

# **ART AND PEACEBUILDING IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR A RESEARCH AGENDA**

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### **Abstract**

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## Introduction

Artistic projects in the context of peacebuilding are often ascribed the potential to give space to emotions, to enable through physical sensation experiences that cannot be experienced cognitively, to express creatively what cannot be expressed verbally and thus to be a valuable yet underestimated complement to other peacebuilding activities (e.g. Breed 2015; Reich 2012; Lederach 2005). Sometimes, also dangers of art are discussed, for example that art can be used by a group or by powerful persons to establish or reinforce boundaries between groups (e.g. Leissing et al. 2017; Reich 2012). Peacebuilding practitioners as well as art professionals thus share a belief that art can reach people in a way they cannot be reached otherwise and that art can contribute to peacebuilding.

Notwithstanding this shared belief, I have experienced a large gap between what my colleagues from the field of art are aiming at and what peacebuilding professionals are intending when they speak about art in peacebuilding. My experience stems from my work as a project coordinator for artasfoundation, the Swiss foundation for Art in Regions of Conflict. In two years, I regularly discussed the question with colleagues and occasionally participated in discussions about peacebuilding and art organised by other organisations.<sup>1</sup> I have experienced this gap when peacebuilding professionals consider art as something too unspecific to contribute to peacebuilding or instrumentalise art to their ends. I have also experienced the gap, when art professionals claim to act in a participatory manner or focus on the interest of local people, ignoring how difficult this can be in a conflict situation, and how potentially damaging, if one is not familiar with conflict dynamics.

This gap, often visible only at a second glance because of the shared belief, convinced me that we need a more profound and more sincere dialogue between art professionals and peacebuilding practitioners if we want to conduct art initiatives for the benefit of peace. As peacebuilding professionals often have an academic background in the social sciences, my background in political science makes their texts and discussions more accessible to me than those of art professionals. But although I had worked in international cooperation before, my only work experience in a context of conflict is the work with artasfoundation. This work included project management in the South Caucasus, mainly in the de-facto state of Abkhazia, a breakaway region of Georgia, contact with local NGOs, activists and authorities as well as governmental and non-governmental donors. Based on this experience and on the regular theoretical discussions we held at artasfoundation, I chose the topics for this

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<sup>1</sup> Events organised by swisspeace and KOFF in Switzerland (URL: <http://koff.swisspeace.ch/>), meetings with officials in the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, a seminar organised by Dekabristen e.V. in Tbilisi in their creative peacebuilding program (URL: <http://dekabristen.org/project/iskusstvo-kak-most-dlya-dialoga/>).

text.<sup>2</sup> The choice of topics is not meant to be exhaustive, but I hope to cover the most urgent issues.

By pointing to a gap between peacebuilding practitioners and art professionals, I do not want to say that artists should not work in conflict-affected contexts by themselves or peacebuilders should not use creative methods. I assume that art initiatives should have their place in conflict-affected contexts, just as they have in any other social context. But art initiatives should not claim to make a positive contribution to peacebuilding without additional efforts, above all if they are initiated by conflict outsiders. Similarly, there are a wide-range of creative methods, which are reasonably used in pedagogic formats, in project planning workshops and probably also in peacebuilding. No artists are needed for that. But as long as peacebuilding practitioners use creative methods merely as tools to achieve other aims and not with the attitude to engage in an artistic process, I cannot see a reason to call such methods art.

In this text, I discuss issues and questions that arise when art professionals and peacebuilders conduct artistic projects with the purpose to positively contribute to peace in a conflict situation. Rather than to provide answers, the text makes suggestions for a research agenda. Research agenda is a term often used in the social sciences, which, as I understand it, describes a bunch of inter-related issues and questions, which need further research. With the formulation of a research agenda, I aim to contribute to a better understanding between the two professional fields of art and peacebuilding, because I think that research on art and peacebuilding – just as projects in the area – would benefit from contributions from both fields, and in the best case from collaboration between the two fields. This requires a common language to speak about art and peacebuilding.

