



Empowering People **Building Peace**

Strategic Framework 2021 - 2025

PAX

www.paxforpeace.nl

“My **message** to people who have suffered the **atrocities** of **war** is to believe that **things** can be **different**. Understanding that **peace** is **possible** is ultimately about **standing up** for your own human **rights**”

NADIA MURAD, YAZIDI ACTIVIST - NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2018

READING GUIDE

In chapters 1 and 2 we describe PAX's mission, identity and central values and what we can add as PAX in collaboration with other parties: our added value. These characteristics of PAX determine how we look at the world and which positive and negative trends we see. Chapter 3 is dedicated to this.

In chapter 4 we explain what ambitions we want to achieve with PAX on an organizational level in the next five years.

In chapters 5 to 9 we look in more detail at the commitment of PAX at programmatic level. Chapter 5 provides insight into our theory of change: which fundamental changes are necessary for the realization of peaceful inclusive societies. In chapter 6 we make clear on which four themes PAX wants to contribute to achieve peaceful inclusive societies. We formulate a strategic objective for each theme and the main challenges. In chapter 7 we describe in which conflict areas we will be active while in chapter 8 we outline our contribution to a more peaceful inclusive society in the Netherlands. Chapter 9 deals with our collaborative relationships, how and with whom do we work together to realize our ambitions for the organization and strategic objectives for our programs.

Chapters 10 to 12 focus more on the preconditions. In Chapter 10 we identify the factors that determine the success of our programs and that are important in assessing the quality of these programs. In chapter 11 we outline the most important organizational and financial preconditions for achieving ambitions and strategic objectives. And in Chapter 12 we explain how we will monitor the progress of the Strategic Framework.

COVER PHOTO:

A Sudanese woman chants slogans during a demonstration for democracy in front of the army headquarters in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, on 12 April 2019.

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What lies ahead for PAX?

PAX has been working to achieve peace for more than 70 years. We do our work in a recalcitrant reality. It's a reality that is increasingly characterized by decreasing international cooperation, a sense of growing threat, and systematic violation of standards in the field of the law of war and human rights.

But our perspective on the world enables us to see something else too. We see a widespread desire for peace. We see activists backing away from the logic of violence. We see concrete opportunities to strengthen peace. Peace is possible and can break out anywhere.

The building of peaceful societies takes place under a tough political order in which state and non-state actors either cooperate or compete with one another, depending on their interests. The desires of and opportunities for civilians and their communities often play a subordinate role in this.

But civilians everywhere, frequently with women and young people at the forefront, are working single-mindedly on building peaceful and inclusive societies. PAX wants to strengthen the voices of these peace activists and increase their power within political arenas. *Empowering People – Building Peace!* We see that as our core mission in the coming years.

PAX

Utrecht, July 11th 2019

Who are we?

PAX came into being when Pax Christi joined forces with the Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad (IKV, Interchurch Peace Council). We have our roots in the strong desire for a peaceful and dignified life, which arose as a response to the Second World War. Inspired by the Christian tradition and the stories of hope, our predecessors bridged the chasm of enmity in a war-torn Europe. We at PAX are marked by Europe's history as a peace project, and we have our foundations in a long ecumenical tradition laid down by people who both stubbornly believe in peace and work to achieve it.

At PAX we are proud of our more than 70 years of experience that time and time again has confirmed our vision: peace is possible! While staying true to our roots, but acknowledging new circumstances, we're crossing borders once again, affirming the dignity of all people, and working in solidarity with them on building peace. We're working on realizing this mission together with civilians, partners and everyone who desires peace. Together we are committed to taking real action towards a widespread peace mission:

- ◆ Protecting civilians from armed conflict
- ◆ Ending armed conflict
- ◆ Contributing to peaceful and just societies

In our view, the peace to which we want to contribute is much more than just the absence of war and the maintenance of stability. Peace requires the construction of a social order based on justice, characterized by freedom and democracy, and guided by the common good. Hope for peace is like a fragile flower growing among the stones of violence. This hope manifests as a truth that opposes all conceivable and indisputable facts. Or according to a poem attributed to Václav Havel, "Hope is the quality of the soul, (...) an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart, anchored beyond the horizon."

In our peace work, we are guided by human dignity and solidarity. Every person, regardless of their conviction, origin or orientation, has a right to a dignified existence. This right is universal and inviolable. It is the basis of our approach which is characterized by equality, and in which it is both possible and essential to join forces in peace and leave no one behind. That also implies solidarity; after all, people are connected with and dependent upon each other.

Human dignity and solidarity are core values in our peace work. These values are the ultimate benchmark for quality. They act as a critical lens for exposing injustice and violence, and are the foundation for human rights.

What is the soul of PAX?

PAX will exist for as long as people desire peace and justice and are willing to work towards achieving them. We are the expression of this desire and willingness in the Netherlands, and we seek connection with people in conflict areas around the world. This desire for peace always arises anew. PAX wishes to bring this desire for peace into the light in each situation, and connect with this desire and strengthen it. We do this partly because of our engagement with the role that our government and its allies play in conflicts around the world, sometimes as part of the solution, but all too frequently as part of the problem.

PAX strengthens the desire for peace. We do this based on our past experience, responding to the present and keeping the desired future in mind: a world in which “faith and truth embrace each other, justice and peace kiss each other”. This is the soul of PAX; it is what drives us. This soul manifests in the practice of our peace work, in the way PAX views the world, operates in the world, and learns from the world.

How does PAX view the world?

In our view of the world, we at PAX cherish what is perhaps a controversial belief: there are opportunities for peace. Naturally, we're all too aware of the hard-political reality in which the logic of armed conflict, injustice and exclusion seems to determine everything else. But at PAX, we also see another reality that gives us hope and keeps us going. Opportunities for peace always present themselves, no matter what the situation. People stand up for peace and justice time and again. In the desire for peace, we see a transformative power that can set societies on the right track and ultimately brings peace closer. The day always comes that the desire for justice and peace turns out to be stronger than the fear of repression and violence. And on that day, the tenacious desire of everyday people can bring a wall down, dismantle a dictatorship, and cause an outbreak of peace. We are committed to this, in the belief that the establishment of justice and peace locally is also globally important.

How does PAX operate in the world?

