



USIP REPORT ON DIALOGUE PROJECTS AND TRANSFER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past 25 years, dialogue-based processes have become one of the most prevalent conflict intervention strategies for achieving a wide range of peacebuilding goals. The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has been a leader in supporting and implementing hundreds of dialogue-based projects since its inception, and dialogue continues to be an important strategy across a wide range of USIP programming. Dialogue projects vary widely, however, and relatively few comparative evaluations have been conducted to assess the impact of these projects beyond direct participants.

In June 2015, USIP commissioned a comparative evaluation of all USIP grant-funded projects that used dialogues as a core strategy. The study focused on advancing understandings of dialogue *‘transfer’* processes and effects - or *how dialogue effects on participants is spread or transmitted beyond that group to influence other groups, practices or policies, and make broader changes in society*. It also examined changes in USIP grant-supported dialogue projects over time and assessed the relative success of different dialogue approaches. The goal was to provide an evidence base to help strengthen the design, implementation and evaluation of USIP grant-supported dialogue projects and link lessons learned to strategic programmatic decision-making that improves the impact of peacebuilding initiatives.

This comparative evaluation included: 1) a desk review of 105 USIP grant-supported, dialogue-based projects implemented during the period 1992-2015; and 2) field research in Colombia, Israel and Palestinian Territories, and Pakistan on a subset of 23 projects (approximately 22% of the dataset). In the desk review, file materials (e.g. proposals, project reports, evaluations, etc.) were coded for each project using a researcher-designed comparative analysis matrix. In the field research, data from semi-structured interviews (75 individual and 13 focus groups) with 129 grantee staff, dialogue participants, and local peacebuilding experts in Colombia (5 projects), Israel and Palestinian Territories (13 projects) and Pakistan (5 projects) supplemented information from the desk review by focusing on long-term project outcomes, transfer efforts, and contextual factors affecting projects (e.g. political climate or events). Data were analyzed and interpreted at the level of individual (micro), relational (meso), and structural (macro) change within and across projects with the help of both qualitative (Dedoose) and quantitative (Stata) software. Triangulation of data sources, collection methods, and both qualitative and quantitative analyses supported validity and reliability. The study was also limited, however, by constraints in case selection, inconsistent or thin reporting, reliance on self-reports, as well as a variety of challenges typical to comparative evaluations in the field of peacebuilding

Questions Guiding this Study:

1. What are the most common program models articulated by dialogue practitioners regarding how “transfer” happens?
2. Which of the program models are the most and least effective at creating “transfer”?
3. When implemented using these program models, what factors make the projects more likely to succeed or fail?
4. What have been the most and least successful USIP-supported dialogue projects?
5. What are the key factors (including context and process) that made these projects more or less successful?
6. What are key lessons from the study that can guide the design of new dialogue projects?

(e.g. difficulties tracking changes over time, comparing projects across diverse scope and scale, and making causal attributions).

Key Findings:

Changes in dialogue-based projects over time: Over the past 25 years, USIP grants for dialogue projects have increased significantly in both number and size, with more long-term grants and follow-up funding to grantees in recent years. Although the majority of dialogue-based projects have consistently been funded during escalation, crisis, or hurting stalemate stages of conflict, in the past ten years fewer were funded as prevention efforts during latent conflict/no violence conditions and more projects were funded in post-conflict peacebuilding conditions. The focus of change in dialogue projects has shifted away from macro-level (structural), top-down & middle-up approaches that worked primarily with high and mid-level leaders (pre-2000), toward a more meso-level (relationship) focus working with grassroots leaders and individuals through bottom-up and middle-out change approaches. Funding has shifted away from U.S. based and international NGOs toward supporting more local, in-country NGOs. In addition, over time dialogue projects have also become more focused on working with a broad mix of participants (e.g. across sectors, levels of leadership, etc.) and involving specific populations, such as youth, religious leaders, women, or police.

In recent years, more dialogues have been facilitated by past or current project participants, suggesting an increase in grantees dialogue capacities or better utilization of them. In addition, the past ten years have seen an increase in the combination or sequencing of dialogue processes with a variety of other activities (e.g. training, collaborative action, research, etc). Similarly, dialogue projects have increasingly used a greater number and variety of transfer approaches. Long-term dialogue projects have evolved over time based on changes in conflict context, program leadership, participants' feedback and needs, funders' interests and requirements, and organizational learning.

Transfer models: Four broad dialogue transfer models emerged from this study, differentiated by a number of components and focused on the directionality of change beyond participants. These models include:

1) Bottom up and out transfer – where grassroots leaders expand dialogue effects horizontally to peers and vertically to mid- and high-level leaders. Capacity building was usually an integral part of project activities, outcomes were primarily at individual (micro) and relational (meso) levels, and projects utilized a wide range of transfer methods, especially ripple effect, community meetings/ conferences, and cascade models.

2) Middle out and down transfer – where mid-level leaders expand dialogue effects to peers and grassroots members of their communities. Dialogue was usually the primary activity, outcomes were

Transfer Model components include:

Who dialogue participants are (e.g. sector, level, type) and who they are trying to influence;

What activities are included in the project (primary activity, sequence of activities);

Why dialogue is used (purpose, focus of change, issue focus); and

How transfer happens (transfer methods, theories of change).

focused on relational changes, and both dissemination of products (e.g. information awareness materials, training materials, etc.) and media were used most often to support transfer.

3) Middle out and up transfer – where mid-level leaders expand dialogue effects to peers as well as high-level leaders. Dialogue and research were usually primary activities, outcomes were focused on relational (meso), and structural (macro) levels, and dissemination of products (e.g. policy recommendations, research findings) and was used most often to support transfer.

4) Top out and down transfer – where high-level leaders expand dialogue effects to other key decision-makers and, through policy and institutional (macro) change, to mid- and grassroots levels. Dialogue around conflict analysis and policy recommendations were the primary activities, outcomes focused on structural changes, and projects utilized a wide range of transfer methods, especially dissemination of products and policy advocacy.

Transfer Methods
Dissemination of products (74% of projects) – distributing materials such as research or conference results, training toolkits or curricula, documentary films, or program materials.
Ripple effect (55% of projects) – spreading effects of dialogue within personal spheres of influence.
Policy advocacy (44% of projects) - advocating policy or institutional changes with key leaders.
Media campaigns (35% of projects) – working with mass and social media to influence broader audiences.
Cascade model (31% of projects) – replicating dialogue models and skills by original dialogue participants.
Ongoing platforms or mechanisms (30% of projects) – creating ongoing networks or structures (e.g. peace councils) for long-term dialogue and peacebuilding.
Community meetings or conferences (23% of projects) – convening public or by-invitation gatherings to share information and expand the effects of previous dialogues.
Cooperative action (20% of projects) – developing participant-led, joint action initiatives beyond the dialogue to engage and influence others.
Mixed methods (85% of projects) – most dialogue projects used two or more of these approaches to transfer.

Transfer Model Successes: Projects showed enormous variation, even within these dialogue transfer models, and no clear ‘winners’ or ‘losers’ for model effectiveness emerged. Instead, this study found a number of key factors associated with both transfer success and overall project success. For example, successful projects tended to include a mix of many transfer approaches, especially use of mass and social media, creation of ongoing platforms or mechanisms for dialogue and conflict resolution, policy advocacy, and cascade models of training. Successful projects tended to disseminate products such as educational and awareness materials, culturally appropriate radio programs, films, and theatre performances, but did not rely solely on either the dissemination of a product or ripple effects as their primary transfer method. More transfer methods used was associated with great frequency of project success and impact.

Factors Influencing Success: Based on convergent criteria in the academic and programmatic literature on dialogue, a short survey of USIP staff, and interviews with project leaders and participants, this study assessed dialogue project success more broadly as well. Findings indicated that high success projects more often: a) involved a mix of many types of participants and leadership levels; b) partnered with other organizations; c) included training as part of their activities; and d) had theories of change that focused on building local capacities and ongoing mechanisms to resolve conflicts. Surprisingly, there were no significant relationships between project success and the duration of the dialogue process, the duration of the overall project, or how large a component of the project dialogue was (as opposed to other activities). These latter findings were a surprise. A mitigating trend was that there were more sustained dialogue processes (i.e. over 100hrs or 10 days) among high success projects than among low success projects (nearly significant). This suggests that duration of the dialogues was important, but insufficient for project success. A variety of inter-related factors influenced project success including:

Contextual Factors: Escalating violence and security concerns were most frequently described challenges for dialogue implementation, often resulting in delayed, moved, or cancelled activities and, in many cases, requiring extensions to the grant period. Political climate, support by authorities, and adequate local communication and travel infrastructures were also critical for successful implementation.

Organizational Factors: Grantee credibility with and access to local stakeholders was the most frequently mentioned success factors. In addition, high success projects built on previous successful programs and networks, and had implementing partnerships with relevant local or international organizations more often than low success projects. The least successful projects often suffered from program staff and budget changes, as well as poor communication with funders. Highly successful projects included more adaptive management practices, design flexibility, and iterative decision-making processes than their less successful counterparts.

Process Factors: The most successful projects had a clear focus on transfer in their project design and made better use of participant-driven transfer opportunities during the dialogue than other projects. The least successful project often faced challenges in recruiting certain kinds of participants (e.g. women or hardliners) and achieving balanced dialogue participation. This resulted in less diversity (in types of participants and views represented) in the dialogue, as well as having participants who lacked the knowledge to discuss pressing issues or the connections to help create effective transfer.

These and other results from this study provide a variety of recommendations related to dialogue project design, implementation, evaluation and funding.

Recommendations for Dialogue Project Design and Implementation:

1) Promote theory-based dialogue design with explicit theories of change related to achieving intended outcomes within the direct participant group as well as transfer beyond it. Base measures of success and evaluation efforts on these theories and use evidence about successes and failures to revise and refine both theory and practice.

2) Align dialogue transfer models with intended impacts: The research findings highlight a variety of relationships between elements of dialogue transfer models and levels of impact (individual, relational, and structural) that can help guide project design. For example, project leaders should be strategic in recruiting influential participants, include difficult to reach participants (e.g. hardliners), and connect different types and levels of leadership (i.e. horizontally and vertically) to match the project's intended impacts.

3) Adapt programs to political and security context: In highly polarized climates or where there is lack of support from political authorities, just bringing people together can be significant. Depending on the context, dialogue generally served one of three roles: 1) to support an official peace process from the grassroots, mid-level or the top to influence official negotiations and/or by focusing on peacebuilding at the community level in the context of a national peace process /agreement; 2) to jumpstart or unstuck stalemated negotiations by convening influential mid-level and/or high-level civil society and government officials to provide a forum for conflict analysis, creative problem solving, or developing confidence building measures characteristic of typical Track II dialogues; and 3) to provide a platform and safe space for individuals and groups committed to dialogue and peacebuilding despite, or perhaps because of, an insecure and unsupportive environment.

4) Move from dialogue to action/advocacy and transfer: If transfer is a project priority, findings from this study suggest that dialogue plus capacity building and action or advocacy tends to be more successful at achieving transfer than dialogue alone.

5) Create strategic partnerships and networks (horizontal connections): This study's results show a clear relationship between project partnerships and transfer success. Local and international partnering and networks create opportunities for broader impact and can provide a range of resources and options to draw from in addressing challenges that arise during implementation (e.g. finding new participants or meeting locations).

6) Connect levels of leadership (vertical connections): The research confirmed the literature's emphasis on linking grassroots, mid-level and high-level leaders for dialogue and contributing to change, whether at the local or national level. Mid-level leaders are known to be able to play this bridging role between grassroots and high-level leaders, if they have sufficient credibility, legitimacy, access and influence.

7) Strengthen plans for sustainability: This study found that grantees who had clear plans for sustainability (e.g. plans to continue activities or develop new ones after the grant period) showed more transfer success than projects without clear plans.

8) Practice adaptive management: The most successful projects in this study built-in staff time and processes for reflective practice, feedback, and learning that informed adaptations in dialogue project design and implementation.

Recommendations for Grantmaking:

1) Fund ongoing dialogue projects: Help grantees build on their dialogue successes and encourage innovations that strengthen transfer over time.

2) Build grantee capacities for strategic and contingency planning: Grantees recognized a strong need for improved capacities in strategic and contingency planning to help them better navigate the complex and rapidly changing conflict environments in which these dialogue projects operate.

3) Foster communication and cooperation among grantees: Recognizing the complementary approaches of diverse dialogue projects, funders should foster information sharing, collaboration, and coordination among grantees, especially within geographic or issue-focused areas. A common request during field interviews was for USIP to convene in-country grantees to develop a country peacebuilding strategy, as well as share lessons learned, best practices, and resources.

4) Encourage tracking and reporting about transfer: In addition to explicitly identifying transfer approaches in project design, funders should encourage tracking and reporting on transfer processes and impacts at a project level, as well as fund longitudinal studies to examine and evaluate project transfer over time.

5) Develop Adjustable measuring sticks: The scope and scale of dialogue projects vary considerably. Both researchers and funders need different measurement scales or adjustable measuring sticks to compare transfer successes across the huge range of projects.

6) Apply strategic philanthropy and diversify the grant portfolio: The current emphasis on impact evaluation and evidence-based programming to provide important lessons to guide future dialogue programming and funding should not be at the cost of project experimentation. Learning for improvement should recognize that funding innovative, even high-risk projects, has an important place in a diversified grantmaking portfolio.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past 25 years, dialogue-based processes have become one of the most prevalent conflict intervention strategies for achieving a wide range of peacebuilding goals. However, dialogue projects vary widely and relatively few comparative evaluations have been conducted to help assess the impact of these projects beyond direct participants. Since its inception, USIP has implemented and supported programming that uses dialogue as a means for achieving a wide range of peacebuilding goals. Dialogue continues to be an important strategy across a wide range of USIP programming, including grant-supported programming.

USIP has supported approximately 105 dialogue-based projects through grants since 1990. While many projects over \$100,000 have included individual project evaluations, to date, there has been no comprehensive comparative analysis of these projects. Therefore, in June 2015, USIP issued a Request for Proposals to carry out an evaluation of USIP grant-funded programming that uses dialogues as a core strategy. The goal of the evaluation was to inform future grant-funding for projects that use dialogue as a key strategy as well as to learn lessons from past grant-funded dialogue projects about the role of dialogue in peacebuilding.

This report provides a review of the literature on dialogue processes and transfer in peacebuilding, and presents the research methods, results, lessons learned and recommendations for the United States Institute of Peace as it plans for future dialogue grant making.¹

II. DIALOGUE PROCESSES AND TRANSFER IN PEACEBUILDING: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE

Scholarly research and programmatic literature about dialogue processes and transfer approaches in peacebuilding is relatively sparse. This brief review of the literature highlights developments in both theory and practice of dialogue and transfer to provide context for the methodology and results of this study.

A. Evolution of Dialogue Programs for Peacebuilding

Dialogue-based programs and practices have evolved over time, adapting to fit changing conflict environments, integrating advances in research and theory, and responding to lessons from successes and failures. Descended from a variety of philosophical and political traditions, most peacebuilding scholars trace the origins of contemporary, facilitated dialogue processes to post-WWII prejudice reduction and intercultural understanding initiatives that put Gordon Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis into practice (Hammack et. al., 2014, Ropers, 2003). Pioneered in the United States, these initiatives were guided by the conviction that increased interaction between individuals from diverse identity groups could, under specific conditions, help reduce prejudice and discrimination, improve relationships, and effectively address many of the social and psychological drivers of intergroup conflict.

¹ Annex 1, Terms of Reference

Within a decade, former diplomats like John Burton and scholars like Herb Kelman successfully adapted and applied these 'controlled communication' methods in conflict zones such as Malaysia, Cyprus, and the Horn of Africa, inspiring a network of early conflict resolution 'scholar- practitioners' (e.g. Chris Mitchell, Hal Saunders, Joe Monteville, John McDonald) and a tradition of unofficial Track II dialogue processes (Mitchell, 2001; Kelman, 1995). In the 1970s and 80s, dialogue models were critiqued and enriched by host of new social psychological research and theory in intergroup relations and social identity, (e.g. Pettigrew, 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1982) that examined more specifically how individual- and relationship- level changes took place during contact to promote peacebuilding (Abu-Nimer, 1999). In addition, this period integrated social justice and critical pedagogy approaches (e.g. key concepts from Paulo Friere, Bell Hooks, Henry Giroux) to ensure dialogue processes recognized and transformed rather than reproduced significant power imbalances and social injustices (Zuniga, 2012).

Dialogue initiatives gained momentum and popularity in the 1990s, both in international contexts (e.g. the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords spurred an increase in Arab-Jewish dialogues within Israel (Abu-Nimer, 1999) and in the U.S. (e.g. President Clinton's "Initiative on Race" fostered public awareness about dialogue methods and launched dialogue initiatives on college campuses across the country.) By the late 1990s, the Center for Living Democracy (1997) reported that there were approximately 425 groups conducting intergroup dialogues within universities and communities in 45 states and the District of Columbia in the U.S. By the end of this decade, multilateral organizations around the world had begun to recognize dialogue processes as a legitimate conflict intervention method and fund dialogue initiatives in Northern Ireland, South Africa, former Yugoslavia, and countries in Latin America.

Theory-based evaluations that explore how and why an initiative creates change beyond direct participants are the most promising method of examining the effectiveness of different transfer models.

-Church & Shouldice, 2003
-Kelman, 2008

Critiques of the method followed its popularity. Some researchers criticized dialogue models as western imports that lacked cultural and contextual sensitivity (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Bojer et. al., 2006). Others noted the need for dialogue to move beyond talk to action (Carstarphen, 2003; Hierbacher, 1999; Hudson, 1997). They identified problems of 'dialogue fatigue' and frustration among participants when the new insights, awareness, and cross-boundary relationships gained in the dialogue did not lead to any discernible changes in policies or practices affecting the larger conflict situation (Mayne, 2008).

Over the last fifteen years, scholars and practitioners have recognized the diversity of dialogue processes and sought to distinguish and catalogue them to assist project leaders and participants determine which models best fit their goals and circumstances. For example, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) developed a typology of *engagement streams* based on dialogue goals (e.g. "exploration", "conflict transformation", "decision-making", and "collaborative action") and identified 22 discrete dialogue models within these engagement streams (Heierbacher, 2005; NCDD, 2013). In addition, Bojer, Knuth & Magner (2006) in their "Mapping Dialogue" research provided an in-depth examination and comparison of 10 diverse dialogue models used to address social challenges in South Africa. The approaches range from small group processes designed for 20 people or fewer to larger methods that accommodate thousands of participants. Some explore conflicts, problems, and differences while others

focus on what is working and agreed upon. Some dialogue models view participants as representatives of a group or entity while others focus on individuals only representing themselves. In Israeli-Palestinian contexts, Ifat Maoz (2011) has identified and contrasted *coexistence* vs. *confrontation* approaches to dialogue. *Coexistence* approaches seek to reduce the salience of separate in-group identification and polarization of historical narratives in order to facilitate the creation of common in-group identities, while *confrontation* approaches emphasize differences in religious and cultural traditions, historical narratives and political grievances as a tool for mutual recognition, empowerment of low-status groups, and facilitation of cross-group alliances and collective action.²

“Evaluating dialogue processes has become vital for dialogue practitioners, promoters and participants to understand when dialogue is relevant, when it is not, under which conditions it leads to impact and at what level, and how it can ultimately influence the policy level and provoke positive change within a society.”

Mayne, 2008

Despite this diversity, dialogue scholars and practitioners emphasize some important commonalities across dialogue processes. For example, they all focus on enabling open communication, honest speaking, and genuine listening that allows people to take responsibility for their own learning and ideas. They aim to create a safe space or container to surface assumptions, question previous judgements, and change the way participants think about and relate to one another. In addition, they promote more complex and contextual understandings of the conflict (Bojer et. al., 2006). Common challenges discussed in the dialogue literature focus on addressing power asymmetries (Zuniga, 2012), working with individual and collective trauma (Derezotes, 2014), and including a wide range of stakeholders - especially hard-liners and vulnerable populations (Rieker & Thune, 2015).

