

# PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING

An invitation for reflection: Interpeace's experiences

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## **Peacebuilding and State building: Interpeace's experiences. Executive Summary.**

The purpose of this paper is to clarify how Interpeace's programmatic work relates to the question of peacebuilding & statebuilding.

Section 1 points at recent literature that focuses the attention on the quality of state-society relations: "*Statebuilding is an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations.(...) State building is intimately connected to the political processes through which social/political relations and power relationships between holders of state power and organized groups in society are negotiated and managed.*" In this perspective state-society relations are dynamic: they fluctuate and if they are seen to be evolving over time, that evolution is rarely linear. It is typically also a difficult process that if not well managed certainly can turn violent. The term 'state formation' probably signals better the historical and political dimensions in a way that at least a more technical interpretation of 'state building' does not. The need for an endogenous process but also the recognition that this can be violent and take much time, poses certain dilemmas for international assistance actors: can they, and if so how, accelerate the socio-political processes of state-formation, avoiding violence and moving more quickly in the desired direction? The recognition that the nexus of the matter is in state-society relations also signals that external assistance actors cannot work with the state only, or with civil society (intermediary organizations) only, but that engagement is required of both and of wider society. That raises the questions how to facilitate/support such socio-political processes and who can do it?

Section 2 sets out key principles that have shaped how Interpeace engages with this challenge: a focus on peacebuilding rather than on statebuilding; process design and process-management expertise rather than thematic expertise; a broad-based and inclusive process that seeks engagement with and from all sectors of a society from the elite level to that of the population at large; an informal process: strengthening national capacities and broadening local ownership; and the creation of multiple spaces for public debate, discussion, negotiation and collaborative work in which priorities for a peaceful society are collectively identified and consensus is built on how to address them.

Section 3 makes this more concrete by describing what this means in programmatic practice: an initial round of society-wide consultations and debates is presented to a 'national group' that is representative of the society. This group then sets the agenda and provides a mandate for further in-depth analysis and solution-oriented work on some chosen topics. Inevitably then, the topics of concentration will differ between contexts and evolve over time within the same context. A historical and comparative review reveals however that they largely can be grouped into four broad domains: democratization and governance; security and conflict resolution; the economy; and social integration and participation in the social and political community. An Interpeace-style approach pays much attention to legitimacy. We see three sources for the legitimacy that our programmes acquire in their respective contexts: the composition and behaviour of our programme partners; the inclusive and genuinely participatory nature of the process; and the fact that the proposals generated are the result of collaborative and consensus-oriented work between all key stakeholders.

Section 4 looks at the types of results such process-oriented programme can produce. We see influences on individual mindsets and interpersonal relations and also a strengthening of 'capacities' to engage with certain delicate and/or complex issues in terms of greater confidence and greater knowledge. While this may be necessary it is not enough: the discussion about the difficult issues needs to move beyond the interpersonal into the socio-political realm. Examples are provided from different programme evaluations that confirm results in terms of influence on institutions and how they operate; influence on policy and policy implementation and influence on governance relations. While some of these influences and impacts are fairly direct, indirectly this type of programmes fosters a democratic culture of public debate and consensus-seeking.

Section 5 then takes a step back and asks how an Interpeace-style programme relates to other interventions with state- and peacebuilding intent. A distinction is made between 'soft' and 'hard(er) peacebuilding', with soft peacebuilding focusing on the strengthening of social cohesion and political contract, and hard peacebuilding focusing on tasks that need to be done and standards that may have to be met. Both are necessary and would suggest programmatic attention not only to what is being done but also how it is done: because the how is an important determinant whether certain activities enhance social and political cohesion and capital or not. The questions are asked whether current state-building activities pay enough attention to the how, and whether other activities that seek to encourage cohesion do not often fail to foster positive 'vertical' dynamics and connections between an elite and the population at large.

What are the requirements of a good convener and process facilitator? There is no hard rule on this and there are examples of multilateral, foreign and national governments playing such role as well as international and national non-state actors. Yet no type of institutions is intrinsically best qualified: in every situation the question has to be asked which entity is or can be widely accepted and trusted among the spectrum of players on different sides of divides.

Soft peacebuilding is appropriate at all times: preventatively, during open conflict, post-conflict and in so-called 'mature democracies', because democratization is an ongoing process simultaneous with others than would go in a direction of de-democratisation. Having said this, Interpeace frequently decides that minimum conditions are not in place to initiate a new programme. Once a programme is established however, the engagement needs to be sustained also in the face of renewed upheavals and violence – because at some point in future these societal capacities to convene and facilitate debate, discussion and collaborative work will prove vital.

Section 6 summarises some of the challenges Interpeace encounters. These concern a. the inevitably ones of proper management of resources and of its own organizational development; b. gaining and maintaining a quality relationship with its programmatic partners which requires more than a solid agreement on paper; c. within a given programmatic context: the possible limits of involving as many actors that matter in any society in the process even those and perhaps especially those that are 'part of the problem', as well as protecting the integrity of the process from self-interested actions by key players; and d. with regard to other external actors: having to fit longer-term socio-political processes into shorter-term project formats; pursuing an inclusive dialogue-oriented approach in a context where military solutions are sought; and trying to enable an endogenous process of the building of peace and governance relations while external blueprints are being imported with external funding.

Section 7 concludes that the Interpeace experience speaks strongly to a perspective that concentrates the attention on the nature and quality of state-society relations and that acknowledges that on the whole internal processes in the long-term are going to show themselves more robust than the 'results' derived from shorter-term external assistance and cooperation.

Public participation and open public debate are seen as essential aspects of a 'democratic culture', and when combined with capacities for negotiation and collaboration most likely to lead to compromises and moderation and avoid the excesses that degenerate into violence. Strong institutions without democratic culture can come to support authoritarian governance; a strong democratic culture will shape governance relations and governance institutions that are inclusive and work for the public good. An Interpeace-style programme does not seek to directly contribute to statebuilding, but it contributes to the development of democratic governance by strengthening a democratic culture.

## I. EMERGING FOCUS ON DYNAMIC STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS.

Coming from different angles, the debates on peacebuilding and statebuilding<sup>i</sup> seems to be converging on the question of the quality of state-society relations. In the debate about peacebuilding there is broad agreement that 'negative peace' i.e. the absence of warfare, is too low an objective to provide hope of sustainable peace, but that a too ambitious aspiration of 'positive peace' i.e. where all the root causes of the conflict have been addressed and new norms and values interiorized, is not realistic. Call and Couzens therefore have invited the peacebuilding community to consider a moderate objective and standard of success: "no renewed warfare plus decent governance". (2007:5). In the debate on statebuilding there seems to be a growing recognition –at least at the analytical and policy level- that building or rebuilding 'effective' institutions may be necessary but will not be enough – the institutions also have to be 'legitimate'. This then raises the question: what is 'decent governance' and what makes institutions 'legitimate'.

A recent OECD/DAC frames this question in terms of the relationship between state and society.

*"Statebuilding is an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations. (...) Positive state-building processes involve reciprocal relations between a state that delivers services for its people and social and political groups who constructively engage with their state. This necessarily requires the existence of inclusive political processes to negotiate state-society relations. (...) State building is intimately connected to the political processes through which social/political relations and power relationships between holders of state power and organized groups in society are negotiated and managed. This process is often violent, but it can provide the basis for developing state capacity and legitimacy, if the parties involved can identify common interests and negotiate arrangements to pursue them. (...) Legitimacy aids the process of state building, and is reinforced as state building delivers benefits for people. The state's ability to manage state-society expectations and state-building processes is influenced by the degree of legitimacy it has in the eyes of its population. As such, legitimacy is both a means and an end for successful state building."* (OECD-DAC 2008b points 1, 2 & 3)

In this perspective state-society relations are dynamic: they fluctuate and if they are seen to be evolving over time, that evolution is rarely linear. It is typically also a difficult process that if not well managed certainly can turn violent. The term 'state formation' perhaps better signals the historical and political aspects of this process in ways that the concept of 'state building' –at least as used in more technocratic international cooperation discourse- does not.

The above perspective creates however certain perceived dilemmas<sup>ii</sup> for many external assistance actors, especially after a situation of civil war<sup>iii</sup>:

- ◆ We may agree that we cannot import a 'blueprint' for a functioning state from elsewhere as this would negate the 'endogenous' character of state formation, but at the same time argue that the endogenous process cannot be left to itself where it has already shown the human costs of its violent convulsions;
- ◆ We tend to hold that states are the building blocks of the system of international relations and are concerned that 'weak states' are a threat not only to the human security of their own citizens but possibly also to international security; therefore the international community needs some

form of state that can control its territory and that can participate in basic international relations not at some uncertain future time but *now*;<sup>iv</sup>

- ◆ We believe that certain international norms and standards have also been evolving through a historical and political process and we would like this society to buy into again *now* and not at some uncertain future time: *"In the end, distinctive national solutions need to be found in each case, but it is important that these solutions respect basic international legal norms."* (OECD DAC 2001: 57)

If state-society relations are at the heart of the matter then this has certain fundamental strategic implications for external assistance actors:

- ◆ We need to work with both the state –typically with and through the government- as well as with 'civil society' (either as the full spectrum of intermediary non-state organizations or the narrowed selection of 'NGO-type' entities). The disconnect (and sometimes polarization) between 'government' and 'civil society' that international assistance actors have sometimes unwittingly encouraged, is not helpful in the long term, if it is not also complemented by capacities to negotiate and collaborate;
- ◆ Working only with intermediary organizations in society may also not be good enough – we know that intermediary organizations do not necessarily properly represent society at large or work as effective intermediaries between the elite / government and the wider population. How to engage a wider 'society'?
- ◆ Capacities for constructive engagement, public debate, dialogue and negotiation are required at *all* levels of society.

