INTERPEACE & PARTNERS:

What types of impacts do our programmes produce?

A preliminary document review.

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ABSTRACT.

While acknowledging the methodological difficulties, Interpeace and its partners are committed to assessing the impacts of their programmes. This first report, based on the analysis of internal documents and external evaluations, identifies the *types of impact* our programmes can have. This report does *not* analyse the conditions that enable us to have certain impacts – conditions we often first have to help create.

Types of Influences and Impacts

- Influence on governance relationships.
- Influence on the policy debate: broader participation, issues brought onto the public agenda, research that influences the debate, influence on legislative initiatives, influence on policy decisions.
- Influence in terms of conflict prevention and mitigation: structural and at times of tension or crisis.
- Influence on the interpersonal dynamics.
- Influence on national capacities: within the community of researchers and intellectuals, within civil society and among policy makers.
- Influence on state and civil society institutions: new institutions and/or new networks; changes in existing institutions; changes in the implementation of institutional reforms.
- Influence on internal-external actor dialogue.
- Influence on the policies and programmes of international assistance actors

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INTERPEACE AND PARTNERS.
What Types of Impacts do our Programmes Produce?

(Note: Some examples are offered for each type of impact; these examples are illustrative only and obviously do not represent the inventory of impacts of our programmes in different places.)

I.   The Challenge: Assessing 'Impact'.

"Peace building" has been a rapidly expanding field in international conflict engagement since the end of the Cold War in 1990. This has led to, among other manifestations, the creation of new specialist organizations, thematic study opportunities, multi-mandate organizations trying to be conflict-sensitive ('do no harm') and of course a multitude of projects that claim to contribute to 'peace'. After some years of fairly free-flowing experimentation, the question of the effectiveness of all these efforts and investments has arisen. Organisations are asked to demonstrate their 'impact'. That is also the case for Interpeace (formerly WSP International, references to WSP have been retained in quotes).

Yet assessing, let alone 'demonstrating' impact on something as broad and elusive as 'peace' is not as straightforward an exercise as demonstrating the impacts of a supplementary feeding programme, or of the introduction of new seeds and farming methods. In a paper commissioned by WSP, Ken Menkhaus[i] summarises very well the methodological difficulties:

- There are not many simple, direct and objective indicators of what are rather intangible, process-oriented objectives, that to a certain degree also depend on perception as much as fact;

- Even if good indicators can be found, the specific data needed to measure those indicators can be difficult to obtain in a post-conflict setting, or the measurement methodology itself becomes too costly and time-consuming in relation to the overall project budget;

- There are the problems of causality or attribution, and of the counterfactual. What evidence is there that a certain impact or change is indeed (largely) the result of a certain peacebuilding intervention? How certain can we be that things would not have evolved as they did – even if the peacebuilding intervention had not happened?;

Challenges to Impact Assessment

- What are relevant indicators?
- Can we practically measure the indicators?
- The cost of measurement?
- Attribution and the counterfactual
- Appreciating the event that did not happen?
- Achievements overridden by larger forces
- What underlying theory of change?
- Whose definitions are used?
- When can impact be assessed?
- Capturing unintended and unplanned for impacts?
- Appreciating what a project can hope to influence and what is outside its control.

- How do we assess and appreciate something that did not happen i.e. conflict avoided, thanks to a certain peace intervention?
- How do we assess and appreciate a peacebuilding project / process that does not –in the short term- produce 'Peace Writ Large' because of larger and more powerful dynamics?
- What is the often implicit theory or hypothesis of change that underlies a certain intervention? If an intervention falls short of its objectives, is it because the implementation of the project was flawed, because its strategic assumptions were wrong, or because the theory on which the intervention was based was flawed?
- Whose definitions are we using? 'Peace', 'democracy', 'good governance', 'trust', 'social contract', 'social capital', 'justice', 'reconciliation' are key vocabulary in this field. But not all stakeholders may hold the same meaning of these concepts. Moreover, different values (e.g. security and democratization; justice and reconciliation) can be seen as in tension with each other – all of them cannot be pursued equally vigorously at the same time;
- When do you assess impact? The potential influence and impact of a peace project may not be immediate – during and by the end of the project. It may take several years for certain impacts to materialize in 'visible' ways.
- What about unplanned for and unintended impacts? Given that peace and conflict are broad cross-cutting processes, a peace intervention may have impacts that were not planned for or anticipated? Presumably these should be captured – but how do we ensure they are being paid attention to and noticed, if they do not appear in the basic 'project' documentation?
- What are realistic 'impact' expectations? There can not only be a time-lag between the project and its observable impacts, but much real-world impact is fundamentally out of the control of the project managers and participants. Are we trying to measure 'results' far beyond the reach of projects / processes? [ii]

Interpeace and its partners have not been systematically monitoring impacts. The available 'evidence' however goes beyond the anecdotal, and is based on testimony from a wide range of people (often collected by reviewers and evaluators[iii]) and further supported by case studies.