In recent years, many donors, policy-makers, and scholars have noted that the use of dialogue processes has far outpaced any systematic efforts to measure or assess their impact on peacebuilding (Dessel et. al. 2006; Nagda and Derr, 2004; Pruitt and Kaufer, 2004; Schoem and Hurtado, 2001). While the past 10 years have seen a maturation of evaluation frameworks and methods, and an increasing call for their use in assessing the effectiveness of dialogue project design, implementation and impact (Blum, 2012; Mayne, 2008), few comparative evaluations of dialogue projects have been undertaken. Reporting on a Generative Workshop on Dialogue Evaluation sponsored by the United Nations Development Program and the Carter Center, Maureen Mayne (2008) summarizes a growing consensus that, “Evaluating dialogue processes has become vital for dialogue practitioners, promoters and participants to understand when dialogue is relevant, when it is not, under which conditions it leads to impact and at what level, and how it can ultimately influence the policy level and provoke positive change within a society.” (p.5)

² Recent dialogue field experiments with Israeli and Palestinian participants (Hammack & Pelicki, 2015; Hammack et. al., 2014) tested specific processes that facilitate participant empowerment. These studies found that dialogue models that supported mutual differentiation (i.e. confrontational approaches) created more anxiety, fear and confusion among participants, but were also more empowering to low-status group members and more effective in challenging power asymmetries than dialogue approaches focusing on shared values, goals and identities (i.e. coexistence approaches.)

B. Dialogue Research and Evaluation

Adrienne Dessel & Mary Rogge's (2008) meta-evaluation of 23 intergroup dialogue outcome evaluations (implemented 1997-2006) currently provides the most comprehensive review and comparison of existing dialogue studies. Reflecting the goals of these dialogue projects, the evaluations reported almost exclusively on individual-level (i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioral) and interpersonal-level (i.e. improved relations and new friendships) outcomes in project participants.

Dialogue approaches and models varied widely in the projects reviewed and in most studies the specific dialogue procedures were not clearly delineated. Consequently, there was no assessment of dialogue methods or implementation across studies. Dialogues in the study fell into three categories based on context and participants: 1) university campus dialogues with student participants; 2) community based dialogues with grassroots leaders; and 3) international/ ethno-political dialogues with mid- or high-level leaders. While findings varied for these different categories, the research focused exclusively on changes in dialogue participants³. The study concluded that, in general, dialogue processes proved effective in

The meta-evaluation concluded that dialogue processes have proven effective in making cognitive and affective changes in participants and improving interpersonal relationships among participants.

Dessel & Rogge, 2008

making cognitive and affective changes in participants and improving interpersonal relationships among participants. Unfortunately, the study did not examine or discuss dialogue project impacts on the larger conflict context or how individual and relational outcomes in participants transferred to broader groups in society.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer's (1999) comparative evaluation of six, Arab-Jewish dialogue programs in Israel offers findings more relevant to understanding the impact of political context on dialogue projects and to examining questions of transfer beyond direct participants. In considering the role of context, Abu-Nimer noted that the political environment (e.g. peace accords; increased violence/ Intifada) directly impacted the focus of issues addressed in the dialogue, participants' readiness to participate, and participants' expected outcomes from the dialogue. He also reports that increased violence made the logistics of organizing dialogues more difficult and dangerous, and raised emotions on both sides (more anger, frustration, fear) so that interactions became more volatile and participants were less able to acknowledge each other's personal and political narratives.

For dialogue effects to successfully transfer beyond the participants and make an impact on the larger conflict, participants' changed attitudes and relationships must be translated into behavioral acts that influence others.

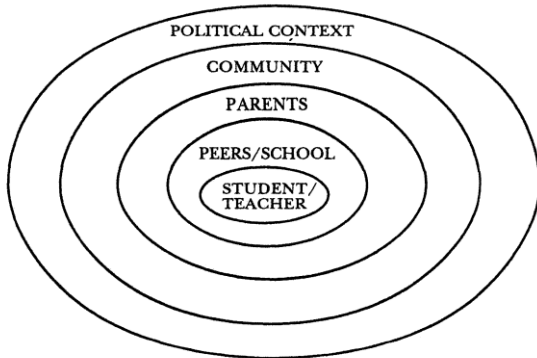
Abu-Nimer, 1999

In looking at project effectiveness, Abu-Nimer found that dialogue programs successfully helped change participant perceptions about and interactions with each other, but rarely impacted participants' behavior outside of the dialogue meetings. He argued that in order for dialogue effects to successfully transfer

³ See Annex 2 for List of Dialogue Outcomes found in these studies.

beyond the participants and make an impact on the larger conflict, participants' changed attitudes and relationships must be translated into behavioral acts that influence others. He noted that maintaining changed attitudes and perceptions, and influencing others, was particularly difficult in the face of pressure from family, peers and others in their environment who didn't participate in the intervention or share their views. Without the behavioral component, Abu-Nimer suggests that dialogue methods are a "drop in the ocean", limited to the population directly reached and easily reversed by context.

Figure 8.1. Intervention Programs' Range of Impact



Abu-Nimer also critiqued dialogue programs for: 1) providing no follow-up to trace impact/ changes in participants over time; 2) offering no options or commitments for continued work with participants who were interested in the issues after the dialogue was over; and 3) providing no support for participants when they return to an environment (e.g. their school or family) that might be resistant or even hostile to initiatives for change. He concluded that "The direct and explicit impact of such programs did not reach beyond the immediate circle of the individual, in this case, students. For teachers, the impact might directly be transferred

into the teachers' immediate circle of the school and professional domain" (p. 129). Abu-Nimer presents a 'range of impact' model (see figure) illustrating how the effects of dialogue projects with educators and youth might transfer beyond direct participants.

Abu-Nimer also noted that the dialogues helped create both awareness and frustration, particularly in Arab participants, that they might not be able to impact levels beyond themselves. He concludes that dialogue programs, because of their focus on individual, interpersonal and relationship change (micro and meso change), may be ill-suited to macro-level peacebuilding.

C. Dialogue Transfer

While much of the dialogue project literature indicates that the ultimate aim of these processes is to contribute to larger peacebuilding efforts, surprisingly few resources focus on the concept of 'Transfer' and its measurement (Mayne, 2008; Church, 2003). The underdeveloped concept of Transfer includes processes by which a project's effect on participants is spread or transmitted beyond that group to influence other groups, practices or policies, and make broader changes in society. The concept overlaps considerably with a projects' Theory of Change and includes *what* effects are transferred, *how* these changes happen, and *who* is influenced.

Small group processes can create transfer by:

- a) Yielding new products (e.g. policy recommendation reports) that can be exported into the political process;
- b) Building new relationships that allow participants to act as a coalition for joint peacebuilding initiatives
- c) Serving as a model for an institutionalized mechanism or an ongoing joint forum within civil society exploring bi-communal peacebuilding.

Kelman, 2008

Reporting on over 20 years of problem-solving workshops between Israelis and Palestinians, Herb Kelman (1997, 2008) outlined a number of ways that micro-processes in dialogue-based interventions can lead to macro-level changes. He highlights the importance of participant selection, suggesting that participants must have both interest and capacity to engage in the learning process of the dialogue, as well as credibility and access within their own communities to influence political leaders, constituents or the general public. Kelman suggests that these small-group processes can, among other things:

a) yield new products (e.g. policy recommendation reports) that can be exported into the political process; b) build new relationships that allow participants to act as a coalition for joint peacebuilding initiatives and/ or to support each other in facing resistance from their respective communities; and c) serve as a model for an institutionalized mechanism or an ongoing joint forum within civil society that continues exploring bi-communal peacebuilding.

In their report, *Evaluation of Conflict Interventions Part II: Emerging Practice and Theory* Church and Shouldice (2003) discuss the topic of transfer directly as well. Similar to Abu-Nimer's (1999) Intervention Range of Impact model, they suggest that transfer should be examined in terms of steps between 'tiers of influence' (e.g. family, peer group, community, sub-national region, country, etc.) rather than direct impact from local to global levels. Church & Shouldice hypothesize that a project's most significant transfer will occur at tiers of influence closest to the original implementation. For example, a project that works with grassroots individuals may be more likely to transfer to families, peers and perhaps community groups rather than change national or regional policies and institutions. Conversely, a dialogue project that works with national leaders may have its most potent transfer at societal or regional level rather than with families or grassroots individuals.

Transfer should be examined in terms of steps between 'tiers of influence' (e.g. family unit, social network, community, sub-national region, country, etc.) rather than direct impact from micro- to macro-levels.

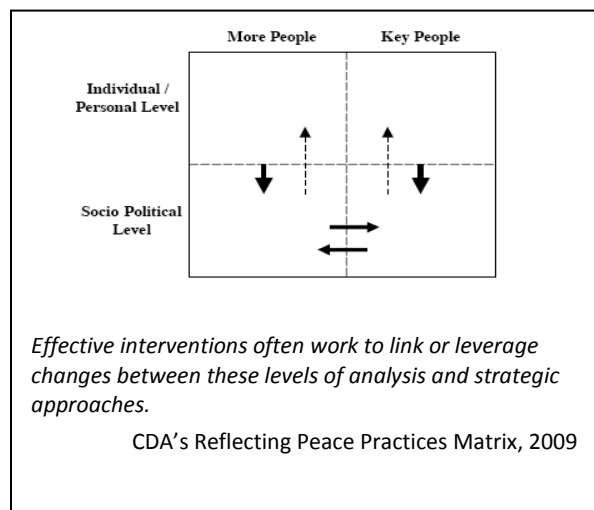
Church & Shouldice, 2003

Church and Shouldice discuss the importance of identifying what is being transferred. Is it information, new ways of thinking about relationships among the parties, narratives of the conflict, skills for peacebuilding, etc.? They also question the assumption that all changes transferred are positive, noting that negative experiences, reinforced stereotypes, etc. can also be transferred.

The authors also discuss the relative effectiveness of different transfer approaches. For example, perhaps attitudes shared through stories are transferred better within a community than statistics or personal experience. They recommend that project leaders gain better understandings of what methods might be most effective in reaching people in their target communities, and suggest that theories and models of transfer need to be articulated, examined and tested through evaluation to help maximize a project's

potential to effect change. They call for further research to identify which participants, conditions or situations, and methods are best for promoting or maximizing transfer. Both Kelman (2008) and Church & Shouldice (2003) recommend theory-based evaluation, which explores ‘how and why an initiative works’ as the most promising method of examining the effectiveness of different transfer models.

Collaborative Development Associates’ (CDA’s) Reflecting Peace Practices (2004) framework provides a useful scaffolding for comparing programmatic theories of change and examining how individual projects contribute to broader societal level peace. It compares programmatic approaches to ‘peace writ large’ by looking at whether they focus primarily on Individual/Personal vs Socio-Political levels of change in relation to using More People vs Key People strategies of change. CDA suggests that effective interventions often work to link or leverage changes between these levels of analysis and strategic approaches. For example, changes at the individual/personal level need to transfer to socio-political changes in order to contribute to peace writ large. Similarly, policy changes at the socio-political level



often need to transfer to at least behavioral (if not attitudinal) changes at the individual level to become enduring and effective. Chigas and Woodrow (2009) note that it is harder to transfer from micro-levels (individual/personal) to macro-levels (socio-political) than vice versa. They also suggest that much fewer peacebuilding projects work at the macro level or with hard to reach populations, making transfer less likely.

This study built on existing dialogue research and theory, as well as the questions, gaps, cautions, and lessons highlighted in the scholarly and programmatic literature, to guide the methods and

interpretation of results about transfer approaches in USIP-funded dialogue projects.

III. METHODS

A. Purpose & Guiding Questions

The primary purpose of this study was to inform future USIP grantmaking efforts by providing evidence-based guidelines to better assess grant applications for dialogue-based projects, improve the project design, and adjust grantees’ implementation if necessary. In addition, the research aimed to produce more generalizable lessons for the peacebuilding field by identifying different approaches to transfer among dialogue projects and factors that enhanced or inhibited dialogue project success.

This comparative evaluation consisted of: a) a review of existing research and evaluation literature on dialogue projects; b) desk research on USIP grant-funded dialogue projects since 1990; and c) field research on a subset of USIP grant-funded dialogue projects in Colombia, Pakistan, and Israel and the

Palestinian Territories. The study used the following definitions of dialogue, transfer and levels of analysis/impact, and sought to answer the following questions:⁴

1. What are the most common program models articulated by dialogue practitioners regarding how “transfer” happens?
2. Which of the program models are the most and least effective at creating “transfer”?
3. When implemented using these program models, what factors make the projects more likely to succeed or fail?
4. What have been the most and least successful USIP-supported dialogue projects?
5. What are the key factors (including context and process) that made these projects more or less successful?
6. What are key lessons from the study that can guide the design of new dialogue projects?

Definition of Dialogue

A facilitated, conflict intervention process that brings together various stakeholders in a conflict, or around a problem/concern, to express, listen to, explore and better understand diverse views in order to transform individual, relational, and/or structural drivers of conflict.

Definition of Transfer

The strategy for expanding the effects of dialogue on direct participants to broader groups, practices or policies in society. Transfer approaches include a focus on who (or what) was the target of change, and how (through which processes) broader change happens.

Levels of Analysis/Impact

Micro-Level Change: *Changes in individual-level knowledge, perspectives, attitudes, emotions, behaviors or actions.*

Meso-Level Changes: *Changes in interpersonal or intergroup relationships, networks, alliances, friendships, etc.*

Macro-Level Changes: *Changes in larger social or political structures, institutions, policies, norms, etc.*

B. Dialogue Project Selection and Dataset Description

The unit of analysis in this study was USIP grant-funded dialogue projects. USIP staff provided the researchers with an initial list of 249 grants supporting dialogue-related projects from 1986-2016, identified through keyword searches of USIP grants databases. In consultation with staff, the researchers developed the following criteria for inclusion in the study:

⁴ See Annex 3: Glossary of Terms used in this study

Criteria for Project Selection

1. Projects used dialogue processes as at least one component of their intervention strategy;
2. Projects were implemented during or after 1990;
3. Projects received USIP grants greater than \$35,000 OR were part of a larger dialogue effort supplemented by other funders;
4. Project materials such as proposal, reports, and evaluations were available for review.

An extensive review and discussion of project summaries and file materials resulted in a final dataset of 105 grants supporting dialogue-based projects during the period 1992-2015⁵. Nine of these grants (approx. 10%) represented a second (and in one case, third) round of funding given to continue or expand a previous USIP-grant supported dialogue project. Grants ranged from \$20,000 to over \$1 million, with 29% of them providing \$40,000 or less; 37% providing between \$41,000 to \$99,000, and 33% providing \$100,000 or more. Projects ranged from 5 months to over 4 years in duration, with the vast majority of projects conducted during a 12-18 month period.⁶

In the desk review, researchers coded file materials for 105 USIP grants for dialogue-based projects and conducted both qualitative and quantitative analyses to identify transfer models and examine factors related to project success.

These projects were implemented by 97 different organizations: 37% were US-based organizations, 52% were local, in-country organizations, and 11% were foreign-based (neither US nor local) organizations. Almost 30% percent of the organizations were universities or other research institutions; the rest were peace, human rights, and development NGOs.

Most of the dialogue projects addressed conflict in the Middle East (32%), South & Central America (21%), and Africa (16%). Dialogue projects were implemented most often in conflicts that were rapidly escalating (25%), experiencing crisis or a hurting stalemate (30%), or in post-conflict peacebuilding (20%) stages. Approximately half of the projects included a mix of civil society and government sector participants, while the other half focused on either specific populations or mixed groups within civil society. While the vast majority of projects combined dialogue processes with other activities (e.g. training, research, etc.), 20% of the projects used dialogue processes as their primary activity, and two-thirds of the projects, dialogue processes made up more than half of the project time and activities.

C. Procedures

1. Desk Review

The research team for the desk review included both of the primary investigators and two graduate research interns. The team reviewed and coded materials for each of the 105 projects in the

⁵ See Annex 4: Project Selection: Table of Reasons for Project Selection.

⁶ See section IV.A. for results and discussion of relationship of grant amounts to project year, duration, region and other variables examined in this study.

dataset including: project applications/ proposals; interim reports; final reports; evaluation reports; USIP grant officer notes; written products produced by the projects (e.g. books, curricula, research reports, additional program materials, etc.); and project websites materials (where possible). More than 600 file reports (many thousands of pages) were assessed as part of the desk review portion of the study.

File materials were coded into a summary template for each project. The project templates were loaded into Dedoose, a web-based qualitative data analysis program, and excerpts were coded based on a researcher-designed coding matrix. Inter-coder reliability among the research team was assessed at $\alpha = .67$, a relatively low, but acceptable rate given the number of coding categories. Coding reliability was bolstered with detailed coding instructions, team training and discussion to minimize ambiguities, independent checks of coding by both PIs, and subsequent recoding for consistency.

Template excerpts, including direct quotes and summarized materials from project reports, were analyzed qualitatively across projects to identify themes within categories and conceptual links between categories. Codes were exported from Dedoose into Stata for supplemental quantitative analyses including descriptive statistics, as well as parametric and nonparametric tests to examine measures of association among categories.

2. Field Research

The field research portion of the study focused on a subset of 23 projects (approximately 22% of the full dataset) implemented in Colombia (5); Israel and the Palestinian Territories (13); and Pakistan (5). The researchers worked with USIP grant officers in selecting the countries as well as the specific dialogue projects within each country. The selection was based on the number and type of USIP-supported dialogue projects in each country as well as access to grantees and participants given security considerations.

A total of 129 people were interviewed, including project leaders, participants, and local peacebuilding experts representing 23 USIP-funded dialogue projects in Colombia, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and Pakistan. Field interviews supplemented the desk review by providing deeper understandings of transfer approaches, long-term changes, and key contextual factors affecting the projects.

The researchers conducted two-week site visits in Colombia and Israel respectively to meet with grantees (including organizational leaders, project managers, and dialogue facilitators), a selection of project participants, local peacebuilding experts, and other local stakeholders. Due to the re-registration of international NGOs affecting the USIP office in Islamabad, the researchers were not able to travel to Pakistan for this study. Instead, interviews with grantees were conducted via Skype and two local researchers were hired to collect data from a selection of participants in four of the five projects.

In all cases, grantees were initially introduced to the study and researchers by USIP staff. The researchers followed up by sending more detailed information about the study, including interview questions, and a

request to meet with project participants⁷. A total of 75 individual and 13 focus group interviews were conducted during the field research with 129 people.⁸

The Colombia site visit focused on two organizations that received multiple (5) grants for dialogue projects between 2007 and 2015. The researchers were interested in the transfer approaches and impact of these long-term dialogues. The site visit to Israel involved twelve organizations (13 projects since 1992), including eight organizations with sustained dialogue efforts between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as four shorter-term projects initiated at various times between 2002 and 2015. Interviews with Pakistan organizations focused on five projects, most of which combined dialogue with other activities and were implemented between 2008 and 2015. Cross-cutting issues included projects focusing on women, youth, police-community, and inter-faith dialogues.

The field research provided opportunities to gain important understandings about how the conflict contexts shaped dialogue project design, implementation, outcomes, and transfer approaches. Key informant interviews with grantee staff, dialogue participants, and other local stakeholders also provided deeper, more nuanced information about what changes occurred (intended and unintended outcomes of the dialogue project and transfer effects) and why, what factors contributed to successes, challenges that occurred and how they were addressed, and lessons about the role of dialogue in peacebuilding.

