional levels.

Recommendation 5.8: WSP International should consider how to address the possible failure by governments and others to achieve the expectations created by dialogue and consensus building processes.

Recommendation 5.9: WSP International needs to promote greater involvement and ownership of country staff in addressing strategic issues, developing policy and methodology and in identifying lessons.

Recommendation 6.1: Outreach & Learning should remain firmly rooted in national peacebuilding processes where there is much to learn and where WSP International has a

comparative advantage. This will require closer collaboration between the Operations and O&L programmes.

Recommendation 6.2: WSP International should periodically assess the benefits of different ways to influence and assist international actors.

Recommendation 6.3: Outreach & Learning materials should link peacebuilding lessons to the language and paradigms of development and aid agencies.

Recommendation 6.4: WSP International should maintain the priority it is giving to its networking strategy to reduce the pressure for WSP International to develop expertise in many different thematic areas.

Recommendation 6.5: The O&L programme should consolidate and build on its niche in country programming, linking theory with practice, rather than expanding too broadly in the peacebuilding field.

Recommendation 6.6: Given the complexity of developing impact measures, WSP International should monitor, and rely as much as possible on, the work of other organisations such as those grouped in the Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Peacebuilding Network (CPR).

A c r o n y m s

CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
CPR	Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Peacebuilding Network
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IRDP	Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (Rwanda)
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NLA	National Learning Analyst
O&L	Outreach & Learning
POLSEDE	Proyecto Hacia una Política de Seguridad para la Democracia (Guatemala)
PSIS	Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies
SEG	Senior Executive Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose

WSP International is a private Swiss non-governmental organisation that assists societies torn by war to overcome conflict and to build lasting peace. It does this by promoting processes of consultation, research and analysis with all sectors of society, including international assistance agencies and donors.

The WSP International Advisory Council commissioned a mid-term evaluation in 2003. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which WSP International has lived up to the expectations that underpinned its creation in December 1999, and to allow for a possible reorientation at the mid-point of its seven year mandate (2000-2007).

The mid-term evaluation assessed six broad questions:

- Is WSP International achieving its original objectives?
- What is WSP International's niche of excellence?
- What is the relevance of WSP International to the stakeholders?
- What is the impact of WSP International's work?
- What is the mid-term assessment regarding the institutional development of WSP International?
- Is any reorientation necessary?

The evaluation focused on WSP International's overall programme, rather than on individual projects. The terms of reference specifically excluded "the fundamentals" of WSP International – its mandate, its mission and its statutes – as these will be addressed in a final evaluation scheduled for 2007. The terms of reference are provided in Appendix III.

1.2 Evaluation Team and Steering Committee

WSP International Advisory Council formed a Task Force to act as a steering committee for the evaluation. The Task Force included representatives from Canada (Chair until Oct 2003), Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands (Chair from Oct 2003), and UNICEF. WSP International acted as the Secretariat.

The evaluation team members were selected to provide a balance of experience in evaluation, institutional assessment and familiarity with the issues of peacebuilding. The team was composed of:

- Doug Daniels (Team Leader), Senior Associate in Universal Management Group, Canada;
- Graeme Simpson, Director of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, South Africa; and
- Tracy Vienings, Deputy Director of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, South Africa.

1.3 Methodology

Data collection

Data collection included document review, interviews and field visits. The team reviewed an extensive set of WSP International documents and conducted individual and focus group interviews with a wide range of stakeholders within WSP International, the Governing Board, Advisory Council, other organisations and with many stakeholders at the national level.

The team also conducted field visits to Guatemala and Rwanda to observe WSP International's operations at the country level (the team was not asked to undertake an evaluation of the country projects). These two countries were selected in consultation with WSP International staff and the Evaluation Task Force. Guatemala was chosen because it provided the best example of the development of second generation projects in WSP International, and also because it offered an example of the early evolution of a regionalised initiative. Rwanda was chosen because the timing of a National Roundtable in Rwanda provided an opportunity to observe the WSP programme at a critical point – where consensus was being reached about the country note, and where entry points were being discussed among national stakeholders.

Data analysis

The team triangulated the data from all sources to develop its conclusions. Key findings were presented at a January 2004 meeting with WSP International's management and the Evaluation Task Force.

Limitations

WSP International is a complex organisation with considerable variation in the design of individual projects. Field trips to other country programmes would have yielded further data on the subtleties and variations, but neither time nor budget allowed for this. The team was encouraged to pursue a participatory approach in the review, sharing issues with the different stakeholders as the review progressed. However, the distances involved and limited contact with many stakeholders made this difficult.

Time constraints did not allow the evaluation team to fully explore all aspects of WSP International's work. In some cases, the team had to rely on its extensive experience in evaluation and peacebuilding work, rather than being able to provide conclusive evidence to back up each statement. Nevertheless, on the fundamental issues addressed in this report, the team had sufficient evidence to be confident in its findings and recommendations.

Acknowledgements

The team is grateful to the staff of WSP International, Governing Board, Advisory Council, donor agency representatives, national actors and all the other individuals who provided their views and readily responded to all the questions posed by the team. Their cooperation and enthusiasm were unconditional. The Executive Director had a number of meetings with the team while Agneta Johannsen provided considerable organisational support as the WSP International's focal point.

2. Context

Changes in the global environment since WSP International's creation present the organisation with important opportunities and challenges.

A critical shift has been the changing motivation for the involvement of external actors in intra-state and regional conflicts. This shift started with the end of the cold war and the collapsing of the national boundaries and political authorities that framed this period. The increasing close correlation between cross-border conflicts and unresolved internal conflicts, frequently associated with disintegrating or retreating states, has re-focused international attention on the need to resolve conflicts at the country level to prevent the regional spread of conflicts.

This subtle impetus has been dramatically affected by developments in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the US. In particular, the war on Iraq has contributed to the promotion of 'regime change' as a tool of international politics, largely flying in the face of public international law. This has also been associated with popularly used notions of "nation-building" as part of the discourse of regime change.

In practice these developments have had the effect of militarising and 'securitising' peacebuilding endeavours, through increasingly linking military and civilian peacebuilding, but without matching this to the longer term linkage between peacekeeping and development interventions essential to building durable peace. The effect is that the ground gained in the development of an holistic approach to peacebuilding, which appeared to take root in the 1990s, has suffered significant reversal. As a result, during the period under review, the 'peacebuilding sector' has remained fragmented, further compounding the difficulties in demonstrating measurable impact within the sector.

The post-9/11 context has also dramatically impacted on the credibility of multilateralism, with serious consequences for the UN, which suffered at least a temporary loss of its political influence through its marginalisation in the face of unilateral and bilateral action in Iraq. These trends have also negatively impacted on other multi-lateral mechanisms and institutions.

With the growing awareness that military action alone cannot create the conditions for stable and durable peace, there is the potential for a significant retreat from unilateral military approaches to resolving inter and intra-state conflict. The heightened interest in controlling non-state militant groups has led to the growing realisation that "failed states" need support in developing more viable and democratic governments.

Another trend in the post-9/11 context has been reversals in the spheres of human rights, democratisation and security sector reform. Many governments have been pressured to comply and cooperate in the global campaign against terrorism, resulting in a sometimes convenient retreat from a human rights dispensation. When combined with the impact of globalisation and the politicisation of intelligence gathering internationally, this makes it particularly difficult to shape and influence the roles of international actors and to shield local actors from inappropriate external interventions.

These changes lend more weight to the importance of WSP International's agenda. As the cost of ignoring unstable situations at the national and regional levels becomes more obvious to the major international players, and as the costs and failures of other approaches such as military action is recognised, alternatives become more attractive. In this respect, the shifting context of international conflict politics over the past few years has done more to reaffirm WSP International's potential role and approach than to inhibit it. This is especially so considering the potential relevance of WSP International's unique positioning at the intermediary interface between local and international actors.

3. WSP International's Role

3.1 Background

In 1994, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the Programme for Strategic and International Studies (PSIS) of the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva hosted the experimental War-Torn Societies Project (WSP). There had been a series of setbacks in Angola, Cambodia, Somalia and other post-conflict countries where there was either renewed fighting or continued instability. WSP was an attempt to find tangible ways to build trust and a commitment to peace by the national population through a novel methodology that used research as a support to dialogue and consensus building.

From 1994-1998, 26 governmental, United Nations and philanthropic donors supported WSP. It initiated pilot projects in four countries (Eritrea, Mozambique, Guatemala and northeast Somalia (Puntland)). Although WSP was originally conceived as a way to help the international community be more effective in post-conflict societies, the experience in these countries showed that the methodology was a more powerful tool in helping local actors resolve their problems.

WSP International was founded on 26 May 2000 on the recommendation of the United Nations and bilateral stakeholders, including the host country Switzerland, as the legitimate successor institution to the War-Torn Societies Project and the WSP-Transition Programme. It retains a privileged relationship with the United Nations, enshrined in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in October 2001, and remains closely linked to the world body in its constitution, governance, mandate and activities.

WSP International's mission is based on the philosophy that rebuilding a war-torn society is the obligation, task and responsibility of local people at all levels, and that the challenge of overcoming conflict is also the challenge of rebuilding trust and relationships between individuals and groups. At the same time, affected communities cannot build peace alone; they need help, and the international community has a major role to play.

WSP International works at both the field level and at its Geneva headquarters to assist the international community to define the support it can give local people in rebuilding their societies and underpinning peace efforts in a way that will encourage sustainable peace. The WSP process results in negotiated, broadly endorsed recommendations for policy makers inside the war-torn country and for external assistance actors who wish to support rebuilding based on locally agreed priorities.

The heart of WSP International's work is its country projects. These are carried out by local teams led by a carefully recruited 'consensus figure' and supported by a small team at its central hub in Geneva. Through its country teams, WSP International tries to help local and international actors in-country better understand and analyse complex problems and challenges that must be addressed if a society fragmented by war is to be pieced back together. WSP International uses participatory action research in support of reconstruction efforts. This approach, using a research-based consensus-building method, aims to establish neutral spaces for dialogue.

The organisation currently works in Somalia, Guatemala, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Macedonia. It is beginning to launch projects in several countries in Latin America, and is exploring possible activities in Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific.

3.2 WSP International's Niche

Finding 1: WSP International has a clear niche in the peacebuilding sector. This is based upon the organisation's unique methodology, its positioning in relation to the UN, and its objective of transforming the relationship between national and international actors in the sector.

WSP International's niche is well established within the peacebuilding sector. Its operations have credibility both in-country and internationally, through the highly specific methodology and strategic vision that it has brought to peacebuilding. There are no other peacebuilding organisations, that the evaluation team is aware of, that aim to directly impact on shifting relationships between national and international actors in building peace. WSP International's methodology and field experience are well documented in the materials produced at the conclusion of the UN project phase. The organisation has been able to prove its methodology in a number of countries, giving responsibility to national actors in identifying strong national leaders and in creating national institutions.

Although WSP International's strategic positioning in close collaboration with the UN substantially enhances the organisation's niche, its credibility is still compromised by its limited presence in different countries and regions. This affects the ability of WSP International to draw widely applicable lessons and to influence other actors. This should become less of an issue as the number of WSP country programmes grows and it is able to draw on a larger pool of country experiences over time.

All stakeholders consulted felt that there were still needs and opportunities for WSP International to apply its approach in other countries, and that there are still significant lessons to be learned and applied from its present country programme approach.

