



# Build Peace

Organisation Strategy – December 2025

  
Cord



A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a white coat, smiling and looking to the right. The background is slightly blurred, showing shelves with various items.

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# Executive Summary

**The devastating impact of conflict continues to be felt across the world, particularly among the poorest and most vulnerable communities. Its many complex causes include greed, power, identity and inequality. Sadly, the need for peaceful solutions far exceeds the resources available to support them. Solutions are not easy or simple, but they are vital. At their core lie relationships built on trust and mutual respect.**

**It is clear we need to Build Peace.**

This strategic plan highlights the decisions undertaken by Cord to address these challenges. They build on what we learned from our previous strategy.

Cord's commitment to building peace through developing and transforming relationships remains the driving force behind everything we do. It is a vital part of the answer to the challenges we see. This is why our strategy is titled Build Peace. It not only answers the question, 'What does Cord do?', but also defines the focus of our work in response to the realities we observe in the world.

Over recent years the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) has been established as a core foundation to programmes in conflict-affected contexts. There are however significant difficulties arising from 'traditional' HRBA programming. In recent years, the empowerment of Rights Holders to represent and claim their rights with Duty Bearers has often led to adversarial engagement and negative consequences. These include stigmatisation, imprisonment and in extreme cases, death for Rights Holders and their representatives.

Through its peacebuilding approach, Cord supports people to find new ways to address grievances, understand the root causes of conflict, and work collaboratively with those who hold different views. This adapted approach helps to improve the safety of those raising rights-related issues such as Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). Finding a path forward and resolving conflict requires us to create spaces to 'de-other' and spend time talking.

Cord will continue to champion this view, partnering with others who share similar perspectives to create a more peaceful world where everyone can flourish, free from fear.

Cord's Christian faith inspiration shapes our values. It guides us to prioritize relationships; treating everyone with dignity and respect.

Through our peacebuilding approach, based on our three-strand programme framework, we will facilitate collaboration between Powerholders (government, private sector, security forces) and local organisations so that people can enjoy greater freedom. We will use various peacebuilding tools and work with a diverse group of stakeholders to develop an environment conducive to peace.

In order to become more effective and achieve the goals of our Build Peace strategy, whilst working across our 5 programme themes, Cord will focus on three development priorities:

### 1. Promoting & embedding peacebuilding practice

We will prioritise peaceful solutions to conflict by promoting awareness and understanding of peacebuilding, both internally and with partners, by embedding it into regular practice.

### 2. Equipping partners for action

We will develop a more intentional partnership approach that ensures that Cord is consistently and meaningfully responding to the felt needs of local actors. When invited, we will work with partners to strengthen their capacity and catalyse their impact in conflict-affected contexts. Cord aims to be regarded as a 'partner of choice'.

### 3. Making the case for building peace

We will look to develop a stronger Organisational Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (OMEAL) system and wider evidence base. This will support external communication and advocacy, highlighting the necessity and efficacy of peacebuilding, including its crucial role in conflict prevention and post conflict recovery.

Our work will continue to be centred on 5 programme themes:

» **Economic Empowerment**

» **Women and Girls Empowerment**

» **Climate Change and the Environment**

» **Building Stronger Societies**

» **Fundamental Freedoms.**

During this strategy period we will also focus on developing our organisational processes in order to achieve our goals. From a funding perspective we will seek to increase our involvement in consortia, working with a wider range of actors, effectively articulating Cord's added-value and complementary approaches. We will also seek to diversify our funding sources, with a particular focus on developing strong relationships with trusts and foundations.

Regarding project and programme management, we will ensure that we are working effectively, efficiently, utilising available technologies and learning from the best practice of others.

Lastly, as an organisation committed to learning, we will focus on further integrating a learning culture into our organisational practice to inform an adaptive approach to programming.



# Who We Are

## Our Christian Faith

### Perspective

Cord is an organisation inspired by the Christian faith. It was started in 1967 by a group of Christians who wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of those who were suffering - regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, status, religion or sexuality.

