

# **STOPLIGHT ANALYSIS:**

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING INTERNATIONAL- LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS IN PEACEBUILDING**

June 2024

## Authors and Acknowledgments

*Charles Davidson, Founder & President, IPI*

*Remy Nsengiyumva, Africa Operations Director, IPI*

*Nuria List, Research Assistant, IPI*

This work would not have been initiated without the stoplight metaphor proposed by Dean Alpaslan Özerdem of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School at George Mason University. We also thank AmeAmor Blatchford-Rodriguez, Conflict Analyst with IPI, for authoring the section introducing risk assessment matrices and for reformatting the full academic working paper for a practitioner audience.

This report offers a practitioner-friendly, summarized version of an academic working paper by the above authors. As the framework is continually tested in the field, new versions of this report will be published periodically.

## About Innovations in Peacebuilding International

Innovations in Peacebuilding International (IPI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to accompanying local peacebuilding efforts in war-affected areas. IPI partners with local community representatives to invest in strategies that aid sustainable peace solutions and produces research to advance the peacebuilding field. To learn more, please visit [www.innovationsinpeacebuilding.org](http://www.innovationsinpeacebuilding.org).

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# Purpose and Summary

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**This report presents a structured framework to evaluate the feasibility of partnerships between local and international peacebuilding organizations, especially crucial in conflict areas. The methodology employs a color-coded approach and specific assessment points, with implications for more informed decision-making and improved outcomes in peacebuilding initiatives. This report offers a practitioner-friendly, summarized version of the full academic working paper currently being finalized by the authors.**

Derived from a total of 40 years of practical peacebuilding experience from the project's two researchers as well as interviews of various other peacebuilding actors, this report introduces the Stoplight Analysis System of Partnering Organizations Readiness, a comprehensive framework designed to facilitate effective collaboration in international-local peacebuilding partnerships by evaluating the readiness of both potential partner organizations and the location of the proposed project. The system employs a color-coded approach, categorizing potential partnerships into three distinct indicators: Red (no-go), Yellow (requires further research), and Green (promising, go ahead). Within each category, specific factors are identified for assessment, guiding decision-makers in evaluating the feasibility and potential success of collaboration. The Red category signals significant barriers, prompting an immediate stoppage in the consideration of partnership. The Yellow category encourages deeper investigation to determine whether potential issues can be mitigated, while the Green category signifies organizations deemed ready for collaboration. This systematic and structured approach empowers decision-makers to make informed choices, enhancing the likelihood of successful and mutually beneficial partnerships.

This research holds significant importance in the field of conflict resolution as it provides a systematic and structured approach to peacebuilding partnership.

# Introduction

**This work offers a comprehensive and systematic evaluative method for international peace-focused organizations seeking to establish effective and sustainable partnerships with local peace-focused organizations in conflict-affected areas. The Stoplight Analysis employs a straightforward yet thorough set of criteria to evaluate the readiness of partnering organizations when considering whether or not a partnership would be beneficial and effective. In utilizing this method, organizations can efficiently navigate the complexities of potential collaboration and make informed decisions about the likelihood of preventable challenges or successes.**

The process, grouped by “restricted,” “consider with alterations,” and “proceed” is color-coded with respective indicators: **RED**, **YELLOW**, and **GREEN**.

**RED** indicates that:

- A program should not be pursued.
- A red indicator suggests restriction and prompts an immediate reevaluation of the potential partnership.

The **YELLOW** category indicates:

- One or more characteristics associated with the partnership that could present immediate or future barriers to success.
- The partnership should proceed only if the particular characteristics are further investigated and/or adjusted.
- Aspects classified as yellow require additional research to determine whether they pose insurmountable challenges or if they can be ameliorated prior to the beginning of the cooperation.
- This category should be utilized for a more in-depth analysis before making a conclusive decision on commencement.

**GREEN** indicates that

- No changes are needed and the partnership could proceed as-is.
- Organizations displaying green features exhibit promising attributes for a successful partnership.

This work expounds upon the above and describes the characteristics for each of the three categories by examining them according to our accompanying chart, focusing on the organization local to the conflict, the characteristics of the initiative itself, and finally, the characteristics of the international/partnering organization.