A vision is only credible if it translates into action. In the way we work in the world, we therefore consistently align our vision – that peace is possible – with our mission of taking realistic steps to come closer to achieving peace. Peace work is always undertaken at the interface between passionate hope and thorough analysis. The way in which we deal with the tension between these two aspects is what determines the meaning of our peace work. We are always inspired by the vitality of the hope shared by people and their communities in conflict zones. They continually fire up our hope, while we hope that our solidarity keeps their own hope alive. We are their allies; we see the world through their eyes and are guided by their rights. Everything we learn this way, we connect to what we see in terms of development both elsewhere and in our own society. In this way, we contribute to the peace that our supporters also desire and to which they want to contribute.

How does PAX learn in the world?

Our peace work enables us to learn from our cooperation with people and communities striving for a peaceful and inclusive society, both in conflict zones but also in the Netherlands. This cooperation is the result of how we view the world, and it appeals to our uniting capacity. It determines our role and position within the peace work. We both aim to support and strengthen this work, and are a part of it ourselves. It is precisely this cooperation that enriches our insights and enhances our eloquence.

Experience has also shown us that opportunities for peace appear unexpectedly, and that the commitment to peace implies presence and requires strategic patience, and builds upon people who connect with each other and with society. The continued shaping and assessment of the value of this cooperation requires PAX to develop and contribute its own form of professionalism.

What is the added value of PAX?

PAX has added value both as a social organization and as a social movement. This added value enables us to work towards achieving our aspirations with authority and influence, together with other parties. Our added value is as follows:

- ◆ Our knowledge is based on years of experience, presence in conflict zones, and cooperation with partners. Where necessary, we conduct thorough investigations, and based on these, we carry out campaigns and take action.
- ◆ We strengthen the power of peace activists and therefore their capacity to articulate their claims and grievances and exert influence.
- ◆ We can create strategic connections that convey the voices of local peace activists and their communities to the political arena, so that they are heard by national and international leaders and decision-makers.
- ◆ We have social legitimacy derived from being embedded in Dutch society and from our solidarity with peace activists in conflict zones.

We do not take our added value for granted, however. Instead, we strive always to live up to it and to strengthen it, and continue to work on its vitality. Being informed requires a willingness to learn, including from others. Our solidarity with our partners requires reciprocity in the partnership. Switching strategically between local, national and international levels requires adaptability to respond to new opportunities and urgent threats. Being embedded in society requires us to listen to our supporters.

We treasure the tension that arises due to being both a professional organization and a social movement. This means that we, as professionals, must refine our relationship to society repeatedly. If we want to strengthen the desire for peace, we must listen to the supporters and local communities in conflict areas, and seek cooperation with other social organizations. Only then can PAX be both a professional organization and part of a peace movement. At the same time, we want to effectively bolster the power of civilians and their communities with an approach based on passionate hope, thorough analysis and our years of experience in local, national and international peace work.

What do we see in the world?

We see both positive and negative trends in the world. The simultaneity and contradiction of these trends are characteristic of this time in which fundamental changes are taking place.

It is certainly positive that the vast majority of the world's states adhere to the international legal order, resolve conflicts in a peaceful and democratic way, and represent the legitimate interests of their citizens as well as possible. There is also an international agreement on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including the objective of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

At the same time, however, the international order that was built up after the Second World War is now under pressure. International cooperation has been weakened. The willingness to cooperate internationally on peace and security, arms control, migration and climate policy leaves much to be desired. The US is increasingly guided by a limited view that prioritizes self-interest. Russia is strengthening its position and explicitly intervening in the affairs of European countries. China is also increasingly demonstrating itself to be a dominant world power. Fewer countries are endorsing human rights standards. The international consensus on refugee protection is eroding. Conflicting parties flout international humanitarian law with impunity. Sexual violence is increasingly being employed as part of a broader violence strategy aimed at expelling 'undesirable' communities. Lack of compliance and instrumental abuse are undermining the moral credibility of international standards.

In many countries, voters are being driven towards populism by an aversion to the established political order, a fear of losing their own culture, growing inequality and decreasing constituent loyalty. On social media, propaganda and misinformation receive a great deal of space, frequently at the expense of truth and fact.

In short, the current system is under pressure, with a new system not yet available. In the meantime, the threats are increasing in number and seriousness, evoking uncertainty and discord about the future. In response to this, we see a nostalgic yearning for nationalism and strong leadership, and a tendency to exclude other people.

Conflicts worldwide, in numbers

- ◆ 37 countries at war, 4 of which with more than 10,000 deaths per year in 2018
- ◆ 82 countries with political violence with more than 25 deaths per year in 2018
- ◆ 32,102 victims of explosive weapons in 2018, based on English media reports
- ◆ 87% increase in arms trade with the Middle East in 2014-2018 compared to 2009-2013
- ◆ Development opportunities for 2 billion people negatively influenced by fragility, conflict and violence
- ◆ 1.3 million women and 760,000 men were victims of sexual violence from 1994-2010 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ◆ Nuclear weapon states invest \$116 billion in nuclear weapons production
- ◆ Conflict causes 80% of humanitarian need
- ◆ 95% of refugees and displaced persons come from 10 conflict countries
- ◆ Political rights and civil freedoms deteriorated in 68 countries in 2018, a negative trend which has been apparent every year since 2005

Fortunately however, we're also seeing positive and hopeful responses; a movement that opposes the steady erosion of universal standards and international solidarity. People persist in their desire for a peaceful, democratic and dignified existence. There is no end to the popular uprisings against repressive regimes and failing governments. A new commitment is emerging among the younger generations. There is growing attention for power inequality, and the participation of women in political processes is increasing. Social media strengthens the mobilizing capacity of civil society in response to climate crisis, inequality, injustice, violence and corruption.

Although Europe is under pressure, the European Union can use this to boost improvement and innovation. There is a widespread, active need for a Europe that protects people and their environment. Despite, or perhaps because of stagnating international cooperation, new ad hoc coalitions are forming between states and social organizations that cooperate in specific areas. A new consensus appears to be slowly emerging that greater priority must be given to conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of injustice, inequality and exclusion.

Against the background of both the worrying and the positive trends, the nature of armed conflicts is changing. We see warfare taking on a whole new form due to the use of new technologies, the deployment of robots and autonomous weapons, and computer and network sabotage. We see intra-state conflicts becoming internationalized due to cross-border military activities by neighbouring states or armed groups, as well as geopolitical competition.

