



PEACEBUILDING PROGRAM

Program Memo

Ariadne Papagapitos, Program Officer

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Executive Summary

In March 2011, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's (RBF) board of trustees approved the new direction of the Peacebuilding program (formerly known as Peace and Security). This paper served as the foundation for the program's new framework and funding guidelines, and was the basis of discussion at the March 2011 board meeting.

The new Peacebuilding program is the culmination of a thorough and collaborative review process that included contributions from RBF program staff, trustees, and advisors. The program framework proposed herein is grounded in the theme of conflict transformation. It is built around the issue of persistent conflicts that compromise global security and allows this theme¹ of peacebuilding to drive the geographic focus, rather than the specific needs of a geographic location determining programmatic priorities, as in the RBF's Pivotal Place model.²

The revised program aims to advance just and durable peace in ways that draw on the RBF's strengths, principally by:

- Identifying and addressing drivers of conflict and peace;
- Supporting conflict transformation and constituencies for peace;
- Aligning institutions, processes, and leadership at the multilateral, national, regional, and local levels;
- Encouraging an effective U.S. approach to conflicts in the context of a multipolar world; and
- Exploring how philanthropy can help tackle emerging transnational drivers of conflict.

Underlying this framework is the premise that contemporary threats to international peace call for shared responsibility at all levels of society and government, as well as innovative, collaborative solutions for the transformation of conflict. The new program framework has been crafted in a way that enables cross-program collaboration. Moreover, the proposed grantmaking strategies are mutually reinforcing, allowing most grants to contribute to more than one strategy.

¹ The RBF's grantmaking is organized around three themes: Democratic Practice, Peacebuilding, and Sustainable Development.

² The RBF considers Pivotal Places to be subnational areas, nation-states, or cross-border regions that have special importance with regard to the Fund's substantive concerns and whose future will have disproportionate significance for the future of a surrounding region, an ecosystem, or the world. The Fund currently works in three pivotal places: New York City, Southern China, and the Western Balkans.

Introducing a New Grantmaking Framework for Peacebuilding

The U.S. and global political landscapes have shifted significantly and with them, necessarily, the RBF's priorities. As staff have consulted with grantees, funding partners, scholars, diplomats, and other advisors, **conflict transformation** has emerged as a central theme and aspiration for the RBF's work in the international peace and security field. This framework would focus on helping to transform violent and frozen regional conflicts with wider security implications into peaceful outcomes. In addition, for this to be a program that aims to further peace and security objectives, it must be concerned with how responses to transnational threats—critical determinants of U.S., international, and human security—create the conditions for peace or conflict.

Following an extensive program review, we developed a **framework that aims to advance peace by identifying and addressing drivers of conflict and by aligning institutions, processes, and leadership at the international, national, regional, and local levels**. Doing so would build on prior RBF work and set the stage for grantmaking to advance the prospects for just and durable peace. As one of the RBF's three thematic pillars (Democratic Practice, Peacebuilding, and Sustainable Development) within the overall program architecture, it is the prospect of making progress on an issue of global significance—conflict transformation—that determines the geographic location of the program's grantmaking. Thus, the Peacebuilding program would focus its resources on select persistent contemporary conflicts that have significant implications for international security. The Fund also would consider Peacebuilding initiatives that relate to the Western Balkans and/or Southern China Pivotal Place programs.

A concentration on conflict transformation would build naturally on the RBF's prior work:

- The underlying purpose of our work to build **mutual respect and understanding between the global Muslim community and the West** has been to reduce conflict among communities, with a focus on two geopolitical poles of this conflict: the wider Middle East³ and the United States.
- Through our **U.S. Global Engagement grantmaking**, we sought to reduce conflict at the nation-state level by encouraging the United States to act more responsibly and collaboratively in its relationships with other governments and with regard to pressing global issues. Grantees have promoted the use of conflict resolution tools, including policy innovation, development assistance, and respectful dialogue that permits full exploration of the concerns of the parties to conflict.
- Our work regarding Iran is intended to help resolve a key conflict using the tool of **Track II dialogue**.⁴
- The proposed framework would provide a logical **complement to the Democratic Practice program's Global Governance portfolio**. While global governance helps elevate the voice of the global South in multilateral institutions and negotiations, the Peacebuilding program would encourage transformed U.S. participation in those systems.
- With our diplomatic networks and experience in the policy community, our 20-plus years of experience working in states in transition, and our willingness to be farsighted and take risks in grantmaking, we are well-positioned for this work.

