

DANMISSION  N

Position Paper:

Dialogue and
Peacebuilding

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Position Paper: Dialogue and Peacebuilding

1. Introduction

This paper details Danmission's position and definition of its work on Dialogue and Peacebuilding as outlined in Theme 2 in Danmission's programme strategy "*Sustainable Existence, Peaceful Co-existence*". Alongside Theme 2 the programme strategy outlines Theme 1 on *Contextual Theology for Faith and Social Action*; Theme 3 on *Sustainable and Just Stewardship of Natural Resources*; and the crosscutting principle of *Human Rights and Gender Equality*. This position paper refers to and builds on the programme strategy and Danmission's Understanding of Mission, "*There is hope, there is forgiveness, there is life*".

The position paper is primarily directed to staff, board, and partners of Danmission, to support a common understanding of Danmission's thematic areas and approaches. Furthermore, the position paper is directed to donors, potential donors, networks, Danmission's constituency, and others with an interest in Danmission's work.

2. Why is Danmission committed to working with Dialogue and Peacebuilding?

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mat 5:9).

Peacemakers are “blessed” and will be called “children of God”, says Jesus, continuing the Jewish prophetic tradition to express the nature of true devotion and service to God. The expression “like parent, like child” is used to describe a striking resemblance. To be someone who strives for peace is to resemble something of the very nature of God “like a child to a parent”. God is peace. To serve God truly is to serve the God of peace.

Danmission’s Understanding of Mission highlights that “There is forgiveness”. Forgiveness has to do with God’s relation to us, but relations among people also correspond to God’s unconditional love and forgiveness. In forgiveness there is freedom and a powerful transformative force. Forgiveness opens up to community and a just future. God’s love is freely given to people and the created world. God’s love encompasses difference and those who are different, and it invites *community*. It stems from the very nature of God. God is relational, already “living in community”, in the Trinity, where God is both diversity and unity. Likewise, Christ is both God and human.

As a Christian organisation Danmission shares the belief that God seeks community with people and creation (*oikoumene*). Each person has an inherent value and dignity as created in the image of the triune God (*imago Dei*). However, people are only truly human in communities (*koinonia*) and as part of the whole. In Christ “we are formed into one body” just as a body is one but consists of many parts (1 Cor 12:12). In Christ Jesus “you are all one”, says Paul, and points to the transcendence of individual and group identities – Jew or Gentile (ethnicity), slave or free (social status), male or female (gender) (Gal 3: 26-28). Everything and everyone belongs to God. The Southern African theology of *ubuntu* values our interconnectedness as human beings in saying, “I am because we are”. Each person’s humanity is inextricably bound up with other people: “I am human because I belong, I participate, I share”. A person with *ubuntu* is “open and available to others and affirming of them.” [ref]. And vice versa: “The whole is diminished when ... other members are diminished, tortured or oppressed.” [ref] Moreover in the name of Christianity all types of evil have been committed. But throughout history people have also heard and responded to the call of God to act for human dignity, justice, peace and reconciliation. For a mission to be Christian, it must be characterized by being relational (dialogue-based) and by creating peace

(peacebuilding). In a world of suffering communities and broken relationships, the Gospel literally becomes good news.

Danmission's Understanding of Mission affirms that all can take part in the mission and work of God for the world (*missio Dei*). The injustice of the world “has to be met by acts of love”. Danmission aims to “work for peace, justice, and reconciliation”, wherever there is strife, so that people do not get stuck in prejudice and self-confined limits. Danmission supports processes in which people are invited to “turn around and look into the future together”.

Social change and sustainable development in societies may prove to be anything but sustainable and may even be wiped out by violence if peacebuilding, a culture of dialogue, relationship-building, and community-building among the people is not in focus. Globally there are alarming developments. At many levels divisions into *us-and-them* and polarization attempts threaten to unravel social cohesion and destroy community-building and cooperation built up over decades. The rhetoric use of “othering” for political or economic gain is dangerous and may lead to social unrest. Religion is also captured to fuel politically motivated discrimination and authoritarian types of religious nationalism. In the countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East where Danmission is working, violent conflict, hatred, polarization, and discrimination are extremely destructive forces. There is an urgent need for Danmission with its Christian mandate to join forces with other actors with peacebuilding mandates deriving from their faith- or ideological sources. With the words from the title of our *programme strategy*, Danmission works for *peaceful co-existence*: without this *sustainable existence* is not possible.

3. Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Danmission

This chapter presents Danmission's understanding of its "Dialogue and Peacebuilding" work and includes three sub-chapters: Danmission's general understanding of "dialogue and peacebuilding (3.1); its particular focus on "religion" (3.2); and how it seeks an "integrated" approach (3.3). This is followed by chapter 4, which more concretely specifies the intervention areas, thematic focus areas, and examples of activities related to first Dialogue and then Peacebuilding.

3.1 How Danmission understands and works with Dialogue and Peacebuilding

Danmission's Dialogue and Peacebuilding work aims at "*Strengthening inclusive and just community building and promoting peaceful conflict transformation*". Two interlinked intervention areas are outlined:

- Dialogue: "*Strengthening interfaith and intercultural dialogue and action*"
- Peacebuilding: "*Strengthening faith-based peacebuilding, mediation, and conflict transformation*"

For Danmission Dialogue and Peacebuilding entail both goal and process. This is in line with the UN charter, where peacebuilding and sustaining peace is "a goal and process [...] aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict"¹.

For Danmission, Dialogue and Peacebuilding mean peace with oneself, with other people, with God, and with the natural environment (creation). Dialogue and Peacebuilding also relate to justice and power – and entail a *just* peace. Peace is *mutual*. If powerful actors silence those with less power, there is no mutually accepted peace. Danmission seeks a just peace as understood in the Christian prophetic tradition with its focus on justice and reconciliation (restorative justice) – and the restoration of relationships from the core belief in the equal value and dignity of all human beings bearing God's image.

For Danmission Dialogue and Peacebuilding are linked to to community-building and the interconnectedness of people (*ubuntu*). As God seeks community, so Danmission understands its role to follow this lead. Danmission's work aims at strengthening

¹ Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace defined in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions A/70/262 and S/2016/2282.

relationships, processes, and structures. One important aspect is to equip local actors themselves to build and sustain *community building* over time – a sustainable ‘culture’ of dialogue and peace. Building and sustaining ‘culture’ can be understood as a ‘process-structure’, illustrated by a river: The water is ‘process’, flowing in dynamic, flexible, and adaptable ways (relations – interactions) – yet the ‘structure’ of the river is retained over time (‘culture’). Relationships are central: To sustain change, the focus is on a network of people, their relationships and activities, and their social structures. For Danmission this entails a *transformation* from deeply divided, hostile, and violent relationships to *building* and *sustaining*, over time, continuous, dynamic, and self-generating processes of social change. This involves addressing root causes to move from cycles of violence towards the desired and shared vision of the future.

Danmission’s theological and moral vision as regards peace, justice, human dignity, and community-building overlaps with liberal ideas on social and economic development. Danmission supports the idea that the formation of a peaceful and just society is a prerequisite for upholding the rights and dignity of its people. Enhancing dialogue-based, democratic values is essential for sustainable economic, social, and political development. In this respect Danmission situates its Dialogue and Peacebuilding work in the interconnection between development and peacebuilding for long-term and sustainable change – within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. Danmission has ‘localization’ as a key focus area and recognizes the key role of civil society and local actors – including faith-based actors. Localization and civil society actors are not least important in fragile, conflict-prone, or volatile contexts where Danmission works, such as Syria, Iraq, and Myanmar. Here state actors often have less reach and capacity, and may even have lost their legitimacy by their actions.

3.2 A focus on religion in peace and conflict

Danmission sees a value in drawing upon its Christian mandate and vision of peacebuilding. In a wider 'peacebuilding field' it sees its partners and programme as having a key role and making a particular contribution to the focus on 'religion' and the active engagement and potential of 'faith', 'faith-based actors', and 'interfaith' interventions.

Danmission's Christian mandate is the point of departure – and it is equally essential for Danmission's approach to have deep and wide cooperation with actors from different faiths, interfaith, or no faith.

