Peacebuilding for faith-based development organisations: Informing theory and practice

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Abstract: Faith leaders and their congregations have been recognised as holding the potential to engage positively in peacebuilding activities in a post-conflict context. Alongside this faith-based development organisations have the ability to engage with these constituencies to increase the peacebuilding impact of their activities. This paper presents a framework of faith engagement to enable FBDO's to work with local faith leaders and people of faith to develop the peacebuilding impact of development activities. A reworking of Anderson's 'Do No Harm' it encompasses the areas that FBDO's need to address in order to be effective peacebuilding actors in a faith context.

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Introduction

Faith has had an ambiguous role in violent conflict and conflict resolution over the centuries. There is growing recognition that Faith leaders and their congregations hold the potential to engage positively in peacebuilding activities in a post-conflict context. Alongside this faith-based development organisations (FBDOs) have the ability to engage with these local faith constituencies to increase the peacebuilding impact of the organisations development activities.

In this article I examine current literature with regard to the role of FBDOs and outline a theoretical approach for FBDOs seeking to engage with faith communities to develop the peacebuilding impact of the development activities. This theoretical approach is represented by a 'Framework for engagement' and posits a three stage level of faith engagement reworking Anderson's 'Do No Harm' strategy. The Framework identifies key components for FBDOs seeking to undertake faith-based peacebuilding activities and encompasses the areas that FBDO's need to address in order to be effective peacebuilding actors in a faith context. In addition this paper highlights the need for an ethical approach to faith-based peacebuilding which underpins the theoretical framework.

Contrary to the expectations of secularization theories, Religion has seen a growth in the last century as the number of religious adherents has grown, along with a development in different religious ideologies often leading to an increase in fundamentalism (Gopin 2000: 3). Alongside this increase in religiosity there has also been an increase in the number of violent conflicts that have taken place within state boundaries. Many of these conflicts have used religious rhetoric to promote the use of violence as acceptable in promoting the nationalist or ethnic cause that they are pursuing. An analytical understanding of the role of religion in conflict would suggest that religious doctrines can be construed as ambiguous, and consequently can be used to promote violence or to promulgate peace, and that they are most likely to promote violence when linked with ethnic or nationalist claims (Appleby 2000:10).

Many of the countries facing these intra-state conflicts face issues of extreme poverty with all that this encompasses with regard to health, education, livelihoods and human rights abuses. Consequently these countries have a plethora of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) both international and local working on various development issues. While some of these organisations may come from a secular background, there are many faith-based organisations working in these settings, who are seeking to bring socio-economic improvements into the

areas in which they work. NGOs face huge challenges in undertaking development and peacebuilding activities, yet they are in a unique place to engage with local faith communities and to develop the role of faith and religion in peacebuilding activities (Smock 2004: 46).

This paper seeks to explore the role of FBDOs in the process of working with faith leaders and their congregations in the promotion of peace in areas where faith has been used to give moral sanction to violence. Adapting the 'Do No Harm' framework originally established by Mary Anderson, I outline a framework for these organisations to use in planning and implementing development activities, and in establishing their role as a faith-based actor who is seeking to have peace impacts through their work. Anderson's 'Do No Harm' framework was originally established in the early 1990's as a result of research demonstrating that development organisations were often impacting the conflict context in which they worked, and this impact was at times deleterious to the situation. Her framework which involves a full assessment of those factors that contribute to conflict and peace was aimed at enabling development organisations to plan and implement projects and programmes that do not impact negatively upon the conflict context, and enable development organisations to operate in that context in a positive manner. I will demonstrate how this framework can be further developed to assist FBDO's in inter-faith peacebuilding.

In this paper I will refer to 'faith' and 'faith leaders' as opposed to 'religion and religious leaders'. The majority of people's faith is expressed through institutional religious structures, however, there are many forms of worship and faith which exist outside of these structures and which should be included in inter-faith peacebuilding activities, consequently I use the broader term of 'faith'. I will also use examples from field research undertaken in Northern Uganda of the work of two different organisations in October 2010: the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) a Northern Ugandan NGO; and Christian Outreach Relief and Development (CORD) a UK-based NGO to illustrate the framework.