There are pressures on WSP International to respond to very different country conditions with different programmes at the national and sectoral level. The Outreach & Learning component, which is only now scaling up, also faces pressures to spread its analysis to encompass a broader peacebuilding perspective. The potential spread of both the operational and the Outreach & Learning components are documented in the following sections of this report.

The evaluation team feels that there is a risk that the WSP niche could become blurred over time. WSP International's ability to take advantage of its niche positioning may depend on its ability to build its profile, brand-recognition and advocacy capacity, and to manage its growth without compromising the integrity of its country programmes as the cornerstone of its operations.

Recommendation 3.1: WSP International should consolidate and deepen its niche by focusing on its proven country methodology, strengthening its relationship with the UN and UN departments and in testing and refining different approaches to influence international actors.

In terms of brand recognition, the evaluation team found that the organisation's name does not give any indication of WSP International's focus to individuals who are not already familiar with WSP. The Canadian organisation known as ICHRD (International Centre for Human Rights and Democracy), for example, has achieved much better name recognition since it began identifying itself as 'Rights and Democracy' rather than ICHRD. It is still incorporated under its original name but uses the new name for public purposes. The evaluation team suggests that the Governing Board consider the advantages of adopting a name that would more clearly identify WSP International's mission.

4. Institutional Development

4.1 Introduction

WSP International is a dynamic organisation that is in the process of building its programme, management and operational infrastructure. The team's assessment is largely based on the situation prevailing in the fall of 2003. The evaluation team identified areas that needed attention, only to find that these issues are being largely addressed by management. This has given considerable reassurance to the evaluation team that the management of WSP International is alert to areas of weakness and is prepared to address these.

WSP International is still an organisation in transition. Senior management in WSP International indicated that the magnitude of the management and administrative task of re-constituting this complex organisation was underestimated – not only by management, but by the donors and UN agencies that were supporting the transition. The evaluation team feels that significant strides have been made in the past four years.

“Many of the key challenges faced by the organisation are still associated with this ongoing and complex institutional transition”. Board member

4.2 Strategy

Finding 2: WSP International has a well-defined strategic plan and a process that allows for systematic review and updating of its strategy.

The Strategy document is clear on the organisation's vision, mission, values, strengths and weaknesses and in identifying strategic issues. Unlike many other organisations, the WSP International strategy clearly spells out both external and internal risks. While an ambitious document, it avoids the hubris of overstating the organisation's role and importance.

The Senior Executive Group (SEG) devotes time to reviewing strategic issues in a formal strategy meeting every three months. Strategic review has become an important part of the WSP International culture. A number of new issues have been identified that will be taken to the Board in 2004. Employing a consultant to work on the strategy has been a useful way to dedicate time to this in the early years when there are other operational pressures.

With the growing maturity of the organisation and increasing field experience, WSP International's management should pursue opportunities to allow for more field staff input into the planning process. WSP International has followed very different approaches in different countries and this is proving to be a rich source of new ideas. Broadening participation in periodic strategic reviews will bring in fresh ideas and reduce the likelihood of a disconnection between HQ and field staff. As an organisation becomes larger, there is a risk that field staff develop a feeling that management does not appreciate the realities of field conditions.

4.3 Infrastructure

WSP International's present facilities in Geneva do not provide an environment that is conducive to effective teamwork. There are plans to move to another building that, it is hoped, will bring all the staff together in the same working space.

WSP International has an administrative support office for Somalia in Nairobi, and is developing the Guatemala office as its first regional office. WSP International will look at establishing a second regional office.

There are attractions in creating regional offices over time, both in terms of bringing WSP International's staff closer to the conditions in a region as well as for possible cost savings. Geneva is a high cost location. The UN cost of living index for an expatriate in Geneva is 108, compared to 85 in Guatemala or 88 in Nairobi. In other organisations, regional offices have not always worked out well. WSP International will have to try to avoid problems in areas such as headquarters management trying to make all decisions, or regional offices tending to drift and develop their own working style and activities that don't fit with headquarters. The establishment of the Latin America office in Guatemala allows WSP International to work out relative responsibilities and reporting relationships in advance of creating other regional offices. Management had expected that project funding would cover much of the Latin America office in Guatemala costs, but at present, it is financed from the very limited core budget of WSP International.

4.4 Management Team

WSP International has been fortunate in being able to build on a strong framework established in the WSP project phase and in having continuity in leadership from a dynamic Executive Director. The comments by all individuals interviewed were nearly unanimous in identifying the quality of his leadership as a major reason for the success of WSP International – in motivating staff, in generating donor support and confidence, and in helping attract quality representatives to the Governing Board.

The Executive Director has indicated that he is prepared to remain for some time, which will provide continuity in management in this important establishment period. At some time, however, he will leave the organisation. The evaluation team feels that WSP International is gradually putting in place a management team and organisational infrastructure that can survive his departure.

Recommendation 4.1: WSP International's Board should establish a fixed term of office for the Executive Director.

The management team is composed of the Executive Director and the Directors of Operations and of Outreaching & Learning. WSP International is now recruiting a Director of Finance and Administration who will be part of the Senior Executive Group (SEG). Although financial and administrative issues need to be addressed when making management decisions, several informants expressed the view that the Director of Finance and Administration should participate in but not be part of the SEG. Certain problems that arise in administration and finance can be just as destructive to organisational effectiveness as poor field programming. Such problems include an administrative system that is not seen as responsive, financial management that is not seen as sufficiently rigorous, or cumbersome administrative rules that create staff frustration.

Recommendation 4.2: WSP International's management should appoint the Director of Finance and Administration as a member of the SEG.

The creation of a strong management team and the growing capacity of programme staff to act independently will allow the Executive Director to gradually shift his attention to more strategic issues and to external relations working with key audiences. For its part, the SEG should be able to devolve more programming decisions and project management responsibilities to individual staff. As the organisation grows and the number of staff increases, management should assess the need for a middle tier of senior staff, including their role in succession planning.

Management will have to develop procedures and guidelines that will allow for more autonomous decision making by staff, as well as an open and responsive management style that will facilitate the ability of staff to make appropriate decisions. This aspect should be vigorously addressed, as there is some evidence that the pressures of growing operations, and the demands this places on management, are already causing some operational delays.

4.5 Organisational Culture

Finding 3: The value-based organisational culture of WSP International, reflected in the staff's strong commitment to the ideals of WSP International, is a significant factor in improving the organisation's effectiveness.

The organisational culture embodying staff values and commitment to the organisation is an important element in an organisation like WSP International where staff need to operate with a good deal of autonomy in the field.

WSP International's organisational culture is strongly rooted in its staff and operations. The evaluation team noted the strong sense of collectively held vision and values. Staff appear to have a high level of commitment to WSP International's objectives, and feel that it represents an important instrument for change. Commitment to local ownership and to in-country programmes as the "heart" of the organisation appears to be lived out in everyday practices – both in the Geneva HQ and in interactions with in-country actors.

In part, this strength is based on the values-based definition of the organisational programme and a thorough and rigorous process in the documentation of its methodology during the first phase of WSP International.

As the organisation grows, WSP International will face challenges in maintaining this culture of openness, flexibility and responsiveness to national needs. Growth, pressures for accountability, and the marketing requirements of WSP International could negatively affect this open organisational culture.

"The notion of family in WSP International is strong, but as it grows, there is a danger that the pressures of a larger organisation will result in this essential culture being lost" Board Member

The evaluation team found that staff members were willing to engage in free discussion on issues. There were concerns, however, that the organisation still does not have adequate guidelines for staff on approaches that should be followed in their fieldwork. WSP International is now writing orientation notes for new staff that should help.

Some staff suggested providing more opportunities for frequent staff interaction through common strategy meetings. This has been shown to be an effective team building approach in other organisations.

4.6 Staff

WSP International has been increasing its staff at a significant rate, first in programme staff for fieldwork, and more recently in recruiting to develop the Outreach & Learning programme. The organisation has used a number of experienced senior consultants to develop policies and practices, while employing a relatively young cadre of professionals as programme staff. The evaluation team believes that this has been an effective strategy in getting assistance from experienced professionals while recruiting young professionals who could remain at WSP International for a long term.

Nevertheless, staff recruitment and conditions need to be given more attention by the new Director of Finance and Administration. The dual nature of staff (recruited either directly or on secondment from the UN) requires careful attention for some time. WSP International should aim to reduce the level of staff turnover until there is a larger cadre of experienced staff.

Recommendation 4.3: WSP International should develop a staff training policy that allocates resources to continuous updating of staff capability.

The expansion of the Outreach & Learning Programme offers opportunities to strengthen the common organisational culture in WSP International by helping to identify and share lessons. It can facilitate interaction between programme staff and external organisations to give them new ideas and stimuli. The evaluation team suggests that WSP International consider allowing occasional secondments from one programme to the other, to provide more concrete field experience to Outreach & Learning staff, and more time for reflection and analysis for field staff.

WSP International's staff is largely drawn from northern countries. The evaluation team believes that WSP International should aim to employ more professional staff from developing countries who could provide additional insights and diversity of experiences. The team found that WSP International has been able to identify some outstanding individuals at the national level who could provide strong support for WSP International's work in other countries. Some of these individuals may find themselves in difficult circumstances in their own countries and it would be an opportunity for WSP International to benefit while providing meaningful employment for them.

Recommendation 4.4: WSP International should establish a policy of employing more staff from developing countries to provide additional insights and diversity of experience.

National project staff employed for a WSP project may find themselves in a difficult position, given the sensitive nature of the issues they are addressing. WSP International is aware that it has an ethical responsibility to these individuals. WSP International's projects should include funding for a substantial transition period for project staff (in the event the project is terminated for some reason, or when the project is being phased out) if no ongoing employment is offered in a new institution.

4.7 Finance and Administration

Finding 4: The Finance and Administration system is improving.

WSP International is now recruiting a full time Director of Finance and Administration. This is an important position given the growing size of WSP International and the complexities of managing a programme across varied and difficult country conditions. In the meantime, WSP International is well served by a full time experienced administrator who has created similar financial and administrative systems elsewhere. The financial manager is in close contact with senior management and is fully aware of the overall programme objectives and management interests.

There was a costly delay in establishing good financial management processes and operational rules for WSP International when the original manager left. The origin of WSP as a project serviced by the UN appears to have been a contributory factor in WSP International's management's failure to operationalise the financial and administrative side of the organisation as quickly as was necessary. The programming capability of the organisation was much more advanced than the financial and administrative dimension, and this area needed extra attention.

Most of the basic financial elements for senior management appear to have been put in place, so WSP International can be fully accountable. Financial reports are now given to the Executive Director about every six weeks, with the objective of providing such reports every four weeks. This should be an adequate level of financial performance tracking. Given the unpredictability of the organisation's expenditures and revenue receipts, the introduction of a good process for tracking projected to actual revenue receipts and revenue/expenditure ratios are important indicators.

Another step will be to refine financial information procedures to provide programme staff with good financial information and to ensure that they have the training to keep financial information up to date.

Similarly, some refinements are required in the administrative and personnel policies necessary to the running of a larger organisation.

Recommendation 4.5 WSP International should refine its procedures for recruitment; performance management of staff linked to a functional job grading system; staff development and career path strategies; and induction and succession planning procedures.

4.8 Financial Flexibility

Finding 5: Without an adequate financial reserve, WSP International is unable to achieve optimal efficiency in its use of management or financial resources.