Recognizing the challenges of attributing changes in the larger conflict situation to these relatively small scale projects, the researchers asked questions similar to those used in Outcome Harvesting (OH) methodology (Ricardo Wilson-Gray and Britt, 2013) for data collection and analysis. Interview questions focused on what and how changes had been made in behavior, relationships, activities, practices, or policies beyond direct participants since the dialogue project. Researchers asked participants to describe all results they could think of, whether good or bad, planned or unplanned, within the dialogue project's 'sphere of influence'. Rather than just accumulating a list of results, they specifically focused on understanding the process of change and how project activities and participants contributed to those results. Drawing from Most Significant Change methodologies, the researchers also asked all participants about the most significant changes since the end of the dialogue project and where possible, worked backward to discuss the possible contributions of the projects to such changes.

The researchers aggregated interview responses by project and conducted a contribution analysis to examine programmatic transfer approaches in light of changes made beyond direct participants. The analysis looked at causal assumptions in project's theories of change and the chain of results described by project leaders and participants. It also highlighted other key factors, outside the project, that participants believed had significantly influenced the changes (e.g. political events, personal events). Finally, the researchers compared transfer approaches, project impacts, and contribution analyses across projects.

⁷ See Annex 5 for Interview questions

⁸ See Annex 6 for List of People Interviewed during the field research

Where possible, the information about project transfer beyond direct participants was validated or substantiated by comparing it across multiple data sources for the same project as well as information collected from other knowledgeable, independent sources (e.g. local peacebuilding experts). These changes were then analyzed and interpreted at the level of individual, relational, and structural impacts that contribute to larger peacebuilding goals and objectives. The results were used to answer the research questions directly as well as supplement findings from the desk review.

Information about project transfer beyond direct participants was validated or substantiated by comparing it across multiple data sources for the same project as well as information collected from other knowledgeable, independent sources.

D. Research Ethics and Approach

This study was guided by principles of learning for continuous improvement, accountability, utility for multiple stakeholders, adherence to best practices and recognized standards of excellence in evaluation, and research ethics such as ‘do no harm’, ‘respect for persons’ and ‘beneficence.’ This comparative evaluation assessed dialogue outcomes and impacts at micro- (individual), meso- (relational), and macro- (structural) levels of analysis in the variety of contexts (e.g. institutions, communities, etc.) where projects focused their change efforts. It examined both intended and unintended consequences of intervention, and recognized the importance of both context-specific process design (best fit) and common principles of effective practice (best practice).

E. Verification, Delimitations and Limitations

The verification of construct validity, internal and external validity, and reliability were based on a number of different “checks and balances” in this research. First, construct validity, or the development of operational measures for the concepts being studied, was increased by using convergent lines of inquiry (literature review, and multiple sources of evidence (project reports, interviews with USIP grant officers, project leaders, participants, & local peacebuilding experts), and triangulation of methods (qualitative & quantitative analyses). Reliability was enhanced by using a web-based qualitative data analysis program that supported more transparent and consistent coding, meticulous record-keeping, and a clear decision trail of interpretation. Cross-case comparisons and triangulation of data sources, data collection methods, and both qualitative and quantitative data analysis supported consistency and reliability in results and interpretations. In a field dominated by case studies and small n research, the relatively large number of projects in this study, as well as the inclusion of field research, increased the external validity or generalizability of the findings.

1. Data level limitations

Imperfect case selection: The researchers started with an initial dataset provided by USIP of 249 projects that were identified through word searches of USIP’s grants databases. The variety of ways that the term “dialogue” was used (e.g. as an outcome – ‘to promote dialogue’) required a time and labor intensive process of sifting through file materials to determine which projects were relevant to this study.

Subsequent discussions with grant officers revealed many additional projects not in the original dataset, suggesting that the word search was not the most reliable method for project identification.

Thin reporting: Project reporting was thin or weak for many projects, especially older ones where reporting requirements were less focused or rigorous. It was difficult to conduct assessments of these projects without more information. In addition, project reports rarely focused on dialogue process design and implementation. The sparse and uneven data about why dialogue processes were chosen (as opposed to or in combination with other intervention processes), what dialogue approaches were used, how dialogues were structured, facilitator and facilitation issues, group dynamics, etc. severely limited the researchers' ability to use dialogue process design and implementation factors as a basis for comparison and assessment in this study.

Reliance on self-reports: Very few independent project evaluation reports were available, so the majority of data collected was based on self-reports from project leaders and participants. For most of the projects, there was no baseline data, counterfactuals, or meaningful data related to changes in peace writ large. The researchers could not control for the biases, or uneven quality and quantity inherent in such data.

2. Method level limitations

This project was not immune to the significant methodological challenges facing other peacebuilding evaluations.

Assessing changes over time: The desk review used cross-sectional methodology that provided "snapshots" of different dialogue projects across a span of 25 years. This method is very limited when studying the dynamic processes of transfer and their effects over time. While some of these projects had pre-post measures of change reported at the end of a project, they did not capture impact beyond participants that may have taken weeks, months or years to manifest. As Anderson, Chigas, and Woodrow (2007) note, "*Some dialogues that at first appear to have been successful ultimately lead to nothing. It may take years before participants are able to leverage the relationships and insights gained in dialogue sessions to influence a peace process*" (p. 92). Where possible, the researchers supplemented information provided by project files with web searches and discussions with USIP grant officers. But additional information about many of the older projects in particular was often unavailable. So, while the desk review was useful in identifying different transfer approaches as planned by project leaders, assessments of actual transfer or project impact beyond participants was severely limited.

The field research provided a longitudinal complement to this limitation for approximately 20% of the projects in the select locations of Colombia, Israel, and Pakistan. The follow-up interviews with project leaders, participants, and peacebuilding experts in these regions helped the researchers trace and assess the longer-term impacts of the projects and relate them to identified transfer approaches.

Impact of intangibles: Reflecting a pervasive challenge in peacebuilding evaluations, this study had limited means of measuring the activation and impact of intangibles such as changed perceptions or interpersonal relationships developed through dialogue. Most dialogue projects aim to create changes in intangible

areas such as new perceptions of the other and the conflict, trust, empathy and cooperation between groups, etc. (Pruitt & Thomas, 2008). These may make important, and perhaps necessary, contributions to tangible peacebuilding outcomes such as agreements or institutional changes. While a host of tools can measure these individual and relational changes, in general, the field lacks appropriate indicators and methodologies to effectively track how changed attitudes and new relationships become operative over time and in different contexts. Dialogue evaluation is challenged to make the invisible visible and link intangible changes to concrete outcomes.

Scope and scale: Linking project-level changes with peacebuilding-level changes was a particular challenge in this research.⁹ As Blum (2011) notes, most dialogue projects are limited in terms of time and scope, yet changes are sought at a broader, peace writ large level. There is a schism between peacebuilding projects, such as dialogue processes, that usually have modest goals of creating shifts in individuals and interpersonal relationships, and measurement frameworks that seek changes at institutional and societal-levels. In most cases, the scope and scale of individual dialogue project effects will be too small to be judged successful when measured at broader, societal levels of impact.

In addition, the problem of ‘overclaiming’ (Woodrow, in Mayne, 2008) for some projects created difficulties assessing relative effectiveness. Under pressure and competition for funding, some project leaders seemed to make unrealistic claims about the changes they could produce with limited time and resources. This dynamic of overclaiming resulted in many projects appearing to ‘fail’ or underperform when they were assessed in relation to stated goals and in relation to other projects that claimed less.

Making causal attributions: Both the desk review and field research portions of this study were observational in nature. They could not isolate cause and effect relationships between specific processes and outcomes. Surfacing projects’ theories of change and transfer approaches helped specify underlying assumptions about how and why a project’s activities would make desired changes. However, projects’ theories of change were often unarticulated, unclear, inconsistent, or dynamic in the projects examined. Only 28% of projects had an explicit theory of change. In addition, a host of external or contextual factors influenced projects and their participants making it difficult to isolate specific contributions to project impacts.

Aggregated assessments: Finally, the vast amount of information gathered about these projects in the desk research, as well as the articulate and sophisticated responses from practitioners, participants, and other stakeholders during the field research, make the data in this study complex and multi-layered. Unfortunately, the aggregation and comparative analysis processes that were intrinsic to this study meant that reporting could not adequately capture the richness, distinctions, and depth of each project’s efforts.

⁹ This issue is discussed more fully in peacebuilding evaluation literature as well - see Jean & Erstorpher, 2014; Woodrow & Oatley, 2013; Stave, 2011; d’Estree et. al., 2001).

These data and methodological issues, while not unique to this study, created significant limitations to the interpretation of results. They also have important implications for next steps in research and improvements in practice (see Section V).

IV. RESULTS

A. USIP Grant Supported Dialogue Projects: Changes over time

This study provided a useful opportunity to examine and discuss some of the ways USIP-funded dialogue projects have changed over time. These significant changes over the past 25 years reflect both advances in knowledge about dialogue processes in peacebuilding (e.g. as noted in the literature) and shifts in agency funding strategies.¹⁰

The most obvious changes include an increase in both the size of the grants ($p < .02$) and the number of dialogue-based projects ($p < .001$) funded by USIP. Between 1990-2000, USIP funded only 20 dialogue projects, almost all less than \$40,000. In the past 10 years (2006-2015) it has funded more than 60 projects, all with grants over \$40,000 and half with grants over \$100,000. There are more long-term grants (e.g. 18-40 months rather than a year or less), and follow-up funding to the same grantee in recent years. Starting in 2006, USIP grantmaking for dialogue projects shifted away from predominantly funding US-based organizations to funding local, in-country organizations ($p < .001$). This may reflect specific strategic decisions about USIP grantmaking, as well as both larger critiques within peacebuilding literature and broader trends in Western peace and development funding policies.

Consistently over time, the majority of USIP dialogue projects have been funded during escalation, crisis, or hurting stalemate stages of conflict. In the past ten years, however, significantly fewer dialogue projects were funded as prevention efforts during latent conflict/ no violence conditions and more projects were funded in post-conflict peacebuilding conditions.

Not surprisingly, the regions where dialogue projects have been implemented have changed significantly over time as well ($p < .001$). Over the past 10 years there have been fewer dialogue project grants related to conflicts in Asia-Pacific, Europe, and North America regions or addressing multinational issues, while there has been a significant increase in grants to Africa (esp. in 2006-2009), Central & South America, and the Middle East. This likely reflects changes in conflict hot spots, but is also associated with changes in other contextual factors such as the stage of conflict and scope of violence where dialogue projects were implemented. For example, in the past ten years significantly fewer dialogue projects were funded as prevention efforts during latent conflict/ no violence conditions and more projects were funded in post-conflict peacebuilding conditions ($p < .05$). Consistently over time, however, the majority of dialogue projects were funded during escalation, crisis, or hurting stalemate stages of conflict ($p = .002$). Reflecting larger changes in conflict dynamics, over the past 10 years, dialogue-based projects were used significantly less in cross-border or regional (multi-country) conflicts, and were used most often where

¹⁰ See Annex 7 Descriptive charts & graphs

violence was focused in specific regions of a particular country ($p < .05$). Most dramatic was the increase in projects focused on only a few communities in one local area. (e.g., municipality, district).

In general, dialogue projects' focus of change has shifted away from macro-level (structural), top-down & middle-up approaches that worked primarily with high and mid-level leaders, (pre-2000), toward more meso-level (relationship) efforts working with grassroots and mid-level leaders and individuals through bottom-up and middle-out change approaches.

Over time, dialogue projects have also shifted significantly in their focus of change (micro/individual, meso/relational, macro/structural) ($p < .05$), participant level and type ($p < .01$), and general approach to change (bottom-up, middle-out, top-down) ($p < .01$). The focus of change has shifted away from macro-level changes at the national/international level through top-down and middle-up approaches that worked primarily with high and mid-level leaders (pre-2000), toward mostly meso-level change at the local level through bottom-

up and middle-out approaches working with grassroots and mid-level leaders and individuals ($p < .05$). This evolution may be due to the increase in projects initiated in post-conflict environments that primarily seek to build and reconcile social relations at the community level. It may also be due to the increased funding of local NGOs that have greater access to grassroots and mid-level leaders than to high-level leadership, or to intentional shifts in USIP peacebuilding strategies or priorities.

In recent years, projects are less focused on convening dialogues among academics/experts or among high-level government officials alone (most common in top-down approaches, which also declined), and are more focused on working with a broad mix of participants or specific populations such as youth, religious leaders, women, or police ($p < .001$), more common in bottom-up approaches. Working with a broad mix of participants reflects increased efforts to make both horizontal and vertical transfer and impacts, while working with specific populations reflected the increased focus on local initiatives. In addition, in recent years more dialogue facilitators are past or current participants in the projects funded ($p = .03$) suggesting an increase in grantees' dialogue capacities or better utilization of them.

In the past 10 years, USIP funded dialogue projects increasingly work with a broad mix of participants or specific populations such as youth, religious leaders, women, or police and are guided by facilitators who are past or current participants in the projects. They use a greater number and variety of transfer approaches and have higher levels of success than older projects.

Dialogue project design, implementation, and impact has evolved as well. Earlier dialogue projects tended to use dialogue as the principal or only intervention process/ activity, while more recent projects have combined or sequenced dialogue processes with a variety of other activities (e.g. training, collaborative action, research, etc.) ($p = .03$). Similarly, over the past ten years, dialogue projects have increasingly used a greater number and variety of transfer approaches ($p = .02$). In particular, projects have increased their use of media and cascade models as methods of transfer ($p < .01$), as well as developed and disseminated more informational/ awareness materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters), films/ theatre/ radio programs, and program products (e.g. newsletters, blogs, etc.) ($p = .02$) than earlier dialogue projects. These methods are discussed more thoroughly in section IV.B.

In general, more recent dialogue-based projects have had higher levels of success than older projects ($p < .001$), especially on dimensions of effectiveness, sustainability and transfer. This may reflect larger learning and improvements in the use of dialogue processes in the field of peacebuilding over time (see section I V.E.1. for further discussion of success measures and factors related to project success).

Interviews with program leaders and participants from organizations that have long-standing dialogue efforts (e.g. Neve Shalom (30 yrs.), Givat Haviva (25 yrs), and Seeds of Peace (23 yrs.) revealed additional insights into dialogue program changes over time. Dialogue models for most of these long-standing organizations evolved over time. While each project changed in its own unique way, many project leaders identified the need to pair dialogue processes with other efforts such as collaborative action, advocacy, and establishing ongoing mechanisms that promote dialogue.

Factors driving the changes in both dialogue models and approaches to transfer seemed to fall into five areas:

1. Conflict Context: Participants discussed the importance of changes or instability in political leadership, violent events, high-level peacemaking efforts, etc. as very important in shaping the projects over time (see section E.1., for further discussion). Program goals, priorities, design, and anticipated outcomes all shifted as organizational leaders assessed where the greatest needs were and what could realistically be achieved under the circumstances. For example, in dialogue-based projects involving Israelis and Palestinians, program leaders often discussed how difficult it was to recruit participants (especially hardline participants) during the current period of fear and despair. Several talked about needing to reframe their dialogue projects when talking to different audiences to attract a wider base of participants. One participant commented, “Right now, it’s not about peace. It’s about hope and empowerment during difficult times.”

Right now, it's not about peace. It's about hope and empowerment during difficult times.

- Israeli-Palestinian dialogue participant

2. Program Leadership: In long-term dialogue-based efforts, changes in the program leadership often shifted theories of change and transfer approaches. For example, as founders were replaced by a new generation of program leadership (often program alumni), program models and methods were re-evaluated. Often new project leaders came from other human rights or peacebuilding organizations in the region and brought with them different perspectives and vision. In addition, new networks and capacities emphasized by different program leadership brought new opportunities.

3. Participant Feedback and Needs: Both project leaders and participants talked often about projects being shaped by participant feedback and the changing needs of project graduates. Several programs with long-term dialogue projects had a significant network of program alumni. For example, a few organizations focused on creating alumni events and programs to increase transfer.

4. Funders Interests and Requirements: International funders and individual donor interests and requirements also influenced changes in dialogue programs over time. Shifts in funders’ regional or thematic focus often drove project focus. Limited or inconsistent funding affected transfer approaches

and impact potential. Reporting and other funder requirements encouraged reflective practice, evaluation and learning about dialogue and transfer processes.

5. Organizational Learning: While all of these factors play a broader role in organizational learning over time, project leaders particularly mentioned information sharing with other organizations, reflective practices, and partnering with researchers as helping reshape their programs over time. Most long-term dialogue projects had staff (often program leaders or alumni) with advanced degrees in conflict resolution who conducted project-related research and evaluation. Many also partnered with universities over the years and integrated learning from these studies into the shape and design of their dialogue models and approaches to transfer. Several of the programs and project leaders in this study either conducted or participated in pioneering dialogue research and theory-building, in addition to their practice.

B. Dialogue Transfer Models: Four Approaches to Transfer and Societal Change

Approaches to dialogue transfer include *what* results and effects on dialogue participants are transferred, *how* these changes are transferred, and *who* or *what* is influenced. Embedded in these transfer strategies are assumptions of how change happens moving from participant outcomes to broader impacts.

Following recommendations by Kelman (2008) and Church & Shouldice (2003), the researchers initially analyzed the projects through the lens of theories of change to develop dialogue and transfer program models. Each project had its own unique theory of change, implicitly or explicitly stated. In order to aggregate and compare across projects, we combined individualized theories of change into broader categories. Based on the literature review, desk review and interviews, there were six primary theories of change evident in the projects: (1) Individual change (24%); (2) Capacity building and creating local mechanisms (34%); (3) Relationships and connections (48%); (4) Public attitudes (12%); (5) Track II (16%); and (6) Public Policy (16%).¹¹

These theories, implicit or explicit, were connected with the general approach to change (bottom-up, middle-out, top-down) ($p < .001$), the focus or level of change sought (micro, meso, macro changes) ($p < .01$), the level of participants (grassroots, mid-level, and high-level) ($p < .01$), and type of participants (e.g., youth, women, academics) ($p < .05$). The theories of change were also related to the specific methods projects used to transfer the effects of dialogue (and other activities) from direct participants to broader groups, practices or policies in society, whether at the local, national or international levels (e.g., disseminating products, ripple effect, cascade training, media campaigns, etc.) ($p < .01$).

Overall, the theories of change also tended to be related to the primary type of activities (dialogue, capacity building, research) and sequence of activities conducted. The Relations/Connections theory of change was most associated with the capacity building and dialogue to action/advocacy sequence and dialogue only projects ($p = .036$). The Capacity Building theory of change was most associated with, not

¹¹ See Annex 3: Glossary for definitions. Most projects reflected more than one theory of change. Therefore, the percentages add up to greater than 100% of project.

surprisingly, projects that focused on training, but combined capacity building, dialogue and action/advocacy ($p=.001$). Projects based on the Track II theory of change and Public Policy theory of change were most associated with projects that focused on research, but included dialogue ($p=.002$ and $p=.061$ respectively).

The lack of additional significant relationships might be due to the fact that the majority of projects (69%) reflected more than one theory of change, generally because most projects included a mix of dialogue, capacity building and/or research activities, in sequence or parallel, and many projects included a social action or advocacy component. Thus, the projects may have combined theories of change. For example, a project might have initially focused on individual change in participants (hearts and minds approach) and moved to theories of change focused on transferring dialogue outcomes to change public attitudes towards peace writ large, or in most cases, 'peace writ local' as a contribution towards peace writ large. Given these challenges, a broader approach was needed to frame the dialogue and transfer program models, but one that still included theories of change as a component of each model.