The nexus between religion, peace, and violence is complex and contested. Religion entails norms, identities, structures etc.. For some people religion in its various dimensions is the moral ground for promoting peace and dialogue. It translates into an appreciation of diversity and the equal dignity and value of all human beings, as in Christian theology. It can be a catalyst for community building on these grounds. However, sometimes religion can be misused, e.g. to push vulnerable groups into radicalization and violent extremism. It can be an effective weapon in mobilizing discrimination and dehumanisation of the 'other'. This is also seen in the history of Christianity. In addition, religion is always part of a wider societal context (political, social, economic) by which it is shaped and upon which it has a shaping effect. Religion *by itself* is unlikely to create peace – and equally religion *by itself* is unlikely to be the main cause of any major violent conflict.

The added value of Danmission's ...

Local leadership approach:

- Danmission works with local partners based on mutual respect and shared goals.
- Through local offices in programme countries Danmission navigates directly in the contexts and works closely with its partners.

Faith-based approach:

- According to World Population Review about 85% of the world's population identify with a faith. In this context Danmission and its faith-based partners benefit from a broad outreach to large parts of communities through faith-based institutions and actors.
- Danmission and its faith-based partners can sometimes navigate more freely in challenged contexts than other civil society actors.
- Danmission gains trust from both faith-based (of different faith) and non-faith-based actors, which places Danmission in a unique position to facilitate safe spaces across divides.

Engaging with 'religion' in this field is complex. Thorough analyses are needed. Yet it is not an option *not to* engage if such transformative power is to be harnessed and such destructive power is to be transformed. Danmission sees faith-based actors as having a vast potential related to dialogue and peacebuilding, both in its own Christian tradition (understood ecumenically) and in other faith traditions. Faith actors can help counter situations where vulnerable groups are trapped into radicalization and violent extremism. Faith is a powerful transformative and mobilising power for individuals and groups for the vast majority of the world's population who see themselves as guided by 'religion'. For them, faith fosters hope and resilience, and helps to (re)shape values, norms, attitudes, behaviour, and social action. It can enable people to look beyond the current situation and imagine a different, peaceful, and just future. Faith can be a catalyst for people to take action for such visions to materialise into social reality.

3.3 An integrated approach

The holistic understanding that the humanity of one person is inextricably bound up with other people (*ubuntu*) makes Danmission seek an integrated approach. Danmission seeks to link the individual (personal change) with the communal (sustainable social change). Four dimensions are important: 1) personal dimensions: individual, emotional, perceptual, spiritual – a focus on the whole person, also recognizing people's mental, spiritual and religious dimensions, 2) relational dimensions: changes desired for relationships, 3) transformational dimensions: from conflicting to peaceful, dialogue-based, dynamic relationships, and 4) sustainability dimensions: changes with the ability to regenerate themselves over time). The approach seeks to reach beyond the informational and instrumental – to design interventions that also engage our human experiential and emotional sides. It recognizes the importance this can play in change processes. The three dimensions of attitude change is one principle: Head, heart, hand (3H) – to foster a) new thinking, b) positive emotional experience, and c) ways to concretely apply this.

Danmission's working method combines actions for social change (result-oriented) and community building (process- and relationship-oriented). The approach also works with what 'comes before' or 'informs' social actions and social relations, including norms and mindsets. It aims at 'opening up' narrow, exclusivist, antagonistic attitudes. This work is long-term, but important: People's mindsets today shape the communities of tomorrow.

4. Danmission's Dialogue and Peacebuilding intervention areas

The previous chapter focused on how Danmission works with Dialogue and Peacebuilding through *general* positions and approaches (Dialogue and Peacebuilding as indivisible). This chapter presents in more detail the *concrete* focus areas and types of work Danmission engages in within the two intervention areas of Dialogue (section 4.1) and Peacebuilding (section 4.2). The chapter also lists Danmission's thematic priorities and provides examples of activities.

