

GENEVA peacebuilding PLATFORM

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of five institutions



DCAF
a centre for security,
development and
the rule of law



GCSP
Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Where knowledge meets experience

ii
interpeace



QUNO
Quaker United Nations Office

Programme 2018-2019



Highlights

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2018, the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is increasingly recognized as an entry-door into Geneva's peacebuilding world, and as an umbrella for activities on peacebuilding for Geneva-based actors. This two-year programme aims to strengthen the Platform's function as a hub for practical peacebuilding expertise and know-how that draws upon field experience and research. It aims to consolidate the Platform's convening, networking and proactive incubating roles in Geneva and its bridge building between Geneva, New York and peacebuilding actors in the field.

Overall the 2018-2019 Programme concentrates on four areas: Incubating new ideas and practice for peacebuilding; networking peacebuilding resources; convening on peacebuilding issues and contexts; and knowledge capture and management. Key activity highlights are:

- **Geneva Peace Week:** The Platform acts as an engine for the organization and development of an annual Geneva Peace Week in collaboration with other partners. The aim is to establish Geneva Peace Week within the global peacebuilding calendar and facilitate a gradual process to strengthen its partnerships and management.
- **Peace Talks Initiative:** The Platform will actively engage in developing the Initiative and act as co-organizer of the Geneva Peace Talks.
- **New annual retreat:** The Platform pilots a one-and-a-half day retreat for a brainstorm on 'What next in Peacebuilding' that is targeted at key peacebuilding stakeholders in Geneva including partners, Advisory Board members and guests.
- **Technical Working Groups (TWGs):** The Platform will strengthen the TWGs on urban safety and peacebuilding and on business and peace, and will advance these with a focus on the prevention of violent conflict as a cross cutting theme.
- **Network management:** The Platform will elaborate and implement a network development strategy to order and deepen the existing network.

The Platform welcomes the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) as a fifth partner in 2018.

Background

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform was founded in 2008 in a context of growing peacebuilding challenges in many post-conflict countries and an evolving United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture in New York. It was conceived as a hub to advance new knowledge and understanding of peacebuilding issues and contexts, and to facilitate the interaction on peacebuilding between different institutions and sectors. The goal of this mandate was to nurture the networking of peacebuilding resources in Geneva and worldwide; and to build bridges between International Geneva, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in New York, and peacebuilding activities in the field.

The Platform evolved as a partnership between institutions with rich and diversified peacebuilding-related experience, which represent altogether a unique combination of skills and a long record of excellence in their specific sector. This partnership includes the Graduate Institute's Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), Interpeace, the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva (QUNO), and since 2018 also the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). DCAF's comparative advantage in security sector governance and security sector reform adds a complementary strength to the existing peacebuilding-related expertise of the existing four partner institutions.

The partner institutions guide the Platform's strategy and activities, in close collaboration with an Advisory Board representing key peacebuilding stakeholders in Geneva. Since its creation, the Platform has been supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) as part of its host state policy with respect to different international organizations in Geneva, and has worked in close collaboration with the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).

1. The Platform at 10

Ten years on, the Platform receives an increasingly broader recognition “for providing an important umbrella for Geneva-based peace activities all year round” as noted by Michael Møller, Director-General of UNOG, in his closing remarks of Geneva Peace Week 2015. In its journey over the last decade, three characteristics have structured the Platform's work.

A hub for practical peacebuilding expertise and know-how. The flexibility as a knowledge hub has enabled reflection processes on the future of peacebuilding in the *White Paper on Peacebuilding*, and stimulated thinking about peacebuilding in relation to work streams of Platform partners such the analysis of urban insecurities of the CCDP, the work on human rights and sustaining peace or business and peace by QUNO, or Interpeace's work on peacebuilding policy and resilience; or work on political transition of the GCSP. These reflections in turn stimulated thinking about the nexus of peacebuilding practice and conflict prevention or election violence, and about sustaining peace in a variety of post-conflict or urban settings, or surrounding large-scale business or development projects. The Platform also

reflected on the roles of different actors in peacebuilding recognizing the increasing diversity of actors that are shaping peacebuilding contexts. The Platform synthesized new ideas and trends on peacebuilding practice in over 60 publications since 2011 (see Box below). These publications are an integral part of the Platform's knowledge and network management.