II.   The Nature of an Interpeace-supported Project/Process.

Before going into the specifics of what influences and impacts Interpeace-supported interventions have, it is important to quickly clarify or remind ourselves of the nature of this type of intervention. We will look here at the goal, the approach and the underlying theory of change. The question of objectives is deliberately not raised in this section. The reasons for that will become clear later in the paper.

a. Goal

Interpeace-supported processes explicitly seek to contribute to 'durable peace'. Depending on the project, there may or may not be a more specific reference to an ongoing peace process and/or a peace agreement. Whereas in earlier years, goal statements referred more to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development challenges, in more recent years this has been replaced by references to democratization and governance.[iv]

b. Approach

The Interpeace approach follows some basic premises:

- *National capacities*: While we believe that international actors can help reduce and contain violence to an end, durable peace in deeply divided societies must come from within. From that it follows that the projects/processes need to be managed by a team of 'nationals'.
- *Inclusiveness*: Typically operating in divided societies, we seek to include all sectors and actor-groups in that society into the project / process. The exclusion of any important section of society can be or again become a breeding ground for strife and violence.
- *Broadening national ownership*: While Interpeace may initiate a process, a key objective is for the participants and stakeholders from the society concerned to take on ownership of and responsibility for it and to steer it in the direction and in ways they see as most relevant and promising. The implication is that actors other than Interpeace will start co-shaping the longer-term and intermediate objectives of a process, and affect the route it takes and the rhythm at which it moves.
- *Process rather than project management*: While for funding purposes a peace intervention has to be cast into a 'project format', in reality the intervention, like all socio-political interventions, will be more of a process. A process is less predictable than a project. The challenge is then good process management, to prevent a process from going adrift and leading nowhere.

Pursuing this type of approach has some important practical consequences:

- *Careful and cautious preparation*: The decision to initiate a process is not simply an 'external' actor choice. It will depend on a range of factors such as: is there enough political space, can various national stakeholders see the potential benefit of it and are they prepared to engage with it, is the timing right, is the field not too crowded so that the intervention risks getting lost amidst a host of other initiatives, is it possible to find or constitute a strong and widely acceptable national team?

> "Belief in the process and sustained trust in the team coordinating it is an essential requirement to get various players in divided societies to engage and to do so constructively."

- *Building and sustaining trust:* Belief in the process and sustained trust in the team coordinating it is an essential requirement to get various players in divided societies to engage and to do so constructively. A key intermediate objective is then to build enough trust between the actors from diverse sectors, so that it becomes easier for them to interact with each other constructively, and to reach agreements on ways forward. This requires continuous attentiveness to everybody's personal and political sensitivities, and great facilitation skills.
- *Medium-term action against a longer-term perspective*: Finding 'durable peace' especially in societies that have been so deeply divided that it led to serious violence, is not a short-term endeavour. It will take years, sometimes a generation or more. While a project can have a horizon of say 3 years, the local team will often continue, increasingly with a mandate from the local stakeholders. The advantage is that a sustained presence and engagement can deepen, broaden and strengthen impacts that an initial 'project' could not yet achieve or that were not yet visible at the end of it.

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- *Evolving roles:* In the course of the years, the roles of the local team may also evolve. While at the outset the profile may very much be that of a facilitator and/or research institute, with increasing credibility and experience it may come to be called upon as a think tank or sometimes as a political facilitator.

c. Hypotheses of change or underlying assumptions

Interpeace and its partners so far have not tried to more systematically articulate the hypotheses of change that seems to underlie their interventions and approach.[v] A number of assumptions however seem to be obviously present in this approach:

- *Sustainable peace and good governance requires certain forms of positive social and political capital*: Societies need such social and political capital to be able to resolve their differences and conflicts without recourse to violence. Where such capital has been disrupted and is low or absent,

> "Special public dialogue processes, such as the ones initiated and facilitated by Interpeace and its partners, compensate for situations where this is not part of the functioning of existing institutions."

social – and then political- processes are needed to restore it. A sustained dialogue process, managed and facilitated towards convergence and consensus, is one such social process. In well-

functioning societies, such public debates and dialogues are generated and managed by the existing institutions. Special public dialogue processes, such as the ones initiated and facilitated by Interpeace and its partners, compensate for situations where this does not happen, because the institutions are not there or because they do not function that way.