To meet the target level of activities outlined in WSP International's strategy document approved by the Governing Board and the Advisory Council, the budget of WSP International has grown very rapidly. However, the organisation is operating under considerable financial stress. Some of this can be attributed to delays in getting financial management systems in place, and to the fact that management has been too optimistic about the pace at which funds would be provided.

Due to the unpredictability of funding and the nature of its work, WSP International requires some reserves to guard against shortfalls in expected revenue, major unanticipated programme expenditures, or emergency costs. These are realistic possibilities, given the track record of slow contributions by some donors, as well as the potential for a serious situation arising (that may require rapid response and financial commitment) in one of the countries where WSP International operates.

Donors have been willing to provide flexible conditions for much of the funding that WSP International receives now, and WSP International has been more successful than most NGOs in receiving unrestricted programme grants. (Over 25% of its revenue in 2003 was received as unrestricted programme funding.) Although some donors allow a portion of funding to be directed towards building a reserve, other donors do not see this as reasonable. Both WSP International and its donors would benefit from such a reserve, which would reduce unproductive management time in trying to manage resources in an efficient manner.

As the host country for WSP International, Switzerland can play an important role in providing core support. At the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), for example, the World Bank hosts the Secretariat and provides support to top up programmes that are under-funded by other donors. This has frequently been cited as a major reason why CGIAR has been able to maintain its large network of international research centres for three decades.

Some of the activities that cannot be funded by project support are essential to maintaining the quality of WSP International's work. For instance, the evaluation team noted the importance of WSP International devoting project development resources to exploring opportunities for programmes in new countries and identifying and briefing the national team leaders. The ability to choose and recruit good individuals was frequently cited as a significant accomplishment of WSP.

"I have been surprised with the ease at which WSP has found the core team leaders of high quality from different contacts. Contacts are critical in the process of developing a project." New WSP Staff person

Recommendation 4.5: WSP International's donors should support the establishment of a 10% reserve of WSP International's total budget.

4.9 Revenue Generation

WSP International has identified new funding sources, including private foundations and the private sector, that they could approach. They are also intending to register as a non-profit organisation in the US to facilitate receipt of private funding. Private sources of funding have become more important for some NGOs, although experience elsewhere shows that WSP International needs to be prudent in allocating resources to developing private sector funding. There have been cases where organisations have devoted considerable amounts of money to consultants to prepare a marketing strategy, but achieved only limited results.

A targeted approach could be considered as one way to access private sector funding. WSP International might be successful in targeting a private sector funder that has an existing vested interest in achieving some stability in a specific country. However, WSP International would have to consider the implications for its credibility if it accessed such country-specific funds where the donor may be seen as having interests that would undercut WSP International's image of neutrality. WSP International could use the kind of criteria and vetting process already developed by other organisations. The evaluation team believes that, on balance, it is probably not a good use of WSP resources in this demanding establishment phase to try to access private sector resources, unless a likely source is fortuitously identified.

Since donors usually prefer to fund projects with a definable set of activities, it is easiest to find funding for national projects. The team recommends that WSP International try to package as many programme activities as possible in the form of projects. A good example in the team's view is WSP International's proposal now being developed for a project to identify lessons and develop good practices. Another project that should be appealing to some donors would be support to research, test and validate better measurements of performance and impact at the country level.

As WSP International becomes more visible, it is likely that donors will approach the organisation to undertake activities of interest to them. WSP International will have to guard against taking on activities that do not reflect its core objectives and priorities. It should maintain a priority list of projects it wishes to support, and approach donors in a systematic manner based on these priorities.

Recommendation 4.6: WSP International should refine its guidelines for the use of unrestricted funds, and establish a minimum ratio of core to project funding that it will attempt to maintain.

4.10 Relative Merits of WSP International as a Donor Recipient

The evaluation team was informed that donors are now directing a significant amount of money for peacebuilding projects to humanitarian and development NGOs, which are not always able to integrate peacebuilding effectively into their general programming. The evaluation team feels that WSP International has shown the benefits of applying a certain peacebuilding methodology and securing national ownership that many other NGOs may not be able to provide. The evaluation team was not able to assess the relative merits of funding a more focused organisation like WSP International, but believes that this is an important issue for donors to consider.

“The international community has not reflected enough on the fact that WSP has a special methodology and management style that can be effective in (conflict resolution.) There are two special characteristics of the WSP approach: the flexibility of its methodology and the confidence that it places in local people and local capacities.” Stakeholder from POLSEDE project, Guatemala.¹

4.11 Potential Size of WSP International

Finding 6: There are divergent views about whether WSP International should grow rapidly, to spread its impact, or consolidate and grow slowly, to retain its quality in programming.

In its strategy, WSP International set an objective to create a network of 12 national centres in its first seven years, and is hoping to establish about two new country programmes each year. In addition, the organisation has identified, or been encouraged to consider, new initiatives that would respond to the regional nature of conflict and sector-specific issues.

WSP International’s expenditures have grown from US\$ 2.7 million in 2001 to an expected \$6.2 million in 2003. In the second half of its seven-year cycle, WSP International could continue to grow rapidly, although perhaps at a slightly slower rate.

Some respondents suggested that WSP International could become a \$30 million organisation fairly quickly, if there is no fall-off in donor support. They believe that an organisation of this size is both manageable and desirable, in terms of both need and credibility, and that WSP International needs to have a certain footprint and size to attract the attention of external agencies. Others have pointed out that the WSP International model (i.e., a model in which national teams have considerable responsibility for project direction in a first phase, and in which WSP International can leave a country when a national institution assumes responsibility following the first phase) creates less ongoing demand on the organisation. Thus, WSP International growth depends on how effective the organisation is in building local ownership and follow-up.

Management believes that the present management team (with the addition of a Director of Finance and Administration) will be adequate to manage an organisation of \$15 to \$25 million before it would need to expand the management team. The organisation would be using management resources more efficiently as it expands towards this level of expenditure.

While WSP International’s staff and consultants expressed positive views regarding WSP International expansion, other stakeholders expressed some concerns about the rate of growth. Their concerns are based on a desire to maintain the high quality of WSP International’s work.

¹ POLSEDE - Proyecto Hacia una Política de Seguridad para la Democracia

Working in only a limited number of countries gives an in-depth knowledge that makes WSP International so valuable to the international community. They believe that WSP International should stay the course with a limited number of countries, mentor the original institutions, and protect its gains before expanding into other countries. Further involvement with the existing countries, in terms of more thematic projects, could however be useful.

WSP International might fall victim to the failures of other organisations that become over-stretched or that aim to build their institutional “ego”. WSP International could suffer from taking on new areas in national programmes that are outside its core competency.

“WSP could lose its ability to be a centre of excellence if it becomes too large” Advisory Committee Member

There is no conclusive evidence to determine which point of view is correct, but the evaluation team believes that WSP International can continue to expand the number of countries at a measured pace. It has certainly not yet achieved the range of programmes that would allow for an optimal spectrum of experiences that can be used for broader assessment. The range of experience in different countries is so great that WSP International needs to validate its experience over a broader range of countries.

The evaluation team suggests that the rate of growth should be dependent on WSP International’s ability to effectively manage larger programmes. The following are some of the factors that will determine its ability to maintain quality as it grows.

- Strict criteria need to be maintained by WSP International in selecting only those countries where WSP International has a good chance of success. WSP International appears to be addressing this adequately now.²
- The management system must continue to be upgraded, so that accountability, operational guidelines and delegation of more responsibility to staff over time allows for a more complex set of operations.
- Investment in staff development is required, to allow for more independent staff operation while maintaining a common operating style and culture.

4.12 Governance

4.12.1 The Governing Board

Finding 7: The Governing Board represents an important asset for WSP International in terms of its credibility and the access to decision makers that the Board members provide.

WSP International is fortunate in the calibre and influence of its Board members. The active participation of the Assistant Secretary-General of the UN was cited by many of those interviewed as an important factor in maintaining UN links. However, some Board members are so busy that it is difficult for them to provide full oversight of WSP International. The Board may wish to consider appointing some individuals who will be able to provide more time and some specialised oversight, particularly in reviewing the financial situation of WSP International. Although the Board has rightly decided that the Board as a whole has a fiduciary responsibility

² Agenda Item 13, Inaugural Council Minutes, 1999

that it cannot delegate to just one person, an appropriate person could be appointed to undertake closer scrutiny and assist the Board in this area³.

Recommendation 4.7: The WSP International Board should consider adding specialised expertise in financial oversight, and appoint one member of the Board as Treasurer.

4.12.2 Advisory Council

Finding 8: The Advisory Council is a useful vehicle to develop support for WSP International and to inform donor agency specialists on WSP International's experience.

WSP International donors participate as members in an annual Advisory Council meeting. WSP International sees this as an effective means to inform donors on its overall programme and to solicit donor support. The strong sense of donor participation and donor commitment to collective ownership is reflected in the minutes of the Advisory Council and in interviews with donor representatives. This is a real institutional strength for WSP International.

WSP International would like to create broader relationships with donors – relationships that go beyond funding support, and that establish partnerships with donors through which WSP International can provide advice and other services to donors. WSP International's objectives create an unusual potential relationship with donor agencies, which are, in a sense, both "object and subject" of WSP International's work. One of WSP International's key roles is to inform, advise and influence these donor agencies (along with development aid, humanitarian aid and UN agencies) in respect of interventions in post-war countries.

In the future, since Advisory Council meetings are held mid-cycle in the financial year, the Advisory Council will probably become less important as a means of raising funds for WSP International. (It is more effective for WSP International to present individual donors with funding requests for individual projects, as they are prepared.) However, the Advisory Council should be maintained as an important vehicle for creating a common understanding between WSP International and its donors, and for developing a shared commitment to building peace. Some donors indicated that these meetings have a broader interest, and are seen as a good forum for policy discussion. They noted that colleagues from the headquarters of their agencies have often attended these meetings, which they would not normally do for other similar small organisations.

WSP International should continue to try to attract donor participants who are knowledgeable about conflict and peacebuilding, rather than generalists who may tend to see WSP International as just another NGO to monitor. One donor suggested that WSP International might consider the approach followed by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva in which the Director holds a seminar every two months on a country case study and then gives a short update on what the Centre is doing. WSP International might also consider organising some of its technical meetings at the same time as Advisory Council meetings, to encourage donor representatives to participate in both meetings while they are in Geneva.

WSP International's appointment of an External Relations Officer is an appropriate recognition of the attention WSP International needs to pay to this constituency.

³ A Board member with the responsibilities of a Treasurer could meet with the Director of Finance and Administration in advance of a Board meeting to look at the financial situation in more depth and then report to the Board along with WSP International's management.

4.13 UN Relationship

Finding 9: WSP International's links with the UN are important, particularly the political links which provide important benefits to both WSP International and the UN.

WSP International grew out of a UN-sponsored project, and all its initial staff were UN employees. While WSP International was created as a non-profit organisation under Swiss law, the UN gave it strong support both in signing a memorandum of understanding that accorded WSP International an ongoing relationship, as well as by providing operational support. WSP International has relied on UN organisations for financial management (UNDP trust fund) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) for operational support. WSP International's staff often refer to WSP International as a UN hybrid, in keeping with the language of many of the discussion documents which led to the drafting of WSP International's founding statutes.

