



2017

Strategic Plan

2021

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international and ecumenical centre based in Uppsala, Sweden, that supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation through a combination of research and action.

[Adopted by the LPI Board 2016]

BACKGROUND

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international and ecumenical centre based in Uppsala, Sweden, that supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation through a combination of research and action. The creation of LPI in 1985 was a response by the churches to the conflicts in the world, especially in light of the Cold-War nuclear threat posed to humanity. The conflict patterns of the world have since changed, with a sharp increase in intra-state conflicts. The work of the Institute has increasingly focused on the transformation of such conflicts.

Since its inception, LPI has carried out meaningful programmes for conflict transformation in a variety of countries, conducted research, and produced numerous publications on nonviolent conflict transformation and the role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding.

The main focus of LPI's programmes has been on Africa, with LPI's Horn of Africa Programme being established and well-known since the early 1990s. LPI is currently engaged in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as in a Horn of Africa Regional Programme. The Institute is affiliated with the African Union. In research the LPI is collaborating with academic institutions in United States, Africa and Europe.

The work of LPI is carried out mainly through engagement with and support of civil society organisations and academic institutions, building strategic partnerships with local, national, regional and international organisations and networks in order to support environments and platforms conducive to nonviolent conflict transformation.

IDENTITY

LPI is a foundation registered in Sweden with the Christian Council of Sweden as the parent body. The Institute is working independently, governed by an international board with an international advisory council consisting of peacebuilding experts, practitioners and researchers from Africa, the United States and Europe.

As LPI has its roots in the ecumenical movement of the churches, the significance of religion in social life and in conflict and peacebuilding is a special concern for the Institute. Inspired by the theological reflection, experience of dialogue, appreciation of diversity within the ecumenical movement, LPI engages in action and research with different civil society organisations, institutions and actors – secular and faith-based - depending on the context of engagement in the different programmes.

In doing this the Institute seeks to contribute to the improvement of human life by promoting cooperation for peace, justice and reconciliation among people.

CORE VALUES

LPI's work is based on the following core values:

- All **human life is sacred** and possesses a dignity that belongs to every human being regardless of who they are or what they do.
- **Every person has basic rights and responsibilities** that flow from our human dignity and that belong to us as human beings regardless of any social or political structures. The recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all people is expressed in the International Declaration of Human Rights. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good of all.
- As members of one human family—whatever our national, ethnical, religious, economic or ideological differences – we are to live in **global mutual solidarity** with one another. This means that special consideration in economic, political and social decisions must be given to those in greatest need – i.e. the poorest and most vulnerable – in order to promote life in its fullness with peaceful relations for all.
- True peace encompasses **justice, truth, reconciliation and mutual respect**. Esteem for human dignity and human rights is consistent with this vision and a foundation for peace.
- Conflict is an inherent and complex aspect of every society; violence need not be. Sustainable peace can only be based on a **culture of nonviolence**.
- Peace work must encompass all levels and segments of society. Adherence to **basic democratic principles**, where all people has a right to participate in social and political life, is a necessary precondition for building lasting peace.
- **Equality** is a vital necessity in shaping a community of men and women playing equally important roles.

VISION

LPI envisions a world where peace, justice and nonviolent relations prevail through people's active work and commitment.

MISSION

LPI supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation through a combination of research and action that entails the strengthening of existing local capacities to prevent violence, mitigate its effects and rebuild communities after violence has ebbed or come to an end.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

LPI's work is in compliance with the following guiding principles:

Understanding the context: LPI bases its work on a thorough understanding of the context in which it engages.

Coherent work on all levels: LPI acknowledges that building peace is a complex process that has to include all levels of society. The Institute therefore employs a coherent multi-track approach with a special emphasis on supporting the middle and grassroots levels.

Building on local knowledge: LPI believes that people have the power to build peace. LPI is hence sensitive towards local cultures and traditional methods/customs of conflict transformation and incorporates the different perspectives and voices of the people into analysis and action.

Continuous commitment: Peace is not a static condition but ongoing processes, so LPI must rely on the continuous commitment of both internal and external actors in almost every context.

Gender sensitivity: LPI prioritises a gender-sensitive approach to conflict transformation. As conflict affects women and men and boys and girls in gender-specific ways, LPI takes into account the different needs, situations and conditions of women and men in conflict areas.

Accountability, transparency and trust: LPI is accountable to its partners, programme participants and the members of the communities where it works as well as to its donors.

Impartiality: LPI conducts its work in an inclusive and non-partisan way, as effective and sustainable conflict transformation and peacebuilding require the engagement of all relevant parties. Impartiality is not indifference to injustice but entails an effort to engage all stakeholders and to avoid alignment with particular actors.