Methodologically, this paper utilized interviews from peacebuilders from around the globe, scholarly research of extant strategies, and a collaborative review of programming from the project's two lead authors from their own time in the field. Importantly, it should be clear that this document is used in determining whether or not an international-local peacemaking or peacebuilding partnership should be considered.

The conceptualisation and implementation of organizational readiness assessments is not a recent innovation in the world of peacebuilding organizations. The United Nations, for instance, established their own practice of local organization assessment. Their method involves analyzing institutional, financial, administrative, and technical adequacy (Hellmüller, 2014). The notable contribution of our approach lies in its clarity and accessibility rendering it user-friendly and potentially transferable and applicable across diverse sectors.

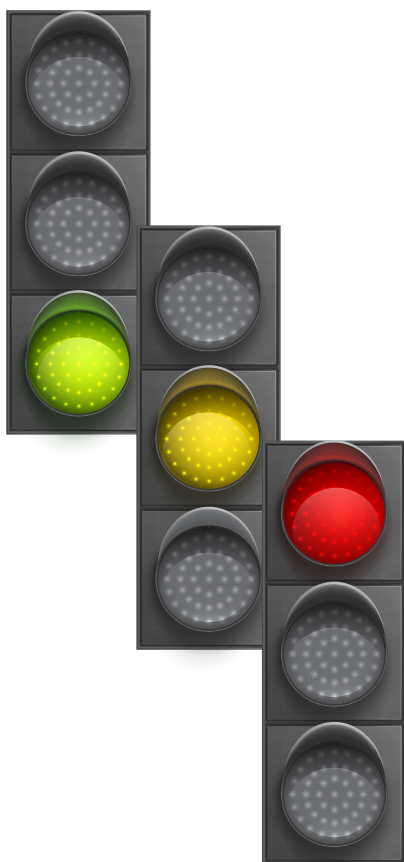
Before proceeding, it is important to understand that while an outside organization assumes the weight of partnership analysis for its own sake, and local organizations likewise, like any aspect of international-local peacebuilding, it is imperative for outsiders to lean into local insight when considering partnerships. It is important to access local knowledge about both partnering organizations and the environment within which a peacebuilding partnership is proposed. The importance of local knowledge is underscored by the insights shared in "Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners" by Anderson and Olson (2003). The authors emphasize the significance of insiders in peace work, individuals with in-depth knowledge of the context, the conflict, and its dynamics.

This systematic approach is designed to enhance the efficiency of collaboration by directing resources towards partnerships with a higher likelihood of success, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes.

## Background on risk assessment matrices

Likelihood of occurrence or exposure for select unit of time or activity	◀ Severity of injury or illness consequence ▶			
	Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Frequent	Medium	Serious	High	High
Probable	Medium	Serious	High	High
Occasional	Low	Medium	Serious	High
Remote	Low	Medium	Medium	Serious
Improbable	Low	Low	Low	Medium

Source: Popov, et al. (2022)



The Stoplight Analysis borrows from risk assessment methodologies which are already used across numerous industries for weighting potential risks and benefits of a given activity or partnership. In the article by Popov, et al. (2022) titled “Risk Assessment: A Practical Guide to Assessing Operational Risks,” the authors describe the purpose of risk assessment matrices as providing “a method to categorize combinations of likelihood of occurrence and severity of harm, thus establishing risk levels.” The authors also share that risk assessment matrices act as a measurement tool to assess, categorize, and prioritize risks within an organization in order to take appropriate next steps to mitigate the risk.

Accepted risk levels are in accordance with risk position on the matrices, allowing users to manage and communicate next steps regarding movement, mitigation, and or pivoting regarding planned contingencies.

While the Stoplight Method explored in this report draws on measurement principles and color schemes used in risk matrices, it differs in some key ways, for example by not evaluating the likelihood of risk. Rather, the Stoplight Method categorizes and identifies specific partnering organizations’ potential risk factors, allowing its users to measure and assess what their acceptance risk level is regarding the matrix.