We see state violence becoming increasingly associated with violence carried out by non-state actors, with political and criminal motives intermingling. We also see increasing diversification and fragmentation of non-state actors who may not be strong in the classical military sense, but are adaptive and mobile.

The expectation is that extremist groups will continue to incite violence by making opportunistic use of marginalization (no or poor political representation) and exclusion (lack of socio-economic development).

The international community is providing insufficient response to the violence and violations suffered by civilians. Any support does not take sufficient account of the lack of legitimacy of governments and the forms of persistent exclusion in fragile and unstable countries. International military interventions seem incapable of dealing with the violence.

What is our response?

The complexity of armed conflicts is increasing, but the motives remain the same: injustice, oppression and exclusion. PAX advocates a response that involves maintaining and strengthening democracy and international justice; containing and regulating armed conflict; and carrying out interventions that focus on prevention and peacebuilding.

Injustice, inequality and exclusion are quick to emerge in disputes over access to security and justice, as well as to land, water and raw materials, to basic facilities, and to political power and governance.

These disputes reflect deeper political and economic power relations. This explains why reforms are difficult and evoke resistance among those in power and the elite. For that reason, it is important to strengthen the resilience and influence of local peace forces. Together we must increase our capacity to bring about change. This means that we must also actively oppose economic interests that profit from armed conflicts and thus help to sustain these conflicts.

More than ever, we will have to connect local peace forces with political decision-making processes at the national and international levels. In this, we will be guided by a people-oriented approach that is not solely guided by national interest, state security and combating symptoms, but is based on human dignity and 'human security', and has a preference for prevention. We consider the involvement of marginalized population groups and meaningful participation by women and the younger generations essential to this. In doing so, we will always have to align our peace work approach with an uncertain, complex and constantly dynamic context.

Religion, conflict and violence

All too often we hear the expression 'religious violence'. It is true – conflict parties use religion as an instrument for legitimization and mobilization. However, it is also our experience that religion and religious partners are often part of the solution. The 'religious violence' characterization often masks deeper-lying origins and motives for conflicts that are determined by the context. Religion appears often not to be the determining factor for the growth of extremist groups. Simplifying the role of religion is just as problematic as completely denying the role of religion. In addition, we see that the situation of religious minorities influences the involvement of external parties. At the same time, we observe that the role of religious leaders and the contribution of religion to peacebuilding are insufficiently recognized and exploited.

What are our ambitions for PAX?

Based on its mission and added value, and in response to what is happening in the world, PAX wants to develop and implement plans in collaboration with its partners. We have a series of ambitions for PAX over the coming period, both as a peace organization (Chapter 4) and for the strategic goals associated with the organization's programmes (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Equally important are the organizational and financial constraints for this (Chapter 10). Achieving these ambitions, goals and constraints is a considerable challenge to which all employees and partners will contribute, and for which leadership and cooperation at all levels will be necessary.

The main theme in our peace work in the coming years will be strengthening the voice and influence of peace forces. If we want to contribute to this, PAX will need to play a recognizable leading role that receives support from more involved people. This requires close cooperation with our partner organizations and supporters, and a commitment to strengthening the role of women in the field of peace and security.

For this reason, the following are the ambitions that PAX wants to achieve as a peace organization in the coming years:

- i. **PAX has a pioneering role in strengthening peace forces** within the themes and networks in which we operate. We make a visible and recognizable contribution to the social and political debate, and can mobilize citizens for peace and strengthening the international legal order. This enables us to put issues on the agenda and indicate potential solutions.
- ii. **PAX plays a leading role in the field of gender, peace and security** because gender equality is a fundamental condition for lasting peace. PAX applies a recognizable gender approach to peacebuilding, makes a critical contribution to the social debate on gender and conflict, and influence the making and practical implementation of policy. In doing so, we make use of our practical experience and knowledge of conflict zones.

- iii. **PAX is recognizable** to more people among the Dutch public. People recognize PAX and our commitment to strengthening local peace forces that contribute to peaceful, inclusive societies. PAX is known as a uniting, passionate and expert organization that exposes the causes of violence in its communications, and highlights the desire for and commitment to peace.
- iv. **PAX deepens its partnership with and the authority of its core and other partners** and promotes the power of this collaboration more effectively in its advocacy and publicity.
- v. **PAX has a committed following that is growing in size.** A more extensive support base enhances the power of our peace work. We therefore want to strengthen and expand our support base with people of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs, who share and commit to our ideal of a peaceful, inclusive society. We want to facilitate our supporters in their contribution to a peaceful, inclusive society in the Netherlands and elsewhere in the world.

How does PAX contribute to peace?

Building peaceful, inclusive societies requires fundamental and irreversible changes within a society. These transformative change processes enable civilians and their communities to more effectively raise their grievances with respect to violence and injustice.

By being 'civic change actors,' civilians will also have the opportunity to actively contribute to solving and preventing violent conflicts in their own societies. Together with our partners, we would like to contribute to these transformative changes:

- ◆ **Strengthening the peaceful power of civilians:** a resilient civil society is essential for providing civilians with the power and opportunities necessary to contribute actively to a peaceful and inclusive society. Providing greater political space for civilian activism in repressive situations is both the goal and the precondition for a resilient civil society. Active participation of women and the younger generations in political decision-making and tackling unequal power relations and gender roles play an essential role in this.
- ◆ **Strengthening social cohesion:** a fragmented society is vulnerable to violence, has a greater risk of exclusion, and has a weakened basis for collective action. Therefore, it is important to resolve disputes and create bridges between hostile groups and communities and to strengthen uniting forces. An inclusive approach focusing on excluded, marginalized groups is essential for this.
- ◆ **Restoring the social contract between civilians and the authorities:** a society in which the authorities do not allow its citizens access to security and justice is not only undesirable, but also vulnerable to violent conflict. Restoring the social contract between a listening, responsive government and civilians is therefore a priority. In this, particular attention must be paid to population groups that feel excluded. We must also take into consideration the dealing with a history of war, as well as access to justice and remedy for victims of violence and human rights violations. Victims need to feel heard, which is also important for restoring trust in the authorities.