Cord's name and logo refer to the three-strand cord *'that is not easily broken'* described in the Bible in Ecclesiastes 4:12.

Cord has changed in many ways over the last five decades but our faith inspiration, focus on transforming relationships, and commitment to working with people affected by conflict remains the same.

Our understanding of God continues to shape our values and approach:

**1. Relationship is at the heart of God** who is three in one — God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

**2. We are all created in God's own image** and deeply loved

**3. God's desire is for peace** in all of its fullness

The Bible also speaks of loving our neighbour (Matthew 22:39), protecting the vulnerable (Proverbs 31:8-9) and seeking justice (Isaiah 1:17). These principles inform our strategy which combines peacebuilding work with a Human Rights Based Approach.



## Values

How we do things is as important as what we do. We are guided by our organisational values, derived from our Christian faith inspiration. Cord employs staff of all faiths and none who gather around these values. We take time to reflect on their meaning across our teams, and how we can embody them through our work:

- » **We are compassionate** and nurture within ourselves a deep concern for our fellow human beings who are not flourishing. Although this can be expressed through words, we recognise this is best demonstrated in practical action.

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- » **We value everyone** and recognise that every human being is created unique and special. We therefore place great value on every human life being worthy of dignity and respect. All people have fundamental rights that should be protected - irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age, status, religion or sexuality. This includes those who are caught up in oppressive systems and behaviours.

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- » **We believe in the power of relationships** and know that communities and societies work best when strong and healthy interdependent relationships are formed. By acknowledging our connectedness and shared humanity, barriers are broken down, people can begin to trust and challenges can be overcome.

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- » **We explore the root causes of violence and conflict**, moving beyond superficial effects to understand hidden drivers and identify sustainable solutions.

## Vision

**Cord's vision is a world where all people can live in peace and live life to the full.**

## Mission

**Our mission is to transform dysfunctional relationships between individuals, communities and those holding power, into positive and thriving relationships built on mutual dependency and trust.**

Our work in challenging and restrictive contexts, informs our understanding that relationships between civil society and those holding power are often dysfunctional and lacking trust. This results in a restriction of people's freedoms and rights. Working through contextually relevant programme themes, we use our peacebuilding approach to develop the capacity of both groups to create meaningful spaces in which to build trust and confidence.

**“How we do things is as important as *what* we do. We are guided by our organisational values, derived from our Christian faith inspiration.”**

## The Need We See

Listening to Cord's staff and partners, it is evident that the world continues to be highly volatile. Significant conflicts have erupted across the globe and some countries experience military rule. Though mostly out of the media spotlight, millions of lives are adversely affected.

Whilst Cord's vision continues to be highly relevant, it is a distant reality for many people whose lives are devastated by conflict and dominated by fear.

However, this is not the full story. Looking a little deeper, a more nuanced picture emerges. It shows quiet, unseen acts of kindness and bridge-building, having a profound impact on people's lives. The consistent, methodical investment in relationships is not the most visible activity, but it must not be neglected amidst the clamour for direct military action.

**For the fighting to stop, for communities to heal, for people to co-exist without the threat of violence, there must be dialogue and space for relationships.**

Cord has worked in many contexts where relationships between individuals, local organisations and Powerholders are not functioning. They have been damaged by fear, mistrust, a lack of understanding and have lost the confidence to engage.

When individuals or groups are prevented from freely practising their religious faith, that's a dysfunctional relationship.

When Indigenous Groups protecting their ancestral habitats from illegal logging are intimidated or threatened by major corporations, that's a dysfunctional relationship.

When women and girls are excluded from public consultation and decision-making because of their gender, that's a dysfunctional relationship.

When government officials are too scared to approach or involve communities for fear of confrontation and attack, that's a dysfunctional relationship.

When authorities use ethnicity, sexuality or identity to divide, separate and discriminate against people, that's a dysfunctional relationship.