Conflict sensitivity: LPI is sensitive to how its identity, principles and practices influence the communities, conflicts, partner organisations and contexts where it works, and how they affect it. It strives to “do no harm.”

Environment: LPI seeks to conduct its work in ways that do not harm the natural environment. In its analyses it is sensitive to the role that environmental issues and the management of natural resources play in situations of conflict.

Diversity: LPI is engaged in action and research with all kinds of civil society organisations, institutions and actors, depending on the context of engagement in the different programmes. In the composition of its own staff the Institute favours a diversity of ideas, beliefs and backgrounds, with everyone’s commitment to the values and principles of LPI as the unifying factor.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

LPI’s work focuses on three interrelated strategic priorities, seeking to implement them in a coherent and complementary way.

1. Civil society support and inclusive engagement for peace

LPI supports civil society actors – especially and where possible relevant faith-based actors – in their conflict transformation work, through capacity building and joint engagement in research and action.

Capacity building:

- Processes, methodologies and tools of conflict transformation
- Enhancing research and analytical skills
- Core organizational support and institutional development
- Resource mobilization
- Policy engagement and awareness raising (see SP 2 below)

LPI employs an accompaniment approach, in which capacity building is understood as a mutual learning process, where LPI adds value to the work of its partners and vice versa.

Joint engagement in Conflict Transformation:

- Participatory analysis of pertinent issues causing the actual conflict situation
- Conflict transformation initiatives based on conflict analysis

LPI’s choice of conflict transformation strategies and tools will always be based on the analysis of peacebuilding needs and space; as well as the specific priorities of its partners in civil society. Using an iterative and reflective approach, LPI will promote the application of lessons learnt; and develop innovative approaches when appropriate.

2. Policy engagement and awareness-raising

LPI engages directly and in collaboration with others on awareness-raising and policy work. It strives to enhance awareness of civil society conflict transformation processes, as well as raise pertinent policy issues deriving from the work in the field. Through this engagement LPI seeks to invite and motivate influential actors to assume their responsibilities for the promotion of justice and peace.

Policy engagement

- LPI undertakes policy engagement on its own, through other organisations and networks and in collaboration with partners.
- For LPI, policy engagement is primarily field-driven and rooted in the organisation's experience and values.

Awareness-raising

- Addressing local, national, regional and international actors
- LPI also engages in ongoing awareness-raising to enhance understanding amongst target audiences on priority themes relevant to the work of LPI and its partners.
- Target audiences are (depending on issue and policy objective): "local authorities;" national, regional and continental bodies; multi-lateral organizations, businesses, governments and funding partners.

3. Knowledge and Learning to enhance practice

Through documentation and learning, LPI makes the knowledge and experiences of LPI and its partners available to peacebuilding practitioners and research communities. This is done in strategic partnerships with relevant local and international researchers, academic actors and peacebuilding practitioners.

At the same time, LPI gathers relevant theories, research findings and experiences from other contexts and organisations, and communicates them within LPI and to its partners.

The purpose of this Strategic Priority is enhancing and improving the work of LPI in Strategic Priorities 1 and 2.

Documentation, learning and sharing

- Systematic and when appropriate participatory monitoring, documentation and evaluation of initiatives, approaches, processes and methodologies
- Analysis of lessons learned
- Supporting local communities of practice among LPI's partners, relevant peacebuilding and academic actors within and across programme contexts

- Effective and targeted communication of learning (reports and publications, organization of and/or participation in seminars, conferences and other learning events)

Networking and research

- Keeping abreast of and connecting to relevant conflict transformation and peacebuilding studies and research
- Relevant issue-based research with a clear link to LPI's and partners peacebuilding practice
- Participation in and organisation of relevant research and practice exchanges

IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The main mode of implementation for the Strategic Plan is multi-year programme plans and annual planning processes. Criteria and checklists serve the operationalization of the guiding principles. LPI will also review and refine existing engagement and disengagement strategies. LPI works with contextualised results-based planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning processes. LPI secures sustainable staffing and funding based on sound resource mobilization strategies.

LPI implements the major share of its work in partnership with local actors, but independent engagement may be taken if LPI is best placed and requested to act.

Strategic and targeted external communications are essential for LPI's work, not the least in Strategic Priorities 2 and 3. LPI applies utmost care that communication outputs fully mirror LPI's Guiding Principles, including conflict sensitivity and impartiality. Communication should be integral to programmatic work; and ultimately contribute to achieving LPI's peacebuilding objectives.

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