Beyond Violence

Organisational Strategy

2015 - 2017

Executive Summary

As a flexible, mobile and innovative organisation committed to nonviolent conflict transformation, Beyond Violence's Organisational Strategy 2015-2017 illustrates its intentional and strategic approach to harnessing the power and potential of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to drive forward inclusive, participatory, online campaigns that internationally will empower grassroots voices calling for an end to violence. Through the development of context specific campaigns, using relevant and appropriate ICTs, Beyond Violence will continue to make increasingly significant and sophisticated contributions to both the prevention and transformation of conflict, reducing violence in communities through the engagement of local activists and campaigners that are themselves committed to non-violence.

Our campaigns will be implemented in partnership with like-minded organisations that are local to the conflict that the campaign seeks to address and resolve. The creation of long term networks of non-violent activists will be created through the support of these partnerships, establishing important linkages between local grassroots voices and action and the impact of Beyond Violence's online campaigns. Moreover, the engagement of these local, grassroots networks will serve to ensure a fundamental level of legitimacy and integrity within the online, Beyond Violence-led global campaigns, as a result of their insight and first-hand experience of the conflict in question.

The prospect of achieving a measurable increase in the level of interconnectivity between grassroots and global activists committed to nonviolent conflict transformation, through the use of increasingly sophisticated mobile phone technology as well as other ICTs, will drive forward Beyond Violence's three year strategy. The conflicts that we analyse and develop campaigns in response to will be selected using specific criteria, ensuring that organisationally we engage only in circumstances where there exists an infrastructure to host the most appropriate ICTs, where there are organisations and activists on the ground to support an online campaign, and where impact can be foreseen and measured.

Each team within Beyond Violence has identified its own set of milestones for the 2015-2017 period, that will each contribute toward the long-term sustainability of both the organisation and its global impact, enabling the organisation to play an increasingly meaningful role in global efforts toward nonviolent conflict transformation.

Background to Strategic Review

In 2014, the decision was taken by Beyond Violence's Executive Director – in consultation with the organisation's team managers – to plan and launch a comprehensive strategic review of Beyond Violence, and subsequently, a strategic planning process. The purpose of this strategic planning process was to develop a clearly articulated organisational strategy that could inform an annual work plans for 2015, and 2016 going forward.

An online staff survey was developed, and circulated among all of Beyond Violence's staff, for the purpose of consulting all staff and securing their opinions and thoughts on crucial topics such as how we perceive the organisation's vision and purpose, how we are different from other organisations within the peace and conflict sector, what our added value is, and what goals we should be working towards organisationally. Once the responses were collated, analysed, and discussed within teams and among team managers, the foundation of a revitalised and up to date organisational strategy was underway.

The organisational strategy presented below represents the product of an intensive, participatory, and highly consultative process, which in the first instance presents Beyond Violence's analysis of the current global peace and conflict context and the challenges in successfully transforming violent conflict along non-violent lines. Beyond Violence's core argument in support of non-violent conflict transformation, through full participation with grassroots communities and civil society, is

then presented and followed up by an explanation of who we are, our vision, mission, goals, and our strategic approach to conflict transformation, campaign development, and use and development of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). A quantifiably measurable set of team milestones for the coming year is then presented.

It is envisioned that this strategy will serve to guide Beyond Violence through this forthcoming period of change, growth, and clarification and strengthening of vision, mission, and objectives.

Beyond Violence's Vision, Mission and Goals

Beyond Violence's Vision

Beyond Violence's vision is a world where communities impacted by violent conflict are empowered to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a tool for non-violent conflict transformation, through the launching of participatory campaigns and the sharing of ideas, strategies and experiences that will help contribute toward a more peaceful world.

Beyond Violence's Mission

Beyond Violence's mission is to connect and bring together the men and women from communities affected by violent conflict internationally whose voices too often go unheard, empowering them to transform violence into peace through the use of cutting-edge ICTs as a tool for non-violent conflict transformation.

Beyond Violence's Goals

- By 2017, organisationally, to become capable of contributing toward the prevention of outbreaks of situations of violent conflict, as well as responding to ongoing situations of violent conflict;

- To develop state of the art ICT specific tools and online services that are capable of supporting early warning systems, and of enabling BV to achieve its vision more generally;

- To create networks of passionate people in conflict situations around the world who together have the capacity to use ICTs to reduce the amount of violence in their communities.