Where consultation does occur between individuals, communities and Powerholders, it is often insufficient. It can be a box-ticking exercise rather than leading to meaningful engagement. This trend is increasing with many countries now facing closed, repressed or obstructed civic space.<sup>1</sup> This breakdown in relationships leads to:

- » Governments taking extreme measures to restrict fundamental freedoms (e.g. social media use, protests, freedom of the press), particularly in response to public criticism by civil society groups.<sup>2</sup>

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- » Authorities prioritising economic gains over the protection of the human rights of communities.

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- » Communities feeling increasingly disempowered, complacent and withdrawing from holding Powerholders to account.

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- » Governments restricting access to funding and resources for local organisations who are working on human rights and democracy issues, and introducing repressive laws to prevent them from operating.

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- » The public no longer being consulted on key decisions and lacking fundamental oversight of government activity.

Powerholders are often able to operate with impunity and an absence of oversight. These dysfunctional relationships have a significant impact on the progress of development and the protection of human rights. They can lead to conflict and instability.

In the contexts where Cord works, evidence shows that poverty is prolonged when people lack access to and control over social, economic and political freedoms<sup>3</sup>. When people's voices are restricted, governance weakens. Public policies, spending, and decision-making become non-participatory. This results in services that are less responsive to actual needs.

If people are continually denied access to true, reliable information, with no visibility of the actions of Powerholders then the status quo remains unchallenged. The rights of marginalised and minority groups are further eroded.

The relationship between restrictive contexts and the state of global fragility is clear.<sup>4</sup> Clamping down on people's freedoms directly impacts on social, political and economic stability, increasing the likelihood of conflict.<sup>5</sup>

1 There are now 30 countries or territories with closed civic space, 51 with repressed civic space and 35 with obstructed civic space, meaning that 116 of 198 countries and territories are experiencing severe restrictions in fundamental freedoms (People Power Under Attack 2024, CIVICUS Monitor 2024)

2 Almost a third of the world's population now lives in countries with closed civic space. (ibid).

3 See for example Investopedia. "Poverty Trap." Investopedia, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/poverty-trap.asp#toc-what-causes-poverty-traps>. Accessed 23 Sept. 2025

4 USIP and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace study demonstrates the link between closing spaces for civil society and increased global fragility (2016), see also USIP (2017) study on link between a vibrant civil society and economic prosperity, and World Bank and OECD (2017) study on link between unequal power dynamics and poverty cycles.

5 World Economic Forum's Global Risk report (2017)

## Our Response:

### Build Peace

The need to Build Peace is clear. It will not happen overnight. It requires the concerted effort of many people. But in the face of challenge, uncertainty and conflict this must be our intentional response, we build peace. When we look around us, we can see that any well-functioning society depends on healthy relationships built on trust and mutual respect, whether it be with our neighbours, families, local and national authorities, businesses and many others. Some of these relationships are more important than others, some have more power than others, some are more equal than others.

However, Cord has learned that the relationship between Powerholders and citizens is the key to creating an environment where everyone can flourish and live free from fear. Put very simply, healthy relationships are fundamental in giving everyone – regardless of their identity – the opportunity to live in peace and live life to the full.

***“Healthy relationships are fundamental in giving everyone [...] the opportunity to live in peace and live life to the full.”***





# Our Peacebuilding Approach

Our peacebuilding approach is based on our three-strand programme framework which seeks to transform dysfunctional relationships into those which are strong and healthy. We apply this framework to all of our work and programme themes.

## Strand 1

We enable Human Rights Defenders, local organisations and communities to become more resilient to the pressures they face. We help them develop constructive relationships with one another and with Powerholders.

When we're successful we'll see... Human Rights Defenders, local organisations, and communities working together across historical divides. They'll successfully advocate for change, to Powerholders, on behalf of marginalised groups.