- *Internal agency has greater potential than external agency*: Ultimately it is the people in a divided society that have to find solutions to their own problems, including problems of division and violence. The chances of rebuilding positive social and political capital are greater when the social process is managed by a trusted and credible internal agency;

- *Meaningful dialogue works on interpersonal relations and on real issues:*

  - Bringing people into a sustained dialogue who do not normally meet or even want to meet, and including those whose views and perspectives are not normally solicited or heard even though they are affected by the issues concerned, increases the chances of coming to agreements on constructive ways forward, and following up on them;

  - Bringing people together in dialogue – with the help of skilled facilitation- has the ability to transform relationships into a more constructive mode and even to generate new social networks;

  - And yet if they are to have a chance of influencing the dynamics of conflict and peace or to consolidate good governance, dialogues have to go beyond the interpersonal dynamics and address real socio-political and economic issues;

  - Injecting knowledge (facts, missing perspectives, solid analysis, comparative experiences etc.) in a dialogue helps to depoliticise it and to reduce the unhelpful rhetoric and posturing. It also helps people with different perspectives move closer to acceptable solutions or at least positive steps forward. It can influence power brokers and decision-makers to see how certain options they first did not (want to) consider, can actually bring benefits and also serve their interest;

  - Where the initial knowledge of a subject and/or the power relations between the interlocutors are unequal, preliminary capacity and confidence building can/must level somewhat the playing field between the interlocutors;

  - Capturing faithfully what the population actually thinks and says and transmitting it to the political leadership, can shift the political debate and/or the barriers of what can be talked about.

- *The chances of impact and of sustainable impact are enhanced by ownership and connection*:

  - The participants and stakeholders in the process increasingly take ownership and responsibility for its success;

  - The participants are linked or can link to the opinion-makers and the decision-makers. Either the participants or the opinion- and decision-makers are linked to wider constituencies, who also have to be 'on board' for certain changes to be possible.

- *Every society or political community needs sustained capacities to facilitate constructive dialogue around difficult and divisive issues*. In deeply divided societies one process will seldom be enough, not in the least because over time the actors and the issues change. Sustained capacities, in the form of mindsets and attitudes but also in the form of procedures and political culture, and perhaps even in the form of institutions, will be required to meet the ongoing challenges.

III. Types of Impacts from Interpeace-supported Projects / Processes.

A review of internal and published documentation and evaluation of Interpeace-supported work between 1994-2005 shows that its projects / processes have different types of 'effects', influences and impacts. We deliberately use the terms 'influence' and 'effect'. 'Influence' signals that achieving impacts is not entirely under the control of our project team and the process participants, but also that impacts are rarely due only to the efforts of one project/process or organization. 'Effect' signals that results and impacts were not always planned for and anticipated. In this section we provide an overview with some illustrative examples.

1. Influence and impacts on interpersonal dynamics.

Interpeace-supported processes can bring people in divided societies together, sometimes for the first time, and facilitate a meaningful dialogue. Examples come from Mozambique, Israel and Rwanda.

> *"Dialogue among people in different regions and/or different affiliations was enlightening because it was uncommon prior to WSP-with the only partial exception of intellectual circles. As one informant put it, "we may have talked in each other's presence, but we did not really listen to what the other was saying." Another, a researcher himself, commented that people had lived so long with their stereotypes that they had not been motivated to learn about their adversaries' problems, viewpoints and priorities." (Mozambique)*

> *"…a bond was created through the personal recognition and the strong feeling that we must build a tolerant, open-minded and critical society. We have come out thinking more about life together, because at the end of the day we all share the same fate." (Joint statement of Gaza settlers and Leftists) (Israel)*

> *The project manages to bring Rwandans together that have not met or talked for many years. An example was the return to Rwanda, for the first time in 10 years, of a major political opponent (Joseph Nsengimana NDAHIMANA , President of the coalition of opposition parties) living in exile in Brussels. He had participated in the IRDP diaspora consultations, and came back for the national conference that discussed the country report "Reconstruire une paix durable au Rwanda: La parole au peuple" in November 2003. This led to a*

first direct dialogue of exiled opposition groups with senior government officials. (internal memo)

Specific characteristics of especially the Rwanda process and to a lesser degree the Somali one are the efforts to bring clusters of Rwandans and Somalis living abroad (diaspora) into the 'dialogue'. This is relevant given the economic and political influence that 'nationals' in the diaspora can have on the conflict and peace dynamics in their country of origin.

2. Influence and impacts on capacities and confidence.

Interpeace-supported processes also strengthen national capacities at different levels: within the local community of researchers and intellectuals, in civil society but also among policy makers. Examples from Guatemala, different Somali zones and Mozambique illustrate this:

> *"One of the goals of WSP is to strengthen national research capacities in post-war settings. WSP Somaliland enjoyed strong success on this score. The Academy research team came to the project with solid research skills, but gained considerable additional skills in the PAR method, conducting interviews, use of computer software, engaging in group projects, writing reports, and use of audio-video technology." (Somaliland)*

> *"…civil society organizations expressed interest in establishing their own co-ordinating mechanism in order to develop a joint strategy for capacity building, policy research, and lobbying. After a first unsuccessful attempt in 2002, the initiative was reinvigorated through WSP International's supported project "Strengthening the Capacities of Civil Society Organizations in Security" –FOSS for its Spanish acronym- which has developed a knowledge and capacity building "Programme of Studies in Democratic Security." (Guatemala)*