Meaningful participation by young people

UN Resolution 2250 calls for young people's participation in peace and security decision-making and in partnerships to engage and strengthen young people in conflict prevention and transformation. PAX has long sought more collaboration with young people in our programmes. This is a strategic choice. We organize this meaningful participation of young people in urban areas because urban fragility is just as important as state fragility. We take a three-step approach for this: organizing local activities; building up experience and trust; increasing political influence. In the coming years, we would like to organize Tripoli experiences – the 'We love Tripoli' project – in other cities too, naturally together with and driven by young people.

The local conflict dynamics and the transformative processes necessary for a peaceful, inclusive society are also influenced by international actors. We recognize the role that international politics plays in situations of war, injustice and exclusion, and Dutch politics is also a part of this. For this reason, PAX is committed to a value-driven foreign policy that is idealistic in its objectives and pragmatic in its implementation. Together with our partners and networks, we therefore want to reduce the negative factors that increase the risk or intensity of armed conflict, and strengthen the factors that contribute to ending violence and resolving conflicts.

REDUCING NEGATIVE FACTORS

- ◆ **Regulation and reduction of weapons and illegal or controversial arms trade:** tackling banned and/or controversial weapons contributes to preventing or reducing armed conflict and unnecessary civilian suffering.
- ◆ **Regulation of business activities** in relation to armed conflicts: corporate responsibility and preventing companies from profiting from violence and human rights violations contributes to the prevention and repair of wrongdoing.

STRENGTHENING POSITIVE FACTORS

- ◆ **Effective protection of civilians** from armed conflict: by aligning international and other interventions with the local security priorities and human security interests of civilians and communities, governments or international security actors such as the UN, EU or NATO can better protect civilians from armed conflict and human rights violations.

This also requires stronger compliance with International Humanitarian Law as an agreed framework for the protection of civilians from armed conflict.

- ◆ **Increasing peace activism and solidarity in Dutch society:** Solidarity from Dutch society strengthens the peace forces in conflict zones, both morally and practically. Organizing involvement and solidarity also increases political support for a values-driven foreign policy that contributes to ending violent conflict and building a just peace.

These processes interact with and strengthen each other. Together they contribute to peaceful and inclusive societies.



Our vision:
Peace is possible!



PAX is a group of people who share this vision.



Our mission:

◆ **protecting** people from armed conflict

◆ **ending** armed conflict

◆ **building** peaceful inclusive societies

How do we do this?

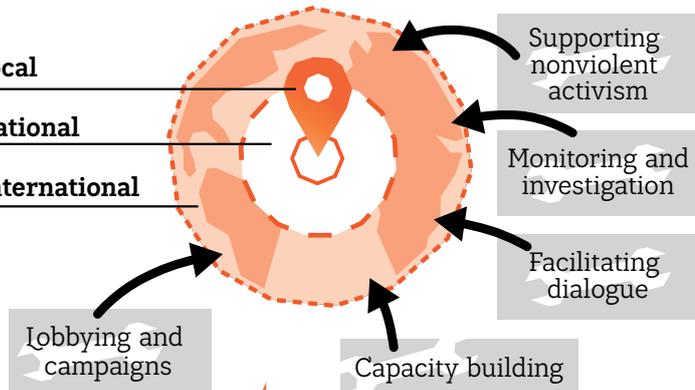
Programmes focusing on:



We are active at various levels:

- local
- national
- international

Our tools:



This strengthens peace forces:

a stronger voice and influence of civilians, activists and partners of governments, companies and international organizations such as the UN.



The international community contributes to peace, maintains human rights and protects civilians.



Negative influences can be prevented or reduced.



International solidarity with civilians, activists and partners, who are committed to peace.

Result!

Creating the fundamental conditions for peace:



These conditions will lead to a peaceful and inclusive society.◆

What are the themes embodied in our peace programmes?

PAX wishes to contribute to fundamental changes that are necessary for realizing peaceful and inclusive societies. We do this by giving our programmes a thematic focus and achieving strategic goals within them. The choice of these themes stems from our mission and our theory about realizing peaceful, inclusive societies, as outlined in Chapter 5. PAX wants to play a leading role within each theme based on its experience and expertise on the theme. The programmes that PAX wishes to carry out together with its partners focus on four themes.

Inclusive Peacebuilding

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

The voice and influence of peace forces and the resilience and social cohesion within communities have been strengthened, giving civilians lasting access to decision-making about security, justice and remedy, particularly where it concerns large-scale human rights violations that have taken place during conflict.

With this strategic objective, we aim to contribute to an inclusive, peaceful society. We do this by strengthening the voice, influence and organization of peace forces, by enhancing the resilience and inclusivity of and social cohesion between communities, and by increasing the sustainable access to decision-making processes, justice and remedy. Where possible, this is in the context of developing a democratic social contract aimed at preventing a relapse into conflict.

Gender, Peace and Security

Gender is a crucial aspect for understanding the social, political and economic dynamics of conflict and security. Conflict and violence have a different effect on men and women, boys and girls, and the associated traditional gender roles and norms. Unequal gender relationships and power relationships can also drive conflict.

PAX strives to achieve inclusive and sustainable peace processes, as well as a greater understanding of the complex relationship between gender and other identity factors such as age, ethnicity, religion and social class. We opt for a broad understanding of gender that also includes men and masculinities. A thorough gender-sensitive conflict analysis is the foundation for our peace work. In addition, we have regional programmes that specifically focus on strengthening the participation and the voice of women in peace processes. We also actively involve men and young people, and pay attention to the link between violence and masculinity.

Together with our partners, we hope to contribute to making a transformative change to unequal power relations. We pressure policymakers at all levels to promote the implementation of the Women, Peace, Security agenda stemming from UNSC 1325 and the associated resolutions. At the same time, we argue for a radical shift of focus away from women and towards greater attention to power inequality and the link with gender and violence. To contribute to this, PAX has a gender pilot fund for innovative gender projects and research into the complex relationship between violence, gender and conflict.

CHALLENGES

- ◆ Local conflicts are often linked to geopolitical power struggles, regional rivalries and the methods by which states fight international terrorism. We therefore want to strengthen strategic links between the local and national/international levels so that civilians can effectively promote their interests.
- ◆ Many conflicts take place in areas where the state is weak, absent or disputed. These areas are often under the control of armed non-state groups on which civilians rely for their security and peacebuilding. We want to strengthen civilians in seeking dialogue with these groups without unduly strengthening the legitimacy of the groups.
- ◆ Many leaders in fragile states, repressive countries and violent regions do not listen to their citizens. They limit the political space for peace and human rights activists, and in some areas it is becoming increasingly difficult for PAX to have a physical presence. Non-state actors, too, limit this political space, often with violence or the threat of violence. We therefore want to invest in the resilience and legitimacy of partner organizations and in their capacity for non-violent action, in order to increase their political space.