4.1 Dialogue: "To strengthen interfaith and intercultural dialogue and action"

Danmission's understanding of *dialogue* derives from a Christian theological vision. The triune God, who *is* community and *seeks* community, takes the initiative for reconciliation and relationship with people and the creation. Set free by God we as people are set free to be in, and to build, a community. Only in communities can we be fully human. Forgiveness and reconciliation come from God – but it is also essential that we as human beings practise these values if we are to live together in peace. This calls for a certain humility in our relationships with each other and in our communities: 'I am imperfect as my neighbour is imperfect'. Beyond this, by grace, I am set free to be in fellowship with my neighbour – and myself. Dialogue on this understanding is a particular way of practising *community-building*. Dialogue is to build and sustain a *culture of dialogue*, a way of life.

Several decades ago Danmission, along with other missionary societies, moved away from the idea that its role was to 'bring God' to a new place or culture. It understood that 'God is already there' and that its role was to be in service (*diakonia*) to communities in interpreting what God already intends and does (*Missio Dei*). As a Christian organisation working with dialogue, Danmission has its source of truth in its faith and Christian tradition, while simultaneously affirming truth wherever it exists, including in other cultures and religious traditions. As such, dialogue for Danmission builds on theologies of religion which are appreciative towards the religious 'other'.

In this understanding of dialogue, inclusive and just *community-building* is central – with healthy, constructive, and reciprocal relationships. If attempts at polarization, or violent conflicts, or humanitarian and other crises hit communities, these relationships are bulwarks and enablers of community resilience and cohesion. An important underlying value in working with *dialogue* is to provide safe spaces and enable processes for people to exist side by side. For the space to be truly safe and free, it is

neither a platform to convince the other in discussion nor a coercion on participants by a facilitator who ‘instrumentalizes’ the space for other purposes. It has to be safeguarded as a space which is emancipatory and ‘sets people free’ in correspondence with ‘being set free by God’ in Christian thought (liberation theology). One is free both to keep and to change one’s view. This is particularly important for people living in segregation and enmity and in environments of polarization and conflict.

One central type of dialogue for Danmission is *faith dialogue*. Here space is created for people with different beliefs to engage with each other in ways which can shed light on both one’s own and the other person’s belief and faith tradition. This can both deepen one’s own belief and open one’s eyes to the truth and beauty of other traditions and practices. This can take place in verbal exchange, in silence, and in religious practice, for example using the principle ‘crossing over, coming back’.

Danmission also has a focus on joint action and cooperation. Often relationships are built by working together – finding a ‘common third’. *Diap Praxis* entails providing safe space for people of different faiths to first ‘do’ together. *Diap Praxis* has as its objective to overcome prejudices, build mutual trust, and work on joint actions related to social issues of equal challenge for people across religious and social boundaries.

‘Dialogue’ has the aim of (re)building the social fabric and social cohesion in societies. It invests in safe spaces for formative and transformative processes, allowing changes in mindsets to enable people to coexist peacefully, and to navigate in and value diversity. Dialogue also entails efforts to foster intercultural and interreligious competencies. The programme strategy outlines that Danmission will:

- Strengthen inter- and intrafaith, intercultural and interethnic relations and build networks for people who value and promote human interconnectedness and community building.
- Support local actors to convene a transformative intercultural, inter- and intrafaith dialogue between religious leaders and others across religious and cultural divides.
- Promote the building and rebuilding of relationships between religiously engaged actors, including with spiritual, existential, and transformational elements – also in challenging environments of enmity, violence, conflicts, and polarization.
- Support interfaith *diap Praxis* and common social action, faith-based engagement and action for peace, coexistence, poverty alleviation, nature preservation, justice, and the common good across religious divides.

Examples of present and future activities:

- Making interventions which bring people together across religious, ethnic, and social divides to foster social cohesion (incl. cultural, social and sports events across groups as initial steps).
- Building Safe Spaces for faith actors for mutual exchanges on faith, spirituality, and existential matters leading to common reflection, appreciation of the other, and creating relationships (interfaith dialogue).
- Create space for people with different beliefs the better to see the truth and beauty of other traditions and practices – for them to engage with each other in ways which can shed light both on one’s own and the other person’s belief and faith tradition (faith dialogue).
- Applying Formational Training, which strengthens interreligious/intercultural competencies (internal *intra*faith interventions), before engaging people to interact across groups (*inter*faith interventions).
- Establishing Safe Spaces in environments of enmity, violence, conflict or polarization – for joint reflection to allow for change in norms and mindsets and the (re)building of relationships across groups (transformative dialogue).
- Supporting Networks of Community Dialogue Facilitators (change agents), who promote dialogue in their local communities (wider circles).
- Supporting the Training of Young People – future leaders – from different professions and across divides for them to become a new generation of leaders in building up their society (nation-building, dialogical-democratic values).
- Setting up and Supporting Strategic ‘Hubs’ – centres, or structures which enhance a ‘dialogue environment’ or ‘culture’ (dialogue centres, dialogue practitioners’ networks).
- Convening People from different religious and ethnic groups to identify common social issues and engage with this in joint action (*diapraxis*).