One could argue that in a field as young and under-researched as art and peacebuilding, one should start with empirical inquiries instead of a theoretical, literature-based discussion. This is an approach many texts on the topic follow (e.g. Naidu-Silvermann 2015; Breed 2015; Isar, Hellqvist, and Rose 2007; Lederach 2005; Zelizer 2003). In my experience, however, texts based on empirical examples are rarely convincing for art professionals, probably partly because they are written from a peacebuilding perspective and in a peacebuilding language (as an exception see: Bleuler 2016). This is the reason why I analyse existing literature, seeking to explain the use of terms and to make underlying assumptions explicit. This undertaking hopefully provides a basis for case studies in the future.

The three issues, on which I focus in this text, in my view could help to close some gaps and communication problems I have experienced between the professional fields of art and peacebuilding. The first issue emerged out of the difficulty to define what art is. Rather than elaborating on academic definitions, I propose to research the connecting and dividing

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<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to the team of artasfoundation, especially Dagmar Reichert and Marcel Bleuler, for many insights into the world of art and suggestions of literature. However, this text reflects only my personal view of the subject.

potentials of different artistic practices in order to achieve a common understanding of what activities we should talk about. The second issue is a reaction to the widespread assumption that art can contribute to peacebuilding. I confront this assumption with requirements of the artistic process and proposals regarding collaboration in art projects found in the literature. The third issue are some project management instruments widely used in international cooperation, which risk to impose an alien logic on art and peacebuilding. I propose to use and eventually adapt these instruments to describe social processes in art and peacebuilding and in order to communicate with a wider audience.

### **The connecting and dividing potential of art**

In discussions with artists and art theorists, as well as in discussions with project partners, I understood that the ideas of what art is are very diverse. Peacebuilding professionals often implicitly use a very broad definition of art and only rarely distinguish artistic practices from cultural activities in general (e.g. DEZA 2016, 2009; Breed 2015; Naidu-Silvermann 2015; Lederach 2005). This is a stark contrast to art professionals, who, especially if from Western academic environments, often implicitly assume a rather restrictive definition of art, which excludes many forms of cultural production, including many popular artistic practices like popular, folk or classical music, traditional dance, documentary filming, literature, circus arts, improvisation theatre etc. (e.g. Fraser 2005). In the South Caucasus, I often encountered a view of art that emphasises classical genres and technical proficiency. In my experience, the attempt to define the notion art does not foster understanding between the professional fields of art and peacebuilding and risks valuing some practices higher than others.

Instead, I propose to focus on connecting and dividing potentials of different artistic practices, because in my view neither of these very broad or very narrow definitions of art are per se problematic or useful for projects in the context of conflict. Rather, the problem is that peacebuilding practitioners speak so positively about the potentials of art having in mind activities, which artists would not even consider to be the topic of the discussion, while art professionals speak about practices, with which people outside the professional field of the arts only rarely are in contact. More conducive to reach a common understanding of what we talk about, I hope, is researching the connecting and dividing potential of concrete artistic practices and how they fit into a concrete conflict situation. Such a discussion must not focus so much on *what* is done than on *how* activities are conducted.

The categories *connecting* and *dividing* are useful in the context of conflict, as peacebuilders argue that projects in conflict-affected contexts should – even if not directly aimed at peacebuilding – be conducted in a conflict sensitive manner (Chigas and Woodrow 2009a). An important principle of conflict sensitivity is to seek to support or reinforce „connectors“, thus issues which connect people across conflict lines and avoid to support or reinforce „dividers“ or weaken „connectors“, thus avoid to strengthen issues which divide people

along conflict lines. A precondition to reach this aim is to understand the context, the interaction between an intervention and the context, and to be able to act in accordance with this understanding (ibid., KOFF 2012). With the following considerations, I seek to illustrate how artistic practices in peacebuilding could be evaluated based on their connecting and dividing potentials. Any real conflict sensitivity analysis can only be undertaken with regard to a concrete project in a concrete context (cf. KOFF 2012)