> *"There is a broad consensus that WSP had a very positive catalytic effect on civil society in north-east Somalia. Locally, this impact is viewed as the single greatest success of the project… . Specifically, interviewees were in broad agreement that the project helped to:*
> - *create a lasting network of civil society leaders in the region and introduce leaders from different regions and different sectors to each other;*
> - *raise local awareness and understanding of the development process and community expectations of local authorities and external actors;*
> - *help local communities mobilize to meet their needs"* (Puntland)

> *"The interactive WSP research methodology applied in the working groups proved to be a valuable learning experience both to the professional researchers and to the policy and operational participants. The latter increasingly appreciated the fundamental need for and value of good information about impacts and public perceptions of policies and programmes. The former increasingly recognized that by organizing the raw data they gathered in forms that could be understood and used by policy makers and*

programme managers, they could make a direct contribution to the policy making process. (…) the project has introduced innovative ideas and methods that will allow the research community to strengthen its contributions to national development and peace." (Mozambique)

3. *Influence and impacts on state and civil society institutions*.

Interpeace-supported processes do not necessarily aim to create new organizations or institutions, but this can become an unintended 'side-effect' – stimulated by the momentum of the process and decided and implemented by the participants in the process.

In Somaliland for example, the first project managed by the Academy for Peace and Development (APD) eventually resulted in the creation of a new Ministry of Family and Women Issues.

In south-central Somalia, the process managed by the Centre for Research and Dialogue (CRD) provided the stimulus for the creation of a Journalist Association.

In Mozambique the pilot of the War-Torn Societies project contributed to the creation of an Association of Agricultural Producers. Members associated with the original project also eventually created a new institution as 'successor', the Center for Research on Democracy and Development' or CEDE, which remains active today.

In Guatemala several years of successive projects on security sector reform and democratic security, eventually in 2004 led to the creation of a thematically focused 'Liaison Office' that allows civil society to directly engage with Congress (Parliament).

> *"This is the combined result of the interest of civil society organizations to establish an active presence in Congress -lobbying for specific security sector legislation- and the demand on the side of Congress for the technical assistance these can provide to the parliamentary commissions. The identification of complementary interests has led to the signature of a four-year Agreement signed by the President of Congress and the Director of FOSS regulating the advisory and lobbying functions of civil society organisations in security sector reform issues. The Liaison Office has already become a concrete interface through which civil society organizations participate in the legislative process, with official status as technical advisors to Congress."*

In other instances, the processes influence existing institutions or the implementation of institutional reforms. In Rwanda for example, Senators that participated in visits and debates in the countryside, managed by the Institut de Recherche pour la Dialogue et la Paix (IRDP), introduced a protocol in the Senate that expects Senators to visit their constituency at least once a month. The grassroots debates initiated and facilitated by IRDP

drew attention to the fact that for ordinary Rwandans, especially in the countryside, aspects of the decentralisation programme did not work well. IRDP brought this to the attention of the Ministry of Local Administration which made some changes as a result. One of these was the separation of the legislative and executive powers at the level of local mayors. In Puntland, (north-east Somalia) the Puntland Development Research Centre convinced the new Puntland administration in early 2005 not to go hastily about decentralisation and the creation of local councils, but to design a step-by-step process and start by testing it out in some towns first.

4. Influence and impacts on governance relationships.

'Governance relationships' are not simply a matter of institutional form or policy content, nor a matter of purely interpersonal dynamics. They may not be very tangible and are certainly not easily measurable. They are perhaps mostly a matter of 'attitudes' between governed-governors – but in that sense no less real and one contributing factor to trust in public institutions and in the political leadership, and thereby to conflict and peace. Two examples from Somaliland and two from Guatemala illustrate the point:

> *"The integration of women's concerns into the "Self-Portrait of Somaliland" – without labeling them as women's concerns or putting them in a separate pamphlet- makes a considerable contribution to mainstreaming women's issues. It has also contributed to women's mobilization and empowerment in a way that previous programs, that have tended to view women as recipients of development rather than as participants and contributors to development, have not. Equally important, WSP is contributing to culture change by adding to the critical mass of women who have experience participating in public dialogues – and the mass of men getting accustomed to women doing so."* (Schwoebel 2001: 31-33 on Somaliland)

> *"The project has provided interested government officials –in parliament and in ministries- with a number of new tools which are improving the quality of governance in Somaliland. The data and analysis generated in the written research products are considered a basic resource for government; the flow of ideas and communication fostered by the workshops has improved government responsiveness; and the Academy advocacy of extensive consultation in decision-making has raised local expectations of government. Individual and groups within the government who seek to promote greater transparency, accountability and democracy have found the Academy and the WSP project work to be invaluable resources of support."* (Menkhaus 2002 on Somaliland)