In looking at the data, it proved to be more useful and clear to use the general approach taken to peacebuilding and transfer (bottom-up, middle-out, top-down) as the lens through which to develop the dialogue and transfer model for three main reasons. First, since many projects were based on two or more theories of change, this led to a very high number of combinations of theories of change that made comparison and statistical analysis impossible due to the relatively small sample size. Second, the development of theories of change in the literature and in the minds of grantees and participants is still relatively recent and underdeveloped. There are no clear, agreed upon dimensions along which to compare theories of change, which made them difficult to apply towards developing a model at this time. Further research is warranted to fully realize suggestions for theory-based studies. Second, using the general approach taken is a broader tool that is based on two easily understood dimensions: (1) the level of leadership of the participants – grassroots, mid-level and high-level leaders/influentials (Lederach, 1997); and (2) the direction of intended transfer and impact – up, out, and down. Given the focus of this research was on dialogue transfer, this proved to be a particularly useful framework.

Three approaches – bottom-up, middle-out and top-down – were compared by their primary activities and sequencing, type of participants, and the primary transfer method used to influence others (recognizing that most projects used two or more methods). After this initial analysis, and based on the field research, it made sense to split up the mid-level category into two categories to reflect the nuances and different focus of participants' transfer efforts that were detected in the mid-level out projects. Therefore, one mid-level model is focused primarily on influencing peers and 'down' into the grassroots, and one mid-level model is focused primarily on influencing peers and 'up' to high-level leaders, policy and decision-makers. The bottom-up approach also included a bottom-out focus and the top-down approach also included a top-out focus. However, we did not split up these categories because bottom-up approaches are assumed to work out and eventually transfer up, and top-down approaches are assumed to work out and eventually trickle down.

Table 1 below illustrates the four broad dialogue and transfer models. The information within each 'box' in the table is presented in descending order of frequency and includes the following components:

- Who:
 - Participant Level and Sector – grassroots, mid-level, high-level; civil society, government, or mixed;
 - Participant Type – youth, women, academics, NGOs, experts, government, military, etc.;
- What:
 - Primary Activity the grantee engaged in with participants (dialogue; capacity building, such as education, training, and training of trainers; and research activities) prior to transfer;
 - Activity Sequence – the order in which these activities took place;
- Why:
 - Dialogue Purpose – the role of dialogue and its aims;
 - Level/Focus of Change – the changes the grantees were trying to achieve with the project (micro – knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, interpersonal relations; meso – intergroup relationship changes, network, and coalitions; macro – structural, societal, socio-political change);
 - Issue Focus – the types of issues being addressed by dialogue and other activities (e.g., conflict analysis and prevention, countering violent extremism, environment, reconciliation, etc.);
- How:
 - Target Audience – more people, key people, or both;
 - Transfer Approach – how participants (and grantees) transmitted dialogue (and other activity) results to beyond the participants and who/what they were seeking to influence;
 - Theory of Change for Transfer and Peacebuilding – the underlying assumptions that explain why the dialogue and transfer model was used.

Table 1: Dialogue and Transfer Models: Four Approaches to Transfer and Societal Change

Model Dimension		Bottom-Out & Up Transfer (N=48/46%)	Middle-Out & Down Transfer (N=23/22%)	Middle-Out & Up Transfer (N=14/13%)	Top-Out & Down Transfer (N=20/19%)
Who	Participant Level & Sector	Mostly grassroots, civil society, some with Mid-level and High-level, including government officials, at the community level	Mid-Level, mostly including Grassroots and sometimes High-level at the community level; Mostly mixed civil society and local government, with some just civil society	Mid-level & some High Level, and occasionally Grassroots; Mostly mixed civil society and government	High level, some with Mid-level, and rarely Grassroots; mostly mixed government and civil society
	Participant Type	Youth, Educators, Women (some from NGOs), Religious/Ethnic/Indigenous members, Local Police Officers	Religious/Ethnic Leaders, NGOs, Police Officials, Journalists, Business, Schools	Academics, Experts, NGOS, Government / Political / Military representatives	Government, Political & Military Leaders, Experts, some Academics and NGOs
What	Primary Activity	Capacity Building and Dialogue	Dialogue, with some Capacity Building	Dialogue, with little Capacity Building	Dialogue
	Activity Sequence	Capacity Building and Dialogue → Action or Advocacy & Transfer	Dialogue and Capacity Building → Action or Advocacy & Transfer	Research → Dialogue → Advocacy & Transfer	Research → Dialogue → Advocacy & Transfer
Why	Dialogue Purpose	Raise Awareness; Interpersonal Relationship Building; some Joint Action	Raise Awareness; Intergroup Relationship Building & Working Through Conflict; Joint Action	Raise Awareness; Intergroup/Sectoral Relationships & Working Through Conflict; Policy Recommendations	Policy Recommendations
	Level/ Focus of Change	Micro (Individual), Meso (Relational) → Macro (Structural)	Meso (Relational), Micro (Individual) → Macro (Structural)	Meso (Relational) → Macro (Structural)	Macro (Structural), including and/or leading to Micro (Individual)
	Issue Focus	Conflict Analysis & Prevention, Education, Reconciliation, CVE, Religion/Culture/ Tolerance, Security, Governance, Human Rights, Victims' Rights	Conflict Analysis & Prevention, Security, Local Governance and Human Rights, Religion/Culture/ Tolerance	Conflict Analysis & Prevention, Security, Local Governance, Environmental Conflict	Conflict Analysis & Prevention, Security, Policy & Governance, International Relations
How	Target Audience	More People	Key People and More People	Key People	Key People
	Transfer Approach (how and to who)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Disseminate Products (e.g., curriculum, articles, documentaries, radio, theatre, brochures, etc.) in spheres of influence Youth primarily use Cascade & Ripple Effect with peers, family, and also lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Disseminate Products (e.g., training manuals, information and awareness materials, radio/tv interviews) in spheres of influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Advocacy through policy briefs and proposals shared with top leaders and influential decision makers Disseminate Products (e.g, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Advocacy through policy briefs and proposals shared with top leaders and influential decision makers

Model Dimension		Bottom-Out & Up Transfer (N=48/46%)	Middle-Out & Down Transfer (N=23/22%)	Middle-Out & Up Transfer (N=14/13%)	Top-Out & Down Transfer (N=20/19%)
		cooperative action in their community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators primarily use Cascade with students and disseminate curriculum • Women primarily use Ripple Effect & Cascade with peers, family and community, and Political Advocacy with local leaders/decision makers • Police use Cascade to train peers • Media/social media/awareness campaigns to spread messages to the public • Community meetings • Outreach in schools, organizations, religious spaces, youth groups, etc. • Ongoing Dialogue Platforms/Networks and Local Peace/Reconciliation Mechanisms • Spin-off projects reaching into new schools or communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ripple Effect and Cascade Model of Capacity Building • Ongoing Dialogue Platforms/Networks and Conflict Resolution/Peacebuilding Mechanisms • Media/social media/awareness campaigns to spread messages to the public • Conferences, community meetings, meetings with local officials • Spin-off projects reaching into new communities, regions 	articles, books, website) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ripple Effect of new thinking and policy options to peers and in spheres of influence, as well to students of academics although this is not the focus/purpose • Conferences, roundtables with peers, policy / decision-makers • Media Coverage, Interviews • Some use of ongoing Dialogue Platforms/Networks for policy discussions and conflict prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate Products (e.g., articles, books, proposals, strategy papers, new policies, training manual) • Ripple Effect of new thinking and policy options to peers and in spheres of influence through word-of-mouth, publications, presentations • Media Coverage, Interviews, documentaries, to raise awareness and gain support
	Theory of Change	Relations & Connections; Capacity Building and Local Mechanisms; Individual/Personal Change; Public Attitudes	Relations & Connections; Capacity Building and Local Mechanisms, Public Attitudes	Relations & Connections; Track II	Public Policy; Track II

1. Transfer Methods

Before reporting on the four dialogue and transfer models, the eight key methods used by participants to transfer the effects of dialogue and other activities are presented.

Disseminating products (74%) – spreading new information, messages and recommendations through written, audio, visual and dramatic products, often served dual purposes to transfer learning and ideas and to serve as the basis of dialogue. Common products were: (a) research/analysis, conference results and policy recommendations, including articles, briefs, books, policy papers, agreements, etc.; (b) curriculum and training manuals/toolkits; (c) film documentaries (e.g., about dialogue groups, successful nonviolent resistance), theatre performances and radio programs focused on tolerance and other peace messaging; (d) program products (newsletters with articles, program updates, analysis reports, database);

and (e) educational and awareness materials (brochures, pamphlets, posters, communication documents, DVDs).¹²

Ripple effect (55%) – spreading new understandings, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors through personal spheres of influence and by being role models to others, whether through informal word-of-mouth to peers and colleagues, or through formal channels, such as public presentations or religious leaders preaching peace and tolerance.

Policy advocacy (44%) – changing institutions and practices by advocating with key leaders and decision-makers in government and civil society to adopt new or reformed policies/practices and institutional change that will have broad impact.

Media campaigns (35%) – spreading the word publicly to mass audiences through mass media and social media. For example, media coverage of dialogue projects seen by a broad audience, radio/television/newspaper interviews, media coverage of project outcomes to gain broad public support, and including journalists as participants to improve their skills in impartial reporting and to provide coverage of dialogue initiatives.

Cascade model (31%) – participants who had gone through education, training and/or training of trainers/facilitators conducting education and training with others, or facilitating new dialogues, thereby replicating the model.

Ongoing platforms or mechanisms for dialogue, conflict resolution and peacebuilding (30%) – sustaining and replicating program models through ongoing networks and structures for dialogue (e.g., youth networks, women’s ecumenical networks, reconciliation commissions, multi-stakeholder dialogues) and mechanisms for preventing/resolving conflict (e.g., district peace councils), and by reforming/leveraging traditional community mechanisms for more inclusive dialogue and peacebuilding (e.g., the *iirga*¹³ in Pakistan).

Community meetings, conferences, roundtables (23%) – convening public or by-invitation gatherings for raising awareness, dialogue, deliberation and policy discussions, and exploring solutions and actions, for example, through citizen participation forums, citizen-government dialogues, expert/academic roundtables and conferences, etc.

Cooperative action (20%) – participants engaging in activities beyond the project to engage and empower others, mostly grassroots citizens, to actively work together towards the betterment of their communities, for example, by conducting joint school activities, ecumenical and interfaith activities in the community (e.g., celebrating other’s holidays, joint festivals), awareness and peace campaigns, organizing symbolic actions (e.g., public peace marches, public signing of peace petitions and commitments to peace), and

¹² See Annex 8 for Table of Product Developed for Transfer by dialogue and transfer model and primary activity.

¹³ A traditional assembly of leaders, generally adult males, that make decisions and resolves disputes by consensus and according to the teachings of Islam.

working on issue-oriented projects to solve specific problems (e.g., security, environment, technology, health).

Mixed transfer methods (85%) – most projects and participants used two or more approaches to transfer, with the highest percentage of projects using three methods (29%).

2. Program Models

The following summaries highlight key components of each model (see Table 1 above).¹⁴

1. Bottom-Out and Up Transfer: The most common dialogue and transfer model was bottom-up approaches (46% of projects) in which participants seek to transfer ‘out’ to their peers and immediate spheres of influence and/or ‘up’ to mid-level and high-level leaders, mostly at the local level, and/or sometimes also the larger national level. The majority of participants were grassroots, civil society members and local leaders, including youth (16%), women (9%), teachers (6%), members of religious, ethnic and indigenous communities (5%), and local police officers (2%). Many projects included a mix of participants (e.g. police-community dialogues, women and youth together, teachers and youth, etc.) and included participants from different religious, ethnic and other majority-minority divides in order to build cross-community relations. Seventy-three percent (73%) of bottom-out/up approaches included only civil society participants, while 27% also included government or political leaders at some point in the project.

Most bottom-up initiatives included a mix of dialogue and capacity building, with capacity building generally preceding dialogue to prepare participants for intergroup dialogue, or following dialogue to prepare participants for some type of joint action or transfer activities. In many projects, especially those focused on youth, capacity building was the primary activity, with dialogue often a component of what was otherwise, mainly a training. Furthermore, not all youth-focused projects recruited existing youth leaders, but rather grantees used capacity building to develop leadership skills. As such, many of the bottom-up approaches were based on empowerment models of change.

Common youth projects were peace/tolerance education, peace camps that combined dialogue, training and social/fun activities, and capacity building projects that emphasized skills building in peacebuilding related topics, leadership skills, and/or used a sectoral focus (e.g., film/theatre/radio, environment, technology) as a common interest around which to bring youth together across identity boundaries.

In women-focused initiatives, dialogue was the primary activity, but usually mixed with some capacity building. Common topics and focus of dialogue included: understanding conflict and conflict prevention, countering violent extremism, religious and cultural differences and similarities, reconciliation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, security, local governance, human rights, and victims’ rights. The purpose of dialogue was to explore issues and raise awareness about these issues to build relationships (primarily at the interpersonal level) and to promote collaborative action or advocacy. Capacity building and dialogue was also used to heal the wounds of war, which was especially important for women given they tend to

¹⁴ See Annex 9 for Program Models by Activity Sequence and Primary Transfer Method.

be the largest cohort of victims of war. In these projects, capacity building and psychosocial healing functioned to support both individual healing and reconciliation, as well as to build personal strength to raise one's voice for change. The two grantees' projects reviewed in the Colombia field research exemplified this approach.

Generally, projects focused on youth and women expected participants to engage in some type of action or advocacy as part of the project design in order to transfer the effects of dialogue and capacity building to the broader community or to key leaders. Police-community projects also included a mix of dialogue, capacity building and collaborative action. Among teachers, dialogue was the primary activity for the purpose of learning and building relationships. Many projects also included capacity building, but rarely were teachers expected to engage in joint action or advocacy beyond the immediate group. However, they were assumed to transfer results, primarily to their students and schools.

The immediate result of these program activities were primarily micro- and meso-level outcomes, specifically interpersonal and intergroup relationships. Participants developed new knowledge, ways of thinking about the 'other' and their conflict, new dialogue and peacebuilding skills (and perhaps sectoral skills), and interpersonal cross-community relationships. The participants then transferred these outcomes within their spheres of influence, primarily to their peers, schools, organizations and local community through informal word-of-mouth and role modeling, which created ripple effects, and through the more formal cascade model of education and training to build local capacities. These transfer efforts reached hundreds of additional participants (e.g., each youth conduct dialogues with 5-30 other youth, women facilitate dialogue in their local communities and villages). In addition, most bottom-up approaches transferred to the broader community through direct action and/or advocacy in their local communities to address specific needs, and sometimes with regional/national authorities to effect policy and institutional change. For example, participants organized community events that brought people together across identity boundaries for dialogue, film screenings, festivals, ritual and symbolic events, and so on. Police participants conducted training for peers and dialogues in universities and community meetings to improve police-community relations and security.

These capacity-building and dialogue-to-action projects tended to occur in more recent years, reflecting the maturation and evolution in the peacebuilding field, and due to urgent appeals by dialogue participants, especially youth, to "do something." In fact, some participants, including youth, developed 'spin-off' projects that engaged more people and created new organizations. In addition, grantees increasingly established ongoing dialogue platforms for youth to stay engaged, such as regular in-person meetings and/or online social media.

Bottom-up approaches often utilized creative transfer approaches to reach mass audiences. For example, one youth project began with peace education and interreligious and inter-tribal/ethnic dialogue and was followed with training in script writing and theatre. Mixed teams of youth then co-developed theatre performances that incorporated messages of peaceful coexistence and tolerance and performed these to broad audiences in their community. Another successful project utilized radio programs that reached thousands and perhaps millions of listeners in the FATA region of Pakistan, which incorporated interviews,

information and dramatic skits in order to inform and inspire peacebuilding coexistence, anti-extremism, and community-based problem solving. This project trained local women and youth as community reporters and dialogue facilitators to contribute material for the radio episodes and to facilitate Listening Clubs to discuss the radio episodes, deepen learning, build relations, and promote collaborative action.

Ultimately, most bottom-out and up projects were trying to achieve meso-level changes in intergroup relations in their communities. They hoped that by changing enough individuals (more people), this would improve overall intergroup relations. Eventually, it was hoped, these improved intergroup relationships would become the new norm and pave the way for more macro-level changes, such as contributing to peace agreements (e.g., Colombia, Israel and Palestine, Sudan), new policies and practices (e.g., protecting human rights, victims' rights, institutionalizing peace education), solidifying existing peace agreements, or reducing and preventing conflict or violent extremism. In other projects, youth used their newfound skills, confidence and coalitions to directly approach decision-makers in their community, for example, engaging religious/tribal leaders in the local *Jirga*, and advocating directly for their inclusion in decision-making and creating peaceful change (e.g., in Pakistan).

In many projects that focused on building women leaders, grantees and female participants reported they had made important contributions to changing gender relations in their immediate sphere of influence as they became empowered with new knowledge and skills. For example, in one focus group with grassroots women leaders in Colombia, the women talked about how they first educated their husbands and sons, thereby, changing the gender dynamics within their family, and then successfully held workshops in their local community on the rights of women and victims and the role of women as peacebuilders. Expressing the experience of several women interviewed, one indigenous woman leader joyfully reported that, "Now when women are silent in community meetings, it's the men who tell us to speak up. For the first time, women have gained confidence to express themselves, the respect of men, and a voice in community decisions. And, violence against women by spouses is decreasing."

Through dialogue and capacity building in Colombia, women are contributing to new gender relations: "Now when women are silent in community meetings, it's the men who tell us to speak up. For the first time, women have gained the confidence to express themselves, the respect of men, and a voice in community decisions. And, violence against women by spouses is decreasing."

– GemPaz participant

The primary theories of change underlying these programs were peacebuilding and transfer through individual change, capacity building, creating local mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and peacebuilding, relations and connections theory focused on intergroup relations, and public attitudes theory focused on influencing broader societal norms. The assumption was that through changing hearts and minds and developing dialogue and peacebuilding skills (through education, training, and intergroup dialogue/contact), relationships would develop and thereby contribute to peace, or, that by focusing on developing relationships (through intergroup dialogue/contact and joint action), individual hearts and minds would follow, also contributing to peace. Further, the sector/issue-focused projects assumed that by bringing participants together around like-minded interests or common ground and needs (e.g., ecumenical circles, environmental issues) to build shared knowledge, skills and engage in joint action, individual and relational changes would also occur.

Finally, many bottom-up projects were based on an empowerment model that sought to build knowledge and capacity in order to address power imbalances between vulnerable, marginalized groups and majority groups. In fact, being organized and united was recognized by several grantees and participants during the field research as key to their success in accessing and negotiating with authorities. They had “strength in numbers.”

2. Middle-Out and Down Transfer: This model (22% of projects) included mid-level leaders who have influence and are primarily focused on influencing their peers and members of their community. The majority of participants in this category were mid-level civil society members, including religious, ethnic, indigenous and other leaders, NGOs, and to a lesser extent police officials, journalists, businesspeople, mid-level school officials. These projects also tended to include grassroots leaders as part of multi-stakeholder dialogues and initiatives, reflecting both a ‘key people’ and ‘more people’ target audience. For example, projects included influential and visible religious leaders, as well as local religious leaders, or, high-level school officials and principals and teachers. The distinguishing feature was that the participants were selected based on their presumed existing influence in their communities (rather than, for example, the ‘future leaders’ model of bottom-up approaches). These projects were more likely to include leaders (formal and informal) representing organizations and institutions, such as civil society organizations, schools, religious institutions, tribal communities, government offices, and so on, than bottom-up approaches. For example, they focused on developing relations between Sunni and Shiite Imams who have significant influence with members of their mosque rather than just bringing Sunni and Shiite individuals together.