# Systematic Evaluation of International Peacebuilding Partnership Readiness

	Local Organization	Project Characteristics	Supporting Partner / International Organization
<b>Red</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not locally/regionally staffed</li> <li>unethical behavior/lack of integrity</li> <li>Self-centered interests</li> <li>Lack of clear vision/focus</li> <li>Lack of neutrality (political, ethnic, or religious)</li> <li>Opportunistic (mission shifting, hasty funding)</li> <li>Poor financial management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of trustworthy connections</li> <li>Lack of adherence to “do no harm” principle</li> <li>Prioritization of short-term outputs over long-term impact</li> <li>No path for local process adoption</li> <li>Lack of key partners/plans to operate in isolation</li> <li>Intractable Intolerance</li> <li>Inter-country/geopolitical conflicts</li> <li>Lack of synergy with existing efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undue danger</li> <li>Lack of visa accessibility</li> <li>Lack of risk assessment</li> <li>Political/social restrictions</li> </ul>
<b>Yellow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently incorporated</li> <li>Primarily religious in nature</li> <li>Lack of national registration</li> <li>Limited work history in conflict resolution</li> <li>Political ties</li> <li>Single-person team / lack of well-structured team</li> <li>Weak communication channels with stakeholders</li> <li>Largely under-tasked team</li> <li>Lack of physical address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of local governance structures</li> <li>Dependence on external “experts”</li> <li>Unclear plan to hand off process to local stakeholders</li> <li>“Unripe” Conflict Situation</li> <li>Long-term reliance on external funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited knowledge of conflict context</li> <li>No regional coordinator</li> <li>Inefficient communication channels</li> <li>Lack of methodological connectivity</li> <li>Lack of local language abilities</li> </ul>
<b>Green</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community-based organization</li> <li>Clear peace-oriented mission</li> <li>Neutral position regarding parties in conflict</li> <li>Observance of universal human rights principles</li> <li>Willingness to invest own resources</li> <li>In line with UN Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>History of peace initiatives/conflict work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genuine partnership/collaboration</li> <li>Local ownership of project</li> <li>Clearly defined and tangible end state</li> <li>Inclusive/engage community</li> <li>Adaptability/flexibility to respond to local context</li> <li>Low fiscal entry point and immediate growth potential</li> <li>Actively involve women in processes</li> <li>Locally conceived processes</li> <li>Can be released entirely by outsiders</li> <li>Doesn’t “pay for peace”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local expert coordinator</li> <li>Funds readily available</li> <li>Well-defined budget/transparent resource allocation</li> <li>Budget aligns with project objectives</li> <li>Written plan/roadmap</li> <li>Locally-led M&amp;E strategy</li> </ul>

# Assessing a Potential Local Partnering Organization

## RED

It is imperative to carefully assess potential partner organizations to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of collaborative efforts when considering international-local peacebuilding partnerships. The following are characteristics of a partner organization that, if present, should raise immediate concerns and prompt a halt in collaboration:

- Signs of unethical behavior, corruption, or other lack of integrity
- Suspicions or perceptions that the partner organization has motivations other than genuine commitment to peacebuilding
- Driven by self-centered interests rather than a commitment to the broader goal of peace
- Lack of a clear vision or focus, mission inconsistency, and being willing to compromise on principles to secure the partnership
- Lack of neutrality in regards to political, ethnic, or religious risk
- Poor financial management, such as misallocation of resources

Numerous prior studies underscore why the above characteristics should be considered red flags for partnership. For example, neutrality is well-known as a cornerstone in peacebuilding, with overt political, ethnic, or religious biases posing risks to the creation of a peaceful environment. Sara Hellmüller's work, "International and Local Actors in Peacebuilding: Why Don't They Cooperate?" (2014), emphasizes the crucial principle of neutrality in peacebuilding efforts. Hellmüller points out that local peacebuilding actors can inadvertently reflect social dynamics and reinforce pre-existing cultural or social divisions, such as the dominance of one particular ethnic group (Haider, 2009: 8).

Importantly, the success and sustainability of a peacebuilding project must also consider the other sectors of society, specifically the endorsement and approval of the partner organization by the local government. Susan H. Allen's work, "Interactive Peacemaking: A People-Centered Approach" (2022), introduces the argument that those fostering peace within specific communities must also navigate and engage with broader national and global forces that impact these communities.