*"A capable state, if it is only a state with a capacity to deliver things to people, that's not good enough. It has to be a state that is grounded in the people... And the challenge for peacebuilding is how you work along with society and how you convince those who hold power to construct a state that is rooted in society."* Amos Sawyer, former president of Liberia. IPA-CIC 2005:1

War, peace and state formation are socio-political processes. The question now is: How to catalyse and/or support serious but non-violent socio-political processes that will allow the different sectors of a society to negotiate and manage their different interests and visions, and that can generate enough consensus and legitimacy to remain non-violent? And who can catalyse and support such processes? If a crucial characteristic of such processes and their outcomes is that they need to have a strong 'endogenous' character (also referred to as 'national ownership') then what role for external actors?

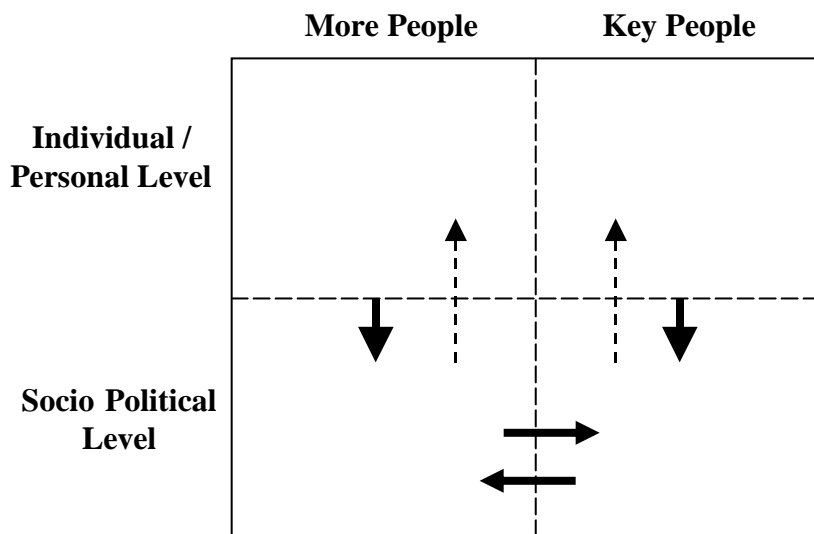
*"External actors cannot determine the outcome of state-building processes, but in line with the good practice principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, they can seek to align with and support those actors who promote positive, inclusive state-building dynamics. External actors can also seek to ensure that they "do no harm" i.e. that their interventions do not undermine positive endogenous state-building processes. (OECD/DAC Initial findings point 12).*

## II. HOW DOES INTERPEACE ENGAGE WITH THIS CHALLENGE: BASIC PRINCIPLES.

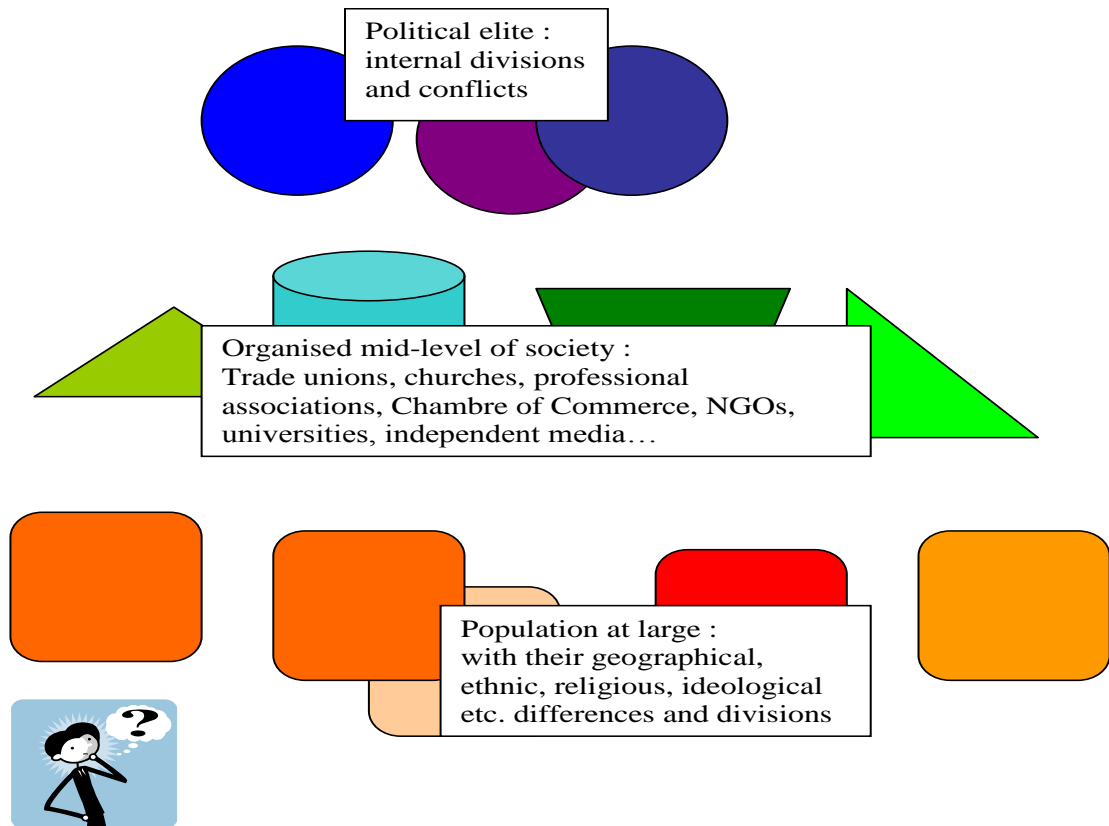
Interpeace is one such 'external actor'. From its very origins in the 'War-torn Societies Project', now almost 15 years ago, Interpeace's engagement with this challenge has shown some characteristics that haven't changed:

- ▣ Rooted in peacebuilding: Although the contexts in which the original pilot projects took place showed differences in terms of 'the state' (moderately capable states in Mozambique and Guatemala, a state structure to be adapted to its own goals in newly independent Eritrea, no state-like structure left in then northeast Somalia – the Puntland administration came into being only later) the programming goals were and have continued to be expressed in terms of 'peacebuilding' not 'statebuilding';
- ▣ Process: Interpeace's expertise is in 'process' design and process management, derived from participatory-action-research methodology though not limited to it. It does not claim thematic expertise.
- ▣ Society-wide: With the exception of the very first pilot in Eritrea, subsequent programmes have increasingly reached out to engage with the whole-of-society, from the elite (within and outside government) level to the population at large, and where appropriate and feasible including even influential concentrations of diaspora. The nature and quality of the connections and interactions between the various levels of society is a central focus of attention. While divisions within each 'horizontal layer of society' need to be mitigated, critical dynamics exist also 'vertically' between these layers of society. Internally we refer to this as 'compressing the vertical space'.<sup>v</sup> And is the quality of relationships and the interactions between 'the governors' and the 'governed' not what determine the quality of 'governance'?

The same idea is expressed in the well-known matrix drawn from the 'Reflecting on Peace Practice' findings (Anderson and Olson 2003: 69). This argues that to be ultimately effective a peacebuilding intervention (or several such interventions consciously brought into synergy with each other) requires engaging both 'key people' but also 'more people' i.e. substantive numbers of other, ordinary people.



One reason to engage both 'key people' and 'more people' relates to the dynamics between leaders and their followers. But another to the fact that really divisive and highly sensitive issues in a society are usually too much to be resolved by one actor alone- even if that actor is the government. They require the mobilization and constructive collaboration of many forces in that society.



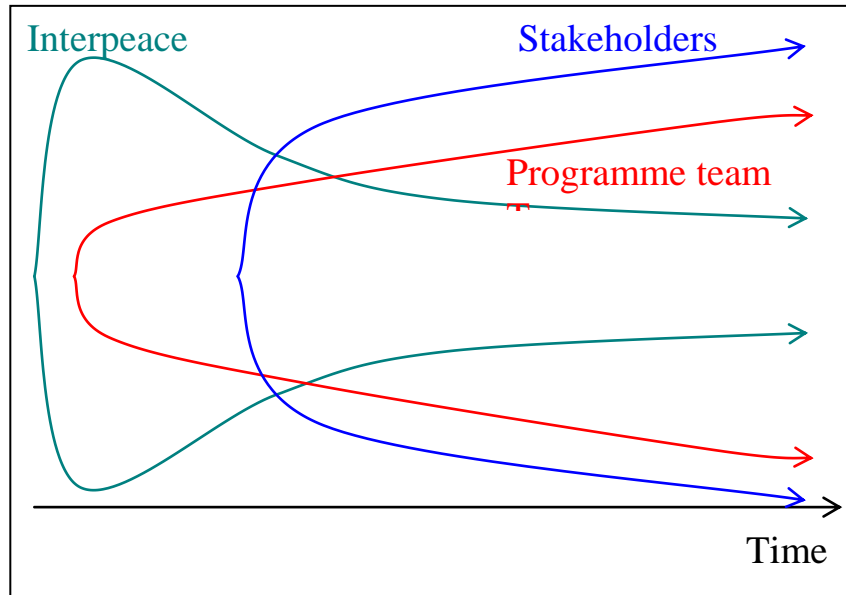
- An informal process: Even though we seek to bring together the different sectors of society – including those that are antagonistic to each other- to discuss and try to resolve big sticking points, the process remains informal and non-binding. While that may appear a profound weakness, this is often its strength: it reduces the political pressure, positioning and posturing that formal processes may induce, and can create an atmosphere for more frank and serious exchanges that if sustained can contribute to attitudinal changes. It doesn't substitute for formal processes, but can be a valuable complement to them.
- Strengthening national capacities and enabling broader ownership<sup>vi</sup>: Interpeace works from the assumption that sustainable peace requires indeed

the prevalence and use of capacities at all levels of a society to engage firmly but also constructively with groups in that same society (or 'political community') that have other interests and other visions, to negotiate solutions or at least agreements and compromises that everyone –for the time being- can live with - and to do so again when needed. From that perspective Interpeace from the outset will search for a team of nationals that are going to be important drivers of the programme. There are no expatriates in the core programme teams 'on the ground'. In every society there are people that have the commitment and the personal disposition and professional competencies to be influential peacebuilders in their own society, and these can be found. As our late colleague Abdulkadir Yahya Ali used to say: "*A failed state does not mean failed people*". External actors – in the form of Interpeace staff but also in the form of peacebuilding colleagues from other societies- accompany the programmes but are not key drivers.