An Introduction to and History of Beyond Violence

Who we are, what we do

Beyond Violence works to transform conflicts into situations of sustainable peace, by engaging in situations of conflict with individual activists who believe like us that working in unison in ICT-facilitated campaigns, can strengthen non-violent action for change and make a tangible difference. We believe that modern ICTs provide a radical new opportunity for connecting and empowering these people to affect change.

Through the effective and innovative use of ICTs, Beyond Violence brings people together who are passionate for peace and allows them to speak out against violence in unison. Our campaigns raise awareness of the destructive impact of violent conflict, facilitate dialogue on how to overcome violence and point towards opportunities for peaceful conflict transformation. We believe that by harnessing the passion of individuals around the world, we can together create and offer campaigns which will empower those people most committed to nonviolent conflict transformation and simultaneously most at risk of the consequences of violent conflict.

Organisationally, Beyond Violence is staffed by a global network of volunteers who are grouped into various operational teams, and all of our campaigns are facilitated, supported and promoted by these global teams.

For each campaign Beyond Violence aims to create a local team which is integrated into the wider organisation's staff structure. The core campaign team works to forge strong strategic partnerships with other local organisations in order to place campaigns on a broad footing and mutually benefit both partners.

Further, campaign teams are encouraged to broadly recruit volunteers from within the conflict country targeted by specific campaigns, and to build up a local network to promote the campaign and its implementation. The local teams focus on the implementation of ICT-based campaign elements and thus do not conduct many non-technological events themselves, but they also facilitate networking with strategic partners who in collaboration with our campaign objectives should be encouraged to mobilise their members through non-technological events. Ideally, from a campaign, a long-term engagement of the local team emerges and permanent structures are established.

Beyond Violence prioritises the security of its staff, volunteers, partners, campaign partners and any other affiliated parties strongly, but also most of all any participants in campaigns – any campaigns or organisational matters which could have security implications will be reviewed thoroughly.

Volunteers and staff members are expected to perform to the highest professional standards. They are to be regularly assessed and mutual commitments will only continue if such high standards are upheld. Volunteers are recruited on a needs-only basis and receive a comprehensive induction and a clear person of contact within the organisation, mostly a team manager or directly the Executive Director.

In terms of funding, financial support for Beyond Violence's work has been relatively limited hitherto. Operational costs have been covered by volunteer's donations as well as a crowdfunding campaign, and campaign specific external funding has been secured from the Joffe Family Trust for the Voices for Peace campaign in Zimbabwe in 2013/2014. Beyond Violence aims to expand our funding substantially in an effort to professionalise and be able to pay some staff members by the end of the strategy period.

Our History

Beyond Violence was founded in mid-2012 by Paul Steinheuer and Tim Williams as an online community of voices pushing for peace. In the years since, Beyond Violence has gone from strength to strength, having successfully launched and implemented several ICT-based campaigns in Armenia and Azerbaijan, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Colombia, Syria and Ukraine. Each campaign has utilised different ICTs to empower voices silenced by conflict, and to enable people around the world to combat violence together. From web petitions, to workshops on creative expression, to missed calls campaigns and violence mapping, we have focussed on the development of creative new technologies which can be used in future campaigns.

Organisational Achievements

Beyond Violence is proud of its achievements to date. In 2013, the organisation was named as one of the Westbourne top 100 campaigns changing opinions and the world. This was in recognition of the impact that our Voices for Peace Zimbabwe Campaign had in promoting

non-violence through freedom of expression and opinion among Zimbabwean voters using ground-breaking mobile phone technology in the run up to and aftermath of the election. The campaign built a community of people demanding an end to all election-related violence and was credited with having provided a platform for greater transparency in the Zimbabwean political process. Also in 2013, Beyond Violence won the prestigious European Youth Award in the 'Pursue Truth' category, Further, Beyond Violence was also a finalist for the Sheila McKechnie Foundation Campaigner Award in 2013, again in recognition of the Voices for Peace campaign in Zimbabwe and in 2014, Beyond Violence was shortlisted for the Dell Social Innovation Challenge award.

