

Caselet Session (workshop)

- **Intro**
 - Present the exercise and format of the exercise.
 - Explain the broad scenario being presented.
 - **Framing:** Keeping a decolonised framing to the scenario, highlighting the local organisation's perspectives on the partnership session'. The aim of the session is to develop a sustainable approach to the problem that speaks to the needs and agendas of all parties involved. In decision making, it is important to centre the perspectives of the local partners – those who are directly, on a day-to-day basis, impacted by conflict and violence.
 - All partners need to keep this in mind in order to shift power in their roles.
 - Remind them about the principles of equality, mutuality, solidarity, humility, complementarity.
 - **Overarching questions to consider:**
 - What happens when (discussed changes) are done? How will we know that the priorities and agendas of the local partner are centred in the process? How do we know if power has truly shifted to the local actor?
 - What guidance is needed for the international partner involved in transition? What is the local partner's role in the transition process?

Caselet

Background

Peace First is an international charity based in the UK. As part of the Strengthening Networks to Prevent and Respond to Violence project, the Global North based organisation has been partnered with a local peacebuilding organisation in Colombia, called *Manos Solidarias*. The partnership between the two organisations began in 2021 and ultimately aims to support local peace committees in developing and employing early warning systems and crisis response actions.

The partnership between *Peace First* and *Manos Solidarias* was agreed after *Peace First* employed a local peacebuilding consultant to conduct a scoping exercise to mapped out more than 20 organisations in Bogotá focussed on early warning networks across Colombia. The local peacebuilding consultant has been able to bridge the cultural differences between the two organisations by translating sector language so they are understood by both parties. *Manos Solidarias* was identified as most suitable for the partnership due to the alignment of short-term and long-term outcomes, as well as the fact that they are one of few women-led organisations in the peacebuilding arena. The local peacebuilding consultant was previously a coordinator at one of *Peace First*'s other partners in Bogotá and became an advisor to *Peace First* when their term had finished. They are a trusted member of the peacebuilding community in Bogotá.

The project deliverables have been successfully completed, with positive feedback from local communities engaged with *Manos Solidarias*, and the local protection committees have been strengthened via the coordination and support of *Manos*

Solidarias. As the project enters its evaluation stage, occurring 3 months before the end of the two-year project, *Peace First* and *Manos Solidarias* are looking at next steps beyond the project.

Together, *Peace First* and *Manos Solidarias* submitted a grant proposal to the donor to expand the work, but it was unsuccessful. Unfortunately, the funder's strategic priorities had changed, and they were looking to withdraw funding support from Colombia. As a result, *Peace First* and *Manos Solidarias* individually conducted an internal assessment to determine whether to continue the partnership. While both organisations conduct their assessments, *Peace First* have committed to giving the *Manos Solidarias* a small pot to keep their operations going for 3 months, and their other major grant is finishing up within the next 8 months.

With no long-term funding available to continue activities and with the key project objectives achieved, *Peace First* is looking to transition out of the partnership. However, it was recognised that *Peace First* have little experience of partnership transitions and to-date, and their previous transitions have had a focus on organisational capacity strengthening with the intention that the local partner could act as their own prime in future grants going forward. This time, *Peace First* are questioning how they can better approach the transition in a way that supports the long-term goals of *Manos Solidarias*.

Manos Solidarias, on the other hand, concluded that the end of a partnership with *PeaceFirst* and the withdrawal of funding leaves them in a vulnerable position in terms of maintaining their community-based activities and sustaining peace in the region. The local staff are also concerned about job security, and the senior management is worried about staff turnover and the financial sustainability of the organisation.

Scenario

Both *Peace First* and *Manos Solidarias* have yet to share the results of their internal assessments. However, as part of the project evaluation, *Peace First* are organising a meeting with *Manos Solidarias* and both have agreed to set some time aside to talk through the future of the partnership.

Caselet Instructions

- Please read the 'Challenges' laid out below, and the key areas of decision making. Then, within your group, discuss how you would process the transition using the 'Decision Points' laid out below. Remember to think about solutions from the perspectives of both *Peace First* and *Manos Solidarias*. What approaches might you take to ensure that sustainable transition occurs? How can the actors involved work together to achieve their vision of a decolonised partnership?
- When you are done, reflect on the transition process you have just discussed. What could be improved? Did you find any other challenges that were not included in the caselet? Was your transition dictated by the principles of *equality, mutuality, solidarity, humility, complementarity*?

Challenges:

- *Peace First* are unsure how to relay their intention to transition from the partnership to *Manos Solidarias*. How can they communicate their desire to transition in a way that is sensitive to *Manos Solidarias*?
- *Peace First* has limited guidance on how to transition from the partnership in a responsible manner. How can both organisations work together to develop a transition plan that is supportive for both organisations?
- *Peace First* and the local staff of *Manos Solidarias* do not have the same understanding of what a partnership transition means. A cultural and linguistic difference needs to be addressed. How can this be done?
- *Manos Solidarias*'s main priority is preventing and responding to conflict. As a community-based organisation, their future depends on support from the community, but also from funding from partners. How can their future be maintained?
- The local community is aware that funding will be completely withdrawn in 8 months' time. Some of the local staff are feeling disconcerted by the uncertainty of *Manos Solidarias*, where risks include high staff turnover and loss of institutional knowledge. In what ways can the local community's concerns be addressed?

Decision Points:

- The approach to communicating the desire to transition.
- Shared vision of the transition / the transition plan.
- The level of accompaniment throughout the transition.
- The point in the transition where responsibility shifts.
- The formal end to the transition.

Post-Caselet Discussion Questions

- What else might be a challenge that wasn't covered and how could you respond to improve the situation?
- What are the key takeaways that you are taking with you from this?
- How might you see these lessons applying to your future work with local partners or otherwise?

Closing

- Discuss ways that they can get engaged with decolonising work.