The operational ties between the UN and WSP International have been declining: The UNDP trust fund was cancelled in 2003, the funds flowing through the UN to WSP International are decreasing, and new WSP International staff have not been UN employees. In addition, the working relationship with the UN creates some complexities for WSP International. Having some staff members who are UN employees and others who are employed directly by WSP International requires different arrangements on conditions of service and on passport and visa requirements. In general, there was a consensus among those interviewed that the UN is not the most effective vehicle for providing financial and administrative support to WSP International.

On the other hand, both staff and management see the political relationship with the UN as very beneficial to WSP International. The UN

"We can sit at the table as family, unlike many of the other NGOs" WSP staff member

relationship was also cited by external observers as one of the reasons why WSP International has been able to maintain its high profile and credibility relative to other NGOs. In certain cases there have also been practical benefits in allowing WSP International to use the UN umbrella. For example, WSP International is able to work in some countries where they would not have status or credibility as an NGO. During its country field visits the evaluation team also found evidence of the practical benefits and comparative advantages that WSP International enjoys in comparison to other NGOs as a result of its relationship to the UN.

It was also felt that WSP International could be a useful source of advice to the UN, which has limited resources to address post-conflict situations. There is therefore a good basis for an ongoing relationship between the UN and WSP International, with each party deriving some benefits.

"The vision and strategy of WSP International is completely remarkable. It is unique in the history of the UN system... and fills a vital gap in strategic analysis and situational assessment within certain sectors of the UN organisation." Board Member

WSP International's links with the UN are strong at present – with high level contacts between WSP International's management and Board members and senior UN officials. The UN Secretary General has appointed a very supportive, high-level representative to the WSP International's board. However, the existing relationship is largely dependent on strong personal commitment and individual contacts.

WSP International's management is committed to maintaining and developing the UN relationship, despite the complexities this creates for WSP International. The status and relationship that the UN has created for WSP International is unique, and the evaluation team agrees that WSP International must continue to build on this UN relationship. The idea of

establishing a WSP International office in New York has been suggested, but there are no plans to create such an office. In the present situation, the evaluation team agrees that an office in New York would be expensive and would not give good value for money. Although there might be some opportunities for WSP International staff in New York to interact on substantive issues, they could also become isolated from the dynamics of WSP International operations. It was suggested by UN officials that more regular WSP International visits to the UN in New York, to meet with various departments, would be useful to the UN in providing a better understanding of the underlying situation in WSP International countries.

At present, the potential for WSP International to work more closely with the country offices of various UN agencies is less clear. There are a limited number of countries in which WSP International can develop a closer working relationship with UN representatives. In these countries, WSP International should pursue a closer working relationship, and monitor and assess the relative benefits to each party. Certainly in Guatemala, relationships with UNDP were very strong, despite occasional tensions about control over the projects' processes and products.

Recommendation 4.8: As a strategic objective, WSP International should continue to strengthen its relationship with the UN, both at the senior level of the UN and, where useful, with UN organisations in the field.

4.14 Sunset Clause

A sunset clause can be a useful means to ensure that organisations can be dissolved when they outlive their usefulness. There is, however, a cost in creating a sense of insecurity among staff and constraining forward planning. The Governing Board of WSP International should take early steps to minimise the potential downside of this sunset clause by establishing, at an early stage, the conditions to be met for terminating the organisation or renewing its mandate.

Recommendation 4.9: WSP International's end-of-mandate evaluation should be commissioned well in advance of the end of its seven-year mandate.

The Statutes of the Governing Board indicate that the evaluation should be commissioned at the end of the sixth year. The evaluation team feels that the Governing Council should commission the evaluation to allow a decision one year in advance of the sunset date. This will ensure that staff are not distracted as the mandate comes to an end, and that WSP International can plan project activities with more confidence. Projects developed towards the end of this period should be fully funded to the end, regardless of the decision on renewal. National partners need to have the assurance that they will be able to carry on their activities to the end of their projects.

The evaluation team expects that this evaluation will be considerably more comprehensive than the current mid-term evaluation, and will consider the questions of whether there is still a strong need for peacebuilding activities and whether there are alternative organisations that could be as effective in this regard as WSP International.

5. Programme Strategy and Implementation

5.1 Introduction

Finding 10: **WSP International is on track and has the potential to exceed the programming goals set for it during its transition from a UN project to an organisation.**

The 'new' WSP International organisation inherited only one operating programme at the start – the Somali programme. Within less than four years WSP International was able to successfully set up and significantly develop several in-country programmes (including several follow up projects in Somalia and Guatemala). The evaluation team's direct exposure to these programmes was limited to its country visits to Guatemala and Rwanda. However, on the basis of these two very different contexts, there is considerable evidence of WSP International's high level of achievement in the building of the in-country programmes, including: the depth of WSP International involvement; the reproduction of the WSP methodology and approach; the establishment of strong in-country teams led by credible consensus figures in these two country programmes; and the significant strides that have been made in the building of consensus around key issues and entry points in both countries. These achievements are in keeping with the original objectives set out in the Inaugural Council Minutes⁴ (Geneva, 1999). If there are any gaps in the realisation of the initial aspirations as set out in the Constitutive meeting of the Inaugural Council of WSP International, then it might be that WSP International has not tested its approach explicitly within any 'pre-war' country context (Proposal for the Establishment of a WSP Successor Body, November 1998), and it might be argued that the failure to establish a presence in Asia limits the balanced 'regional distribution' of the organisation that was identified as ideal. Having said this, the Inaugural Council was more concerned to set out detailed criteria designed to limit rather than facilitate the further expansion of WSP International.⁵

Recommendation 5.1: WSP International should try to establish a country programme in Asia.

5.2 Methodology and Approach

Finding 11: **WSP International's value-based approach to its country programmes is critical in defining the organisation's niche, but this is not always coherently articulated or marketed, due to the significantly different applications of the WSP methodology in different country contexts.**

Whilst the general tenets and components of the WSP approach are clear, the significantly diverse applications of its methodological tools in different countries raises the question of whether this is identifiable as a single methodology which stands on its own. In part this question arises because of the flexibility that is intrinsic to the WSP methodology itself. Local partners, trained in the methodology and well versed with its functions, all clearly articulate a methodology that they identify with WSP

"The three factors that distinguish WSP International from other actors are: its methodology, the ability to gather diverse actors at the table, and its vision of countries in transition from conflict to a sustained peace." (Stakeholder from the POLSEDE project, Guatemala)

⁴ Agenda Item 13 of the Inaugural Council (Geneva, 1999)

⁵ (Minutes of Agenda Items 13 and 14, Geneva 1999).

International. A common discourse and methodological language exists across the various country projects. This includes the participatory research methods, consensus building, and 'neutral spaces' that allow various players to identify and engage with shared perspectives on the key 'entry points' or problems within their societies. However, the specific identity of this methodology may be less clear and distinctive because it takes root differently in different countries, or even within different projects in one country.

The sustained commitment of WSP International to local (in-country) interpretation of priorities, inclines the organisation to simply frame these significant differences as methodological variations on the same theme, but to an external observer or researcher, these can sometimes appear to be quite different methodologies. For example, the style and extent of participation in research in Guatemala as opposed to Rwanda, gives substantially different meaning to "participative research" (see below). The form, style, focus and content of the country notes generated in different countries are significantly different. Different types of 'entry points' often shape the extent of participation, the nature of the interventions, the methodology of follow-up research, etc., in such divergent ways as to strongly suggest that as the approach unfolds in different countries, its identity through a uniform methodology becomes significantly blurred.

It is not clear whether these subtle methodological distinctions or the value-based continuity to the overall approach are clearly grasped by the donor, development, humanitarian aid or even the UN agencies that WSP International seeks to influence or assist. Unless this is resolved, the benefits of multi-country comparisons may be lost on these target audiences.

Recommendation 5.2: The distinction between the core values that underpin cross-country continuity in WSP International's approach and the flexible application of its methodology needs to be more explicit in the marketing of the organisation's work, and should be a targeted objective of Outreach & Learning.

5.2.2 Participatory Action Research

Finding 12: WSP International's participatory research is a powerful tool for opening up discussion and for breaking logjams in consensus-building processes across very diverse societies.

A wide range of informants in both Rwanda and Guatemala expressed a deep appreciation of WSP International's rigorous research-based approach, implemented by talented scholars and fieldworkers, which provides a non-judgmental platform for the expression of views across the political and social spectrum. WSP International's programme staff operating both in Geneva and in the other countries where

"The ability to look at issues on a rational basis allowed people to take positions that were based on information and analysis rather than politics or ideology." (Stakeholder from POLSEDE project, Guatemala)

WSP International is involved also expressed similar perspectives. Whilst the processes that this approach gives rise to are often complex and controversial, sound participatory research helps to build a basis for discussion and relationship-building across social divides and thus contributes to sustainable commitments to consensus. One of the best illustrations of this was directly observed by the evaluation team when the approach clearly facilitated the involvement and participation of the *diaspora* in the Rwandan dialogue process. As in Somalia, the use of video as a multiplier effect to capture and reproduce this participatory process clearly enhanced its impact through rendering visible and audible the consultation with target groups.

However, different country programmes provoke significantly different concepts of "participation" in these research processes, and this has an impact on the extent and quality of the consensus reached. This also influences the nature of the reports produced and the ways in which they are

framed and used. The extent and definition of popular participation is linked to the particular entry point being tackled and the history of the particular conflict in any specific society. This is not by any means to suggest that there should be one single definition or approach – either across countries or across entry points. However, the observation is nonetheless important for how the dramatic diversity of application of this aspect of the WSP methodology might be understood.

For example, the nature and breadth of the consultation process in the compilation of the Rwandan country note was considerably more extensive than the consecutive phases of specialised research on the security sector reform documents in the Guatemalan context. The consultative forums were different, as were the end products – in style, in the level of participation, and in the texture of the policy outcomes produced. In some senses this is an obvious consequence of participatory research being done in two very different societies to promote consensus around dramatically different social, political and developmental concerns. If one compares the process and approach in Rwanda with that in Guatemala (without presuming either one to be superior) the differences are obvious. In one case ‘participatory’ demanded popular and extensive consultations inside and outside the country, breached the urban/rural divide, and engaged literate and illiterate stakeholders to produce a document and a dialogue that was accessible and culturally sensitive. In the Guatemalan case, the process was academically and intellectually complex, the target audience was an urban ‘elite’, and the consultations deliberately did not span a politically delicate urban / rural divide. The product was highly complex, framed in technically inaccessible language and deliberately aimed at stakeholders within a specific (arguably exclusive) set of social and state institutions. Nonetheless, in both cases the approach tailored important and successful break-through relationship-building interventions.

An observer outside of the peacebuilding sector (and perhaps even some within it) might raise serious doubts about whether these different kinds of application are the same methodology, and may erroneously frame this as a weakness rather than as strength in the application of the WSP methodology.

Recommendation 5.3: To maximise the benefits of its flexible participatory research, WSP International should evaluate the quality of the consensus produced in different countries that shape participation differently in their research processes.

5.2.3 Creating ‘Neutral’ Spaces

Finding 13: WSP International is creating ‘neutral’ forums and broader societal spaces where dialogue about difficult and sometimes taboo subjects can be openly debated. However, national WSP staff face a constant tension between being ‘impartial’ and being actors in their own national processes.

The country visits of the evaluation team confirmed the views of management and Geneva staff that the creation of ‘neutral’ spaces for dialogue is one of the most important contributions of the WSP approach and methodology. This was illustrated in the style, energy and dynamics of the two-day country consultation forum when the Rwandan country note was debated.

