This document lays out the terms of reference for monitoring and evaluation technical support to Peace Direct and our partners.

**Peace Direct** - Peace Direct is an international non-governmental organisation dedicated to supporting local people to stop war and build lasting peace in some of the world’s most fragile countries. Peace Direct currently supports twenty local partners in thirteen countries around the world to stop violence escalating and build long term peace.

**Background to M&E at Peace Direct**

While Peace Direct was founded in 2004, it was only in 2016 that the organisation hired its first M&E Officer. Since 2016 we have invested considerable time and effort in understanding, with our partners, how to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of peacebuilding efforts. Evaluating peacebuilding is difficult for a number of reasons, including problems of attribution and the well documented and discussed counterfactual difficulties (i.e. how can we prove that an intervention prevented violence from happening?). Since recruiting a dedicated M&E Advisor, we have commissioned evaluations of most our major projects, shared the learning from these evaluations with the wider sector through the production of learning summaries, and have tried to instil in the team the concept of continuous learning and reflection, so that we consciously learn from our work and integrate the findings into new programmes.

Our focus on equitable partnerships and in transforming the peacebuilding system in favour of local action has also meant that we have approached M&E/MEL from a position of humility, recognising that it is our partners who do the work on the ground and not us, and that the current international system favours upward accountability (i.e. to donors) instead of downward accountability (i.e. to communities) or internal accountability (i.e. to each other as a team). For these reasons we do not wish to overclaim impact for ourselves; nor do we want to impose any MEL methodology on our partners, as we wish to co-learn and find contextually appropriate frameworks and indicators of success which genuinely help our partners and us to learn together, regardless of the pressures imposed on us by our donors.

**Purpose of this consultancy**

In April 2020 our M&E Advisor left her post, and instead of recruiting a replacement, we have taken time to reflect on what the organisation needs in terms of MEL staffing. In the meantime, we have a number of significant programmes which require technical support in order to develop appropriate MEL frameworks so that we do not fall behind on this important work. In particular we have three major projects that require specific technical input:

- We have developed a new grantmaking programme called the ‘Local Action Fund’ (LAF) which provides micro and small grants to a wide range of local peacebuilding organisations. Two of the major projects are part of the Local Action Fund. The nature of providing small grants for local groups makes monitoring and evaluation inherently difficult and may require an emphasis on creative approaches and self-reporting rather than externally commissioned evaluation consultants.
  - The Local Action Fund in Nigeria and Myanmar has a particular focus on atrocity prevention.
  - Our ‘Youth Action for Peace’ project, provides small grants and support specifically to local youth organisations in Central African Republic, DR Congo and Pakistan.
• A project funded by DFID which focuses on building the capacity of civil society networks to tackle identity based violence in DR Congo and Burundi.

In addition to the above projects, we support partners to implement a range of projects, all of which require some form of MEL framework.

**Specific objectives of this consultancy**

1. To work closely with Peace Direct’s staff and partners using participatory methodologies to jointly develop a contextually appropriate MEL framework for Peace Direct’s programmes, in particular the aforementioned projects
2. To provide technical training and advice to Peace Direct’s staff and partners in order to increase MEL capacity and support the implementation of an MEL framework
3. To assess Peace Direct’s current approach to MEL across our projects and to recommend changes/improvements

**Methodology and approach**

Peace Direct and our partners consider that the process of carrying out any kind of research is just as important as the outcome produced. For this reason, the methodology developed for this work must take into account the following:

**Do no harm**

• Peace Direct works on the assumption that ethics comes before evidence, in line with the principles of ‘Do No Harm’: ensuring that any kind of intervention does not inadvertently or in any way do harm or worsen the situation. It is essential that any interactions and work carried out as part of this evaluation do not in any way negatively impact the individuals or communities involved. It is critical that during data collection the psychological impact of the research on participants is considered, as well as their physical security.

**Informed consent**

• It is crucial that participants share information willingly and with informed consent, not because they have been chosen by peers, authorities or others, or because the researcher is aiming to include a certain number or profile of participants. The purpose of the collecting information must be made clear to all participants before any interviews or Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) begin.

• Participants must not be under the impression that they are required to participate in the study and should be aware of their entitlement to refuse to participate and/or withdraw their information at any moment for any reason.

• Consent must be explicitly sought for all elements of participation – eg. to participate in FGDs or interviews, to be quoted directly, to be photographed. It is fine for consent to be given for some things and withheld for others.

**Participation**

• The process and methodologies used for the evaluation must be empowering and participatory. It is crucial that the consultant develops the methodology alongside Peace Direct and its partners. It means that anybody interviewed or engaged in any way in the evaluation should find the process beneficial and it must not be purely extractive.
• The methodology used should attempt to capture a wide range of perspectives on the work carried out.

Learning
• Peace Direct strives to be a learning organisation. While evaluations are necessary to ensure accountability, we consider that lesson learning is equally important. We want the evaluation to be a learning process, directly embedding lessons throughout the consultation process with partners and feeding findings back to the partner and communities. It is also important that we learn from the process of carrying out the evaluation, as well as the findings of the research, and that consultants are open about the challenges, problems to be overcome, and the lessons of the evaluation process.

Rigour
• Findings and conclusions made must be thoroughly and clearly based on quantitative and qualitative evidence, including stories, first person testimonies, anecdotes and/or quotes throughout and any assumptions must be made explicit.
• Limitations in the research must also be made explicit – for instance if certain groups are not reached, it is not possible to travel to certain regions or there are constraining factors to how openly or freely participants share their opinions and perspectives.
• It is important to verify information by seeing if the same perspectives arise multiple times (in FGDs, interviews etc.). If contradictions arise, attempt to understand and explain why.

Record keeping
• The consultants must have an organised system for storing all raw data from field research and be prepared to share this with Peace Direct and partners upon demand. Information on those consulted must be disaggregated by gender and age and other relevant categories according to the project (eg. former combatant or not, ethnic group).
• The consultants must store all data from field research in an organised system. The personal data of participants (their names, gender, age origin and other relevant categories, as defined jointly by Peace Direct and the evaluator) must be recorded and securely stored. This information must not be shared by either Peace Direct or the research consultants and must only be used for the purpose of this research, with all personal data being anonymised in all outputs. The dates of all consultations (interviews, FGDs etc.) must be recorded.

The methodology must be approved by Peace Direct before work begins, based on the methodology and work plan developed by the evaluator/evaluation team.

Expected Reading
The consultant is expected to read and engage with the following documents and use these to inform their research:

Primary
1. Project proposal/application for the three key projects
2. Existing M&E Frameworks for those projects
3. All previous partner and donor reports for the projects
4. Previous relevant evaluations commissioned by Peace Direct
5. Peace Direct’s previous and current strategy
6. Peace Direct’s values and ways of working

**Person Specification**

- Experience of supporting the development of MEL frameworks for complex work in complex contexts
- Experience of using participatory methodologies in the develop of MEL frameworks
- Understanding of the complexities and challenges in monitoring peacebuilding efforts
- Excellent spoken English and French

Interested candidates should send their CV and a covering letter to recruitment@peacedirect.org, outlining why they are interested in the role and what experience and insights they would bring to Peace Direct.

**Deadline to apply: 13th September 2020**