Permanent space for networking, convening and incubation on peacebuilding in Geneva.

The Platform has grown into a network of over 4,000 professionals working on peacebuilding directly or indirectly, and into a reference point for engaging with the peacebuilding community in Geneva for outside actors and institutions. Ever since its creation, the Platform has opened a space for continuous exchange of information on peacebuilding practice through seminars, consultations, and conferences, and has facilitated outcome-oriented dialogues on peacebuilding issues and contexts. Since 2012, it has organized about 20 events annually ranging from smaller meetings to large scale public events and including a range of event partners. The Platform has applied several characteristics to its activities that explain how it networks, convenes, and incubates on peacebuilding. These characteristics are:

- Adding value by generating analysis or understanding on peacebuilding at the cross section of institutions, sectors, and disciplines.
- Enabling frank and open exchange by locating discussions outside official meetings on positions and above institutional and sectorial silos and 'turf wars'.
- Listening to the voices of local peacebuilders so that those building peace on a daily basis are heard in Geneva, New York, and other major policy hubs.
- Facilitating connections across institutions and sectors to network peacebuilding resources in Geneva and worldwide.

Since 2012, the platform has also proactively incubated several initiatives, including the White Paper on Peacebuilding, on business and peace, or on urban safety and peacebuilding (see also Box below). The Peace Talks Initiative and Geneva Peace Week also show how the Platform is expanding the space to incubate new ideas for building peace and resolving conflict. The collaborative approach of these activities emphasizes the prospect of collective impact by combining existing resources, skills and expertise in Geneva and beyond.

Bridge builder between Geneva, New York and peacebuilding activities the field.

The Platform has nurtured the critical mass of peacebuilding actors, resources, and expertise in Geneva, and has fostered creative links between this critical mass, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in New York, and peacebuilding activities in the field. Since then, the Platform is actively engaged with QUNO New York including since 2014 through collaboration an annual meeting of peacebuilding networks and New York-based peacebuilding actors. In recent years the Platform has nurtured exchanges with other policy centres including Brussels, Nairobi, or Vienna and participated to present its thematic work in international conferences. For actors from New York and other policy centres, the Platform is increasingly recognized as a docking station into Geneva's peacebuilding world. Many events have confirmed the Platform's value added for senior officials or practitioners on mission to Geneva in terms of reducing transaction cost to reach out to a diverse range of peacebuilding actors.

Box: Examples of the Platform's proactive initiatives

The White Paper on Peacebuilding constitutes a participatory process in 2015 that filtered a diverse range (and large amount) of perspectives about the challenges, opportunities and future of peacebuilding into an accessible and short document. The White Paper process provided an important input to the review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture and generated new analysis about peacebuilding practice through background papers on regional perspectives, literature reviews, and thematic papers. It also articulated a 'White Paper methodology' setting out a research design to establish a qualitative evidence base that can be adapted for white paper processes in other fields. The White Paper on Peacebuilding is an illustration of a 'Platform way of working' in which Platform members combine their respective strength in support of a multi-stakeholder process. By mobilising their own networks, devoting staff time, and offering expertise and know-how, Platform partners have been critical to assure the success of the White Paper process. The process was coordinated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and funded by the Swiss FDFA.

Entry points for a new prevention agenda: Since 2012, the Platform has advanced discussions about a new prevention agenda that connects New York, Geneva, and contexts facing a significant risk of escalating violent conflict and disaster. These activities underlined the importance to enlarge prevention practice beyond its traditional focus on 'conflict prevention' and to facilitate the transmission of best practices and development of complementary programming across disaster preparedness and risk reduction, armed violence reduction, public health interventions on violence prevention, urban violence management, and private sector risk mitigation strategies. The Platform also advanced several studies on the cross-cutting nature of prevention practice, especially with in relation to the prevention of election-related violence and conflict surrounding large-scale business investments, as well as on Burundi, the Central African Republic, and Kenya (see list of publications below).

