

Berghof Concept Note - Workpackage 4:

The Aim of WP4

The overall objective of WP4 is to formulate and clarify the themes relevant to an assessment of governance initiatives and their conflict resolution potential. The main aim is to chart and form a research basis on the different socio-cultural, economic and political dimensions that determine the viability and impact of governance agendas. These aims include the following sub-aims:

- To identify and analyse the social and cultural premises of governance initiatives
- To chart the impact of governance initiatives
- To chart and analyse the necessary structural conditions of sustainable conflict resolution.

A further aim of the research is to provide context and background for both fieldwork and for analysis and policy formation, and will have a three-level approach:

- to assess the state of the art project-related themes
- to assemble information and field research on the actual on-the ground practices of governance institutions and actors
- to make concrete assessments of governance initiatives on the basis of the thematic areas.

The Role of Berghof Conflict Research and the Collaboration with Partners

Berghof is the lead institution and coordinator of this workpackage. The coordination role includes linking WP4 to the other workpackages of the CORE project, organizing a workshop on Theme A and developing two reports (Themes B and C) which will inform – and be informed by – the field research. Based on the concept for the two reports, Berghof will post detailed questions to be taken into consideration by the field research teams and will compile and analyse the feedback and empirical data from the field research for the purpose of the thematic reports. CRG (especially for Report B) and JNU will contribute with research work based on consultation and guidance from Berghof. All other institutions are expected to contribute through either field research results or/and feedback on the draft and final report.

The Deliverables for WP4

The workshop in Berlin discussed the cultural premises of governance initiatives. Building on the state-of-the art studies of WP2, the reports on Theme B (impact of governance agendas) and Theme C (socio-economic and political conditions for sustainable conflict resolution) will analyse and compare different cultures of conflict transformation agendas and the

(necessary) local conditions for dealing constructively with conflict transformation (agendas) in Europe and India.

According to the project outline both reports are practice-oriented. Against the background of the theoretical framework, the thematic reports will build on practice-related theories of change and the explicit and implicit assumptions about the mutual repercussions of culture, conflict and peace, particularly on the level of governance implementation. Thus, while looking from different perspectives, the aims of the two reports are inter-related and the findings from the one report are expected to inform the findings of the other.

The guiding question of analysis is about the inter-relation and inter-dependence of theories of change in design and in reality, i.e. the structural conditions and cultural premises, on the ground. It includes exploring the differences between the theories of change in design and the theories of change in use.

Report B will focus primarily on selected peace governance agendas (strategies, policies) of state actors, namely the European Union and (with help from CRG) India, in peace processes. The report will look at the effect of mediation and dialogue approaches on local conflict dynamics. Since mediation and dialogue are participatory by nature, the analysis of strategies and policies related to this agenda are particularly suited to provide a framework for reflective research, for comparing the design and implementation of policies and for learning from the feedback from actors on the ground.

Report C will focus on interaction on the local level, while providing a needs assessment and an analysis of local ways of dealing with conflict. The findings for this report will very much rely on the empirical findings from the field research. The report will examine the local expectations, theories of change, and structural conditions against the background of cultural diversity. It will identify the role of cultural diversity and conflict, the emergence of “hybrids”, and the collision of governance agendas with structural realities on the ground.

While field research will play a crucial role in both reports, Report B also has a substantial amount of desk research (analysis of strategy documents).

A synthesis of the major findings (conclusion) will be considered in order to formulate concrete policy recommendations for the EU, the State of India and other actors (including CSA) with regard to the cultural appropriateness of existing approaches to conflict transformation.

Report B: “Approaches to Dialogue and Mediation – Concepts, Theories of Change and their Influence on Local Conflict Dynamics”

Purpose and Aims:

The report will concentrate on one illustrative strand of conflict transformation, namely the European Union’s and India’s approaches to dialogue and mediation. The research will be conducted by analysing theories of change, the underlying assumptions they are based on and the strategies and policies which have resulted from them.

Key Issues:

Three sets of questions will play a crucial role in this analysis:

1. On what hypotheses and implicit assumptions about conflict, peace and culture are agendas of mediation and dialogue based on? What are the most relevant theories of change within these agendas?
2. How do the actions or activities outlined in the agendas correspond to the desired results for reducing violence or building peace? Which theories of change are applied in a particular context and why? How do agenda-setters define the success of a strategy/policy?
3. How exactly do external approaches to mediation and dialogue influence local conflict dynamics and social processes?