Similar views were widely expressed by various informants about the multi-generational projects undertaken in Guatemala. Virtually every stakeholder interviewed indicated that WSP International had played a critical and irreplaceable role (through the POLSEDE and POLSEC projects) in creating a 'safe' space for dialogue on civil-military relations, which had not previously existed in that society. This was seen to have evolved significantly over the course of the past four years into a 'societal space' rather than just a forum for a popular discourse on democratic security. This was illustrated by the prolific engagement of civil society organisations on security sector reform, as well as by the research being undertaken in universities and the courses being offered on the subject – all previously unthinkable in a society emerging from military rule.

"This (Rwanda National Report) is very important because it tells us a lot of what goes on in the country – not in the capital, not in our own heads, but among the real people who live there... This is a courageous document, then, which exhibits the qualities of dialogue, respect, and truthfulness, in a country that has had all too little of these. All the persons who speak in this document are Rwandans, and so are all those doing the interviewing... It constitutes one more opening taking place in Rwanda." External Academic

The creation of these spaces has not been uncomplicated. Due to uncertain governmental responses and limitations in governmental political will, the very existence as well as the 'neutrality' of the space has had to be carefully defended and politically managed on an ongoing basis. This also presents tensions for the in-country programme personnel between their roles as researchers (and their documents as facilitative of the consensus-building space) on one hand, and their peace activist orientation on the other. As activists they constantly confront the dilemma that the use of their research and documents by various stakeholders in the public arena might compromise its perceived impartiality and may jeopardise incomplete consensus building processes. There is nonetheless an important role in utilising this information to contest misinformation that is in circulation and particularly the abuse of it by parties to the negotiations.

"A process of building trust and legitimacy that has created both a climate and a forum that was initially characterized by tolerance and then by collective construction... making it an unusual meeting place in this country." POLSEC Participant

Related problems identified by WSP International's country teams include how to deal with the risk of third party attacks on these processes, or the risk of shut-down by a government that becomes threatened by the process or which tries to assert its ownership and control of the process. These dilemmas also raise a tough question about how to deal with potential spoilers in situations where the whole representation of the process is one of inclusive consensus-building. Different in-situ approaches to all these questions reflect the fact that there are no uniform answers across different contexts and in different countries.

In some instances, these dilemmas have strategically shaped the extent and breadth of public participation. In Guatemala, as noted above, it was deliberately decided to focus on urban areas and on the participation of technically proficient stakeholders in the dialogue about security sector reform. This meant that the process specifically excluded an engagement with largely rural-based indigenous populations and social movements – a sector already suffering from exclusion and marginalisation within Guatemalan society. In part, this was strategic, due to the risk that conservative or anti-democratic attitudes to military rule may find prevalent expression in these sectors and that this might impair the functioning of the neutral forums or even taint the potential for transformation of civil-military relations. However, the risk here is twofold: on one hand it has the potential for raising questions about the inclusiveness of the process and the 'neutrality' of the forums created. On the other hand, the failure to include these marginal yet strategically important groups and to articulate a strategy that secured the buy-in of rural-based

social movements, may present medium to longer-term risks for the sustainability of the forum and of the interventions – and even for future re-emergence of violent confrontations.

5.2.4 Trust and Relationship Building

Finding 14: **While the durability of trust and relationships forged through WSP International’s approach cannot be easily measured, WSP International’s country programmes have achieved some success in forging these relationships between various stakeholders.**

Finding 15: **Where ‘neutral’ spaces for dialogue can only be preserved through compromising accountability for past human rights violations, this may create significant risks for sustainable peace.**

In the field visits to both Rwanda and Guatemala, the evaluation team found strong indications that WSP International’s role and creativity in building relationships of trust has been significant. In Rwanda the team witnessed this first hand in the country consultations to debate the country note. Whilst this was obviously only one moment frozen within a much more elaborate process, it was evident from information about what had preceded this forum, as well as from an observation of the style, design and dynamics of the process itself, that a significant breakthrough had been made.

In Guatemala, the indications were equally substantial, but less momentary. In this case a careful study of the evolution of the country programme revealed a high degree of continuity of stakeholder and individual involvement over the various iterations of the WSP International programme. Although these processes are impossible to evaluate quantitatively (or even qualitatively), the impressions gained are not merely anecdotal. Indeed, the same players moving from one project on security sector reform to another, coupled with the continuity in a collective of key individuals from across the political spectrum working together and supported by WSP International’s Guatemala researchers, has clearly been critical to the durability of the security sector reform initiatives at a time when government was at best rather sluggish in its responsiveness, and at worst actively resistant. After the first WSP Guatemala project virtually folded in the face of governmental disinterest, a significant period later another opportunity presented itself and the same relationships re-emerged in support of a new security sector reform initiative that has proven much more enduring.

Trust-building frequently evolves more by accident than through design, and the outcomes of these processes are neither certain nor predictable. As a consequence, these relationships are also impossible to guarantee in volatile and changing circumstances. Realistic reflection may well demand that we recognise that in the spotlight of public attention, behaviour may alter.

Trust and consensus are also easiest to build on the basis of the lowest common denominator – a shared perspective on the key problems plaguing a society. Maintaining such consensus and trust in the forging of much more contested solutions is considerably more difficult – and has certainly been tested further in WSP’s Guatemalan experience than in the more recently established Rwandan process.

There are also very real risks, in societies emerging from intense violent conflict, that one of the ways of building ‘trust’ and consensus is through pacts that protect perpetrators from accountability – whether before the justice system or just through a public acknowledgement of what happened in the past. Several stakeholders in the Guatemalan process acknowledged that the process stalled when the past was brought up, and that the participation of key military stakeholders became conditional on these issues of past accountability being excluded from the terms of the process. In contrast, the WSP Rwanda process has prioritised dealing with

versions of history, as well as insisting on confronting both the genocide and the issues of accountability and justice – as three of the key entry points in the consensus-building process.

These are perennial risks that confront consensus-based peacebuilding processes and which are hardly new to WSP International. However, there are severe risks in failing to adequately integrate such peacebuilding with the evolving field of transitional justice. This may pollute trust-building exercises and could lend credibility to violators of human rights. This appears to have been strongly avoided in WSP practice. However, the willingness to relinquish dealing with the past in the course of these exercises clearly presents important questions about the sustainability and durability of the peace that then rests upon the pillars of trust and consensus brokered through these processes.

Recommendation 5.4: It is important that WSP International effectively documents and analyses its successes and failures in building trust in societies. This should not be a purely retrospective process.

Recommendation 5.5: WSP International must engage more comprehensively and actively with initiatives grappling with transitional justice models as a means for societies emerging from intense conflict to deal with past human rights violations.

5.2.5 Selection of National Leaders

Finding 16: In some cases, the selection of country teams and consensus figures has been instrumental in the success of the project. In others, reliance on a consensus figure has proved problematic.

In both Guatemala and Rwanda the selection of the consensus figures who led these processes was widely regarded as a critical factor in the success of the projects. Virtually all the stakeholders interviewed in Guatemala made specific mention of the credibility and respect of WSP International's project leaders or consensus figures, throughout the various steps of the country programme. The leadership of these consensus figures, and their capability as 'political managers' of the processes, should not be underestimated. Some stakeholders expressed concern that WSP International could place too much emphasis on particular personalities of its incumbent leadership, leaving the sustainability of these initiatives vulnerable should these leaders be lost. There is also the risk that some local donors may see the individuals rather than the processes as critical to their investments. Certainly, the evaluation team was alerted to the risk that when a key figure lost credibility or mismanaged the delicate process of building consensus, the impact could be extremely disruptive for the entire country programme. In fact, one such instance evolved in Macedonia during the course of the evaluation. However, as this was not one of the field trips undertaken by the evaluation team, it is impossible to offer any substantive assessment of this case.

Astute selection of in-country teams also plays a critical role in moderating the isolated influence of a single figure. In particular, strategic alignment of academic and political management skills in the composition of country teams constructed around a consensus figure offers the best guarantee against the risks described above.

Recommendation 5.6: As over reliance on credible leadership figures can impact negatively on country programme operations, WSP International should try to separate the political and project management functions at the field level.

5.3 Relationship to Non WSP International Initiatives and Organisations

Finding 17: **WSP International appears to be setting an innovative and concrete example of how international agencies can better relate to national actors.**

From the earliest statutes and discussion documents establishing WSP International, one of the criteria for WSP International undertaking a new country programme has been that the context is not 'overcrowded' and that WSP International is not therefore duplicating existing initiatives and capacity. The criterion for this is not explicitly documented and this does leave open the assessment as to how – and how extensively – the capacity of local organisations is evaluated. Nonetheless, where a country programme is established, there remains a need and a commitment to forge working relationships with existing organisations, build capacity of domestic institutions and ensure that, where appropriate, WSP International's interventions engage with existing credible initiatives of either government or non-governmental organisations.

The evaluation team observed that even where WSP International establishes its own working team in country, as in the case of Rwanda, this does not compromise the general organisational commitment to seek working partnerships with existing organisations in the field. In Guatemala a local organisation, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), rather than WSP International, hosted the POLSEDE project. This had clear advantages as FLACSO had established credentials based upon its academic research track record, its reputation for objectivity, its ability to facilitate dialogue, its capacity to convene other role players, and its existing research on military and security issues. Again, this flexibility in the WSP method allows for arrangements that are appropriately suited to specific country conditions.

This presents some complications for WSP International, in that different operational arrangements clearly attract different obligations in terms of exit strategy, funding accountability and financial, ethical or legal obligations. The management of these arrangements is never likely to be formulaic and will add to the management burden of both in-country and Geneva based WSP International staff.

Several stakeholders in Rwanda, one of whom was a donor, expressed some concern about the relationship of WSP International to local initiatives. The issue was raised as to how the project of the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) related to other initiatives in the field of transitional justice, particularly in relation to the National Unity and Reconciliation Committee and various other retrospective justice processes. In Guatemala this appeared to be much less of a concern, and most informants agreed that the selected WSP entry point of security sector reform was entirely appropriate and that no other local institution was adequately positioned to initiate this process in the manner WSP International had done. The evaluation team was not able to substantively evaluate how the WSP Guatemalan process related to other initiatives in the field, the Historical Clarification Commission, the issues of past human rights violations, or the recent prosecutions of Guatemalan military personnel in the USA.

The concern for preserving 'neutral' space may also have an effect on the extent to which WSP initiatives dovetail with related local interventions (often, but not exclusively, government-driven). This is significant not merely because of the potential benefits of cumulative impact, but also because donor, development and humanitarian aid agencies operating in-country were often inclined to expect such collaboration or cooperation.

WSP International's field personnel discussed these issues when they gathered for a methodological review in Geneva in September 2003. The evaluation team observed parts of

this exchange. One key issue discussed was the nature and timing of WSP International's interventions – for example, the dangers of setting up discussion and consensus seeking forums that represent an alternative to an existing national negotiations process (such as in the Middle East) would make the WSP process politically controversial and contested. In the context of Israel/Palestine, this was framed differently: How do you create a process and a country note where there is already so much existing documentation, research and history? This might be a question of the selection of country programmes and is perhaps one of the key issues of intervening in 'crowded' national contexts. There is, of course, no simple answer to these questions; this will require careful political management in any in-country programme.