³ This includes North Africa, Anatolia, the Levant, the Persian Gulf, and South Asia.

⁴ Track II dialogues are unofficial and informal nongovernmental dialogues between nonstate actors, including business contacts, citizen exchange programs, policy advocates, and/or religious contacts.

Turning Our Aspirations into Action: Core Ideas for Future Programming

The Peacebuilding program's aspiration for conflict transformation and international cooperation that create the conditions for global peace has remained consistent since the program's inception in 2003. Based on the lessons learned from a comprehensive strategic review process, the proposed framework would enable the program to productively contribute to global peace and security.

Below are the core ideas that have shaped our thinking about the future of this grantmaking and key elements for effective conflict transformation.

- **The Reality of Multipolarity:** The extent to which world powers locate their national interests in a shared understanding of **collective security** will determine how dangerous the world will be.⁵ Until now, the program has focused its policy work on advocacy in Washington, D.C. But with the diffusion of power and the need for shared responsibility, our policy-related grantmaking should shift to reflect this reality. Policy development and advocacy efforts should focus on encouraging work with **emerging powers**, particularly in the wider Middle East, to transform conflict.
- **Global Interdependence:** Because of global interconnectedness, seemingly local conflicts raging on the other side of the world have a direct impact on distant communities, including the United States. Therefore, the United States has a strategic interest in **conflict zones** and **fragile states**, which are vulnerable to extremism and otherwise undermine the prospects for collaborative problem solving among the community of nations. There is also a moral imperative: the United States has direct involvement in and ongoing responsibility for helping to introduce peaceful resolutions to many existing conflicts (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan).
- **Working with both People and Policymakers to Address Drivers of Conflict:** The root causes of conflict can be contextual, external, or transnational, which is why it is critical to enhance multilateral, regional, and national/local governance in order to successfully resolve conflict, as all of these levels influence international peace and security. The program would build on its robust experience in policy development by supporting and participating in projects that advance diplomatic and dialogue-based solutions to conflicts at the policy level, and that advance collaborative efforts with parties and perspectives from the region in question. To complement the policy-level work and to address both the drivers and consequences of conflict at the local level—where they are often most acute—the program also would support civil society groups that work on transforming conflict at the grassroots level, and on creating local mechanisms to handle conflict and its consequences. This effort would aim to bring voices of indigenous civil society to policymakers and other officials charged with keeping peace.

⁵ Philip Stephens, "National Interests Collide in the New World Disorder," *Financial Times*, September 16, 2010.