Increasing amounts of development aid are being channelled through NGO's to bring about socio-economic change in a variety of situations. In fact some International NGO's have budgets which are greater than the relevant Government department in the country in which they are located (Ferris 2005). Donors are keen to engage with International NGOs and through them with local Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) to bring about change in the host country. Alongside this increase in donor funding for NGO's there has been a further two-fold development. The first is the realisation by development NGOs that their activities have an impact upon the peace and conflict dynamics within a conflict context, and an

increase in academic and practitioner thinking on reducing the negative impacts of their activities on conflict dynamics.

These developments have put all NGOs, both International and local in a situation whereby they are seeking to bring about socio-economic change in post-conflict areas. These programme interventions are to be designed so that they do not impact negatively on the conflict context, and in addition they are to contribute to 'peace writ small' and 'Peace Writ Large'. Leaving aside the argument as to whether local and small scale development initiatives are able to contribute to 'Peace Writ Large', the task facing NGOs in post-conflict settings is huge (Paffenholz 2005).

To assist NGOs in this task, a variety of tools have been produced. This began initially with the 'Do No Harm' framework of Anderson. However, it became clear that the analysis and assessment process during programme and project design was crucial to establishing project impact upon peace and conflict indicators. Bush outlined and developed a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) (1998), and this concept has been developed and changed over the years, so that there are now at least 11 different types of approach to development and peace (Bush 2005). There is also a concern that local NGOs especially lack the capacity to use these tools effectively, and find them difficult to use in their contexts (Barbolet et al 2005). These assessments all mention local community leaders, though few specifically mention local faith leaders, who may be key in establishing dividers between faith groups, or equally may be working to establish links between different groups. On many occasions it is likely that there will be some overlap between community and faith leaders, but this is not always the case and in some cases local faith leaders may be ignored altogether.

Although faith, religion and faith leaders are mentioned in passing in some of these tools, there has been little direct attempt to engage with these issues. This may be because authors and academics from a secular background feel hindered in wrestling with these issues, although acknowledging that they are often important in conflict and post-conflict settings. This framework is an attempt to redress this imbalance in theory and practice.

Challenges Facing FBDO's

FBDOs are a large subsection of the NGO community. WHO estimate that at least 40% of health services are provided by faith-based organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011: 11). Along with their secular counterparts FBOs and FBDOs face the challenge of working in difficult post-conflict settings, and in endeavouring to bring about

socio-economic change. FBDOs come in all shapes and sizes, from the very large, such as World Vision, to locally based civil society. Although this diversity of organisation provides great opportunities for engaging in development activities, it means that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to working with such organisations. Alongside this diversity of organisation the identification of FBDOs also raises issues. Most INGO's from the global north will usually highlight if they come from a faith-background such as Islamic Relief, or Christian Aid, or Tearfund (The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund). However, NGO's and CSO's that originate in countries where faith is a normative part of culture are much less likely to highlight any faith affiliation that they have, or to emphasize a faith-based motivation for the work that they undertake, because faith is such an accepted part of society. For this reason Bouta et al. have identified different definitions for categorizing faith-based organisations dependent upon their religious affiliation and location (Bouta, Abu-Nimer, Kadayifici-Orellana 2005). These commentators focus particularly on Christian and Muslim faith-based organisations, but similar issues apply to Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh organisations. Where faith and its practice is such an embedded part of culture, organisations that come from a faith motivation are unlikely to highlight that motivation.

FBDOs have much that commends them in their activities. Some International FBDO's are likely to be sited in a location for much longer periods of time than secular organisations, and their international staff are also likely to remain in an area for a much longer period than their secular counterparts (Bouta, T., M. Abu-Nimer and S. Ayse Kadayifici-Orellana 2005). This means that closer relationships are built with local people, and the presence of expatriate families who speak a local language demonstrates solidarity with local communities. In addition FBDO's share a common language of the sacred with local faith communities; even if these faiths are different (Harpviken and Roislien 2008: 364). This shared language could be the cause of some difficulties, but it can also be an opportunity to engage with local communities around issues of faith, and this shared language is absent with secular organisations, who may struggle to communicate in the same terms with local communities where faith is part of everyday life.

