

# EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES AND PEACE

A JOINT STATEMENT ON AN ANALYTICAL  
FRAMEWORK, EMERGING PRINCIPLES FOR  
ACTION AND NEXT STEPS

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# INTRODUCTION

This joint statement is an important step in our collective efforts to strengthen the peacebuilding impact of our employment programmes in conflict-affected countries. Job creation, better quality jobs, and better access to jobs for the bottom 40 per cent have the potential to increase incomes and contribute to more cohesive and equitable societies. Conversely, high or increasing income inequality, unemployment and poverty can trigger alienation that contributes to instability, armed conflict, and violent extremism.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies and decent work and growth as key priorities. Leaving no one behind – a key aspiration of the Agenda – requires special attention to fragile and conflict-affected countries. At the same time, recent General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, adopted in April 2016, highlight the need for the entire United Nations system to work more closely together around the goal of sustaining peace. In recognition of the special role of jobs in building stability, and the importance of stability in advancing development, the World Bank Group's framework for the International Development Association's 18th replenishment negotiations includes: (i) Fragility, Conflict, and Violence and (ii) Jobs and Economic Transformation among its five core themes.

In the spirit of the United Nations resolutions on sustaining peace, and to support countries in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank have joined forces to advance research on the impact of employment programmes on peacebuilding. As a first

step, the partner organizations have funded an independent research report to take stock of what is known on the issue. The research involved a comprehensive literature review; an analysis of 438 employment programmes (labour-based, targeted vocational training, and small- and micro-enterprise development) in 40 conflict-affected countries; country case studies in Lebanon, Liberia, and Timor-Leste; more than 120 interviews with practitioners and beneficiaries; and regional consultations in Beirut and Nairobi. This joint statement is informed by the report's findings and consultations among the partner organizations. It reflects a starting point in the process of having a stronger foundation of shared knowledge.

This process highlighted two important challenges for raising the peacebuilding impact of employment programmes:

- The well-established theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between employment programmes and peace are not yet translated into an analytical framework or consistently applied in operations; and
- There is both a need and an opportunity to strengthen and extend the empirical evidence on the linkages between employment programmes and peacebuilding.

This joint statement: (i) presents an **analytical framework** for employment programmes that support peacebuilding outcomes; (ii) provides **emerging principles for action** to inform the design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes; and (iii) highlights joint **next steps** toward strengthening the peacebuilding impact of the employment programmes of our four organizations.



# ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

A review of the portfolios of the four organizations suggests that managers of employment programmes in conflict-affected settings implicitly assume three different “theories of change”. These theories constitute the logical link between the employment programmes and the goal of building peace.

## Contact

If conflict is driven by negative perceptions among groups, employment programmes may reduce conflict by fostering mutual understanding. By bringing people together, providing opportunities for dialogue among social groups, and breaking down stereotypes, employment programmes may increase social cohesion.

## Grievance

If conflict is driven by grievances over real or perceived injustices, employment programmes may reduce the risk of conflict by addressing them. Furthermore, delivering employment programmes through a transparent and accountable governance process may reduce the perception of inequity and injustice and ultimately reduce violent behaviour.

## Opportunity

If conflict is driven by adverse economic circumstances (e.g. unemployment or under-employment), decent employment, by providing income and livelihoods, may reduce the incentive to engage in violence as a means of improving economic circumstances.




## Jobs Effects and Programme Effects

There are two ways in which employment programmes can help build peace. Programmes can address the drivers of conflict by

creating employment and increasing incomes (**Jobs Effect**), or they can address the drivers of conflict through the programme itself (**Programme Effect**), regardless of whether the programme successfully creates jobs in the short or long term. See the table below for examples.

In addition to the above analytical framework, programme designers can consider the following dimensions of peacebuilding impacts:

- Peacebuilding **impacts on beneficiaries** can translate to **impacts beyond beneficiaries**. Considering a programme’s potential positive and negative effects beyond beneficiaries can make the design more robust and the effects more sustainable. For instance, a programme might develop the skills of beneficiaries and reduce the risk of violent behaviour among them. If market demand analyses are not properly conducted, however, beneficiaries may compete in a saturated jobs market. The very success of the programme in improving employment for beneficiaries might increase overall tensions if non-beneficiaries feel excluded or are denied opportunities.
- Similarly, it should be considered that **short-term** effects may not translate into **long-term** effects. For instance, temporary employment may not last beyond the end of the programme itself. The lack of sustained positive impacts may cause more harm than good if beneficiaries become disillusioned when these employment opportunities end. A well-managed transition from emergency responses to sound support systems and jobs policies for the long run is therefore fundamental to sustainable peace.