Context Analysis – Beyond Violence's perspective

Long term situations of protracted conflict, of a consistently or periodically violent nature, continue to feature heavily in the global geopolitical landscape in 2015. Civil wars continue to be fought in countries across the world today, with civilian populations caught between the frontlines. Prior to, during and after elections, violence has become a familiar companion in many emerging democracies, while ethnically framed riots can be witnessed again and again. These various dynamics of violence by state and non-state actors, including governments, rebels, warlords or terrorists have overtaken international conflicts as having the most significant impact on civilian populations' lives. Nonetheless, unresolved disputes over territory and resources, characterised by complex sets of historical grievances and conflict drivers, such as the long term stand-off between India and Pakistan and the Israel-Palestine conflict, have also for too long served to overwhelm even the most sophisticated diplomatic efforts designed to resolve these conflicts. Two of the most high profile ongoing international conflicts – the civil war in Syria and the conflict in Ukraine – further de-stabilise already tense relations between the West and Russia (in the case of Ukraine) and within the broader Middle East (in the case of Syria) and show little sign of reaching a peaceful, inclusive or sustainable resolution.

A Needs Analysis

World leaders all too often focus on negotiating ceasefires and other often temporary measures for ending situations of violent conflict, but stop then without engaging fully with the root causes of a conflict. Civil society and affected communities closest to the conflicts are too often excluded from multilateral level negotiations and state sponsored peace processes. Against such a backdrop, feasible alternatives to such traditional approaches to conflict resolution must be adopted, supported and resourced, enabling and empowering civil society and grassroots communities and activists to adopt transformative, inclusive approaches to conflict prevention and resolution.

What needs to be done

Beyond Violence is committed to non-violence as a philosophy and as a strategy for conflict transformation. We believe that the use of violence or intimidation as a means of forcing an outcome to a conflict situation fails to address the core relations and grievances associated with particular situations of violent conflict. In too many situations of violent conflict internationally, the voices of people in affected communities longing for peace all too often go unheard. Yet these are the people - men, women, young people, activists or otherwise - who carry the potential to have the biggest impact on efforts to transform such situations of violent conflict. Beyond Violence wants to connect these people, to allow them to speak together as one, demanding and engaging in a constructive and non-violent transformation of conflicts. We adopt this low-level, grassroots approach as a means of developing a possible long-term vision for a conflict's sustainable transformation. Beyond Violence makes use of the most cutting-edge ICTs – with a particular focus on mobile phone technology – that are available to most people in a specific conflict zone to achieve this vision, bringing people together and empowering them to transform conflicts without violence.

Conflict Transformation

Beyond Violence believes that conflicts do not need to be solved with violence. We believe that in every conflict the vast majority are opposed to violence, even if they are silenced by violent actors. Beyond Violence believes that together people can make a difference and transform violent conflicts around the world using non-violent means.

– Beyond Violence understands non-violent conflict transformation to address violent armed conflicts of a societal nature. Such conflicts might include civil wars, riots, pogroms, genocides, post-election violence, violence against minorities or any similar situations of public violent unrest;

– While domestic violence, structural violence, cultural violence and other forms of violence are certainly problematic, they are not our focus;

– Our campaigns can focus on preventive measures to avoid violent conflict, on ending ongoing violent conflict or on dealing with past violent conflict (particularly with a view to avoiding re-ignition of it);

– Beyond Violence is open to working in response to any conflict and will evaluate suggestions on their merits on a campaign-by-campaign basis – criteria for campaign feasibility include the presence of an adequate technological infrastructure, connections to local organisations or movements, the potential for strong impact, and widespread attention for a conflict;

– We focus on long-term conflicts, rather than reacting in an adhoc fashion to current developments when these are unfolding fast, as it is not possible to keep up with these within the current framework. This stance will be reassessed after two years.

Campaign Development

Beyond Violence wants to see a global network of grassroots-level activists connected and empowered. We develop and run campaigns that call for non-violent conflict transformation and that are normally specific to a certain country or regional context.

We want to see conflicts mediated and not fought out violently, differences embraced and not politicised.