Equally moral legitimacy is given to faith leaders and faith organisations when discussing issues that impact local lives (Bouta, Abu-Nimer and Kadayifici-Orellana: 2005). The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) working in Northern Uganda, have made great advances in reducing sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) as a result of all faiths working with legal counterparts to highlight not only a legislative prohibition to this activity, but also

to demonstrate a Biblical or Koranic prohibition to this act (personal interview, Gulu, 2010). A faith perspective offers a moral sanction which may provide greater motivation to change behaviour than a purely legal motivation.

There has, however, also been much criticism made of faith-based organisations from a variety of different sources. These include limited capacity and resources for professional development activity, accusations of proselytism, and of these organisations being too focused on the process and less on the outcomes of development activities (Bouta, Abu-Nimer, and Kadayifici-Orellana 2005). However, an increased legitimacy of FBDOs has demonstrated an increased desire on the part of donors to engage with FBDOs.

FBDOs like their secular counterparts also need to improve the conflict-sensitivity of their work, and are also seeking to improve the peacebuilding impacts of their work. FBDOs like many secular organisations are struggling with this additional focus. In addition FBDOs have a unique opportunity to work with faith communities, where faith has been used to justify violence in a conflict setting. This is an activity that secular organisations are unable to do, but both international and local NGOs can work with faith communities, using the strengths that the communities have in these areas. There is however, little guidance or understanding of how this activity might take place. How can faith-based organisations engage around issues of development and peace with different faith constituencies in an effort to increase peacebuilding impacts?

Purpose of a Framework

In addressing these challenges that face FBDO's endeavouring to engage with faith issues in post-conflict settings, it would seem appropriate to develop a framework of engagement. Such a framework should be a tool that can give guidance to project design and implementation, but is flexible to be used in any circumstance, and consequently not directive. When Anderson developed her framework for 'Do No Harm', she made these comments about the purpose and utility of frameworks:

> A framework took does three things. First, it identifies the categories of information that have been found to be the most important in affecting the way aid interacts with conflict. Second, it organizes that information. Third, it highlights relationships among the categories and allows one to anticipate likely outcomes of alternative programming decisions. This facilitates an assessment of whether the anticipated

impact is the best one available and if not allows an examination of options and alternatives to improve the impact (Anderson 1999: 75).

Consequently, any framework that is developed needs to be empowering and to provide the relevant categories of information for users, but must not direct users what to do specifically as each project is dependent upon location, conflict context, and local capacities to engage with issues of faith. Any framework that is developed should allow FBDO's to place themselves at the appropriate level of faith engagement, and then to assist them in developing their role as a faith peacebuilder through the socio-economic development activity that they are undertaking with the communities.

Essential Components of a Framework

The identification of the essential components for such a framework would appear to be the key to developing a successful tool that can be used by FBDO's in the field. In developing this framework which is illustrated later in this paper, I have used the principles of Anderson's framework with regards to the 'Do No Harm' concept and conflict analysis, but I have also brought in other components from the writings of Paffenholz (2008), and Alger (2002) and highlighted the faith component in the analysis and assessment stage.

   a) Conflict Context

The overarching component of the framework is that of the conflict context. No significant development activity with peacebuilding impacts can take place without a substantial analysis of the conflict context. During the analysis of the conflict context Anderson maintains that it is essential to determine the dividers and tensions that exist within a community or between communities that contribute to the conflict. In addition, it is also essential to identify the connectors and those things that link communities across the conflict setting, Anderson refers to these as local capacities for peace. These dividers and connectors can be placed into five separate categories: systems and institutions; attitudes and actions; experiences; values and interests; and symbols and occasions. Systems and institutions consist of trade and infrastructure which can either exacerbate the tensions, or provide links across conflict lines. Attitudes and actions are the sentiments portrayed in the media, or the behaviour of one group toward another. These attitudes and actions can be consistent with increasing tensions, or they may connect people. Experiences can be different and so cause division or be shared and so provide space for mutual understanding and sympathy. Values and interests can be different and consequently contribute to tensions, or they may be shared and thus have the

potential for peacebuilding. Finally, symbols and occasions may serve to re-ignite old enmities or enable communities to share in a common grief, or celebration. The analysis of these factors is essential for a full assessment of the conflict setting (1999).