- ◆ In a post-conflict situation, in order to prevent old conflicts from flaring up again and again, the underlying causes of violence and the grievances arising from an unprocessed past need to be addressed. In this, PAX chooses to work based on the perspective and needs of the victims.

KEY ACTORS

We work together with civilians (focusing particularly on women and young people) and local communities, their leaders and organizations. We also focus on national governments, intergovernmental institutions at international and regional level, and where possible, on non-state groups (whether armed or unarmed).

INTERVENTIONS

We strengthen the capacity of local peace forces, including with respect to non-violent action. We facilitate dialogue, both locally and where possible, nationally. Based on monitoring and investigation, we strengthen the access of civilians and local communities to security, justice and remedy. Where necessary, we cooperate with our partners to conduct advocacy and campaigning activities in which we ask governments and/or international actors to contribute to peaceful and inclusive societies.

Humanitarian Disarmament

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Together with peace forces, we contribute to the prevention of human suffering and environmental damage caused by weapons, the development of and compliance with standards for trade in and use of weapons, and we are committed to securing remedy for victims.

With this strategic objective, we contribute to the prevention of and remedy for human suffering and environmental damage caused by weapons. We do this by advocating for effective compliance with existing standards and development of new standards for trade in and use of weapons. We focus on weapons that by their nature or deployment do not distinguish between combatants and civilians, that contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, and that act as an obstacle to the creation of peaceful and inclusive societies.

CHALLENGES

- ◆ New developments are emerging that could fundamentally change the nature and method of warfare. Due to the rapid growth in possibilities with respect to artificial intelligence, data processing and cyber war, the speed and anonymity of wars will change drastically. We will continue to monitor and address the ethical, political, military and legal concerns associated with the development of weapons technology. At the same time, the threat of nuclear mass destruction, the use of conventional weapons and the development of new weapons systems also continue to demand our attention.
- ◆ International cooperation and agreed standards require continued care and attention. Many civilians fall victim to armed conflict, frequently without transparency, accountability and remedy on behalf of the responsible states. We will challenge this in collaboration with international networks and coalitions.

Climate Crisis

Climate change influences the human security of everyone, but poses an especial threat to the most vulnerable civilians and communities, especially in fragile states and violent regions. In particular, climate change can complicate access to and the right to basic facilities such as clean drinking water. Climate change intensifies already existing tensions, catalyzes violence and threatens peacebuilding. The effects of climate change will form part of our conflict analyses. We plan to enhance our knowledge about the climateconflict nexus. Within programmes, where necessary we will seek partnerships with allies who possess complementary knowledge and experience in the field of climate change.

- ◆ The progress of disarmament negotiations is strongly dependent on the political willingness to reach an agreement. We will work with like-minded countries and other actors through research and campaigns to contribute to the further regulation and/or prohibition of weapons that by their nature or use, are incompatible with international law. We will identify and stigmatize the political unwillingness to make progress in negotiations.
- ◆ Our mandate to approach states on the matter of the humanitarian impact of arms and the arms trade is partly determined by the involvement of partners in conflict zones. We want to make this visible and strengthen it where necessary. We also want to make the impact of arms and the arms trade on civilians and their communities visible using innovative research methods.
- ◆ The development and production of weapons requires investments. We will engage with the financial sector on its responsibility to contribute to enforcing standards with respect to prohibited and controversial weapons and the arms trade. We will also mobilize the financial sector and its stakeholders, as well as our supporters, to speak out in support of ethically responsible investments.

KEY ACTORS

We focus on both governments and multilateral institutions, as well as arms manufacturers and their investors. In addition, we work in international networks and coalitions and seek connections with partner organizations in country programmes that experience the humanitarian impact of prohibited and controversial weapons.

INTERVENTIONS

We monitor and investigate the investment in, production of, trade in and deployment of weapons, and based on the information gathered, we undertake advocacy and campaign initiatives, often in cooperation with international networks.

Protection of Civilians

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Peace forces are strengthened and therefore have a more effective influence on the development of and compliance with 'Protection of Civilians' standards by national and international security actors.

With this strategic objective, we want to contribute to the protection of populations in conflict zones by strengthening civilians' voice in and influence on the integration of the security perspective of civilians and their communities in the interventions by national and international security actors.

Types of intervention available

We use proven tools to achieve our strategic objectives:

- ◆ Monitoring and investigation
- ◆ Advocacy and campaigns
- ◆ Facilitating dialogue
- ◆ Capacity building
- ◆ Facilitating non-violent action

CHALLENGES

- ◆ The increased attention for the 'Protection of Civilians' does not translate into more effective protection of civilians in conflict zones. Policy is by no means being translated into practice, and there is little transparency where the number of civilian victims resulting from international military missions is concerned. The lack of political will is partly to blame for this. We want to increase the influence of civilians and their communities on decision-making and policy related to their security. Together with them, we continue to emphasize that the credibility and effectiveness of security interventions depends on the protection of civilians and transparency about the direct consequences of military actions.

KEY ACTORS

We work mainly with civilians and their communities; their priorities and interests are always our central focus. In addition, we seek partnership with security actors (armed forces) at the national level and with multilateral institutions such as the UN and NATO.

INTERVENTIONS

We focus on increasing the political will to more effectively deploy and carry out international missions with 'Protection of Civilians' as their mandate. PAX contributes to knowledge about 'Protection of Civilians' in practice (by means such as providing training to various security actors and/or through field and other research) and appeals to international and national actors for effective policy and practice.

In addition, we conduct human security surveys to monitor security in conflict zones from the perspective of civilians and their communities. Based on this, we facilitate dialogue between civilians and security actors and influence the policy of governments and multilateral organizations through advocacy.

Business, human rights & conflict

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Peace forces are strengthened in terms of their effective influence on the development of and compliance with human rights standards by companies operating in conflict zones.

With this strategic objective, we want to contribute to the prevention and remediation of human rights violations by companies in conflict zones. We do this by strengthening the voice and influence of victims in their struggle for truth and remedy, and through the development of and compliance with human rights standards by companies and governments.