## Strand 2

We support Powerholders to become committed and competent in developing mutually beneficial relationships with Human Rights Defenders, local organisations and communities.

When we're successful we'll see... Powerholders recognising the legitimacy of Human Rights Defenders, local organisations and communities. They'll realise the value of partnering with them for the benefit of society.

## Strand 3

Our work is centred on a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in recognition that human rights protection is fundamental to flourishing communities. However, we recognise that traditional human rights advocacy between Rights Holders and Duty Bearers can lead to adversarial encounters that have harmful consequences and don't necessarily lead to positive change.

There is undoubtedly a place for 'hard advocacy'<sup>6</sup> that pressures Powerholders into change, and for campaigns that raise public awareness of important issues. But, in many contexts, programmes that address human rights abuses are stuck because of intractable conflict between Rights Holders and Duty Bearers. Therefore, an alternative approach is required; a peacebuilding approach that recognises the reality of deep disagreements, addresses structural injustice and seeks to build common ground between Powerholders and communities.

We recognise that rights abuses are frequently driven by multiple, interrelated factors including deep prejudice, systemic discrimination, and limited understanding between groups. In many cases those in power lack knowledge and expertise in how to fulfil their obligations.

<sup>6</sup> Defined as 'advocacy that takes a direct, often conflictual and assertive approach to drive change'

To address these complex issues, Cord's approach is one of quiet diplomacy. We establish trust and confidence, developing positive relationships between communities and those in power, so that real and meaningful change becomes possible.

When working in contexts where there is intractable conflict, building strong, sustainable relationships, based on mutual respect and trust can be challenging. It is often time-consuming and highly complex. It can be frustrating and there can be a sense that nothing is changing. When engaging with Powerholders is not possible, preparing and strengthening the capacity of Rights Holders to engage is crucial. Our experience leaves us in no doubt that stronger relationships are the bedrock for lasting peace.

Complementing Cord's emphasis on relationships, our work also seeks to strengthen environments that promote 'positive peace'<sup>7</sup> and confront the root causes of conflict. We use top-down and bottom-up approaches to building peace, working to drive positive change upward from the community level as well as influencing the space for change at the policy level.

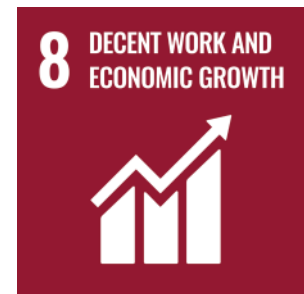
Cord has developed and adapted a range of peacebuilding tools. They help us deliver our three-strand programme framework as well as implement specific thematic approaches. Within each strand we utilise different tools to implement the programme design. Additionally, we use Conflict Mapping, Conflict Sensitivity, Non-Violent Communication (NVC) & trauma-informed approaches. These components are foundational to all our programmes.

<sup>7</sup> Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/pact-for-the-future>

<sup>9</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Cord's work supports the United Nations (UN) Pact for the Future<sup>8</sup> and the accomplishment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>9</sup>. Whilst much of Cord's work is focussed on SDG 16 promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, our projects also contribute to a range of other SDGs. These include SDG 1 (ending poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality) SDG 8 (decent work) and SDG 13 (climate action).



# Partnership

Meaningful partnerships are at the heart of Cord's peacebuilding approach. We don't work with partners because we are forced to, instead we choose to work in partnership, because we are motivated by our values. Our value of interdependence reminds us that we need our partners as much as they need us. We learn from them as they learn from us and together we are stronger.

Historically there has been a power imbalance in these relationships which Cord is seeking to redress. In our view, the localisation agenda — the movement to ensure that power, decision-making, and resources are held at the local level — risks being reduced to a narrow focus on transferring funds from the Global North to the Global South. At Cord we see partnerships as so much more than a contractual agreement. They are relationships based on shared values that require nurturing, hard work and investment. As a relational organisation, this is part of our DNA and one of our distinctive values. Cord aspires to be a partner of choice for local and international organisations due to our approach and the quality of our work. We seek to support and catalyse the organisations we work with to help them achieve their mandates.