- **The Need to Build Constituencies for Peace:** Complex systems of interlocking interests lead to entrenched conflict. Building a movement for peace involves influencing both the internal and external dynamics and connections that promote conflict, in order to build political will for change. This requires working with populations in conflict zones as well as other parties that have bearing on, or are directly affected by, a conflict—including diaspora communities and others within the broader region—to help move important stakeholders toward resolution and peace.
- **A More Effective Multilateral System:** Multilateralism has encountered challenges since the end of the Cold War as the United States has become increasingly dominant in terms of military and economic power. With the changes in the world's political landscape and persistent critical perceptions of the United States abroad, it is in the United States' best interest to engage more actively and constructively within the multilateral system, starting with the United Nations.
- **Human Security:** Human security is a concept advanced by scholars and policymakers that holds that the individual rather than the state should be the referent for security and that the well-being of a population is an important determinant of the security of a nation-state. Human security and national security are not mutually exclusive concepts. Without human security, traditional state security—which centers on a state's ability to defend its sovereignty against external threats—cannot be attained and vice versa. Human security advances the notion that national, regional, and global stability cannot be created solely through governments building national power and military defense; rather, people's basic needs must be taken into account when considering sources of threats. In this regard, civil society organizations are important partners in helping to promote security.
- **Emerging Transnational Threats:** As transnational threats from climate change, diseases, migration, deepening economic inequality, cyber-terrorism, and trafficking of humans, weapons, and drugs increase, traditional modes of defense are challenged. The borderless nature of these phenomena presents a different and more complex set of challenges than those that primarily target the nation-state. The program can begin to identify and seek innovative and collaborative ways to combat new, 21st-century drivers of conflict—the future's most complex challenges.
- **Gender Equity:** This program presents an important opportunity for the RBF to act upon its commitment to expanding diversity and inclusion in grantmaking and in the world by working to enhance women's participation in peace and security matters. Peacebuilding and related policymaking are largely male-dominated arenas while, often, the people most affected by their outcomes are women and children. Women's participation in conflict transformation processes can also strengthen mechanisms to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts and ensure that the threats women face, often disproportionately, are addressed. Attention to gender dimensions in this work would be a highly valuable contribution.

Peacebuilding Definitions and Terminology

The peace and conflict field encompasses a variety of efforts aimed at the prevention, mitigation, and resolution of conflict. These can include peacekeeping in situations of violent conflict; peacemaking such as mediation and resolution; and peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. As in any field, there are discrepancies in how the various terms are employed by practitioners and international institutions. Some of the vocabulary is opaque, while other terms are laden with political perspectives. Like many in the community of practitioners, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund uses the term “peacebuilding” as shorthand for all related activities such as prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

States of conflict span a broad spectrum from violence to the absence of violence. Moreover, stability does not necessarily indicate the presence of peace. The program will thus employ an expansive notion of conflict that includes strained relationships or clashes in aspirations between nation-states, peoples, and other groups; violent conflict; atrocities; and human deprivation. **The ultimate ambition is the attainment of a just and sustainable peace**—the conditions that eliminate the causes of violence and engender peaceful relations between nations, groups, and individuals.

Although we continue to use “peacebuilding” and “conflict transformation,” in this paper we have also proposed prioritizing the terminology “identifying and addressing drivers of conflict” in describing the program’s ambition and approach. This structure allows us to identify a conflict’s underlying causes and the vulnerability to conflict of a region, state, or population group. It helps us address the structural mechanisms attending conflicts—which often lie at the intersection of various issues and institutions—to understand and activate processes that lead to a more desirable human condition. This is why it is critical to affect deficiencies at the policy level while also lending support to grassroots organizations tackling disparities in rights and/or living conditions.

In sum, the program’s approach is one that would seek to promote transformation of conflicts at the multilateral, regional, bilateral, and subnational levels,⁶ understanding that progress in one area cannot be made without progress in the others. This program vision would be carried out by building on the RBF’s policy and diplomacy work—complementing it by supporting on-the-ground work with constituencies, funding research and policy papers that propose innovative ways to address threats to peace and security, and working with grantees to carry them out. The program can advance concrete and practical ways that move beyond the *rhetoric* of “multipolarity” and “engagement” to set examples of how the world, and the United States, can push back on the biggest drivers of conflict and work with new partners to advance shared responsibility for securing peace.

⁶ At these various levels reside multilateral organizations; national governments and militaries; and international, national, and local civil society organizations with which we can engage.

Strategy Implementation

Over the next several years, we propose to focus grantmaking largely on conflict transformation in the wider Middle East, where many of the program's issues of concern play out acutely, with several ongoing conflicts that call for multilateral and regional solutions and effective U.S. engagement. The proposed framework would allow us to target the problematic dynamics at the heart of U.S. relations with the wider Middle East: conflicts that arise from politics and policy, more than religious differences. It also invites collaboration with two of the Fund's three pivotal places—Western Balkans and Southern China—and the Democratic Practice-Global Governance program.