These projects were primarily dialogue projects, with some including capacity building, followed by action or advocacy and transfer activities. The primary purpose of dialogue was to raise awareness and build intergroup relations across identity boundaries that go beyond interpersonal relationships. In addition, relationship building emphasized working through conflicts in order to heal intergroup relations, promote harmony, and resolve conflicts. As such, these initiatives tended to focus on meso level relationships, including building strong networks, as well as micro level learning, in order to achieve macro level changes in their respective communities. These dialogues focused on issues such as conflict analysis and prevention, security, local governance, human rights, victims’ rights, religious/ethnic/cultural tolerance and institutional change.

The most common transfer methods were disseminating products in participants’ spheres of influence, such as training manuals to multiply capacity building, and information and awareness materials to spread key peace message and information. The second most common transfer method was the ripple effect and cascade model since participants were selected for their ability to influence others. Another strategy was creating ongoing dialogue platforms, networks and conflict resolution/peacebuilding mechanisms. These platforms/mechanisms varied from formal to informal institutions. The majority of dialogue platforms and networks were loosely structured with some expectations established for frequency of meeting, transfer, and so on, but were not legal entities or officially recognized by government entities. Some projects established formal neighborhood and district peace councils that were recognized by local governments to address local needs, and oftentimes included both civil society and government staff. Other projects

included informal mechanisms. For example, the municipal and departmental citizens' reconciliation commissions organized by Sembrandopaz in Colombia brought together civil society leaders for dialogue and training in order to build a strong network and capacity to influence their respective communities. The individual commissions were not officially recognized by government agencies. However, over time they established connections with local, regional and national government and were able to influence policies and practices, thereby combining middle-out, down and up transfer.

The middle-out and down approach was more likely than other approaches to use media (traditional and social media) to develop awareness and messaging campaigns to reach a broader audience. Participants in these approaches were also more likely to convene community meetings to raise awareness and problem solve, and to hold meeting with official authorities to advocate for change.

The underlying theories of change were developing relations and connections across groups, organizations and institutions, building local capacities and mechanisms for peacebuilding, and changing public attitudes and local policies in order to create societal change.

3. Middle-Out and Up Transfer: This model (13% of projects) included mid-level leaders who have influence and are primarily focused on influencing high-level national leaders, such as government, political, and military officials and decision-makers. The majority of participants in this category were civil society members, including academics, experts and influential NGOs, with some projects also including government, political, and military officials and decision-makers in an unofficial capacity (e.g., Track II dialogues). While these leaders have a connection with the grassroots (e.g., academics transfer their learning to their students), the focus was on influencing peers and high-level leaders.

In contrast to the other approaches, this model was focused primarily on dialogue, with few projects including capacity building, and most dialogues including a research component, generally as the basis for dialogue. The purpose of dialogue was similar to the other middle-out model regarding to explore issues and raise awareness and build interpersonal and intergroup relationship, but primarily building relations within issue sectors (e.g., security) and focused on analyzing and addressing specific conflicts or issues (e.g., governance, environmental conflict, intrastate and international conflicts, etc.). Thus, the dialogue purpose was ultimately to develop policy recommendations, often with advocacy following dialogue activities. These projects included key people to reach other key people.

This approach relied heavily on publishing and disseminating written products, such as articles, books, and policy briefs. In addition, these academics, experts, government officials and other participants transferred their new understanding and policy ideas through a ripple effect within their spheres of influence, spreading new ideas about policy options. The theories of change included building relations and connections, as well as Track II theories about the utility of unofficial dialogues for official peacebuilding.

4. Top-Out and Down Transfer: This model included government, political, and military officials and decision-makers in an official and/or or unofficial capacity. The majority (59%) of these dialogues also included civil society participants, such as mid-level leaders, including subject matter experts, and to a

lesser extent academics and NGOs, and in a few projects, also grassroots/civil society organizations. While there is overlap in this category and the middle-out/up model, the difference is that the overall level of decision-making and authority of participants is much higher, and research and dialogue are the primary activities, followed by advocacy and transfer. The dialogue purpose was almost exclusively focused on exploring and developing policy recommendations on issues, such as conflict analysis and prevention, security, internal and international relations, and governance practices, including justice, rule of law and citizen participation. The level of focus was macro-level structural change, which may include micro changes among participants and/or lead to micro changes in others, but this was not the purpose or focus. The participants are key people transferring dialogue outcomes to other key people through advocacy with top leaders and influential decision makers, dissemination of scholarly/expert publications, strategy papers and enacting new policies, as well as the ripple effect to transfer new ideas, relationships, policies and practices through ‘trickle down’ processes, and media coverage (e.g., interviews, documentaries) to raise awareness about policy issues and recommendations and gain widespread support. The assumption is that socio-political policy and practice changes (macro change) implemented at the top will require new/changed structures and behaviors among mid-level and grassroots leaders/individuals, which in turn supports attitude change (to alleviate dissonance). This approach reflects public policy and Track II theories of change, and the assumption that as government officials or other key leaders change policies and practices, the dynamics of the conflict will also change, encouraging the larger populace to respond accordingly. Research supports this approach as an effective means of broader behavioral and attitudinal change.

An important point about the four transfer models is that grantees/projects often included more than one approach in their design and/or worked with different levels of leadership during different phases or activities. In addition, many grantees’ strategies evolved over time. This evolution of strategies was often accompanied by the maturing of grantee organizations, their increased experiences, and their resulting increased influence and access to other stakeholders. For example, some grassroots organizations who were locally focused developed over time to have regional and even some national influence on policy. As such, their approaches integrated bottom-up approaches in local communities with mid-level approaches reaching across and up.

C. Most and Least Effective Dialogue Transfer Models

1. Criteria for Transfer Success

Identifying which of the program models are most effective and least effective at creating transfer – or, “transfer success” – requires that we first define what we mean by transfer success. What is considered transfer success will likely be different for different stakeholders (funders, grantees, participants, etc.), in different contexts, using different dialogue program models, with different goals and objectives, and so on. One approach to developing indicators of transfer success is to use the definition of transfer posed earlier:

- *What* effects are transferred – the outcomes of dialogue for participants as evidenced by the impacts seen beyond the participants;

- *How* these changes happen – the type and number of transfer methods used and the type of sustainability plans to deepen/broaden reach;
- *Who* is influenced – the type of “beneficiaries” who are targeted for transfer and number of beneficiaries reached.

The relationship between program models and transfer success were explored by measuring the program models’ relationship (and that of subcomponents) with each suggested indicator.¹⁵

2. Program Models and What Effects are Transferred

One way to identify transfer success is to measure whether impact beyond participants happened, and which of the indicators related to transfer are most strongly associated with impact, whether at the micro, meso or macro level. An underlying assumption of dialogue programs is that if the program leads to success in outcomes for participants, the participants will in turn be able to influence others and make change beyond the dialogue group (impact). Table 2 shows the percentage of micro, meso, and macro impacts beyond participants for each of the approaches (based on the original three approaches).

Table 2: Program Models by Type of Impact: Percentage of projects with micro, meso, macro impact

<i>Percentage of projects</i>	Micro Impact (individual)	Meso Impact (relational)	Macro Impact (Structural)
Bottom-up Approach	50%	46%	46%
Middle-out Approach	27%	49%	46%
Top-down Approach	15%	20%	60%

The quantitative analysis revealed near significant differences between program models and types of impacts ($p=.076$), with the strongest differences between program models for micro impact ($p=.01$) and meso impact ($p=.09$). Bottom-up approaches were more often associated with micro impact (50% of projects) in participants’ spheres of influence than other approaches. Forty-six percent (46%) of bottom-up approaches were also associated with meso impacts, such as new intergroup relationships, and with macro impacts. These macro impacts took place primarily at the local level in the communities where projects were implemented, such as increased citizen participation in local government decision-making, new police practices, improved police-community relations, and so on.

Middle-out approaches were more associated with meso impacts (49%), such as strengthened cross-community relationships or new coalitions/networks, than other approaches. Forty-six percent (46%) were also associated with macro impacts that either occurred in local communities (‘out and down’

¹⁵ While the program models presented in Table 1 split the middle-out approaches into two separate categories, the quantitative analysis was conducted on one middle-out category. As explained previously, the two categories emerged after the desk review and quantitative analysis and in light of the field research.

transfer) or in national level policies and practices ('out and up' transfer). Twenty-seven percent (27%) were associated with micro impacts in their spheres of influence.

Top-down approaches, not surprisingly, were more associated with macro impact (60%) than other approaches. These were mostly related to national/international level policies and practices, for example, new policies on civil-military relations.

Most projects had more than one type of impact; some combination of micro, meso and macro impact. This is not surprising given that all theories of change, implicitly or explicitly, assume an interrelationship between micro, meso and macro change (they differ primarily in their focus of change). Some differences were found (although not significant, $p=.113$), when comparing program models by the combination of impacts achieved. Bottom-up approaches were more likely than other approaches to be associated with impacts in all three levels of impact simultaneously (21% of projects), and were more likely to have all three levels of impacts than only one or two types of impact. This suggests that bottom-up approaches were relatively successful in achieving all types of impact, albeit primarily at the local level. Middle-out approaches mostly saw combinations of meso and macro impacts (16% of projects), solely macro impacts (16%), or solely meso impacts (14%). Top-down approaches were mostly associated with macro only impact (35% of projects), micro-meso-macro impacts (10%), and meso and macro impacts (10%).

These findings are preliminary due to the difficult nature of identifying impacts from a desk review that included few evaluations and only limited field research. In addition, the field research included a higher percentage of bottom-up and middle-out approaches than top-down projects, which might have skewed results, especially regarding macro impacts since grantees were able to identify many more impacts during field interviews than represented in project reports. As such, projects included in the field research are over-represented in the 'high success' categories. In addition, about 10% of top-down and middle-out approaches relied heavily on disseminating products (e.g., books, articles) as the primary transfer method. It was difficult to determine whether these types of products led to any discernible impact, given the time lag between their dissemination and possible impact. Given the popularity of publishing and disseminating articles and books for transfer, future research is warranted to investigate their transfer effects. Despite challenges in the research, we can conclude that all three approaches were successful in leading to micro, meso and macro level impacts in the settings in which the projects took place (e.g., local communities, regional initiatives, national, etc.). Section IV.D looks more closely at what factors contributed to their success.

3. Dialogue and Transfer Program Models and How These Changes Happen

Indicators for how changes happen include the type and number of transfer methods used and sustainability plans to deepen/broaden reach.

Type and Number of Transfer Methods: As described in section IV.B.1 participants and grantees used eight basic approaches to transfer effects beyond the dialogue participants. Quantitative analysis shows significant differences in the primary transfer method used by the bottom-up, middle-out, and top-down

models ($p < .001$). The strongest differences were for policy advocacy (mostly top-down) ($p < .001$), community meetings/conferences (mostly bottom-up) ($p = .023$), cascade model (mostly bottom-up) ($p < .001$), ripple effect (mostly bottom-up) ($p = .034$), and use of media (mostly middle-out) ($p = .046$).¹⁶

There is a relationship between the type of program approach used, type and number of transfer methods, and the ability to achieve impacts beyond the participants. Overall, the more transfer methods that were used, the greater the frequency of all types of impact.

In addition, the combination of activities used was also significantly related to project impacts. Projects that included both capacity building and dialogue, and especially those that also built action/advocacy (transfer) into the project design, were significantly related to micro impact ($p = .014$) and meso impacts ($p < .001$). Training participants in dialogue facilitation, mediation and other peacebuilding skills was strongly associated with meso impact ($p = .006$) and weakly associated with micro impact ($p = .071$). Training was most common in bottom-up approaches (67%), somewhat evident in middle-out (mostly middle-down) approaches (38%), and least common in top-down approaches (10%) ($p < .001$). Relatedly, mid-level and high-level leaders were also significantly less likely to be associated with training than grassroots leaders/individuals ($p < .001$). We can only speculate as to why relatively few middle-out and top-down approaches included a training component. One reason might be that the goal of middle-up and top-down projects was primarily policy change. While it is not uncommon to conduct training for mid-level and high-level leaders, perhaps the grantees assumed that such leaders already have dialogue, mediation and other skills and/or that these skills weren't needed to achieve policy recommendations (especially since most of these projects included experts and academics).

The finding that training was more strongly associated with meso than micro impacts is, on the surface, somewhat surprising. However, the majority of bottom-up approaches and middle-out/down approaches that included training were ultimately trying to improve relationships among participants (outcome) and in the broader community (impact). Both bottom-up approaches and middle-out approaches were most often based on the Relationship and Connections theory of change (63% of projects in both approaches, compared to 32% for top-down approaches). Thus, training was ultimately for the purpose of improving relationships (through additional dialogue, mediation, etc. beyond participants). While relationship change presumably includes micro impact, this was not the primary goal, therefore, micro impacts might be underreported by grantees.

Significant differences were also found between the type of transfer method used and project impacts ($p = .048$). Projects that had micro impacts were most associated with the dissemination of products, which was a common method across all approaches, from articles and books to radio/tv/theater programs, and other efforts. Projects that had meso impacts were most associated with use of the cascade model and ripple effect, both most commonly used in bottom-up approaches. Again, the meso-level impacts are likely related to the focus of bottom-up approaches on relationship building. Projects with macro impacts were most associated with the use of several methods together, which was equally common in bottom-

¹⁶ See Annex 10 for table showing the distribution of transfer methods by bottom-up, middle-out and top-down models.

up and middle-out approaches. In addition, macro impacts were highly associated with participants reaching out to leaders and decision-makers through advocacy efforts, most closely associated with top-out/down approaches. Overall, the more transfer methods that were used, the greater the frequency of all types of impact: micro ($p=.071$), meso ($p=.007$), and macro ($p=.002$). The number of transfer methods was also associated with project success ($p<.001$) (discussed more in Section IV.E.). This analysis suggests there is a relationship between the type of program approach used, the type and number of transfer methods, and the ability to achieve impacts beyond the participants.

Sustainability: Grantees and participants used five primary approaches to ensure sustainability of project results and expand project efforts: 1) grantee sought funding for project next steps and expansion (25%); 2) grantee planned other activities (highly correlated to seeking funding; $p<.01$)(43%); 3) participants planned additional project-related activities (33%); 4) participants developed or engaged in other peacebuilding activities beyond the grantee/project (e.g., spin-off organizations formed)(28%); and 5) new dialogue/peacebuilding mechanisms were created or strengthened that ensured continued opportunities for engagement for existing participants and others (23%).

Participant-led sustainability plans were most associated with projects that included capacity building, dialogue and action.

While these plans were mentioned in final reports (and/or interviews), it's unclear how many of these plans were actually realized, although many had indeed begun according to final reports, evaluations and field research. Nevertheless, the fact that grantees and participants actually had plans in place by the project end was a good sign of potential further transfer. In fact, grantees who received additional USIP funding generally had clear sustainability plans described in their final reports (which were substantiated by subsequent evaluation reports). Each project's overall sustainability plan was rated on a scale of 1-5 in terms of its likelihood of contributing to sustainability of project effects, participant resilience, and ongoing activities. Quantitative analysis found that project sustainability ratings were significantly associated with project impacts beyond participants ($p=.017$). Projects with high sustainability ratings were more likely to be associated with macro impacts ($p=.005$), meso impacts ($p<.001$), and micro impacts ($p=.057$) than projects with low sustainability ratings.

Furthermore, projects in which there were participant plans to continue project activities ($p<.001$), grantee plans to continue projects activities after the grant period ($p=.041$), and projects that established new mechanisms for dialogue and peacebuilding ($p=.05$) were more associated with micro impact than projects that did not have these plans. Also, grantee plans to continue project activities after the grant period were more associated with macro impacts ($p=.05$) than projects without these plans. No other significant relationships were found.

Participant-led sustainability plans were most associated with projects that included capacity building, dialogue and action. This suggests a relationship between projects that inspired and empowered participants to be proactive and participant outcomes. Given that many projects sought to empower participants, especially at the grassroots level and in bottom-up approaches, this suggests that those

projects that culminated in participants' plans to continue their engagement (with or beyond the grantee) is another sign of successful transfer, albeit in the future.

New dialogue and peacebuilding mechanisms were weakly associated with participant outcomes ($p=.108$) and were most associated with projects that combined capacity building and dialogue to action models ($p=.064$). In other words, participants were provided with skills to engage in conflict resolution, dialogue facilitation or other intervention techniques and then provided with a mechanism or platform in which to use their new skills.

Bottom-up approaches were slightly more likely to have sustainability plans (60%) than middle-out (57%) and top-down approaches (55%). Bottom-up approaches were associated with greater tendency to result in participant plans for additional project activities ($p<.001$) and engage in other peacebuilding activities ($p=.062$) than other approaches. The reasons for these differences are unclear. However, one possible explanation is that bottom-up approaches, by definition, are relying on a grassroots-led movement to achieve change. Such a movement implies many people are involved (RPP's 'many people'), which requires ongoing and expanding initiatives and sustained effort. Therefore, bottom-up approaches must include sustainability plans in order to succeed.

In highly polarized political climates, participants, especially youth, found solace and hope in their ongoing networks.

A few significant differences were also found between types of participants (youth, women, etc.) and sustainability plans. Projects with a mixed group of participants were more associated with participant plans to continue project activities ($p=.002$) and develop new peacebuilding activities ($p=.093$). NGOs were somewhat associated with plans to develop new peacebuilding mechanisms ($p=.072$). Field interviews suggest that once people developed multi-stakeholder relationships, networks and coalitions (across participant types or NGOs), they were very keen to continue to build on these new relationships, making further transfer more likely. In fact, field interviews showed that being part of a strong network or coalition provided ongoing opportunities for dialogue, capacity building and joint action. The exception to this was in Israeli-Palestinian projects, in which participants had been less able to engage in collaboration and joint action recently due to the increasingly highly polarized political climate. However, even in these climates, participants, especially youth, found solace and hope in their ongoing networks.

Academic participants were highly associated with continued plans for project activities ($p=.016$), primarily through continued engagement in new/ongoing dialogue and peacebuilding platforms ($p=.073$). Similarly, although less weakly related, participants who were religious/ethnic leaders were somewhat associated with continued plans for project activities ($p=.07$), also through dialogue and peacebuilding platforms ($p=.07$). Police in police-community relations projects were also somewhat associated with dialogue and peacebuilding platforms ($p=.069$).

While having sustainability plans was generally associated with impact and project success, they were not the only factor that determined project impact. Impact was also dependent on what type of program approach and transfer method was used. For example, in projects that were middle-out/up, included only/mostly academic participants, and used dissemination of products (e.g., articles, books, policy briefs) as the primary transfer method, having sustainability plans was not necessarily associated with project impacts. This is likely because this particular transfer method and type of product was insufficient to make change.

Finally, two factors related to sustainability stood out as causing negative unintended effects on participants, and therefore, transfer. One issue was the lack of funding for ongoing project activities. This is always a possibility and risk and a perpetual challenge for grantees. However, it was especially problematic when participants had the expectation that they were being involved in an ongoing initiative. Raising expectations that were then unmet led to disappointment and disillusionment with the grantee and lost opportunity for transfer and impact. This points to the need for grantees to not only have sustainability plans, but also exit strategies when funding dries up. A second problem was related to turnover in key staff. While staff turnover is common and to be expected, participants in one project felt used by the staff person who had recruited them and worked with them for a year, remarking the person was just using them and the project as a 'resume builder.' It's not clear why the staff member actually left, and perhaps, they had a perfectly legitimate reason. However, this suggests that organizations need to carefully select staff who will preserve the reputation of the organization and live up to professional and ethical standards and that when key staff leave, the organization meets with participants to debrief and plan for the future.

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4. Program Models and Who is Influenced

Another indicator of transfer success might be the level and type of "beneficiaries" who are targeted for transfer (using the type of participants and focus of change as proxy measures) and number of people reached, and whether these indicators were related to impact beyond participants.