## YELLOW

In evaluating potential partner organizations for peacebuilding projects, certain characteristics indicate a need for caution or further investigation. These “yellow factors”, if present, should prompt careful consideration and assessment before proceeding with the partnership:

- The organization is newly incorporated or lacks a proven track record and established networks
- The organization has a primary religious focus and may face challenges in maintaining neutrality and inclusivity, potentially limiting their effectiveness in addressing diverse community needs.
- The organization lacks national registration, which may raise questions about the organization’s adherence to national and local laws.
- Lack of physical address, potentially posing challenges in establishing a visible and accessible presence within the community.
- Limited history of peace-related projects or initiatives, which may signal a lack of experience in navigating the complexities of peacebuilding work.
- Strong political affiliations, which may compromise the organization’s perceived neutrality.
- The organization is led by a single individual, potentially limiting scalability and sustainability.
- Lack of a well-structured and purpose-driven team with sufficient tasks with clear roles.
- Ineffective communication channels with key stakeholders.

Reich’s work, “Local Ownership” in *Conflict Transformation Projects: Partnership, Participation Or Patronage?* (2006), provides insights into the dynamics of solo-operated organizations and their potential shortcomings. Solo-operated entities may lack the diverse skills and resources required for comprehensive peacebuilding projects. The collaboration with a single individual limits an organization’s capacity to address the multifaceted aspects of conflict resolution effectively.

Moreover, Reich sheds light on the phenomenon of “mushroom NGOs,” (p. 13) as observed in places like Palestine or Afghanistan. These organizations, often established hastily in response to donor agendas, may lack proper national registration and consist of only one person, earning them the moniker “briefcase NGOs.”(p.14) Reich highlights that the modest salaries of middle-level civil servants may drive individuals to establish such organizations with the specific aim of tapping into foreign funds. Consequently, these organizations lack the diverse skills and resources necessary for effective peacebuilding.

It is important to remember that these “yellow” factors serve as indicators that warrant closer scrutiny and further exploration during the vetting process. While they do not necessarily disqualify a potential partner, they highlight areas where additional information and assurances are needed to ensure the organization’s capacity and commitment to contributing positively to peacebuilding initiatives.

## GREEN

“Green factors” serve as positive indicators of a strong and reliable collaboration. These characteristics highlight attributes that contribute to the effectiveness and credibility of local organizations engaged in peacebuilding initiatives:

- Organization is a “community-based organization (CBO)”, as CBOs inherently have an understanding of local dynamics and sustainable approaches to peacebuilding.<sup>1</sup>
- Organization has a clear and focused mission statement centered around peacebuilding, demonstrating a commitment to addressing conflict-related issues
- Organization has well-defined governing texts, such as a constitution or bylaws, which provide a framework for organizational structure, decision-making processes, and accountability, thus enhancing transparency and governance.
- Organization exhibits a neutral stance and commitment to fostering trust and collaboration among diverse stakeholders, demonstrating the ability to engage impartially with all parties involved in a conflict.
- Organization has a demonstrated and institutionalized respect for, and adherence to, universal human rights principles.
- Organization shows willingness to invest its own resources, indicating a genuine commitment to the mission and shared responsibility for achieving positive outcomes in peacebuilding.
- Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), indicating a broader commitment to addressing societal challenges, contributing to long-term development, and adopting a holistic approach to peacebuilding.
- Organization has gained insights and understanding through direct involvement in conflict to effectively navigate the complexities of peacebuilding initiatives.

The insights from “Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners” by Anderson and Olson (2003) underscore the significance of insiders in peace work. Insiders, often associated with CBOs, bring key elements crucial for effective peacebuilding. Their established reputation, credibility, and trust within the local setting are invaluable assets. These attributes translate into tangible benefits such as enhanced access to decision-makers, adept negotiation skills, and the ability to mobilize constituencies effectively.

<sup>1</sup> CBOs have a few defining characteristics, described simply by the following article by the University of Michigan School of Public Health: What is a CBO?.

The alignment between the characteristics of CBOs and the key elements highlighted in “Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners” (2003)” emphasizes the synergies between local engagement and successful peacebuilding efforts. By fostering strong ties within the community, these organizations can navigate the complexities of the conflict, negotiate effectively, and mobilize support from the grassroots level, contributing to a more sustainable and impactful approach to peacebuilding.

These green factors collectively signify a robust foundation for collaboration, suggesting that the organization is well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding projects. While these positive indicators enhance the likelihood of a successful partnership, it remains essential to conduct thorough due diligence and ongoing communication to ensure alignment with project goals and sustained impact in the targeted communities.