Thinking about artistic activities through the lens of conflict sensitivity led me to the question what asymmetries a concrete activity reveals between involved persons, and subsequently, if such asymmetries reinforce „dividers“ along conflict lines. When we think, for example, about classical music, a practice peacebuilders most probably would identify as art while professionals from the field of art probably would hesitate to do so, an analysis of the dividing potential could reveal the following: Classical music can require an expensive instrument, specialised instruction and year-long practice to play, say, an instrument in an orchestra. For people without these prerequisites, a classical music project is likely to divide them from people possessing these prerequisites. The important question is how this division relates to conflict(s) in a specific context.

For people with the mentioned prerequisites, classical music may have a potential to help them connect with others from a different cultural and social background, even across conflict lines. Such people may be able to build on their skills in processes that go beyond reproduction. They may interpret, improvise or compose. People who do not have previous experience may experience classical music as connecting, too, if they share a new listening experience or if they start to practice together. In both cases, starting on similar levels of previous experience is a precondition for a connecting experience. In this case, one can even see it as an advantage that European classical music is to a similar degree ‘foreign’ and to a similar degree part of an intellectual canon for different ethnical groups. However, this does not necessarily hold for different religious or socioeconomic groups. A context-specific analysis must show how previous experience is related to relevant conflict lines.

A contrasting example could be folkloristic art (e.g. folk music, traditional dance and singing, traditional decorative handcrafts), practices that are also mentioned by peacebuilders, but rarely qualified as art by art professionals (e.g. Lederach 2005, 161 f.). In contrast to the example of classical music, the technical skills and knowledge related to folkloristic practices are often widely shared in more traditional communities. But such practices often have regional, religious or ethnical connotations. Not only are they tightly related to a specific language, but they often also replicate legends or myths that are important in defining a certain group and its claim to a certain territory or specific customs. Such group creating practices by definition exclude some people and it is important to analyse the interrelation of this exclusion with conflict dynamics.

One could still argue that a project could build on shared folkloristic skills and techniques among the involved persons. The challenge is to find a way to mitigate the dividing

potentials. More connecting than a festival where different folkloristic groups perform and celebrate their unique and thus dividing features would thus be, for example, a workshop where people with different or even with the same folkloristic tradition jointly create a music or dance piece, building on their technical skills but developing something new and specific to the actual situation. I assume that art professionals would agree that such an approach also brings activities in classical music and folkloristic dance nearer to their understanding of art.

Artistic activities can reveal asymmetries not only along conflict lines, but also between the different partners involved in an international project. Contemporary artistic practices are an example at hand. They are popular among art professionals in the West and the North and in the urban centres of the South and the East. To my knowledge, they have only rarely been in the focus of peacebuilding professionals. As an outsider to the art world, it is a challenge to find the right words to describe practices like performance art, installation art, conceptual art and socially collaborative practices. In contrary to the practices discussed above, many of these practices do not require proficiency in a certain technique or specific material equipment. This makes them accessible for a wide range of people, what is a connecting potential.

However, not only resources and actions, but also behaviour and (implicit) messages have implications for conflict sensitivity (KOFF 2012, 2). One must consider that the mere qualification of such practices as art can be a dividing message. It may astonish if not alienate artists with a self-conception based on technical skills and a classical canon; it can divide more experienced spectators or visitors from those with less experience; and it may reinforce some kind of a hierarchy between persons from places where such practices exist (the North, the West and urban centres) and persons from places, where such practices are largely unknown (the South, the East, and peripheral areas). This hierarchy is inherent in many projects, as persons from the first group often are the initiators and those with access to funding, whereas those from the second group assume the role of a target group or beneficiaries. One has to analyse how this dividing potential is related to conflict dynamics and how implicit messages can be conveyed in a way that does not devalue other artistic practices.

