

Project number	39915005
Title	Peace and Trust

Countries Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya/East Africa, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Togo

Summary Review springs from a need to better understand the position and the capacity of the Church and Local Faith Actors (LFAs)<sup>1</sup> to build peace and trust. In order to better understand, PMU has conducted a series of six reviews to see how PMU and partners approach the building of peace and trust. This report is an aggregation of these findings.

The report is an aggregation of six contextual mappings (Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya/East Africa, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Togo). The contexts consist of sites and situations where PMU and a number of its partners work.

The mappings were conducted by two independent consultants, based in Democratic Republic of Congo and Egypt, and the development strategist based at PMU.

Although the six reports rest on slightly different analytic frameworks, this comprehensive report relates to “Causal Layered Analysis” (CLA). The CLA approach focuses on four aspects: instrumental, social causes, structural discourses and metaphors.

Building peace and trust from a civil society position depends on consideration of both needs and functional capacity. Any Civil Society Organization (CSO) needs to consider its ability to function as peace and trust builder in terms of protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialization, social cohesion, facilitation, and service delivery.

Considerations of such functions encourage the Church to get engaged in enabling reconciliation and promotion of dialogues. More specifically, the peace and trust building ministry is about: mediation, raising awareness (sensitization of people to prevent conflicts), and building capacity of local peace builders (grassroots peace facilitators). The findings of the report, makes it clear that the Church has a mission for building peace and trust. Especially in African contexts, there is also an expectation that the Church takes part and plays a role.

### Action

There are a number of contextual factors as well as theological aspects that lead up to formation of the Church approach. Therefore, what are called for are contextual sensitivity, good self-esteem of role and function and a wide capacity to holistically address needs and tensions. In the intervention fragmentation has to be avoided both in terms of groups and actions. Maintaining dialogues of diverse groups may be a way to do so. Although, the individual members of the Church are important, the Church as a body needs to develop a strategy for its own action as well, and make sure that this strategy can communicate with local cultures.

### Social processes

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<sup>1</sup> The “Church” is often used to designate aspects of the approach, while the “LFA” often point to interventions run by local churches or social branches of the Church.

The Church usually sees individual's situations and needs rather than groups'. Therefore building peace and trust, often aims at stimulating behavior and relations that reduce tensions and conflicts. Often times, it is individuals in the Church and their awareness that inspire action. In such endeavor the Church is anchored in values picked up from the Creation Story, such as equality and stewardship. Even the self-definition of the role is based in the Creation Story aiming at restoration. In peace and trust building processes the Church never ceases to be a Church, on the contrary it makes use of the fact that it is often embedded in multiple cultures. The tool for this mission is usually social and deliberative dialogue, for interaction with both citizens and authorities. Besides that, the Church has to rely on competences of its members.

### **Discourses and structures**

Effectively building peace and trust depends on thorough analysis of contextual conditions and factors. This analysis is both a matter of access to data and an analytic structure. The Church tends to talk about transformative justice and "Shalom". The Church seems to be quite aware of the great number of structural factors at designing interventions forwarding peace and trust. Sometimes it also sees how it is a part of the fabric of society, and sometimes can take advantage of a multiple base in different ethnic and tribal communities. This multiple base and the ability to realize unity in diversity, together with reliability and a moral authority, is a precondition for legitimate action. However, the Church faces a number of challenges in forming efficient structure for analysis and action, both internally and externally: the composition of the Church, linkage between LFAs and the Church, mobility and flexibility, staffing roles, steering principles, relations to the wider society etc.

### **Myths and metaphors**

The usage and importance of narratives in building peace and trust varies a lot among churches and LFAs. Where tensions exist narratives play an important role, as a vessel both for self-esteem and self-definition and for attitudes. Narratives therefore become very strategic to infuse energy to continue the struggle and to highlight the essence of the conflict. Since the Church has storytelling and testimonies at its heart, the capacity to work with cultural narratives is quite good. However, working with peace and trust, there is not a fully worked out narrative canon. Each LFA selects stories they believe suits their own context, and often times these are for internal or temporal use. Very often the selection is made up of Biblical stories rather than stories from own context. To some extent such selection hampers the ambition to address and interact with local contexts.

Recommendations The report recommends that actions be taken that enables the Churches and LFAs to be more intentional and outcome driven in building peace and trust. This means creating strategic space for long-term commitment, up-dated capacity for continuously doing conflict sensitivity and strategic analysis, an approach that secures a simultaneous work with different target groups and to secure diversity among staff.

In order to stimulate peace and trust building processes, creating platforms of intercultural interchange and engagement, would enable better relations between groups and individuals. Also, for partners it would be important to avoid fragmentations of roles (like sometimes being a civil society organization and other times being a church). As a general rule PMU and partners ought to respond to the larger picture by prioritizing interventions with clear social

impact. Overall, capacity needs to be built around capacity to intervene in local conflicts and to assist in reconciliation.

PMU should dedicatedly respond to its coordinating role by sensitizing around peace and trust building processes. For instance, it could develop a faith based conceptual framework for building peace and trust. It would also be important that PMU and partners focus on bottom-up transformative approaches.

Since conflicts are not just about structures but also about cultures, PMU and partners ought to include such components into their peace and trust building strategies. This means forming effective narratives and includes culture specific actions and ceremonies into their approaches. Above all, strive to make the Church a role model narrative in itself. This also means that the Church ought to build capacity of local peace builders (grassroots peace facilitators).