The Evaluation of Facilitated Dialogue: Approaches, Frameworks and Challenges

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INTRODUCTION

The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began in February 2014 and continued with a large-scale invasion in February 2022, has put into question the viability, and even the mere possibility, of dialogue and peacebuilding. The Ukrainian community of mediators and dialogue facilitators, whom the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU) has supported since 2015, affirms that they are indeed still possible, though they will take a context-specific form dependent upon the phase of the war and specific local contexts. Ukrainian mediators and facilitators have practised dialogue for many years, applying dialogue-based approaches to conflict management initiatives inside the country: within local communities as well as national and local governments, between IDPs and host communities, within the national government and between the various groups making up Ukrainian civil society. Dialogue processes that engaged people from non-government-controlled areas (NGCA), namely the Russian-occupied territories in Luhansk and Donetsk regions, as well as Crimea, were in the minority[1] . The focus of the capacity-building and dialogue work performed by Ukrainian dialogue facilitators was directed toward the strengthening of social cohesion and resilience. This dimension has been strongly supported by the OSCE PCU. When the Russian Federation invaded in February 2022, it was this strength that proved most valuable. As soon as March 2022, Ukrainian dialogue practitioners were able to launch conflict mitigation projects involving IDPs and host communities in western Ukraine. In this way, dialogue proved a valuable instrument even during the "hot" phase of the war.

The OSCE PCU has been a constant partner to the Ukrainian community of dialogue facilitators. Since 2015, the OSCE PCU has implemented nine one- and multi-year projects focused on supporting dialogue for social cohesion and reforms. These initiatives have been offering opportunities for civil society actors and Ukrainian government officials to connect in Kyiv as well as in various regions. This was made possible via a continuous, multi-faceted dialogue process and a stable, professional capacity-building platform for Ukrainian dialogue facilitators. The OSCE PCU supported the creation of *Dialogue Standards: Definitions and Principles,* a document proposing a common set of principles for dialogue developed by Ukrainian dialogue facilitators (OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, 2018). The OSCE PCU also fostered the professionalisation of the facilitator community through the provision of training, financial and organisational support to the National Association of Mediators of Ukraine (NAMU), as well as by providing spaces for exchange with international colleagues, supporting annual gatherings of the facilitator and mediation communities and providing organisational support to the NAMU and other initiatives.

1 Kyselova, T. Understanding dialogue: A survey-based study. Mediation and Dialogue Research Center. 2018. Retrieved from: https://md.ukma.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Understanding-Dialogue-Report-2018-eng.pdf

By 2021, it became obvious that the professionalisation of dialogue practices, as well as further demands concerning improvements in quality assurance, required more focused work on the evaluation of dialogue. Although facilitated dialogues have been evaluated by donors since the very beginning of such projects in Ukraine (largely from 2014), Ukrainian dialogue facilitators felt that these procedures had to be improved in order for their voices to be heard by international actors. Evaluation has also been seen as important for improving the quality of dialogue processes aimed at generating mutual understanding and strengthening social cohesion. To this end, they initiated a process to develop a context-specific methodology for dialogue evaluation in Ukraine, with the OSCE PCU supporting this initiative. The specific experience of dialogue in Ukraine, reflected in the document *Dialogue Standards: Definitions and Principles,* serves as the focal point of this development of a dialogue evaluation methodology, though international best practices and lessons learned from other contexts will also be accounted for.

This report serves another objective of this process: it aims to survey existing approaches, frameworks, and data collection methods used for dialogue evaluation in order to raise awareness concerning existing best practices among Ukrainian dialogue practitioners. The report is based on the analysis of academic and practitioner sources in the broad field of conflict transformation, all of which have been applied in various conflict zones. This material reflects lessons learned from international research and practice. It attempts to present existing evaluation approaches and methodologies in a way that would prove useful and practical for Ukrainian dialogue facilitators in their ongoing work to develop a Ukrainian dialogue evaluation methodology. Further adaptation of the findings to the Ukrainian context will be necessary and will comprise a separate step in the OSCE PCU's project *Building Dialogue Capacity for Conflict Prevention and Resolution.*

The target audience of this report includes:

- Mediators and dialogue facilitators who facilitate dialogues at various societal levels (also known as "tracks")[2];
- Civil society organisations who convene such dialogues;
- International organisations and donors who support such dialogues in Ukraine and elsewhere;
- Evaluation experts looking to apply their expertise to the field of facilitated dialogue.

2 This paper operates with the notions of tracks with regards to three levels: Track I comprises the leadership of a country (e.g., political and/or military); Track II includes leading figures in society such as religious dignitaries, intellectuals, political parties and regional power figures; and Track III is made up of leading civil society figures at the local community level and grassroots initiatives. Basics of mediation: Concepts and definitions. German Federal Foreign Office & Initiative Mediation Support Germany. 2017. Retrieved from: http://www.peacemediation.de/uploads/7/3/9/1/73911539/basics_of_mediation_concepts_and_definitions.pdf.

We hope that, despite the harsh conditions of the current war, this work will be useful and that dialogue will continue to serve Ukraine as an instrument to enhance social cohesion and societal resilience, especially in order to withstand Russia's military aggression and the use of hybrid warfare against Ukraine.

The first section of this report will define dialogue on the basis of scholarly and practitioner-based materials. Following this will be a summary of the process and objects of evaluation as applicable to facilitated dialogue. The main part of the report will present various frameworks for evaluating peacebuilding projects with a focus on dialogue processes. The final section will explore various challenges that have been identified with regard to evaluating facilitated dialogue.

1. DIALOGUE: A LACK OF CONCEPTUAL CLARITY

1.1. Dialogue in academic research and peacebuilding practice

In the past several decades, facilitated dialogue has become an important tool for peacebuilding and conflict resolution around the globe and has subsequently become a standard part of donor strategies in all conflict zones worldwide. However, a precise, universal definition of dialogue has proven elusive both in academic research and in practice. According to Feller and Ryan, "dialogue is consistently used by scholars with the same lack of attention to meaning as observed in the general public vernacular[3]."

Facilitated dialogue as a process is often defined through comparisons with mediation. Differences between mediation and dialogue, in particular, can be identified by analysing their objectives. Mediation in the classical, facilitated model is aimed at resolving a specific dispute or making decisions through the negotiation of two or more parties (problem-solving) assisted by a mediator, while dialogue often aims only at trust-building and generation of mutual understanding. Researchers at the Conflict Research Consortium argue that "unlike mediation, which usually aims to resolve a dispute, the goal of dialogue is usually simply to improve interpersonal understanding and trust[4]." The authors of the OSCE Handbook on Mediation and Facilitation of Dialogue suggest that "although dialogues can lead to very concrete decisions and actions, the main goal is not to reach a concrete solution, but to better understand the different perspectives on conflict[5]." The American diplomat and dialogue practitioner Harold Sanders expressed this feature of dialogue in, perhaps, the most convincing way:

> Dialogue is a process of genuine *inter* action through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others' concerns into her or his own picture even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other[6].

3 Feller, A. and Ryan, K. "Definition, Necessity, and Nansen: Efficacy of Dialogue in Peacebuilding.» Conflict Resolution Quarterly 29:4. 2012. P. 4.
4 Kobakhia, B., Javakhishvili, J., Sotieva, L. and Schofield, J. Mediation and Dialogue in the South Caucasus: A Reflection on 15 Years of Conflict Transformation Initiatives. International Alert. 2012. P. 27.
5 Cantin, H. (Ed). Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation in the OSCE: Reference Guide. OSCE. 2014. P. 10. Retrieved from: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/0/126646.pdf.
6 Saunders, H. A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts. Springer. 1999. P. 82.

Thus, building trust and understanding between participants is an essential element of any dialogue, while making decisions or signing agreements remains optional. Trust between stakeholders and building sustainable channels for constructive interaction and communication may be seen as successful outcomes of a dialogue even without any accompanying instances of decision-making.

The question of whether professional facilitation is a foundational element of dialogue remains unanswered in research. In many definitions of dialogue, there are references to a "facilitated process[7]," yet in others such references are absent. Regardless, even in the absence of such references, institutions using similar definitions offer structured facilitation training programs and promote dialogue methodologies with an accompanying, distinct professional facilitator identity at work.

Other differences between mediation and dialogue involve greater flexibility and informality in facilitated dialogue processes as compared to mediation. OSCE-engaged experts distinguish dialogue as a "separate approach," with a "more open-ended communication process between conflict parties in order to foster mutual understanding, recognition, empathy and trust" that can consist of "one-off conversations, or go on over a longer period of time[8]."

Finally, while mediation has a more standard methodological base, with a particular model of facilitative mediation accepted as a mainstream approach and tool, dialogue facilitation allows for the use of various methodologies. Scholars of participatory dialogue at the United Nations identified 34 different methodologies and tools of dialogue, including nonviolent communication, restore circles, open space techniques, world cafes, consensus conferences, future searches, offender mediation, and others[9]. These eclectic methodologies stem from a general ideology of respect for human dignity, inclusiveness, empowerment, recognition of conflict, safe communication, and understanding — they provide a sufficiently diverse basis for the development of a professional identity for dialogue facilitators.

Thus, although there are no precise and universal definitions of dialogue, several features of dialogue nevertheless remain clear: a focus on trust-building between parties without a need for agreement, the importance of third-party facilitators, the flexible nature of the process, and the application of various, creative methodologies.

There are many types of facilitated dialogue that serve different purposes and aim at addressing different aspects of a conflict or provide for reconciliation

7 Froude, J. and Zanchelli, M. What Works in Facilitated Dialogue Projects? USIP. 2017. P. 2. Retrieved from: https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/sr407-what-works-in-facilitated-dialogue-projects.pdf; Cantin, H. (2014). P. 10.
8 Cantin, H. (2014). P. 10.
9 UN DESA. Participatory Dialogues: Towards a Stable, Safe and Just Society for All. United Nations. 2007. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/prtcptry_dlg(full_version).pdf

and the strengthening of social cohesion. Distinctions between various types and forms of dialogue are often made with regard to the levels at which they are being conducted.

Practitioners and scholars have identified at least three levels also known as *tracks.* There are dialogues among those involved in official negotiation processes, sometimes known as **track one.** Then there are dialogues among influential elites who are looking to make an impact on negotiation processes, public policy or society at large which are referred to as **track two** (or sometimes, in cases where high-ranking officials operate behind closed doors or in private capacities, **track one and a half).** There are also dialogue processes among grassroots or civil society groups working towards reconciliation, social cohesion, and inclusion in negotiation processes or within society at large — these are sometimes referred to as **track three**[10]**.**

Historically, **problem-solving workshops** applied as a parallel or supporting process alongside high-level political negotiations within official peace processes have been described as part of **track-two diplomacy** and form a distinct form of dialogue in the peacebuilding field. Problem-solving workshops are gatherings where different parties may be encouraged, with the assistance of trained facilitators, to share their experiences of a given conflict or societal issue and to listen to the experiences, narratives, and concerns of others. Facilitators work to create a space safe enough for the participants to feel comfortable to step outside of their usual "roles" in the conflict and explore dynamics like active listening, the acknowledgement of the others' needs and grievances, the initiation of joint thinking regarding creative solutions to the issues at hand and, if the process allows, even the creation of collaborative statements, action plans and "artifacts" like policy recommendations or suggestions for official negotiation processes[11].

Track three dialogue processes at the grassroots level are often categorised according to the types of participants involved and can be referred to as intergroup dialogues, inter-ethnic dialogues, community dialogues, etc.

Finally, Cuhadar and Dayton identified two approaches to goal-setting in dialogue processes which they called "outcome-focused initiatives" (designed to generate proposals to be used or adopted in official policy-making and negotiation processes) and process-focused[12]or relationship-oriented[13]initiatives (designed to build relationships, trust, empathy, and mutual understanding among adversaries). For example, they suggested that the dialogues "between unofficial representatives of Israelis and Palestinians resulting in the 2003

10 German Federal Foreign Office. (2017).Cantin, H. (2014). P. 10.
11 Jones, P. *Track Two Diplomacy in Theory and Practice.* Stanford University Press. 2015.
12 Çuhadar, E. and Dayton, B. "The social psychology of identity and inter-group conflict: From theory to practice.» *International Studies Perspectives* 12: 3. 2011. P. 273-293.
13 Çuhadar, E. and Dayton, B. «Oslo and its aftermath: Lessons learned from Track Two diplomacy.» *Negotiation Journal* 28:2. 2012. P. 155-179.

Geneva Accords, which outlined a 'final status' solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" were outcome-focused. At the other end of the spectrum were process/relationship-oriented initiatives such as the dialogues conducted by the Seeds of Peace initiative, which provided "the chance for young Israelis and Palestinians to interact at a summer camp where they learn about each other, leadership, and coexistence[14]."

To conclude, there are many definitions and types of processes referred to as "dialogue," from high-level political initiatives to grassroots community projects, that can vary greatly with regard to their participants, goals and outcomes. Therefore, the task of evaluating dialogue first requires a clear understanding of the concrete elements that need to be evaluated.

1.2. Facilitated dialogue in Ukraine

During the initial period of the armed conflict in Ukraine, which started in 2014, it was difficult to understand what was meant by "dialogue" and to categorise the varied activities conducted under this term. By 2018, the local community of mediation and facilitation professionals was able to document their understanding of dialogue in *Dialogue Standards: Definition and Principles*[15]. The definition developed in this document was included in the 2019 manual on dialogue published by the OSCE PCU[16]. Facilitated dialogue is defined in these documents as:

> a specially prepared group process that takes place with the help of a facilitator, [which] aims to improve the understanding/ relationships between participants, and [which] may also have the goal of making decisions about common actions or the resolution of a conflict in a way that provides equal opportunities for the participants of the meeting to express their opinions.

