



# THE VALUE OF PEACE DIRECT

## *Summary*

Peace Direct finds, funds and promotes local peacebuilding.

We seek out effective and visionary local organisations and individuals working to end conflict and build peace in their own countries.

We fund them to do what they think will be most effective in their unique context– we don't tell them what to do.

We put them in contact with people in power - including donors, international agencies and the media.

We are working for a world where peacebuilding strategies are led by local people, thereby increasing the likelihood that conflicts will be settled without the use of force.

## *1. Peace Direct's vision*

Peace Direct's mission is *'to work with others to bring about a world where peacebuilding strategies are led by local people'*. We believe that only peacebuilding strategies that are genuinely led by, and embedded in, the local population in conflict areas will lead to a lasting peace, and therefore achieve our vision of *'a world where conflicts are settled without the use of force.'*

Peace Direct, therefore, puts local peacebuilders at the centre of everything it does. We want local peacebuilders to be seen as equals by the international community and to be supported as true leaders of peacebuilding initiatives.

## *2. Why is Peace Direct different?*

Most agencies would agree with us that local people should be supported or involved in peacebuilding activities. But that is not the same as having programmes that are 'locally led': ie specified and directed by local people, using their local knowledge to solve conflicts in their own ways. In fact, many 'localised' projects consist of a Western plan or programme that is only implemented by locals, who serve as contractors or implementers but not as 'directors'.

By contrast, **Peace Direct exists to allow local peacebuilders to do their own thinking**, react to their own needs and insights, and build their own capacities and solutions. In this respect we are genuinely capacity-building and enabling.

In effect, we have turned the normal aid model on its head. **We see ourselves as an extension of the local peacebuilders, rather than them being an extension of us.** We see Peace Direct as the means by which they achieve their goals, rather than using them to achieve ours. Because that is a pioneering approach, we are needed to act as a bridge between local peacebuilders and the international community – whether policy-makers, donors or media. We are their access to the wider world. And until the locally led concept is widely accepted and practiced, we are needed to clear away the obstacles that prevent the full potential of local peacebuilding from being realised.

## *3. The benefits of local leadership in peacebuilding*

We believe that locally led peacebuilding is crucial to building lasting peace because:

- Local peacebuilders have the moral authority that can persuade those involved in conflict to make fundamental attitudinal and behavioural changes<sup>1</sup>.
- Locally led peacebuilding is less costly than working through international agencies, generally by an order of magnitude<sup>2</sup>
- Supporting locally led peacebuilding builds capacity that will endure when international attention and presence wanes<sup>3</sup>
- Locally led peacebuilding can tap into voluntary effort and therefore engages more people to work for peace<sup>4</sup>
- Locally-led peacebuilding can connect issues and problems that are not obvious to, or achievable by, most international programs that tend to focus on one area of expertise<sup>5</sup>
- In many fragile states, governance becomes radically localized as a result of conflict; local peacebuilders are best placed to work within this localized governance system<sup>6</sup>.
- Locally-led peacebuilders, through their status, connections and local knowledge, can see opportunities that are not obvious to those from other cultures<sup>7</sup>
- Local peacebuilders are part of their communities and thus, while they often face considerable risk, are less visible targets for those who may be opposed to peacebuilding<sup>8</sup>.

#### ***4. Achieving the potential of locally-led peacebuilding***

There are a number of obstacles that currently limit the full potential of local peacebuilding, and hence prevent a real chance for sustainable peace. These obstacles are outlined below, and proactively removing them is at the core of Peace Direct's methodology.

##### ***4.1 Funding structures are not suitable for supporting local peacebuilders***

**The problem:** The majority of donors are unable to administer the small grants that are needed to support local peacebuilders; are typically impatient to see impact with short term commitments; are reluctant to provide core funding; and tend to be very slow to release funds. Local peacebuilders typically need small amounts of funding (usually for core costs); often require a number of years simply to position themselves to be able to start to make an impact; have a reputation that is highly sensitive to gaps in funding;<sup>9</sup> and often need funds at very short notice.