Theory of Change	Example of a positive Jobs Effect	Example of a positive Programme Effect
<b>Contact</b> 	Beneficiaries are exposed to members of other social groups through employment. Working together in an activity of common interest and benefit increases mutual trust and respect.	Programme participants are exposed to other social groups while participating in an employment programme (e.g. training), or being involved in negotiations on programme development and implementation. This increases mutual trust and understanding.
<b>Grievance</b> 	Grievances over unemployment are reduced as a result of sustained employment because of vocational training. Violent expressions of these grievances are also reduced.	Programme participation improves participants’ view of the legitimacy of government, or provides participants with non-violent means of expressing grievances as a result of transparent selection criteria and contracting methods in the programme.
<b>Opportunity</b> 	Beneficiaries are provided income opportunities (e.g. as a result of skills or entrepreneurship development initiatives). The relative cost of participating in armed groups increases, and people leave armed groups in favour of regular employment.	Participants in programmes experience a positive alternative to participation in armed groups. They recognize their own potential beyond violence and their personal opportunity cost of involvement in armed violence increases.

# EMERGING PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

The research findings point toward the following set of emerging principles for action that programme managers and other practitioners may wish to consider in designing and implementing employment programmes that aim to foster peace and stability in conflict-affected countries.

## **OWNERSHIP: Build on national and local ownership, and support and strengthen capacity of national and local governments in developing and implementing employment programmes for peacebuilding**

Credible national and local ownership and effective and legitimate leadership are essential to sustainable peace and resilience. Wherever possible, employment programmes should aim to empower and enhance the capacity of institutions at local and national levels. Local institutions and communities should lead employment initiatives and should be empowered to participate throughout the cycle of programme design, implementation and evaluation. However, given the realities of weak initial capacity and legitimacy in many conflict-affected countries, pursuing this goal can mean different things. For instance, in some settings, governments will be able to deliver programmes. In other settings, it may be more feasible to build government capacity to oversee programme delivery by others. In yet other settings, governments can elect to foster progress by providing additional space for private business initiatives to generate sustained employment.

## **ANALYSIS: Ensure that programmes: are based on solid conflict analysis; demonstrate understanding of the motivations of beneficiaries; and provide a relevant theory of change**

The right starting point to designing an employment programme with a peacebuilding objective is to have a clear analysis of the conflict at hand. Objective, comprehensive, and rigorous conflict analysis is challenging – in particular when there is a pressing need to deliver results. Nonetheless, programmes should more consistently attempt to identify a theory of change that best addresses the drivers of the conflict.

Programme design should also consider how different motivations of programme participants can affect the peacebuilding outcomes. Women, men, and different social, ethnic, regional or other interest groups may have diverging motivations for participation. It is important to consider their diverse experiences and histories in programme design, and to articulate explicitly why the proposed intervention will appeal to participants, and why it stands a real chance of reducing conflict.

Furthermore, programmes should make explicit the potential trade-offs between employment and peacebuilding objectives, and design interventions to mitigate emerging risks. For example, it may be that

poverty is most severe in rural areas although the main threat to peace is related to urban unemployment.

## **PARTNERSHIPS: Involve the private sector and civil society early on, and have clear criteria and conditions for their role in the programme**

The private sector is the engine of job creation in successful recoveries from conflict. Early involvement of local private enterprises in recovery and reconstruction can help jump-start business activity. It may create opportunities for developing skills among workers and entrepreneurs alike, generating sustained employment, and helping to improve domestic capacity. To increase the sustainability of employment opportunities and the impact on long-term stability, the private sector and its representatives (employers' organizations, chambers of commerce, and national sector industry councils) should also be involved early in discussions about sector- or community-based employment programmes.

Clear rules for involving private sector partners can help sustain support from the private sector for employment programmes and achieve sustainable peacebuilding outcomes. Interventions must be designed to monitor and mitigate any effects of market distortions. In addition, mechanisms for transparent and effective dialogue between programme managers and participants are essential to set wages fairly, ensure appropriate working standards, and help workers and enterprises build capacity. Programmes can further build on and strengthen existing dialogue mechanisms among government, labour unions, employer organizations and other relevant civil society organizations. It is important to involve these partners in programme design, and to be cognizant of existing opportunities and tensions.