Thus, based on this context-specific experience, the Dialogue Standards have legitimised both goals of dialogue: problem-solving and trust/relationship-building. A clarification to this definition further expounds that:

14 Çuhadar, E. and Dayton, B. (2011). P. 159.
15 *Dialogue Standards: Definition and Principles.* Institute for Peace and Common Ground. 2018. Retrieved from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JN3QRE8EXU5D1FvY3Go1H19ZvRNHNxAo/view.
16 Guseva, K. and Protsenko, D. *How, When, Where Does Dialogue Work? A Practical Guide* (in Ukrainian). OSCE PCU. 2019. Retrieved from: https://www.osce.org/uk/project-coordinator-in-ukraine/422831.

> Focus on improving the understanding and the relationships between participants is a fundamental element of any (facilitated) dialogue. "Improving understanding" includes an enhanced sense of understanding among participants of the dialogue process; their recognition of different views of the issues and the situation being discussed or of other participants in the dialogue. "Improvement of the relationship" is evidenced by changes in behaviour of dialogue participants when they interact with each other. Additionally, the dialogue may be aimed at addressing a particular conflict situation or at making joint decisions or agreements by the participants. Thus, the main purpose of the dialogue is not to convince others that one is right by imposing one's own views, but a possible change of views (attitudes) through a new understanding of the situation and of other participants, or the search for the most appropriate solutions to meet the interests of all participants (consensus)[17].

Based on the above definition, and similar to Cuhadar and Dayton, professionally facilitated dialogues in Ukraine include value-oriented/existential dialogue that does not require any agreements as outcomes — this is in addition to problem-solving dialogue (workshops/events) that aim to produce written documents or other types of "artifacts"/outcomes such as the export of participants to official processes, the creation of consulting roles to track one mediators, the consolidation of professional networks, etc[18].

According to a 2018 survey-based study of dialogue in Ukraine that was conducted from 2014-2018, the majority of dialogue processes dealt with solving problems like community infrastructure, the implementation of reforms and the involvement of civil society in governmental decision-making processes — these dialogues do not often require representation from groups with adverse political views[19]. Indeed, only a few dialogue processes actively engaged people from areas not controlled by the government (the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic") in cross-contact-line dialogue[20]. Overall, the study identified 66 organisations in Ukraine that have conducted 157 facilitated dialogues between 2014 and 2018, with ten organisations responsible for two-thirds of all dialogues in Ukraine[21].

Given that there are currently no dialogue evaluation frameworks based on the Ukrainian understanding of dialogue, the following sections of the report will only present international evaluation approaches and frameworks based on research and experience in different conflict zones.

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17 *Dialogue Standards.* (2018). P. 6.
18 Kyselova, T. (2018); Kyselova, T. and von Dobeneck, J. *Track III Dialogues in Ukraine: Major Patterns and Resulting Risks.* Mediation and Dialogue Research Center. 2017. Retrieved from: https://md.ukma.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Track-III-Dialogues-in-Ukraine-Policy-Paper-ENG-2017.pdf
19 Kyselova, T. (2018).
20 There are semi-public dialogue platforms engaging people from the NGCA and Russia at a grass-roots, person-to-person level. Examples include *Donbas Dialogue* (https://www.donbassdialog.org.ua/p/about.html) and *Women's Initiatives for Peace in Donbas(s)* (https://www.owen-berlin.de/projekte/wipd.php).
21 Kyselova, T. 2018. P. 22.

2. THE EVALUATION OF PEACEBUILDING AND DIALOGUE: CURRENT APPROACHES

2.1. Why evaluate? The purpose of evaluation

The question of how to evaluate facilitated dialogues has been asked since the appearance of contemporary problem-solving workshops in the second half of the 20th century but attained particular importance since the 1990s. Practitioners were accused of not documenting their work rigorously, lacking a consistent or replicable methodology or even of causing more harm than benefit. These and other criticisms of facilitated dialogue as a tool, particularly for the resolution of deep-seated and protracted interethnic conflicts, prompted greater attention to developing ways to assess their impact, positive or negative, in such contexts[22].

The task of evaluation, historically speaking, has occasionally been met with resistance from facilitators and other practitioners. This has been for reasons ranging from controversies over how success can be defined or determined to whether the subtle changes encouraged by facilitated dialogue can ever conclusively be measured[23]. In more recent times, however, the need for evaluation has found general acceptance among facilitators, conveners, and donors of facilitated dialogues. This need has been framed as having two aspects. The first is the need for **accountability** to funds given or to various stakeholders and parties in a given conflict or context. The second is the need for **innovation and greater understanding** of the nature of facilitated dialogue, especially for the purposes of creating best practices for design and implementation[24].

The reasons for evaluating facilitated dialogues are diverse. Assessment can take place to generate lessons learned, to evaluate whether a process confirms a proposed theory of change, to provide data for designing future dialogue processes, or to develop new facilitative techniques[25]. In other words, evaluation can aim at generating knowledge, providing accountability regarding a predetermined set of goals or allowing the participants themselves to define and change their approach to assessment and "success" over time[26].

2.2. What to evaluate? The objects of evaluation

The identification of potential components of dialogue to evaluate will depend upon the evaluative goals as well as the goals of the facilitated dialogue itself.

With regard to the **evaluative goals,** the following questions are relevant: To whom will the assessment be provided upon completion? Is the facilitated

22 Fisher, R. "Historical mapping of the field of inter-active conflict resolution." In Davies, J., and Kaufman, E. (eds.): *Second Track/ Citizen's Diplomacy: Concepts and Techniques for Conflict Resolution. Rowman & Littlefield.* 2002; Rouhana, N. "Unofficial third-party intervention in international conflict: Between legitimacy and disarray. *Negotiation Journal* 11:3. 1995.
23 Dessel, A., and Rogge, M. "Evaluation of intergroup dialogue: A review of the empirical literature." Conflict Resolution Quarterly 26:2. 2008. P. 199-238.
24 Jones, P. (2015).
25 Çuhadar, E., Dayton, B., and Paffenholz, T. "Evaluation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding." In Sandole, D., Byrne, S., Sandole-Staroste, I., and Senehi, J. (eds.), Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Routledge, 2009. P. 286-299.
26 Elliott, M., d'Estrée, T., and Kaufman, S. "Evaluation as a tool for reflection." In Burgess, G., and Burgess, H. (eds.) Beyond Intractability. Conflict Information Consortium. 2003. Accessed at: https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/evaluation-reflection

dialogue being funded by stakeholders who are looking to confirm that funds were spent appropriately? Will other facilitators and practitioners be reading the report in hopes of learning more about the process? Are the parties themselves looking for proof that facilitated dialogue accomplishes specific goals? What are the next steps in the dialogue process? Was the facilitated dialogue held as a one-time event meant to bring together stakeholders for a specific consensus-reaching process? Was the dialogue meant to be a first step that lays the foundation for future sessions?

With regard to the **goals of the facilitated dialogue,** they vary widely depending upon the type of the dialogue itself (relationship-oriented or problem-solving) as well as the goals that the dialogue conveners and facilitators set for the process. In very generic terms, the typical goal of a facilitated dialogue is prompting a change within, or an impact on, something or someone.

Change typically refers to any type of change at any level. Two broader types of change prompted by facilitated dialogue have been identified by facilitators and scholars: a) individual changes that take place within or among participants during facilitated dialogue processes (which are sometimes referred to as "workshops") and b) changes that take place outside the meeting itself[27]. In contexts of armed conflict or civil war, certain facilitated dialogue processes have been recognized as having contributed to official negotiations and to ceasefires or eventual peace agreements in places such as South Africa, Northern Ireland, Mozambique, and Israel-Palestine[28]. In post-conflict contexts, facilitated dialogue interventions have led to the creation of integrated interethnic schools in the former Yugoslavia[29] or reconciliation initiatives in the former USSR. In contexts of relatively nonviolent societal conflicts, facilitated dialogues have led to greater reconciliation among communities divided by racism as well as increased civic engagement among citizens regarding municipal issues[30]. It is critical not to overstate the potential of facilitated dialogue, however. Practitioners, conveners, and researchers note that the outputs generated by dialogue may have a wider impact or they may not. Facilitated dialogue ultimately counts as one influence among many that can contribute to, but not outright create, the desired change in conflict contexts[31].

In contrast to change, **impact** is usually framed as "the larger changes initiated by the intervention within the general context, changes that often occur only after a longer time has passed[32]." That said, it must be noted that sometimes the term "impact" has been used by some researchers or practitioners synonymously with "change."

27 Kelman, H. "Evaluating the contributions of interactive problem solving to the resolution of ethnonational conflicts." *Peace and Conflict* 14. 2008. P. 29-60.
28 Jones, P. (2015).
29 Uremovic, M. and Milas, I. "Challenges of education for peace in segregated schools in Vukovar." In McGlynn, C., Zembylas, M., and Bekerman, Z. (eds.) *Integrated Education in Conflict Societies.* Palgrave MacMillan. 2013.
30 Dessel, A. and Rogge, M. (2008).
31 Saunders, H. "Evaluation in an open-ended political process: Civic learning and the citizen evaluator." *In Sustained Dialogue in Conflicts: Transformation and Change.* Palgrave MacMillan. 2011.
32 Çuhadar, E., Dayton, B. and Paffenholz, T. (2008). P. 288.
33 Spurk, C. «Forget impact-concentrate on measuring outcomes: lessons from recent debates on evaluation of peacebuilding programmes.» New Routes 3. 2008. P. 11-14. Retrieved from: https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Demystifying-Impacts-in-Evaluation-Practice.pdf.

What particular change or impact is thought to be achieved by a given dialogue process depends upon the **theory of change** held by a dialogue's conveners and facilitators. Theories of change involve a specific conception of how people, processes, organisations and conflicts transform in response to a given set of conditions or a specific intervention and are crucial to evaluation as "in the absence of a theory of why change happens and how it may be brought about, one lacks a set of markers against which to design a process or measure impact as the process unfolds[34]."

Thus, theories of change are currently seen as indispensable in the process of planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating any projects by donors. Theories of change have emerged inside donor structures and often are presented as a single set of linear "if... then" statements that are thought to remain true throughout the life of an intervention. This is in spite of the fact that the context often amounts to a series of complex environments where dynamics change rapidly[35]. In this framework, articulations of how change happens may be based on the donors' experience rather than reflect realities on the ground where change is anticipated. There is, therefore, a need to make theories of change both more adaptive and inclusive of local actors — this requires a more comprehensive understanding of how people on the ground see the change they hope to produce through dialogue and how they develop their theories of change independent of donors[36].

A levels-of-analysis approach has been used as a major tool to distinguish and organise "a vast and tangled assortment of theories related to change[37]." Consistent with approaches to social change analysis found in the social sciences[38], conflict resolution scholars frame these as "micro-, meso-, and macro-levels[39]." Most often used is Lederach's classification of the dimensions of both conflict and impact. He suggests that conflict influences situations and impacts change along four dimensions: (1) the personal, (2) the relational, (3) the structural, and (4) the cultural[40].

Each dialogue project will have its own unique logic and assumptions about change. Yet, there are conventional approaches that can be summarised here as examples. Church and Rogers[41]describe theories of change identified by peace-building practitioners in the following way:

- **The individual change theory.** Change comes as a result of the transformation of a critical mass of individuals or their mindsets, attitudes, behaviours, and skills.

34 Jones, P. (2015). P. 54.
35 Stein, D. and Valters, C. Understanding Theory of Change in International Development: JSRP Paper 1. JSRP. 2012. P. 4. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259999367_Understanding_Theory_of_Change_in_International_Development.
36 Neufeldt, R. «'Frameworkers' and 'Circlers' – Exploring Assumptions in Impact Assessment." In Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation. Berghof Foundation. 2011. P. 484-504. Retrieved from: https://berghof-foundation.org/library/frameworkers-and-circlers-exploring-assumptions-in-impact-assessment.
37 Shapiro, I. «Extending the framework of inquiry: Theories of change in conflict interventions.» *Berghof Handbook Dialogue* No.5. 2006. Retrieved from: http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/Shapiro_Extending%20the%20Framework%20of%20Inquiry.pdf.
38 Weinstein, J. Social Change. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2010. P. 128-129.
39 Çuhadar, E., Dayton, B. and Paffenholz, T. (2008). P. 288.
40 Lederach, J. The Little Book of Conflict Transformation. Simon and Schuster, 2015.
41 Church, C. and Rogers, M. *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs.* Search for Common Ground. 2006. P. 12–18. Retrieved from: https://www.sfcg.org/Documents/manualpart1.pdf.

- **The healthy relationships [between groups] and connections theory.** Change emerges from a process of breaking down isolation, polarisation, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/among groups. Strong relationships are a necessary ingredient for peacebuilding.
- **The institutional development theory.** Change is secured by creating stable/reliable social institutions that guarantee democracy, equity, justice, and fair allocation of resources.
- **The political elites theory.** Change comes when it is in the interest of political (and other) leaders to take the necessary steps. Peacebuilding efforts must change the political calculus of key leaders and groups.
- **The grass-roots mobilisation theory.** When the people lead, the leaders will follow. If we mobilise enough opposition to war, political leaders will have to pay attention.

Going deeper into the question about which targets dialogue can affect and at what levels, there seems to be an agreement in the literature on the salience of individual change. Common observed changes include shifts in conflict-related attitudes and behaviour[42], but other individual changes can include: a greater sense of empowerment and recognition[43], an enhanced sense of responsibility and understanding of the conflict[44], additional skills and knowledge regarding conflict transformation and affective transformations[45], insights into conflict roots and ideas about solutions[46], along with numerous other factors. From among all targets of dialogue transformation, relationships occupy a significant and important category thought essential in the process of impacting a conflict[47]. Saunders suggested that the overall objective of sustained dialogue is to "transform conflictual or dysfunctional relationships so that people can work together to solve their problems[48]." Mitchell determined the qualities of relational change thus: a change in the interaction between adversaries over a period of time from "imbalanced to balanced," "from dependent to interdependent," and "from non-legitimised to legitimised[49]."