4.2 Peacebuilding: “Strengthening faith-based peacebuilding, mediation, and conflict transformation”

For Danmission, **peace** relates to a Christian theological vision which includes the notions of a ‘positive’, ‘holistic’, and ‘just’ peace. Peace is more than the absence of war or similar ‘negative’ definitions of peace. It is linked to the biblical, social, and political concept of *Shalom*, which has connotations of harmony, joy, well-being, life in all its

fullness, and good and safe relations. Peacebuilding concerns the *building (or rebuilding) of community* and a *culture of peace*.

However, conflicts are a natural part of life. They may be necessary and transformative. Working with *peacebuilding* is not to do away with conflict. Danmission's work may, for instance, consciously involve advocacy and criticism as confrontational voices in efforts to overcome injustices (in the prophetic tradition). Other conflict dynamics lead to violence (physical, structural, verbal) or other harmful consequences – and call for conflict transformation. The aim is *peaceful co-existence*, and if possible *pro-existence*: Not just to *tolerate* the 'other', but to *exist for (pro)* each other in community.

Danmission engages in faith-based, community, and people-centred peacebuilding with the focus on local contexts. Danmission supports Christian, faith-based, and interfaith peacebuilders and mediators, organisations and institutions. It seeks to enable civil society and local actors to build and sustain structures to deal with conflict dynamics with non-violence as a principle.

The scope and focus of Theme 2 (Dialogue and Peacebuilding) are limited to conflict dynamics where religious worldviews are at play or where actors use or misuse religious identity markers (see chapter 7, which describes the link to Danmission's related work with conflicts related to natural resources). Here thorough conflict- and other analyses are made and related to economic, social, and political issues and root causes in the local contexts. Danmission's civil society approach stipulates a focus on grassroots- and middle-level actors (peacebuilding tracks 2 and 3). The focus is on communities and people who have broader circles of influence, e.g. in institutions or organisations, such as religious-, community- or young future leaders (formal or informal). When Danmission and its partners have a particular added value, interventions can be national or regional. In particular instances, Danmission directly supports networks of individuals with important roles, such as faith-based mediators or people working with reconciliation.

Danmission's approach brings into play the potential of religion/faith (norms, identities, structures etc.) as resources. Danmission sees the value in its own Christian tradition (ecumenically understood) and how churches and Christian partners can make use of it. Likewise, Danmission cooperates with and encourages other faith-based and traditional actors to make use of the richness in their traditions, narratives, liturgies, values, practices, and structures which promote justice and peace, sometimes from ancient times. For example, the non-violent nature of God in Jesus Christ has been an inspiration for non-violent action across religious divides (Gandhi, Martin Luther King etc.).

Peacebuilding involves working with conflict dynamics and recognizing different phases of conflict. Interventions can be seen to fall into four major categories: violence-prevention, intervention, mediation, and reconciliation. The relevant interventions depend on which phase the conflict is at – and may be useless, or even harmful, if the intervention is deployed at another time. Peacebuilding work includes *how* to deal with conflicts – conflict management/transformation, mitigation etc. Analysing and addressing root causes, stakeholders, and drivers of conflict in the local context are essential to prevent radicalization, polarization, or an escalation into violence.

Danmission’s work also has to do with healing the damage and impact of violent conflicts on societies – e.g. reconciliation or faith-sensitive psycho-social support.