Cord works in partnership with local, national, regional and international NGOs across all projects. We believe that lasting impact — that continues long after Cord's work is done — is only possible when there is meaningful buy-in and capacity-building at the local level. This is why Cord is committed to increasing local ownership in all aspects of our work. This approach is embedded throughout all our programmes. It includes co-designing projects, providing sub-grants and developing the capacity of partners.

***“Meaningful partnerships are at the heart of Cord’s peacebuilding approach.”***

Cord is committed to continuously improving our approach to partnerships and taking the time to meaningfully listen to partners' feedback. We work hard to implement changes in response to their input. Cord will use the results of a comprehensive partnership review over the coming period, to better articulate our offer to new and existing partners and to bring greater clarity as to what they can expect from us.





# Theory of Change

Cord's Theory of Change has been developed through extensive consultation with staff, local partners and communities in the different contexts where we work, as well as our international partners.

It describes how Cord's peacebuilding approach will achieve the change we are aiming for. The diagrammatic version of the Theory of Change can be found in Figure 1:

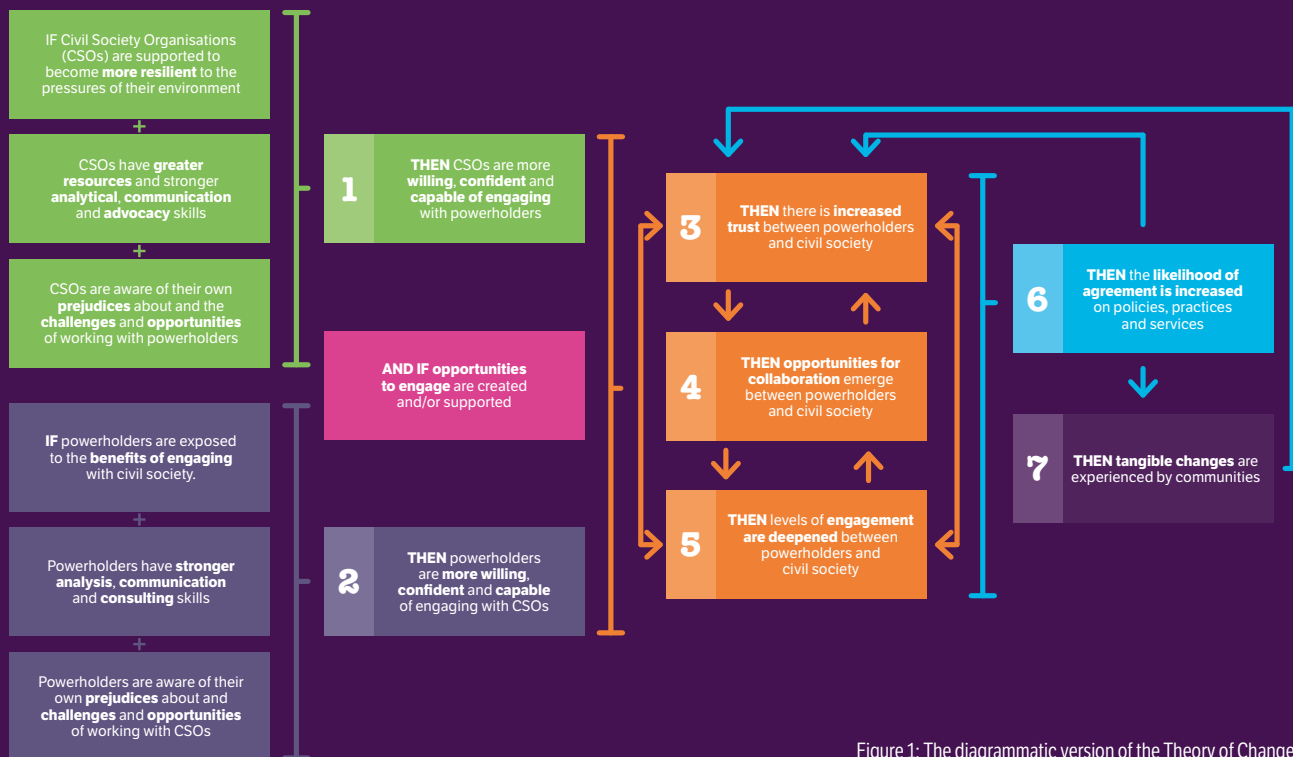


Figure 1: The diagrammatic version of the Theory of Change

**IF** we **develop the skills** of Human Rights Defenders, local organisations and Powerholders in mapping conflict, communicating non-violently and in advocacy.

**AND IF** we work independently to i) **identify any prejudices**, perspectives and intentions within communities, ii) to **identify the key obstacles and challenges** to working with each other; and iii) to **identify shared goals and aspirations**.

**AND IF** we **create opportunities for dialogue** through tools such as communities of practice and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, building trust, mutual respect, tolerance and dependency.

**THEN** Human Rights Defenders, local organisations and Powerholders will **begin to collaborate** - involving each other in consultation and joint working.

This leads to **Human Rights Defenders, local organisations and Powerholders** having a common understanding as to how policies, practice, and services can be adopted and transformed in ways that more effectively meet the needs, interests and rights of local communities.

This results in a reduction in conflict:

**Communities securing land registration certificates** and achieving a sense of confidence in the future sustainability and viability of their livelihoods.

**Communities receiving fair and proportionate government funding** for core local services including health and education.

**Private companies adopting more sustainable approaches** to natural resource extraction that have a less negative impact on the cultural, social and economic rights of Indigenous Communities.

**People feeling able to vote, speak in public and participate non-violently** in campaigns, demonstrations and protests without fear of repression.

# Development Priorities

Over the coming period, alongside our ongoing programming and areas of thematic focus, Cord will focus on three development priorities in order to increase our effectiveness and help achieve our Build Peace strategy:

## 1. Promoting & Embedding

### Peacebuilding Practice

Globally, in many contexts peaceful approaches to resolving conflict are not well understood or supported. At a local level, whilst recognising the incredible work of local peacebuilders, awareness of peacebuilding skills and tools is limited. In light of this, Cord will...

- a. Ensure training and coaching on peacebuilding tools is offered to all Cord's local partners.
- b. Work through consortia with international partner organisations to strengthen their capacity to integrate and apply peacebuilding tools within their own work and that of their partners. We will particularly explore opportunities to work in the space between humanitarian, development and peace actors, defined as the 'HDP Nexus'<sup>10</sup>. We will use the HDP lens to partner with these actors to incorporate peacebuilding elements into humanitarian and development work.

- c. Cord will strengthen the knowledge and capacity of its staff so that each country team has an identified Peacebuilding Champion who serves as a resource hub and coordinates action.



10 <https://www.icvnetwork.org/uploads/2021/08/Topic-One-Briefing-Paper-The-nexus-explained.pdf>

## 2. Equipping Local

### Partners for action

Fundamental to Cord's approach is working with and alongside local partners to achieve our vision and mission. As outlined in the Partnership section of this strategy, Cord is fully committed to supporting the meaningful localisation of resources, capacity, decision-making & power.

Building on this, Cord will develop a more intentional partnership approach that ensures partners are meaningfully equipped and supported to fulfil their mandates and positively impact their contexts. The aspiration is that this approach will position Cord as a 'partner of choice' - an organisation with whom others actively seek to collaborate. To achieve this Cord will....

- a. Implement an independent survey to use with local partners. The feedback will enable Cord to develop a refreshed, more comprehensive approach that enables Cord to consistently engage with partners in a transparent and clear manner.

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- b. Clearly articulate our partnership offer, outlining the roles Cord can play and the added value we bring to local partner organisations.