Regarding the transformation of institutions and societal structures, change is most often seen by researchers in terms of impacting root conflict causes like "socio-economic inequality, cultural discrimination, marginalisation, lack of political participation and poverty[50]." Changes on the cultural level usually concern social norms in society that typically require long-term, even generational transformation[51].

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42 Shapiro, I. (2006); d'Estrée, T., Fast, L., Weiss, J., and Jakobsen, M. "Changing the debate about 'success' in conflict resolution efforts." Negotiation Journal 17:2. 2001. P. 101-113.
43 Cleven, E., Bush, R. and Saul, J. «Living with no: Political polarization and transformative dialogue.» Journal of Dispute Resolution 53. 2018. P. 53-63. Retrieved from: https://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/faculty_scholarship/1157.
44 Mitchell, C. «Beyond resolution: What does conflict transformation actually transform?» Peace and Conflict Studies 9:1. 2002. P. 1-23.
45 Cuhadar, E. and Dayton, B. (2011). P. 169.
46 Kelman, H. (2008).
47 Mitchell, C. (2002).
48 Saunders, H. (2011). P. 262.
49 Mitchell, C. (2002). P. 18-19.
50 Austin, A., Fischer, M. and Wils, O. «Peace and conflict impact assessment: Critical views on theory and practice.» *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation.* 2003. P 58-59. Retrieved from: https://berghof-foundation.org/library/peace-and-conflict-impact-assessment-critical-views-on-theory-and-practice; Mitchell, C. (2002). P. 8-9
51 Lederach, J. (2015).

Finally, given the multi-level structure of many theories of change, a very important aspect to pay attention to is the **transfer** of a change/impact from one level to another or from one target to another. In other words, "the process by which individual changes (e.g., improved attitudes, new realisations) and group products (e.g., frameworks for negotiation, principles for resolution) are moved from the unofficial conflict resolution interventions to the official domain of negotiations, policy-making, and the surrounding political culture[52]."

Within the context of track two diplomacy, transfer was traditionally understood mainly as the "upward" movement of the changes initiated in a dialogue, which hopefully would culminate in a political peace agreement[53]. As noted by Fisher, "the objectives of transfer were mainly to influence negotiations, the interventions were predominantly concerned with serving a complementary role to track one work and 'paving the way' for official peacemaking efforts[54]." The mechanisms of transfer were consequently limited to those consolidating the connection between tracks two and one, for example: a) building the capacity of advisory cadres with influence on official negotiation delegations, b) the development of creative ideas and perspectives regarding conflict analysis and the development of solutions, or c) contributing to changes in public discourse that are favourable to constructive negotiations or the emergence of a new relationship between the parties[55].

Within this framework, the major mechanism for transfer from problem-solving workshops to the broader political context amounted to the personal contacts claimed by workshop participants. Thus the challenge was for the dialogue participants to "persuade decision-makers that a system change is required to reach a resolution[56]." Other transfer strategies identified by researchers of problem-solving workshops included "sending artifacts (e.g. recommendations, information) to the decision makers, selecting the 'right' participants (i.e., influential, representative, skilled), involving international participants and third parties for leverage purposes, establishing a functional role for the group (e.g. epistemic, policy advisory, etc), lobbying and advocacy" or "using the media to report about the outcomes of the initiative, organising public peace campaigns, publicising alternative narratives about the conflict, and utilising public opinion polls to influence the behaviour of the masses[57]."

Later, based on Lederach's idea of "middle-out" transfer both "upwards" and "downwards," other researchers started analysing transfer using a multi-level and multi-directional perspective that sought to move beyond a unidirectional "local-to-global" idea of transfer and challenged the exclusive selection of official peace negotiation processes as a target. In effect, researchers and

52 Fisher, R. «Transfer effects from problem solving workshops to negotiations: A process and outcome model.» *Negotiation Journal* 36:4. 2020. P. 443.
53 Fisher, R., 2005. "Analysing successful transfer effects in interactive conflict resolution." *In Paving the Way.* Lexington. P. 1–17; Jones, P. (2015); Mitchell, C. "Persuading lions: Problems of transferring insights from track-two exercises undertaken in conditions of asymmetry." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 2:1. 2009. P. 32–50.
54 Fisher, R. (2020). P. 448.
55 Kelman, H. "Contributions of an unofficial conflict resolution effort to the Israeli–Palestinian breakthrough." *Negotiation Journal* 11:1). 1995. P. 19–27.
56 Fisher, R. (2020). P. 446.
57 Çuhadar, E., and Dayton, B. (2012). P. 172-173.

practitioners were growing more interested in "the spread of dialogue effects experienced by project participants to broader groups, practices, or policies in society[58]," which opened the door for civil society, public educators, and popular media to be legitimised as targets for transfer. This broader view allowed for transfer mechanisms like education, peer-to-peer empowerment, partnership, civic and political participation, and reintegration to receive attention[59]. In all of these contexts, however, transfer is seen as "a very complex process whose evaluation entails significant constraints and whose ultimate and exact contributions to peace processes are likely unknowable[60]."

Finally, a newly emerging object of evaluation is the observance of **normative frameworks.** Such frameworks include "do no harm[61]," which focuses on the impact a project has on the context it works within. The potential harm a dialogue project can cause may include: (1) adverse effects on the society it takes place within, such as increased polarisation or the re-traumatising of vulnerable populations; (2) dangers to participants, especially when dialogue processes take place in the open; (3) the allocation of limited resources to dialogue projects as compared to urgent humanitarian needs; (4) the reproduction of power structures that cause harm to one or more of the parties involved, among others. In the Ukrainian context, local facilitators and dialogue conveners have warned that pressing for dialogue between Ukrainian and Russian citizens during such a hot phase of war does not take into account the traumatic nature of the invasion and may result in further psychological harm to an already vulnerable populace[62]. Whether a dialogue project was designed or implemented to take these complexities into account can be a target for evaluation.

Other normative frameworks have been noted as especially relevant to facilitated dialogue projects[63]. For example, recruitment processes can be evaluated for whether or not they have been sufficiently *inclusive* of affected populations. For instance, are representatives of all parties brought to the table? And, are there efforts made to include the voices of women, minorities, youth, citizens living on non-government-controlled territories, local communities, IDPs or veterans in the dialogue[64]? Another normative framework revolves around the *desired goal* of a dialogue project: does "mere" problem-solving go far enough, or should a dialogue strive to further the strengthening of social cohesion or the transformation of society? Ownership is another major factor, as some projects are accused of sidelining local experts in favour of international figures or NGOs who may not be as familiar with the local context or who are able to amplify relevant community voices. Another related factor to

58 Froude, J. and Zanchelli, M. (2017). P. 3.
59 Froude, J. and Zanchelli, M. (2017).
60 Fisher, R. (2020). P. 441
61 Bush, K. A Measure of Peace: *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Development Projects in Conflict Zones.* The Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program Initiative & The Evaluation Unit. 1998. Retrieved from: https://gsdrc.org/document-library/a-measure-of-peace-peace-and-conflict-impact-assessment-pcia-of-development-projects-in-conflict-zones/
62 "7 points on the war and dialogue from Ukrainian mediators and dialogue facilitators." Mediation and Dialogue Research Center. 2022. Retrieved from: https://md.ukma.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Public_Statement_War_and_Dialogue_Ukraine_ENG.pdf
63 Palmiano Federer, J. "Toward a normative turn in track two diplomacy? A review of the literature." Negotiation Journal 37:4. 2021. P. 427-450.
64 Çuhadar, E., and Paffenholz, T. "Transfer 2.0: Applying the concept of transfer from track-two workshops to inclusive peace negotiations." *International Studies Review* 22, 2019. P. 651-670.

evaluate is the *facilitation* itself, whether it is conducted by traditional scholar-practitioners with academic backgrounds, by NGOs with relevant experience, or by community leaders who work with conflict-affected populations.

The question of *whose* normative frameworks are applied is also important to take note of during the design and evaluation of dialogue processes. Certain norms may be defined by international bodies such as the United Nations through years of experience, but applying them without proper sensitivity to the field may lead to resentment from local actors who see this as an intrusion of outside values into their context.

To conclude, the question of what to evaluate depends upon: (1) the evaluative goals determined by stakeholders and/or donors (for example, accountability or learning); (2) the specific change/impact that is seen as the goal of the dialogue itself, often as defined by conveners and facilitators pursuant to their theory of change; (3) the potential for transfer of relevant changes/impacts from one level to the other; (4) whether certain normative frameworks have been observed over the course of the dialogue.

2.3. How to evaluate? Indicators and data collection

2.3.1. Developing indicators

A major element of performing an evaluation, whether regarding facilitated dialogue or any other peacebuilding intervention, is developing and tracking indicators of change. According to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), a good indicator is a measurable sign of a particular kind of change or development[65]. For example, an increased amount of conciliatory language used during a dialogue session is an indicator of changing relationships among the parties.

Indicators can be **quantitative,** which can measure quantities and amounts, or **qualitative,** which can measure perceptions, judgements and subjective experiences. The amount of participants in a dialogue process over time (or their degree of influence in relevant institutions) is an example of a quantitative indicator, while recorded statements from participants about how a facilitated dialogue changed their perspective is an example of a qualitative indicator.

Useful indicators are selected in response to the specific needs of a dialogue process and often stem from clear objectives and a solid understanding of the initial context (known as the "baseline") against which change is measured. To this end, a common method for developing indicators is the "SMART" framework: is the indicator *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound* [66]?

65 Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). "Evaluating peacebuilding activities in settings of conflict and fragility: Improving learning for results." DAC Guidelines and References Series. OECD Publishing. 2012. Retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/publications/4312151e.pdf

66 Little, M. and Carnegie, T. *How to create SMART indicators.* Firdale Consulting. Retrieved at: https://www.firdaleconsulting.com/blog-post-2

Different projects will require looking for different kinds of indicators and there are a number of factors to keep in mind when planning an evaluation of facilitated dialogue. First, while there will be some obvious indicators that will be easy to measure (the number of participants, how often they met, how funding was used, etc), it can be more challenging to develop good indicators regarding the more abstract impact a dialogue can have (changed perceptions, community reconciliation, capacity building, etc).

Another issue to keep in mind is that some changes or impacts prompted by a facilitated dialogue might be unexpected and thus may not be measured by the indicators that were originally selected and measured. For example, an evaluation may attempt to measure a specific type of impact within a given community — should this impact not prove visible, the dialogue may be seen as a failure even though it may have created a significant and dynamic professional network more capable of initiating change in the long run. Certain projects possess the freedom to generate new, increasingly relevant indicators as time goes on, but restrictions on other projects (occasionally donor-imposed) can make this impossible. This is why the initial process of developing indicators is especially important. Seeking input from facilitators on the ground as well as evaluative experts connected and unconnected to the dialogue may be useful.

When developing indicators for a specific project, the following questions may be relevant[67]:

- What does the evaluation seek to learn or confirm?
- How will evaluators be able to confirm if a set of results actually took place?
- In what ways will signs of these results be specific and measurable?
- Are the selected indicators achievable, relevant and time-bound?
- What data collection techniques will be useful to collect relevant information?
- How might these results manifest themselves differently at different stages of the intervention?
- How might evaluators guard against "false signs" and problematic data, such as when participants report results they think that organisers want to hear?

67 Lederach, J., Neufeldt, R. and Culbertson, H. Reflective peacebuilding: A planning, monitoring and learning toolkit. Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. 2007. Retrieved from: https://pulte.nd.edu/assets/172927/reflective_peacebuilding_a_planning_monitoring_and_learning_toolkit.pdf

Some examples of the sets of indicators include the following:

DIALOGUE COMPONENT	EXAMPLE INDICATORS

Project Implementation[68]	• Operational goals:
	  ▪ Were concrete, operational goals involving logistics, accommodation, and catering set prior to the start of the dialogue? Were these goals achieved?
	• Donor requirements:
	  ▪ Did costs stay within budgetary requirements?
	• Topic relevance:
	  ▪ Did participants indicate whether the topic of the dialogue was relevant to the conflict or task at hand?

Recruitment [69]	• Participant relevance:
	  ▪ Did participants possess a desirable degree of influence over targets of transfer (official negotiation delegations, media outlets, civil society)?
	• Inclusion:
	  ▪ Did participant makeup reflect the diversity of the parties involved in the relevant conflict or societal issue, including women, minorities, youth, IDPs, etc;
	  ▪ Was there an acceptable balance of women and men present?

Normative Frameworks[70]	• "Do no harm":
	  ▪ Were any action plans developed during the design state that sought to mitigate potential psychological distress among participants?
	• Participatoriness:
	  ▪ Were participants involved in the design, implementation or evaluation of the facilitated dialogue?

68 OECD. 2012. Ropers, N. "Basics of dialogue facilitation." *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation.* Berghof Foundation. 2017. Retrieved from https://berghof-foundation.org/library/basics-of-dialogue-facilitation; Jones, P. (2015); Saunders, H. (2020).
69 Lederach, J. et al. (2007); d'Estrée, T., and Fox, B. "Incorporating best practices into design and facilitation of track two initiatives." *International Negotiation* 26:1. 2021. P.. 5-38; Kelman, H. (2008).
70 Lederach, J. et al. (2007); Rothman, J. "Action evaluation and conflict resolution: In theory and practice." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 15:2. 1997. P. 119-131.