Number of People Reached: No significant relationships were found between the total number of project participants and project impact. This was an unexpected finding given the assumption of many programs that reaching more people is related to impact. There are several possible reasons for the lack of any significant findings. For example, there could be weaknesses in the 'more people' theories of change. CDA concluded in their RPP research that projects that focus solely on the 'more people' approach must be linked to 'key people' efforts at the socio-political level to show any discernible contribution to peace writ large. Several of the projects reviewed, especially in the early years failed to make this linkage. At the same time, if the grantee's strategy is to work with key people, then the number of immediate participants is likely much smaller than when working under the more people strategy. Therefore, the number of people reached might be an effective indicator of transfer, but not necessarily of transfer success in terms of leading to impact. Another reason may simply be the lack of quality data on the total number of beneficiaries reached (inconsistent reporting). More research is warranted.

Total number of people reached was, however, related to the type and combination of project activities ($p=.004$). Projects that focused on research and dialogue reached the smallest number of people. This was especially characteristic of middle-out/up approaches that conducted conflict analysis and researched possible policy options, both of which were then used as the basis for dialogue. Similarly, projects that focused solely on dialogue reached the smallest number of people. This was especially characteristic of top-down approaches where participants (usually including high-level and mid-level government and civil society representatives), engaged in policy dialogue.

Projects that reached the most number of people were those that included both capacity building and dialogue, and especially those that also built action/advocacy into the project design. This combination of activities was most common among bottom-up approaches. Given the earlier discussion that this combination of activities was significantly related to micro and meso impacts, this provides some limited evidence that there might be a link between number of people reached through transfer and micro and meso impact. It is still unclear whether there is a link with macro impact.

Projects that reached the most number of people were those that included both capacity building and dialogue, and especially those that also built action/advocacy into the project design.

Type of People Reached: The most common targets of transfer were people in the participants' immediate spheres of influence – up, down and across, as discussed in Section IV.B. on the dialogue and transfer program models. Participants transferred outcomes 'out' to their peers and colleagues, 'down' to smaller units of analysis (e.g., individual, family, school, village) depending on the starting point, and/or 'up' to broader units of analysis, such as the community, regional or national levels. Another transfer strategy was between grassroots, mid-level and high-level leaders, thereby, connecting 'more people' with 'key people' in the process.

Qualitative review of the data showed that who was being reached was closely associated with the transfer method used and impact. For example, media campaigns were trying to reach a broad audience, cascade models typically were trying to replicate education and training in participants' peer groups, organizations and in the broader community. Advocacy was targeted at mid-level and high-level leaders (locally or nationally). Collaborative action was generally trying to engage peers, colleagues and the broader public in collective action. Quantitative analysis also found significant relationships between the type of participant and impacts beyond participants. Macro impacts were most often associated with educators ($p=.05$), and somewhat associated with NGOs ($p=.09$) and government, military and policy leaders and decisions makers ($p=.09$).

D. Key Factors for Transfer Success

The key factors that make projects more likely to succeed or fail in their transfer efforts is highly similar to the general factors found for what makes USIP-supported dialogue projects more likely to succeed or to fail, which is discussed below in section IV.E. Therefore, this section focuses specifically on key factors for success (or failure) related to the effectiveness of transfer methods. The success of the transfer methods relied on several key factors: characteristics and capacities of grantee organizations, participant selection, project design, and transfer method.

Key Factors for Transfer Success:

Grantee Organization:

- Expertise and credibility
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Institutional support from higher authorities
- International support
- Participants as partners

Participant Selection:

- Readiness for dialogue
- Credible and legitimate
- Influential
- Reaching the hard to reach, hardline voices, and ‘spoilers’

Project Design:

- Dialogue plus capacity building and action/advocacy
- Planned transfer as part of project design
- Ongoing dialogue through active networks and engagement
- Sustainability plans by grantee and participants

Transfer Method:

- The more transfer methods used, the more impact and success

1. Grantee Organizations

Grantee Expertise and Credibility: Organizations that were perceived as credible, legitimate, committed, highly professional and skilled were able to attract the right participants, access authorities, convene key stakeholders, and develop strategic partnerships. These were key ingredients of project success overall, and transfer efforts in particular.

Partnerships and Collaboration: Multi-stakeholder alliances enabled projects to transfer effects broadly through multiple organizations and institutions (e.g., universities, NGOs, government offices) into multiple communities and regions. Strong connections and partnerships between civil society and government encouraged cooperation by others and often garnered the attention of media and higher authorities who became supporters and created additional transfer opportunities and impacts.

Institutional Support from Higher Authorities: Successful transfer was more likely if grantees had had institutional support from higher authorities for their projects. For example, teachers needed the support of their principals to implement new curriculum. Similarly, school principals may have needed support from Ministries of Education to implement new curriculum. Those projects that included higher authorities as project participants, or at minimum, had approval and support from higher authorities to move forward, were more likely to implement new ideas and curriculum in their schools. Projects that had no or limited support, were not able to transfer and implement their new ideas and curriculum successfully beyond individual teachers’ efforts and classrooms.

All the projects that focused on improving police-community relations and security either included a mix of rank-and-file officers, police officials, influential government officials or community leaders, and

grassroots, in joint training or dialogue, or at minimum had institutional support of the police department and police commissioners (e.g., financial support, letters of agreement). This support was key for implementing new policies that emerged out of dialogue and/or implementing ongoing mechanisms for police-community relations.

International Support: Grantees mentioned the support they received from the international community for financial resources, capacity building and moral support as important to their organizational development. For example, several grantees and participants mentioned the unique role played by USIP as a quasi-governmental institution, which enabled them to receive all the benefits and few of the negative risks of being associated with a U.S. funder. Grantees also highly valued the partnership approach, capacity building and technical support provided by grantee staff.

Participants as Partners: Just as partnerships and collaboration are important for grantees to forge with other NGOs, academic institutions and other strategic partnerships, the projects that showed transfer and success had grantees who saw their participants as partners, not beneficiaries. This was a theme across some of the grantees during the field research. Participants highly valued such relationships and the opportunity to participate in the development of project activities and long-term plans. They had greater ownership in the process and were more likely to remain active and committed to the project and grantee. Several grantees reported they use a model of ‘accompaniment’ with their participant partners to provide guidance and advice, but leave decision making in the participants’ hands. This was especially helpful for supporting transfer in a way that allowed participants to identify and meet local needs, but still have access to support when it was needed.

2. Participant Selection

Selecting the right participants is always a key factor for dialogue project success. However, when participants are also expected to transfer the effects of the dialogue to effect broader change, selecting the right participants becomes especially important for transfer success. For bottom-up approaches, the rights participants meant those who were open to listening and learning and meeting the ‘other,’ were enthusiastic messengers, and had (or developed) the communication skills, action planning skills, and organizing skills to engage in effect transfer through the ripple effect and action. Participants who planned to educate/train and/or facilitate dialogue among others needed to be seen as credible and legitimate actors (similar to grantees). Participants who engaged in dialogue and advocacy with higher authorities typically had developed enough confidence and skills to do so effectively, whether they brought this with them from previous experience, or developed it through capacity building by grantees.

Participant selection was especially important for success of middle-out approaches, both to transfer ‘down’ and to transfer ‘up.’ The assumption of these projects was that the participants had the requisite influence for transfer success. However, it was unclear in many projects whether the participants actually had such influence. For example, while it is often assumed that academics and experts have potentially wide reach, credibility and legitimacy, merely being an academic or considered an issue expert, does not necessarily mean the person has actual influence with high-level leaders. It was unclear from project proposals what criteria was used to determine whether the participants had influence. Future proposals

should clearly explain the selection criteria, indicators and process of selection. Otherwise, as was the case with many of the mid-level projects, the participants may be successful in analyzing complex conflicts, building interpersonal relationships, developing sound and perhaps innovative solutions and policy ideas, and producing scholarly publications that are widely disseminated (or not so widely), but these results had no discernible effect. The projects that had the most transfer success selected participants who came to the project with access to key leaders or who themselves were key leaders with some authority. The latter approach was especially successful.

In addition to recruiting influentials, recruiting hardline and moderate participants are important, given their 'spoiler' potential. Several Israeli grantees mentioned the mistake the 'left' made in the heyday of the optimistic Oslo years, by marginalizing more right wing and conservative voices. Today, it is the left on the sidelines. The need to reach across religious, ethnic and tribal lines, also needs to include reaching out across ideological lines within one's group.

Projects that showed success in reaching more conservative participants were able to do so by time spent on relationship and trust building. Several grantees described the important role this played in recruiting, for example, *Madrassas* to participate in training and interfaith dialogue. Others talked about holding special meetings with male leaders in order to gain sufficient trust to enable recruitment of women. Similarly, a grassroots peasant leader in Colombia talked about reaching out to "improbable probables," including business; military/police; and municipal/departmental authorities. For participants who had been victimized by these groups, it showed great courage and confidence, (bolstered by the grantee's support, capacity building and connections) to extend an open hand for dialogue.

3. Project Design and Sustainability

Activities and Sequencing: As discussed previously, certain activities and combinations of activities – research, capacity building, and dialogue – was shown to be related to the type of transfer methods used, their reach, and their impact. Particularly effective for transfer were projects that combined dialogue with capacity building (in no particular order) and was followed by plans for transfer, namely action or advocacy, as part of project activities. Capacity building was related to transfer success because it provided participants the skills and tools to transfer new knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills, and provided them with methods for building bridges, healing and building relationships, taking action and advocating for change.

The combination and sequence of activities was somewhat significant. Projects that included capacity building and dialogue (in any order), then action or advocacy, followed by transfer were associated with more micro ($p=.014$), meso ($p<.001$) impact than other combinations of activities. No other significant sequencing effects were found.

Planned Transfer: Projects that had strategies for transfer built into project plans and activities were more likely to achieve transfer and impact than projects that left transfer up to the participants to engage in post-project without support or guidance, or a way to keep connected with other participants. However, also important was that transfer efforts be participant-driven, which helped build participant capacity and ownership and support sustainability.

Ongoing Projects and Sustainability Plans: There is growing recognition in the peacebuilding field that one-off dialogue is usually insufficient to transfer success. This lesson learned was also evident in this research. For example, more recent projects were more likely than older projects to think in terms of transfer and sustainability and also evidenced a higher rate of success. Field research in Israel and Palestine revealed that grantees who initially provided short-term one-off dialogue opportunities were increasingly thinking in terms of ongoing projects and follow-on activities that supported past participants, brought in new participants, and focused on transfer beyond participants. For example, one grantee had shifted from one-off peace camps for youth to multi-year programs and opportunities for continuous engagement through active networks, ongoing capacity building opportunities, and engaging parents in a new effort to expand their reach and increase the resiliency of their efforts. This organization and others were actively researching and planning ways to better support their alumni to engage in peacebuilding and increase transfer.

4. Transfer Methods

The transfer methods used by participants (discussed previously) were, in descending order of frequency: 1) disseminating products; 2) ripple effect; 3) policy advocacy; 4) media campaigns; 5) cascade model of replicating education/training; 6) ongoing dialogue and peacebuilding platforms and mechanisms; 7) community meetings, roundtables, and conferences; and 8) cooperative action and advocacy. Eighty-five percent of projects used more than one transfer method, although there was no discernible pattern in which combination of methods worked best. As reported earlier, the greater the number of transfer methods used, the greater the association with micro, meso and macro impact. Thus, a key success factor was the use of multiple strategies.

Disseminating products: Common products were: (a) research/analysis, conference results and policy recommendations, including articles, briefs, books, policy papers, agreements, etc.; (b) curriculum and training manuals/toolkits; (c) film documentaries, theatre performances, radio programs, and other peace messaging; (d) program products (newsletters with articles, program updates, analysis reports, database); and (e) educational and awareness materials (brochures, pamphlets, posters, communication documents, DVDs).

Projects that focused on producing and disseminating analytical papers and policy recommendations (as a result of research and/or dialogue) assumed that these would spark discussion, innovation and change. However, there is little evidence to suggest this happened, unless paired with another transfer method, especially advocacy. Where these middle-out/up projects did show success in their transfer efforts, the key ingredient was the participants' and/or grantees' ability to access and convene relevant audiences, including connections with high-level leaders, to discuss their findings and influence policy change. Less successful projects were those in which the grantee and participants seemed to lack these connections. In these cases, the projects generally met their stated objectives, but failed to contribute to discernible transfer or impact.

Similarly, merely distributing education and awareness materials was not necessarily sufficient to increase knowledge or change attitudes and behaviors in the broader public. For example, one grantee discovered

that just passing out pamphlets about human rights was not sufficient to transfer key messages. Disseminating such materials was more successful when paired with information sessions and opportunities for dialogue.

Developing and utilizing radio and television programs or documentary films was successful in reaching a mass audience. Theatrical performances reached a moderate number of people. There was evaluation evidence that these were successful for impacting knowledge and attitudes of their listening/viewing audiences. In addition, these transfer impacts were strengthened when coupled with post-viewing/listening dialogue. It was also found that using these products as the basis for dialogue was a successful strategy for attracting attention and interest in dialogue.

Ripple effect: Spreading new understandings, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors through personal spheres of influence and by being role models to others was the second most common transfer methods. The success of this approach lay primarily in the credibility and legitimacy of the messenger, their access to others, and the amount/duration of their reach to others. These factors were especially important for middle-out/up and top-out/down approaches. No significant differences were found for ripple effect and impact.

Policy advocacy: The success of this approach also lay primarily in the credibility and legitimacy of the messenger and their access to policy and decision makers, coupled with clear messages, strong communication and negotiation skills, and, oftentimes, the ability to mobilize others in a way that would attract the attention of key leaders and decision-makers, and open a 'space at the table.' However, these factors alone were not necessarily sufficient to achieve policy change. The political context, timing, support of other key stakeholders, or spoilers, also influenced the ability of advocacy to turn into change, especially in highly polarized environments and/or when advocating at the national level. At the local level, advocacy contributed to change when participants had effective skills for engaging in policy or other types of discussions, were well organized, and members of a credible network. These findings were evident during field research in Colombia.

Media campaigns: Spreading the word publicly to mass audiences through mass media and social media was a common strategy. However, this relied on access to media. The credibility, visibility and significance of the project and participants also mattered in attracting media attention and being invited for interviews. One particularly effective strategy was to include journalists as participants or inviting them to private or public events (e.g., a conference, community event, training ceremony) or upon successful milestones (e.g., agreements reached) in order to get media coverage of dialogue initiatives to increase public awareness and support. A well-planned and timed media strategy also seemed to contribute to successful transfer, and was evident mostly in middle-out approaches that sought to influence policy at the local or national level.

Cascade model: The cascade model of transfer involved participants who had gone through education, training and/or training of trainers/facilitators conducting education and training with others, or facilitating new dialogues. This transfer method was most frequently used with bottom-up approaches,

which were also most likely to include capacity building along with dialogue, or as the primary project activity, with dialogue being a much smaller focus. This ‘each one, teach one’ approach, or rather ‘each one teach 10, 30, or a 100,’ was a very successful way of transferring knowledge, attitudes and skills to others. The more systematized and structured the effort, the more likely that many people were reached and reached well. This was most likely when the participants were members of existing organizations, networks or institutions that supported and welcomed their efforts and provided a framework or venue in which to conduct education/training and attract new participants (e.g., a school, university, church, mosque, police station, local/indigenous, etc.). Having high-quality curriculum/training materials and an interactive, engaging education/training design also helped ensure transfer success and impact.

Ongoing Platforms/structures for dialogue, conflict resolution and peacebuilding: Almost a third of projects including establishing formal or informal ongoing platforms or networks for dialogue and peacebuilding (e.g., youth networks, women’s ecumenical networks, reconciliation commissions, multi-stakeholder dialogues) or mechanisms for preventing/resolving conflict (e.g., district peace councils), or strengthening and increasing access to traditional community mechanisms for dialogue and peacebuilding. It was beyond the scope of this research to assess the quality of each of these mechanisms, however, the quantitative analysis suggests that they were significantly related to transfer success and impact, especially at the meso ($p=.030$) and macro level ($p=.091$). Middle-out approaches were most likely to establish such platforms and mechanisms. Having a space that brings people together is itself a key achievement and first step towards change in many contexts. The desk review (especially evaluation reports) and field research all showed the value grantees and participants gave to these spaces for contributing to participant outcomes and broader change. Even in projects in which dialogue played a relatively minor role, evaluators and participants emphasized the key role of dialogue for bringing together disparate people and groups in genuine dialogue. For many participants, the project was their first opportunity to meet with the ‘other’ and having an ongoing platform around which to meet was crucial for continuing that opportunity and broadening the experience to others. Key factors for the success of these platforms and structures were effective and impartial facilitators and regular opportunities to dialogue. The field research corroborated the desk review findings.

For mechanisms focused on conflict resolution of specific disputes and conflicts, it was also important that they be viewed as impartial and accessible to anyone. As dialogue and conflict resolution built relationships and resolved disputes, these mechanisms increased in their credibility, legitimacy and visibility, which attracted additional support and engagement. Several projects contributed to changing community norms away from violence towards peaceful resolution of conflict through these mechanisms. Having sustained mechanisms will help ensure that the transfer of new norms and behaviors become broadly internalized.

Community meetings, conferences, roundtables: Similar to several other transfer methods, the transfer success of these meetings was highly dependent on the grantees and participants, especially their convening power, or their ability to partner with others who have convening power. Bottom-up models were more likely to use community meetings as a strategy for transfer than other models ($p=.023$). In addition, in bottom-up models, these types of meetings were more likely to be successful when they

connected 'more people' with 'key people.' Top-down models were more likely than other models to use conferences and roundtables (p=.003). However, while conferences and roundtables were able to share learning with additional people, these efforts were not related to impact. They were, however, more likely to be related to impact when coupled with political advocacy.

Cooperative action: Bottom-up models were more like to use cooperative action as a transfer strategy than other models. The key reason for this was that bottom-up approaches were also more likely to use capacity building with dialogue, an important precursor to cooperative action. Dialogue only projects were much less likely to be associated with cooperative action as a transfer method. Cooperative action led to transfer in two ways. First, by reaching out and engaging a broader audience in a continuation of project activities or new activities (including spin-off projects). Second, by working to effect some type of change, usually focused on meso level change. Similar to other bottom-up transfer efforts, cooperative action was most effective when it connected 'more people' and 'key people.'

E. Most and Least Successful Projects

The previous section focused on transfer models and factors for their success. This section looks more broadly at the success of USIP-funded dialogue projects.

1. Success Criteria for dialogue projects:

Defining and measuring success is both an important and challenging dimension of evaluation work. For comparative assessments, the task is even more difficult. Different actors (e.g. funders, project leaders, participant groups, etc.) have different expectations and criteria for success. Different contexts shape what successes are needed and possible. And different project goals and designs, even when using a nominally similar intervention process, result in a range of outcomes difficult to compare along any dimension, let alone the slippery concept of success.

This study drew upon criteria from a variety of sources in defining and measuring success. In the desk review portion of the study, the researchers utilized five key criteria for success outlined in OECD-DAC's *Guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities* (2008)¹⁷ including effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability and significance¹⁸:

Effectiveness: How well did the project implement and achieve its intended objectives?

Efficiency: How well did the project's resources (funds, time, staffing, number of participants) convert into results?

¹⁷ See Annex 5 for a glossary with definition of these terms

¹⁸ The concept of Significance in this study is related to OECD-DAC's measure of Impact, but was adapted for the purposes of this study to specifically focus on an assessment of transfer related to achieving impacts.

Relevance: How well was the project grounded in an adequate analysis of the conflict? How well did the project objectives and activities respond to the central drivers of conflict and peacebuilding needs?

Sustainability: How well did the project sustain a continuation of benefits and resilience to risks after it had been completed?