We also work from the assumption that 'national ownership' is critical. To that end our first engagement in a society will be with an 'open agenda'. Typically the first phase of a new programme will be one of extensive consultation with people from all sectors of society on how they see their own situation. All that is compiled and presented in a report, a form of 'self-portrait', that does not offer recommendations. Many programmes preserve and communicate even better the integrity of the diversity of views and how they were expressed by different members of the society in video documentaries. It is then out of the collective deliberation of a representative sample of people from all sectors of that society, that more specific themes are chosen for in-depth study, debate and deliberation, and the formulation of policy recommendations. At this point the programme team 'on the ground' can be said to receive a 'mandate'. Yet its role then also changes from what had been a leading role in the initial consultations, to a support-role for the working groups that will be put together for each of these themes. The members of these working groups will join in the driving seat, and it will be them and no longer the programme team, that subsequently publicly present the findings of their work, and their recommendations.

The diagram on the next page shows how over time the 'ownership' of the process becomes more widely shared. Initially Interpeace is certainly the driver behind the original feasibility study on whether to initiate a programme or not, and at the outset of a new programme when sharing its collective experience with a new programme team. Subsequently however the programme team, made up of people of the society concerned, becomes a stronger hand in the driving of the programme. Yet this team itself needs to reduce its control and create space for participants in the process and key (internal) stakeholders in the programme to begin to share in the ownership of – and therefore also the driving of - the programme.





This is not a theoretical diagram – this broadening does take place, depending on the specifics of the situation and the people involved, within a span of 1-2 years.

The sense of national ownership in Interpeace-supported programmes is strong. It are typically the local team and the programme (that sometimes has its own name visibility such as 'Voz di Paz' in Guinea Bissau or 'Mustakbalna' i.e. Our Future in the Occupied Territories) that are visible for the internal actors, not so much Interpeace. And we notice that over time internal actors other than the team also start referring to the programme as 'theirs'.

The broad-based and inclusive nature of the process is critical to generate 'national ownership' this being more than 'government-ownership'. It is also critical because obviously there is a multiplicity of 'local actors' with conflicting interests and levels of capacity, authority and autonomy. A process that allows these different perspectives to be voiced and advance at least to convergence if not total consensus on the ends and means of policy reform, is the necessary requirement to generate broad social and political support. (Bendix and Stanley 2008:96) *"Local ownership in this perspective could be measured by the extent of its incorporation of all voices of the society in question, and thus by its level of democratic participation."* (idem p. 99)

Interpeace-style programmes thus create multiple spaces for gradual consensus-building through public debate, discussion and negotiation between people from different sectors of a society, on what they see as key challenges to being or becoming a viable society, and how to overcome them. Participants in these debates (which are also rendered better informed through the injection of 'research') emanate from the elite, intermediary organizations, and from the population at large. The process will sooner or later consciously bring together members and perspectives from these different circles. One of the challenges of facilitation is then to create an atmosphere in these spaces where the asymmetries between different participants in terms of power, status, self-confidence, knowledge are not reinforced but mitigated.

### III. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PROGRAMMATIC PRACTICE?

#### a. Opening the public debate across all sectors of society.

A fairly broad society-wide public debate & consultation process is currently taking place in various new programmes: Guinea Bissau, Timor Leste, Burundi (were the results were publicly presented in October 2008). A similar first such exercise was conducted in compressed form in Nimba county (Liberia) and is planned to be expanded to the rest of that country, while a comparable process will start in late 2008 in Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador) already more focused on the topic of youth delinquency and youth gangs.

To give this some quantitative sense: In its first few years, the programme in Rwanda engaged in the order of 4000 people in the open public debates and discussions about 'the state of the nation', including about 1000 in the diaspora. In 2008, after 7 years of sustained work, there are some 2000 Rwandans of different walks of life that are in regular contact with the programme.

In its first round of public debates and consultative interviews (11 months) the programme in Burundi engaged 2200 fellow Burundians from all over the country and from different walks of life.

Those broad-based debates lead to an identification of a range of 'obstacles' or 'challenges' for sustainable peace. As mentioned before, it will not be Interpeace or its partner who determine what the subsequent thematic areas of concentrated work will be. That agenda is decided by a 'national group' that is representative of all sectors of society and to which the outcomes of the initial society-wide debates are presented.

Occasionally the comment is made that the issues thus prioritized were already well known from the assessments and reports available. But that misses the vital point: 'how' they are identified? Deriving them from society-wide debates rather than from the work of a few consultants or analysts gives them a different legitimacy and creates a momentum that can generate a stronger socio-political process (see Taylor 2008:6). And sometimes we also see that the national actors choose different priorities from the external ones.

*“During the reporting period, the participatory dialogue programme led by the National Institute for Studies and Research in partnership with Interpeace – Voz di Paz- continued its grass-roots consultations, involving more than 3600 people in 39 administrative sectors of the country, to identify obstacles to the consolidation of peace. The main sources of conflict identified were: the weakness of the State; widespread poverty; insecurity; poor administration of justice, poor management of natural resources; the struggle for power as a means of controlling and using for personal benefit the meager resources of the State; the manipulation of ethnicity for political reasons; the absence of a culture of dialogue; the loss of or inversion of social values as stimulants of violence; and harmful traditional practices as a source of recurrent intra- and inter-ethnic tensions, as well as inter-religious tensions.”*

UN 2008 p. 3

b. What thematic areas do Interpeace programmes address?

Given that the choice is left to a 'national group', the themes will differ from context to context and will also evolve over time.

A comparative overview (see annex) of areas of thematic work in the various programmes of the past 14 years shows however 4 broad thematic domains: democratization and governance; security and conflict resolution; the economy; and social integration and participation in the social and political community.

We see here that, even though we come from a peacebuilding angle and without a predetermined agenda, much of the programmatic work turns out to be highly relevant to state building. But the agenda itself emerges from a process that involves a full spectrum of state & society actors and puts them in relation with each other.

Still, state building may be a consequence of Interpeace-style programmes, but it is not a predesigned objective. We need to acknowledge that people in many places are deeply mistrustful of the state, because their historical experience has shown them that it can be captured by a particular group and then used against the rest of society. Somalia is only one such instance, as the quote on the next page reminds us.

The peaceful functioning of a society is also perceived to be correlated with the broad acceptance and adherence to certain norms and values. As a result, a number of intervention strategies by external actors (also supported and complemented by internal actors) consist of 'norm diffusion'. Prominent examples are international humanitarian law and human rights law with its sub-domains on the rights of women, the rights of children, the aged and disabled, the rights of detainees to due process etc. International refugee law and guiding principles related to the internally displaced are other prominent ones. These are international secular norms and values, but of course there will also be recourse to religious norms and values.

Yet in our experience we encounter at times passionate expressions of disturbance from ordinary people with regard to what they see as 'imported' norms.<sup>vii</sup> One example relates to the treatment of alleged or perceived criminals where ordinary people feel that 'human rights' neglect the rights of the victim, and that it typically leads to the release of the (alleged) criminal and therefore contributes to impunity and human insecurity.

*"The Somali experience has repeatedly demonstrated that while reconciliation is often viewed as potentially 'positive-sum' by Somali communities, the revival of a central government is viewed by most as zero-sum exercise, involving winners in control of the state and losers who fear that their rivals will use the state apparatus as a tool of domination at their expense. This is intimately linked to the negative Somali historical experience of the state, and is often viewed as a major source of misunderstanding between mediators –who view the state as an essential enabler for governance, economic recovery, and security – and many Somalis, who have come to see the state as a predator."*  
Menkhaus 2007

Another not uncommon example relates to the relationship between elders and youth, with elders complaining that rights of individuals and of children contribute to youth no longer respecting (their) traditional authority which creates disturbance and conflict within the family and community; youth in turn may argue that elders have made serious mistakes which contributed to larger scale violence and therefore can no longer be a moral authority for youth.

Even though questions about norms and values may not appear as explicit topics for focused research-dialogue, they occur very frequently in the wider debates. Such debates should not surprise as they also occur in Western societies – and we know from our own social and cultural history that norms and values change, but also that such changes take time. The point here is that perhaps we should also create spaces for these topics to be debated by those directly concerned and affected, rather than conveying the impression that the 'modern' norms and values are unquestionably superior. It is often also very important to have spaces for debate without the presence of external actors (i.e. people not seen as members of the society). Again the issue is less about the 'what' that is desirable, but the 'how' we get there.

A common comment heard from participants in different countries is the strong appreciation for these spaces where they can meet other members of their society and engage in difficult but also facilitated dialogue. We hear quite often that prior to the programme such spaces were absent altogether or where they occurred were typically not very inclusive or dominated by the 'powerful voices'. Not surprisingly, we also see quite some demand for such spaces for debate to be continued.<sup>viii</sup> After several years the programme in Rwanda has sparked 8 'dialogue clubs' in rural areas; 50 dialogue clubs in 25 secondary schools; 5 district level forums and 3 national ones. Some more are planned including among Rwandans in the diaspora. The constraint on expanding these numbers is that the programme team cannot itself continue to provide facilitation-support as they should focus their reputation, skill and resources on still not addressed or newly emerging 'difficult issues'. (see Rwamasirabo & Williams 2008). The programme in Guinea Bissau has sought to immediately create more sustained forums for debate at the level of the regions and in the capital city of which, after 16 months, there are now 11.

c. The importance of 'legitimacy'.