Table continuation

DIALOGUE COMPONENT	EXAMPLE INDICATORS
Personal Change [71]	Were any relevant changes within participants recorded, including: ■ Increased knowledge of the conflict; ■ Enhanced sense of personal agency; ■ Behavioural changes; ■ New ideas for approaching conflicts, community concerns or policy issues.
Relational Change [72]	Were any relevant changes between the parties recorded, including: ■ Recognition of each party's needs, perceived stakes, and basic human rights; ■ Increased pursuit of joint thinking and collaboration. Were any increased instances of constructive interaction between the parties recorded, including the sharing of: ■ Knowledge; ■ Narratives; ■ Needs, emotions, concerns and hopes. Were improved communicative practices between the parties noted, including: ■ Use of active listening; ■ Less frequent use of escalatory language.
Outputs and "Artifacts" [73]	Were any of the following developed or generated during the dialogue process? ■ Knowledge; ■ Relevant skills; ■ Creative ideas (sound, realistic, politically feasible, reality-tested); ■ New directions, options or solutions. Did the dialogue conclude following the production of "artifacts" such as: ■ Action plans, including roles, timelines, outputs, and accountability structures; ■ Joint statements; ■ Policy recommendations; ■ Recommendations for negotiation processes.

71 d'Estree, T. and Fox, B. (2021).
72 d'Estree, T. and Fox, B. (2021); Kelman, H. (2008); Saunders, H.. (2011); Fisher, R. (2020)
73 Çuhadar, E. "Assessing transfer from track two diplomacy: The cases of water and Jerusalem." Journal of Peace Research 46:5. 2009. P. 641–658; d'Estree, T. and Fox, B. (2021); Saunders, R. (2011).
74 Çuhadar, E. (2009); Fisher, R. (2020).

Table Completion

Preparations for Transfer[74]	Mechanisms for transfer: ▪ Whether mechanisms for transfer had been identified, including: • Personal contacts and advisory roles; • Dissemination of products and "artifacts"; • Presentations for civil society leaders and grassroots groups. Targets for transfer: ▪ Whether targets for transfer have been identified, including: • Political leaders; • Negotiators and mediators; • Civil society, individuals and organisations;
Impact[75]	Participant political behaviour: ▪ Recorded changes in political actions; ▪ Publicly expressed ideas (speeches, publications, activism, etc) originating from the dialogue. Policy makers: ▪ New directions conducive to a transformed relationship between the parties; ▪ New discourses related to relevant societal issues or policy decisions. Impact on the resolution of a conflict: ▪ Whether agreements or peace processes reflect developments originating in the dialogue process.

2.3.2. Collecting data: data collection tools

Transcripts from facilitator observation[76]

One of the most mentioned methods for generating data for the evaluation of facilitated dialogues is creating transcripts of the proceedings. These are usually created by the facilitators themselves. There have been cases where specialised parties are present in the room with the explicit purpose of creating transcripts, but this approach is discouraged as the presence of outsiders to the process can create a negative impact, especially if the discussions are of a sensitive nature.

74 Çuhadar, E. (2009); Fisher, R. (2020).
75 Kelman, H. (2008); Fisher, R. (2020). Note that impact is often framed as the most difficult component of a dialogue process to evaluate, due to the a) the abstract nature of a dialogue's impact on the wider context, b) the difficulty in assessing whether a given result is attributable to a dialogue project or to other parallel processes and c) the immense amount of resources necessary to track impact over time.
76 Laurier, E. "Participant observation." In Clifford, N., French, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.) Key Methods in Geography. SAGE Publications Ltd. 2010. P. 116-130.

The typical method by which transcripts are created involves facilitators taking notes of their observations. The presence of video or audio recording equipment is discouraged as many participants may feel like they are being monitored and thus may limit their participation. As mentioned above, when there are teams of two or more facilitators, the role of taking notes can be alternated.

After the workshop has ended, these notes can be typed up into full transcripts that can then be used for content analysis (what was said, who said it, how often) and discourse analysis (how points were made, how communication habits changed over time).

Observation-based transcripts are an accessible tool for both new and experienced facilitator-evaluators. Having facilitators themselves record their observations is a way to produce data in cooperation with those involved in the process, as compared to having external evaluators come into the process later. However, much is dependent on the qualities of the facilitator-observer, as what they judge worthy of note will inevitably be a subjective judgement.

Organisational records[77]

Many records of how the dialogue was organised may prove valuable to evaluators. A common example is participant lists that provide ways to measure how successful a dialogue has been for convening "more people" (the number of participants, either once or over time) or "key people" (the influence of participants, especially for transfer purposes).

Other records relevant to evaluators may include: mentions of location or descriptions of the physical space (for evaluating the neutrality or appropriateness of where the dialogue was convened), itineraries (for noting workshop length and the diversity of its components), budgeting documentation (for evaluating efficiency and value for money), and others.

Certain records may only prove their value over time. For example, workshop participants may eventually move into notable roles in relevant institutions or negotiating teams, making it worthwhile to save participant lists for future use.

Surveys[78]

A popular way to collect information, surveys are made up of a series of predetermined questions used to gain insight into a particular topic. They can be distributed to participants online, by phone, on paper, or by other means.

Often the information collected using surveys is quantitative: closed-ended questions that can be used to create statistics. These are particularly effective when evaluators know exactly what information they would like to test, with participant opinions being recorded using yes/no questions, multiple-choice, or scales from 1-10.

77 Kelman, H. (2008).
78 Phillips, A. "Proper applications for surveys as a study methodology." *The Western Journal of Emergency Medicine* 18:1. 2017. P. 8-11.

Surveys can be used before a facilitated dialogue to create a baseline, right after the workshop to gain insight into immediate impact, and then some time afterward in order to gauge long-term impact. Due to the ease of inputting and collecting data from online surveys, large numbers of surveys can be distributed and analysed with ease.

However, all surveys rely on self-reported information, as compared to other methods like transcripts or organisational records — this means that such surveys carry a risk that participants may give "expected" answers rather than ones that genuinely reflect their experience. Additionally, survey relevance is dependent on design. If questions are not well-thought-out, the resulting surveys won't be able to track the most relevant information.

Interviews[79]

Interviews, along with surveys, are a popular way to generate data for evaluations. These are often structured or unstructured conversations with participants, arranged in a way that participants will be able to share their thoughts, opinions, or beliefs about a topic in depth.

Interview content can involve a dialogue's organisational elements, shifts in a participant's understanding of the conflict, or their impressions of what the dialogue process did to shape the group's behaviour. If what's being evaluated is the impact a workshop has on a participant's political life and activities, evaluators can interview colleagues who did not participate in the dialogue process itself.

These interviews can be quantitative or qualitative in nature — that is, they can seek yes/no and multiple choice answers, but they can also explore more nuanced data if the interviewer asks the right questions. Herbert Kelman, the designer of one of the evaluative frameworks below, suggests that long, informal interviews can be especially useful when there are few dialogue participants and when evaluators have the resources to sort through the resulting data.

Similar to surveys, interviews can be conducted before, following, and then periodically after the facilitated dialogue. Experienced facilitators warn that some participants get the wrong idea from pre-interviews — they interpret them as a sign that a given dialogue is a research project instead of a serious attempt at conflict resolution. Kelman recommends instead asking questions casually during a group "pre-briefing" session to avoid this effect.

Focus groups[80]

If interviews often concentrate on a single participant, focus groups work with groups. Multiple participants are brought in at the same time and are asked about their opinions on a subject. Groups are often formed according to certain criteria: all participants may be from the same locality, for instance, or possess similar political beliefs or economic backgrounds.

79 Stokes, D., and Bergin, R. "Methodology or 'methodolatry'? An evaluation of focus groups and depth interviews." *Qualitative Market Research* 9:1. 2006. P. 26-37.
80 Stokes, D. and Bergin, R. (2006).

The data produced from focus groups can range from individual responses to an analysis of what narratives arise within group contexts. Such groups are particularly useful when evaluators are interested in consensus opinions or differences in opinion. Both qualitative and quantitative data can be produced, and focus groups can be conducted before, following, and then periodically after the dialogue.

This technique is used to get a sample size of opinions, and evaluators are encouraged to pay attention to the ways that group dynamics may incentivise or disincentivise sincerity. Groupthink and self-censorship, due to social pressure in particular, can create a false sense of consensus. Creating a safe space for participants to express their opinions among their peers is essential.

Randomised experiments[81]

While scholar-practitioners like Kelman prioritise conflict resolution over the production of research, others use randomised experiments in academic settings to test the ways that facilitated dialogue differs from more traditional forms of discussion.

Researcher-evaluators divide participants into different groups (some test dialogue as a whole, while others create different groups to test different techniques or activities), including a control group that only experiences a traditional discussion. Participants are randomly sorted into test groups and control groups.

This method has been used primarily in academic or school settings, with participants most often being students. While this method can create powerful data for assessing dialogue effectiveness, the research context may make it an inappropriate choice for use in sensitive, conflict-affected situations.

Media and publications monitoring[82]

Monitoring the media and relevant publications is critical for evaluators looking to assess a facilitated dialogue's effect on society and the greater political atmosphere, as compared to its effect on a concrete negotiation process or on the opinions of a political/community leader.

Participants may speak publicly in ways that disseminate ideas generated from the workshop, and these can be published in video clips, social media posts, pamphlets, and other forms. It may be important to note which media outlets tend to disseminate ideas generated in workshops, as well as the public response to those ideas. Questions to ask involve: which outlets share what information, using what channels, to what audience, and to what effect?

81 Horiuchi, Y., Imai, K., and Taniguchi, N. "Designing and analyzing randomized experiments: Application to a Japanese election survey experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 51:3. 2007. P. 669-687.
82 Macnamara, J. "Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology." Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal 6:1. 2005. P. 1-34.

While a comprehensive media monitoring campaign may generate incredibly useful data, this is a resource-consuming method. Additionally, it is challenging to distinguish the influence of a dialogue process as compared to other parallel influences.

Process tracing[83]

Rather than being a single tool, process tracing is a grouping of four different ways to think about cause-and-effect relationships and track the impact a project may have had in a given context.

These four tools are separate formal tests that examine the strength of a particular claim for impact or transfer. Evaluators use them to hypothesise whether a given action was necessary or sufficient for a change to occur. One important part of this process is that evaluators are encouraged not merely to look at preferred actions or possible contributions to change — they must also investigate alternative reasons for a given change.

This method is best used to theorise the conditions under which a change is expected to occur, and then look at data collected using other tools to make judgements about the relevance of the specific factor assessed (such as the new ideas, attitudes, or behaviours inspired by a dialogue). While this tool may lead to interesting or surprising conclusions, it requires more training to properly use and thus may not be accessible to new evaluators or facilitator-evaluators.

Outcome harvesting[84]

Similarly to process tracing, outcome harvesting is less a data collection methodology than a way of organising the data collected by other tools. While process tracing starts with project outputs and seeks to link them to observable changes in the broader context, outcome harvesting works backwards.

Evaluators first note observable outcomes and then attempt to trace the causal chain that led to them. For example, if observably better relations have developed between the parties to a conflict, an evaluator can use that to start asking questions and uncover what series of events led to this change. As outcomes may not be visible for some time after a facilitated dialogue, it is an especially appropriate tool to use during periodic evaluations well after the workshop's end.

While outcome harvesting may provide key, eventual insights, it may be less effective in measuring the collective steps that are necessary but will only lead to a given outcome over time. Thus it may fail to capture the dynamics of what d'Estrée, in her evaluative framework described in section 3.2 below, called "meso-changes."

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83 Collier, D. "Understanding process tracing." *Political Science and Politics* 44:4. 2011. P. 823-830.
84 Wilson-Grau, R., and Britt, H. Outcome Harvesting. Ford Foundation. 2012. Retrieved at: https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/wilson-grau%2C-britt-%282012%29-outcome-harvesting.pdf.

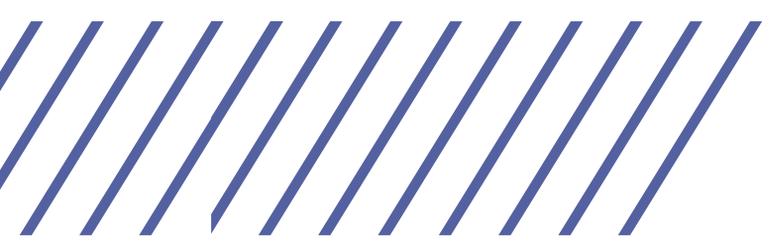
3. FRAMEWORKS FOR EVALUATING FACILITATED DIALOGUES

This section describes various concrete frameworks that evaluators can use to assess facilitated dialogues. The frameworks attempt to integrate many or most of the required elements of evaluation in a comprehensive way. Yet, none of the frameworks evaluate all components of the dialogue process — some are better at evaluating general project implementation while others pay closer attention to dialogue-specific elements such as behavioural change or transfer mechanisms. For this reason, many evaluators use different frameworks at the same time in order to generate a more comprehensive picture of the process.

Some of these frameworks provide reflective material for evaluators looking to design a custom-made evaluative framework while others offer a predesigned, step-by-step way to measure all steps of a dialogue process, from recruitment to transfer. Some of these frameworks were designed with a particular context in mind: transferring ideas or participants from a workshop to a negotiation process, for example, rather than to media outlets or civil society. It is advised that project conveners, facilitators and evaluators adapt elements of these frameworks to fit their goals and context.

While reviewing the following list and assessing which frameworks are most appropriate for a given project, factors to pay attention to include a framework's context, its goals (for example, evaluating accountability or transfer), the amount of steps involved, whether it is applicable to peacebuilding generally or specifically to dialogue, the resources and time used, what kind of indicators are relevant, and what methods are used to collect data.