Towards an action framework for business and peacebuilding: This multi-stakeholder process in 2012 focused on the dispute resolution and prevention capacities at the local level, as well as on the respective roles of international actors – including but not limited to business – in strengthening them. A key result of this process was the outcome document *Confronting Risk, Mobilizing Action: A Framework for Conflict Prevention in the Context of Large-scale Business Investments* which takes stock, distils promising action trends, and charts an action framework. The process also established a cross-sectoral network counting more than 100 professionals from a variety of business and peacebuilding backgrounds. The initiative evolved as a partnership with the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and PeaceNexus Foundation, and included two multi-stakeholder retreats and research in Uganda.

Since 2015, **the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Urban Safety and Peacebuilding** has brought together focal points on urban safety of cities with peacebuilding, peace mediation

and conflict prevention practitioners in order to help craft solutions to the rapidly increasing risk of conflict and insecurity in urban settings. TWG objectives are to network urban safety and peacebuilding practitioners, to develop a better understanding of practice at the nexus of urban safety and peacebuilding, and to contribute to developing an integrated approach on urban safety and peacebuilding. The TWG is a collective action exercise without dedicated funding. By the end of 2016, the TWG evolved into a network of over 100 professionals. The TWG mainly functioned through web-based exchanges but also held conferences in Mexico and Colombia as well as on the margins of the HABITAT III Summit in Ecuador. The Platform produced eight publications and drew together all major resources on the confluence of urban safety and peacebuilding practice. The Platform also facilitated two conferences in collaboration with UNHABITAT and other partners on *Reviewing the State of Safety in Cities* in 2016 and 2017, and incubated a discussion among Geneva-based actors about the establishment of a Geneva Cities Forum.

2. A changing global context for peacebuilding

The 2018-2019 Programme coincides with a changing global context that is putting peacebuilding practice to the test. The White Paper on Peacebuilding summarized the key elements of this change as follows:

- **Many regions face transforming security landscapes.** Key elements driving these transformations include chronic political instability, persistent social volatility and conflict, the proliferation of non-state armed groups and transnational actors, disputes over land and natural resources, weak state systems, and recurring cycles of violent competition over the state or markets. Some societies are also facing an erosion of the social fabric, albeit for different reasons. This erosion is not new, but has intensified in many regions as a result of climate change, unconventional conflict and violence, geo-political disputes, transnational organized crime and terror networks, as well as growing inequality.
- **The characteristics of violent conflict have changed.** New types of armed actors with fluid affiliations are defining many conflict theatres. At the same time, fewer instances of violent conflict fall into the classic categories of 'inter-state' or 'civil' wars. The majority of violent deaths occur outside those major conflict zones. There is also a much greater awareness about the differing impact of violence on women, children, and elderly people. The scale of violent deaths is of particular concern to countries that are characterized as facing 'chronic violence', but also in many major cities across all continents. At the same time, geopolitical tensions are rising and lead to new conflict dynamics. What is more, new threats to states and societies are developing, including through the proliferation of precision strike capabilities, cyber instruments, and bioterror weaponry.

- **Power has become more diffuse.** There is a growing number of actors that play an ever more important role in peacebuilding, be they state, non-state or sub-national actors such as cities. Many actors engage with peacebuilding outside existing institutional frameworks and are using different labels to advance their efforts and interests in a specific context. At the same time, communication technologies have contributed to the emergence of new networks including different configurations of state and non-state actors. In the peacebuilding field, such processes have created spaces outside of – yet often connected to – intergovernmental organizations. What is more, the diversity of actors in these spaces raises new questions about the division of labour, ownership and leadership between different actors in building peace at different levels.
- **State capacities and functions are challenged in many regions of the world.** Some states have limited capacity to provide people with security, welfare and representation. Incumbent state elites are failing to offer a prospect of life for a large cohort of young people fostering social marginalization and exclusion. In most regions, territorial control by states is contested, in many cases violently. In some regions, states have lost control of power, authority, and territory to organized criminal actors or transnational armed groups. This outlook stands in contrast to the prevailing operating principles of international governmental organizations and inter-state processes that are based on national sovereignty and relationship to governments.