The analysis of the connecting and dividing potential of art initiatives could structure the analysis of already existing projects as well as the planning of new projects. In both cases, it helps to reveal the benefits of specific artistic practices in specific conflict-affected context. It should focus on the connecting and dividing role of technical skills, experience, knowledge, education and cultural symbols and ask how they are related to specific conflict groups or to the privileges of certain socioeconomic groups or world regions. Ideally, the search for the connecting and dividing aspects is a chance for art professionals to examine conflict-related aspects of their practice, and for peacebuilders to gain a more differentiated understanding of an artistic practice.

Such analyses, whether used for planning or evaluation, must always be context and project specific, and they should pay special attention to the conflict lines, which could be reinforced or mitigated. No project is able to influence all connecting dynamics in a conflict, and it may not be able to mitigate all dividing dynamics. But if an artistic activity is being conducted in a conflict-affected context, I cannot imagine any reason why the responsible persons should not strive to do no harm. I expect that such a conflict-sensitive approach must not restrict artistic freedom, because, as the examples showed, it will most probably make art projects less technique-based and less hierarchical and thus more conducive for artistic processes.

## **The Artistic Process, Peacebuilding and Collaboration**

The analysis of the connecting and dividing potentials of different artistic practices helps us to discuss what kind of artistic practices we should pursue in contexts of conflict. But such an analysis is not sufficient to answer the question of if and how art can contribute to peacebuilding. Conflict sensitivity is a principle which all projects in a context of conflict should adhere to, whether or not their aim is peacebuilding. Following Chigas and Woodrow (2009a) and being aware that the terms are not always used consistently in the peacebuilding community, I state that peacebuilding, on the contrary, means addressing conflict issues in order to consolidate peace in the aftermath of a violent conflict. Authors as well as actors (NGOs and state agencies) claim that art can positively contribute to peacebuilding (e.g. Leissing et al. 2017; Reichert 2011; Gad 2011; DEZA 2016, 2009).

Towards the end of his book *The Moral Imagination*, Paul Lederach (2005, 161) asks what it would mean „if peacebuilders saw themselves as artists“. He does not mean that peacebuilders should engage in „music, poetry, or painting“. Lederach has in mind what he calls the „creative act“ and the „birthing of the unexpected“, two processes which he calls essential for reconciliation after a conflict and which he deems characteristic for artistic processes (ibd.). Dagmar Reichert describes an artistic process as a process which does neither aim at the resolution of a pre-defined problem, nor pursue a pre-defined aim, but is stimulated by the personal interest of the artist, „who then follows its different aspects or threads to see where they might lead“ (Leissing et al. 2017, 5). Both descriptions are intuitively intriguing, but they also raise some questions about concrete peacebuilding activities.

The first question is that such artistic processes contradict the focus on the instrumental value of art prevalent in many peacebuilding initiatives. The instrumental value of art is a term used by Mary Ann Hunter and Linda Page (2014, 121) to describe projects, where artistic practices are used as „tools“, for example for communication. Such a view on artistic practices are reflected in some of the projects described by Naidu-Silvermann (e.g. 2015, 18), where theatre *is used to* „train local women and youth to advocate for women’s rights“ or by Isar et al. (e.g. 2007, 27), where theatre groups perform stories *in order to* help release personal trauma or spread awareness of mines. In the latter example, an NGO defined the

aim of peace and reconciliation, trained to that end local theatre groups, which then communicated with the addressees. Probably based on this observation, art theorists notice that projects in international collaboration are more often discussed as questions of therapy or social pedagogy than as questions of the science of art (Bleuler 2016, 6).