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Footnotes throughout the text offer examples of Peace Direct's model in action with its funded partners.

<sup>1</sup> In DR Congo, CRC has turned violent militias into peace activists that are now crucial to the project.

<sup>2</sup> The Collaborative in Sudan actually covers many of its intervention costs by community contributions.

<sup>3</sup> In Dr Congo, INGOs regularly pull out and now MONUC is doing the same. CRC has been asked to adopt the Save the Children (StC) programme in North Kivu as UNICEF funding for StC has stopped.

<sup>4</sup> In Sri Lanka, CPBR now has 200 volunteer peace activists.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the need for economic and community development to make disarmament sustainable.

<sup>6</sup> In Zimbabwe, there are multiple layers of government, party political and traditional structures that vary geographically. All these are weighted by demographic nuances; for example, 'young' people (and those that have no voice) are anyone below the age of 45.

<sup>7</sup> In Sri Lanka, CPBR realised that Buddhist monks did not engage positively in inter-religious dialogue as they felt insecure from their dated methods of education and lack of exposure to the outside world. CPBR worked with them privately to increase their confidence which led to very successful inter-religious dialogue sessions.

<sup>8</sup> In Sudan, whilst INGOs were being expelled from the country by President Bashir, the Collaborative was increasing its activities ten-fold.

<sup>9</sup> Although local peacebuilders are able to achieve a huge amount with almost no funding, their work is very dependent on maintaining close relations with communities and protagonists. Gaps in funding can limit the visibility of local peacebuilders and undermine their credibility.

**Our solution:** Peace Direct works hard to raise funds from a diverse range of sources, much of which is unrestricted. It also has a very small structure with very close relations to its peacebuilders. This allows Peace Direct to provide very small grants for core costs (most partners initially require as little as £8,000 per year), release funds very quickly when needed<sup>10</sup>, commit to an organisation for many years and bridge any funding gaps the partner may face<sup>11</sup>.

#### *4.2 Local peacebuilders are not given status by the international community*

**The problem:** Most international agencies include local involvement in their mandates and policies, but in reality local peacebuilders are rarely given a place at the decision-making table or even consulted. In part, this is a lack of awareness of what local peacebuilders achieve, but it is also an attitude that struggles to relate to local organisations.

**Our solution:** Peace Direct understands that local peacebuilders know more about preventing or resolving their own conflict than an outside organisation does, and may be faster and more effective at doing so. By assuming competence, we attract a high calibre of partner, one that is highly motivated and knowledgeable, driven by their own vision for peace and the possibility of realising it. As such, Peace Direct partners demonstrate an outstanding ability to bring peace to even the most violent and remote areas, and consistently demonstrate an ability to create a momentum for peace at the grassroots.

#### *4.3 The international community is not aware of who the local peacebuilders are*

**The problem:** Agencies understandably find it difficult to identify credible local peacebuilders, especially in areas that are conflict prone and inaccessible to outsiders.<sup>12</sup> This leads to a tendency to engage with only a very narrow section of civil society that normally has a presence in major towns, or for outsiders to make decisions themselves.

**Our solution:** In conflict situations ‘local’ means really local – right down to village level. If an organisation does not have personal connections in the communities it is working with, it is unlikely to succeed. This means more than working with a few large local NGOs that have an office in a major town<sup>13</sup>. Peace Direct spends a lot of its effort finding very localised organisations to support. Our financial support enables them to grow and become better known with other donors. We also publicise their work through our ‘promote’ function (see below), crucially via our online resource Insight on Conflict.

#### *4.4 Most agencies are not willing to take the risk of working with small unknown organisations*

**The problem:** Agencies tend to favour organisations that have a reputation and a history of working with the international community. This does not encourage new talent, and tends to lead to large local NGOs that mimic INGOs and lose the positive characteristics of being local. In particular, there is a danger that they will be directed into areas (geographically, thematically, socially) that they are not suited to.