In the context of these changing strategic contexts for peacebuilding, the Platform situates its comparative advantage within the strengths of Geneva as a multilateral centre that hosts a critical mass of actors, resources, and expertise. Geneva is home to 35 international organizations, 400 NGOs, and many private foundations and major companies. Geneva also counts over 174 countries that are represented by 250 diplomatic missions to various international organizations. This ecosystem has become a major innovation cluster for peace policy and practice. In consequence, given its location in Geneva, the Platform builds its activities on a certain set of values – or “Geneva spirit” – that emphasizes

- The use of dialogue and negotiation to resolve conflict and build peace;
- The importance of partnership to address the challenges of war and peace; and
- The human dimension in international affairs as embodied in humanitarian diplomacy, human rights, and people-centred security.

The Platform also highlights the practical and operational expertise and know-how that draws upon field experience and research.

3. Activities 2018-2019

The 2018-2019 Programme builds on the cumulative achievements of two previous programmes – for the periods 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 – that have consolidated the Platform as knowledge hub, as convener and incubator, as a network, and as a connector between Geneva, New York and Peacebuilding activities in the field. The 2018-2019 Programme stands to maintain and develop these achievements through several activities that collectively aim to advance the Platform's mandate. The Platform will continue to proactively incubate new initiatives and mobilize resources to drive them – always building on the principle of partnership and collaboration between organizations with a joint interest in shaping policy discussions on peacebuilding or strengthening peacebuilding practice. Activities will also continue working outside the silos that all-too-often characterize the international community to enable more creative responses to violent conflict and insecurity in a variety of contexts.

The 2018-2019 Programme concentrates on four areas:

- Incubating new ideas and practice for peacebuilding;
- Networking peacebuilding resources;
- Convening on peacebuilding issues and contexts; and
- Knowledge capture and management.

Incubating new ideas and practice for peacebuilding

In light of the changing global contexts for peacebuilding, the Platform aims to further expand the space for new ideas for building peace and resolving conflict through dialogue and negotiation. It will take an active role within the partnerships behind Geneva Peace Week and the Peace Talks Initiative.

1. Geneva Peace Week: Piloted in 2014, Geneva Peace Week has evolved into a partnership between the Graduate Institute, UNOG, and the Platform that jointly facilitate an annual Geneva Peace Week. The objective is to open a space for exchange about peace across institutions and sectors. By synchronizing meetings on a given topic related to the promotion of peace during one week, Geneva Peace Week maximizes synergies between organizations in Geneva and focuses on the cross-cutting nature of resolving conflict and building peace. For past programmes see <http://www.genevapeaceweek.ch>. The Platform acts as a engine for the organization and development of an annual Geneva Peace Week in collaboration with other partners. The aim is to establish Geneva Peace Week within the global peacebuilding calendar and facilitate a gradual process to strengthen its partnerships and management to increase impact.

2. Peace Talks Initiative: In 2016, UNOG, Interpeace, and the Platform constituted the Peace Talks Initiative through an Exchange of Letters. The objective of the Peace Talks Initiative is to help facilitate and guide Peace Talks events. Individual Peace Talks aim to demonstrate that solutions to conflict and violence exist; to showcase inspiring stories to encourage innovation and out of the box thinking to build peace; to raise awareness that each and every person,

actor and institution has a role to play in building peace and resolving conflict, and to inspire action in everyday life and on a global scale. Individual Peace Talks can be watched at <http://peacetalks.net>. The Platform contributes to the further development of the Peace Talks Initiative and act as a co-organizer of the Geneva Peace Talks as the flagship event in Geneva on the International Day of Peace (21 September). The aim is to amplify the voice of powerful human stories about building peace and resolving conflict.