Criteria for selecting EU conflict transformation strategies to be analysed in the report:

Given that a great variety of different EU conflict transformation strategies exist, the focus for this report is on *long term, transformative* approaches from the field of *dialogue and mediation*.

Depending on the case study region, different research questions for desk and field studies are of interest. For the role of the EU as a political actor in peace processes, the following topics are of particular interest:

In Bosnia, Georgia and Cyprus, EU strategies on dialogue and mediation played/play a crucial role in the peace processes, e.g. EU Special Representatives and envoys, EC delegations, EC commission funding. We intend to consult the project partners, particularly those who are engaged in the field, on the choice of EU approaches to be scrutinised, before mapping and deconstructing the theories of change they are based on. Even though the EU plays a more indirect role in the three Indian case study regions, the influence of its conflict

transformation approaches on local conflict dynamics requires further research, too. However, because of the structural difference of the EU's role as an external actor in wider Europe and India, the research questions about EU strategies need to be framed differently.

On the local level the Indian state might be perceived as an external actor as well, and it would be interesting to identify if and to what extent the Indian Government works with strategies and policies of conflict transformation. Whether or not policies of dialogue and mediation will be suitable to analyse remains to be seen. We will consult JNU and CRG about which conflict transformation strategies and policies to choose for the analysis.

In a concluding step EU concepts on mediation and dialogue will be contrasted with the selected Indian approaches to conflict transformation. The guiding question for analysis is if marked differences between the theories of change in the EU and in India were observed, and if so, why and how?

Report C: Interaction of Conflict Transformation Initiatives, Resulting Hybridity and Local Conditions for Peace

Purpose and Aims:

This report focuses mainly on analysing the dynamic relationship between external governance initiatives (interventions by international organisations, external governments and national governments) and local ways (by organisations and groups at sub-national level) of dealing with conflict. It will look at interactions (or the reasons for blocking interactions) at the local level and the results of these interactions (for example hybrid constellations). The cultural sensitivity of peacebuilding strategies and policies will also be assessed.

Key issues:

Three sets of questions will play a crucial role in this analysis:

1. What hybrid forms of agendas as well as hybrid constellations of external and local actors' collaboration emerge out of the interaction between external and local actors?
 - How do agendas/actors influence each other? What influence do external agendas and their theories of change have on local and indigenous approaches of dealing with conflicts? And vice versa? Are the external conflict transformation agendas in use culturally sensitive and adapted to the local context?
 - When comparing the underlying theories of change of both external and local conflict transformation agendas, what differences can be detected?

2. What is the benefit or drawback of hybridity when working on conflict transformation?
3. Which cultural aspects play which role in the interaction of conflict transformation agendas and their implementation at local level? To what extent does culture assist in solving conflicts in our case studies?

As a thematic focus, a type of a hybrid agenda that will be investigated in the different case regions is the *strengthening of local governance* by external and internal actors. In India, as well as in European countries such as Bosnia, numerous external donors and INGOs as well as the national governments and local civil society organisations support local government structures in order to build stability and long-term peace. The investigation of these agendas allows us to study the hybrid forms and constellations of external, liberal and internal local theories of change and values. We will also be able to study the supportive and disruptive cultural aspects for the local implementation of these agendas as well as look at how sensitive the agendas are towards cultural diversity.

Criteria for conflict transformation strategies to be analysed in the report:

In order to narrow down the focus of this study, we will investigate agendas that strengthen local governance. Strengthening local governance is a type of initiative which is promoted and implemented in all the case studies. Within this group of initiatives, we will pick out these which display hybrid elements of collaboration and have a long term focus.

Methodology/Next Steps:

In order to be able to study interactions and hybrid forms and constellations, we intend to draw as close as possible to the 'everyday life' of conflict-affected communities and regions. This will be done by consulting subject literature, ethnographic material and specialized literature written by organisations working in the case regions. However, the main source of knowledge and information used will be the findings from the field research that our partners will conduct. Thus, as a first step we will consult our project partners about our research intentions and questions. We will then provide them with elaborated and tailored questions for the field.