At the time of writing, political transitions are transpiring in several countries in the wider Middle East and their outcomes remain uncertain. As asserted in this paper, these situations affirm that we must work across the spectrum of civil society, rather than solely with entrenched elites, to catalyze social change and build durable peace. In light of the fact that this program is driven by a thematic interest in conflict transformation, rather than by the particular needs within a specific country, it would not support democracy-building work or otherwise directly engage with the changing domestic politics. Staff are working with the Fund's grantees in the Middle East to monitor political progress, and as new leaders and civil society institutions emerge, the program would seek to work with those best positioned to carry out the Peacebuilding program's interests.

Below is a preliminary assessment of what early efforts would look like within each strategy and the type of grantee activities the program would support.

Strategy 1: Supporting innovative and collaborative policy solutions to conflict at the multilateral, regional, and state levels.

- Given that transnational challenges require coordinated international action, the U.N.'s role is central to the issues addressed by this program. Enhanced participation in the U.N. and other multilateral systems on the part of the United States also would contribute to a more positive image of the United States abroad. Grantmaking within this strategy would seek ways to strengthen U.S.-U.N. relations and broaden multilateral problem-solving in U.S. policymaking.
- This work also would support projects that encourage the United States to be a more effective participant in regional discussions/negotiations such as the Kabul Conference—a meeting led by RBF grantee the Institute for State Effectiveness, with the international community and Afghan stakeholders, to reach an agreement on development priorities—or the Century Foundation's Afghanistan project led by Lakhdar Brahimi, former U.N. special representative for Afghanistan and Iraq, and Ambassador Tom Pickering, a respected retired U.S. diplomat.
- With regard to grantmaking for policy development and advocacy, in addition to U.S.-based institutes, we would continue to explore opportunities to support regional policy institutes to produce fresh thinking on issues of relevance to our program and to support the inclusion of regional voices into policy debates.

- Even after the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 2010, there is continued political deadlock and no consensus on political reform that would help sustain peace in the Balkans. Progress is stalled and some observers note that the situation is deteriorating. Bosnia presents an opportunity for the Western Balkans and Peacebuilding programs to collaborate on security and conflict prevention projects there in 2011. A Serbia-Kosovo dialogue also might be an opportunity for future theme-pivotal place collaboration.

Strategy 2: Strengthening innovative grassroots approaches to conflict transformation that build political will for peace.

- The lack of resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a key challenge to U.S. relations in the wider Middle East. While we do not foresee a large investment in this issue, finding fresh entry points to strengthen political will for peace is important if we are to advance a conflict transformation and peacebuilding program that will begin its efforts in the Middle East. One way that the RBF might have impact is through support for organizations that are building constituencies for peace around innovative conflict transformation proposals.
- Elevating the role of women in preventing conflict and the equal participation of women in efforts to create international peace and security would be an important focus of the program overall. Women in conflict face severe human rights violations, as they are often the targets of warfare and experience deep constraints on their independence. In addition, women provide critical contributions to peacebuilding efforts as they are often the first responders to humanitarian crises. Yet funding is insufficient for initiatives that relate to the role and impact of women as peacebuilders.

Strategy 3: Exploring solutions to emerging transnational threats and drivers of conflict (specific focus to be developed).

- To begin identifying the most pressing emerging transnational threats, methods for their resolution, and where the RBF might have the greatest impact, we might consider convening experts at the Pocantico Center this year.
- We have begun studying past conflicts, their drivers, and what led to action or inaction (such as Rwanda and Bosnia), in order to build our knowledge base and explore the field of conflict prevention.

Types of Grantee Activities

The program would fund the following types of grantee activities⁷ in an effort to affect policy, cultivate new leaders, support grassroots work and constituencies for peace, and connect actors operating at different levels. These activities apply to grantees working in the United States as well as abroad. [Note: Interested grant applicants should refer to the [current Peacebuilding Guidelines](#).]

