FHI 360's Adaptive Peacebuilding Approach

FHI 360's Approach to Fostering Locally Led Solutions to Violent Conflict and Extremism

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Why *Adaptive* Peacebuilding?

FHI 360 views violent conflict and extremism as *adaptive problems*. These are problems resulting from drivers and dynamics that are constantly evolving, so the response to them also needs to evolve and adapt. Our approach to resolving and preventing violence and extremism is *adaptive peacebuilding.*[1] This approach starts with *understanding the complex and dynamic nature of the problem* — and continuously updating that understanding. It has at its core the principles of *local ownership*, which include *investing in local* capacities and the *resilience of institutions to sustain peacebuilding processes*. Finally, adaptive peacebuilding embraces *learning* and *stimulates regular activity adaptation*.

FHI 360's Adaptive Peacebuilding Approach

For the last 20 years, FHI 360 has developed and implemented solutions to violent conflict and extremism in more than 35 countries across five continents. When we started this work in 2002, we admit that we approached violent conflict as a *technical problem* as opposed to an *adaptive one*. But we have learned a great deal, and we have adjusted our approach over the past decade to foster and build the capacity of local communities and actors to craft their own solutions in contexts as diverse as Cameroon and Mali, Myanmar, and Tunisia.

Key Components of the Adaptive Peacebuilding Approach

Illustrated in the figure and described below, adaptive peacebuilding closely aligns with the Global Fragility Act; the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability; the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act; the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Women, Peace, and Security Strategy; USAID's strategies for countering violent extremism; and USAID's policies on youth development, climate and locally led development.

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1. De Coning C. Adaptive peacebuilding. Int Aff. 2018; 94(2): 301-17.

- **Understand the local system and the dynamics of the conflict.** Working with and through local actors, we continually improve and update understanding through participatory and rolling assessments, analysis, and complexity-aware monitoring activities. We build upon existing research, further examine key mobilizers and conflict dynamics and ensure that activity design is continually informed and adjusted to the context.

- **Advance locally led solutions**. To do so, we apply methodologies such as Whole System in the Room workshops, where system actors jointly develop action plans to address their key priorities and then award grants to local partners to implement the solutions at the national, regional and/or community levels. Locally led activities incorporate lessons from the "Reflecting on Peace Practice" framework by engaging "key people," whose roles are critical to the conflict dynamics, and "more people," who provide broad legitimacy for local conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

- **Strengthen resilient institutions and local capacities for peace**. We offer capacity-strengthening, mentoring, training and learning opportunities to key local actors, organizations and institutions that have roles to plan in furthering peace and resilience. We assess and strengthen capacity using a Capacity 2.0 approach, improving evidence-based technical approaches and ultimately increasing the impact and sustainability of activities.

- **Integrate conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion**. We conduct integrated gender and conflict sensitivity analyses and key-actor-influence mapping to inform activity design and implementation. We ensure activities Do No Harm and further gender equity and social inclusion — in part by strengthening the voice and role of women and young people in preventing conflict, violence and fragility.

- **Integrate regular testing, learning and adapting into programming.** We ensure that adaptive management and complexity-aware monitoring, evaluation and learning are integrated across activities, allowing our project teams to constantly learn from and monitor impacts, reflect on progress, and pivot activities as needed. We do this by (1) creating a culture where staff and stakeholders commit to exchange ideas and learn candidly, take risks and try new approaches and (2) establishing an adaptive management cycle and allocating resources toward strengthening the management capacity of staff and partners.