'Legitimacy' is a highly intangible (and not easily 'measurable') and yet very important dimension of state-society relations. Legitimacy is certainly not only obtained from success in elections. Legitimacy is more fluid and more fragile than

that (it is hard to acquire and easy to lose) and relates not only to actors but also to what is done and how it is done – and how this is perceived. (see OECD DAC 2001:61)

Legitimacy is beginning to be recognized as an important ingredient in successful state building and peacebuilding: *“The state’s ability to manage state-society expectations and state-building processes is influenced by the degree of legitimacy it has in the eyes of the population. As such, legitimacy is both a means and an end to successful statebuilding.”* (OECD DAC 2008b point 3).<sup>ix</sup>

Distinctions have been made between international and domestic or internal legitimacy with a risk, in situations of strong international presence, that the domestic legitimacy remains secondary and derivative to the primary goal of building an internationally acceptable state. (E.g. S. Woodward 2005)

A useful distinction has also been made between ‘input-legitimacy’ referring e.g. to the participatory nature of a decision-making process, and ‘output legitimacy’, referring to the problem solving quality of the proposal or decision. It has been argued that these two forms of legitimacy can be considered *“an outcome of the ability of the political process to resolve conflict and of state capacity to deliver on negotiated solutions. This more effectively captures the dynamic nature of legitimacy within the social contract.”* (OECD DAC 2008a:24-25).

Legitimacy is a conscious point of attention in Interpeace-supported programmes although we do not necessarily use that term. <sup>x</sup> Where do we believe that the legitimacy in our programmes comes from? We see three sources: the team, the process and its outputs:

- ◆ Legitimacy of the team: Key elements that shape the perception of the team are
  - credible balance within the team (in light of the main divisions in society);
  - the leadership of the team ;
  - the institutional location of the team (how is that institution perceived in this society?)
  - the way the team members talk and behave (‘walk the talk’).
  
- ◆ Legitimacy of the process: Key elements that shape the perception of the process are
  - open agenda: stakeholders decide collectively on the agenda;
  - inclusion of all stakeholders that matter;
  - legitimacy of those that directly / personally participate in the process;
  - real participation (rather than just ‘consultation’);
  - injection of ‘knowledge’ and ‘reason’ through research;
  - broadening of ownership – stakeholders get a hand on the steering wheel of the process;
  - longer-term and sustained engagement;
  
- ◆ Legitimacy of the outputs of the process : Key elements that shape the perception of the recommendations and proposals that the process generates;

- result of collaborative work involving all stakeholders (including – when and as much as possible- potential spoilers);
- made active use of existing knowledge and added new `research` where needed;
- consensus-based i.e. has social and political support.

#### IV. WHAT SORT OF RESULTS DOES AN INTERPEACE-STYLE PROCESS PRODUCE?

An earlier paper had identified types of impacts that our programmes produce with multiple examples (Van Brabant 2006). We see similar types of impact in more recent achievements of older programmes and emerging in newer programmes and illustrate them here with additional examples.

The first two types of impact, on interpersonal relations and on confidence and capacity seem quite essential in that they shape the willingness and ability to enter into debate and 'negotiations' (in the broad sense of the word). The following types of impact – on institutions and how they operate, on policy, and on the wider quality of governance relationships go more to the heart of the matter. They also represent the qualitative 'leap' from the 'interpersonal' to the 'socio-political', that the Reflecting on Peace Practice project has identified as necessary for effective peacebuilding (supra p. 5).

##### a. Influence on interpersonal relations.

Just one example from the Nimba project evaluation (Liberia):

*"The project clearly contributed to meaningful communication and reconciliation between participants of different ethnic groups. Many of the successes of the Interpeace project are captured in what interviewees feel are small but highly significant gestures between participants of opposing tribes – the sharing of food, jokes and conversation. These gestures were all but impossible prior to the Interpeace intervention. The ability to talk and joke has led to an ability to bring issues out into the open and speak to members of other tribes sincerely. This could, with additional support and more time, lead to peaceful conflict resolution on a larger scale."* (Taylor 2008 Executive Summary)

##### b. Influence on capacities and confidence.

The overall goal of the Israeli programme is to foster a more thoughtful national debate among Israelis on the future options for Israeli society and for Israel within the region especially in its relationship with the Palestinians. In that context the programme is working with different segments of what is actually a deeply divided society. One such group is the Arab population that live in Israel and are Israeli citizens and who constitute a significant minority of about 20% of the overall population. Although enjoying equal rights under the law, in practice they have faced decades of social and economic disadvantages and of discrimination, a situation that periodically results in street protest. The programme has provided a crucial impetus for a process within this segment of Israeli society that has generated for the first time an agreed expression of identity as "Palestinian Arabs in Israel" and a set of agreed proposals on vital issues such as their legal status, land and housing, social and economic development etc.<sup>xi</sup> The proposals are definitely controversial but have sparked a serious public debate that did not happen before. They have created a new dynamic in the relationship of this minority with the Jewish majority and with the state in which proposals are put up for debate – ultimately a more constructive pathway than expressions of frustration and anger in the form of street protest and violence. In Latin America this change in modus operandi is succinctly referred to as "de protesta a propuesta", "from protest to proposal".<sup>xii</sup>



*Public presentation of their proposals by the Palestinian Arabs in Israel in early 2007.*

Substantive work has also started with the SHAS movement in Israel. SHAS is a social, religious, cultural and political movement of orthodox especially Sephardic Jews. Given that some 15% of the population in Israel makes national and political decisions based on rulings from Rabbis and Jewish religious laws, the movement is an important actor regarding the question of the relationship between religion and state in Israel. But it is also politically very important given that the fractured political reality of Israeli politics requires coalitions, and has often made SHAS a balancing pivot in the Knesset and in the government, also with regard to the peace process with the Palestinians. Upon their own request, the first substantive programme activity is a study-course for selected SHAS leaders at the ONO Academic College in Kiryat Ono, in which are offered diverse perspectives on the history of Israel and its relationship with the Palestinians and the wider Middle East – so that the SHAS leadership can engage in critical political debates with more in-depth knowledge.

In Guatemala Interpeace for several years now has been supporting sustained work on security sector reform first and on the larger question of democratic security since. An evaluation in 2006 had this to say:

*"Over the years it has become evident that Guatemalan capacities – in different sectors of the state and society- to take on the issues of security in a constructive and effective manner, have improved significantly. Equally important has been the development of new channels of communication and collaboration between the State and society, notably civil society*

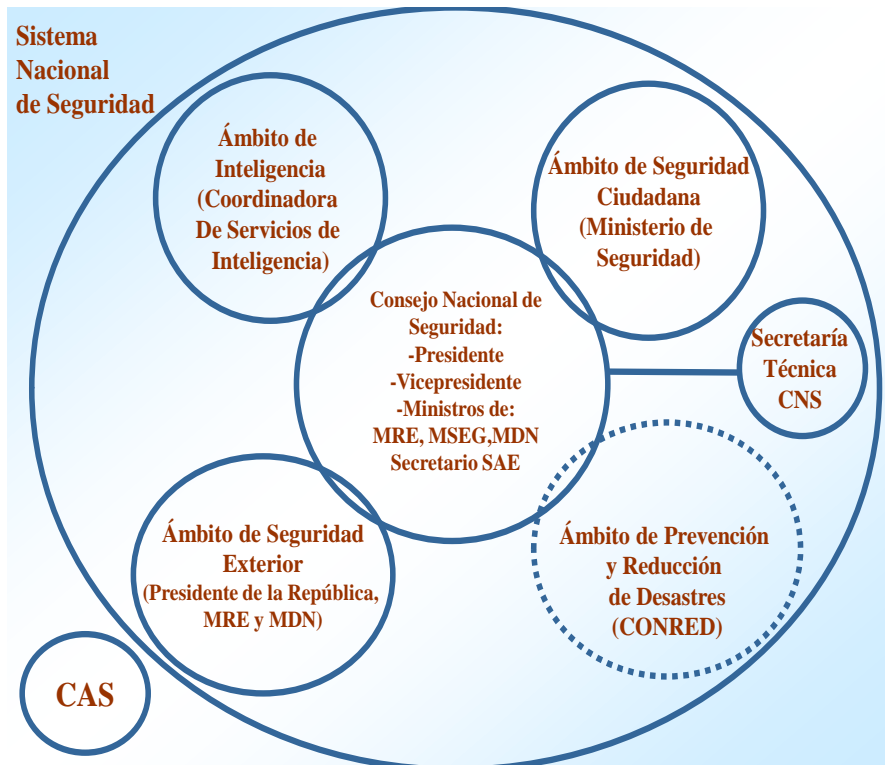


organizations, that have generated a multi-sectoral 'policy community' on security issues." (Giupponi 2006: executive summary)

The collaborative research and learning being conducted through the Reflecting on Peace Practice project has signaled however that the critical challenge is to move from the level of 'people' (mindset, attitudes, knowledge, confidence) to the level of the socio-political processes and decisions. But there too we see external analysis and evaluation confirming influence and impact.

c. Influences on institutions and how they operate.<sup>xiii</sup>

In our whole collective experience one of the larger scope influences on institutions and how they operate together i.e. on 'state design' (Call 2008a:8), has probably been with regard to a new structure of the national security architecture in Guatemala. One component of this is the creation of a National Security Council. The original proposal came from the Consejo Asesor de Seguridad (CAS) – a civil society policy advisory platform to the President that was formally created in 2005 following sustained engagement by Guatemalan civil society organizations supported by Interpeace facilitation. By February 2006 more detailed proposals on this were presented to the President that had been developed through the 'National Dialogue for Security and Defense', called by the Peace Secretariat but facilitated by Interpeace. Related proposals were also developed that year e.g. by the participants in another forum Plan Vision de Pais, de Forum of Political Parties and some members of parliament.