Community-building among actors is not attempted with short-term projects, in particular in polarized environments. It has a long-term goal and a long-term time frame. It is more resource-demanding than working with more singular issues, but has a focus on social cohesion and sustainability. It relates to the meaning of the African proverb: *If you want to go fast, go alone – but if you want to go far, go together*. The programme strategy outlines that Danmission will:

- Support traditional and religious peacemakers across divides, in their prevention, mediation, and reconciliation efforts, and convene cooperation among all types of actors, at both local, regional, and national level.
- Support local actors in community-based peacebuilding – through analysis of conflict drivers and structural issues and through setting up sustainable structures to promote social cohesion.
- Support psycho-social endeavours related to people suffering from conflicts and their effects.
- Support local actors to take action to prevent communal violence, extremism, derogative narratives, scapegoating, and hate speech in communities and in media and new technology.
- Promote innovative peacebuilding approaches and partnerships in order to prevent, mitigate, resolve, and reconcile. This includes qualitative work with a few targeted individuals, and quantitative work of scale, e.g. with the use of media, social media, and technology, including PeaceTech.

Examples of present and future activities:

- Support diverse local actors to work for increased social cohesion, prevention of communal violence, and building structures which enable conflict transformation.

- Convening, equipping, and training networks of faith-based mediators (interfaith).
- Supporting peacemakers' networks to engage in reconciliation and peacebuilding (e.g. women peacemakers).
- Assisting local actors to analyse root causes of conflicts and conflict drivers and to identify commonly-owned response strategies.
- Bringing youth at risk together in formation projects to counter violent extremism, religious, and other radicalization.
- Supporting people in fragile/post-conflict contexts in the (re)building of social cohesion across ethnic, religious, and social divisions – across IDP and host communities (e.g. a youth focus).
- Training local faith-based and civil society actors across professions to develop anti-polarisation strategies.
- Convening local faith-based and strategic innovation actors to develop innovative strategies to prevent communal violence, extremism, derogative narratives, scapegoating, and hate speech in communities and stemming from social media.
- Designing and facilitating in conflict-prone/post-conflict contexts faith-sensitive psycho-social support, trauma healing, and resilience building, including with faith-based resources (faith-sensitive), for a) local faith-based and other leaders (often under severe pressures) and b) the wider community (IDP and host communities).
- Supporting peace education, education on 'theologies of religion' which are appreciative of the 'religious other', interreligious and intercultural competences, and the formation of inclusive citizenship (dialogical and democratic) with educational institutions.

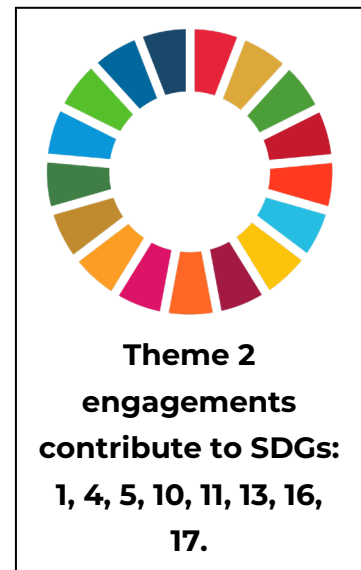
Danmission builds partnerships with actors with whom it shares values related to dialogue and peacebuilding (of different faiths or no faith). Partnerships are the key to finding innovative solutions where religious and other identity markers are misused in attempts to drive radicalization, violent extremism, communal violence, polarization, derogative narratives, and scapegoating. It also includes prevention efforts where the root causes of hate speech spring from both offline and online spheres that increasingly influence each other. Danmission takes an active role with its partners on capacity building and cooperation. Danmission therefore prioritizes having strong in-

house skills related to dialogue and peacebuilding. Sometimes the nature of the work may require that Danmission takes a role to convene or implement directly.

Danmission also engages in advocacy and cooperation in national, regional, and global networks to leverage joint influence and programmatic development of the field with likeminded actors, e.g. in the Sustaining Peace Workstream of PaRD (the International Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development), the global Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, and the World Council of Churches.