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- c. Continually explore new ways of working with local partners, particularly focussing on promoting their work with donors and helping them secure new direct funding with donor bodies.

## 3. Making the case for building peace

In spite of limited progress, arguments for investing in peace rather than conflict remain peripheral, particularly in the face of recent global conflicts. There is a need to engage key stakeholders such as governments, funders and partner organisations, demonstrating through robust evidence, that investing in peace delivers significant and sustainable benefits. To achieve this Cord will...

- a. Develop a global advocacy strategy that sets out Cord's approach, identifies key institutions to engage with, and priority messages to share.

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- b. Develop a stronger internal Organisational Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (OMEAL) system. This will integrate an Outcome Harvesting approach that better captures the peace impact of Cord's projects.

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- c. Collaborate with academic partners to publish research that can be used as an advocacy tool to support the case for peace and its wider benefits.

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- d. Develop the capacity of local partners to present their work effectively, with a focus on demonstrating the peace impact of their projects.

# Programme Themes

## Economic Empowerment

The ideal of peace is a distant concept for someone struggling to feed their family or send their children to school. Inequality is often a driver of conflict and can fuel ongoing tensions. Cord is delivering programmes which empower communities to save money collectively, invest in their own businesses, improve financial literacy, and secure land titles that contribute towards sustainable income

Where people are meaningfully included in the social and economic prosperity of their community, they demonstrate a greater commitment to build and sustain peace.

## Women and Girls

### Empowerment

Women's equitable involvement in decision making is essential to achieving sustainable peace. Cord challenges the root causes of gender inequality by addressing the structural issues that keep women and girls from accessing their rights. We support Women Human Rights Defenders to grow their confidence and credibility in male-dominated spaces. We empower them to engage men and boys to challenge stigma and prejudice. Our work ensures women and girls can reach their full potential and play their essential role in promoting just and peaceful societies.

## Climate Change and

### The Environment

As identified by the 2015 Paris Agreement, the challenges of climate change require global solutions that meaningfully incorporate the voices of those most affected. Local and Indigenous Communities play a vital role in combatting the effects of climate change. Cord is building the capacity of these groups to protect their land from deforestation, illegal logging and unsustainable resource extraction. We create spaces for people to amplify their voices through networks and by constructively engaging with Powerholders – such as multi-national companies and government ministries – to promote locally-led environmental stewardship.

## Supporting Stronger Societies

Cord believes that a strong and resilient civil society, able to constructively hold Powerholders to account, is vital for the effective functioning of governments and society as a whole. Where the space for civic engagement is limited, we work to strengthen civil society leaders through training, mentorship and networks, enabling them to drive meaningful change in their communities. Our work also engages those in power, enhancing their ability to govern and collaborate with communities.



## Fundamental Freedoms

People cannot flourish in societies where their fundamental freedoms are denied. Cord works across a range of contexts with authorities and communities to improve the knowledge and application of human rights for all. Our approach encourages open and frank discussions to break down biases and facilitate cooperation between those who hold opposing views. We work to improve freedom of religion and belief, freedom of speech, and champion the rights of marginalised groups.





## Operations

Cord currently works in 8 countries: Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Burundi, Uganda and Ethiopia

We will continue to focus on existing programmes in Southeast Asia and East Africa over the coming period whilst remaining open to working in other locations where the opportunity and need arises - most notably in West Africa and in the Middle East. Cord anticipates operating in 8 - 12 countries during this time. We aim to maintain a diverse range of contexts for learning while preserving deep contextual expertise and knowledge.

Cord will continue to prioritise strong local relationships in country contexts that are facilitated by national staff teams or through local partner relationships. The majority of Cord's staff will continue to be employed in country contexts, with a limited global support team located in the UK.

Cord will maintain small, cost-efficient teams to ensure that programmes remain a priority and operations are financially sustainable. The global support team will continue to work primarily from home, using the Coventry office for team gatherings and strategic meetings.