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<sup>10</sup> In Nepal, when a riot broke out and threatened to engulf a town, Peace Direct’s rapid response fund was able to respond within a day. It took a further four days to bring the situation under control. In Kenya funds were transmitted to Concerned Citizens for Peace overnight as violence erupted in 2008.

<sup>11</sup> In Sudan, Peace Direct was able to find £10,000 as bridge funding for an oil-conflict initiative preventing the collapse of the project. 6 months later the project now has over \$100,000 committed from other donors.

<sup>12</sup> When Peace Direct asked the DfID African Conflict Advisor why DfID did not work in North Kivu, the reply was that they did not know any good local partners.

<sup>13</sup> The Collaborative in Sudan is made up of 30 local organisations and there are over 300 local peacebuilders featured on [www.insightonconflict.org](http://www.insightonconflict.org)

**Our solution:** A selection criteria for Peace Direct partners is that the organisation does not yet have good contacts with the international community, and has not received significant outside funding. In this way, Peace Direct continually promotes new organisations, providing them with momentum, and expanding the pool of local peacebuilders for others to work with

#### *4.5 Most agencies are not prepared to invest the time and effort to focus solely on local peacebuilders*

**The problem:** The peacebuilding sector is small, with few INGO's and funding streams. Whilst other agencies do exceptional work with and through local peacebuilders, none of them focus solely on expanding the number and accessibility of local peacebuilders. It is a challenging role to continuously seek and work with small organisations, who are not used to reporting or demonstrating significant 'sellable' impact.

**Our solution:** We believe that this problem requires a dedicated agency like Peace Direct, to fill the gap for the rest of the peacebuilding community, benefiting both local and international players.

Peace Direct's work is designed to overcome the obstacles that local peacebuilders face and, as highlighted above, many of those obstacles are associated with funding. This adds an organisational challenge that requires considerable effort to raise diverse funds, but is essential to maintaining the Peace Direct model.

#### *7. The Peace Direct 'model'*

We **find** and **fund** local peacebuilding work, and **promote** its importance to those with power and influence – external governments, donors, media, opinion formers, and international NGOs and multilateral organisations.

##### *Find*

As mentioned above, one of the challenges to local peacebuilding is that people simply do not know that they exist. By identifying who the peacebuilders are, we increase their accessibility and encourage others to take them seriously. This applies as much to the leaders of their own countries and communities as to the international community at large; community and national leaders are not always aware of their own indigenous peacebuilding capacities.

To do this, we employ local correspondents in 16 conflict countries around the world as part of Peace Direct's *Insight on Conflict programme*. Insight on Conflict is the first stage of the vetting procedure for selecting which partners Peace Direct funds.

If these peacebuilders merit moving on to becoming a funded partner, they must show that they have:

- Local roots and connections in the conflict area.
- Conviction, and have shown willingness to make sacrifices, work voluntarily and take personal risks to build peace.
- A track record but still be at a stage where a small core grant from Peace Direct can make a difference.
- A coherent conflict analysis and be able to relate their current work to this, while also having a vision of how they could impact more with greater resources.
- The potential to connect the grassroots with people in power in their conflict area.
- A clear understanding of, and desire to, communicate their work to the outside world in terms that it can understand.

### *Fund*

**Finding the peacebuilders is only the first step** and it does not overcome the main obstacle that **the vast majority of aid funding is incompatible with the work of local peacebuilders**, not least because it is not administered in small amounts.

As a **long-term solution**, Peace Direct uses its ‘find’ and ‘promote’ strategies to help change this. However, this change will take a long time, so as a **more immediate solution**, Peace Direct funds the local peacebuilders itself, whilst working to make them more compatible with more typical funding streams.