CHALLENGES

- ◆ Companies make a positive contribution to peace in the form of important economic development, but in conflict zones there is little transparency about the abuses to which companies contribute or from which they earn their profits. 'Due diligence' is often non-binding or completely omitted, while the victims of abuses have difficulty accessing justice and remedy. By investigating and publicizing serious cases, we want to make an impact on behalf of local communities in conflict zones and contribute to systemic changes.
- ◆ Business and human rights principles can be improved, are not enforceable and the impact for civilians and communities in conflict zones remains limited. The covenants concluded by the Dutch government with high-risk business sectors also have yet to prove themselves. We will focus mainly on translating existing agreements with companies into concrete improvements that have an impact in violent regions. We will pay particular attention to financial institutions in this. Concrete cases will act as leverage for achieving change at the system level.

Countermovement in Europe

Europe as a peace project is under fire. The rise of national extremism is threatening Europe from within. However, there is also a countermovement starting up, particularly among the younger generations. They want to invest in a better Europe. Civilian participation in Europe strengthens the legitimacy of joint European policies for cross-border challenges. PAX is a European peace movement. We feel responsible for contributing to this countermovement, towards a stronger Europe as a community of values. We will therefore explore the opportunities for strengthening the European peace project, together with like-minded organizations.

- ◆ The development of human rights standards at the international level is often a lengthy process, frequently with little impact on the application of the standards. Our commitment to the further development of human rights standards at the international level is therefore determined by what can be expected to create additional pressure on corporate responsibility in the foreseeable future.

KEY ACTORS

We focus primarily on Dutch or European companies that contribute to, are linked to or that profit from violence and human rights violations. In addition, we engage with investors, trade associations and governments of the countries in which these companies are located. We work together with local communities who are seeking access to justice and remedy.

INTERVENTIONS

We monitor and investigate economic and financial relationships that contribute to or are linked to human rights violations. Where possible, we engage in dialogue and start up advocacy and campaign initiatives

What is our geographical scope?

As a peace organization, we work in conflict zones that are characterized by fragility and repression, where systematic repression, fragile institutions, human rights violations and the threat of armed conflict exist. The main motive for our involvement is the lack of human security for civilians and their communities.

In Africa, we are active in conflict zones in the Horn of Africa, the African Great Lakes region and the Sahel. In the Middle East we work mainly in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. In Latin America, we work particularly in Colombia. In Europe we work in the Western Balkans and Ukraine. We are also active in the Netherlands and in Brussels and New York for our work aimed at the EU and UN.

Our peace work in regions close to Europe offers opportunities to influence the Netherlands' integrated foreign policy and Europe's joint foreign and security policy.

In response to the internationalization of conflicts, where possible we choose a regional approach to investigation and advocacy on specific topics. This enables us, together with our partners, to achieve greater impact with the European Union and other regional intergovernmental institutions.

What can we do together to achieve a peaceful, inclusive Netherlands?

As a peace movement, PAX also wants to be active in Dutch society and share our insights and meaningful stories gathered from our work in conflict zones. By doing so, we want to keep the hope for peace alive in a time of increasing division and conflicts, and oppose the tendency to withdraw due to short-sighted self-interest, which increases the threat of violence and the chance of war. At the same time, it must be clear that peace has real consequences for Dutch and European politics. A peace movement must ensure visible support for this, and offer people the opportunity to translate their desire for peace into concrete actions. That is why we support our local Embassies for Peace and other local initiatives that strengthen the uniting powers in our society.

The IKV board and the Pax Christi council of members contribute to the moral deliberation on peace issues and to maintaining our relationship with churches and supporters as well as our clients. PAX wishes to strengthen local peace forces in the Netherlands, as they contribute to creating a peaceful, inclusive Dutch society. The following are the main points in our programmatic approach.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Peace forces are strengthened and therefore contribute more effectively to a growing, more visible solidarity between citizens in the Netherlands with different cultural and religious backgrounds.

With this strategic objective, we aim to contribute to our peace mission in the Netherlands. We do this by seeking out peace forces in our own society who want to resist the climate of polarization and exclusion, and who want to contribute to dialogue and connection with communities with different backgrounds.

CHALLENGES

- ◆ People are experiencing fissures in Dutch society between people with a Dutch background, and those with a migration background and a different religion. The issues at play here relate to discrimination and intolerance. We monitor standards, bridge fault lines and in doing so, show that things can be done differently.
- ◆ The debate on Islam, migration and terrorism is strongly polarized. However, polarization stems from a broader undercurrent that is nourished by an aversion to the political elite, fear of loss of culture and identity due to immigration, growing inequality and decreasing constituent loyalty. We look for suitable frames that include rather than exclude people.
- ◆ The arrival of new refugees has created societal tensions. However, the refugee arrival also highlighted a phenomenon: thousands of volunteers register to help, and there is a large group of citizens who do feel involved, but do not identify with the polarized positions in the debate. We want to strengthen the uniting forces in society.

KEY ACTORS

We focus on local initiatives by citizens and groups with diverse cultural and/or religious backgrounds. Of course, we also appeal to local churches and our constituency of Embassies for Peace. In addition, we actively seek new target groups.

INTERVENTIONS

By carrying out tried and tested activities during Peace Week and beyond, we endeavour to strengthen the forces of change and make them more visible. We offer capacities and models for dialogue and connection and make use of opportunities to promote the visibility of local change forces at a national level. Where possible, we strive for institutional embedding of local dialogue.

Who are the partners of PAX?

Our parent organizations are IKV and Pax Christi. These representatives of our supporters approach PAX on matters to do with our mission and policy outlines. In addition to this, we participate in the international network of Pax Christi International, which is made up of more than 120 international Pax Christi sections and peace organizations that work together worldwide.

PAX works with like-minded parties to achieve shared goals. In this, we make a distinction between alliance parties, allies and partner organizations.

Amnesty International Netherlands is an **alliance party** of PAX, and together we form the 'Freedom from Fear' alliance. This alliance participates in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Strategic Partnership 'Dialogue and Dissent' (naturally while maintaining our independence). PAX also works intensively with **allies**, including network partners that collaborate on specific topics within international networks and coalitions. A striking example of this is ICAN, with PAX as the driving force on the board. We also work together with VNG (the Association of Netherlands Municipalities) on local government, and with Impunity Watch on tackling human rights violations and situations involving impunity.