Networking peacebuilding resources

Facilitating the interaction on peacebuilding between different institutions and sectors is at the core of the Platform's mandate since 2008. In order to advance this mandate between 2018 and 2019, the Platform will focus on the following activities.

3. Annual retreat: In 2018 and 2019, the Platform will pilot a one-and-a-half day retreat for a structured brainstorm. This brainstorm will be scheduled to strategically connect with a meeting of peacebuilding networks held in New York by QUNO and other partners. The idea evolved from the Advisory Board Meeting in 2017 and the exploration of a different format to convene the Advisory Board and enhance the incubation and networking potential of Advisory Board Meetings. The retreat targets key peacebuilding stakeholders in Geneva including the Platform partners, Advisory Board members and invited guests. Aimed at 25-30 people, the retreat is intended as an informal exchange at the senior expert level about the opportunities and challenges for peacebuilding. The retreat will take place in the Lac Lemman area in the February/March period. The retreat will involve the production of an 8-10 page report as a contribution to discussion on peacebuilding in New York and other policy centres.

4. Technical Working Groups (TWG): In the period 2015-2017, the Platform has piloted a TWG on urban safety and peacebuilding with significant results in terms of networking and advancing new knowledge and thinking on peacebuilding. The TWG has also confirmed this format of networking as an effective means to manage exchanges across sectors and institutions, and between smaller expert groups with the result of deeper network relationships. The Platform will maintain the existing TWG on urban safety and peacebuilding and on business and peace and will advance these with a specific focus on the prevention of violent conflict as a cross cutting theme.

5. Network management: Since 2008, the Platform has developed a network of over 4,000 individuals that is currently administered as a contact database. Over the next two years, the Platform will elaborate and implement a network development strategy to order and deepen the existing network. Overall, the Platform's network is an important asset that deserves more targeted attention and development.

Convening on peacebuilding issues and contexts

6. The Annual Meeting is the Platform's yearly flagship event and brings together a variety of actors and representatives from civil society, government, international organizations, business, and academia and opens a space for frank and honest exchange outside of more formal policy forums. The Annual Meeting usually attracts an audience of between 200 and

400 and takes place on the first day of Geneva Peace Week to introduce and set the tone for the annual Geneva Peace Week theme.

7. Briefings and meetings: The Platform is a proactive convener on peacebuilding related issues and context. These activities include, for instance, lunch-time seminars, briefings for diplomats, consultations, informal meetings or workshops, retreats, or public conferences. The Platform convening strives to achieve logically connected events, to draw on the expertise available through the Platform's network, and to place events within an integrated knowledge management strategy (see activity 10 below). Key innovations for the 2018-2019 period is to explore a series of briefing for diplomats, especially targeted at human rights delegates from diplomatic missions ahead of the Human Rights Council (HRC) meetings on peacebuilding issues or contexts. Another initiative builds on an existing collaboration with the Think Tank Hub on breakfast meetings that bring together senior regional experts from international organizations, academia, NGOs or the private sector for informal exchange on peace and security trends and issues in specific regions.

8. Ad-hoc meetings: The Platform remains alert to service short-notice requests for events or informal exchanges on critical peacebuilding issues as they emerge. The Platform is increasingly recognized by senior peacebuilding actors visiting Geneva to reduce transaction cost when reaching out to the Geneva-based peacebuilding community. Due to its connectedness the Platform will remain in a position to convene a critical number of Geneva-based peacebuilding actors on an ad-hoc basis. Ad-hoc meetings are also crucial for the Platform to proactively explore new issues or initiatives.

9. Advisory Board Meeting: The Advisory Board meeting aims to nurture collaborations within Geneva's peacebuilding space and to generate strategic advice for the work of Platform.