– The content of the campaigns will vary strongly from conflict to conflict and will adapt to the local settings, as mediated by local Beyond Violence teams and strategic local partners;

– When we run our local campaigns, we seek to interact with other activists and local groups in order to tap into grassroots capabilities, interests and passions on the ground;

– While we appreciate that non-technological activities (concerts, demonstrations, workshops, any creative means etc.) have great value in enhancing non-violent conflict transformation, this is not our area of working; we believe that the interconnectivity of
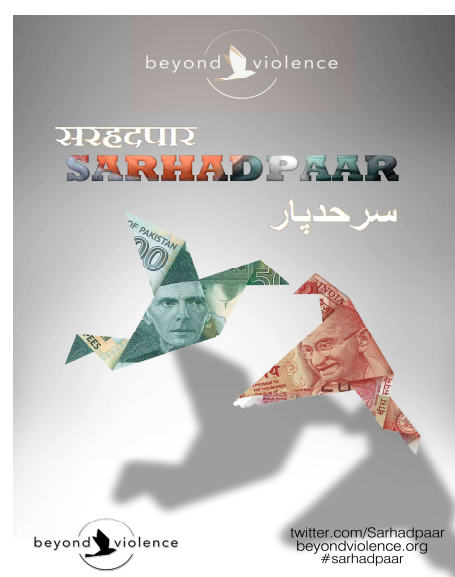
people can be enhanced beyond the mere spatial surroundings people are located in and can reach a better connection through technology;

- We do support these non-technological activities when implemented by partner organisations as far as they interact with our technologically-driven campaigns, but they will not form any core of our campaigns;

- Beyond Violence will continue to explore new and innovative ways of developing creative technologies for local campaigns;

- We seek to enhance our networking approach by seeking opportunities for collaboration with organisations both at global and local levels;

- Going forward, Beyond Violence will prepare for the development of local campaigns structures by establishing a framework for seeking out local partners that will feature clear selection criteria and standards.

Information and Communication Technologies

We believe that the best way in which to create this connected and empowered global network of grassroots-level activists is to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). We want to embrace the digital revolution and harness the power of mobile phones and the internet to connect and empower people to stand together against violence.

- Beyond Violence is an organisation that uses ICTs as a tool for promoting and achieving the non-violent transformation of conflict globally;

- The use of ICTs (which include mobile phones, smart phones, and the internet) is central to our organisational and strategic approach to developing campaigns designed to achieve a non-violent transformation of conflict;

- We envisage utilising our knowledge of and expertise in the use of ICTs as a way to empower grassroots organisations and individual activists internationally to lead on and participate in successful campaigns against violent conflict;

- We have the capacity as an organisation to develop ICT strategies that are flexible and adaptive, allowing us to adjust our strategic use of ICTs to most effectively respond to situations of violent conflict that are specific to particular geographic regions and locations;

- We equally recognise the need to avoid locking out any stakeholder groups that may not have equal access to technologies. Accordingly, campaigns using the technologies that Beyond Violence develop are designed to allow for the participation of a broad base of people in conflict areas, or in non-conflict areas on matters pertaining to violent conflict;

- Beyond Violence strives to ensure that the technologies we use are linked into an online presence, as well as through our website and our social media channels;

- Beyond Violence will focus on expanding its technological diversity regarding mobile phone technologies (primarily conventional mobiles, but also smartphones);

- We strive to develop new technologies as needed for new campaigns, as well as improve and expand already developed technologies;

- Through our website we strive to promote our campaigns as well as provide and present information, experiences and insight into our focus topics accessibly, e.g. through blogs, infographics, videos etc;

– Beyond Violence will continue to review and enhance its focus on the use of ICTs, with a view to achieving maximum measurable impact when planning and implementing campaigns.

Beyond Violence's Aspirational Staff Structure

We aspire to become a hybrid professional-volunteer organisation, in which some core positions are paid. These paid positions will be used to efficiently manage volunteer commitments.

– Beyond Violence's team of volunteers should be supported by a small core paid team, who facilitate and strive to bring out the best in all our volunteers. Ideally this team size would be 3-5 paid, full-time staff by the end of 2017;

– BV plans to secure funding to pay for the salaries of some core organisational staff positions. The rationale for this is that the organisation requires a core steering committee formed of staff that are resourced and incentivised to commit time to the leadership, development and coordination of Beyond Violence's operational functions and the implementation of the organisation's annual strategy and work plans, as well as the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of these work plans and strategy.

– Beyond Violence as a global organisation endeavours to include as volunteers people from many different countries, as long as they can be adequately included operatively through their internet connection;

– In the long term, a physical presence in the form of an office with staff is envisaged. This should support and strengthen our existing global reach and our volunteer network, rather than replace it;

– Provisional recommendations for a future staff structure include the following:

1. Possible paid positions at the global level that could include roles such as Executive Director, Campaigns Management (incl. Research and M&E), Fundraising, and Communications;

2. IT projects on a paid, task-based contract basis;

3. Local team leaders paid on a short term, full time, campaign by campaign basis, with more specific contracts available for certain tasks;

4. The majority of Beyond Violence staff will continue to work on a voluntary basis, and will still be responsible for the majority of the organisation's workload;

5. Beyond Violence will register as a UK charity. This will allow us not only to apply for grants and other forms of funding more easily, but the legislative requirements will enforce credible transparency and accountability.