This list comes from an analysis of scholarly and practical experience in the spheres of evaluation, dialogue, and peacebuilding interventions in conflict zones other than Ukraine. The list is not meant to be taken as a comprehensive guide but rather as a starting point for facilitators and evaluators looking to decide for themselves how best to evaluate the dialogue processes they work with.



3.1. General frameworks for evaluating peacebuilding initiatives, including facilitated dialogue

The Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Matrix[85]

- What should we work on? Which of the issues or conflict factors is a priority?
- Whom should we work with? Which actors/stakeholders are most important?
- Why should we work on that issue with those people? Is the rationale for our chosen approach solid[86]?

The model itself is a four-part matrix that analyses how two main factors intersect: people and levels of change.

Two types of people are identified: (1) more people, which refers to the number of people who have been impacted, changed, or transformed as a result of a project, and (2) key people, which refers to strategic participants that are either members of a preselected target audience or that are influential citizens able to impact society at large.

Likewise, there are two levels of change. First is individual change, which refers to the impact of a project on a specific number of people — in facilitated dialogues, these are the participants. Next is socio-political change, which refers to the broader structural, institutional, or cultural impacts of a project.

The RPP Matrix is meant to be a way for facilitators, dialogue conveners, and other stakeholders to track their project's impact, especially over time. A single facilitated dialogue may only take place in one of the quadrants, but an organisation conducting different dialogues over time will be able to map its progress as well as formulate a theory of change that leads from one quadrant to another. Different elements of a dialogue process can be mapped onto the model, and then indicators can be generated.

	MORE PEOPLE	KEY PEOPLE
INDIVIDUAL	Community dialogue	Dialogue among elites
SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE	Normalisation of dialogue practices within a region or community	Institutionalised dialogue across the contact line

85 CDA. Reflecting on peace practice (RPP) basics. A resource manual. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2016. Retrieved from: https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/reflecting-peace-practice-rpp-basics-resource-manual/.
86 CDA. (2016). P. 1.

The RPP Matrix is meant to be a starting point for practitioners and organisations to think about who they are targeting, what level of change they are aiming for and then, using this information, to create indicators that will give a broad picture of what impact their facilitated dialogue may have had. This tool, however, does not provide any guidance for creating indicators nor does it assist evaluators to assess a project's procedural elements.

The quadrants of the RPP Matrix are not meant to be seen as existing in isolation from each other as the linkages between them are just as important. For example, some dialogue processes have failed by recruiting only *more people* or only key people instead of engaging both audiences. This tool is simple, which may allow for its key concepts (more vs. key people, individual vs. socio-political change) to be used in the context of other evaluative tools surveyed in this report.

Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance (DAC Principles)[87]

Within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) can be found the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), a sub-body which created the *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance,* more commonly known as the DAC Principles, in 1991. This was in response to a growing need for standardised methods of evaluating development projects broadly, which at that point included peacebuilding projects. Later the DAC Principles were formally adapted to conflict contexts in the document *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility*[88] in 2012.

Since the DAC Principles aim for relevance across a broad range of peacebuilding and development projects, they primarily assess a project's organisational elements. In other words, dialogue facilitators, conveners and evaluators can use them as a tool to report on whether a project effectively used resources or is able to provide accountability to donors.

The tool relies on a set of predetermined qualities including impartiality, credibility, relevance, participation and donor collaboration. The 2012 version identifies four key areas for conflict prevention activities: a) *socio-economic development,* b) *good governance,* c) *reform of justice and security institutions* and d) *a culture of truth, justice, and reconciliation.* Peacebuilding projects, including facilitated dialogues, are encouraged to evaluate how their projects fare with regard to these broad areas.

87 OECD. Principles for evaluation of development assistance. *Development Assistance Committee.* 1991. Retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2755284.pdf.
88 OECD. (2012).

The criteria underlying the DAC Principles evolved, but currently include:

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTOR	POSSIBLE
Relevance	Did the project prove useful within the given context?	Did any dialogue participants complain of irrelevance during the process?
Effectiveness	Did the project achieve its objectives?	Were goals set before the facilitated dialogue process, and were these achieved?
Impact	Did the project have a greater impact?	Were any draft plans or agreements developed within the facilitated dialogue brought to the attention of relevant decision-makers?
Sustainability	Will the project's effects last over time?	Do project participants still communicate two years after the facilitated dialogue was conducted?
Efficiency	Did the project make good use of resources?	Were budgets made beforehand with proper follow-up?
Coherence	Was the project consistent with larger policy goals in the field?	Were facilitators and conveners advised regarding regional policy goals?
Linkages	Did the project coordinate with other initiatives in the field, and was there any overlap?	Are there many other projects conducting similar facilitated dialogues?
Coverage	What was the project's intended and actual scale?	Were project participants from one locality or brought in from different regions?
Consistency with values	Was the project implemented with regard to the goals, values or norms of relevant stakeholders, organisations, or donors?	Regarding norms of gender inclusion, how many women took part in the dialogue process?

Evaluators are encouraged to take these nine categories as a starting point to develop indicators of their own. With the exception of the category on impact, most of these categories will provide data on the organisational elements of a facilitated dialogue and will be of special interest to donors and other stakeholders looking to check in on how dialogue projects are being implemented. This data will be well-suited to providing accountability or confirming the efficient use of resources.

The DAC Principles provide guidance on these issues and moreover are popular, respected, and familiar to donors. They can be adapted to individual projects, but are criticised for being inflexible and top-down in nature. They will not capture the nuances of impact and transfer, and so thus should be supplemented with other evaluative frameworks.

A team of experts operating under the now-defunct Initiative for Peacebuilding (IFP) adapted the DAC Principles to make them more accessible to projects focused on peace mediation and dialogue, as will be discussed below in section 3.2.

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)[89]

The Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) tool was developed by Kenneth Bush and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in 1998 and updated in 2014[90]. This was after the DAC Principles were published as a general guide for development agencies but before their 2012 adaptation to contexts of conflict. During this interim, PCIA became widely discussed, criticised, and implemented as one of the few robust frameworks addressing peace and conflict directly.

While the DAC Principles focused on organisational elements, PCIA focused on the impact projects would have on conflict-affected and otherwise fragile contexts. It especially focused on a project's potential and unforeseen negative consequences, especially with regard to the "do no harm" principle. In this sense, it is closer to the RPP Matrix as it is interested in impact, broadly speaking. Additionally, it provides guidelines not only for evaluating a project's outcomes, but also lists criteria for stakeholders to use when assessing whether to launch a project in the first place.

PCIA outlines five areas of potential impact for peacebuilding interventions, including facilitated dialogues, to take into account:

89 Bush, K. (1998).
90 Bush, K., and Duggan, C. "Evaluation in conflict zones: Methodological and ethical challenges." *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 8:2. 2013. P. 5-25.

AREA	EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT FACTORS
Institutional capacities to limit violence and promote peace Later reformulated as: **Conflict management capacities**	• Capacity to respond to peace and conflict challenges; • Financial capacity; • Institutional flexibility; • Credibility among stakeholders.
Military and human security	• Levels of violence or need deprivation; • Veteran reintegration; • IDP integration; • Ceasefires.
Political structures and processes	• Legal reform; • New policies impacting conflict-affected populations; • Decentralisation; • Institutionalised dialogue.
Economic structures and processes	• Supply of goods to conflict-affected regions; • IDP entrepreneurial initiatives; • Economic reconstruction; • Pension reform.
Social reconstruction and empowerment	• Quality of life; • Tolerance, inclusion, participatory democracy; • Provision of social services; • Facilitated dialogues.

PCIA users identify predetermined targets using these five categories and then develop indicators to evaluate whether their intervention had an impact on them. Many criticisms of PCIA focus on its top-down and inflexible nature, and so evaluators of facilitated dialogues may be encouraged to be more flexible with their targets, especially as new factors may emerge with time that prove especially relevant. Another criticism of PCIA is that many organisations have used it inconsistently over time, for purposes such as program design, impact on the conflict, a conflict's impact on the project, and others, necessitating greater clarity during design and implementation.

This tool is meant to serve as a supplementary framework to other evaluative approaches, with an eye to assess a project's positive or negative impact on a conflict-affected or fragile context. Evaluators of facilitated dialogues may find these five categories useful when developing their theories of change, identifying relevant organisational categories, or evaluating the long-term contribution of dialogue processes to change.

Evaluators and implementers are encouraged to select their own indicators, but the working paper on PCIA provides examples of various indicators relating to security, psychology, societal factors, politics, and judicial matters. Many of the initial indicators have to do with legal reform.

The Reflective Peace Toolkit (RPT)[91]

Designed by John Paul Lederach, Reina Neufeldt, and Hal Culbertson in coordination with the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the *Reflective Peace Toolkit (RPT)* is a document outlining at once a theory of change and a framework for evaluating peacebuilding projects, including facilitated dialogues.

As is typical of Lederach's work in particular, the RPT is especially relevant for grassroots projects and initiatives aimed at broader cultural change and conflict transformation. While documents describing the RPP Matrix, the DAC Principles, and PCIA focus on the situation on the ground and how to evaluate it, the RPT aims just as much to shape the perspective of evaluators and is thus a useful document for those who are new to the field. It provides suggestions for becoming more aware of how theory (especially theories of change) manifest in day-to-day peace work and offers guidance for making links between observations and desired outcomes, a necessary skill for designing, noticing, and assessing relevant indicators.

Lederach and his colleagues propose a four-part framework describing different dimensions of conflict, made up of the *personal,* the *relational,* the *structural,* and the *cultural.* Evaluators of facilitated dialogues are encouraged to design indicators within the quadrants that their initiative seeks to address, with the *personal* and the *relational* being the most developed in the document itself.

Dialogue conveners are advised to be aware of what type of change is targeted by a particular project, which allows for evaluators to design concrete and effective indicators able to track a dialogue's impact in these areas.

91 Lederach, J. et al. (2007).

PERSONAL	RELATIONAL
Individual change, especially regarding attitudes and behaviours.	Change in the relationship of the parties, especially regarding polarisation, trust, communication, cooperation, collective decision-making, and conflict-handling mechanisms.
STRUCTURAL	**CULTURAL**
Broader change regarding organisations, institutions, power structures, procedural mechanisms, etc.	Broader change regarding cultural attitudes, political or societal "atmosphere," behavioural norms, and conflict-conducive cultural patterns or narratives.

Like the RPP Matrix, the RPT distinguishes between personal and societal change, but instead of focusing on key or more people (which may be evaluated within the "personal" level), it addresses potential changes to relationships, which is something that facilitated dialogue specifically aims to influence and has shown success in doing so. However, it may be difficult to develop indicators for structural or cultural change that are explicitly linked to a particular dialogue process. This difficulty is also explored in other frameworks below.

Evaluation and participatory inclusion: Action Evaluation (AE)[92]

Action Evaluation (AE) is an evaluative framework developed and popularised by Jay Rothman and Marc Howard Ross in the late 1990s in response to the rising challenge of ethnonational violence, identity-based conflicts, and civil wars. These types of conflicts were seen as protracted, deep-seated, and requiring a flexible and inclusive framework for evaluation that included participants and local stakeholders. They developed this framework in conjunction with their work on identity-focused facilitated dialogues, though AE has also found wide acceptance in the broader peacebuilding community.

Taking inspiration from action research methodology, which seeks to include participants in the design and implementation of research processes, AE prioritises local ownership. As such, this is not a framework for evaluation so much as a way to design evaluative frameworks that take into account local needs and stakeholder priorities. Success is defined (and redefined) by the actors involved, and this is hoped to create assessments directly relevant to the stakeholders involved.

92 Rothman, J. (1997).

The process has three steps.

ESTABLISHING A BASELINE	FORMATIVE MONITORING	SUMMATIVE EVALUATION
Participants express their definitions of success. Various stakeholders or relevant groups build consensus regarding success, goals, and plans. An action plan is built collaboratively.	Action plans are implemented. Definitions of success, as well as the plan, are collaboratively monitored and adjusted by relevant stakeholders as needed.	Participants are involved in the process of asking questions, designing indicators, and measuring internally-defined successes. Relevant plans, goals, and definitions are updated as necessary if the project continues on to new phases.

AE roots itself in participatory action, inclusivity, local ownership, and a bottom-up approach that favours the experience and priorities of stakeholders on the ground. The type of data it produces varies according to the project — other evaluative frameworks mentioned above can be used to provide data concerning procedural effectivity or impact, but only if agreed upon by the participants themselves. In the case of facilitated dialogue, this means that dialogue participants define what success will look like. AE has been reported to lead to greater coherence among groups and increased personal investment in the project.

When different processes happen concurrently, this can mean that each individual dialogue can be evaluated differently and the data produced may be difficult to synthesise into a common picture. This may be preferable for long-term dialogue processes involving the same group, or in cases where donors are receptive to the idea of participatory ownership and open-ended evaluative frameworks. However, this free-flowing evaluative approach may prove a challenge to donors or government officials used to specific formats for evaluative frameworks.

While AE can be, and has been, used to evaluate facilitated dialogue, this framework provides no guidance as to what to record, what indicators to select or whether particular theories of change may prove useful. Additionally, parties in increasingly polarised societies like Ukraine may not be ready to immediately collaborate with perceived rivals or find consensus regarding success and goals. Initial rounds of dialogue may be required before reaching this point.

Evaluating cohesion and collective action: the CDA Framework for Collective Impact in Peacebuilding[93]

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA), which developed the RPP Matrix, also created a separate framework for reflecting on collective impact: the ability of various organisations to come together and complement each other's efforts in a given context. In addition to generating reflection, it can be used to evaluate the collective work in contexts like Ukraine, where various facilitated dialogue processes occur at once that may benefit from more cohesive implementation and evaluation.