PAX is an active member of these campaigns and movements



In conflict zones, we work together with around 100 local **partner organizations**. Upon entering into and during collaborations with partner organizations, PAX is guided by **partnership principles** that determine the quality of our relationship and collaboration:

- ◆ We work from a shared vision and values;
- ◆ We build on mutual trust and solidarity;
- ◆ We respect one another's autonomy and independence;
- ◆ We work together complementarily on common goals;
- ◆ We share our roles and responsibilities;
- ◆ We guarantee reciprocal accountability to each other and to stakeholders;
- ◆ We are prepared to learn from each other in order to improve the work we do.

We work with core partners with whom PAX often already has a long-term relationship. These partners possess legitimacy and capacity and are authorities in their field. PAX often works with project partners on specific projects. Solidarity is evident in the long-term cooperative relationships with core and other partners and the patient presence of PAX in conflict zones, even in times of setback when immediate results do not appear to be forthcoming. Cooperation with partner organizations in repressive and violent regions is extremely challenging due to the following factors:

- ◆ **Violence and oppression**
We've observed that living under violence and insecurity has a huge impact, both on the way partner organizations operate and learn, and on the well-being of their employees (trauma). Marginalized population groups are vulnerable to violence and displacement. Their organizations are often fragile. Escalation of violence forces the adjustment of activities and resources.
- ◆ **Political fragmentation and power struggle**
In societies where armed groups are active and impunity prevails, partner organizations can become targets of violence. It is risky to undertake activities that those in power regard as a threat. Limiting political space can limit the effectiveness of partner organizations. Partner organizations with a high degree of legitimacy are less vulnerable to this.
- ◆ **Divided societies**
Partner organizations can contribute to social cohesion in divided societies. Religious or ethnic identity is often a factor in the conflict dynamics. This offers both opportunities and limitations for partner organizations with their own identity. Connections with all actors in the conflict and with international parties are often necessary.
- ◆ **International involvement**
International actors are also part of the conflict dynamics. Their involvement often arises from self-interest, such as trade, migration, the fight against terrorism, geopolitical power, etc. In our view, this often leads to diverging local and international interests.

Partly due to these factors, cooperation based on partnership principles can sometimes be enormously challenging. Violence and oppression can mean that partner organizations

Partners

PAX works in the field together with a wide range of partners: local NGOs, community organizations, informal groups and individual activists. A few examples: In African countries, we often work together with church parties that have strong roots in society, such as the 'Justice and Peace' Committees of Dioceses in Southern Sudan. In Colombia we work with Humanas, an expert organization in the field of sexual and gender-related violence. In Lebanon we work with the 'We Love Tripoli' youth organization on social-cultural and environmentally related issues. In many cases, the cooperation focuses on diversity and inclusivity, which means mobilizing and involving as many people as possible from different groups in society in local peace initiatives.

are institutionally vulnerable and therefore remain dependent. Violence can divide partner organizations, to the extent that partner organizations may no longer be prepared to cooperate with each other. Repression and violence can threaten the physical safety of partner organizations so that PAX is unable to work openly with them. And the reciprocity and equality that we advocate may come under pressure due to the accountability requirements applying to PAX and therefore to our partner organizations.

Despite this, we are guided by our partnership principles in our collaborative work. PAX does not view itself primarily as a donor and does not see local partner organizations as implementers, but as actors with whom we work together on achieving peace. The mutual trust, joint effort and shared commitment are the ingredients of our partnership. This also means that we hold each other accountable for abuse of power and undesirable behaviour.

In practice, partnership takes shape through:

PARTNER PANELS

We work together reciprocally on joint conflict analyses, strategy formation and the development, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. The partner panels form the platform from which we and our core partners strive together to achieve shared decisions and common approaches at the level of programmes within connected regions. The opportunities for this are partly dependent on regional circumstances and the factors that play a role in them.

COMMON ADVOCACY

Together with partner organizations, we develop and implement an advocacy agenda and strategies based upon this. Due to political and security risks, partner organizations will regularly only be involved behind the scenes.

LEARNING PATHWAYS

Together with partner organizations, we participate in joint learning pathways in order to improve our effectiveness.

Which factors determine the success of PAX?

With interventions aimed at conflict transformation and peacebuilding, we can achieve positive outcomes for people in fragile and violent contexts. Our contribution to the outcomes increases when we integrate proven success factors into our approach, enabling us to increase both the quality of our programmes and the likelihood of their success.

The following are the factors that characterize the approach taken by PAX:

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

- ◆ We ensure a thorough, **gender-sensitive conflict analysis** and regularly adjust this.
- ◆ The starting point for analysis is the **perspective of civilians and their communities**.
- ◆ We look at both the **local and international/systemic dimensions** of conflict dynamics, as well as the associated political-economic influences.

INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ We **switch strategically between levels** (the levels of local communities; civil society; political decision-makers at national and international levels; companies and value chain).
- ◆ We focus on **strengthening the voices and influence of civilians** and their communities in political-economic processes and structures (claim-making capacity).
- ◆ We direct our work towards **structural and inclusive transformative changes** – also regarding gender and unequal power relations – through targeted and proven change theories (Theories of Change) and interventions.
- ◆ We guarantee **flexibility in our interventions** in order to do justice to the complex environment in which PAX works (adaptive planning). Testing our assumptions and monitoring results (outcomes) are an integral part of our interventions.

ENGAGEMENT

- ◆ We **engage in an inclusive way with civilians and their communities**, as well as governments and multilateral organizations that have an interest in peace.

- ◆ We **work and learn together with our partner organizations** based on shared vision and values. The strategic selection of and long-term engagement with partners is essential to the structural changes that we strive for.
- ◆ We **work together in alliances and with allies in networks and coalitions** based on common goals in order to increase the reach and influence of PAX and our partner organizations and gain access to new knowledge and skills.

MOBILIZATION

- ◆ We **strengthen the capacity of civilians**, their communities and our partners for non-violent activism, particularly through women and the younger generations.
- ◆ We ensure that our **advocacy and campaigns are always visibly supported by civilians and their communities** (legitimacy) and based on facts (evidence-based).
- ◆ We are **innovative in strengthening the voices and influence of civilians** and their communities in the context of shrinking political space for activism.