Advocacy	Promotion of public policies and approaches and education of policymakers on specific policies and issues.
Public Mobilization	Public education and work with targeted constituencies, including “grass tops” as well as “grassroots.”
Policy Analysis, Research, and Development	Expert work to better understand specific issue areas, the publication of select studies and reports, and development of policy recommendations.
Track II Diplomacy	Work to encourage interaction among civil society leaders, politicians, and officials to help create the conditions for official Track I diplomacy.
Field Work in Conflict Areas	Work with parties directly involved in conflict, including mediation, enhancing women’s participation, and empowering victims of conflict.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we propose a program that aims to identify drivers of conflict and address them through enhanced diplomacy and support for constituencies for peace. Its approach would be to strengthen and align institutions and actors at the multilateral, regional, state, and local levels. Lastly, it would take into account an evolving role for the United States, encouraging it to address transnational threats through a new style of engagement in the context of our multipolar world.

The proposed peacebuilding framework resolves many of the issues with which we have struggled over the last few years, such as how to direct our limited resources across an enormous theme, and how to avoid taking up issues of long-term instability and human capacity building that are better addressed in a Pivotal Place program. It presents an exciting opportunity to be bold and to build the program around innovative solutions to today’s most critical threats and challenges. The Fund can help implement solutions by strengthening actors at each level and infusing them with new ideas, gradually helping imbue a notion of shared responsibility. As a private foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund is well-positioned to operate in a niche that government and international institutions cannot. It can be courageous by supporting new models of peacebuilding, challenging the status quo, and pushing the envelope toward new and creative solutions to existing conflicts and emerging threats.

Following review of this program paper at the March 2011 board meeting, the RBF board of trustees approved the new Peacebuilding guidelines (see page 9).

⁷ Peace and Security Funders Group, “Peace and Security Grantmaking by U.S. Foundations, 2008-2009” report.

PEACEBUILDING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Numerous and diverse factors drive contemporary conflicts, from strained relations between governments and groups of people to threats that transcend borders, such as environmental crises, the flow of weapons, and violent extremism. In today's interdependent world, regional or local conflicts often have consequences that undermine the security and well-being of distant communities. Transforming conflict to build just and durable peace requires the global community to think differently about how it responds to the complex nature of 21st-century challenges. Governments, multilateral organizations, and civil society must work in concert to develop a new framework for conflict prevention and peacebuilding that engages international, regional, state, and local actors in addressing the human security challenges of local populations.

As the world evolves rapidly toward a multipolar reality in which a growing array of nations pursue their national interests from positions of shifting political and economic power, the United States continues to play an important role in global efforts to create a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world. U.S. policies and behaviors that demonstrate respect for the competencies and perspectives of both traditional allies and emerging powers can help create a greater sense of shared responsibility and advance collective problem solving to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts. Civil society organizations have a significant role to play in promoting nonviolent responses to conflict and cultivating the political climate necessary for official peacebuilding and diplomatic negotiations to succeed. They also are important advocates for a more robust multilateral system that is effective at brokering peace agreements.

The Fund's Peacebuilding program aspires to strengthen grassroots constituencies for peace and to connect them with policymaking on the regional and international levels. It aims to understand the conditions that lead to violence and the processes that support durable peace in order to identify innovative solutions to the most pressing drivers of insecurity. The program's grantmaking focuses on conflicts that have a disproportionate influence on international peace and security. It works closely with the Fund's Pivotal Place programs, especially in the Western Balkans, and with the Global Governance portfolio of the Democratic Practice program. The Fund places particular importance on elevating the role of women and young leaders in international peacebuilding and conflict transformation efforts.

Goal: Advancing Just and Durable Peace

The Fund will pursue the following interrelated strategies with respect to select conflicts.

Strategies:

- Supporting innovative and collaborative approaches and policies for conflict prevention, management, and transformation at the multilateral, regional, and national levels.
- Strengthening constituencies and political will for conflict transformation and durable peace.
- Exploring solutions to emerging transnational threats and drivers of conflict (specific focus to be developed in 2011).

The program is currently focusing a significant portion of its grantmaking on the wider Middle East.