As such, this is not a tool for assessing impact, procedural effectivity, or providing accountability. Instead, it is exclusively concerned with whether a coalition of different organisations or projects are coordinating among themselves effectively. This tool assumes that this coordination is either already happening or that various organisations have a desire to coordinate, but it can also be used to convince such organisations that coordination is worthwhile, or for donors to fund a project aimed at bringing different initiatives together.

The tool asks evaluators to assess a set of groups' collective impact in five key areas:

Common Agenda Also framed as: **Collective & Emergent Understanding**	Focused on conflict analysis, progress and awareness of who is doing what. • Has a shared understanding been developed? • Has a map of who is doing what been produced? • Is conflict analysis re-conducted on a regular basis and does it include all interests?
Shared Measurement Also framed as: **Collective Intention & Action**	Focused on common agendas, the level/ scope of action, core strategies and common measurement norms. • Has a collective vision of long-term and immediate evaluative steps been developed? • Has a document been produced describing approaches, strategies, and theories of change that have been collectively adopted? • Have shared measures been identified and monitored?

93 Woodrow, P. *Framework for collective impact in peacebuilding.* CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2017. Retrieved from: https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Framework-for-Collective-Impact-in-Peacebuilding.pdf.

Mutually Reinforcing Action Also framed as: **Collective Learning & Adaptive**	Focused on regular feedback, adjustments, and mutual learning. • Have structures enabling collaborative learning been designed and implemented? • Is feedback and data analysed collectively? • How are these analyses used to adjust action plans?
Continuous Communication Also framed as: **Continuous Communication & Accountability**	Focused on continuous data sharing, common reflection, and exchange of experience. • Have structures for mutual accountability been created? • Are there transparent mechanisms for ongoing internal and external communication? • What frameworks exist for responding to feedback from external communication?
Backbone Support	Focused on whether "sufficient support structures" exist and are sustainable. • Have representatives or organisations been appointed to provide support? • How are they held accountable? • Are there mechanisms for reporting vulnerabilities regarding support structures? • Have regular reviews been conducted?

As mentioned above, the data produced by this type of evaluation is organisational in nature and creates a map of whether different actors have come together to strengthen their collective impact. This will not be of relevance to all evaluators of facilitated dialogue but may be of particular interest to parties in Ukraine seeking to leverage the diversity of the professional community of facilitators and promote greater coordination and cohesion between their efforts.

This takes, however, a great deal of time and resources to evaluate (let alone implement) and would likely require a donor looking to support this level of coordination between initiatives. The *Framework for Collective Impact in Peacebuilding* provides suggestions for how such a project could be proposed to donors.

3.2. Frameworks and tools specifically designed for evaluating facilitated dialogues

The DAC Principles revisited: Evaluating Peace Mediation (EPM)[94]

The Initiative for Peacebuilding (IFP) was a consortium of organisations led by International Alert. Together with swisspeace, the Center for Peace Mediation and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), they released a version of the widely accepted DAC Principles that were adapted for use within contexts of peace mediation and facilitated dialogues. The resulting document, *Evaluating Peace Mediation* (EPM), was released in 2008.

This reframing of the DAC Principles took place in response to a wide-ranging debate over their relevance, one that eventually led to a re-release of the DAC framework in 2012 in a form addressing conflict-affected and fragile situations. The authors of the EPM hoped to contribute to this discussion while providing specific guidance to mediators and facilitators while addressing persistent issues with evaluating mediation and dialogue. These challenges facing evaluators are discussed below in section 4 of this report and include quickly-changing goals, complexities on the ground, and the multiplicity of mediation styles and outcomes.

The EPM's main innovation was to apply the nine DAC evaluative categories (explored above) to three very different frameworks of mediation and facilitated dialogue. The first, **power-based mediation**, reflects a political realist worldview and utilises the promise of rewards and the threat of sanctions in order to reach agreement. The second, **interest-based mediation**, refers to "problem-solving" dialogue processes that seek creative solutions taking into account the diverse interests around the table. The third, **transformative mediation**, is informed by conflict transformation theory and favours long-term engagement aimed at the shifting of relationships within and between the parties.

94 Lanz, D., Wählisch, M., Kirchhoff, L. and Siegfried, M. *Evaluating peace mediation. Initiative for Peacebuilding.* 2008. Retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/derec/ec/Swiss%20Peace%20-%20evaluating%20peace%20negotiations.pdf.

The adapted DAC matrix would then look like this:

	General	Power	Interest-based	Transformative
Relevance				
Effectiveness				
Impact				
Sustainability				
Efficiency				
Coherence				
Linkages				
Coverage				
Consistency with values				

While it focuses on mediation and dialogue, the EPM leaves concrete indicators open for evaluators to develop for themselves. That said, the document suggests a broad number of reflective questions that will be of use in this process. The EPM's goal is not to build a picture of what the best type of facilitated dialogue is, but to highlight best practices across a variety of projects and processes.

This will be of use to facilitators, conveners, and evaluators looking to leverage the tangible data provided by the DAC Principles (along with its credibility among donors) while also reflecting more abstract factors such as relational change and dialogue impact. It creates a framework to hold projects accountable to resources spent while also generating lessons learned.

"Links-in-the-chain" – Herbert Kelman[95]

Herbert Kelman was one of the pioneers of early facilitated dialogue in the mid-to-late 20th century. As both an academic and a practitioner, he valued concrete theories of change, a precise understanding of the dialogue process, and a methodology that would produce robust data when used correctly. Kelman, along with many other methodological developers surveyed below,

95 Kelman, H. (2008).

was involved in classical track two dialogues inviting elite members of society to problem-solving workshops (PSWs) in hopes of generating new ideas that could then be used to influence official negotiation processes.

For Kelman, the desired end result of a facilitated dialogue was contributing to a negotiated agreement that was high-quality, sustainable, and would provide a foundation for a transformed relationship between the parties. He was careful not to overstate the role that dialogue could play in this regard: dialogue can merely "contribute to changes in the political cultures of the two sides that would make them more receptive to negotiation with the other[96]." This goal of changing political cultures and "atmosphere" shaped his methodology.

His evaluative framework is made up of nine steps which he called "links-in-the-chain," and are accompanied by descriptors, recommended indicators and possible methods to collect data. The first four stages evaluate progress within the dialogue process, while the other five evaluate transfer to the wider conflict or societal context. As the dialogues he evaluated took place over an extended period, often comprising the same or similar participants, he was in a position to collect data on transfer mechanisms and their success.

STAGE	DESCRIPTOR	POSSIBLE INDICATORS	MEASUREMENT

The nature of the participants	If the dialogue has attracted "key" people	■ Politically influential or involved;
		■ Within the political mainstream;
		■ High credibility;
		■ Willing to:
		  • sit down with the other;
		  • absorb new ideas;
		  • engage in joint thinking.
			■ Analysis of transcripts;
			■ Looking at participant lists over time.

Engagement in the process	If participants are engaging in the process productively	■ Open participation; ■ Active listening; ■ Sharing differing perspectives; ■ Exploring the needs of the other; ■ Pursuing joint thinking.	■ Discourse analysis of transcripts.

96 Kelman, H. (2008). P. 32.

Table continuation

Change in interaction between parties over time*	If participant interaction during the dialogues changes over time in a positive direction	■ An increase in respectful language; ■ A decrease in blame, defensiveness; ■ Increased empathy; ■ Increased reassurances made to the other side.	■ Discourse analysis of transcripts.
Attitude change	If there are changes in attitude that participants walk away with	■ Changed perspective of conflict; ■ Hope for the future; ■ Sense of possibility; ■ Greater understanding of the other side.	■ Participant interviews, immediately after the dialogue AND following a period of time.
Impact on participants' political behaviour	If ideas from the dialogue affect their behaviour	■ Changes in political actions; ■ Ideas from dialogue surface in speeches, publications or oral presentations.	■ Analysing participant publications; ■ Self-reports; ■ Reports by colleagues.
Impact of participant's political behaviour on others	If participant actions affect others	■ Measurable influence from: • speeches; • activities; • example; • contributions; • organised activities.	■ Analysing participant publications; ■ Self-reports; ■ Reports by colleagues.
Impact on political atmosphere	If a dialogue process affects political atmosphere	■ A change in language used by media, politicians, parties, and the public; ■ New ideas seriously entertained by parties and by society; ■ A changed societal atmosphere regarding the conflict.	■ Public opinion data analysis • editorials; • media monitoring; • politician pronouncements.
Impact on policy-makers	If the dialogue is impacting elites and policy-makers	■ Changing attitudes towards peace among policy-makers; ■ New directions conducive to a transformed relationship between the parties.	■ Analysis of politician and decision-maker pronouncements; ■ Whether workshop ideas are present at high levels; ■ Whether workshop participants are involved in negotiation processes.

Table completion

The nature of the agreement	The presence of high-quality, lasting agreement	■ Durability; ■ Productive implementation; ■ The presence of helpful institutional mechanisms; ■ The quality of post-agreement relationship between parties.	*Not listed in Kelman's article.*

While Kelman's framework is academic and robust, facilitators and conveners of dialogue processes aimed at transforming communities, culture, or society (as compared to concrete negotiation processes) may find it necessary to adapt his methodology to their needs. This methodology is well-suited to creating in-depth case studies that can then be used for comparative purposes, to report to donors, or from which to derive best practices.

However, this level of evaluation requires specially trained evaluators, a long-term mandate and a great deal of resources. Additionally, while Kelman notes different mechanisms for transfer outside of the facilitated dialogue, tracking them may prove difficult especially in cases when evaluators are working with dialogue processes aimed at transforming society rather than elite citizens.

**Note:* Kelman draws special attention to the need to notice and evaluate these important turning points (symbolic gestures, recognizing needs, etc) as they often indicate major milestones in the dialogue process.

Five-stage workshop evaluation – Harold Saunders[97]

Like Kelman, Harold Saunders was a pioneer of problem-solving dialogues in international contexts, often civil wars or protracted ethnonational conflicts. As a former diplomat instead of an academic by trade, the evaluative framework that he developed focused on the most practical elements that fall under the control of facilitators and conveners: the facilitated dialogue itself.

His concern is over whether the workshop produces change among participants and lays effective foundations for transfer. In this sense, his five stages for evaluation have much overlap with the first four stages of Kelman's model (discussed above). Similarly to Kelman, Saunders worked with elite members of society in hopes that the ideas, possibilities, or even participants in the dialogue would go on to impact a negotiated settlement process. Facilitators and conveners of dialogue processes hoping to contribute to reconciliation or impact society broadly will need to adapt the model to better match their vision of transfer.

97 Saunders, H. (2011).

STAGE	GOAL	POSSIBLE INDICATORS
Convening the dialogue	Identifying the problem and gathering parties to talk	■ Whether an issue has been identified that would prompt both sides to talk; ■ Logistical organisation of the lead-up to the facilitated dialogue; ■ Inclusivity of invitations to participate in the dialogue.
Deepening understanding of the other and the conflict context	Achieving mutual understanding and the creation of a joint "map" of the problem that is accepted by all parties	■ The creation of a joint map; ■ An observably greater degree of collaboration or listening between parties;
Collaborative work on issue	A sense of collective direction for dealing with the problem	■ An observable increase in participants "talking with" rather than "talking at" each other; ■ Deeper conflict analysis conducted that includes the grievances and needs of all sides.
Designing possible courses of action	Creating a concrete document or plan for action that includes all needs and perspectives of the parties	■ The design of relevant symbolic actions and relevant actions that can be taken in response; ■ The design of interactive steps that sides can take towards each other to de-escalate conflict or depolarise society; ■ A plan of who to contact concerning ideas, plans, and other outputs; ■ A final document or set of recommendations that has common agreement.
Implementation	Delivering outputs of the facilitated dialogues into the hands of people who are empowered to act on them	■ Meetings with officials, thought leaders, and media; ■ Multimedia projects describing the project; ■ Consultations with conflict-affected groups.

Saunders' evaluative framework works in a chronological fashion, which allows evaluators (or the facilitators producing the workshop transcripts) to focus their attention on one element at a time. This makes the framework particularly useful for facilitators who are themselves learning to become evaluators of their own work.

The data produced will be a concrete picture of what happened within the confines of the facilitated dialogue, which may eventually form the basis of briefings for donors and policy-makers or a case study for eventual comparative use by academics or practitioners. While Kelman's model requires vast, multi-year observation of long-term dialogue processes, Saunders' model can be used to describe a single workshop or a series of dialogues conducted over time.

That said, this framework will have to be complemented by another framework if evaluators are seeking to assess a facilitated dialogue's contribution to broader cultural, structural, or political change.

The Process and Outcome Model – Ronald Fisher[98]

Ronald Fisher's work stands alongside Kelman's and Saunders' as innovating the format of problem-solving workshops for addressing deep-seated conflicts globally. As an academic, his method for evaluating facilitated dialogues focuses more on different components of the process rather than a chronological set of stages.

Many of these components reflect processes that occur simultaneously, so evaluators are encouraged to pay attention to multiple factors at once.

COMPONENT	WHAT IT EVALUATES	FACTORS TO MEASURE
Identity of participants	Whether the participants have been selected carefully and appropriately	■ Participant roles; ■ Capacity (personal/unofficial); ■ Influence; ■ Credibility; ■ Openness to ideas; ■ Motivation to participate in the process; ■ Openness to change.
Conditions of interaction	The quality of interaction between participants	■ Open communication; ■ Problem-solving orientation; ■ Respectful behaviour; ■ Shared analysis; ■ Different perspectives; ■ Mutuality and reciprocity.
Qualities of development	The progress of relationships within a workshop	■ Shared norms of constructive confrontation; ■ Limited internal cohesion and group identity; ■ Empathy and mutual responsiveness; ■ Thinking and working together.