Significance: How well did dialogue effects transfer beyond direct participants to impact other groups, practices or policies related?

Projects were rated from one (Poor) to five (Excellent) on each of these five dimensions. Three members of the research team assessed the ratings for each project to increase reliability of these scores. Based on a confirmatory factor analysis, these five ratings were combined into a composite 'success' score ($\alpha = .82$) for each project. High and low success scores were used to calculate measures of association (Pearson's R and Chi-Square) in the quantitative analysis portion of the study.

Beyond the quantitative analysis, we looked for convergences in criteria for dialogue project success identified by USIP staff (through a short survey on Survey Monkey (n=6)), as well as grantees, and project participants (elicited during interviews – n=40). While USIP staff mentioned measureable outcomes more than project leaders and participants, responses to questions about what successful dialogue and transfer look like were very congruent. Criteria focused on: 1) project design and structure; 2) dialogue process design and implementation; 3) transfer approaches; and 4) outcomes and impact.

A variety of sources were used to define and measure success including quantitative ratings based on five OECD-DAC criteria and qualitative analyses of: 1) project design & structure; 2) dialogue process design & implementation; 3) transfer approaches; and 4) outcomes & impact).

For example, in terms of *dialogue project design and structure*, research participants discussed the importance of including a skills-training component to help prepare participants to engage in real dialogue (rather than superficial conversation or debate) and encourage sustainability beyond the specific dialogue group (e.g. to prepare participants to lead their own groups). They

mentioned the need to assess political, personal, and practical factors that support dialogue including: situational ripeness (i.e. conditions that motivate people to participate and make them receptive to learning and change); participant readiness (e.g. level of interest, level of trauma, etc.), and process appropriateness (i.e. whether dialogue process' micro- and meso-level strengths fit local needs and peacebuilding goals). They suggested that dialogue projects need a clear focus and strategy, grounded in an analysis of the conflict, and that all project staff are on the same page about dialogue project goals, processes, and theories of change. Participant selection and buy-in was considered one of the most important criteria for dialogue success. The selection of participants related directly to the project's goals, the theory of change, and transfer approach.

In terms of *dialogue process and implementation*, research participants often suggested that successful dialogues create safe space for participants to express and listen to diverse, often contested, views without being alienated or re-traumatized. This takes considerable time and skilled facilitation. Many also suggested that successful dialogue processes use multiple methods (e.g. not just talk, but shared

experiences such as field trips to important sites for each group, meals together, group games or sports, etc.) to engage participants' minds, hearts and bodies. Echoing the literature (e.g. Abu-Nimer, 1999), many research participants suggested that recognizing power asymmetries in the larger conflict environment, and taking measures to redress imbalances within the dialogue group, was critical to dialogue success. Empowering disempowered groups, including diverse and marginalized voices, and promoting equal relationships within the dialogue group was seen as essential for building healthy and effective collaboration outside of the group. Many participants also stressed that having skilled, experienced facilitators who were familiar with the issues, context, and parties was important for successful dialogue.

In keeping with the literature (Dessel & Rogge, 2008), *outcome and impact measures of success* mentioned most often focused on micro-level (participants' perceptions & behaviors) and meso-level (new relationships) changes. For example, research participants suggested that successful dialogues made participants more receptive to diverse views (both within their group and within the other side), increased empathy and perspective-taking, reduced stereotypes and rehumanized the 'other', and created better understanding of the other side's narrative. Some participants also suggested that successful dialogues helped create shared understandings or reframing of the conflict sources, dynamics and options for peacebuilding. Almost all mentioned that successful dialogues built trust among participants and facilitated new relationships and friendships (within and between groups).

Other outcome success criteria included measurable changes in participants within the first year, attributable (at least by participants) to the dialogue process. Success also required that participants' transformations were sustained over time and were resilient to external pressures (e.g. escalating conflict or violence; lack of support among family, peers, etc.). Finally, research participants suggested that a project's ability to retain participants over time (for long-term projects) or develop sustained interest/commitments to peacebuilding beyond the project (for short-term projects) was a relevant criteria of success.

Research participants were much more circumspect in their suggestions about success criteria related to changes beyond direct dialogue participants (transfer and impact). Many suggested that such indicators/ measures should be context, and project, specific. *Transfer-related success criteria* included: a) participants speaking with others outside the dialogue group about their experiences/ changed perspective; b) participants publicly contradicting damaging stereotypes or speaking out against violence/ injustices against the other side; and c) participants taking action either individually or collaboratively to improve intergroup relations and/ or to help empower disempowered parties. Indicators of successful dialogue transfer mentioned involved participants being able to point to others who they have influenced, participants developing spin-off projects that expand peacebuilding work, and establishing communities of practice to sustain and improve dialogue efforts. A few participants mentioned broader indicators of success such as reduction in rates of violence or increase public participation relevant to the scope of the

Because this study focused primarily on dialogue project transfer, success criteria related to transfer was given more weight than other dimensions of success.

project, but most emphasized the challenges in tracking, measuring, and attributing broader changes to dialogue processes.

This study identified a number of high success and low success projects based on the criteria outlined above. Because the research focused primarily on dialogue project transfer, however, the success criteria related to transfer was given more weight than other dimensions of success. For example, there were several projects that had excellent design, structure and process implementation. Their goals and focus, however, was almost exclusively on changes among direct participants and little effort was made to promote transfer beyond the participant group. For the purposes of this study, while these projects were considered effective in meeting their goals, they were not rated as successful as projects that had clear and effective transfer approaches. However, this sort of divergence was only relevant to a few of the projects. In general, transfer success covaried with success in other dimensions ($p < .001$).

2. Characteristics of the Most and Least Successful Dialogue Projects

The quantitative analysis revealed a strong linear relationship between the size of the grant and the success of the project such that projects receiving larger grants tended to be more successful ($p < .01$). Since grant size and project success were also both strongly related to changes over time (grants in more recent years tend to be larger and more successful), this association between grant amount and success may reflect a more general trend of learning and improvement within USIP grantmaking about assessing the kinds of dialogue projects that will have the most impact and the resources needed to support project success.

a) Most Successful Projects

Projects in this study used dialogue processes for a variety of purposes such as: fostering exploration and awareness; building relationships; promoting collaborative action; and supporting decision-making or policy development. The only dialogue purpose significantly associated with highly successful projects in this study was relationship building ($p = .04$). In addition, highly successful projects more often involved a mix of many types of participants ($p < .05$). They also involved more police-community dialogues ($p = .02$) and dialogues with NGO leaders ($p < .05$).

Highly successful projects focused on relationship building among a mix of many types of participants and/ or levels of leadership. They partnered with other organizations more often than other projects in the study, built capacities and created ongoing mechanisms for conflict resolution as part of their activities, and used three or more different transfer approaches to affect broader change.

Highly successful dialogue projects worked with partnering organizations more often than low success projects ($p < .001$). Partnerships between international and local organizations or among local organizations with credibility/ access to different conflict parties seemed to enhance project success. Project leaders also raised cautions about partnering as well, suggesting that horizontal structures (e.g. equal participation in decision-making), shared goals, and clear roles was important to the success of such partnerships.

Dialogue projects had a wide range of theories of change. When aggregated into common categories, however, highly successful project tended to have more theories of change that focused on building local capacities and ongoing mechanisms to resolve conflicts ($p < .01$). Relatedly, highly successful projects tended to include training as part of their activities ($p = .04$). Dialogue processes involving community meetings and townhalls (e.g. that brought together local government and citizens) where the emphasis was on dialogue and discussion were also significantly related to highly successful projects ($p = .003$).

High success projects used a mix of many transfer approaches more often than less successful projects ($p < .01$). In addition, the following transfer approaches were used most often in high success projects: media ($p < .001$), mechanisms ($p < .01$), policy advocacy ($p = .04$), and cascade ($p < .05$). In addition, highly successful projects were associated with creating and disseminating the following sorts of products: educational/awareness materials such as informational brochures, pamphlets, posters, communication documents, and DVDs as well as radio programs, films, and theatre performances ($p = .04$).

Highly successful project had more micro-level outcomes ($p < .05$) and meso-level outcomes ($p < .01$) than less successful projects and had a stronger association with impacts at the macro-level ($p < .001$) and meso-level ($p = .004$).

b) Least Successful Projects

The least successful dialogue projects tended to be older projects that consisted primarily of academics ($p < .001$) and/or regional and issue experts ($p = .02$), especially where dialogue processes were connected mainly with research and conference activities ($p = .02$). In addition, low success projects tended to develop and disseminate more analysis and policy recommendation papers, reports, briefs, articles and books as well as more program newsletters and updates ($p = .04$).

Surprisingly, there were no significant relationships between project success and the duration of the dialogue processes, the duration of the overall project, or how large a component of the project dialogue was (as opposed to other activities).

Low success projects used fewer transfer approaches in general ($p < .001$) and were least successful when they relied solely on either the dissemination of a product or ripple effects (diffusion into participants' spheres of influence) as their primary transfer method ($p = .04$). Finally, the least successful projects were associated with outcomes only at the micro-level ($p = .02$) and had impacts primarily at the micro- and meso-levels ($p = .02$).

Surprisingly, there were no significant relationships between project success and the duration of the dialogue processes, the duration of the overall project, or how large a component of the project was dialogue (as opposed to other activities). This was unexpected given how often research participants discussed the importance of having enough time for dialogues to be effective. A mitigating trend was that there were more sustained dialogue processes (i.e. over 100hrs or 10 days) among high success projects than among low success projects ($p = .067$). In addition, the lack of statistical significance does not mean duration does not matter. Rather, this suggests duration of the dialogues was important, but insufficient for project success.

In addition, we expected to see differences in success rates among projects that were 80-100% dialogue-focused vs projects where the dialogue component was less than 20% of project time and activities. The lack of difference between projects that fell into these categories suggests that conflict intervention methodologies/activities, such as dialogue vs. training vs. research, etc. may not be a particularly important dimension for comparing projects or assessing project success.

F. Factors Influencing Project Success

A number of key contextual, organizational, and process factors seemed to influence the relative success of the dialogue-based projects in this study. The study looked at some of the more consistent factors associated with success across types of dialogue projects or conflict situations. Equally important in understanding project success, however, is recognizing the unique and dynamic ways that these projects navigated the challenges and opportunities in their dialogue groups and conflict environments. *While this section discusses success factors in context, organization, and dialogue processes separately, these inter-related, mutually influencing factors often combined in idiosyncratic ways that had a cumulative impact on dialogue project success.*

Project leaders pointed to context-related challenges and opportunities such as violence and security concerns, political climate, and support by local authorities as affecting success more often than any other factor.

1. Contextual Factors

Project leaders pointed to context-related challenges and opportunities as affecting success more often than any other factor. In terms of transfer, contextual factors

Escalating Violence and Security Concerns: Violent events and security concerns were the most frequently mentioned challenges affecting successful project implementation (in 36% of projects). These concerns often resulted in delayed or cancelled activities and, in many cases, required extensions to the grant period. Security issues sometimes caused unplanned changes in meeting locations or participants, and often shifted the dynamics of the dialogue process (e.g. unbalanced participation of parties; increased tensions among dialogue participants). In many of the projects, security concerns affected participants' ability to travel to dialogue locations either because of difficulties getting necessary visas, border closings, or violence at planned locations.

In several projects, the death of one or more participants because of local violence or assassination created fear and reluctance among other participants to continue with the dialogues. Project leaders reported that this sometimes led to their projects gaining a bad reputation in the local community. Several projects mentioned that as violence escalated, participants often questioned whether continuing with the dialogue was worth the risk. In a few cases, participants fled or left the area.

Approximately 40% of the least successful projects described significant problems with violence and security concerns that impacted project implementation. Only 12% (3 projects) of the most successful projects mentioned similar problems. Those more successful projects seemed better able to address the

problems through adaptive management (e.g. shifting locations or activities) and drawing on organizational connections within the communities (e.g. tapping existing networks to find other participants) than the less successful projects. In addition, two of the three high success projects suggested that the violence served to motivate new participants (e.g. people really wanted an avenue for change) and created opportunities for additional joint meetings or action projects.

Political climate: The political climate in a country was cited as one of the most important factors influencing project transfer approaches and success. For example, the rise in right-wing political leadership in Israel, the anti-normalization campaign among Palestinians, and a general skepticism or apathy about political peace processes on both sides has made it much more difficult for projects to sustain dialogue efforts and create transfer at this time. Project leaders consistently mentioned that the current climate of fear and despair has created significant challenges in finding influential allies, recruiting new participants, attracting positive media attention, and garnering local financial support. They discussed how the unsupportive climate has made it difficult for both organizational staff and project participants to talk with family, friends, and colleagues outside of the dialogue group about their new understandings and relationships. Both project leaders and participants described incidents where they have been personally criticized or called traitors by those outside the group because of their participation. The current political climate has also fostered a distrust of internationally funded civil society organizations in general, and organizations that bring parties together for peacebuilding activities in particular.

Broader political and social 'readiness' for peacebuilding strongly affects dialogue success and transfer.

In contrast, the political climate of cautious optimism about peace processes in Colombia has created a momentum that provides significant (if often intangible) support for dialogue project transfer and success. There seems to be greater social acceptance of dialogue and other peacebuilding projects and both USIP-funded projects in the field research had been able to establish channels that gave them (limited) voice with both local government peacebuilding and national level peacemaking efforts. The broader political and social 'readiness' for peacebuilding strongly affects dialogue success and transfer.

Support by Authorities: Changes in local or national government leaders or institutional authorities also seemed to influence the success of a project. A few of the least successful projects lost access to and support from influential authorities during the course of the grant period. This created delays in implementing the project itself and significantly limited the impact and transfer potential of these projects. In one of the low success cases, local government leaders who had previously supported a project turned against it and actively criticized it (media reported these incidents which created negative transfer. Reports from some of the least successful projects also described how lack of interest or presence of local authorities limited their ability to make larger policy or institutional changes.

Conversely, one of the most frequently mentioned opportunities/ success factors in the highly successful projects was practical or symbolic support for the project by local or national authorities. Project leaders commented that this support gave the project credibility within a much broader scope and helped expand the reach beyond direct participants (e.g. requests for replication or additional services, dissemination of

products/ materials, etc...)¹⁹ In a couple of the highly successful cases, former project participants rose to higher positions in local government and supported the expansion of the project.

Infrastructure: Finally, infrastructure challenges in communication (e.g. lack of internet; government controlled media channels) limited the implementation of projects, the transfer approaches available, and the overall success of the project. In addition, poor roads and travel conditions often had similar negative impacts on project. For online dialogue projects, technological infrastructure (e.g. security measures, accessibility, etc.) created significant challenges and impacted the success of the projects.

Conversely, for a couple of high success projects, institutional infrastructures that already had peacebuilding mechanisms in place, just not being used, (e.g. municipal and regional Peace Councils in Colombia) provided important structural support for project implementation and success.

2. Organizational/ Project Factors

Grantee Credibility and Access: By far, the most frequently mentioned success factor among highly successful projects was grantee connections and respect with a wide range of local stakeholders. Project leaders described how their credibility and networks allowed them to continue or expand dialogue efforts despite unfavorable external conditions. More than half of the highest success projects explicitly built their USIP-funded dialogue projects on successful previous work and strong networks/ connections in the local conflict environment. Project leaders discussed previous work as providing critical knowledge about social and cultural norms, establishing a credible reputation, and building relational networks that contributed to project successes. Many of the most successful projects described tapping into existing social networks to create new transfer opportunities.

Organizational credibility, access, and effective use of local knowledge were important characteristics of successful dialogue projects.

Low success projects often did not have pre-established credibility or access to participants, authorities, etc. For example, in setting up an international Track II dialogue, a U.S.-based grantee used conflict-insensitive phrasing in the participant invitations and couldn't get key participants to attend. Rather than redesign the project, they just replaced key participants with more accessible but far less influential participants. This greatly affected project transfer and impact.

Partnerships, Collaboration and Coordination: Two thirds of the highly successful projects involved strong partnerships between local organizations that had credibility and access to different conflict parties, or between international and local organizations. Project leaders also discussed the importance of coordinating with other peacebuilding projects (to build synergy, momentum, and enhance transfer.

¹⁹ In contexts where authorities are not widely respected or seen as corrupt, it seems likely that the inverse could be true – but no project reports or interviewees in our dataset mentioned that this was the case for them.

In contrast, very few of the least successful projects included partnerships. In the few cases where projects had partnerships, reports focused on difficulties with the collaboration. For example, project leaders noted how slow work with large institutions (e.g. universities, local government, police, etc.) could be. They also described changing partners in the midst of a project due to corruption, deteriorating inter-group relations, or lack of partners' credibility and networks.

Successful dialogue projects had strong, clearly defined, and equitable partnerships or collaboration with other organizations that supported project resilience and opportunities for transfer.

Staffing, Capacity, and Budget Changes: One of the most common issues influencing project success was mid-project staffing changes. In many of the least successful projects, grantee staff left (e.g. took positions in other organizations; fled because of violence; died) and new project managers were either unfamiliar with or did not have strong buy-in to the dialogue project. In other projects, grantees did not have enough capacity (i.e. staff, funding, time, or know-how) to plan or follow up on opportunities for transfer. In addition, in a few of the least successful projects, unanticipated project implementation needs took resources away from transfer portions of the budget (e.g. hiring security for dialogue forums; participant travel costs, and depreciation of US currency).

Funder Relations and Reporting: In a number of the least successful projects, USIP grant officers noted concerns over poor communication with grantees, difficulties organizing site visits, and weak reporting. These problems made it difficult for grant officers to assess project success and similarly limited this study (see section III. F.1). Beyond the evaluative issues, however, this problem sometimes reflected underlying organizational capacity issues and was associated with low project sustainability.

Adaptive Management: The most successful projects in this study built-in staff time and processes for reflective practice (e.g. about what was going well and what wasn't in the project) and were able to reshape projects to respond to challenges or pursue opportunities. These projects showed more design flexibility, iterative decision-making, and adaptive management practices than their less successful counterparts. They also made good use of their knowledge about local cultural traditions and norms, the conflict parties, and existing networks in their adaptations. Given the complex, uncertain and changing conflict environments where they work, and the dynamic nature of dialogue processes, the capacity to reflect, learn and adapt was a critical factor for success.

3. Dialogue Process Factors

Participant Recruitment: One of the issues mentioned most often as affecting project success were challenges recruiting participants. Women, in particular, were mentioned as a population that was hard to recruit for dialogue, especially where strong cultural traditions limited their political participation. Where projects were seen as primarily representing one group or conflict party, project leaders

Participant selection is critical. Participants must have both the interest and capacity to engage in the learning process of the dialogue, as well as credibility and access within their own communities to influence political leaders, constituents, or the general public.

- Kelman, 1997

often found it difficult to involve participants from other groups/ parties. In addition, as political tensions and violence escalated, recruiting hardline and even moderate participants became more and more difficult. Project leaders indicated that these and other challenges with recruitment resulted in less diversity (in types of participants and views represented) in the dialogue than hoped for. It sometimes resulted in recruiting participants who didn't have the knowledge or connections needed to discuss the most pressing issues or achieve the goals of the project. It also increased some participants' feelings of hopelessness (i.e. that they could not bring the people needed into the group— let alone change the conflict outside of the dialogue group).

Dialogue Focus and Facilitation: Leaders of less successful projects often reported having greater difficulty focusing the dialogue, especially when participants (both within and between groups) had different ideas about what issues were most important. These project leaders reported trouble keeping dialogue topics and participation balanced. They were particularly concerned when participants from minority groups didn't express criticism or when majority group participants refused to discuss controversial issues. A couple of evaluation reports for less successful projects suggested that the process of equality in dialogue was difficult for participants to grasp, and the purpose of the dialogue was not explained clearly.