> *"Another effect of POLSEC (Spanish acronym of another Interpeace-supported project), again based on a consensual decision, was the creation in 2002 of the Guatemalan Network for Democratic Security (Red Guatemalteca para la Seguridad Democrática). Its purpose is to serve as a mechanism to continue intersectoral dialogue, with the voluntary participation of governmental institutions, civil society organizations, and individuals. All participants are committed to the promotion and adoption of security policies based upon*

democratic principles and to the public debate of security issues[1]. The participatory nature of the network and the implicit reciprocal legitimisation of roles of the respective stakeholder groups, have enabled it to continue functioning throughout political and institutional changes." (Guatemala)

"Simultaneous to or subsequent to the POLSEDE and POLSEC processes (both are the Spanish acronyms of earlier Interpeace-supported projects), other initiatives to discuss security sector reform issues took place, among them the Ministry of Defence's Policy Dialogue on Defence Policy –developed with the assistance of UNDP-OAS- that led to a White Paper. Governmental actors responsible for the initiative have acknowledged that the POLSEDE experience was determinant for the identification of viability for such an effort, and included its recommendations as official documents of the process" (Guatemala – POLSEDE and POLSEC were the acronyms for two WSP-supported projects on democratic security).

5. Influence and impacts on the policy debate.

Here it is important to note that, at the outset of a peace intervention in any given context, an Interpeace-supported process does not set out with specific policy objectives. This is utterly important from a trust-building and a methodological point of view. If an Interpeace-supported process would itself come with policy objectives, it would be seen as having an agenda and an agenda that is shaped by outsiders and/or by a particular interest group in the country. Such perceptions would make it impossible to achieve 'inclusion', as certain actors in the society would refuse to participate, and to play a role of impartial facilitator. Additionally, neither Interpeace nor the team managing the actual process have the mandate and the legitimacy to make policy. This remains ultimately the prerogative of government through its different branches. [vi]

Having said that, Interpeace-supported projects have resulted in multiple influences and impacts on policy debates, policy formulation and policy implementation, as examples from Mozambique, Guatemala, Somalia, Macedonia and Rwanda show:

Interpeace-supported projects have helped to broaden the participation in the policy debate:

> *"Government spokespersons gave this evaluator positive evaluations of the project. They affirmed the hypothesis that WSP had been an important 'listening post', maintaining that WSP had provided useful information for them and had called attention to some concerns they had ignored. They insisted that it was important for them to learn both what was happening in the country as well as what people believed was happening, even if they considered the interpretations to be unjust."* (Mozambique report p. 120)

> *"The process has also contributed to the mobilization of peripheral towns and rural areas by enabling them to articulate their issues vis-à-vis the national government, to members of that government, in a way that was*

empowering because it was afforded legitimacy." (Schwoebel 2001 on Somaliland)

"*By holding the workshops in small towns and inviting nomads, fishermen, and other 'non-elite' members of society to participate, the WSP team broadened political participation in a significant way."* (Menkhaus 2001 on Puntland)

The Project for Common Vision (WSP-PEV) in Macedonia reached out very strongly to people all over the country, provided them a platform to voice their perspectives and captured it all on video. Two key messages that it thereby brought to the socio-political elite concentrated in the capital, were that there was far greater support for continued multi-ethnic co-existence than the ethnically based political parties pretended, and that people's priority was not the ethnicity agenda but jobs and employment. (internal memo)

Interpeace-supported projects have helped bring issues to the public policy agenda:

"*The program has contributed to mobilizing and empowering women by articulating issues that had been kept silent as private concerns (e.g. the impact of qaat), as public concerns at the local and national levels. Even more empowering is to have had those concerns placed on the local and national agendas*. (Schwoebel 2001 on Somaliland)

Interpeace-support projects have produced research that influences the policy debate:

"*Instead, the government appears to have been influenced by WSP indirectly, especially through the published sectoral reports. Those reports have become the baseline studies for planning in a number of ministries, serving as a point of departure in administration discussions with donors. This has occurred mainly by default – the administration lacks the capacity and the interest to produce such reports itself, but needs to have such documents in order to proceed with development projects. Discussions with parliamentarians in the Puntland government also revealed that the WSP documents have served as important sources of evidence and argumentation in their sessions as well."* (Menkhaus on Puntland p. 348-350)

Members of a commission tasked with developing guidance on how to teach the history of Rwanda, have decided to use the results of IRDP's research on this issue (internal memo - confirmation can be obtained from National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation in Rwanda)

Interpeace supported projects have influenced legislative initiatives:

A POLSEDE working group proposal on intelligence service reform was translated into a proposal to create both a national intelligence system and a civilian intelligence directorate, and used in the preparation of draft laws for these. (The creation by Government of intersectoral Working

*Groups for issues like intelligence reform legislation, using as input consensus-based proposals and with full participation of civil society organizations) This became the first comprehensive regulatory framework of the intelligence services in Guatemala." (*Guatemala*)*

