

## There is no recipe for peacebuilding



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In any conflict, the picture is always blurred and you can't separate the 'good guys' from the 'bad guys' so easily.

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**Description:**

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Twitter: [@KristianHerbolz](https://twitter.com/KristianHerbolz)



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My professional background is agriculture engineering. I became an environmental activist, and from there I jumped to peace and human rights activist. I spent a year volunteering in Colombia, and later I started working in peacebuilding.

In [Conciliation Resources](#) we work on three things. The first one is to support initiatives in conflict areas. We are now in 10 places where we are working with local actors, civil society organizations and armed groups.

The second thing we as Conciliation Resources do is to document innovation in peacebuilding, and we do so by studying and reporting the newest technologies and approaches used in the peacebuilding field. We also organize and take part in meetings to share experiences and knowledge with other peacebuilding organizations, meetings [like the one we attended the last 9th of May](#) with the ICIP, the [International Catalan Institute for Peace](#).

The third thing we do is to work with governments, special governments of typically donor countries like Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark and the UN. We work together with them in advocacy and policy making.

Colombia is the only Latin American country Conciliation Resources works in, but we also are in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, in the Central African Republic and in Somalia. If we look at Asia, the organization is in South Caucasus, between Armenia and Azerbaijan and between Georgia and Abkhazia, which used to be a part of Georgia until a civil war broke out and Abkhazia declared its independence, which so far has only been recognised by Russia.

The other locations where our organization is present are Kashmir, Philippines, [Bougainville island in Oceania](#), where civil war ended just 16 years ago, and the Fiji islands, where there is a transition process from dictatorship to democracy going on.

As I said, Conciliation Resources organization works in 10 different countries in conflict at the moment. All of them are countries which have long-term conflicts neither the press nor people talk much about. That is part of our mission: we work with long-term commitment and we stay with locals for as long as it takes.

There is no recipe for peace, each scenario is different and sensitive to each context. However, peace processes have to be an initiative coming from the people affected: they can't come just from outside, because international support is important and helpful, but it also has limitations.

For my experience, the best is for international organizations to partner with locals, and yet, it is often hard to tell whether a peace process is successful or not. Take the case of Northern Ireland and South Africa, for instance. Have these peace processes been successful?

Obviously, the clearest indicator to see how a peacebuilding process is going is the number of killings: in Colombia there used to be about a 1000 violent deaths a month linked to the FARC conflict; this is not the case anymore, but this doesn't mean the conflict is over.

In any conflict, the picture is always blurred and you can't separate the 'good guys' from the 'bad guys' so easily. Sometimes as a peacebuilding organization you have to support or talk to the marginalised ones, to the armed groups: this happens because war is never clean. If you don't make the effort to understand the other, you lose.

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