These success factors are central to our peer discussion about the quality of our peace work. They contribute to our reflection on the quality of our programmes during development and implementation. We will continue to gradually refine and renew these success factors.

What does this require of our organization?

In order to achieve our ambitions and strategic objectives, we also must invest in the organizational and financial environment. In the coming years, we mainly want to develop the following aspects of our organization.

- ◆ **Targeted innovation:** To increase the access of civilians and communities to peace and justice, PAX is working on overhauling its interventions. Over the coming years we would like to explore the possibilities for innovation in three closely linked areas:
 - ◆ Open source research into the humanitarian impact of violence
 - ◆ Research into the financial dimensions of violence and injustice
 - ◆ Strategic litigation for access to justiceBy collaborating with other parties, we want to find out whether we can apply these interventions more broadly in our peace work. Our goal is to strengthen local peace forces and achieve systemic change in the themes in which PAX is active.

- ◆ **Emergent learning:** PAX is strengthening its reflective practice. We're doing this based on our conviction that the road to peace is a complex change process with no fixed path, while at the same time there are similarities in the ways we can bring peace closer. To strengthen its reflective practice, PAX is introducing emergent learning: a framework within which teams use learning questions and reflective methods to jointly arrive at new insights. PAX explicitly chooses to also integrate emergent learning in its collaborative work and in learning together with partner organizations. Our goal is to achieve better actions and results through reflection.

- ◆ **Adaptive planning within peacebuilding:** We cannot tackle the complex processes that are a part of our peace work with a single plan that is set in stone. We want to carry out our peace work in close consultation with partner organizations and local communities in an inductive process of learning and adaptation. Our aim is to increase our capacity to understand and respond adaptively to dynamic change and complexity. This places demands on the way we plan, monitor, adjust and justify our work.

Connected with PAX

It is important for PAX employees to talk to each other regularly in a way that keeps the coherence of our peace work visible, and that we both experience and express the soul of PAX in words, images and stories. It is important to us that every employee in their own position feels that they are part of a shared vision. We also feel it is important for all colleagues to experience that they are contributing meaningfully to PAX in a way that is appreciated by other employees. At the same time, it is important for employees and their contributions to always be part and parcel of the PAX story.

- ◆ **Compelling and transparent accountability:** In being accountable for our peace work, we want to pay more attention to the impact of our interventions on people's lives. This requires more attention to the qualitative and narrative dimension within our monitoring, evaluations and reports. Our goal is to provide compelling and transparent accountability for the results and meaning of our peace work for the people for whom and with whom we work. In our accountability, we will also be clear about our limitations and setbacks.
- ◆ **Sustainable deployment and employee well-being:** In deploying our employees, we want to make the best possible use of their qualities and experience. This requires attention to both personal development and a healthy work-life balance, as well as a reflective professionalism that enables us to connect our own work to our vision and meaning of peace work. We also strive to employ the right person at the right moment in the right place in a way that aligns with our central values. In addition, we aim to make our peace organization sustainable in its operations. Our goal is to enable all our employees to be able to contribute to peace in an inspired, motivated and sustainable way.

As well as adequate organizational support, our peace work also requires a suitable financial scenario. In the coming years, we want to address:

- ◆ **The size of the organization:** We want to stabilize the organization in terms of the number of employees at approximately the average in the period 2016-2020, naturally depending on the available financial resources. A further significant increase in the size of the organization is not desirable from the standpoint of manoeuvrability and manageability. We seek a good balance between stability and flexibility through strategic personnel planning (the right person at the right moment in the right place) in a way that aligns with our core values of human dignity and solidarity and the most equal possible use of the available resources.

- ◆ **Scope and deployment of resources:** To achieve our mission and strategic goals, we are committed to a gradual growth in total financial resources. We aim for a good balance between personnel and operational costs, so that there is sufficient budget available for partners and other operational costs and we can achieve more impact. We will primarily use the growth in financial resources for this.
- ◆ **Fundraising:** For the financing of our peace work, we remain largely dependent on support from the Dutch government. We are working towards increasing the income from other sources, while grasping opportunities to find significant extra resources for new, ambitious projects. We would also like to have more freely disposable resources that allow us flexibility and enable us to fund projects that are difficult to finance. In addition, where possible we will make the physical and digital security and mental well-being of our partners a permanent part of the applications for funding for projects. This means that we will further increase our commitment to raise funds among private and institutional donors.

How will we monitor the Strategic Framework?

We will reflect periodically on our progress in achieving our ambitions and strategic goals, and the fulfilment of the conditions necessary for this. We will therefore focus on the following four domains.

- ◆ **The world around us:** current events and assumptions
We will periodically renew and supplement our context analyses with research into and analysis of geopolitical and policy developments relevant to conflict. This will enable us to test the relevance of our work and adjust our strategy where necessary.
- ◆ **Our organization:** added value, ambitions and prerequisites
The goals of PAX are described in the Strategic Framework as a combination of added value, ambitions and prerequisites. In these, we can identify the following testable aspects that will characterize the development of PAX in the coming years:
 - ◆ Leadership and profile (in strengthening peace forces and in the areas of gender, peace and security)
 - ◆ Recognizability, familiarity and support
 - ◆ Learning and innovation
 - ◆ Quality and accountability
 - ◆ Employee deployment and well-being
 - ◆ Income scope and diversification

We will develop quantitative and qualitative indicators, targets and learning questions for these aspects, which will form the basis for assessment and reflection.

- ◆ **Our programmes:** strategic objectives and programme quality
The Strategic Framework formulates strategic goals and success factors for our programmes. The following aspects form the basis for regular assessment and reflection:
 - ◆ Quality of the programme design
 - ◆ Achievement of strategic objectives at organization, programme and project level
 - ◆ Relevance of our theories of change

We can adjust the programme strategy and goals based on assessment and reflection, with the input of our partners and at programme and organization level.

- ◆ **Our partners:** capacity and partnership
The Strategic Framework identifies ambitions and principles in relation to partnerships. We will subject the following aspects to reflection and assessment:
 - ◆ Capacity development
 - ◆ Quality of the partner relationship

We will use the reflection to set long-term ambitions as well as annual targets and learning questions. Assessment and reflection start at the level of the partner organizations, and develop further via the programme and organization levels.



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