### *Our funding model*

Our funding model, therefore, requires us to raise funds from a range of different sources, so that we can provide long term funding and match the funding to our partners’ needs – small and fast funding from the public, project initiation funding from high net worth individuals, ongoing project funding from trusts and donor governments. We start with small core grants of £8,000 p.a.– of which one Nepali partner said ‘*£100 from Peace Direct that I can use with my discretion is worth £100,000 to deliver a donor’s project.*’ When the partner has shown that they can report effectively and have convincing ideas for how to work on a wider scale, we raise project funding for them.

To achieve this, Peace Direct has to search hard for the funding streams that are compatible with local peacebuilders. These are normally trusts and foundations, and these donors make up 32% of Peace Direct’s funding base (this compares to less than 7% for any other comparable organisation). It’s worth noting that two thirds of the trusts who fund through us do not have conflict resolution as an explicit goal – many are funding us because we put local people in the lead. We are thus finding new resources for local peacebuilding here as well.

This model of fundraising is extremely time-consuming and something that local NGOs would find almost impossible, especially at an early stage of organisational development<sup>14</sup>. Peace Direct takes that burden and commits to providing them with long term funding, freeing them to do what they do best – build peace.

### *Maximising the impact of our model*

Peace Direct realises that for organisations to get that ‘first break’ is very rare and the opportunities for them to get on the funding ladder are few. With that in mind, Peace Direct specifically seeks organisations that have not yet achieved their own momentum, and one of our strategies is to position these organisations to eventually be independent of Peace Direct, sourcing their own funding. **The ultimate goal is to enable them to raise money directly from donors who previously they would not have had access to.** Peace Direct can then move its attention onto other small organisations, and hence we continue to populate the peacebuilding sector with local peacebuilders.

In terms of Peace Direct’s own interests, **this latter strategy goes against the logic of most INGOs**, which see their own income increase with the success of their projects. In the case of Peace Direct, we effectively lose significant income for every successful project,<sup>15</sup> magnifying the funding challenge and our need for a diverse funding base.

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<sup>14</sup> Local NGOs often struggle to articulate their projects in a way that the international community accepts. Until they are large enough to employ dedicated fundraisers, their leaders may be choosing between fundraising or dealing with live conflict. Combined with their lack of access to the funding bureaucracy, their skills as peacebuilders can easily be overshadowed.

<sup>15</sup> The Collaborative in Sudan is currently funded through Peace Direct by Humanity United for over \$300,000, double what it was funded in 2009. Of that, Peace Direct takes 10% for its own costs. It is

What we fund them to do is to carry out the work that they think is most important. ‘Locally led’ for us means much more than using local organisations to deliver programmes in line with the requirements of donors. It means that we adopt the analysis of the conflict and of the preferred strategy for dealing with it from the local organisation.

This is not to say we fund uncritically - we test their ideas against our understanding of what makes for effective peacebuilding, and we push our local partners to think about how they will define and measure the impact of their work.

### *Managing risks*

One of the risks of our funding model is that, by encouraging our partners to find funding from elsewhere, we risk pushing them into relationships where they lose the control to lead their projects. To reduce this risk, it is important that we promote the work of the peacebuilders in parallel with positioning them with donors. By getting the international community to recognise the strengths that local peacebuilders have, by getting them into a decision making role with a position at the table, and by positioning them to be influential in the thinking of the international community, then the risk that future projects will be led by the donors rather than the local peacebuilders is reduced. It is this influence for local peacebuilders that is at the heart of the ‘promote’ component of the Peace Direct model.

### **7.3 Promote**

Finally, we promote the importance both of locally led peacebuilding in general, and of the locally led work that we are funding. We aim to make the case that peacebuilding work by local organisations and international organisations can be complementary, but that the starting point for international funding should always be ‘What is the local capacity for peacebuilding and how can we support it?’

We promote local peacebuilding in general through Insight on Conflict, a web showcase of local peacebuilding initiatives in a growing range of conflict areas, and its monthly newsletter, and through periodic publications and events. Through our evaluation work with our partners, we encourage them to better document their peacebuilding strategies and better communicate their impact with the international community.