b) Definitions of Faith Engagement

Anderson highlighted the concept of 'Do No Harm' in her work on conflict-sensitivity. This concept has been adapted over the years, and organisations now talk about working 'in a conflict setting' and working 'on a conflict setting', with 'Do No Harm' as a baseline. In the development of a framework for faith engagement it seems appropriate to begin by defining different levels of faith engagement, using the concept of 'Do No Harm' as a starting point.

Having assessed the dividers and tensions, alongside the connectors and links, to put it simply, to 'Do No Harm' is to make sure that the dividers and tensions are not exacerbated by the project intervention, and the connectors and links are not damaged in any way.

In further refining this definition I believe it is essential to highlight these dividers/tensions and connectors/ capacities for peace focussing on faith communities and congregations. Where are members of different faith communities interacting in a peaceful manner, and where is this interaction causing tension and division? This enables us to focus on three potential definitions: 'Do No Harm'; 'Working in a faith context'; and 'Working on a faith context'. These definitions would be as follows:

1) Do No Harm: Ensuring activities do not exacerbate tensions and dividers between faith groups and faith groups and traditional cultural practice, or damage local faith capacities for peace.

2) Working in a Faith Context: Ensuring activities do not exacerbate tensions and dividers between faith groups and faith groups and traditional cultural practice, or damage local faith capacities for peace; and engaging with connectors and links between faith groups

3) Working on a Faith Context: Ensuring activities do not exacerbate tensions and dividers between faith groups and faith groups and traditional cultural practice, or damage local faith capacities for peace; and engaging with connectors and links between faith groups; and developing new connectors and enhancing local faith capacities for peace.

These definitions demonstrate an increasing level of engagement with faith communities, which are dependent upon the capacity of the International or local organisation to work with

these different constituencies. They expand upon Anderson's original concept and highlight a faith focus in the analysis and the assessment processes.

c) Service Delivery

The majority of development NGO's and FBO's activity is to engage in socio-economic activities that enable partner communities to be lifted out of poverty and increase well-being. The NGOs may call this by a variety of names such as development activity, empowerment, partnership, but service delivery is a term used by Paffenholz to label the development activities undertaken by different NGOs in engaging with partner communities (Paffenholz 2008: 5). The NGOs mode of engagement with the communities will determine the analysis that they undertake and the subsequent intervention that organisations will engage in with the communities.

Although traditionally project interventions have been determined through a needs assessment, more recently NGOs have been focussing on a human rights-based approach to development activities. Apart from the right to freedom of association, freedom of speech etc, there are many basic human rights that cover the gamut of human existence. These include access to education, access to health services, the right to own property and to have a livelihood. A human rights-based assessment would focus on where fundamental human rights are not being met and endeavour to work with communities to access these, in this way typical socio-economic development activities are still undertaken however it is the analysis through which these activities are identified and planned which is different.

However a human rights-based approach is only one analytical tool by which to decide upon project interventions. There has been a push amongst the donor community in particular to focus upon issues of political pluralism. This is partly because most donors are from democratic countries and they have an underlying philosophy that a democratic government is least likely to go to war with another democratic government. To this end some organisations seek to increase political pluralism through their development activities. Although political pluralism is seen as a global north democratic priority in the developing world, some Muslim communities have felt that cultural pluralism is more appropriate for their culture, and have preferred to focus on this approach (Said and Funk 2002).

An additional focus for service delivery is that of social justice. Social Justice per se is not the same as human rights approaches. It is a right to be able to own land, however, if the boundaries of your land are disputed as you've returned from living in a refugee camp for the

past few years, then in theory the person already owns land, and has access to a livelihood. However, if their boundaries are threatened this is more likely to be an issue of social justice. Consequently many organisations working in areas that have seen the return of large numbers of people who have temporarily migrated due to conflict are engaged in land dispute resolution. These land disputes can result in violent conflict, but working with communities to resolve such disputes peacefully provides for social justice within the community. Social Justice and Communal solidarity are two issues that are perceived as acceptable to Muslim communities, and working on Social Justice can also increase communal solidarity, as communities work together to resolve the issues that have led to injustices taking place.