Projects based on such an instrumental value of artistic practices provide only limited room for an artistic process as described by Lederach or in Leissing et al. One reason is that the objective of such activities is pre-defined and mostly lies outside the realm of art; another reason is the structure of collaboration, in which the person or persons who define the goals of a project are different from those who are proficient in the artistic „methods“ and those again are different from the addressees. Both elements severely limit the freedom of the involved persons to follow their personal interests, react to different aspects and eventually come up with something unexpected. If this freedom is limited, e.g. for participants, it is doubtful that art can have all the advantages ascribed to it. An important topic for discussion and further research is thus how the arts can contribute to peacebuilding without being reduced to their instrumental value.

This brings me to the second question related to the artistic process. Having in mind the definition of peacebuilding as an activity that addresses a conflict, one may object that peacebuilding requires a goal-orientation and that this is compatible with using the arts for their instrumental value, but not with an artistic process without pre-defined problems and objectives. As a reply, I propose to let aside the technical words of goal and problem and to use the word purpose instead (following Lederach 2005, 127 f.). In my view, art can only contribute to peacebuilding if the persons involved in an activity agree that the purpose of their activities is to contribute to peace. This is reconcilable with the artistic process described above, if we take the claim seriously that an artistic process is not random, but a process that is framed „(...) by procedural rules they [the artists] deliberately set for themselves“ (Leissing et al. 2017, 5). These “rules” must reflect the purpose of peacebuilding.

The purpose of peacebuilding is what peacebuilders call „Peace Writ Large“ – a stable and continuous peace. Peace Writ Large describes more than only the absence of violence. This purpose is large and long-term; no single project can achieve it. Projects must address issues as diverse as poverty reduction, protection of human rights, participation in governance and others (Chigas and Woodrow 2009b). Ideally, in all these areas, peacebuilding seeks to alter key driving factors of conflict. Peacebuilders and art professionals must discuss, if in a given conflict, the arts are also one of these issues, or if and how they are related to issues important for Peace Writ Large. Based on this, they can set their „procedural rules“. Such „rules“ must be conflict-specific and cannot be proposed here in a ‚one-size-fits-all‘ version. But the rules must be jointly defined both by those who will directly engage in the artistic process and by people familiar with the conflict. This helps avoiding an instrumental view of the arts and may add unexpected issues to the range of peacebuilding activities.

The question of collaboration is the third question raised by the above-cited descriptions of artistic processes. While Lederach asked what would happen if peacebuilders became artists themselves, projects making use of the instrumental value of art involve artists only as specialists or executors. In between those poles lie two different proposals by Hannah Reich and Dagmar Reichert. Reich advocates what she calls „inter-professional“ teams of artists and conflict managers, arguing that such teams are necessary to work *on* conflict issues, in contrast to just work *in* the context of a conflict (Reich 2012, 12 f.). Quite differently, Reichert advocates an approach where a peacebuilding practitioner or organisation assumes the role of a curator who is responsible for setting the frame for an artistic process, while the artist is free to pursue his or her artistic process in this frame. In this model, the peacebuilding purpose is embodied by the frame set by the curator, whereas the artist chooses his or her “rules” inside it, but independent of it (Leissing et al. 2017, 5). Probably, these approaches are less different in practice than in theory, but they reveal different attitudes to collaboration.

The question of collaboration between artists and other persons involved in a peacebuilding project is intriguing, because on the one hand, peacebuilding often requires the transformation of relationships and ways of collaboration, and on the other hand, theorists and practitioners from the field of art have a lot to offer when it comes to reflecting collaboration. According to Mark Terkessidis, collective action and collaboration have been discussed more intensively in the field of art than in other fields (cf. Terkessidis 2015, 178). There are even art theorists who criticise socially collaborative art for putting the ethics of collaboration before the aesthetics of the art (Bishop 2006). While I leave this discussion to art professionals, I would appeal to peacebuilding practitioners and art professionals to engage in a dialogue about collaboration in artistic peacebuilding projects.