The evaluation team had little opportunity to evaluate the relationship between IRDP in Rwanda and other local civil society organisations. However, we did get considerable feedback on this in the Guatemalan case. Civil society organisations expressed some anxiety about having to compete with WSP International for funding in the security sector reform arena, but all acknowledged that their presence and strength in the sector was largely attributable to WSP International's active fostering of collaboration between civil society organisations. Indeed, some NGO representatives expressed considerable gratitude to WSP International for having opened up this sector in the first place. WSP International has also been instrumental in building a fully independent network of civil society organisations operating in this sector. Clearly, both competition and collaboration can be sources of tension. However, all the NGO representatives interviewed regarded WSP International as having great integrity. WSP International's relationships with these organisations have been managed with considerable respect and sensitivity.

Recommendation 5.7: WSP International should outline the principles that shape its approach to collaboration and strategic partnership with both governmental and civil society initiatives at local and regional levels.

5.4 National Agendas and Issue-specific Dialogues

Finding 18: WSP International's programmes use both broad national agenda entry points and more confined issue-based entry points. As yet there is no clear-cut evidence of the long term consequences or comparative advantages of either path.

The WSP Guatemala interventions provide a critical insight into the evolution of a multi-stage process utilising the WSP approach and methodology. In many respects, the comparison with the Rwandan process, which is much newer, offers some important insights. Both interventions produced country notes that were wide-ranging and that tackled a broad range of the central issues that underpinned the history of violent conflict within these countries. However, the WSP Guatemala country team reflections suggest that WSP projects tackling national agendas would have less chance for success in Latin America, unless the government was in crisis, with limited conditions for governance and legitimacy. From the first phase of WSP in Guatemala, one of the lessons drawn was that it is difficult for a government that has sufficient conditions for governance and legitimacy to enter into a dialogue process that opens up the national agenda to be defined via consensus. This also raises interesting questions for the Rwanda programme, not merely on the basis that government might resist interventions that tackle the full spectrum of key national issues (as the Rwandan country note implies), but purely because of the magnitude of the burden in seeking to facilitate the simultaneous tackling of all these key national issues.

Stakeholders indicated that one of the success factors for the second and third phases of the WSP Guatemala projects has been the focus on a specific policy issue – security and defence.

This focus facilitated progress towards results (both process- and product-oriented). Security is considered critical for moving forward with the Peace Accords and for building democratic governance. Yet it remained an issue that few people understood and in respect of which government required assistance at the time the civil-military relations project (POLSEDE) began in 1998.

The WSP Guatemala team recognises that there are important potential losses that come with such a narrow focus. One of the potential risks of focusing on defence and security is that the dialogues continue to engage the same circle of actors, usually drawing on relatively elite groups in society and facilitating a technical discussion that is frequently detached from social movements and wider social justice and development. This raises important concerns for the longer-term durability of peace, if it does not adequately address these issues, and it also frames a dialogue that risks excluding key sectors of Guatemalan society.

5.5 Timing of Country Programme Interventions

Finding 19: The timing of WSP International’s interventions is a factor in the organisation’s effectiveness in its country programmes.

There are few rules about the timing of in-country interventions that can circumvent the somewhat unpredictable outcomes of dialogue processes or the initiation of participatory research. These are ventures that rely heavily on astute political management and careful strategic assessment. In both the Rwandan and the Guatemalan field visits, stakeholders commented on the keen political sense that has been applied to initiate, pause, and continue dialogue processes. It is a testimony to the quality of this strategic leadership within WSP International, both in Geneva and in the various country programmes, that none of the programmes reviewed during this evaluation failed due to having been undertaken at an inappropriate time. In part this is because of the rigorous assessment that is undertaken before any new projects are initiated. The leaders of the Phase 1 experimental project in Guatemala speculated whether the results of the project would not have been more far-reaching if it had been launched six months earlier than was eventually the case, because the project’s momentum may thus have been more proximate to the Popular Referendum on Constitutional Amendments. Similarly, there was some speculation that had the WSP programme in Macedonia been launched two years earlier, it may have played some role in the prevention of the conflict which ensued – ultimately provoking the later involvement of WSP International. These are, however, exercises in hindsight that do not detract from the strategically astute timing of WSP International’s interventions in the course of the past four years.

5.6 Sustainability and Impact of Institutions and Peacebuilding Processes

There are a number of points raised in the previous section about the sustainability and impact of in-country institutions and of the peace process itself. In a sense, impact and sustainability are cross-cutting issues that relate closely to the successful impact of the peace dialogue process, how the methodology is used, and the success of advocacy functions and Outreach & Learning. The terms of reference for this review deliberately excluded an evaluation of the impact of country projects. The evaluation team has tried to show, through detailed findings on the programme strategy and implementation and on the Outreach & Learning, where WSP International has made or is making an impact on building peace and influencing international actors. There is reference to impact under most of the points under methodology. This is covered by reviewing how the method works and what gains it has made in building consensus

for peace. In Outreach & Learning, impact is tackled more from the point of view of how lessons are learned, and how these lessons have had an impact on shaping international actors.

Sustainability is closely linked to impact: If the process is having a positive impact, it is more likely to be sustained. It is important to note that although the sustainability of the peacebuilding process is NOT under the control of WSP International, the following points need to be carefully considered in addition to the others raised elsewhere in this report.

5.6.1 Policy and Delivery– The Implementation Gap

Finding 20: : **Although not part of WSP International’s mandate, the policy-implementation gap at the country level runs the risk of ultimately undermining WSP International’s peacebuilding projects.**

If the peace dialogue process does not result in sustained interventions, the sustainability of the peace process itself is put at risk.

The terms of reference for this study state that the WSP process “results in negotiated, broadly endorsed recommendations for policy makers inside the war-torn country and for external assistance actors who wish to support rebuilding based on locally agreed priorities.” Key WSP International staff in Geneva supported this aim, saying that what was needed was trust in the process and faith that government and donors alike would respond positively to the results of WSP International’s work, and that this would result in concrete delivery. The evaluation team acknowledges that the WSP country projects are a critical first step in building peace – in their own right. However, once the dialogue process is completed, the success or failure of the dialogue process will be measured against whether anything concrete comes out of it. WSP International cannot guarantee that this will be the case, nor should it try to influence implementation by acting as donors or conduits for funding – this would quite clearly compromise its role as an ‘impartial’ actor in supporting an inclusive peace process, and would fundamentally change its relationship to national actors.

There are a number of ways in which WSP International is trying to ensure that government and donors take up the recommendations from the peace dialogue process in a concrete way.

One element is that WSP International’s structures its role to try to ensure that the dialogue process will result in concrete recommendations that are funded and that can be implemented.

Another element is the External Relations function (out of the Director’s office) in shaping top-level international views. This is currently heavily reliant on personal contacts and political acumen, which makes it less sustainable. At the national level, WSP International aims to influence international actors by making them partners in the dialogue for peace process. This is the aim of the process in Rwanda and it remains to be seen if this will result in concrete partnerships in the second phase. The evaluation team believes that the most important element in influencing international actors is the creation of partnerships at the national level, since this provides tangible benefits for national stakeholders and extends the success of the policy making endeavours driven by WSP International and local partners at the national level. Advocacy from the Geneva office at senior agency levels can help this process when international agency representatives at the national level are constrained.

One of the key findings of the WSP process has been that national actors define their priorities independently of international actors. Part of the difficulty in matching international and national priorities is that, in most instances, national actors define priorities across sectors, defying the international community’s desire to fit priorities neatly into separate sectors. Again this points to the unique and critical positioning of WSP International in being able to point out these fundamental differences in approach and in trying to forge solutions to deal with them.

Donor and development agency confidence in funding concrete recommendations from the peace dialogue process is dependent, at least in part, on the potential for translating the 'soft' issues into 'harder' interventions and achievements (to use the language of one of the donors interviewed by the evaluation team). WSP International can play a critical role in emphasising the nature of the relationship between hard and soft issues so that donors begin to realise that both are essential to post-conflict peacebuilding. WSP International faces constraints in getting donors to commit to the outcomes of national processes. Donor rhetoric often indicates a desire to support processes that have been identified by national actors, but when it comes to providing funds, most donors simply do not like being told what to do, or do not want to accept the political analysis and outcome of a national process. This is part of the longer term and more difficult task of re-shaping international ways of engaging with national peacebuilding processes.

The WSP consensus-building process is deliberately a multi-player intervention that reaches beyond governmental involvement, and may even work around governmental disengagement (such as in Guatemala's early security sector reform interventions). Some of these visions and policies will be taken up and implemented by governments. Others are less likely to be implemented because they relate to the vision and objectives of forums that are wider than government alone. This is evident in both the Rwandan and in Guatemalan contexts.

“There is a real danger that the research process – which is supposed to service the building of consensus and relationship building – is seen as an end in itself... debriefing communities and moralising about behaviour change, but then withdrawing or disappearing from the process with no results or delivery... Like preaching peace and reconciliation, but just words.” Country Programme Participant in Methodological Review Meetings in Geneva, September, 2003

Recommendation 5.8: WSP International should consider how to address the possible failure by governments and others to achieve the expectations created by dialogue and consensus building processes.

5.6.2 Sustainability of WSP Country Processes

Finding 21: : WSP International recognises its responsibility to facilitate ongoing funding support and capacity development of WSP country projects to promote sustainability, but there is no single strategy on how country processes or institutions should continue once the WSP process has ended.

One key element of sustainability of the peace process is to ensure that policy is translated into concrete implementation. The other element of sustainability relates to the sustainability of the institutions and the peace process they have been facilitating.

In one context, this may be about the kind of institution that is left behind; in another, it may be about a new trajectory and an ability to develop follow-up phases and eventually a regional evolution; and in a third context, this may be related to neither institutions nor programme follow-up, but rather about the less predictable social fabric intervention in relationship building that is left behind.

One Geneva WSP International staff member noted an issue that needs critical attention: Usually WSP International is required to wind down projects and at the same time think about how they can be sustained in the country without WSP International. These two activities require different strategies and orientation, and are difficult to do at the same time. In Rwanda, IRDP staff were anxious about the sustainability of their project. They said great expectations had been placed on them to find solutions to extremely difficult issues and that this was a long-

term process. They feared the life span of the organisation was too short, and also feared their reputations might be at risk if they did not continue.

The Guatemala experience illustrates how WSP International's programmes can evolve, beyond the initial national dialogue, into increasingly autonomous second phase projects. This would seem to follow naturally from the principle of local ownership that prevails in the organisation.

"WSP International's role evolves over time from an actor that "stimulates" or "catalyzes" (which can mean direct management of a project), to one which "accompanies" and "monitors", and finally serves as background support and acts as a last recourse if a major problem or crisis situation arises." Guatemala observer

Because of the length of WSP International's engagement, the sustainability of the process, and the increasing autonomy of projects in Guatemala, it would seem reasonable for WSP International to slowly disengage from work there. We tested the notion of an exit strategy with several stakeholders. The feedback we received suggests a process of changing roles but *never complete disengagement*. Even when processes are mature and apparently sustainable on their own, people cite the need for WSP International to act as background support in the event that a crisis was to arise.

5.7 Relationship Between Geneva and the Country Programmes

Finding 22: There is the potential of an emerging divide between Geneva and WSP International's country programmes, based on a distinction between strategy and policy making responsibilities on one hand and operational or implementation responsibilities on the other.