# Assessing a Potential Peacebuilding Project

## RED

When envisioning a project with a local peacebuilding organization, certain characteristics, identified as “red factors” should raise concerns about the viability, ethical considerations, and potential negative impact of the proposed initiative. These characteristics signal areas that require careful reevaluation of project design and potential negative or impactful outcomes:

- A lack of trustworthy connections with key stakeholders, local communities, or relevant institutions, likely undermining the project’s potential effectiveness and sustainability.
- A lack of adherence to the fundamental principle of “do no harm”, which requires immediate reevaluation to mitigate negative consequences.
- Prioritization of outputs (short-term deliverables) over outcomes (long-term impacts and changes), which can lead to superficial achievements without addressing the root causes of conflict, diminishing the project’s overall effectiveness.
- Lack of a clear pathway for how the project will contribute to peace, indicating a lack of feasibility and relevance
- Absence of a plan for local process adoption, which may indicate a lack of community ownership and participation.
- Lack of key partners or plans to operate in isolation, which limits resilience and efficacy of peacebuilding endeavors.
- Lack of efficiency or synergy with existing efforts, which may cause duplication of efforts and thus limit potential impact.

To expound upon the term “do no harm”, this principle serves as a guiding ethical imperative, necessitating a careful assessment of project activities to prevent unintentional negative consequences. This principle is echoed in the insights shared in “Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners” by Anderson and Olson (2003). The text points out instances where agencies, in their pursuit of peacebuilding objectives, may inadvertently put people in dangerous situations that they would not otherwise have entered. Fostering inclusivity and understanding should be at the forefront of project goals, creating a basis for sustainable positive change.

Addressing these red factors is crucial to ensure that the envisioned project is not only ethically sound but also strategically designed to contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding goals. A comprehensive and thoughtful approach, taking into account the complexities of the local context, is essential to maximize positive outcomes and minimize potential harm. Ongoing monitoring and flexibility in adapting the project based on feedback and evolving circumstances are also key components of a successful peacebuilding initiative.



## YELLOW

In considering cooperation with a local peacebuilding organization, certain characteristics, denoted as “yellow factors,” signify areas that require careful consideration but may not necessarily be prohibitive. These factors suggest that certain aspects of the project need further evaluation and planning:

- The absence of robust local governance structures which can significantly impede a peacebuilding project’s effectiveness in engaging and mobilizing the community.
- Dependency on external “experts” who are consistently brought in to run activities. This approach can hinder the development of local capacities and governance structures, as communities become reliant on outside intervention.
- Lack of clarity on when to transition control to local stakeholders, potentially inhibiting the community’s ability to take ownership of the project and sustain positive outcomes.
- Insufficient language skills, particularly in the local languages spoken in the community. This challenge can result in communication difficulties that hinder engagement.
- “Unripe” conflict situation, meaning local dynamics do not provide a clear path for project impact.

The insights from “Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners” by Anderson and Olson (2003) shed light on the significance of language and transparency in the success of peacebuilding projects. The importance of longer-term or more effective engagement by culturally and linguistically prepared “outsiders” is also heavily investigated in Severine Autesserre’s book *Frontlines of Peace* (2021).

Agencies may encounter difficulties in fostering transparency due to language barriers, potentially leading to misunderstandings, rumors, and suspicion within the community. The inability to communicate effectively in local languages can impede the sharing of information and the clear articulation of project goals and intentions. As a consequence, a lack of transparency can give rise to skepticism and cynicism among community members, affecting their perceptions of the agency’s activities. To mitigate these challenges, language training for staff members or the inclusion of bilingual staff and interpreters becomes crucial.

These yellow factors highlight areas where additional efforts and strategic planning are necessary to overcome potential obstacles. While these factors may present challenges, they are not necessarily insurmountable, and proactive measures can be taken to address them. Thorough assessment, community consultation, and flexibility in project design can help navigate these yellow factors and contribute to the success of the cooperation project.