"The Liaison office is already demonstrating its further effectiveness:
- *A series of meetings between civil society organisations and members of Congress through the Liaison office led to a proposal for a draft law on access to confidential state information, which in November 2004 was turned into a formal draft legislation project;*
- *The Liaison office also played a crucial role in influencing draft legislation related to the regulation of private security companies and to the possession of firearms and ammunition. Initial drafts had been strongly influenced by the lobby of arms dealers and private security companies. The draft that eventually was proposed showed much stronger concern for citizen's security."* (Guatemala)

Interpeace-supported projects have influenced government policy decisions:

"Civil society institutions played a key role in the High Level Commission of the Ministry of the Interior, particularly in the working group that produced consensually agreed draft legislation for the creation of the General Directorate of Civilian Intelligence. This group used as starting point for its discussions the corresponding proposal approved in POLSEDE, was coordinated by the then POLSEC's Director -who had previously been POLSEDE's research coordinator- and had the participation of several institutions that took part in POLSEDE." (Guatemala)

In Puntland, north-east Somalia, the pioneering work of the Puntland Development and Research Centre on public expenditure review has directly influenced a reallocation of the central budget with an increase from 3% to 15% for expenditure on health, education and water and sanitation. (Puntland- internal memo)

6. Influence and impacts in terms of conflict prevention or mitigation.

Interpeace and partners do not normally engage in direct conflict mitigation and mediation. If such a role is played, it tends to be by default, because there are no other credible, trusted and non-partisan institutions in the country that command the respect to take on such role. So far this has largely been the case in the Somali space, where CRD, PDRC and APD all have been first driven but now increasingly requested to engage in political facilitation at moments of high tension that could spark violence. They are prepared to consider such role where a recurrence of violence would jeopardize the context in which constructive dialogue for peace can move forward.

Four examples from the Somalia regions:

Somaliland: In a context of ongoing acrimonious disputes and personal attacks between government and political opposition prior to the first local elections in December 2002: "*The Academy focused its energy to make sure that democratic initiative and process were not nipped in the bud by either camp. It single-mindedly directed its effort toward the protection and advancement of the democratic initiative and process*." Given the suspicions among the opposition parties about the National Election Commission (NEC), APD invited the NEC to the behind-the-scenes negotiations. "*Among the results of these negotiations were two critical codes of conduct which set in writing the rules of the game the elections would follow*." Both were publicly signed on 5 December 2002. Similar codes were signed on 11 April 2003 just before the presidential elections. (internal memo)

Puntland: *The election in October 2004 of Abdullahi Yussuf (then President of Puntland) as President of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, had significant implications not only for the country, but also for Puntland, given the political vacuum created by his departure. With only two months left of the legal term of office, the incumbent vice-president assumed the presidency and the new leadership quickly signaled its intention to extend its term with at least one year. Vehemently against this plan, the opposition seemed on the verge of resorting to armed confrontation. In the volatile political climate that ensued, PDRR felt the solution lay in invoking the traditional leaders as mediators to effect a peaceful resolution of the standoff and, following intensive lobbying, finally persuaded the Puntland administration to summon 66 elders for a 10-day conference. The elders chose to hold their conference in the PDRC premises. The intervention of the traditional elders defused the tension considerably and a compromise was reached: there would be no extension of the government's term; the elders would select new members of the House of Representatives, with the administration nominating a committee to screen and endorse the election. The new members of the House would then elect a president and vice-president within seven days of being sworn in. The subsequent election handed the leadership of Puntland to the opposition – and did so in a peaceful and democratic manner. Acting as facilitators, PDRC staff thus played a positive and vital role in pushing for a solution and the Centre provided both technical and logistical support, as well as constitutional advice, to clan elders, the electoral and conciliation committees, government members and other interest groups.* (internal memo)

South-central Somalia. *A Transitional Federal Government (TFG) for Somali was formed in late 2004. Its relocation from Kenya to Somalia caused however a deep internal rift, the trigger for which was the alleged security or insecurity of Mogadisho. While part of the Cabinet and the Transitional Parliament did establish itself in Mogadisho in 2005, the President, Prime Ministers and the other part of the Cabinet and Parliament set up office in Jowhar, some 90km from Mogadisho. Concerned about the impasse and the risk of possible failure to this attempt to re-establish government, the Centre for Research and Dialogue together with other civil society organizations and members of both groups in the TFG pursued a 'Mogadisho security and stabilisation' initiative. These efforts culminated in a high-level meeting on 6 June 2005. The 'Joint Statement' resulting from it specifically acknowledges the role of CRD. More importantly, the process created dialogue between civil groups and militias and their commanders, reductions in the number of*

roadblocks in the city and a cantonment of militia – financial support for which was provided by the Somali community itself. (south-central Somalia)

Inter-regional confrontation*: APD in Somaliland and PDRC in Puntland for more than a year also worked patiently behind the scenes on the issue of prisoners-of-war that both sides had taken during an outbreak of violence in September 2004 in the contested Sool region. On 5 December 2005 both administrations finally exchanged their prisoners and publicly acknowledged the constructive role played by PDRC and APD.*

The Palestinian team is gradually gaining the credibility (in the West Bank so far) that may invite them to occasionally also play such role.