In WSP International's vision and mission, the country programmes are articulated as being "at the heart" of the organisation. The integrity of this commitment to the empowerment of country programmes, and to their integration in lesson drawing and methodology development within WSP International, was evident in the evaluation team's country visits to both Rwanda and Guatemala.

Nonetheless, there is a division between Geneva and the country operations, primarily understood as a functional division between the lobbying or advocacy function based out of Geneva (including Outreach & Learning) and the operational function in-country. However, this does not adequately describe the full picture. Despite the drive for more targeted local funding support in the various country programmes, the centralised fundraising for WSP International is driven from Geneva; training (particularly in the WSP methodology), cross-cutting evaluation and the Outreach & Learning functions are essentially Geneva-based, although an attempt to decentralise this is evident in Guatemala being tasked to lead the cross-country methodological review process. Probably the most critical point is that the strategic leadership of the organisation internationally is operating from Geneva. In reality, it is only through Geneva that the whole picture of WSP International can presently be represented.

There is a troubling aspect to the definition of in-country programmes as essentially operational and implementation-oriented, whilst the Geneva-based role is framed primarily in terms of its policy, advocacy (broadly defined) and strategic responsibilities. There is an inspiring openness in Geneva, particularly within the SEG, to engage creatively with strategic issues in a deeper way. But the flip side of this is the real danger of restricting the involvement of field personnel in this strategic thinking and planning, and of creating a gap between strategy and implementation.

One interviewee suggested that this potential divide is embedded in the labelling of most field personnel and partners as 'local actors' – which, without derogating from WSP International's

genuine commitment to the primacy of in-country programmes, limits the extent to which these actors are drawn into and engage in the wider strategy formulation, Outreach & Learning design, and in the bigger picture policy issues within WSP International.

This perspective was apparent through our observations of the methodological review process. Field personnel need more than recognition and affirmation; they also seek a sense of ownership and leadership in the evaluation of lessons learned, impact assessment and measurement, and the setting of strategic priorities. Country programme protagonists need to be better integrated into the formulation of WSP International's broader strategy, or at least they must be given the opportunity and the right to set their own limits on involvement in this level of vision and strategy formulation.

A key question that arises from this is how WSP International can play a high profile international advocacy role, grounded as this must be in the lessons and experiences derived from the field operations, yet in such a manner that preserves rather than threatens the sometimes fragile neutral space that is the essential building block of in-country peacebuilding.

Some field programme managers expressed concern that the in-country players did not own the vision and mission of the organisation as a whole. However, this must not be over-generalised and there were clearly exceptions to this – cases where field personnel clearly enjoyed considerable influence and played an important leadership role in WSP International more generally. The evaluation team also found cases where country programme personnel were actively resistant to taking on these broader roles and the wider vision and strategies.

We must guard against trying to assert influence in the global sphere in a manner that creates the appearance of compromising the critical operation space in the field. We can't be seen by local actors to be trading in the information and knowledge they generate with heavy hitters and powerful players in the donor and development community. If there is a challenge in how we manage the relationship between HQ and the field, it is how to protect the core of our in-country work.

So, while WSP International clearly defers to local priority setting and definition of the peacebuilding agenda, this initiative and innovation from the field is occasionally 'appropriated' and used to leverage donor and other international agency positioning. However, through the divide between Geneva-based policy and strategy functions and the country-based operations, the local actors risk losing (or give up) ownership of WSP International's mission, vision and macro interventions, and sacrifice their ability to operate as proactive actors in this process. There is the associated danger that a 'silo engagement' evolves for some of the in-country people, based on the fact that some people in the organisation are seen as custodians of the bigger vision and strategy, while others are happy – even when learning from each other – to retire to a comfort zone constrained strictly to in-country operations.

Recommendation 5.9: WSP International needs to promote greater involvement and ownership of country staff in addressing strategic issues, developing policy and methodology and in identifying lessons.

Measures to address this might include:

- cross-recruitment or exchange of personnel from the field and placements in HQ (with due sensitivity to local capacity needs and constraints);
- appointment of country programme leadership onto the various governance structures of WSP International;
- greater facilitation of cross-country exchanges, particularly in the arenas of policy and strategy development sessions for the organisation;

- active involvement of country programme personnel in development of learning and outreach strategy, in the development of impact assessment, evaluation and measurement tools; and
- direct utilisation of country programme leadership in presenting their experiences to the international development, humanitarian and donor agencies, as well as UN personnel in Geneva and the various capitals where WSP International lobbies.

6. Learning and Outreach

As the Outreach & Learning programme is only now being scaled up to be fully operational, the evaluation team's comments are more tentative. WSP International planned to scale up this programme in the second half of its mandate, following development of the field programme.⁶ This does not suggest a reduced importance of this work, but rather reflects the commitment to evolve such lesson drawing and analysis from the experiences of in-country programmes. We support the priority being given to building the O&L programme on the basis of country peacebuilding experiences.

6.1 Relationship between Outreach & Learning and Operations

Finding 23: The relationship between Outreach & Learning and Operations has not yet been sufficiently defined and developed.

Outreach and Learning (O&L) should not be seen as a support dimension to Operations, or merely as dissemination activities; it is integral to what the organisation exists to do – to undertake field-based action programmes and use them to fulfil an advocacy role within the international community based on lessons learned in the field.

Great care should be given to ensuring that Outreach & Learning is not divorced from the Operations staff and programmes. There are many examples in other organisations where the research, policy and analytical arms of the organisation are divorced from the operations programme. This could result in Outreach & Learning becoming more abstract, and Operations becoming too focused on day-to-day project development. The evaluation team feels that this is potentially a serious weakness that could evolve, as there is no evidence of O&L staff going to the field.

There is a delicate balance between wanting to ensure that O&L staff members are closely connected to the field, and not wanting to disrupt national peace dialogue processes by inserting too many individuals who are not directly part of the process. The National Learning Analysts, whose primary function is to document lessons, could be used to build better integration between O&L and Operations. They can contribute to developing good in-depth information on an ongoing basis that other national staff members don't have the time to develop, and they can be a key point of contact and reference for O&L staff from Geneva. A second way to address this concern is to promote better inter-change between O&L staff and Operations staff. Part of this lies in building stronger relationships between the individuals

⁶ This was explicitly stated in the minutes of the Constitutive Meeting of the Inaugural Council of WSP International in Geneva (December 2-3, 1999) as well as in the WSP Transition Programme document on Establishing a Successor Body to the War Torn Societies Project (Geneva, 18 November 1999). The analysis and translation of lessons learned through its country projects was also framed as a second priority under the programme of work (Agenda Item 12, Programme of Work 2000/2001, Meeting of the General Assembly).

involved, and in structuring joint projects that allow them to co-operate and deliver joint final products. Secondments of Geneva staff to the field and joint meetings and strategy sessions will also help. Outreach & Learning can assist in some of the country project activities, while Operations staff should be encouraged to analyse and write up lessons. One of the biggest hurdles to overcome is for operational and programme staff to really see and acknowledge the important role that O&L can play.

Recommendation 6.1: Outreach & Learning should remain firmly rooted in national peacebuilding processes where there is much to learn and where WSP International has a comparative advantage. This will require closer collaboration between the Operations and O&L programmes.

6.2 Influencing International Actors (Advocacy)

Finding 24: WSP International currently has no way of measuring the gains it is making in influencing and assisting international actors in engaging in national peace processes.

The two major aims of Outreach & Learning are to document and disseminate lessons learned, and to improve relationships between internal and external actors. Of these two aims, one is far more difficult to implement and measure than the other. WSP International already has good experience in the first area – making WSP International a learning organisation where lessons are documented, analysed and shared.

The second aim – to improve relationships between internal and external actors (in conjunction with External Relations) – is more complex, more difficult to pursue, and far more difficult to evaluate. WSP International has the advantage of good access to both international and national actors. It has access to senior levels in some international agencies, particularly in the UN through WSP International's Advisory Committee and Board (although these relationships are more personal than institutional). WSP International is also trying to create stronger links and involvement with external agencies in project activities at the national level. The evaluation team has seen evidence that this has been actively pursued and that gains have been made in donor support for national institutions at the country level.

At the national level, a number of WSP country teams have acted as a resource for the international community, both in providing up to date analysis of what is happening on the ground, and in providing information about local actors and the roles they are playing. (Many of these examples are in Somaliland, where international access is severely restricted, but they were also evident in Rwanda.) This type of activity can be a drain on country teams and may not necessarily result in concrete partnerships at the national level. Nevertheless, they show that WSP International and its national partners have credibility, and that WSP International is carving a space for itself as a link between national and international actors. The challenge is to not end up serving international actors at the expense of the local peacebuilding process.

WSP International will need to periodically assess its results in influencing international actors, to see which techniques (or combination of techniques) are the most effective. Success will be very difficult to measure for a variety of reasons: many of these relationships are dependent on individual contacts; slight shifts in attitudes and strategies cannot always be traced directly to WSP International; and delicate political processes often cannot be publicised. This complexity is related to, among other things, difficulties in understanding the post-conflict context, different priorities, and long standing misperceptions of one another. However, WSP International is well placed to facilitate better relationships between internal and external actors through its activities in dialogue and consensus building.

Recommendation 6.2: WSP International should periodically assess the benefits of different ways to influence and assist international actors.

Given the large number of actors and the limited resources of WSP International, it would seem appropriate for WSP International to narrow its target audience of international actors, with specific efforts directed at like-minded donors, specific UN agencies, and International NGOs who share a similar outlook. The evaluation team believes that the Peacebuilding Forum is another important method for WSP International to provide the international assistance community with insights into the likely impact of their aid policies and programmes.

The exchange between local and international actors needs to be tackled from different angles. It might be strengthened by framing some of WSP International's lessons learned in a way that speaks directly to the paradigms of international development aid and diplomatic efforts at a national level. WSP International can begin to show the relationship between 'hard' and 'soft' issues in post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. In the peacebuilding sector, there is a chasm between organisations that engage directly with peacebuilding and those that are involved in aid and development. An interview with a donor in Rwanda, who was fairly sceptical of IRDP and the WSP process, illustrated how perspectives differ. He felt the process was "too waffley and focused on intangible and soft issues" and wanted to know what the concrete outcome would be. WSP International can help bridge this divide by making concrete links between the lessons learned in development and peacebuilding in a way that international agencies can relate to.

Recommendation 6.3: Outreach & Learning materials should link peacebuilding lessons to the language and paradigms of development and aid agencies.

6.3 Networking and Partnerships

Finding 25: WSP International is making an important contribution to the peacebuilding sector by prioritising horizontal learning between national actors.

WSP International's approach to peacebuilding – from the bottom up and through a process of consensus building – provides insights and practical solutions to difficult problems. Research has shown that there is more communication between external donors and war-torn societies than between these societies themselves, usually because external actors initiate and direct these relationships. Through a common methodology, WSP International is giving national actors a common language and terminology to facilitate dialogue. In many cases, practitioners in the field are unable to devote time and energy to documenting and sharing lessons, and WSP International activities can help correct this problem.

The evaluation team believes that the creation of National Learning Analysts (NLAs) in the country projects is an excellent way of ensuring that lessons are systematically and coherently drawn out, documented and shared. Care must be taken, however, to not overburden field staff with too many activities. The appointment of NLAs will ensure that horizontal learning is not simply a by-product or extra burden to other national staff. Their work will have to be carefully defined (keeping in mind that exchange of experiences and lessons need to be owned by all members of the country team) and ongoing support and training for NLAs will be important. The process of sharing horizontal lessons is a positive indication of WSP International's commitment to relinquishing control to country teams rather than keeping it in Geneva. NLAs could also be used to build better links between O&L in the field and Geneva.