## GREEN

In considering a cooperation project with a local peacebuilding organization, the identification of certain characteristics, often referred to as “green factors,” becomes pivotal as positive indicators that enhance the project’s potential for success and positive impact. Drawing insights from Reich’s work, “Local Ownership” in *Conflict Transformation Projects: Partnership, Participation Or Patronage?* (2006), and Lederach’s principles for establishing peace constituencies, we find valuable guidance for gauging the viability and sustainability of such endeavors. Lederach’s three essential elements for establishing peace constituencies: indigenous empowerment, cultural sensitivity, and a long-term commitment. These principles align with the green category as detailed below:

- Genuine partnership and collaboration in conflict transformation projects.
- Local “ownership” of the project, ensuring a deep understanding of the community’s needs and priorities and thus increasing the project’s relevance and likelihood of success.
- Clearly defined and tangible end state, providing a beacon for the peacebuilding journey, facilitating the setting of achievable milestones, and offering a roadmap for success and a mechanism for measuring progress.
- Sustainable and inclusive solutions which actively encourage the community’s involvement in the peacebuilding process.
- Actively involving women in the project design, contributing to a more comprehensive, inclusive, and effective peacebuilding effort.
- Project is adaptable and responsive to the specific context, as flexibility enables external actors to collaborate effectively while respecting local dynamics, thus fostering a harmonious partnership.
- A low fiscal entry point, allowing for a more inclusive approach that involves a broad range of stakeholders in the peacebuilding process.
- Demonstrates the potential for immediate fiscal growth, indicating economic benefits for the local community.
- The inclusion of individuals with a background in conflict participation, ensuring adequate expertise to navigate the peacebuilding process.

In assessing the “green factors” or positive indicators for a collaboration project, one should consider the extent to which the principles of genuine partnership, local empowerment, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to the long-term transformation of conflict are evident. Such characteristics not only enhance the project’s potential for success but also contribute to its positive and lasting impact on the local community.

Reich’s emphasis on “Local Ownership” stresses the significance of genuine partnership and participation, indicating that inclusivity extends beyond token representation to active involvement in decision-making processes. Integrating women into the project not only diversifies the voices

at the table but also harnesses the invaluable contributions that women can make to conflict transformation and peacebuilding efforts. Women offer insights that are pivotal in understanding the multifaceted dimensions of peace. Their inclusion brings forth diverse perspectives, enriching the project's overall understanding of community needs and aspirations.

The inclusion of individuals with a background in conflict participation, whether as former or current participants, is crucial for gaining valuable insights and fostering trust within the community. This practice aligns with the cautionary lessons from "Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners" by Anderson and Olson (2003), which highlight the challenges foreign agencies face when managing tension-filled situations beyond their skills and experience. Recognizing the value of individuals with conflict backgrounds sets the stage for a nuanced understanding of complex situations, building on the insights from both local expertise and external perspectives.

These green factors collectively contribute to the project's potential success by emphasizing local relevance, sustainability, and inclusivity. Leveraging these positive indicators enhances the project's alignment with the community's needs and aspirations, fostering a collaborative and impactful approach to peacebuilding. Regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms can further ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the project.

# Assessing the Supporting Partner/International Organization's Readiness

## RED

In addition to evaluating the feasibility of the potential local partner and project design, it is essential to reflect internally as well. The success of cooperation with a local peacebuilding organization is contingent upon various factors, and the presence of certain criteria can impede the effectiveness of such collaboration. If present, the following “red factors” should deter one from pursuing a cooperation.

- The lack of visa accessibility poses a logistical hurdle for contributors involved in peacebuilding collaborations. Restrictions on visa issuance can impede the movement of personnel crucial to the success of the partnership, hindering the transfer of expertise, knowledge, and resources.
- Lack of risk assessment, as effective cooperation hinges on the stakeholders' confidence in their ability to contribute without compromising safety, security concerns should be addressed on a continuous basis.

Political and social restrictions, such as restrictions on travel due to health concerns such as disease outbreaks, natural disasters, undue danger or other safety issues .

Successful cooperation with local peacebuilding organizations necessitates a nuanced understanding of potential impediments. The identification of “red factors” within the supporting organization acts as a crucial checkpoint, guiding decisions on collaboration. Three major obstacles – political and social restrictions, undue danger, and visa accessibility – stand out as significant challenges.

## YELLOW

If yellow factors have been identified within the supporting partner's organization, further inquiry to determine their impact and potential resolutions is warranted. The following yellow factors should be considered:

- Limited contextual knowledge of the conflict, which may lead to ineffective intervention strategies.
- Absence of a centralized figure, such as a regional coordinator, responsible for aligning the efforts of various stakeholders and preventing fragmented initiatives, duplicated efforts, or a lack of synergy among partners.
- Communication gaps that make it difficult to share critical information, updates, and insights among collaborating entities.
- Heavy reliance on external funding raises without a strategy for financial diversification and long-term sustainability.
- Lack of methodological connectivity and a shared understanding of effective peacebuilding practices, which hampers efficient collaboration between local and external partners.