We also give a voice to the local peacebuilding projects we support by introducing them to donors and international organisations in their own country, and in the UK, and through access to the media. This can be more valuable even than funding – in 2007 Asha Hagi, of Somalia, wanted more than anything to be able to tell the world how bad the humanitarian situation was in Somalia. We were able to arrange for her to be interviewed on BBC Newsnight – an interview that was posted on YouTube and has received nearly 80,000 views.

### **8. Costs of Peace Direct**

Currently Peace Direct supports 30 projects through 12 partners in 11 countries. The Peace Direct office is a small team of 10 permanent staff, only 4 of whom are full time. Whilst the demands of constantly working with small organisations is more time consuming than most INGOs might be used to, Peace Direct is still able to maintain a low ratio of overheads to project costs. Below is a summary of accounts at year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

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hoped that within the next one or two years, Humanity United will be funding the Collaborative directly – a Peace Direct success that will come at a minimum financial loss of \$30,000 a year.

	Basis of allocation	Fundraising £	Fund £	Promote £	Governance £	2010 £	2009 £
<i>Costs directly allocated to activities:</i>							
Project costs	Direct	-	601,725	30,345	-	632,070	300,376
Staff costs	Direct	56,599	89,000	112,262	5,705	263,566	235,979
Fundraising costs	Direct	26,867	-	-	-	26,867	43,968
Trustees expenses	Direct	-	-	-	7,340	7,340	212
Audit fees	Direct	-	-	-	4,113	4,113	4,025
<i>Support costs allocated to activities:</i>							
General office and finance staff	Transactions	2,416	10,706	10,706	2,416	26,245	18,586
Premises costs	Number of Staff	6,911	8,238	6,836	451	22,435	19,839
Communications	Number of Staff	1,823	2,173	52,952	119	57,067	39,977
Information technology	Number of Staff	766	913	1,313	49	3,041	7,097
Legal and professional costs	Transactions	-	-	-	11,505	11,505	5,218
Other office costs	Number of Staff	1,778	2,130	1,770	194	5,873	6,788
		97,160	714,885	216,185	31,892	1,060,122	682,065
		<b>9%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3%</b>		

## 9. Conclusion: adding value to the sector

Peace Direct adds value in ways that are different from most INGOs. When we ask our partners what limits their ability to bring peace to their communities, regions and countries, they mention lack of funding and lack of respect and recognition. This drives our focus on fundraising and promotion – always recognising the importance of finding the very best organisations in the first place.

There are undoubtedly skills gaps among our partners. We do not major on capacity building – in fact, we bring our partners to the UK to train young people here in conflict resolution and leadership. We do however recognise that the process of growing, in line with our funding model, puts strains on organisations in terms of financial control, communications and evaluation, for example, and we support organisations to improve their capacity, whilst helping them with project design.

We also believe that they can learn the most from each other, so we provide opportunities for them to meet together, either on exchange visits or through our Peace Exchange conferences, where the organisations we fund meet with organisations we may fund in the future, together with our external evaluator and Peace Direct staff.

The last word should go to the organisations we fund. The ways in which our model is different are very clear to them. In answer to questions posed by our external evaluator, partners described working with Peace Direct as being “very empowering”, “friendly, comfortable, full of learning, supportive”, and “very much supportive and flexible.” They appreciated the sense of partnership. “Peace Direct is taking our hand until we start walking. We never feel it’s a donor for our project,” said one. “They give lot of space, support and encourage the local peacebuilder to take the onus of the process. They are more like partners than bosses!” Peace Direct “keeps with us all the time, solves our troubles, assists us, supports us even with staff experience”. They appreciated that Peace Direct listens to the real needs of local peacebuilders. Said one: “any organization can be an excellent organization...but it’s very hard to be a friend who has a heart.”