A further focus for organisations engaged in socio-economic development is that of increasing peace and tolerance. This is separate from political and cultural pluralism, or social justice and communal solidarity. Projects and interventions which seek to increase peace and tolerance may focus on providing good quality primary and secondary school education, and include in this the provision of books and materials which promote peace. Additionally media programmes on the radio or television may provide basic literacy, or health education, and at the same time be providing peace messages.

The organisational approach to service delivery will depend upon the analytical approach used to assess the situation, and the peacebuilding impact that they intend to make. I would suggest that any organisation attempting to bring socio-economic change and through this to have peacebuilding impacts would be undertaking their analysis through one of these lenses: that of human rights-based approaches; political and cultural pluralism; social justice and communal solidarity; and peace and tolerance.

d) Peacebuilding Role of Faith Actor

Paffenholz states that service delivery is only a means to an end, in that it allows a gateway for an individual or the organisation to have a peacebuilding role (2008: 5). Service delivery on its own does not bring about peacebuilding, but when this is combined with the organisation taking a peacebuilding role, then peacebuilding can take place. She gives a number of roles, and I have incorporated these with roles suggested by Appleby (2000), and Alger (2002), to include the following: facilitation, monitoring/observation, advocacy, socialisation, inter-faith cohesion, protection and mediation.

Facilitation allows groups to meet together, this may be people of the same faith background as they discuss the issues and perhaps begin to move toward a point where there can be

negotiation or mediation, or it may include facilitation between faith groups. Different faiths bring with them various resources with regards to assets, such as buildings, and human resources held within the faith congregations. Meetings, activities, discussions, services, can be held in these different buildings and be supported by the different congregations.

Monitoring and observation may have a variety of roles to play. They may report on human rights abuses which impact the different faith groups and refer these to the appropriate authority, whether it's the state or some other legislature. They can act to observe the development of agreements, and can observe that these are kept following their ratification.

Following the gathering of information as a monitor the FBDO could then use this information to advocate for those affected. ARLPI in Northern Uganda presented information on human rights abuses performed by the Lord's Resistance Army and the soldiers of the Government of Uganda in their advocacy to President Museveni to bring about a ceasefire. They brought information from across the different faith backgrounds demonstrating that the violence was impacting the entire community. Their advocacy did impact the peace process, and they were instrumental in the implementation of the Amnesty Act 2000 which enabled Formerly Abducted Persons (FAP's) who were acting as combatants to escape and return home from the bush without facing criminal proceedings for their action with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Another role for the FBDO is that of socialisation. Brining different groups of people together can help to reduce prejudice if undertaken in the right conditions. This includes equality of group meetings, and presence of social norms around group meetings. Socialisation usually takes place around a socio-economic activity such as livelihoods development, or a community development activity such as water sanitation provision, but the FBDO acts to bring people of differing faiths together around an issue that is of mutual benefit to all concerned. CORD through its partners in Northern Uganda worked with ex-combatants on their return, and also whilst working with host communities developed education and livelihood opportunities for all the youth, whether Formerly Abducted Persons, or youth who had remained with their communities. Alongside these activities the NGO worked with communities on traditional cultural practices to restore a community identity, and to enable those returning to be re-integrated into their communities alongside non-abducted youth.

The Acholi Religious Leaders worked together to model inter-faith cohesion, another role of FBDOs as peacebuilding actors. They created an organisation whose aim it was to work with all other faiths present in the conflict area, and to engage with local traditional practices for restorative justice and reconciliation. By working together in a concerted manner, each faith supporting the other on areas of commonality this organisation role-modelled inter-faith cohesion, and encouraged its growth and practice in Acholiland. In inter-faith peacebuilding, the development of this inter-faith cohesion is critical, and the work of FBDOs in networking together and role-modelling such cohesion is essential..

