



**QUNO**

Quaker United Nations Office

**“What’s Next in Peacebuilding?” Gathering**  
**Quaker House, New York: June 18-20, 2018**  
*Issues Arising*

In June 2018, a group of peacebuilding leaders, including representatives from peacebuilding organizations, think tanks, and donors, met at Quaker House in New York for the annual “What’s Next in Peacebuilding?” gathering. This year the sessions were arranged to investigate a central question – What’s at the heart of peacebuilding?

A number of additional forward-looking issues and challenges arose in discussion. Although these were not examined in detail, it seems worthwhile to note them here. As before, this is not an attempt to produce an exhaustive list. The order of points is not intended to be indicative of their importance.

**Other issues arising at the gathering**

- *Radical inclusion*: as external actors in many cases, how do we go beyond inclusion in analysis, planning and implementation to a model that is much more about accompaniment and partnership, shifting the center of ownership and sustainability to endogenous actors? For example, moving from inviting youth to a seat at the (our) table, to help them set up their own table?
- *Models of social change*: if a society consistently uses peacebuilding working methods and tools, will it automatically become more peaceful? Many/most societies have set systems of elite control. How do peacebuilders engage with other approaches to large scale social transformation - social movements, external coercion and intervention, etc.? Should peacebuilding approaches be more ambitious – and perhaps more disruptive?
- *Values*: what is the place of values in peacebuilding work, whether humanitarian, liberal, human rights or other? And which of these values are universal, and which rooted in particular political or cultural assumptions? How can we connect better with ‘heart’ issues and heart-based communication (stories), and become more confident in operating in a values-based space?
- *Peacebuilding policy directions*: policy is the land of myth as much as evidence. How can peacebuilding organizations have more impact – is it just better stories? There are strong embedded systems that feed violent conflict – what are the systems that feed peace, and how to strengthen them? How can we support endogenous peacebuilding policy initiatives, and when is peacebuilding policy work just buying into the same top down exclusionary model?
- *Human rights*: 2018 is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, yet human rights approaches are under increasing pressure around the world. The relationship between human rights and peacebuilding disciplines is complex. Is there a way to be clearer about the complementarity and mutual interests of both fields, as a foundation for more effective partnerships – and as a basis for clearer support from peacebuilding organizations for human rights, and vice versa?

- *Bringing the field together:* how can peacebuilding practitioners (local and international), donors, think tanks and academics in this small field better act as partners and support one another? Has the recent growth in forums and conferences that seek to convene the peacebuilding field aided in this, or are we in danger of filling our schedules with meetings that cover the same ground, among the same participants?
- *2030 Agenda:* the 2030 Agenda universal commitment to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies, including the many targets in SDG16 and elsewhere that address peace issues, was a significant policy achievement. National governments, donors, IFIs and multilaterals are now aligning their priorities with the SDGs, creating many entry points for peacebuilders. Nevertheless, there has been relatively limited engagement from peacebuilding organizations in the follow-up and implementation of the SDG16+ commitments, either at local or policy levels. What's up?
- *Changing environment:* the global environment is changing fast – but which of these changes will require peacebuilders to adapt their approaches? The fundamental mechanics of human societies are not necessarily shifting, but the velocity and complexity of social interaction and social change are increasing rapidly. What will work, what will the heart of peacebuilding be tomorrow?

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