In the same article, where Reich calls for inter-professional teams, she concludes proposing to conceptualise conflict transformation as an “art of relationship-building” (Reich 2012, 13). Even though he does not discuss his case with a view to peacebuilding, the reflections by Marcel Bleuler (2016) about a project by performance artists from Western Europe and local youth in a Georgian town seem like a further elaboration of Reich’s proposal. Bleuler states that the artistic interest in an international collaborative project can consist of the work on relationships itself. But, while Reich earlier in her article highlights the importance of choosing appropriate spots and participants in vulnerable contexts of conflict, Bleuler’s essay implicitly demonstrates that art professionals are careful if not reluctant to use categories like participants or target groups. In my view, a promising issue for research is to discuss how artistic approaches to conscious and cautious relationship-building could serve the purpose of peace in the sense of relationship-building.

Another inevitable and interesting aspect of collaboration in international peacebuilding projects is the asymmetry between foreigners and locals. Asymmetries between people are challenging and conflicts probably always come with problematising certain asymmetries.

Accordingly, a purpose of peacebuilding could be to search for and try out ways to deal with asymmetries in non-violent ways. Both professional fields of arts and peacebuilding offer enlightening reflections on collaboration and asymmetries. For example, art professionals wrote about „togetherness“ and how the creation of such an experience does or does not reflect the realities of a divided and diverse community (Bishop 2004). Expanding on this, Bleuler asks whether asymmetries in privileges and power can be overcome – but not denied – through amicable relations (Bleuler 2016, 2). According to my experience, the field of art has a lot to offer when it comes to personal relations in an international project, probably reflecting the insight that collaboration potentially changes everyone involved (cf. Terkessidis 2015, 14).

While personal relationships only rarely gained attention in the peacebuilding literature (Hug 2016), this topic profits also from earlier insights of this literature. Just as in art theory, peacebuilding practitioners criticise the term participatory if it describes methods merely used for consultation or for the gathering of information (e.g. Chigas and Woodrow 2009b; Reich 2006). In addition, peacebuilding practitioners highlight the fact that everyone entering a context of conflict becomes part of this conflict. This adds to the asymmetries in power and privilege in the sense that conflict outsiders, thus people not steadily living in the context of conflict, must not bear (all) the consequences of a conflict, while conflict insiders usually cannot escape them (Reich 2006). Both strands of literature thus complement each other. Peacebuilders and art professionals should use this to their advantage. Art projects with the purpose of peacebuilding could thus be undertakings, where insiders and outsiders to a specific conflict situation try out ways of collaboration in spite of asymmetries.

Further research should focus on collaboration, because the structure of collaboration defines space and time for the artistic process and its purpose, and because relationship-building could be one of the underestimated potentials of art in peacebuilding. Regarding the structure of collaboration, an important question is how the artistic process, including its openness, can be guaranteed. While I doubt that it serves the purpose of peacebuilding if the artistic process is limited to the lowest implementing level of a project, except probably for education projects, it is surely idealistic that collaboration can be artistic up to the mostly large international donors. The artistic process thus necessarily has boundaries, but professionals from the fields of art and peacebuilding should deliberately choose them and define the peacebuilding purpose accordingly.

### **Purpose, process and product**

Collaboration between peacebuilding and art professionals is not easy, even if it is desirable and promising. The requirement that an artistic process is open and the requirement that peacebuilding serves a purpose bear tensions. I expect uneasiness at the side of art professionals, because purpose may be seen as just another word for objective, pointing to an economic worldview and to the instrumental value of artistic practices. I expect also

uneasiness at the side of peacebuilding practitioners, because the artistic process seemingly does not allow them to plan an activity strategically and because the peacebuilding purpose of an artistic process probably is only hardly tangible. And even if art professionals and peacebuilding practitioners find a common approach on the ground, this may not satisfy international partners and donors who expect statements of cause and effect and the concrete contribution of an activity to acute conflict issues.