98 Fisher, R. (2020).

Table continuation

Individual change	Change within the participants	■ Improved attitudes; Increased positivity; ■ New complexity of thought; Cooperative orientation; ■ New knowledge and skills acquired; ■ New insights concerning the conflict and the other side.
Products or outcomes	What comes out of the facilitated dialogue	■ Creative ideas and options; ■ Principles, frameworks, and proposals; ■ Engagement in formal roles; ■ Changes in political behaviour; ■ Relational structures, networks, and coalitions.
Mechanisms of transfer	The ways transfer is hoped to take place	■ Personal contact and advisory roles; ■ Formal briefings; ■ Writings and speeches; ■ Dissemination of products and “artifacts”; ■ Enactment in formal roles; ■ Political involvement; ■ Activities of relational structures.
Targets of transfer	The objects of intended transfer	■ Leaders; ■ Decision- and policy-makers; ■ Negotiators and mediators; ■ Bureaucrats and officials; ■ Public and political constituents; ■ Civil society, individuals, and organisations; ■ Media organisations; ■ Thought leaders and influencers.
Effects of transfer	The visible impact or contributions of dialogue on wider context	■ Impact on individual targets; ■ Improved political discourse and atmosphere; ■ Mutually beneficial agreements; ■ Improved relationships; ■ The resolution of the conflict.

Fisher's focus on the different components of the facilitated dialogue experience is more precise and offers more guidance than Saunders' more practical five-step framework (which can provide more support for evaluators learning about what to pay attention to during a dialogue) but is consequently more abstract and less immediately accessible.

The components on transfer that Fisher proposes are more applicable to different types of dialogue than Kelman's model — while Kelman focuses on participants' political influence on negotiations and society, Fisher's model allows for facilitators, conveners, donors, and evaluators to design their own mechanisms, targets, and effects of transfer, ones that will be most relevant to their own context. As such, this Process and Outcome Model works across different tracks and appeals to levels ranging from unofficial diplomacy to grassroots community reconciliation.

The Framework Approach – Tamra Pearson d'Estrée[99]

While researching different evaluative methodologies for primarily track two dialogues, scholar-practitioner Tamra Pearson d'Estrée identified two main challenges voiced by evaluators. The first was that of selecting criteria to assess, and the second was how to link individual change among participants, which she calls "micro-change," to broader structural, cultural, or political change, which she calls "macro-change."

To address the first challenge, d'Estrée and her colleagues created a "framework" model that outlines a) different types of change that occur during a facilitated dialogue, and b) foundations that can be laid for transfer and broader societal change. What results is a simple model that familiarises facilitators, conveners, and evaluators with various options for selecting criteria[100].

I. CHANGES IN REPRESENTATION	II. CHANGES IN RELATIONS
▪ New learning; ▪ Attitude change; ▪ Integrative framing; ▪ Problem-solving; ▪ Better communication; ▪ New language.	▪ Empathy; ▪ Improvements in relational climate; ▪ Validation and reconceptualization of identity; ▪ Security in co-existence.
III. FOUNDATIONS FOR TRANSFER	**IV. FOUNDATIONS FOR OUTCOME/ IMPLEMENTATION**
▪ "Artifacts"; ▪ Structures for implementation; ▪ Perceptions of possibility; ▪ Empowerment; ▪ New leadership; ▪ Influential participants.	▪ Networks; ▪ Reforms in political structures; ▪ New political input and processes; ▪ Increased capacity for jointly facing future challenges.

99 d'Estrée, T. et al. (2001).
d'Estrée, T. et al. (2001). P. 106.

To address the second challenge, d'Estrée identified two other relevant factors. The first was the presence of three separate *phases of change* that required different evaluative approaches. These are often expressed as a matter of timing:

- The *promotion phase*, which takes place as the dialogue intervention generates discussion, changes relationships or produces "artifacts". This is usually measured *during or right after the facilitated dialogue.*
- The *application phase,* when participants implement various mechanisms of transfer beyond the scope of the workshop. This is usually assessed *a short time after the facilitated dialogue.*
- The *sustainability phase,* when long-term changes that the facilitated dialogue has contributed to are measured and assessed. This takes place *some time after the dialogue itself.*

Next, three levels of change are identified:

- *Micro-changes,* which occur on the level of individuals.
- *Meso-changes,* which take place within communities, neighbourhoods, organisations, or other networks.
- *Macro-changes,* which are broad societal, cultural, structural, or political changes.

Taken together, these two components combine into a table that evaluators can use to classify what types of change they expect to record and assess[101]:

TIME FRAME BY LEVEL OF IMPACT	PROMOTION	APPLICATION	SUSTAINABILITY
MICRO			
MESO			
MACRO			

One of d'Estrée's main contributions is the formulation of the "meso" level of change. While many of the frameworks in this report discuss micro- and macro-changes, she asks facilitators and evaluators to pay attention to the ways that a facilitated dialogue's impact affects society prior to hoped-for changes in conflict status or broad intergroup relations.

101 d'Estrée, T. et al. (2001). P. 109.

Evaluators, in particular, are to pay attention to how professional organisations, extended family networks, media collectives, political parties, and grassroots coalitions are impacted in mid-tier ways that form the foundation of long-term change. Developing indicators to measure this level of change is expected not only to give a more comprehensive picture of how dialogue can impact society, but also provide more grounded success stories in lieu of peace agreements or societal transformation.

This framework has proved popular and has been used in contexts ranging from interethnic conflicts to grassroots religious dialogue. It is simple to understand, reflects a broad range of processes and draws attention to important meso-levels of change not addressed by other frameworks. Evaluators are advised to be aware that not all levels in the second table are expected to be addressed in one project — indeed, different projects are encouraged to work on different levels to create more comprehensive coverage of the conflict context, possibly necessitating an additional evaluation of project collaboration like that suggested by the CDA *Framework for Collective Impact* mentioned in section 3.1.

Reflective Practice – Peter Jones and Elizabeth Shillings[102]

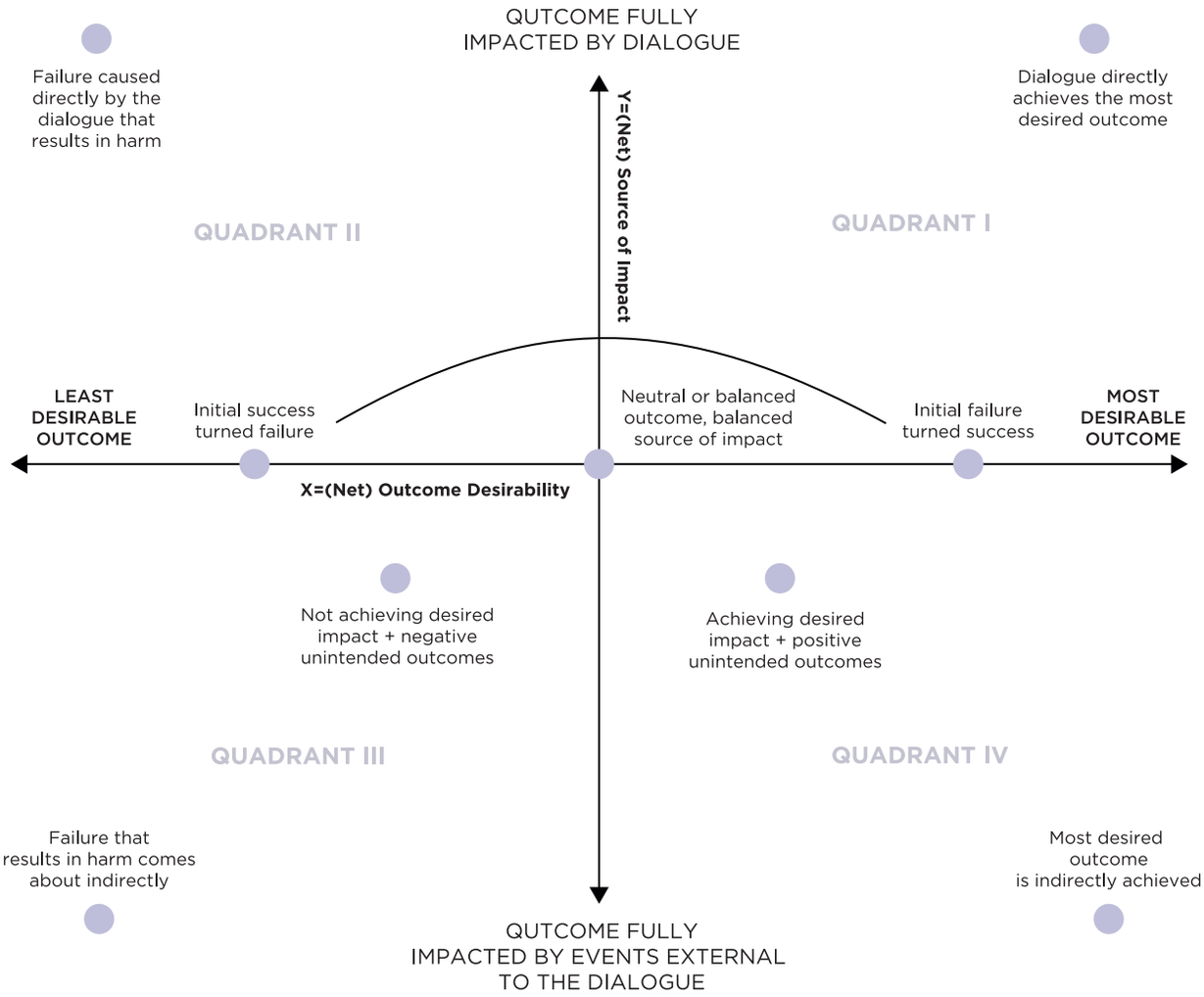
The Reflective Practice model, created by Peter Jones and Elizabeth Shillings, is the newest model on this list and is less a methodology to evaluate dialogue processes than it is to map various interventions (or their components) so as to promote reflection on practice.

The model presents four different quadrants, with each axis representing the desirability of an outcome and the influence a facilitated dialogue process has had on this outcome. Each axis has a range from one to ten, with facilitators and evaluators being expected to come up with a ranked set of indicators that allow them to plot outcomes visually.

102 Shillings, E., and Jones, P. "Best practices in the measurement and evaluation of track two dialogues: Towards a 'reflective practice model.'" *International Negotiation* 26:1. 2021. P. 85-101.

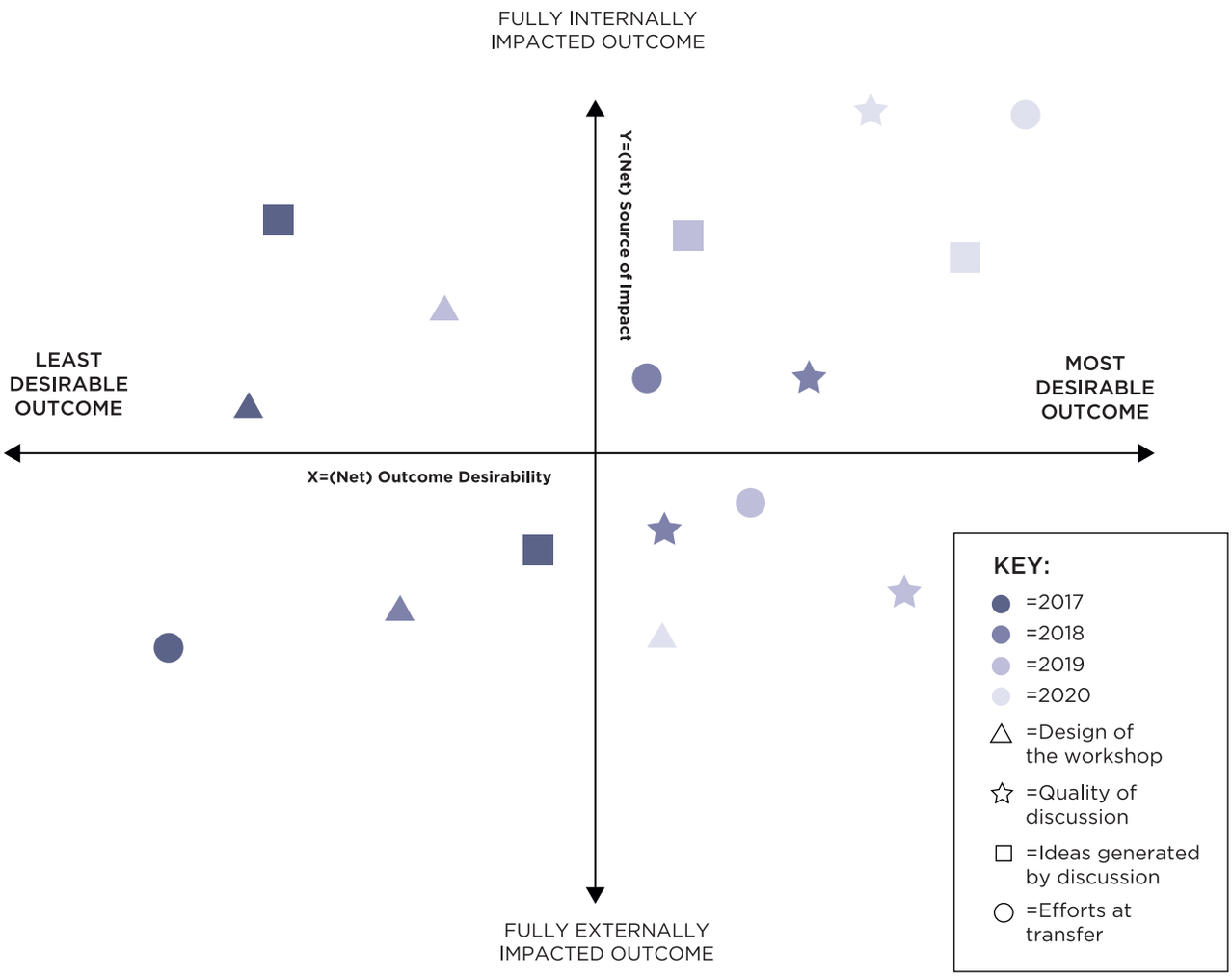
NEGATIVE OUTCOME CAUSED BY DIALOGUE	POSITIVE OUTCOME CAUSED BY DIALOGUE
NEGATIVE OUTCOME UNRELATED TO DIALOGUE	**POSITIVE OUTCOME UNRELATED TO DIALOGUE**

The end result will be a series of dots on the chart above that visually show the evaluating team's subjective assessment of success and influence. Rather than mapping merely one outcome, the different components of a dialogue can be disaggregated and mapped separately to create a snapshot of the different forces in play during one facilitated dialogue. Such components can include workshop design, quality of discussions, ideas generated, or mechanisms of transfer — all can be plotted in different places depending on their impact on participants, the dialogue process, or the conflict itself.