5. Human Rights & Gender and Theme 2: Dialogue and Peacebuilding

Dialogue and Peacebuilding are inherently linked to human rights and gender equality. The whole idea behind the creation of the human rights system in the aftermath of the Second World War was to create a framework to support sustainable peace and security and prevent future conflicts. Through dialogue and peacebuilding, Danmission and its partners address the root causes of conflicts that lie in the deeply entrenched inequality patterns of discrimination based on politics, socio-economic status, race, gender, religion or belief, disability, migrant status, country of origin, and other status. Human rights and gender equality provide a specific framework in building and sustaining peace through dialogue, advocacy, and mitigating actions. Preventing conflicts and rebuilding societies requires the incorporation of human rights norms in conflict resolution efforts for peacebuilding, for instance ICCPR art. 20 on hate speech and the Women Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security Agendas.



The overarching principle of the SDG's is to 'leave no one behind', and is rooted in the human rights principle of equality and non-discrimination that underpin conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Peace is one of five key prerequisites for the achievement of SDG 17. SDG 16 specifically focuses on peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities are instrumental in transforming power relations to achieve genuine, just, and sustainable peace. Poverty, food security, and agriculture addressed by Goals 1 and 2 set targets to ensure that the basic material conditions for a decent existence provide a core foundation for peace. Goals 12 through 15 highlight the drivers and impact of climate change and natural resource management, and call for critical attention to the interconnections between fragility and violent conflict and the environment which are included areas of work for Danmission's themes 2 and 3.

The nature of Danmission's interventions is in general to work for community building and thus to include diverse groups of people, including discriminated, marginalised, and vulnerable groups (LNOB). Based on analyses related to the local contexts,

Danmission designs interventions which strategically target change agents such as religious leaders, or specific selected groups such as women or youth (e.g. young future leaders). This includes interventions related to the Women, Peace, and Security and the Youth, Peace, and Security agendas.

6. Case, Syria: Hiwarouna

In Syria, the Hiwarouna (from Arabic: 'Our Dialogue') project had a Development-Peace nexus approach providing safe spaces for training on dialogue and peaceful coexistence for local organisations across ethnic, religious, and social divisions. This approach also facilitated the joint development of local initiatives focusing on livelihood support and peaceful coexistence. The project engaged young women and men who were being restricted from participating in social, civic, and economic life in the fragile context of Syria. The aim was to improve resilience and capacities of people, communities, and institutions, and to prevent violent extremism and sectarianism by fostering religious understanding, dialogue, and active citizenship among individuals and across groups in local societies. Danmission worked within the UN OCHA Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria (HRP), which adopted a recovery and resilience-oriented approach with a focus on supporting communities' own efforts for self-recovery, covering critical gaps in attaining decent livelihood opportunities, and "repairing the social fabric". Special attention was given to the relationship between IDPs and host communities with different ethnic and religious identities, where there was the risk of further decline in social institutions and relationships, and an increase in community level conflicts. The HRP emphasized promotion of social cohesion "through and with communities", with an emphasis on facilitating participation and helping communities undertake 'common good' initiatives (from prevention of local tensions to access to services and resources). Danmission assessed that such an integrated nexus-approach was lacking in Syria and that our approach was needed and was complementing other approaches. This was confirmed by a Danida-commissioned review (December 2020), where the Review Team assessed Danmission's work with HDP nexus in fragile contexts and Myanmar and Syria as a case to be "good examples of the relevance of working with and through local faith-based organisations in supporting development, addressing humanitarian needs and strengthening social cohesion". The report underlined how Danmission "brings a unique approach and experience to working in the HDP nexus landscape, as it has core competencies in 'contextual theology' and 'dialogue/peacebuilding'" and "acts as a facilitator, promoting contacts, dialogue and understanding between stakeholders from or within different religions and ethnic groups".

7. Synergy with Danmission's two other thematic areas

Democratic formation takes its point of departure in seeing democracy correspond with dialogue. Danmission shares this understanding and engages in interventions in the overlapping field of democratic formation and dialogue. In addition, interventions related to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) are often connected with interventions related to Dialogue and Peacebuilding and may be included in such interventions, but structurally the description of Danmission's work is available elsewhere: For these two areas, please see Danmission's position paper on 'Contextual Theology for Faith and Social Action'.

Similarly, conflicts related to natural resources and natural resource-dependent people are also an intervention area for Danmission closely related to Dialogue and Peacebuilding. Please see further in the position paper on 'Sustainable and Just Stewardship of Natural Resources'.

Approved by the board of Danmission, August 2023.