Regarding the last point, I think that the challenge to communicate the activities one deems reasonable on the ground to international partners and donors in distant offices cannot be entirely removed. Partly, this is because the larger the international actor, the larger the bureaucracy behind it. Bureaucracy needs standardised proceedings, which do not easily fit with project realities. This does not only hold for art initiatives. Partly also, the communication with partners and donors is challenging because they are accountable to those who fund them, mostly state agencies or international NGOs, mostly funded by democratic Western countries.<sup>3</sup> These actors need to prove why they spend their money for our projects. Reasons are that projects in the past have done harm (Hoffmann 2003), but also a general emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency. The latter is perceived as alien to art and peacebuilding. However, one could also look at it as a „contemporary imperative of reflexivity“ (Isar, Hellqvist, and Rose 2007, 11) and as part of a democratic process, as most money comes from state agencies and thus ultimately from the tax payer. This should be less alien to art and peacebuilding than pure efficiency considerations.

By accepting the necessity to account for our projects does not remove the uneasiness regarding the combination of a peacebuilding purpose with an artistic process. In my view, this uneasiness partly stems from a misunderstanding or even misuse of the terms and tools, which are often used for the management of projects in international cooperation and also expected by international partners. As a social scientist, I am convinced that artistic projects in peacebuilding can be described and evaluated. As a practitioner, I know that time, money and skills are often lacking. And as someone who has worked with art professionals, I experienced, that the scepticism towards such terms and tools sometimes complicates a dialogue. The reason for the latter is that the instruments risk to dictate the process. Instead, they should be seen as tools to describe and understand social processes relevant for peacebuilding. As these tools are based on or inspired by methods of inquiry in the social sciences, a research task for the social scientists among the peacebuilding practitioners is to adapt them for the description of purposes and processes of art in peacebuilding.

By terms and tools, I mean instruments for the planning and evaluation of activities used in peacebuilding programs and projects. Examples are the Logical Framework („logframe“) for Project Cycle Management in international cooperation (SECO 2017), methodologies for

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<sup>3</sup> Of course, also large non-democratic countries invest abroad, and not always with private and profit-oriented goals (e.g. China, Russia). The considerations in this section do not deal with such cases, as the projects in the focus of this paper are not likely to be supported by such governments.

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) in peacebuilding (e.g. Austin, Fischer, and Wils 2003) or „theories of change“ (e.g. Church and Rogers 2006). Such instruments often assume causal relationships between *cause* and *effect*; they use terms like *output*, *outcome*, and *impact* to describe intended effects; and they use *indicators* to measure change. The misunderstanding is to mistake a discussion of cause and effect for the assumption that social processes have single causes and can be engineered; to mistake output and outcome for an artistic product; or to mistake an indicator for a statistical number. If one uses the common terms in a way that communicates one’s purpose, they should not hamper the realisation of the proper idea, but help to communicate it to persons outside of the specialised field of art and peacebuilding.

For example, the words process and product, as they are used in art, cannot simply be substituted by the terms activities and output in the language of the „Logical Framework“ (cf. SECO 2017, 2 f.). In the relationship-building example above, Bleuler (2016) calls the work on relationships the „artistic interest“. This work is a process with a framework of time and space and certain values on what kinds of relationships are desirable. The process does not aim at a pre-defined product. In this case, I would describe the meetings between local youth and foreign artists in the given time frame and space as the project output. This output should be evaluated with regard to the planned framework of time and space. The work on relationships I would describe as the project outcome. This outcome can be evaluated against the background of the ideas about desirable relationships, which are part of the „procedural rules“ the artists set for themselves. Such a description can convince art professionals, peacebuilders and international partners and donors alike.