The various proposals, not that different from each other, were discussed in 2007 and finally signed into law in February 2008. The 'design' of a new national security architecture cannot and should not be solely attributed to Interpeace and its

immediate partners in Guatemala, but directly and indirectly there has been strong influence. And the fact that civil society in Guatemala now collaborates so closely with the state institutions on all matters of security sector and democratic security, is certainly an important impact of successive 'projects' facilitated by Interpeace.

d. Influence on policy.

An Interpeace-style process can generate proposals but of course has no formal policy-making authority. That remains the prerogative of government. What the process can do however is help to generate proposals that have broad support, such as happened in Nimba County in Liberia.

*"The project has developed a cohesive, realistic set of policy recommendations that are community generated and locally owned. However, community members feel that government will have to sincerely consider their recommendations and implement problem-solving mechanisms before the project can truly be called a success."* (Taylor 2008: Executive Summary.)

The chances of a proposal being adopted and translated into policy are increased by the inclusion of all key stakeholders in the process, so that different interests and concerns are taken into account in their formulation. Among participants will of course also be people that are connected to the policy-makers so that the proposals do not come as a sudden surprise.<sup>xiv</sup>

e. Influence on governance relations.

An important question now is whether over time the governance culture in a society changes to one where almost as a matter of habit, authorities and society seek each other out in multiple formal and informal forums and networks and spaces to discuss important issues and how best to address them. Of course this does not always happen easily and smoothly and facilitation may be required, in which case the question is whether the society has its own internal resources that can provide that service.

Some evidence of that is found in the recent evaluation of the programme in Rwanda:

*"Local authorities now consult members of our dialogue club. They want to know our views when they are preparing for meetings at the district level. And they asked us to facilitate a dialogue on peace. The local authorities also use this methodology in 'ubudehe' <sup>xv</sup>consultations."* (Rwamasirabo & Williams 2008:14)

*"Perhaps the greatest influence is cited in the domain of socio-political discourse. The programme began at a time when people felt that many topics were too delicate to discuss, whether for fear of reprisals or of opening old wounds. Now it seems possible to debate these issues, and perhaps even arrive at a consensus about what to do about some of them. The effect of this is to make space for discussion, to focus attention on doing something together about critical problems, and to make the notion of disagreement a respectable, responsible part of civic participation."* (idem: 15-16).

f. Fostering a democratic culture of public debate and consensus-seeking.

As suggested earlier, the goal of Interpeace-supported programmes is peacebuilding more than state-building, at least in the more 'institutional' interpretation of 'state building'. The essence of its contribution is perhaps better understood as fostering a 'democratic culture' of more open and ultimately consensus-seeking public debate. A strong democratic culture may help to 'democratize' institutions.

With more prominent people such as Amartya Sen (2005) and Al Gore (2007) we believe that open, informed, public and civic debate are a major societal mechanism for non-violent conflict management.<sup>xvi</sup>

*"Public reasoning includes the opportunity for citizens to participate in political discussions and influence public choice. (...) While democracy must also demand much else, public reasoning, which is central to participatory governance, is an important part of a bigger picture."* (Sen 2005:14/16) Al Gore expresses the same point with references to the "conversation of democracy", "open and free public discussion" and "the marketplace of ideas" (2007:12-13).

The following quote succinctly expresses how ultimately the cumulative influence of the multitude of debates and dialogues in Rwanda is trying to contribute to a change in the political culture in Rwanda. The depth of the challenge and the significance of achievements so far will be clearer if we realize that the cycle of conflict in Rwanda is also a symptom of a socio-political tradition in which the population showed strong obedience to the instructions of the authorities. In addition to that, the genocide cast a cloud of silence on Rwandan society that was still very strong when the programme started in 2002.

*"IRDP/Interpeace has established itself as an interlocutor, described in terms such as credible, neutral, objective and accepted. It has been particularly adept at identifying important issues which were controversial or taboo, yet which needed to be discussed in order for Rwanda to progress in the direction of peacebuilding, and at engaging those at elite and decision-making levels in dialogue. It has dared to open difficult themes, and has managed to inform and include the full range of actors, from the base to the high political levels."* Rwamasirabo & Williams 2008: Evaluation of Rwanda programme, Executive summary

## V. WHERE DOES THIS SITUATE AN INTERPEACE-SUPPORTED PROGRAMME IN RELATION TO STATE-BUILDING?

### a. Soft peacebuilding: Social cohesion, social capital, political contract.

Many of us have used the expression of 'social fabric' and how especially civil wars tend to tear it apart. We seem to understand that a functioning society will present a 'social tissue' with some wear and tear but one that remains wearable. But once turned into a rag by large scale violence, how to weave the treads again into a wearable textile that makes the wearer feel proud to be part of that society or political community?

In more intellectual-academic discourse we talk about this in terms of 'social capital'<sup>xvii</sup>, or 'social contract' or 'political contract'. Contracts can be guaranteed by the law, but overall contracts only function insofar as most people accept to respect the underlying rules and trust that the majority of others will do the same. That is not something that legal recourse alone can bring about.

So how to establish or re-establish such 'contract? DDR, small enterprise support, infrastructure rehabilitation, electoral reforms, a reconciliation commission and police training in certain ways may contribute to the emergence of a new social and political contract. Or it may not. We believe that the potential social/political contract benefits of such interventions or activities will depend very much on *how* they are done. That brings us back to process in addition to product.

The following diagram tries to visualize where we see the distinctive niche of an Interpeace-style programme. It groups different types of peace- and state building activities within broad 'domains' the boundaries of which are fuzzy and which are certainly interconnected<sup>xviii</sup>:

- Security
- The mechanisms to regulate competition in a political community
- The macro- and micro-economy which includes livelihoods and infrastructure
- Social integration, social wellbeing.

But underneath and connected to all is that intangible question of generating or preserving enough social and political cohesion so that the inevitable and recurring differences of opinion and conflicts of interests do not turn violent – this is the fairly intangible but very influential realm of trust, good governance, legitimacy and of capacities to 'negotiate' and 'collaborate'. It is not a domain like the others – it permeates all the others which is why Interpeace programmes can be thematically guided to areas of work in any of them. But if activities and interventions in the other domains do not ultimately contribute to this, they will not increase the likelihood that the peace will be sustained.

For the sake of brevity, this could be referred to as 'soft peacebuilding' – a vital complement to the more tangible and perhaps 'technical' aspects of 'hard(er) peacebuilding'.



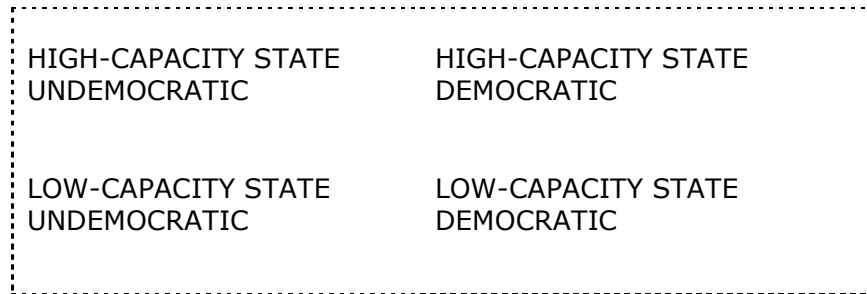
We would argue that 'soft peacebuilding' is a necessary ingredient: interventions and efforts to generate a viable state and a viable society will not be successful if there remains little social cohesion and no real political contract and if there are not enough capacities within that society to bridge divides and negotiate 'rapprochement'. But it is not a sufficient ingredient: the multitude of other interventions is also required. Yet can these be carried out *in such a way* that they contribute to social cohesion and a viable political contract, and strengthen the capacities at all levels to bridge divides and negotiate a 'rapprochement'?

Would it be fair to say that the dominant practice of peacebuilding, especially governmental and inter-governmental driven peacebuilding, tends to be strong in the thematic domains – especially in the 'hard' more technical peacebuilding but weak on the soft-peacebuilding, with its emphasis on process and participation?<sup>xix</sup> And that many other interventions of the 'soft peacebuilding' kind tend to operate within one or other of the horizontal segments of society (elite, mid-level, grassroots) rather than across?

## b. State-building and democratization.

It may be useful here to look at the matrix that the prominent historian Charles Tilly (2007:19) used to visualize admittedly 'crude regime types' and stimulate reflection on the nexus of state-capacity and democracy.

The X-axis looks at 'state-capacity' while the Y-axis refers to 'democracy'.



Many things can be said about this (simplifying) diagram but a few are worth pointing out:

- There is not necessarily real consensus among all actors, that the desired ideal is a 'high capacity & democratic state' (top right corner). Some actors are definitely interested in a high-capacity but less democratic state, while others support democratization but distrust the state and would prefer a lower-capacity one. Recent scholarly research suggests that "a minimally legitimate and effective state is necessary for sustained peace" (Call 2008b:370).
- The simplified diagram would also suggest that two longer-term trends need to go hand-in-hand: one of strengthening the capacity of the state and one of 'democratisation'.
- Even if one accepts the 'high capacity & democratic state' as desirable goal, then there are different pathways towards it. The historical experience of the emergence of democratic states surely shows that these pathways were non-linear and often turbulent. Recent scholarship has also suggested that, notwithstanding their complementary relationship, the end goals of state building and peacebuilding are different, which will lead to different designs of policies and programmes (Call 21008a:13).

Here we would argue that **how** one goes about promoting and supporting a move in a desired direction is not neutral. The choice of 'method' or 'approach' is decidedly political: a 'lecturing' approach –which may be a conscious or unconscious tone of 'technical advice'– tends to reinforce authoritative positions that can slip into authoritarianism; participatory approaches (when genuine) are intrinsically 'democratic'. The importance of this point is expressed also in other ways such as the need for peacebuilders 'to walk the talk' (Anderson and Olson 2003:27ff) or the assertion that "democracy cannot take root other than by democratic means" (Nathan 2007:7).