Some of that conflict mitigation work is more structural:

"*The WSP gives legitimacy to discussions about intercommunal violence by reframing the discussion in terms of issues rather than in terms of identities. By focusing on issues rather than on identities, participants perceive their needs and interests as being associated with categories of identity other than clan. (…) WSP has revealed that there are overlapping cleavages in Somaliland society beween individuals with more traditional worldviews and those with more westernized or synthetic worldviews. (…) In the long-term WSP's greatest contribution may be its contribution to the mobilization of non-clan-based identity groups in Somaliland.*" (Schwoebel 2001 on Somaliland)

Interpeace and its partners do not normally engage in formal political processes. Where this has happened, it has again typically been in situations where there are few credible and respected entities that could play such role and where there is a risk of violence. The clearest example comes from the parliamentary elections in September 2005 in Somaliland. Upon explicit request of the National Electoral Commission in early 2005 APD and Interpeace contributed to the success of these elections by playing capacity-strengthening and supporting roles. APD and a specific Interpeace-supported project team contributed to voter education, the training of election staff, support for the election logistics (ballot papers, ballot boxes, communication equipment, transport to and from polling stations), facilitated agreement on the location of polling stations, and on where the vote count would take place, and again facilitated the elaboration of two Codes of Conduct, one for the political parties contesting the elections and the other for the media covering them.

7. Influence and impacts on internal-external actor relationships.

At the outset (1994) of War-Torn Societies pilot project, it was envisaged that the projects and processes it would support, would facilitate a better dialogue between local-national and international assistance actors. This was a major contribution in the first pilot project in Eritrea:

> "*By far the most significant contribution of the WSP has been in promoting a refreshingly frank and wide-ranging debate between internal and external actors on the main construction issues… . (…) The whole exercise helped to break the ice between the two parties.*" (Eritrea)

Subsequently however, the center of gravity of the projects shifted decidedly to dialogue among local and national actors. Inasmuch as durable peace can only be established by people in a society coming themselves to agreements about fundamental social and political contracts and groundrules, this is justified.

8. Influence and impacts on international assistance actors and their policies.

Interpeace and its partners can also have influence on how international assistance actors engage in a conflict or post-violence zone. While we have some documented examples of such influence, the focus on dialogue among 'internal' actors means that we do not capture such influences very well – or that we fail to build on the opportunities available.

> "*One informant reported that her agency modified its approach to the interaction of demobilized combatants largely as a result of WSP research findings related to how the programme in question was seen by local communities. (…) It was not that the information that WSP reported was new, but the research process reliably confirmed what some reports had suggested.*" (Mozambique)

> "*Though they may not have been openly enthusiastic during the actual WSP project in Puntland, many aid agencies are now quietly adopting the practice of extensive local consultations on proposed projects, and WSP-style workshops have increasingly become the norm in Puntland*" (Menkhaus 2001 on Puntland)

In a number of instances Interpeace has created opportunities for international actors to meet with its partners or for its partners to access international policy makers, to enable the international actors to hear the insider analysis from an actor that is widely connected among the drivers of a socio-political dynamics that the international actors want to influence. While we cannot always document this, we know that such occasions at times have had significant impact.

IV.   Conclusions and Implications.

- There is no doubt that the projects / processes of Interpeace and partners have influence, and contribute to meaningful positive 'impacts'.

- Our experience, particularly in Guatemala and in the Somali area, confirms the value of sustained engagement: sustained efforts over several years indicate that impacts become not only more noticeable, but can also go deeper and wider.

> "sustained efforts over several years indicate that impacts become not only more noticeable, but can also go deeper and wider"

- It is not surprising that there are –at the time of writing- less or less strong examples of influence and impact in Israeli and Palestinian and Rwandan societies – the projects there are younger. There are also less and less strong examples from the first interventions in Eritrea and Mozambique. This is partially because these pilot projects were too short to 'accumulate' sufficient influence in the first place, but also because there has not been any sustained engagement and monitoring of influences and impacts after the pilot ended.

- To a certain degree, there is also an implicit step-by-step sequence. How swiftly this can advance will depend on what the 'baseline situation' is at the start of the peace intervention. Where people are not even willing to sit together, a first challenge will be to try and get them to do so. If people are unable to listen to each other and to have the most basic civilized conversation, a next step will be to try and get them to do that. Changing basic interpersonal attitudes and dynamics can itself be a time-consuming effort but also an important achievement. We are then not yet into the collective analysis of issues, let alone close to agreements on workable solutions or at least steps forward that participants can agree on. And then there is still the challenge of implementation – without which there still will be little 'noticeable' impact in the 'real-world'. None of this is unusual or surprising for socio-political actors in developed democracies who know that social and political compacts can take years to reach and more years to implement. But it doesn't fit very well in relatively short-term 'project formats' – unless these are better articulated in terms of shorter, medium and longer-term objectives.