Taken from: Shillings, E., and Jones, P. "Best practices in the measurement and evaluation of track two dialogues: Towards a "reflective practice model." International Negotiation 26:1. 2021. P. 91. Reprinted with permission from Brill Publishers

The same dialogue process can be mapped over the years using different coloured points, allowing for a visual representation of how success and influence change over time. The tool has also been discussed as a way to possibly map different dialogue initiatives operating in parallel, which may allow for donors, policy-makers and other stakeholders to quickly familiarise themselves with the strengths and weaknesses of different projects.



Taken from: Shillings, E., and Jones, P. "Best practices in the measurement and evaluation of track two dialogues: Towards a "reflective practice model." International Negotiation 26:1. 2021. P. 96. Reprinted with permission from Brill Publishers.

The subjective nature of this assessment, however, requires note. This is a "mapping" system to prompt reflection rather than to give an objective perspective that will go on to inform funding decisions. Should this model be used among donors in this way, the evaluating organisations may be incentivised to highlight successes while downplaying failures. Another note is that, while the end product is an accessible, visual graph, much reflection is needed ahead of time to produce a relevant and useful image. While this reflective task will prove useful to any evaluative team or process, it requires time and training to accomplish and thus may not be accessible to newer evaluators.

4. THE CHALLENGES OF EVALUATING FACILITATED DIALOGUE

The intangibility and complexity of facilitated dialogue impact[103]

The complexities involved with evaluating dialogue are numerous. First, there is the intangible nature of dialogue work itself — it seeks to influence attitudes, perceptions, and relationships not only on an individual level, but within societal and political contexts as well. Existential and identity-based dialogue processes often deal with deep-seated conflicts that themselves are driven by roots that seem intangible and difficult to map. It is not always immediately obvious who the relevant stakeholders are and where their actual needs lie.

Another difficulty is in assessing the impact of a facilitated dialogue process within complex conflict situations where there are, usually, many simultaneous interventions in play. It can be difficult to parse which process led to what particular result. If the context seems particularly "ripe" for resolution, it may be difficult to assign significance to dialogue rather than the political will of the parties or other factors.

Additionally, evaluations are often necessarily results-focused and take place within a specific time frame, whereas the results, outcomes, and impact of a dialogue process may take time to become apparent.

The lack of standardised practices for planning and implementing facilitated dialogues[104]

Facilitated dialogue processes have been used to address an increasingly broad array of issues. These can include, for example, post-conflict reconciliation, policy design and implementation, community relations, societal healing, and reconciliation. Some dialogue processes aim at influencing official negotiation processes while others attempt to influence particular communities or society at large.

Given the complexities of these diverse contexts, various interventions will often design their dialogues using radically different formats and structures. These context-specific requirements mean that general rules or standard formats are unlikely to emerge, which also means that evaluations will need to be tailored to individual projects to a great degree. In one evaluation, an understanding of how dialogue impacts realist-based power structures will be useful, while in another evaluation there may be more of a focus on psychosocial factors. This can prove intimidating to new evaluators as it can demand expertise in a wide range of fields.

103 Lanz, D. et al. (2008); Jones, P. (2015); Shillings, E. and Jones, P. (2021).
104 Lanz, D. et al. (2008); Kelman, H. (2008); Bush, K. and Duggan, C. (2013).

What's more, the specifics of a given context will also give rise to particular demands. If a dialogue process takes place in an active conflict zone, greater care will need to be paid to issues of safety and confidentiality. If a country-wide dialogue process is implemented in various locations where the conflict status differs, evaluators will need to adopt a correspondingly diverse evaluative framework to account for realities on the ground.

An additional concern is that, in contexts where political or financial incentives exist to conduct facilitated dialogues, there may be an explosion of such projects — some of which may be planned spontaneously without much thought to include evaluative concerns into project design.

Perceived gaps between donor priorities ("dialogue as a project") and facilitator/stakeholder priorities ("dialogue as a process")[105]

Experience has shown that dialogues may be evaluated by different groups of experts, including: (1) external professionals hired by project staff (evaluators and project specialists) for the sake of program reporting to donors or by donors seeking to evaluate several projects within one program; (2) dialogue facilitators and local conveners for the sake of learning and to confirm whether it worked. Such groups see dialogue from two different perspectives and may conduct evaluations for different purposes.

Dialogue facilitators may want to understand whether a particular process was inclusive enough, whether a dialogue facilitator acted in a multi-partial manner, or whether all participants felt safe enough to freely express their views, fears, and feelings. They may be interested in whether the particular techniques used were adequate and effective or whether confidentiality, as requested by participants, was properly observed and so on.

Alternatively, donors may want to measure the quality of the event's organisation, which may include issues of timing, logistics, and catering. Questions they might ask may include: how many events were organised? What level of training did the facilitators possess? Were funds spent efficiently and was there value for money? Were relevant baselines developed in advance? Was the project more visible than the projects of other donors[106]?

This can lead to various funding tensions where, for example, the need for confidentiality may clash with a desire for public acknowledgement that a process is taking place. Some facilitators or conveners may prioritise flexibility and open-ended indicators, while certain donors require accountable project structures and transparent processes.

105 Saunders, H. (2011); Jones, P. (2015).
106 Lanz, D. et al. (2008);

Competing ideas of success[107]

Given the sensitivity and complexity of various conflicts, societal issues or policy decisions, it is not surprising that different stakeholders possess diverging metrics of success. When planning an evaluation, it may be necessary to privilege some metrics over others, which may generate resentment if a party feels that their needs or vision was not taken sufficiently into account.

Different visions of success can include: a resolution to a given conflict, the production of "artifacts" like media materials or policy recommendations, the development of intangible factors like optimism or a sense of possibility, improving relations between different parties, laying foundations for future negotiations, improving humanitarian situations on the ground, giving hope to conflict-affected populations, and others.

Furthermore, this may be complicated further if dialogue advocates or conveners "oversell" the potential impact of a given process, leading to inflated expectations and possible disappointment. Diplomatic breakthroughs may not take place, but influential elites may instead be "socialised" into thinking more cooperatively, which is a development that can be easier to achieve yet more difficult to measure and demonstrate.

Limited resources or mandate for in-depth evaluation[108]

While it may be a simple task to evaluate the impact of problem-solving dialogue processes, projects aimed at addressing societal or existential questions may require years of follow-up. Many projects do not have the resources to conduct such evaluations, or even the mandate to do so. This is especially true in contexts where projects have a duration of 2-5 years (or, in the case of Ukraine, often a single year) meaning that funds are connected to the limited timeframe of traditional project cycles.

What's more, in situations where resources, in general, are limited, organisations conducting facilitated dialogues may decide to invest more funds into areas like training, accommodation, or travel rather than even short-term evaluation. Facilitators and conveners have also noted that, given the choice to spend funds to improve the dialogue process or to improve evaluation components, many understandably prioritise the process itself.

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107 Lanz, D. et al. (2008); Kaye, D. *Talking to the enemy: Track two diplomacy in the Middle East and South Asia.* RAND. 2007. Retrieved from: https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG592.html; d'Estree, T. and Fox, B. (2021).
108 Kelman, H. (2008).

The reliability of data collection tools and methodologies[109]

A number of tools used to collect data for evaluation involve self-reports made by participants. Experienced facilitators and dialogue conveners note that, if interviews or surveys are conducted on behalf of influential organisations or stakeholders, participants may feel pressure to indicate more signs of success than actually emerged.

Even in cases when participants respond openly and frankly, it may be difficult to understand the changes that took place without conducting pre-interviews. These interviews may lead to an ethical dilemma, as excessive surveys may indicate to participants that they are taking part in a research study rather than a process aimed at resolving significant issues. Pre-dialogue "briefings" and focus groups may alleviate these concerns.

Another issue with reliability concerns participant makeup. If participants indicate changes in attitudes and behaviour, this may reflect less the dialogue's impact on them than pre-existing inclinations towards peace and reconciliation. This is particularly true when recruitment processes don't account for the potential over-representation of participants who are already prone to seeking peaceful solutions.

Additionally, many evaluative tools gather data on personal change (known as the "micro" level) and broad societal or institutional change (known as the "macro" level). This may leave out changes that take place on a "meso" level, within NGOs, civil society, educational systems, and other mid-range institutions where much societal change takes place. There is a need to develop tools aimed at measuring change at this important level.

Ethical issues[1110]

In addition to the issues listed above, there are many ethical concerns to take into account when evaluating facilitated dialogues. First and foremost is the issue of confidentiality and safety, especially in sensitive, conflict-affected contexts. Evaluators may be greatly assisted by transcripts of audio or visual recordings of a process, but these are often not possible due to participant sensitivities. Evaluators and facilitators present during the process may need to take detailed notes on paper that will later be used for the development of transcripts. Having teams with multiple facilitators may assist with this process, with at least one member of the team taking notes at different times.

109 Kelman, H. (2008); Jones, P. (2015); d'Estree, T. et al. (2001).
110 Lederach, J. et al. (2007); Kelman , H. (2008); Lanz, D. et al. (2008); d'Estree, T. and Fox, B. (2021)

There are also ethical issues with regard to planning dialogue interventions. It is common to design projects with evaluation in mind, which means pre-defining indicators, having a set format, and focusing on particular issues. This may conflict with participants who seek greater ownership in the planning/evaluation process or who interpret this as organisation concerns taking precedence over a participatory process of resolving a conflict. Circumstances may be seen as favouring observation rather than progress.

Additionally, especially when evaluators represent powerful organisations and stakeholders, care must be taken not to cause undue stress when collecting data, as well as not to leverage power to coerce participants into providing data or specific answers. Participant identities often must be kept confidential with regard to surveys and post-dialogue interviews.

Certain participants may be unfamiliar with the nature of dialogue processes and, when told there will be an evaluation, may interpret the proceedings as evidence that "real change" cannot be far behind. Evaluators, along with facilitators and dialogue conveners, must share realistic expectations for what dialogue can and cannot accomplish.

CONCLUSION

This report sought to analyse existing approaches, frameworks, and data collection methods used in the evaluation of facilitated dialogues. This was done in order to raise awareness of these issues among a Ukrainian target audience and lay the foundation for the further work of local facilitators to elaborate and develop a context-specific methodology to evaluate dialogues in the country. The report thus highlights the challenges involved as well as lessons learnt in other conflict contexts, especially as they may prove practical and useful for Ukrainian dialogue facilitators. The findings of this report may also be of interest to (1) civil society organisations that convene and evaluate dialogues; (2) international organisations and donors who support such dialogues in Ukraine and elsewhere; and (3) evaluation experts looking to apply their knowledge to the field of facilitated dialogue.

Based on the analysis of academic and practice-oriented literature, this report presents different elements in the field of dialogue evaluation: its goals (accountability and learning), the objects of evaluation, and the development and use of indicators as well as data collection methods, all of which comprise a guide for Ukrainian dialogue facilitators looking to familiarise themselves with the field. Additionally, this report presents six frameworks used to evaluate peacebuilding projects generally, including facilitated dialogue, and six frameworks developed to specifically address the unique needs of dialogue processes. Finally, based on the analysis of challenges regarding dialogue evaluation research and practice, the report highlights the following key points:

- Diverse types of facilitated dialogue require different evaluation approaches and methodologies;
- There is a lack of standardised practices for planning and implementing facilitated dialogues, which increases the amount of unique projects and complicates attempts to create universal evaluative frameworks;
- Evaluations need to take into account the issue of timing. The intangible and complex nature of a facilitated dialogue's impact is unavoidable given the goals of such processes: changes in attitudes, perceptions, and relationships not only among individuals but within societal and political contexts as well. All of this requires time to manifest and be conclusively recorded;

- Evaluations often proceed from a project's stated theory of change, which is specific to each dialogue/process and should be spelled out clearly during project planning and adjusted during the implementation phase. In the absence of an explicit theory of change, or in case of an unclear or confusing theory of change, evaluators and facilitators may have to develop a working version for themselves before proceeding to evaluation;

- Certain evaluation frameworks designed for general peacebuilding interventions may prove useful when evaluating facilitated dialogues, with regard to their organisational components in particular, but are less able to address more intangible elements like transfer and impact;

- Tensions may emerge between donor priorities, which may focus on evaluating a dialogue's organisational qualities ("dialogue as a project"), and facilitator, convener, or participant priorities, which may be more concerned with the quality of the dialogue as such ("dialogue as a process");

- The strength of an evaluative effort depends on the resources allocated to it, as well as on a mandate for in-depth evaluation over time. Both of these are often lacking in current dialogue projects in Ukraine;

- Evaluators and dialogue facilitators should be aware of issues relating to the reliability of data collection tools used for dialogue evaluation and the ethical issues involved in gathering data for such evaluations.

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