The identification of yellow factors within your organization should prompt further examination. A lack of knowledge about the conflict context requires immediate attention to avoid ineffective intervention strategies. Likewise, limited mechanisms for ensuring effective communications and shared methodologies among partners should warrant reflection about your organization's ability and fitness to undertake a local peacebuilding project.

## GREEN

The following “green factors” denote aspects regarding the supporting partner’s organization and should encourage going forward with the cooperation:

- Presence of a Local Expert Coordinator to provide cultural competence and an in-depth understanding of the local context, serving as a liaison between external partners and the local organization.
- Readily available funds, providing operational flexibility and uninterrupted activities amidst unforeseen challenges.
- Well-defined budget with transparent resource allocation, which fosters trust between your organization and the local partner and demonstrates a commitment to responsible financial management.
- Budget that aligns with the overall objectives of the collaboration, which ensures that financial resources are directed towards activities that contribute meaningfully to the peacebuilding initiative.
- Written plan that serves as a clear roadmap for the collaborative venture which outlines objectives, strategies, and timelines, thus minimizing the risk of misunderstandings or misalignments.
- Locally-led monitoring and evaluation processes which ensure an accurate reflection of the impact of collaborative efforts on the ground.

To expound upon the importance of locally developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes, this commitment to involving the community in the assessment of peacebuilding initiatives not only enhances the effectiveness of the evaluation process but also cultivates a sense of ownership and empowerment within the local organization. As illuminated by “Insiders in Peace Work” in “Confronting War” by Anderson and Olson (2003), insiders possess a unique ability to provide continuity, follow-up, and long-term monitoring due to their consistent presence in the setting. When the community actively participates in the evaluation process, they not only contribute valuable insights but also take ownership of the outcomes.

Similarly, a Local Expert Coordinator enhances cultural competence and communication, fostering effective collaboration by bridging cultural gaps and aligning strategies with local dynamics. Last, having readily available funds, a well-defined budget, and clear alignment with collaboration objectives allows for the flexibility, transparency, and trust needed to maximize effectiveness while minimizing any misalignments or misunderstandings. These “green factors” signify that your organization is well-positioned to partner with a local organization to undertake peacebuilding efforts.

# Conclusion

**In conclusion, this paper provides a structured approach to partnership evaluation through the Stoplight Analysis System.**

By categorizing indicators into red, yellow, and green, this system facilitates a clearer understanding of the potential challenges and opportunities associated with collaborations between international and local partners toward peacebuilding efforts. It offers a nuanced and structured approach to assessment, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of both organizational characteristics and project-specific considerations. The red, yellow, and green factors serve as guideposts, enabling stakeholders to identify potential risks, areas for caution, and positive indicators that can significantly impact the success of collaborative efforts.

Through this framework, we underscore the importance of ethical considerations, local ownership, and inclusivity in fostering sustainable peace. The red factors emphasize the necessity of addressing potential pitfalls, from trustworthiness issues to geopolitical challenges, and highlight the significance of aligning projects with the principles of “do no harm.” The yellow factors draw attention to areas requiring careful consideration, signaling the need for additional planning and proactive measures. By acknowledging these cautionary aspects, stakeholders can proactively address challenges such as unripe project conditions or language barriers, thereby mitigating potential roadblocks. On a positive note, the green factors celebrate the potential for immediate program growth, locally conceived processes, and inclusivity, recognizing the invaluable role of women and individuals with conflict participation backgrounds in peacebuilding initiatives.

Implementing these guidelines can empower organizations to make well-informed decisions, enhancing the likelihood of successful and mutually beneficial partnerships. Regular monitoring, feedback loops, and adaptability are key to ensuring the ongoing relevance and impact of collaborative projects. The development of functional, sustainable, and cooperative local/international peacebuilding partnerships increases the likelihood that not only will programming be more successful in the short-term but more sustainable in the long term. This allows for both peacemaking and peacebuilding to fully engage systems and structures that led to and sustained conflict to be remedied.

This system will continue to be refined based on practical experiences and feedback from the report authors as well as other practitioners doing this meaningful work to promote more peaceful communities around the world.

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