Cord will increasingly utilise staff based in East Africa and Southeast Asia to provide peacebuilding expertise and support to programmes in surrounding countries.

Cord will continue to capitalise on its position as a small to medium-sized INGO, using its agile structure to adapt programme implementation strategies to evolving external environments and evolving needs.

# Stakeholder Engagement

Being well-connected is increasingly important in order for Cord to utilise its expertise with other organisations, achieve greater impact, to access different channels for funding and to learn best practice from others' approaches.

## Networks

### In-country Forums

In countries where Cord operates, we actively participate in INGO, NGO and thematic networks and forums. These are important for collaboration, co-ordination and learning. Cord will continue to invest in this activity during the coming period.

### EU-CORD

EU-CORD (a network of European Christian Relief and Development NGOs) will continue to be one of our key international networks. Cord is a founding member and we continue to play an active role. Increasingly, by building relationships within the network, Cord will seek opportunities for collaboration with other members, identifying where Cord's peacebuilding approach can add value to their programmes. Cord will engage in country specific fora to build country-level engagement alongside Europe-based colleagues.

### Peacebuilding engagement

In this strategy period Cord will seek to strengthen connections with other peacebuilding organisations to develop our work, explore opportunities for collaboration and keep up to date with best practice. This may include joining specific peacebuilding networks and attending internationally recognised peace conferences.

### Engagement with Academia

Opportunities to partner with academic institutions will be a strategic priority. Such partnerships will strengthen Cord's evidence base and enhance understanding of the impact of its programmes. Research can also play a key role in advocacy and in influencing policy. We will use research to promote the value and necessity of peacebuilding with funders and policy makers.

### Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN)

Cord is a member of the Community of the Cross of Nails. This is a network of groups involved in a wide variety of reconciliation activities, led from Coventry Cathedral. Cord will continue to participate, contributing and learning from this network.

## Resources

A significant proportion of Cord's work is funded by institutional donors including governments and multilateral organisations. Cord has developed a strong reputation and relationships with a range of key donors who fund peace and human rights focussed work. The diverse funding portfolio that Cord has developed in recent years has enabled us to navigate significant events like Brexit and unexpected reductions in institutional donor funding, exemplified by the changes in the UK.

However, the funding landscape continues to shift and an overall reduction in development funding is anticipated. Research highlights that funding for conflict prevention and peacebuilding will decline in the coming years<sup>11</sup>. The Foreign Assistance Review by the US Administration will also have wider ramifications given the significance of US funding to development and peacebuilding globally.

Over the coming period Cord will continue to adapt our funding sources with an emphasis on growing income from global philanthropy, trusts and foundations. Furthermore, we will explore the potential opportunities within non-traditional, innovative funding sources such as social impact bonds.

Investment in consortia and collaboration with international partners will be a strategic priority. This will improve the impact of projects and create access to funding sources that would not otherwise be directly available to Cord. By developing clear and innovative pathways for partnership and consortium

engagement, Cord will remove some of the barriers to collaboration that we have previously faced. Particular emphasis will be placed on multi-country consortium relationships at an organisational level.

Alongside Cord's institutional fundraising, we will continue to engage with individual supporters, churches and trusts in order to secure private sources of funding. Cord retains a dedicated and strongly-engaged supporter base who give generously and are committed to our work. Supporter engagement and communications will remain a priority to ensure our supporters stay connected to the organisation's activities and impact. Further emphasis will be placed on developing strong long-term relationships with trusts in order to build on the existing funding available. These private sources of funding remain a vital aspect of Cord's funding model as they give operational freedom, provide for core structural costs and enable investment in organisational development. It is anticipated that legacy income may increase over the coming period which will be utilised to further diversify private sources of funding.

**“The diverse funding portfolio that Cord has developed in recent years has enabled us to navigate significant events.”**

<sup>11</sup> Global Public Policy Institute, The crisis of international peace & security assistance (2025)



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