Strategic Milestones for 2015

Organisational Milestones

September 2015

Complete the organisational restructure, with the aim of:

- Strengthening the independence of and support for local campaign teams;
- Facilitating the implementation of a rigorous monitoring and evaluation programme;
- Integrating reporting mechanisms to the board of trustees;
- Improving support for volunteers, while allowing for better quality control and recognition of successes;
- Improving institutional communications between teams below the level of team managers.

December 2015

- Register as a charity in the UK;
- Recruit a complete Board of Trustees, the membership of which will ideally consist of individuals that bring both functional (ICTs, finance, fundraising etc) as well as sector specific knowledge, expertise and experience;
- Financial registration with Her Majesty's Revenue And Customs Office.

Team-specific Milestones

Human Resources

- HR Statistics will be reported on quarterly (by June 2015);
- Improve volunteer commitment (more hours, more reliability, but also more recognition) and introduce more stringent monitoring (by June 2015);
- Expand induction process, to include more tailored induction for new team members (by June 2015);
- Development of a HR strategy that will inform staff recruitment and the integration of teams;
- Reduce turnover rate of volunteers to get us up to an average volunteer duration of at least 1 year (by December 2015).

Campaigns

- Develop transparent criteria for campaign selection (by June 2015);
- Launch three campaigns (by December 2015);
- Develop protocols for local-global-cooperation (including all teams) (by June 2015);
- Launch 6 major campaigns in 2016;
- Set challenging targets for 2017;
- Establish at least half the campaigns as enduring local teams with local structures (as of now) (i.e. minimum of five established local teams worldwide by end of 2016);
- Also in the coming period, we will evaluate our past campaigns and past use of ICTs with a view to developing a best practice handbook and 'technological menu' (also with not yet implemented ideas) for new local campaigns.

Research

- Complete monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for all teams (by June 2015);
- Continual reporting on M&E in place (by June 2015);
- Develop framework for keeping profiles up to date and overhaul all (by June 2015);
- Evaluate idea of monitoring conflicts to gauge upcoming potential for campaigns (by June 2015);
- Expand our profiles to include all major ongoing conflicts (by December 2015).

Blogs

- Expand partnerships to create wider audience for blogs (by June 2015);
- Develop strategy with communications team for wider blog promotion
- Continue frequency of blog publication, but review frequency at later point (in addition to campaign blogs) (by December 2015);
- Expand recruitment of guest bloggers (by June 2015);
- Review idea of foreign blogs to be translated (by December 2015);
- Review and codify criteria for blog content selection, sign off and inclusion on website.

Communications

- 10,000 FB likes (by December 2015);
- 5,000 twitter followers (by December 2015);
- Press release database finished (by June 2015);
- Regular mention in media of campaign countries (by December 2015);
- Develop comprehensive strategy for mainstream and specialist media engagement (by June 2015)
- Develop strategy for M&E of social media and ways for constant development;
- Regular monthly newsletter published (by June 2015);
- Develop strategy on international expansion of social media for local campaigns, including a clear approach to setting up local accounts where required and associated standards for this (by June 2015)

Tech

- Revamp website (simpler, more streamlined and evocative, clearer on our mission, featuring more use of infographics) (by September 2015);
- Assess need for Beyond Violence App (by June 2015), if applicable develop and launch the app (by December 2015);
- Allow for stronger HR management on website (by June 2015);
- Review approach to promoting the Bulletin board function within the 'Discussion' web page to our online contacts.

Languages

- Have website fully translated from English into 5 languages, with capacity built in for ongoing translation updates (by December 2015);
- Review need to develop capabilities and processes for translating from languages other than English (by December 2015);
- Have website for every campaign language in advance of launch (in effect immediately).

<u>Fundraising</u>

- Create team and develop various strategies (including but not limited to grants) (by September 2015);
- Develop realistic funding plan for next three years (by December 2015);
- Raise enough for funding of three full-time positions (by June 2017).

Monitoring & Evaluation – Implications & Plan

To be developed by June 2015