Knowledge capture and management

10. Dedicating resources to knowledge capture and management: The variety of events and discussions facilitated or hosted by the Platform represent an unparalleled insight into the latest knowledge and cutting edge practice of peacebuilding. A key challenge so far has been to capture this rich knowledge and experience, and package it adequately for dissemination. In order to strengthening its knowledge hub functions the Platform will develop a resource capture template and dedicate resources to knowledge capture by engaging Graduate Institute students or consultants as report writers, drafters or note takers. In the development of its activities – especially with respect to Geneva Peace Week and the annual retreat – the Platform will engage a consultant to explore ways to strengthen knowledge capture and management.

11. Communication: Equipped with a brand new website (www.gpplatform.ch) the Platform will maintain an active web-portal that serves as the primary entry point for information about Platform activities and peacebuilding resources. In order to reach the full breadth of different peacebuilding constituencies (esp. the young) the Platform will feature existing or develop new video clips on peacebuilding issues or contexts on its website and social media channels. The Platform also aims increase its social media profile with social media event

coverage and the production of content to build a stronger online community following the Platform.

12. Publication series: The Platform maintains a paper and brief series that present key knowledge synthesis of platform activities. These papers and briefs are also important to advance the work as a knowledge platform and generate relevant web content.

13. Peace calendar: Cognizant of the increasing number of meetings and conferences in Geneva, the Platform will aim to organize fewer events by itself but feature events of peacebuilding organized by stakeholders in Geneva. The Platform will collaborate with the Canton of Geneva to serve as a conduit for peace related events in Geneva for the Canton's events web-portal.

Evaluation

The Programme 2018-2019 foresees an evaluation of the Platform's activities in the summer of 2019. The first evaluation of the Platform occurred in 2014. The Platform Steering and Management Committees in collaboration with IOD will jointly develop the relevant parameters for the evaluation.

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Box: Thematic overview of selected publications

The Platform produces a Brief and Paper Series, as well as publications with partner. Platform Briefs are short thinking pieces or event synopsis targeted at a policy audience. All Platform publications aim to foster interactions on peacebuilding across sectors and institutions.

Trends in peacebuilding practice

- Building Peace: An Annotated Resource Pack (Paper 21/2016)
- Responses to Conflict that Work (Paper 15/2016)
- White Paper on Peacebuilding (2015)
- Peacebuilding: A Review of the Academic Literature (WP Series 13/2015)
- Peacebuilding: A Review of the Policy Literature (WP Series 14/2015)
- New Technologies: The Future of Alternative Infrastructures for Peace (WP Series 20/2015)

Private sector and peacebuilding

- Business and the UN Peace and Security Agenda (Brief 10/2016)
- What Role of the Private Sector in the Prevention of Election Violence? The Case of Kenya (Paper 13/2015)
- Confronting Risk, Mobilizing Action: A Framework for Conflict Prevention in the Context of Large-scale Business Investments (with Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2012)
- Business and Conflict Prevention: Towards a Framework for Action (Paper 2/2011)

Urban safety and peacebuilding

- Urban Safety and Security: Lessons from the last two Decades and Emergent Issues (Paper 22/2016)
- Case Studies on Urban Safety and Peacebuilding: Lagos, Beirut, Mitrovica, Treichville and Johannesburg (Paper 19/2016)
- Negotiating with Criminal Groups: From Prejudice to Pragmatism (GPP Paper 18/2016)
- Entry Points for Programming across Urban Safety and Peacebuilding (GPP Paper 16/2016)
- Understanding the Grammar of the City: Urban Safety and Peacebuilding Practice through a Semiotic Lens (Paper 14/2016)
- Peacebuilding and the City: Setting the Scene (Brief 9/2013)

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding

- Entry Points for Preventing Youth Engagement in Political Violence: Lessons from Burundi's 2015 Elections (Paper 23/2016)
- What went wrong in the Central African Republic? International engagement and the failure to think conflict prevention (Paper 12/2015)
- Keeping the Peace: Lessons Learned from Preventive Action towards Kenya's 2013 Elections (Paper 10/2013)
- Entry Points for a New Prevention Agenda (Brief 8/2013)