Some of these problems seemed to be the result of poor, pre-dialogue planning and preparation, or unskilled facilitation. However, when larger political tensions or violence increased, these sorts of problems arose in even the most successful dialogues.

Focus on Transfer: The most successful dialogue projects in this study had a clear focus on transfer in the project design, and used a variety of transfer approaches. They exceeded expectations in the number of participants recruited and often resulted in tangible results (e.g. agreements, ongoing mechanisms, high quality products to disseminate, or improved intergroup relations beyond the dialogue participants). Conversely, low success projects did not prioritize or have a clear plan for transfer. Their focus remained on change in and between participants in the dialogue group.

Successful projects had explicit theories of change around transfer and aligned their transfer models with intended impacts.

Participant-Driven Transfer: Project leaders in highly successful projects often mentioned that many new opportunities for transfer were specifically driven by participants rather than part of the project design. For example, in many projects, participants invited family, friends, or colleagues to participate in the dialogue, expanding both the dialogue group and its reach. Other project leaders mentioned that when participants developed strong relationships, they often took the initiative to collaborate on activities outside the dialogue project. Reports mentioned that where dialogue facilitators supported these participant-led initiatives and viewed participants as partners, participants felt a strong ownership of the project.

V. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USIP/FUNDERS

A. Key Lessons Learned for Design of New Dialogue Projects

One overwhelming finding was simply the sheer number of variations in project design found across the projects. Even within the framework of the four dialogue and transfer program models – bottom-out/up, middle-out/down, middle-out/up, and top-out/down – which revealed many shared characteristics within each model, the projects also varied in the specific type and combination of participants involved, primary activities and their relative emphasis, transfer methods, theories of change, and other design components. While the researchers were able to identify significant differences in these program models related to transfer and impact, and found key factors associated with both transfer success and overall project success, there were no clear ‘winners’ in dialogue models. Each general approach, participant focus, and so on had successful and less successful projects. Therefore, a ‘menu’ approach with key project design choices, that must take into account the specific contexts in which projects are implemented may serve as a more useful starting point for future project design (Table in Annex 11).

Despite the wide variations in program models and specific projects, this study identified the following lessons learned and recommendations for dialogue project design²⁰:

Promote theory-based designs: Dialogue projects should be theory-based, including explicit theories of change for achieving desired outcomes in participants, how these immediate results can be transferred successfully beyond participants, and why and how these transfer efforts will contribute to peace writ large (or at minimum, peace writ local.) Grantees, especially younger grantees, suggested that USIP provide guidance on how to use a theory-based approach to project design. This would help ensure that whatever design choices grantees make, they are based on a coherent set of assumptions about what will lead to success.

Be clear about what success means: Project success does not necessarily mean the same as transfer success or impact beyond participants. This study provides a broad review of what success means, but because the focus of research was on transfer, the definition of success applied here was skewed towards transfer. There were several projects that met their stated objectives and were deemed successful by USIP grant officers, however, they did not necessarily have significant transfer or identifiable impacts (at least not according to project reports) and were deemed less successful in this research. Moving forward, if USIP expects transfer and impact beyond dialogue participants, it may need to develop new criteria for grant applications and measures of success.

Match desired impacts with the ‘best fit’ program model approach: The research findings suggest bottom-up approaches were best for micro impacts, as well as meso impact at the local level through participants’ spheres of influence. When connected with mid-level and high-level leaders, bottom-up

²⁰ Desk reviews of projects were based on limited process details in the proposals and reports and field research was focused primarily on transfer and impact. Therefore, we are unable to comment on process factors for success.

approaches achieved macro impact, at least at the local level. Dialogue integrated with capacity building and action/advocacy increase chances for participant outcomes, transfer success, impact and sustainability.

Middle-out approaches were best for meso impacts if they emphasized intergroup relations through building horizontal relationships across conflict divides and building organizational/institutional linkages and partnerships that institutionalize and normalize the new relationships. These relationships can have broad 'trickle down' transfer through participants' spheres of influence at the grassroots level. Similar to bottom-up approaches, middle-out approaches can contribute to macro level change, whether at the local or national level, by connecting these leaders with high-level policy and decision makers. Top-down approaches were most effective for achieving macro impacts.

Adapt programs to political and security context: Grantees need to establish realistic goals and objectives that take the political and security context into account. In highly polarized climates or where there is lack of support from political authorities, just bringing people together can be significant. It is easier to have dialogue when there is an official peace process. In such a context, dialogue generally served one of three roles: 1) to support the official peace process from below, either via advocacy for voice and policies to influence official negotiations and/or by focusing on peacebuilding at the community level in the context of a national peace process /agreement; 2) to jumpstart or unstick stalemated negotiations by convening mostly mid-level and/or high-level civil society and government officials to provide a forum for conflict analysis, creative problem solving, or developing confidence building measures characteristic of typical Track II dialogues; and 3) to provide a platform and safe space for individuals and groups committed to dialogue and peacebuilding despite, or perhaps because of, an insecure and unsupportive environment.

The presences or absence of an official political peace process was a distinguishing feature in what grantees were doing and thought was possible in Colombia versus the Israeli-Palestinian context. When Israeli and Palestinian authorities were negotiating towards the Oslo peace agreement, dialogue at all levels flourished. As the Oslo process failed to achieve demonstrable improvements in the lives of Palestinians and failed to address key political issues, disillusionment set in, contributing to new waves of violence. Currently, there is no visible peace process underway, or at least one that is perceived as legitimate by Palestinians (according to interviews). The lack of a political process for peace and increased polarization between Israelis and Palestinians has altered and limited the kinds of peacebuilding activities that are possible in today's 'anti-normalization' period by Palestinians. Critiques of dialogue projects argue the conflict is not rooted individual or cultural problems, but structural ones. Therefore, they believe the focus on normalization (e.g., dialogue) is pursued as a distraction or substitute for political settlement and as supporting an untenable status quo. They are more interested in justice than peace (if defined only as the cessation of violence). Thus, to attract more Palestinians more effort must be made to create political change.

At the same time, more intra-group work is warranted to address internal conflicts on both sides, and more focused work centered on specific objectives that address immediate interests (e.g., water, economic development, security) might be more useful in the current climate than broad, diffuse dialogue

groups without clear and tangible objectives. An example, is a highly successful local project that focused on improving Israeli police relations with the Arab-Israeli community, which led to tangible benefits for both sides. As one Palestinian remarked, “‘Humanizing’ the other is an important step towards peacebuilding, as long as the effort doesn’t stop there. That is the key difference today.”

In contrast, grantees in Colombia, where the peace process recently resulted in a signed agreement between the government and FARC, grantees had been working with multiple approaches and transfer strategies, involving a mix of ‘more’ and ‘key’ people, and connecting civil society with government and policy decision makers. While the journey was slow due to deep distrust, fear and pain, the official peace process provided an umbrella framework for organizing.

While the context certainly shapes what is possible and relevant, one Palestinian interviewee said, “we could do dialogue and capacity building work with teachers at any time – we did it during bus bombings, the intifadah, etc. But people need to be motivated. Today, there is too much apathy on the Israeli side and despair on the Palestinian side. People could meet, but they don’t.” Designing the dialogue and activities to achieve concrete results might be one way to motivate both sides to engage.

Move from dialogue to action/advocacy and transfer: As emphasized elsewhere, if you want to spread dialogue effects beyond participants, then include plans and methods for transfer in the project design. This was shown to be related to transfer and project success. If transfer is the priority, dialogue plus capacity building and action or advocacy tends to be more successful at achieving transfer and impact than dialogue alone and other approaches. There were no conclusive results regarding the efficacy of sequencing activities, however, the dominant method was capacity building then dialogue then action, depending on the purpose of each. Moving from dialogue to action or advocacy was key for transferring participants’ new knowledge, ideas, attitudes, and relationships beyond the group to engage more people, establish broader intergroup relationships, address community problems, and so on.

Also key for moving from dialogue to transfer in bottom-up approaches, especially for transferring micro- and meso-level change to achieve macro-level structural change at the national level, is participants need a clear sense of the problems to be solved and policies to be changed (Saunders, 1999).

At the same time, the broader peacebuilding literature suggests that many different types of approaches can be successful. For example, Track II dialogues are frequently successful in contributing to new policy ideas and practices. The key ingredient for such success seems to be selecting the right participants and appropriate mix of transfer methods, timing and so on. A limitation of this research was the lack of sufficient Track II projects included in the field research to detect more transfer effects.

Sequence activities to address power asymmetries: A common critique of dialogue groups is the assumption that people within the group have “equal status” if, for example, they are all similar in educational, socio-economic or professional standing. This assumption ignores the external context and the very real power asymmetries that limit and shape strategy. The issue of power asymmetries (and the increased acknowledgement of it) was a key factor driving Israeli and Palestinian grantees to change their goals and strategies. No clear recommendations emerged from the desk review of field research,

however, the results of this study made us think further about models that might explain some of the trends we saw. One especially useful model is based on the work of Adam Curle and John Paul Lederach that creates a matrix with two dimensions for the conflict context: the balance of power (unbalanced to balanced) and the status of relations (unpeaceful/unjust to peaceful/just). The matrix suggests the potential activities peacebuilders might choose to undertake in a particular context to move the situation towards more peaceful relations. See Annex 12 for further discussion.

Recruit the right participants: This is not a unique suggestion. However, too many projects used the term ‘leader’ or ‘future leader’ rather loosely and selected participants without much evidence of their influence. There was little discussion in project proposals of how grantees determined key and future leaders. If the project is based on participants’ ability to influence others, now or in the future, then there needs to be clear criteria and indicators for recruiting the right participants, and plans for how they will contribute to transfer. One way to ensure this is for grantees to use a participatory approach in their project design and implementation.

Reach out to the hard to reach: In addition to recruiting influential, recruiting hardline and moderate participants are important, given their ‘spoiler’ potential. Several Israeli grantees mentioned the mistake the ‘left’ made in the optimistic Oslo Accord years, by marginalizing more right wing and conservative voices. Today, it is the left on the sidelines. There is some evidence of success in reaching these more conservative elements through time spent on relationship and trust building. Several grantees described the important role this played in recruiting, for example, Madrassas. Others talked about holding special meetings with male leaders in order to gain sufficient trust to enable recruitment of women. In addition, difficult political and security contexts might make engagement with hard to reach people even more difficult. In this case, intra-group work might be best to increase participants’ readiness to dialogue when conditions are ripe.

Connect levels of leadership (vertical connections): It can’t be stressed enough the importance of linking grassroots, mid-level and high-level leaders for dialogue and contributing to change, whether at the local or national level. Mid-level leaders are known to be able to play this bridging role between grassroots and high-level leaders, if they have sufficient credibility, legitimacy, access and influence. Grantees can also play this bridging role if they have access and convening power. Many projects, especially those using bottom-up approaches, laid out plans in their proposals to involve grassroots as well as mid-level and/or high-level leaders without clear strategies for doing so. However, some projects’ final reports suggested that their efforts to engage mid-level and especially high-level leaders was minimally successful, and this affected their project success and impact. Therefore, project design and implementation would be strengthened if connections and partnerships were already in place at the proposal stage to ensure the grantees can deliver and achieve the transfer and impact they seek.

Create strategic partnerships and networks (horizontal connections): The research clearly showed a significant relationship between success and grantee partnerships in project design and implementation. Strong networks or coalitions gave participants ongoing opportunities for dialogue, capacity building and joint action and transfer. Field interviews suggested that once people had developed strong relationships,

networks and coalitions across traditional identify boundaries, they were very keen to continue to build on these new relationships. Strengthening the leadership capability of grantees might be needed to enable forming, maintaining and leveraging partnerships and networks. While it is easy to start a network, they need a lot of ongoing support to become sustainable and effective.

Build capacity for dialogue and facilitate dialogue to build capacity: There was a reciprocal and mutually reinforcing relationship between capacity building and dialogue. On the one hand, capacity building to provide participants with dialogue skills increased participants' ability to effectively engage in dialogue. On the other hand, through engaging in dialogue, participants increased their capacity to dialogue. Combining experiential learning with learning by doing approaches resulted in greater dialogue effectiveness and participant capacity to transfer and model dialogue skills for others. Capacity building was also highly associated with creating ongoing mechanisms for dialogue and peacebuilding, which was highly correlated with project success.

Set standards for training: Training and cascade models were significantly related with transfer success, impact and overall project success. However, care must be taken to ensure participants are properly trained. Many of the trainings described were relatively short (e.g. a few days), and with unrealistic expectations that the training would prepare participants to facilitate dialogue or resolve conflicts. While it's not inconceivable that participants could successfully use the new skills they gained (and indeed they often did), setting standards for training curriculum might be a useful way to provide guidelines, while still allowing for creativity and contextually/culturally relevant curriculum. Trainings that seemed most successful were those that utilized well-tested curriculum, often developed by more experienced partner organizations.

Recruit the right staff: Grantees need to carefully select staff who will preserve the reputation of the organization and live up to professional and ethical standards. When key staff leave, especially those upon whom participants had placed their trust and confidence and who were integral to program implementation, the organization should meet with participants to debrief and plan for the future in order to 'do no harm' (e.g., to minimize participants feeling abandoned or duped) and safeguard project progress.

Strengthen plans for sustainability: Grantees and participants who had plans for sustainability showed more transfer success and impact than projects that lacked plans. Most important were plans by the grantees and participants to continue project activities, plans by participants to engage in other, non-project related peacebuilding activities, and projects that established new/ongoing platforms for dialogue and peacebuilding. In addition, having well thought out and implemented exit strategies for 'shutting down' projects are as important as sustainability plans are to scaling them up. A good exit strategy supports ethical principles of 'do no harm.'

B. Recommendations for USIP/Funders

Find the 'sweet spot' - readiness for dialogue: In reflecting on contextual factors that influence project success, research participants often mentioned the important of societal 'readiness' for dialogue and

peacebuilding. Readiness includes both the willingness and capacity for dialogue among participants, as well as specific avenues for influence or broader societal receptivity to peacebuilding. Idiosyncratic and changing contexts preclude facile recipes for readiness, suggesting that experienced local peacebuilding organizations and experts are best placed to assess the broader environmental conditions that will support dialogue success and transfer. Ironically, successful dialogue processes both need and help create 'readiness' - that sweet spot where dialogue can help transform both participants and the broader conflict.

Fund ongoing dialogue projects: Success builds over time. This was a common refrain heard during the field research, especially by grantees and participants who acknowledged that transfer and success beyond participants were slow to materialize. As one grantee remarked, "Building peace and reconciliation takes time. It's a slow process, but the process is important."

Build grantee capacities for strategic and contingency planning: While a quality process is certainly important, the field research also showed there was the potential for the process to be too slow and incremental. There was some risk of participants losing confidence in the process if more results weren't achieved. In addition, even when projects had good transfer, the bigger context (e.g., escalating violence and security concerns) can derail projects, transfer effects and sustainability. The more successful projects seemed better able to address these problems through adaptive management drawing on organizational connections within the communities. Given the types of environments in which many USIP grantees work, grantees and projects would benefit from conducting rolling conflict assessments and risk analyses and developing contingency plans, or scenario building, to be able to quickly respond and adapt to threats to success.

However, grantees need both technical and financial support to develop their capacities. Additional topics for which grantees requested support include: proposal writing, project management, advanced facilitation, negotiation and mediation training, and strategies for transfer. In addition, more specific capacity building topics such as youth violence, entrepreneurship and small/medium enterprise, peace education, arts and peacebuilding were also requested. USIP improve its support to grantees by surveying them to identify key needs and prioritize capacity building and technical support accordingly.

Accompaniment by USIP staff: Interviewees in Colombia highly welcomed USIP (and other international organizations) direct support and involvement in project activities, for example, as (co-)sponsors of training and other events. It provided much needed organizational strengthening by providing technical assistance and guidance. The visible support of USIP (and others), also increased the credibility, legitimacy, visibility and security of local organizations by being associated with a respected international organization (except in some countries where associations with western NGOs becomes a risk factor). Interviewees in Colombia also reported that USIP's direct involvement in the Citizens' Commission for Reconciliation also generated trust between parties to participants. In addition, some grantees recommended that USIP could help promote the work of the grantees (e.g., through media exposure) and support them in political strategizing. USIP accompaniment, where appropriate, should continue and be expanded to other regions.

Foster communication and cooperation among grantees: Organizational leaders interviewed in this study noted that the current funding system usually requires them to compete against the very organizations with whom they should be collaborating. They urged funders to change their role so that they foster information sharing, collaboration, and coordination among grantees. Research by Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (geo: www.geofunders.org) suggested that to best do this, funders can: a) help to make connections, but don't force them (e.g. convene in-country information sharing meetings; provide shared office space for multiple organizations); 2) offer core support and long-term, flexible funding to organizations participating in aligned work; 3) provide core support for collaborative efforts (e.g. fund logistics and operations of partnerships or communities of practice). This builds on important lessons emerging from this study: that partnerships, collaboration and coordination were an important element of success in promoting dialogue transfer. Funders can play an important role to help peacebuilding organizations work together for better results.

Specific recommendations for USIP are to convene in-country grantees to develop a shared country strategy, share lessons learned, best practices, and resources. In the meantime, a specific request was for USIP to provide information about other organizations and resources working on similar or complementary issues (e.g. in Colombia, what national and international organizations can help victims, support micro-enterprise, are interested in working in different regions?).

Encourage/ incentivize tracking and reporting about transfer: This includes asking potential grantees to explicitly identify transfer elements in their theories of change, develop practical and financial plans to track transfer efforts and impacts, and report on transfer approaches and results. Because a dialogue project's transfer approaches and effects may change significantly over time, USIP should consider supporting a mixed-method longitudinal study to track transfer efforts of several projects over time.

Develop adjustable measuring sticks: Comparative evaluations, by definition, focus on common elements around which projects are measured and assessed. However, it may not be reasonable to compare transfer approaches and results for projects that aim to make changes within a school system to those that try to influence broader political policy decisions. It also may not be useful to use common measures of success for a project that works with liberal or moderate participants vs. those who work with hardliners. Similarly, the conflict context greatly affects what's possible to achieve. As one grantee working with Israelis and Palestinians remarked, "How can we measure impact in a context of shifting conflict dynamics? Sometimes just getting two people together is huge." Both researchers and funders who focus on transfer efforts may do well to develop different measurement scales or adjustable measuring sticks to compare the successes of projects.

Apply strategic philanthropy and diversify the grant portfolio: The current call for evidence-based programming, emphasis on impact evaluation, and urge to align grantmaking with carefully designed theories of change that produce clear and quantifiable results, suggests funders may have lost their appetite for experimentation and risk. In the complex and changing contexts of peacebuilding, however, there are often more questions than answers and rarely clear and simple recipes for success. Funders still need to seek out ideas with transformative potential, explore new approaches, take risks on less proven

approaches, and recognize that innovation often requires flexibility, iteration, and failure (Kasper & Marcoux, 2014). We encourage USIP to continue learning for improvement by funding innovative, even high-risk, projects and recognize that they have an important place in a diversified grantmaking portfolio (e.g. Make deliberate out-of-strategy grants. For example, dedicate a small percent of your grantmaking budget to support projects that seem promising but don't fit neatly into your strategy or learning agenda. Include M&E efforts and regular reflection opportunities to integrate learning from these projects into strategy adjustments.)

What is hope worth? The analysis of contextual variables discussed political climates that may limit the success of dialogue efforts. However, while dialogue projects may not have broad transfer potentials during these periods, many participants in this study insisted that their dialogue projects had become a life raft of hope amidst a sea of despair, a place of sanity in an insane world, and a 'safe-space' to be oneself and not conform to the radicalism around them. As funders consider divesting from peacebuilding efforts in these difficult political climates, they may also find it useful to ask questions like, "what is hope worth?"