### c. The process facilitators.

The Interpeace experience suggests that processes are best driven by an entity that is perceived as neutral and therefore widely acceptable to all sides:

*"Nearly all interviewees agreed that Interpeace was perceived to be credible and neutral by donors, the communities and the government, which allowed them to facilitate reconciliation in their focus groups in a way that state actors could not."* (Taylor 2008: Executive Summary)

The validity of positioning oneself 'equi-distant' or in 'equal proximity' (a balancing act that has to be dynamic as the actor-configuration in the surrounding environment changes) is seen as confirmed e.g. by *"the mere fact that Interpeace and its partners, after having been involved in peacebuilding in the Somali region for some 13 years, are still widely perceived by Somali stakeholders as neutral enough to be regularly requested to intervene in conflict mediation / mitigation efforts."* (no author 2008.)

*"Achieving this within a political culture that was characterized by strong authoritarian tendencies, patronizing attitudes to 'participation', confrontation or marginalisation, is a major challenge. This is where the quality of process management becomes essential. Four key principles have played a role: positioning, skillful facilitation, broadened ownership and sustained engagement. The WSP project team consistently positioned itself independent and equidistant from any specific interest group in society and acted accordingly. The facilitators paid continuous and simultaneous attention to the problem, the various political sensitivities but also the personal and interpersonal dimensions of any interaction, and sought to ensure that the process remained constructive. The process was designed to be inclusive of all key stakeholders but also to broaden the ownership: the agenda, objectives and outputs were determined by the participants and not by the project team. And finally: political transformations of this nature do not happen quickly. Sustained engagement is required in order to generate the cumulative influence and impact that can make for durable change."* (Giupponi 2006: Executive Summary)

The question of *who* needs to be taken more serious than it usually is. There is no hard rule on this. The evaluation of the short pilot experience in Nimba county in Liberia suggests that the Liberian teams working under an Interpeace-UN umbrella have been able to gain an 'acceptance' that the Ad Hoc Presidential Commission for Nimba had not been able to acquire. The 'state' indeed is often not perceived as a 'neutral' broker. Foreign governments rightly or wrongly are also often suspected of having their own political agenda, a concern that in principle though not always in practice is less with regard to multilateral organizations like ECOWAS, the EU and the UN. The UN has the potential in principle but should acknowledge that it is not perceived and trusted as a neutral broker in all environments. And it often remains bound by expectations related to intergovernmental interactions which should not surprise with regard to an organization whose membership is made up of states. While an Interpeace-style approach clearly favours 'national capacities', our experience also contains examples of the potential value an external actor can play – if widely perceived as a honest broker. Interpeace as such provides support to the

parliamentary and presidential elections in Somaliland, in complement to the contributions of our principal partner there, the Academy for Peace and Development. Although the Indonesians have recognized the value of an outside mediator in the Aceh peace process, we are told that for the national actors the activation of the newly created Indonesian Peace Institute is very important, while many Acehnese feel that an external actor inspires more trust (Susanti & Fredriksson 2008:34-35).

#### **d. When is soft peacebuilding appropriate and possible?**

If state-society relations are dynamic and a constant process of negotiation and renegotiation (as we know they are in so-called 'mature democracies') then processes that encourage public participation and public debate are appropriate anytime.

They are certainly appropriate for conflict prevention purposes – even though this does not easily attract funding. They can be appropriate and bring value in situation of chronic instability, as our programmes in the Somali regions and in Israel and the West Bank demonstrate, but also remain highly relevant years after the fighting has come to an end. The programme in Rwanda started only in 2002, at a time when some external commentators were suggesting that Rwanda had reached a solid level of stability and were questioning its relevance. The engagement in Guatemala started at the time of the signing of the Peace Accords (1996) but continues 12 years later. Guatemalans and their colleagues in El Salvador and Nicaragua would not label themselves as 'post-conflict' anymore, but they do acknowledge that theirs are 'fragile democracies' and that in certain respects their states are failing.

Yet our collective experience is also full of decisions –after having studied a situation for a serious amount of time- not to engage. Obviously funding prospects do play a role, but this is by no means the only criterion. We may wait until a formal period of 'political transition' is concluded (e.g. Burundi), because of the expected changes in key players in government. There has to be some 'political space' to work with. We will consider how 'crowded' the situation is: if there is a multitude of actors and initiatives, we may find ourselves competing for attention (e.g. Kosovo in late 1999), which is not a good environment to operate in. That may change over time, particularly if the national and local actors whom we need to engage with a process that should become 'theirs' would have become disenchanted with the limited results of these many initiatives (e.g. Haiti 2008).

In recent years we have not engaged in a new environment quickly after a radical political change (such as independence for Eritrea in 1993 or the signing of the Peace Accords in Guatemala in 1996). There are dilemmas for external and internal actors between the need for rapid 'stabilisation' and a resumption of services delivery, and the equally valid need for broader participatory processes about the medium term vision for the society and its institutions. As Interpeace we have not given focused thought to how to best to manage these dilemmas.

We do however have serious experience with the necessity of being forced into 'low-key' mode when the macro-political dynamics is highly antagonistic. That has happened several times of course in the past 17 years in the Somali regions although the situation has never been as bad as it is currently. That has happened during the war between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006 and is the case in Palestinian society following the violent confrontations between Fatah and Hamas in



2007 and the subsequent attempts to isolate Hamas. We are clear that also in more adverse times it is vitally important to sustain national capacities to convene, facilitate debate, dialogue and eventually collaboration across divides, just as states do not easily break of diplomatic relations altogether even when the atmosphere between them is sour. At some point today's antagonists will have to talk to each other and then various trusted facilitators will be needed.

## VI. WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE ENCOUNTER?

We should not give the impression that all of the above would be as easy to practice as it might be to write. Of course in Interpeace we face challenges and difficulties. These can come from come from 4 different sources over which we have variable degree of influence or control:

### a. Within Interpeace.

Like any other organization, Interpeace has to demonstrate good stewardship of its financial and human resources and has to stay on top of the various challenges related to ongoing organizational management but also organizational development. Simultaneously, we need to ensure that we maintain the quality of our programme support, and can draw actively and pro-actively on what we can learn from our collective experience.

### b. In the relationship of Interpeace with the programme team(s).

While it is easy to talk about 'collaboration' and 'partnership', in practice the quality of a relationship has to be gained and sustained. The relationship, as the diagram on ownership also signals, also evolves over time, with the Interpeace presence and influence becoming lighter. Some of that can be handled through formal agreements on paper, but ultimately a lot depends on the quality of the relationship and the interpersonal skills that sustains this.

### c. From national actors.

Where our programmes touch on some of deeply controversial issues that polarize and divide a society, they are inevitably going to be confronted with serious personal, social and political sensitivities. These can evoke suspicion and resistance, which has to be managed. But if the programme/process is going really well, and gaining in visibility and influence, it can also become interesting for one or other party in that society to try and co-opt it. Protecting the integrity of the process and the perceived 'equi-distance from or equi-promiximity to all key actors in a society, requires regular attention. The process will also have to adapt to changes in the broader political environment, such as changes in government after elections, or renewed hostilities between certain power-brokers in that society.

Our experience by and large confirms the value of including all sectors of society, all those 'who matter' either because they can influence a particular situation or have a stake in how the situation evolves. However we need to recognize limits to 'inclusion' as a programmatic principle: it is unlikely that hard-line violent extremists (examples of which can be found that appeal to different religions to find justification for their brutality) and hard core criminals (such as the narco-traffickers in Central America and in Guinea Bissau) can be 'included'. And even if they would 'engage', their ultimate calculations may not be responsive to the incentives and opportunities that the process offers.

### d. From external actors.

Notwithstanding the increasing policy-level recognition of the importance of 'endogenous process' or 'local ownership' and of the fact that there are no quick fixes in peacebuilding, the administrative realities remain that it is very difficult to get

longer-term programme funding instead of shorter term project funding. Process management therefore has to be reconciled with a fairly narrow 'project format'. There is also a structural difficulty in the demand of many donors for detailed logframes and specificity about expected outcomes – the consequence of concerns that have arisen over the effectiveness of aid and greater insistence therefore on 'results-based management' – with the acknowledgment of the importance of 'process' and 'local ownership'. The latter obliges us not to relinquish 'control' but not to try and pre-determine everything and micro-manage every step. We know that as external actors our role should be to create an enabling environment and then play a supportive role as and where appropriate – but we have difficulty loosening the grip.

There is also the reality of political strategies that seek solutions through confrontation. History shows that certain threats may have to be militarily confronted and that certain actors must be isolated if they cannot be defeated. But history also shows that military victories may not always be achievable and that certain actors have too strong a social base to be permanently isolated (see e.g. Stedman 2000 on different types of 'spoilers') Given that many 'civil wars' end up in negotiated peace agreements, a number of international confrontations, including between state and non-state actors, may also have to revert to 'talks' and negotiation. Until such time however, it is delicate for anyone to suggest engagement rather than confrontation or isolation. A recent example is Afghanistan, where many for quite some time have been saying that the Taliban cannot be militarily defeated and need to be brought into a political process. Not everybody agrees with that, but both Afghan and Pakistani authorities have recently acknowledged they want to start talking to the Taliban.

And there remains of course the tendency to want to import and impose larger blueprints of how states should function. The most tragic example here is probably Somalia. Somalia is typically referred to as the quintessential example of persistent state failure and anarchy. And yet, a sharper analysis would probably reveal it to be the quintessential example of persistent failure of externally driven state building.