It is the duty of the state to protect its citizens, but when a government fails in this duty FBDOs can work with individuals, organisations and communities to provide protection. This can be through accompaniment to provide a 'human shield' of observers who can ensure that individuals aren't harassed, persecuted or killed. Additionally FBDOs can provide services to provide protection. ARLPI worked with communities to provide night shelters for children, so that they could be safe from the prospect of forced abduction by the LRA.

Finally, FBDOs can act as mediators. This role is separate to that of facilitator in that it is more than the mere provision of resources or enabling a meeting to take place. It involves the FBDO acting as a 'go-between' two or more sides to a conflict who are not at that point ready to communicate directly with the other. Members of the ARLPI put their own lives in jeopardy by endeavouring to mediate between the GoU and the LRA during the conflict in Northern Uganda. Although the peace agreement between the LRA and the GoU was never signed there has been a cessation of hostilities, and although not the only parties involved in mediation, the work of the ARLPI was significant in bringing a change in President Museveni's approach to bringing peace to Acholiland and surrounding areas of Northern Uganda.

As the FBDO works through the conflict analysis, decides upon the level of faith engagement, and designs and implements its socio-economic projects, it is crucial that their role as a peacebuilding actor is defined, and that they use this role to develop the 'soft programming' of peacebuilding whilst producing the hard outputs of water-sanitation, education, livelihood development or other socio-economic activity.

The Framework

I have identified the different components that are essential for a framework of faith engagement. Each component is related to the other and all are dependent upon the conflict

context. FBDO's can locate themselves upon this framework and work with local faith capacities to develop project intervention and their role as a peacebuilding faith actor. The framework does not seek to proscribe the activity that the FBDO will undertake, but seeks to assist the FBDO in focussing on the aspects of the initial analysis and assessment that are relevant for engaging with faith groups, and demonstrating the relationship that these components have with each other.

The level of faith engagement is dependent upon the local tensions and dividers, and the local faith capacities for peace. This level of engagement will then determine service delivery and the role that the organisations take as a peacebuilder. It is through monitoring and evaluation that the FBDO can determine whether this intervention is positively impacting the faith capacities for peace, or negatively impacting the dividers and tensions. Should dividers and tensions be exacerbated it is then essential that the FBDO and partner community redesign the intervention and re-evaluate their level of faith engagement, peacebuilding role and service delivery if necessary.

See Fig 1.1

Framework Ethos

The challenge of undertaking development activities with both direct and indirect peacebuilding impacts has been met through the publication and use of a variety of tools to assist organisations in their work. These range from the 'Do No Harm' approach of Anderson (1999) through to the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments of Bush, and a variety of other forms of assessment (Bush 'A Measure of Peace' 2005).Various donors have instigated tools and frameworks for organisations to use. However, a criticism of them remains that the organisations using them quite often lack the capacity to apply them appropriately in their own conflict contexts (Barbolet et al. 'The Utility and Dilemmas 2005). A key component in the usefulness and 'success' of these tools and frameworks is the ethos in and manner in which they are undertaken, in that they should be completely participatory; all stakeholders should 'own' the assessment, the project design and implementation, and be in agreement on the changes both physical and social that they wish to see as a result of the intervention (Bush 2005). This ethos is no less relevant when endeavouring to engage with faith leaders, organisations and their congregations. This is pertinent in every stage of project research, design and implementation and is critical to the success of a faith-based intervention.

In addition to the participatory nature of the intervention, it is also essential that the FBDO comes to the community with humility (Gopin 2000), in fact it has even been suggested that expatriate workers should have lessons in humility before undertaking overseas activities. From my personal experience of working in Afghanistan I would also add to this list the educated elite of many countries struggle to receive the community wisdom that the rural poor have to bring to a situation, and also struggle with issues of humility. For a FBDO who believes that they have inherent truth claims in their faith, this issue of humility is essential. Meeting with local community partners of whatever faith background in a spirit of equality, mutual trust and learning is likely to enhance the organisations ability to engage in these issues, and will role-model good inter-faith relationships to the community.