## **TARGETING: Identify programme participants based on clear, transparent and consistent criteria; avoid processes that exacerbate tensions among groups or between participants and non-participants**

The targeting of programmes in peacebuilding settings involves challenging trade-offs. With limited resources, the goal is to positively affect those most at risk of engaging in violence, or those most vulnerable to the impacts of violence. At times, the drivers of conflict are better addressed through employment programmes that avoid targeting specific groups or regions. Decisions on the programme design should be underpinned by the underlying conflict analysis.

Geographical targeting allows for equal treatment of participants and can focus resources in restive areas or vulnerability hotspots. Restricting resources to selected areas, however, can also risk increasing tensions among regions if some are viewed as receiving favourable treatment.



Categorical targeting that limits benefits to a population group is equally challenging, for similar reasons.

To enable transparent discussion and decision-making, the programme must define the criteria for the selection of regions, groups and individual beneficiaries, and link these criteria to the underlying conflict analysis. Dialogue and communication is necessary to rally public support for the choices made.

Currently, programmes often define categories of eligible participants in broad and ambiguous terms, for instance, “at-risk youth.” This makes determining eligibility a challenge. Furthermore, ambiguous categories render programmes prone to a perceived or real favouritism or lack of transparency. Instead, programmes should seek to specify the intended target group. For instance, a project may target “underemployed male urban youth between 18-26 years old who have been in contact with law enforcement in the past five years.” Based upon a clear definition, criteria for access to programme participation can then be defined, alongside open and transparent processes for their application.

**GENDER: Identify the gender dimensions of employment programmes, and their potential in promoting gender equality**

An important targeting trade-off relates to the key goal of ensuring equitable involvement of women and girls in the design and implementation of programmes. There may be a strong rationale for targeting programmes at the demographic groups most likely to engage in violence – often young men. However, improving the economic circumstances of women in peacebuilding settings is a crucial goal, for its intrinsic importance, and because it lessens the risk of women

becoming victims of armed groups. The need to provide opportunity is heightened by the fact that many conflict-affected societies have greater shares of female-headed or single-parent households. The fact that women have been found to allocate a greater proportion of their economic peace dividends to family well-being and community recovery can contribute to overall welfare outcomes.

To minimize unintended adverse consequences, the design and evaluations of programmes should reflect an understanding of potentially differential impacts on men and women, and awareness of how the programme might reinforce or change gender norms. For example, if training sessions are held in the evenings, can women get to and from the training sites safely? Do employment opportunities expose women to danger? Projects also should consider how the conflict has affected women in the labour market – have some activities become unsafe to pursue? Do women risk losing the roles they acquired during the conflict to men returning to their communities in the aftermath of conflict?

A focus on gender roles and economic empowerment of women can increase the likelihood of programme success in terms of building peace, while strengthening women's future position in the labour market. Such opportunities must be seized.

**YOUTH: Consider youth as active agents of change during and after the employment programme, rather than solely as victims or perpetrators of violence; merge short-term interventions with long-term strategies to ensure successful transitions to adulthood**

In conflict, young people are at risk of displacement, forced or voluntary recruitment by armed groups, and physical and sexual violence. Young



people often take on the responsibility of raising younger children and financially supporting the household.

At the same time, the absence of educational and employment opportunities prevents youth from successfully transitioning into adulthood and exacerbates political, social and economic exclusion. Even educated youth face serious problems of accessing labour markets in many parts of the world.

Programmes that mobilize youth to engage in peacebuilding and develop non-violent means of expressing grievances could lay the foundations for long-term peace while providing livelihood opportunities for youth. As such, employment programmes are a strategic entry point for youth empowerment.

**RESULTS: Ensure that programme objectives are expressed explicitly at the outcome level as well as at the output level, and that both employment indicators and peacebuilding indicators are measured and reported**

Practitioners must explicitly define the objectives of their programmes. Is the goal to create long-term employment or short-term conditions for peace? Only a minority of employment programmes in conflict-affected settings currently have peacebuilding as an explicit objective. All employment programmes in conflict-affected settings, however, will have some impact on peace and conflict, regardless of whether it is a stated objective. The selection of goals and indicators should therefore at a minimum demonstrate sensitivity to the conflict setting.

Programmes can facilitate stronger evaluation and learning if they develop indicators at the outcome level rather than only at the output level, and include peacebuilding indicators in the design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. Where peacebuilding is not formally a programme objective, programmes can still seize opportunities to collect data on peacebuilding impacts. Such indicators should link to the perceived drivers of conflict and the theory of change, and should capture data disaggregated by sex, age, location, and other relevant dimensions. Indicators could include:

- Change among participants in the level of satisfaction with local authorities;
- Change among participants in the level of trust among conflicting social groups;
- Incidents of inter-communal violence in the area of the employment programme; and/or
- Perception of security and well-being in the conflict-affected setting.