*"Indeed, the history of the 20-year crisis in Somalia is littered with frustrated foreign mediation, state-building, and peacekeeping. Over a dozen national peace conferences have been convened since 1991; a U.N. peacekeeping operation failed disastrously in 1993-94; and tens of millions of dollars have been misspent on doomed efforts to revive a central government. Some of the blame for these failures must be laid at the feet of poor Somali leadership, and some spring from daunting structural and social obstacles to peace. But much can be traced to flaws in the policies themselves.*

*There is no shortage of individuals, embassies, and aid organizations genuinely committed to a durable solution in Somalia, but international policy toward Somalia is too often characterized by some combination of the following:*

- *Serious misreading of Somali political and conflict dynamics, exacerbated by the international community's isolation from political realities inside the country*
- *Weak institutional memory, made worse by high turnover rates in embassies and aid agencies*
- *Unimaginative, non-strategic, template-driven policy responses with little relevance to the Somali context and little input from Somali voices*
- *Lack of policy coordination both between and within key actors, so that humanitarian, diplomatic, development, and security policies tend to undermine one another*
- *Sharp resistance to critical assessment of policies and programs, no matter how obvious their shortcomings, creating dangerous levels of groupthink*
- *Lack of political will to provide timely and sustained support for promising policies*
- *A shocking lack of accountability on the part of some external donors, embassies, aid organizations, and defense agencies that are in some cases culpable of exacerbating the crisis in Somalia.*

*These all point to a very uncomfortable truth: Somalis seeking to extricate their country from this deadly and protracted crisis have to do so in spite of, not because of, involvement by the international community. We have become part of the problem rather than the solution in Somalia. That must change." Menkhaus 2008*

Compare this with the evolution of Somaliland, which has had far less 'international' attention and support but therefore also left the space to pursue a more 'endogenous' process – even if this involved a civil war (1994-96).

*"Somaliland is unique in that, unlike southern Somalia, it has restored law and order and become one of the most democratic parts of the Muslim world. The dynamics of its reconciliation process revolve around a complex interplay of modern forces on the one hand (...) and, on the other, the traditional, indigenous forces of the north-west's clan leadership. In the early 1990s these forces were accommodated by several 'hybrid' institutions, mixing western and traditional forms of government. Somaliland adopted a national charter known as a beel – a clan or community system. The 'beel' system of government acknowledges kinship as the organising principle of society. It has developed into a power-sharing coalition of Somaliland's main clans, integrating tradition and modernity in one holistic governance framework. This framework, which aims to foster 'popular participation' in governance, might best define the essence of democracy without Western connotations. (...) IN conclusion, donors need to be both sensitive and attentive to indigenous state-building and developmental processes. Their understandable urge to act at speed should not jeopardise developmental work alongside fragile societies. This is work that will, in the long-term, help to remove that fragility as Somaliland demonstrates. There, we have seen the value of allowing citizens to share their own vision of the future and the kind of state they want."*

Otieno 2008:1

## VII. CONCLUSION.

The Interpeace experience speaks strongly to a perspective that concentrates the attention on the nature and quality of state-society relations and that acknowledges that on the whole the internal processes in the long-term are going to show themselves more robust than the 'results' derived from shorter-term external assistance and cooperation.

Interpeace engages with the divisions and blockages within a society from a process-angle and without pre-determined outcomes. Its partners gain and maintain credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the local actors by acting as 'impartial' convenors facilitators that seek to include all sectors of society, while remaining equi-distant (or in equi-proximity) to each of them. They work with both the state and society, because strong capacities for dialogue and collaboration are required at all levels.

Methods or approaches are intrinsically 'political': a 'lecturing' approach –which may be a conscious or unconscious tone of 'technical advice'- tends to reinforce authoritative positions that can slip into authoritarianism; participatory approaches (when genuine) are intrinsically 'democratic'. Therefore an Interpeace-style approach fosters what we can call a 'democratic culture'. We assume thereby three things:

- a. The involvement of the spectrum of diverse interests and perspectives in a process in which the asymmetries are managed and reduced, over time generates compromises and moderate positions. Allowing space for 'endogenous' processes of peace building and state formation may mean that the outcomes that external actors desire are not reached as quickly or as completely as they would wish it – but also that the gains made likely to be more durable;
- b. A strengthened 'democratic culture' over time will also foster further 'democratisation' of the social and political institutions.
- c. Gains in 'democratic culture' can be reversed through politics that restrict and numb free and open public debate and demand unquestioning allegiance to a leader, a flag, an ideology or a faith.<sup>xx</sup> But just as 'democratisation' does not happen overnight, neither does its reversal. There is therefore time to support those that confront and resist authoritarian and coercive trends – if we remain engaged.

Our experience of the past 14 years – while still relatively short-term from the perspective of sustainable peace and state formation – confirms all three assumptions.

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**An Overview of Interpeace & Partners Programming.**  
**Geographical locations and diversity of thematic work**  
 October 2008

Eritrea	Mid-90s	ended	
Mozambique	Mid-90s	ended	
Macedonia	2001-2004	ended	
Guatemala	Since 1996	ongoing	With several Guatemalan partners
Somali region - Puntland	Since 1997	ongoing	Puntland Development Research Centre
Somali region- Somaliland	Since 1998-9	ongoing	Academy for Peace and Development; National Electoral Commission
Somali region – south central Somalia	Since 2000	ongoing	Centre for Research and Dialogue
Israel	Since 2004	ongoing	With several Israeli partners
Palestine (West Bank)	Since 2004	ongoing	With UN
Rwanda	Since 2001	ongoing	Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix
Guinea Bissau	Started early 2007	ongoing	Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa
Burundi	In 2007	ongoing	Centre d’Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits
Indonesia (Aceh)	In 2007	ongoing	Indonesian Peace Institute
Peru	In 2007	Not initiated - no funding	With several partners
Central America gangs (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador)	In mid- 2008	Starting up	With partners in each country
Liberia	In early 2008	Started pilot project	JPU implements Nimba pilot project, national dialogue foreseen with several partners
Cyprus	In 2009	Fundraising started	UNDP ACT programme in Cyprus
Timor Leste	In early 2008	ongoing	Initially the Peace and Development Foundation, late-2008 the programme separates and registers as new NGO “CEPAD”
Haiti	2008	Exploratory work	

## Thematic Participatory Action Research: An overview of 14 years of thematic work.

October 2008

Following is a simple tabular overview of the topics around which WSP-supported teams have conducted in-depth participatory research in the past 14 years (1994-late 2008). The choice of topics was made by stakeholders in the process, mostly ‘national’ stakeholders, never by the project team as such.

The overview shows clearly a preponderance of topics related to “democratization and governance”, with a stronger choice for the legal & institutional aspects of it (constitution, decentralization, rule of law, elections ) more than the financial-economic dimensions of governance (public revenue management, trade agreements and trade regimes, public debt, international investment and concessions etc.).

A second important cluster is that of ‘state & human security’, under which we can group active ‘conflict resolution facilitation’ (notably though not only by our Somali partners), DDR, security sector reform and over time citizen or ‘democratic’ security (more related to criminality especially in Central America).

A third cluster, becoming a more frequent choice in recent years, relates to the economy, either in its more structural and regulatory aspects (such as productivity, regulation, export opportunities) or considered in terms of unemployment and poverty.

A fourth cluster relates to social integration and increased participation of less frequently included sectors of society, not only women and youth, but also minorities and even political prisoners.

There has not been so much demand for focused work on human development topics, be it in terms of access to essential services or planned development of skills and competences of nationals. A programmes have been asked to focus on international cooperation and regional integration, but this is not a regular priority topic in Interpeace-style programmes.

The table also shows that often the topic is defined in very **broad terms**. In practice, the participatory-action-research typically has to **narrow this down** to some specific subthemes.

Cluster	Topics	Programme
<p>Democratisation and Governance</p>	<p><i>Constitutional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutional reforms notably in relation to the peace agreement on identity and the rights of indigenous peoples</li> <li>• Democracy and ethnicity</li> <li>• Legal and cultural identity of the state (esp. with regard to multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism in the structure and functioning of the state)</li> <li>• Constitutional review (currently on hold)</li> <li>• Understanding federalism and challenges to federalism with review of Puntland charter</li>   <li>• Minorities in the context of constitution-development (Palestinian Arabs in Israel)</li> <li>• Power sharing</li> <li>• Increasing participation in governance</li> </ul> <p><i>Governance in general</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues of governance in post-independence Eritrea</li> </ul> <p><i>Decentralisation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building from the bottom: basic institutions of local governance, legal basis and capacity</li> <li>• Consolidation and decentralization of government institutions; capacity strengthening</li> <li>• Support for formation of local district councils</li> <li>• The modernization and strengthening of the state notably with regard to decentralized decision-making</li> </ul> <p><i>Public revenue management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public funds management</li> </ul> <p><i>Rule of law:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somali legal traditions (customary law, sharia and secular law)</li> <li>• Justice, the rule of law and culture of impunity</li> <li>• Arbitrary decision-making</li> <li>• Rule of law, decentralization, local self-government and civic initiative</li> <li>• Transitional justice</li> </ul>	<p>Guatemala</p> <p>Rwanda Macedonia</p> <p>Somaliland Puntland and south-central Somalia Israel Rwanda Rwanda</p> <p>Eritrea</p> <p>Puntland Somaliland South-central Somalia Guatemala</p> <p>Puntland &amp; south-central Somalia</p> <p>Puntland Rwanda Rwanda Macedonia Burundi</p>

Cluster	Topics	Programme
	<p><i>Media:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of mass media in democracy and development</li> <li>• The role of the media in political reconstruction</li> <li>• Media, active citizenship and participation</li> </ul> <p><i>Elections support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and presidential elections in 2002 - 2003</li> <li>• Parliamentary elections 2005</li> <li>• Presidential elections 2009</li> <li>• Peaceful national elections 2010</li> </ul> <p><i>Political knowledge strengthening</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political education opportunity for members of Shas</li> </ul> <p><i>Strengthening civil society for collective engagement on governance issues</i> (non-state actor forums)</p> <p><i>Facilitating involvement of youth on governance issues</i></p>	<p>Mozambique Somaliland Cyprus</p> <p>Somaliland Somaliland Somaliland Burundi</p> <p>Israel</p> <p>Somali region Somaliland, S-C Somalia</p>
Security	<p><i>Security sector reform:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security sector reform notably of the army</li> <li>• Public security and justice notably with regard to the police</li> <li>• Security sector reform notably with regard to the military and the intelligence services</li> <li>• Public / citizen security</li> <li>• Violent youth gangs as regional problem</li> </ul> <p><i>DDR:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reintegration of demobilized soldiers</li> <li>• Towards the social integration of the militias and armed youth</li> <li>• DDR of militias</li> <li>• Security and judicial institutions</li> </ul> <p><i>Business sector:</i> Facilitating its engagement for peacemaking and security</p> <p><i>Disarming the population</i></p>	<p>Guinea Bissau Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala-Honduras-El Salvador</p> <p>Mozambique Puntland South-central Somalia South-central Somalia</p> <p>S-C Somalia &amp;Puntland</p> <p>Burundi</p>