Using networks and partners to deepen expertise

Bringing together key people and players from other relevant country contexts – from other WSP International’s programmes and from other non-WSP country experiences – can be extremely valuable to WSP International. However, the more WSP International’s country projects evolve, the greater pressure there will be for WSP International to develop expertise in different thematic areas of peacebuilding (such as security sector reform in Guatemala). It is unrealistic to expect WSP International to develop expertise in a large number of thematic areas. WSP International can be more effective if it continues to develop strategic partnerships with other organisations and experts in the field who already have that expertise. This external expertise can provide experienced advice at a practical level and broaden WSP project staff links to a wider community.

Recommendation 6.4: WSP International should maintain the priority it is giving to its networking strategy to reduce the pressure for WSP International to develop expertise in many different thematic areas.

6.4 WSP International’s Involvement in the Peacebuilding Sector

WSP International’s *Review of Peacebuilding Capacities* project (to learn from others, to forge partnerships, and to identify trends) is important, both for maintaining the cutting edge peacebuilding work WSP International is engaged in, and engaging organisations that can add value to WSP International’s peacebuilding efforts.

However, in this proposed ‘state of the art’ review, WSP International should not underestimate the difficulty of identifying trends and gaps in the peacebuilding sector, which is not only vague (in terms of who or what the sector is) but is also contested.

There is a danger that O&L staff could become alienated from in-country processes by becoming too caught up in general theorising about peacebuilding. WSP International should devote more of its energy to placing its considerable experience (in linking practice and theory) in relevant platforms, discourses and networks.

Recommendation 6.5: The O&L programme should consolidate and build on its niche in country programming, linking theory with practice, rather than expanding too broadly in the peacebuilding field.

6.5 Measuring Impact of National Peacebuilding Processes

Finding 26: WSP International will need to work with others to develop new measurement criteria, since most existing efficiency benchmark indicators are not appropriate in post-conflict situations.

The evaluation team agrees with another WSP International consultant’s assessment that WSP International is uniquely placed to advance the impact assessment capacity within the peacebuilding sector. He attributes this to WSP International’s positioning, its in-house expertise on peacebuilding, the professional research of its project teams, and its structure and culture of self-reflection.

Recommendation 6.6: Given the complexity of developing impact measures, WSP International should monitor, and rely as much as possible on, the work of other

organisations such as those grouped in the Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Peacebuilding Network (CPR).

WSP International could help to change the nature and terms of the debate about impact assessment. Where donors expect concrete indicators that measure peacebuilding processes, WSP International needs to influence the debate to include other considerations such as 'measuring' peace and the development of a common language for impact assessment. This will challenge the narrow paradigm that some development agencies still use in assessment.

Another challenge for Outreach & Learning will be in shaping documentation and analysing lessons learned in a way that appeals to and pressures donors to shift the way they relate to national peacebuilding processes. WSP International's strategy recognises this challenge and correctly places it at the heart of its Outreach & Learning activities. In the final analysis, actions resulting from lessons learned are critical, but measuring this will be extremely difficult.

6.6 WSP International as a Learning Organisation

Finding 27: The O&L programme will need to develop a process to strengthen WSP International's ability to be a learning organisation.

WSP International sees itself as a learning organisation. The culture of the organisation supports this view, in that it is self-reflective, self-critical and openly scrutinises its strategy and its operations. Yet there are a number of other aspects that need to be further developed in order to operationalise WSP International as a learning organisation.

WSP International needs a system for the effective management of knowledge and information flow. The risk is that as the organisation becomes larger, knowledge will become more fragmented and will no longer be able to be shared through inter-personal contact, as is the case in a smaller organisation.

Evaluation needs to be built into all processes of programme implementation, management and structures – to assess what works and what does not – and then needs to feed into a strategy to reflect that these lessons have been used and internalized.

Appendix I List of Findings

- Finding 1: WSP International has a clear niche in the peacebuilding sector. This is based upon the organisation's unique methodology, its positioning in relation to the UN, and its objective of transforming the relationship between national and international actors in the sector.
- Finding 2: WSP International has a well-defined strategic plan and a process that allows for systematic review and updating of its strategy.
- Finding 3: The value-based organisational culture of WSP International, reflected in the staff's strong commitment to the ideals of WSP International, is a significant factor in improving the organisation's effectiveness.
- Finding 4: The Finance and Administration system is improving.
- Finding 5: Without an adequate financial reserve, WSP International is unable to achieve optimal efficiency in its use of management or financial resources.
- Finding 6: There are divergent views about whether WSP International should grow rapidly, to spread its impact, or consolidate and grow slowly, to retain its quality in programming.
- Finding 7: The Governing Board represents an important asset for WSP International in terms of its credibility and the access to decision makers that the Board members provide.
- Finding 8: The Advisory Council is a useful vehicle to develop support for WSP International and to inform donor agency specialists on WSP experience.
- Finding 9: WSP International's links with the UN are important, particularly the political links which provide important benefits to both WSP International and the UN.
- Finding 10: WSP International is on track and has the potential to exceed the programming goals set for it during its transition from a UN project to an organisation.
- Finding 11: WSP International's value-based approach to its country programmes is critical in defining the organisation's niche, but this is not always coherently articulated or marketed, due to the significantly different applications of the WSP methodology in different country contexts.
- Finding 12: WSP International's participatory research is a powerful tool for opening up discussion and for breaking logjams in consensus-building processes across very diverse societies.
- Finding 13: WSP International is creating 'neutral' forums and broader societal spaces where dialogue about difficult and sometimes taboo subjects can be openly debated. However, national WSP staff face a constant tension between being 'impartial' and being actors in their own national processes.
- Finding 14: While the durability of trust and relationships forged through WSP International's approach cannot be easily measured, WSP International's country programmes

have achieved some success in forging these relationships between various stakeholders.

- Finding 15: Where 'neutral' spaces for dialogue can only be preserved through compromising accountability for past human rights violations, this may create significant risks for sustainable peace.
- Finding 16: In some cases, the selection of country teams and consensus figures has been instrumental in the success of the project. In others, reliance on a consensus figure has proved problematic.
- Finding 17: WSP International appears to be setting an innovative and concrete example of how international agencies can better relate to national actors.
- Finding 18: WSP International's programmes use both broad national agenda entry points and more confined issue-based entry points. As yet there is no clear-cut evidence of the long term consequences or comparative advantages of either path.
- Finding 19: The timing of WSP International's interventions is a factor in the organisation's effectiveness in its country programmes.
- Finding 20: : Although not part of WSP International's mandate, the policy-implementation gap at the country level runs the risk of ultimately undermining WSP peacebuilding projects.
- Finding 21: : WSP International recognises its responsibility to facilitate ongoing funding support and capacity development of WSP country projects to promote sustainability, but there is no single strategy on how country processes or institutions should continue once the WSP process has ended.
- Finding 22: There is the potential of an emerging divide between Geneva and WSP International's country programmes, based on a distinction between strategy and policy making responsibilities on one hand and operational or implementation responsibilities on the other.
- Finding 23: The relationship between Outreach & Learning and Operations has not yet been sufficiently defined and developed.
- Finding 24: WSP International currently has no way of measuring the gains it is making in influencing and assisting international actors in engaging in national peace processes.
- Finding 25: WSP International is making an important contribution to the peacebuilding sector by prioritising horizontal learning between national actors.
- Finding 26: WSP International will need to work with others to develop new measurement criteria, since most existing efficiency benchmark indicators are not appropriate in post-conflict situations.
- Finding 27: The O&L programme will need to develop a process to strengthen WSP International's ability to be a learning organisation.

Appendix II Recommendations

Recommendation 3.1: WSP International should consolidate and deepen its niche by focusing on its proven country methodology, strengthening its relationship with the UN and UN departments and in testing and refining different approaches to influence international actors.

Recommendation 4.1: WSP International's Board should establish a fixed term of office for the Executive Director.

Recommendation 4.2: WSP International's management should appoint the Director of Finance and Administration as a member of the SEG.

Recommendation 4.3: WSP International should develop a staff training policy that allocates resources to continuous updating of staff capability.

Recommendation 4.4: WSP International should establish a policy of employing more staff from developing countries to provide additional insights and diversity of experience.

Recommendation 4.5 WSP International should refine its procedures for recruitment; performance management of staff linked to a functional job grading system; staff development and career path strategies; and induction and succession planning procedures.

Recommendation 4.5: WSP International's donors should support the establishment of a 10% reserve of WSP International's total budget.

Recommendation 4.6: WSP International should refine its guidelines for the use of unrestricted funds, and establish a minimum ratio of core to project funding that it will attempt to maintain.

Recommendation 4.7: WSP International's Board should consider adding specialised expertise in financial oversight, and appoint one member of the Board as Treasurer.

Recommendation 4.8: As a strategic objective, WSP International should continue to strengthen its relationship with the UN, both at the senior level of the UN and, where useful, with UN organisations in the field.

Recommendation 4.9: WSP International's end-of-mandate evaluation should be commissioned well in advance of the end of WSP International's seven-year mandate.

Recommendation 5.1: WSP International should try to establish a country programme in Asia.

Recommendation 5.2: The distinction between the core values that underpin cross-country continuity in the WSP approach and the flexible application of its methodology needs to be more explicit in the marketing of the organisation's work, and should be a targeted objective of Outreach & Learning.

Recommendation 5.3: To maximise the benefits of its flexible participatory research, WSP International should evaluate the quality of the consensus produced in different countries that shape participation differently in their research processes.

Recommendation 5.4: It is important that WSP International effectively documents and analyses its successes and failures in building trust in societies. This should not be a purely retrospective process.

Recommendation 5.5: WSP International must engage more comprehensively and actively with initiatives grappling with transitional justice models as a means for societies emerging from intense conflict to deal with past human rights violations.

Recommendation 5.6: As over reliance on credible leadership figures can impact negatively on country programme operations, WSP International should try to separate the political and project management functions at the field level.

Recommendation 5.7: WSP International should outline the principles that shape its approach to collaboration and strategic partnership with both governmental and civil society initiatives at local and regional levels.

Recommendation 5.8: WSP International should consider how to address the possible failure by governments and others to achieve the expectations created by dialogue and consensus building processes.

Recommendation 5.9: WSP International needs to promote greater involvement and ownership of country staff in addressing strategic issues, developing policy and methodology and in identifying lessons.

Recommendation 6.1: Outreach & Learning should remain firmly rooted in national peacebuilding processes where there is much to learn and where WSP International has a comparative advantage. This will require closer collaboration between the Operations and O&L programmes.

Recommendation 6.2: WSP International should periodically assess the benefits of different ways to influence and assist international actors.

Recommendation 6.3: Outreach & Learning materials should link peacebuilding lessons to the language and paradigms of development and aid agencies.

Recommendation 6.4: WSP International should maintain the priority it is giving to its networking strategy to reduce the pressure for WSP International to develop expertise in many different thematic areas.

Recommendation 6.5: The O&L programme should consolidate and build on its niche in country programming, linking theory with practice, rather than expanding too broadly in the peacebuilding field.

Recommendation 6.6: Given the complexity of developing impact measures, WSP International should monitor, and rely as much as possible on, the work of other organisations such as the Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Peacebuilding Network (CPR).