Theories of Change

A theory of change is the underlying logic behind the success of a course of action. These theories are present in every project design, yet they are rarely explicitly stated (Eyben 2008). Understanding the theory of change present in an intervention is essential for organisational learning, and for evaluation purposes, as it enables all parties to explore why particular activities are successful or otherwise. However, in project design it is usually the theory of

change of the organisation that is of primary focus, and there is little emphasis placed on understanding the communities theories of change with regard to the given conflict context. The theory of change is the logic or reasoning behind an action and why its performance will have the desired outcome. Why does A + B = C. From a global north perspective these are generally fairly grounded in causative logic, however, theories of change expressed at a local level may be far more rooted in local custom, tradition and in relationship than in logical progression (Eyben 2008). For example in field research ARLPI cited the reason for the success of their land dispute resolution project as being simply that those involved in the dispute felt 'heard' by their community and religious leaders, and consequently were more willing to abide by the legal ruling. Although not included as a specific component of the framework the understanding of why local communities believe something will work is essential to learning for the organisation and the community. These theories of change may be problematic to the belief systems of some FBDO's if certain ceremonies or actions may help by removing or appeasing evil spirits to avoid conflict. However, FBDOs need to fully understand and work with these local theories to enable the successful implementation of project interventions. ARLPI in Northern Uganda worked with traditional justice and reconciliation ceremonies to aid return of ex-combatants to their communities which enabled a 'holistic' approach to resettlement.

Conclusion

The role of religion and faith has been significant to the promotion of violence in many intra-state conflicts. There are however many FBDO's who are seeking to work in post-conflict areas to bring socio-economic change and to undertake peacebuilding activities with their partner communities. FBDOs are uniquely positioned to engage with people of faith, especially in areas where religion has been used to promote violence, and to develop and foster the peace ethic inherent in every faith. The reality is that FBDOs face a variety of challenges which hinder their capacity to undertake this work.

Mary Anderson's concept of 'Do No Harm' which has been key in changing the activities and focus of many International and local NGOs is a concept which is useful for FBDOs and can be further refined to enable FBDOs to engage in a meaningful manner with the faith constituencies amongst whom they work to promote peace. By further defining the scope of analysis and assessment to focus on faith tensions and dividers; and faith connectors and local faith capacities for peace, FBDOs can decide on what level they have the capacity to engage: 'Do No Harm'; Working 'in' a faith context; or Working 'on' a faith context. Working

closely with partner communities FBDOs can then design an intervention based on a human rights approach; cultural and political pluralism; social justice and communal solidarity; or peace and tolerance, and through this service delivery develop the role that they will take as a peacebuilding actor in this set of circumstances. Regular assessment and analysis of the context, and monitoring and evaluation of the intervention is essential to aid organisational learning, but also to re-evaluate project design and implementation if necessary.

However, key to the successful use of any framework or guidance is the attitude and ethos under which any development activity with intentional peacebuilding impacts is carried out. Humility, partnership, mutual learning and understanding are essential for inter-faith peacebuilding to bear fruit. This framework is a useful tool for FBDOs without proscribing action, but enabling organisations to engage constructively with local faith communities in areas where faith is a normative part of the culture, and where faith and religion have been used to promote violent conflict.

In a time when development and peacebuilding are at crucial points in their evolution, it is essential to draw in all aspects of socio-cultural life in a world where many conflicts take place in countries where religion and faith are culturally embedded, engaging with the peace ethic in these faiths and the local faith capacities for peace is crucial. This framework is the beginning of a process to assist FBDOs to undertake this task.

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A Framework for Faith Engagement: Fig 1.1

Conflict Context

Dividers and Connectors limit the
scope of faith engagement and
shape the intervention and role

Faith
Dividers
and
Tensions

Faith
Connectors
and Local
Capacities
for Peace

Role and
Service
Delivery are
dependent
upon the
conflict
context, and
level of faith
engagement

The level of
Faith
Engagement is
worked out
through the role
and intervention

Role and
intervention should
impact upon local
capacities for
peace dependent
upon level of faith
engagement.

Role as
Peacebuilding
Actor

Service
Delivery

Role and Service
Delivery are dependent
on each other