A meaningful description requires collaboration of art as well as peacebuilding professionals and both must share the interest to reach a common language. For example, art professionals should accept that reporting the number of meetings or participants is a valuable information about an output (it is not always trivial to organise both in a context of conflict), but not a reduction of the activity to that number. Both art and peacebuilding professionals should sensibly use words like output and outcome and not assume from the outset that they describe artistic products like a performance, an exhibition or a concert. The reason is that the assignment of a term like output to an artistic product also ascribes a value to it. Peacebuilders and artists must agree how to value the product and other aspects of a projects accordingly assign such words to things or processes. Not least should the description and valuation of different project elements reflect the peacebuilding purpose of the activity.

These considerations do not mean that the terms and tools used for planning and evaluation, often mainly used as means to communicate with international partners, are beyond all doubt. They can be and often are criticised by peacebuilders (e.g. Hoffmann 2003) and they should be discussed and criticised by art professionals. They should strive to use them as instruments for reflection and communication. And as proposed by Isar et al.,

these tools and terms probably need to be extended or adapted for art in peacebuilding. For example, artistic outcomes need to be described (and evaluated) alongside social outcomes and the art professionals should engage in the discussion of what should be considered a valuable outcome in a concrete project or activity (cf. Isar, Hellqvist, and Rose 2007). Although if not easy, it should be possible to describe the purpose of a project in art and peacebuilding in a way that satisfies both art and peacebuilding professionals. Ideally, the need for such a description could even help to structure the dialogue about the peacebuilding purpose of a project, similarly to the way the connecting and dividing potentials may structure the dialogue about the conflict-related aspects of a project.

## **Conclusion**

The starting point for this text was my experience of large gaps between what art professionals and peacebuilding practitioners have in mind when they speak about art in peacebuilding. This gap is in stark contrast with a shared belief that art can contribute to peacebuilding. I have experienced this gap and this shared belief when communicating with donors, project partners, and colleagues from different professional backgrounds. In this text, I discussed issues, which seemed most urgent to me in order to reach a common understanding across this gap.

The issues discussed in this text are the connecting and dividing potential of artistic practices; the questions arising when we want to enable an artistic process and at the same time pursue a peacebuilding purpose; and the use of project management instruments in art and peacebuilding. In all these areas, the text raises more questions than it provides answers. For example, whether the discussion of the connecting and dividing potential of an artistic practice in a specific context fosters a common understanding of art between art and peacebuilding practitioners must be tested in practice. The same holds for the question of which form of collaboration between art and peacebuilding professionals enables an artistic process which addresses conflict issues. What the text hopefully showed, is that the focus on the instrumental value of artistic practices makes only limited use of many potentials ascribed to art in peacebuilding. Finally, practitioners must tell whether the text made a convincing point that it is possible not to let project management instruments impose an alien logic on art and peacebuilding, but to use them communication.

The text focused on art initiatives which aim at peacebuilding and argued that collaboration between art and peacebuilding practitioners is necessary, in order to enable an artistic process that serves the purpose of peace. Its aim was not, however, to devalue projects that do not aim at peacebuilding or that are organised with a clear division of labour. Art and peacebuilding practitioners may be completely happy if they are able to act in a conflict-sensitive matter. This is already challenging in many contexts of conflict. Probably, it is often a reasonable and realistic approach for a first project in a specific context. The same holds for the thoughts about collaboration. Probably, some artists are completely happy to be

brought into a work environment, to which they would not have had access otherwise. And surely, some peacebuilders are happy to find artists providing an activity that serves their peacebuilding objectives. My argument is just that such forms of collaboration are less likely to enable an artistic process and to pursue a peacebuilding process at the same time.

The arguments in the text may seem sometimes very theoretical. Probably, the title 'research agenda' is unrealistic, because there is no academic field with appropriate funding that deals with art and peacebuilding. Probably also, the practical suggestions in the text are challenging and idealistic, because it is difficult to find persons who are interested in such exchange and collaboration with professionals from very different fields. But still, the text hopefully stimulates discussion among those practitioners already engaged in art and peacebuilding, and already in search of proper partners, donors and descriptions for their initiatives.

## Literature

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