**RISK: Acknowledge the potential for, and try to avoid, unintended negative consequences by strengthening risk analysis**

Consider the risks associated with different programmes, in different contexts and among different groups of people. All programmes have the potential for positive as well as negative externalities, and these should be taken into account in programme design. If not properly managed, well-intentioned programmes that promote contact among

social groups can backfire and reinforce stereotypes. For instance, within a public works programme, hierarchies may emerge based on existing conflict dynamics, dictating which groups are assigned particular tasks. Similarly, a programme designed to enhance employability through vocational training could increase expectations of employment, which if left unfulfilled, may increase grievances rather than reduce them. Programmes that only offer women employment opportunities that are in line with traditional gender roles may reinforce disparities and inhibit women's economic and social potential. Conversely, non-traditional employment opportunities may expose women to security risks by upsetting local gender norms.

**SUSTAINABILITY: Integrate the sustainability of both the peacebuilding impact and the economic impact of the programme**

Peacebuilding programmes should acknowledge that the creation of sustainable employment and livelihoods will also have an impact on the long-term sustainability of peacebuilding. Even short-term programmes can build conditions for long-term sustainable outcomes, for the beneficiary, for local economic activity, for the implementing governmental agency, or for a wider planning process. For instance, the accumulation of savings, skills, and networks among programme participants will have a long-term impact on their future prospects for productive employment. The development of capable and accountable systems for the identification of beneficiaries can last well beyond the life of the specific programme. Whether or not the programme is expected to continue, these longer-term outcomes should be anticipated and supported from the design phase.

Resources for peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction employment programmes can be used as an investment that paves the way for a development-oriented response to fragility, even in the early stages of post-conflict stabilization. The aim is to create synergies that optimize the use of limited financial resources for early response and income security in the short term, while simultaneously addressing structural poverty and unemployment issues in the long term through the development of opportunities for sustained and productive work.

**COLLABORATION: Maximize the comparative advantages of the partner organizations and minimize the transaction cost when implementing employment programmes in conflict-affected countries**

While information sharing on conflict analysis and jobs needs is essential, organizations must consider when and whether it is efficient to undertake joint design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The goal of joint implementation is usually to reduce the costs of programme implementation. To achieve such efficiency savings, decisions to involve organizations in collaborative work must be informed by areas of comparative advantages and mandates, and be driven by the substantive nature of the programme. When possible, integrated strategic planning should involve participation of all relevant stakeholders. Above all, it is important to allow for flexibility, based on a regular review and validation of achievements and objectives.



# NEXT STEPS

ILO, PBSO, UNDP, and the World Bank agree to systematically build the evidence base on the peacebuilding impact of employment programmes which they fund, support, or implement. The four organizations intend to:

## **Programme Pilots**

Subject to country demand and needs, design and implement pilot programmes, with two or more organizations partnering to bring to bear their complementary strengths, where useful for greater impact. Conduct joint impact evaluations of the projects delivered. Develop recommendations on monitoring and impact evaluation, as well as hands-on lessons learned on developing employment programmes with a view to achieving peacebuilding objectives.

## **Evaluate**

Strengthen the evaluation of employment programmes with a peacebuilding objective, and make results more readily accessible. The partner organizations will work to strengthen their respective policies for evaluation of job and peacebuilding impacts in relevant projects. In addition, any evaluation document for the 438 programmes reviewed in the report that is not yet in the public domain will be made available online, as permitted by access to information policy.

## **Learn**

Continue the joint effort to learn about effective employment programmes for peacebuilding and share the knowledge gathered to field offices including through joint dissemination initiatives. Improve the exchange among partner organizations on data and context analyses related to employment in conflict-affected settings.



# KEY RESOURCE PERSONS

Please feel free to reach out to the partner organizations to discuss this joint statement, the employment programme you are working on, collaboration on employment programmes in conflict-affected countries, or related matters.



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## PHOTO CREDITS

p. 2: Coffee Handlers at Cooperative Café Timor Sifting Coffee Beans, 10 July 2009, UN Photo/Martine Perret

p. 5: Haitians Plant and Save Land in Cash-for-Work Programme, 03 May 2012, UN Photo/Logan Abassi

p. 7: Weaver at Work outside Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, 30 May 2014, UN Photo/Basile Zoma



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