- What also emerges from this document review is that many effects and impacts were not predicted, anticipated or even –as such- planned for. This seems perfectly logical if we recall that the ownership of these processes is deliberately broadened (i.e. more and other people also 'steer' the process), and that they relate to and become themselves (a small) part of a wider socio-political dynamic with many other influences. That makes it however particularly difficult to articulate precise 'objectives' at the outset, when the intervention has to be cast in a project format and spelled out in a project document. Nor may it always be opportune to do so, as it may lead to the perception that a project has been created to serve a particular agenda, and that 'participants' in it will only be subtly manipulated towards predetermined objectives. This only creates a problem when seen through the narrow lens of 'project' formats and how these are usually

managed by funders but also by project management teams, i.e. as a set 'route' towards predetermined results that are presented or would be interpreted as if they are totally under the control of the project team. We know this is not the case - we are dealing with processes that seek to influence wider socio-political dynamics.

'Process' and the 'flexibility' it requires, however cannot be invoked as pretexts and excuses for sloppy management. Process management requires a special combination of flexibility and discipline, with special attention to process documentation, review and regular communication with key stakeholders – rather than a heavy reliance on the internal strengths and persuasiveness of an initial project document, let alone rigid adherence to it irrespective of development in the real world in which the process takes place. This requires much more systematic efforts at capturing 'achievements', 'effects', 'influences' – and the evidence supporting attribution to this intervention. Interpeace and its partners need to get better at this.

[i] Menkhaus, K. 2004: Impact Assessment in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding. Geneva, WSP

[ii] The dilemma is also recognized by the Canada-based International Development Research Centre (IDRC) regarding 'development impacts'. Their approach has been to focus on changes in the behaviour of people, groups and organizations with whom a programme works directly, and to capture this through 'Outcome Mapping'. See Earl, Carden and Smutylo 2001: Outcome Mapping (www.idrc.ca/evaluation)

[iii] see "WSP International. Our experience with reviews and evaluations." 2005, Geneva, WSP

[iv] Van Brabant, K. 2005: WSP and WSP-Supported Programmes. What is our goal, what are our objectives? Geneva, WS, Internal Discussion paper 15 September

[v] The approach has been strongly influenced by 'participatory-action-research', which has been adapted for the purpose of peacebuilding. It could be interesting to review the theoretical analysis of PAR and see to what degree the theoretical assumptions continue to inspire the Interpeace-type of approach. While this approach puts a lot of emphasis on dialogue, it is also a specific form of promoting and managing dialogues. Not all 'dialogue' processes are designed and managed in the same way, and some ways seem to offer greater potential for influence and impact than others.

[vi] When WSP started in 1994 as a pilot project, there was a belief that the projects, through multiple stakeholder dialogue, might be able to produce various well thought through policy options. But this turned out not to be a type of output that was commonly realized. The subsequent reflection led to an acknowledgement that at least the initial (in the first few years) influence on a policy process might be more modest: « *At the point at which WSP's 'impact' is assessed, a number of factors need to be taken into consideration: for example, WSP's contributions to post-conflict*

reconstruction and reconciliation are likely to be indirect rather than direct in nature. Accordingly, the 'impact' of WSP is more likely to refer to how well it succeeded in creating a means of facilitation, in contributing to improved communication and understanding, possibly in helping create a new view of or changed climate for policy dialogue (likely to need longer to assess), and not necessarily to any concrete shifts in policy. Again, actors might well adjust their policy agendas in the light of deliberations in a WSP context, but it has not been an objective of WSP as such to influence policy in any particular direction. The 'impact' of WSP should thus not be judged by whether or not it has done this." (WSP in Eritrea 1998:12) At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the dialogue and research processes in a pilot phase with its own overall deadlines often proved too short-term (around 12 months). Subsequent experience suggests that more time allows for better outcomes.

ACRONYMS.

APD: Academy for Peace and Development (Somaliland)
CEDE: Centre de Estudos de Democracia e Desenvolvimento (Centre for Studies on Democracy and Development – Mozambique)
CRD: Centre for Research and Dialogue (south-central Somalia)
FOSS: Fortalecimiento de Organizaciones Sociales en Temas de Seguridad (Strengthening of Social Organisations in the field of Security) (third Interpeace-supported dialogue project on security in Guatemala)
IRDP: Institut de Recherche pour la Dialogue et la Paix (Rwanda)
PDRC: Puntland Development Research Centre
POLSEC: Hacia una Política de Seguridad Ciudadana (Towards a Citizen Security Policy) (second Interpeace-supported dialogue Project on security in Guatemala)
POLSEDE: Hacia una Política de Seguridad para la Democracia (Towards a Democratic Security Policy) (first Interpeace-supported dialogue project on security in Guatemala)