Cluster	Topics	Programme
<p>Conflict resolution facilitation &amp; reconciliation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources based conflicts</li> <li>• Social reconciliation</li>   <li>• Conflict and peace in Mudug-Galgaduud region</li>   <li>• Conflict in the lower Juba / Kismayo</li> <li>• Conflict in Gedo region</li> <li>• Contested regions on Somaliland-Puntland border</li> <li>• Conflict among Jews in context of Gaza withdrawal 2005</li> <li>• Clashes in Aceh province</li> <li>• Tensions and violence between Palestinian militias in Jenin</li> <li>• Participatory mapping of types and seriousness of conflict in Nimba county</li> </ul>	<p>Somaliland Puntland and south-central Somalia Puntland and south-central Somalia South-central Somalia South-central Somalia Somaliland &amp; Puntland Israel Aceh Palestine Liberia</p>
<p>Economy</p>	<p><i>Economic productivity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food security, food aid and agricultural development</li> <li>• The impact of structural adjustment on agriculture</li> <li>• The livestock economy</li> <li>• Somali customary law and traditional economy</li> <li>• Transformation towards a regulated economy</li> </ul> <p><i>Infrastructure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state of infrastructure development</li> </ul> <p><i>Development and poverty:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development, unemployment and poverty</li> <li>• Social and economic development notably with regard to tax policy and rural development</li> <li>• Socio-economic development and poverty reduction (including the question of demographic pressure)</li> <li>• Job creation as a poverty reduction factor</li> <li>• Developing a conducive environment to business and entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Unemployment and underemployment</li> </ul> <p><i>Sustainable development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a post-settlement context</li> </ul>	<p>Eritrea Mozambique Somaliland Puntland Puntland</p> <p>Eritrea</p> <p>Macedonia Guatemala Rwanda Rwanda Rwanda Burundi</p> <p>Cyprus</p>

Cluster	Topics	Programme
Society	<p><i>Vision for the future (social and political)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palestinian political prisoners vision</li> </ul> <p><i>Gender related</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of women in rebuilding Puntland</li> <li>• The impact of the war on the family</li> <li>• Support for women in peacebuilding and reconciliation</li> <li>• Strengthening of women's capacities</li> </ul> <p><i>Youth related</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for youth groups and youth group initiatives</li> </ul> <p><i>Social (re)integration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social integration of former refugees and ex-combatants</li> <li>• Development of human resources for national reconstruction</li> <li>• Inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relations, integration processes and perspectives</li> <li>• Identity and positioning of Palestinian Arabs in Israel</li> <li>• Daily life in post-settlement Cyprus</li> </ul>	<p>Palestine</p> <p>Puntland Somaliland South-central Somalia Aceh</p> <p>Palestine; Somaliland, Puntland</p> <p>Eritrea Eritrea Macedonia Israel Cyprus</p>
Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for the improvement of essential services in education, health and water</li> </ul>	Puntland
International Cooperation & Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International assistance and the peace programme: the present situation and future prospects</li> <li>• Euro-Atlantic aspirations and the regional integration of the Republic</li> <li>• The role of unified Cyprus in the wider Mediterranean and European Area of Cooperation</li> </ul>	Guatemala Macedonia Cyprus
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The genocide: what, why, who and how?</li> <li>• The representation of history (notably of Hutu-Tutsi relationships) in politics and society, with subsequently more focused research on the events of the 1946-1962 period.</li> </ul>	Rwanda Rwanda

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<sup>i</sup> The paper deliberately avoids precise definitions of state building and peacebuilding. How we understand 'statebuilding' is precisely the object of debate, while 'peace' for different members of violence and war-affected populations may mean quite different things. How 'a state of peace' is envisaged will therefore itself have to be the outcome of a debate and not the starting point.

<sup>ii</sup> The issue of inherent dilemmas in post-war statebuilding, that can only be managed but not fully resolved, is explored in Paris & Sisk 2007.

<sup>iii</sup> We acknowledge that the notion of 'civil war' may unduly keep out of the picture the interests and involvement of external actors, in the region or geographically further away.

<sup>iv</sup> Additional reasons for building up the state more quickly is that a functioning state is seen as a pre-condition for international forces to withdraw and as providing the necessary institutional foundations for 'development' (see Call 2008a:2). A frequent consequence however is often excessive international presence and prerogatives that actually do harm (Call 2008b:368).

<sup>v</sup> An influential image for peacebuilders has been Lederach's 1997 pyramid with its three layers of top leadership, mid-range leaders and grassroots leaders. Many peacebuilding endeavours seek to build bridges across divides within those respective ranges. But in a subsequent article he has drawn attention to the most strategic gap as occurring in the vertical relationships: "*The challenge of horizontal capacity is how to foster constructive understanding and dialogue across the lines of division in a society. The challenge of the vertical capacity is how to develop genuine recognition that peace-building involves multiple activities at different levels of leadership, taking place simultaneously, each level distinct in its needs and interdependent in effects. Strategic change in a system requires that horizontal and vertical relationships move in tandem on an equal basis. In far too many places and times vertical capacity has been weak. What one level of peace-building undertook was rarely understood by, much less conceived and conducted in a way that significantly involved other levels of the affected society.*" (Lederach no date:3)

<sup>vi</sup> We deliberately talk about 'broadening' ownership rather than 'local ownership' or 'transfer' of ownership. It has been rightly pointed out (Reich 2006) that this obfuscates the dominant reality of the external actor retaining a decisive say about at least some important aspects of a programme or project. In the same vein we also take about a "joint programme" of the local programme team and Interpeace with joint responsibility for its success.

<sup>vii</sup> Obviously some of disputes ostensibly about 'norms' are also expressions of power struggles: discarding traditional norms may be depriving traditional authorities of a source of legitimacy and power. Yet it would be a mistake to hold that these norm-focused disputes would always serve power interests and would therefore not have to be taken seriously.

<sup>viii</sup> In practice both 'political' and 'social' (as well as economic) issues are discussed in these fora, signaling that they are important both for peacebuilding and statebuilding.

<sup>ix</sup> Although there is some political science writing on the legitimacy of states and governments, the international assistance actors do not tend to deploy 'experts on legitimacy' as they do on e.g. tax reform, power generation, refugee protection, political party functioning etc.

<sup>x</sup> We more commonly talk about 'seeking validation' from a broad range of national stakeholders.

<sup>xi</sup> The separation of programmes into one within Israeli and one within Palestinian society, and within Israeli society the work –first- with sub-groups of more homogeneous identity or worldview, is similar from the 'single identity' peacebuilding approach (see Church et alii 2004) eventually adopted in Northern Ireland (and where it found its original inspiration) and markedly different from the people-to-people approach after the Oslo Agreement that sought to bring Palestinians and Israelis together. 'Single identity' work can be a necessary preparatory process where the divides are so deep that it would be premature to bring people from across the divides together right away.

<sup>xii</sup> This doesn't mean that from one day to the next the whole modus operandus becomes different. The relationships between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in Israel were very strained by the war between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, and an incident in the mixed city Acre during Yom Kippur in October 2008 degenerated into several days of racial street riots.

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<sup>xiii</sup> An interesting nuance regarding 'state capacity' has been offered between 'institutionalisation' i.e. reducing the personal and arbitrary in functions, and 'state design' i.e. how the institutions relate to each other and interact (Call 2008a: 8-11). Results of Interpeace-style programmes relate to both aspects.

<sup>xiv</sup> An independent evaluation about the cumulative influence and impact of the Interpeace-supported work in Guatemala has this to say: "*The report confirms that these projects, through their cumulative influence and impacts, have made possible substantive transformations in the Guatemalan political and policy frameworks related to democratic security. Intelligence reform and the establishment in 2004 of the Security Advisory Council are examined as examples of direct impact, while a new military doctrine and the redeployment of military units- towards defense of the national territory rather than counterinsurgency positions- can be seen as examples of more indirect impacts.*" (Giupponi 2006 executive summary).

<sup>xv</sup> 'Ubudehe' is a historical tradition in rural Rwanda where peasants join their labour at times of intense agricultural work (preparing the field, harvest) and where the owner of the plot in exchange provides food and drink. It has been reintroduced by the Ministry of Local Administration with an additional 'reconciliation' intent.

<sup>xvi</sup> In this light it would be a simplification to characterise the Interpeace-type of peacebuilding as 'dialogue projects'. They seek to go beyond dialogue events in specific spaces to what reviewers of the organization have aptly called "societal spaces": "*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 organizations 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.*" (Daniels et alii 2004:19).

<sup>xvii</sup> A useful distinction has been made between 'bonding social capital' and 'bridging social capital'. The former is exclusionary in that it focuses on ties within a certain group to the exclusion of others (e.g. the supporters of a football club or members of a youth gang). For social cohesion what is needed is sufficient 'bridging capital' that cuts across the divisions.

<sup>xviii</sup> Different studies and reports organise the various programmatic themes somewhat differently but by and large we see these main domains in only slightly different variations.

<sup>xix</sup> It is unusual to see 'legitimacy' highlighted as a core area or a core issue, next to security, public finance and economic policy making and justice and the rule of law (Call 2008a:14).

<sup>xx</sup> In Tilly's words: "Democratisation is a dynamic process that always remains incomplete and perpetually runs the risk of reversal or de-democratisation." (2007:xi)