

REL Practice Paper 2

March 2020

Understanding change and peacebuilding

Tracking the organisational Theory of Change of a Colombian human rights NGO



Authors

Rosemary McGee, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

Formerly Country Representative at Christian Aid Colombia, Rosemary has worked with Colombian human rights NGO the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) for many years. Her doctoral research was an ethnography of poverty in rural Colombia in the late 1990s.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a translated and edited version of Rosie McGee's original Spanish report of her work with CIJP. Kate Newman and Karen Brock of Christian Aid contributed to the framing and introduction of this English version, and Karen Brock edited the text.

Citation

We request due acknowledgement and quotes from this publication to be referenced as:

McGee, R. (2020) Understanding change and peacebuilding: tracking the organisational Theory of Change of a Colombian human rights NGO, *REL Practice Paper 2*, London: Christian Aid.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/about-us/understanding-change-and-peacebuilding-colombian-human-rights-ngo>

Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

We work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice.

We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes.

[christianaid.org.uk](https://www.christianaid.org.uk)

Contact us

Christian Aid
35 Lower Marsh
Waterloo
London
SE1 7RL
T: +44 (0) 20 7620 4444
E: info@christian-aid.org
W: [christianaid.org.uk](https://www.christianaid.org.uk)

Christian Aid is a member of the

actalliance

Contents

Summary	4
Framing a reflection on organisational change	5
Background to the armed conflict	6
CIJP: emergence, identity, adaptation	7
Time passes: keeping abreast of events	8
Adapting to a time of peacebuilding	9
Looking forward and tracking change	13

About REL Practice Papers

REL Practice Papers are published by the research, evidence and learning (REL) team at Christian Aid. REL works to support the generation of high quality research and evidence in Christian Aid, and enable and encourage the use of evidence in programme design, organisational learning, understanding impact, policy development, and communication. Our Practice Papers reflect on what we are learning from this work. Find them [here](#).

Summary

Ten Years is a collaborative, long-term practitioner research initiative, designed to give participants in Christian Aid's programmes a chance to share their perspectives on the changes they are experiencing in their communities, to understand how their actions interact with and contribute to broader changes in local and national contexts, and to look at the role of Christian Aid and its partners in contributing to change.

In Colombia, Christian Aid has worked with its partners on human rights, reducing violence and building peace for more than 20 years. The country's five decades of civil conflict formally ended in 2016 after a peace process between the Government and the main guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC), which culminated in the signing of a Peace Accord.

This paper looks at the Theory of Change (ToC) of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP), a human rights NGO and long-term partner of Christian Aid Colombia. It offers a window into understanding how an organisation set up to respond to a violent conflict perceives change in its own role as the conflict itself changes.

As well as documenting its current ToC, the paper proposes to Christian Aid and CIJP an approach that could be used to track future shifts during the remainder of Ten Years, to build up a detailed, long-term picture of the strategic evolution of a CSO in a shifting political context.

The paper traces shifts in CIJP's relationship with the state, with communities, with its allies in civil society and with the private sector, and the strategies and interventions it now uses to work towards mobilised communities, an operational rule of law, and a democracy based on justice and peace.

It concludes by suggesting a framework to track future changes, based on analysing the nature, status and rules of the different spaces in which CIJP works at different levels. In future, the framework can be used to provide a structured interpretation of how the organisation adapts to change in its operating context and potential spaces for action.

Framing a reflection on organisational change

Ten Years is a collaborative, long-term practitioner research initiative managed by the Research, Evidence and Learning team at Christian Aid, an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works with partner organisations in fifteen countries across the world. The study is taking place in Colombia and the UK. This paper is one of the outputs of the Colombia component of the study.

Ten Years was designed to give participants in Christian Aid's programmes a chance to share their perspectives on the changes they are experiencing in their communities, to understand how their actions interact with and contribute to broader changes in local and national contexts, and to look at the role of Christian Aid and its partners in contributing to change. It began with the overarching question "how are community members being influenced by, and influencing, processes of social change?" This question was adapted to make it relevant to the socio-political context of each of the study countries.

In Colombia, Christian Aid has worked with its partners on human rights, reducing violence and building peace for more than 20 years. The country's five decades of civil conflict formally ended in 2016 after a peace process between the Government and the main guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC), which culminated in the signature of a Peace Accord. Subsequent years saw efforts at implementing the Accord by an enthusiastic government, followed by the election of a right-wing government with a weak commitment to implementation.

Against this background of change, Ten Years is asking how poor and excluded communities are affected by the Peace Accord, and how they influence it. The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP), a human rights NGO and long-term partner of Christian Aid Colombia, is carrying out regular visits to Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities in the Valle del Cauca region to facilitate discussions and document testimony of their perspectives on change (see [Ten Years of Change](#)).

As well as seeking community perspectives on change, however, Ten Years also set out to analyse how Christian Aid and its partners understand and act in their role as civil society organisations as their operating environments shift. This analysis allows a deeper understanding of the changes being documented in communities, given that civil society organisations (CSOs) both respond to local contexts and are also connected to national and international discourse.

This paper, based on a short consultancy,¹ focuses on this civil society level of analysis. It looks at CIJP – a CSO that emerged in response to violence and rights violations – documenting staff reflections on how its Theory of Change (ToC) has evolved in response to the post-Peace Accord context. What adjustments or updates has this changing context called for, and how have they come about? These reflections offer a window into how an organisation set up to respond to a violent conflict understands and responds to change in its own role as the institutional spaces where it interacts change.

ToC has become popular as a planning and visioning tool in the international development sector. It has been used in a variety of ways to help CSOs articulate what change they are trying to achieve, how they believe they can contribute to that change, the strategies and approaches they will use to affect change, and the assumptions that underpin their choices. While on one hand a ToC can be viewed as a planning tool, advocates of the approach also emphasise its dynamic nature, the importance of continually revisiting it to test whether assumptions still hold, or how contextual shifts interact with possibilities for action.

In reading about the ToC presented here it is important to note that it may not fit some of the norms or language of development sector ToCs. CIJP have a very strong belief system and commitment to the most marginalised and excluded members of society, framed by a fundamental conviction that the Colombian state should fulfil its constitutional commitments to ensure that citizens can access their rights. But the nature of the Colombian context at the time this reflection took place – where a peace on paper had not yet been translated into a lived reality – means that CIJP's way of working, responsive and adaptive to circumstances, defies the constraints of a formal, multi-year ToC. The organisation is ideological and pragmatic, responsive and strategic, local and national, visionary and emergent. CIJP staff are clear about

the change they want to see, and why they are doing what they are doing to achieve it, but they do not usually express this within the formal confines of a ToC.

So, in the reflection process behind this document, the different elements of a ToC were identified through conversation and analysis, indicating what is important to the organisation, and how this has evolved and changed as the spaces in which they operate have shifted. During this conversation and analysis, we identified some broad assumptions that underpin CIJP's actions, and focused in on the spaces in which they work and deliver their interventions.

The reflection process took place 26 months after the government and the FARC signed the Peace Accord, at a point when negotiations between the Government and the second most significant guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN*), were suspended, and the effort to dismantle paramilitary structures was ongoing.

As well as documenting adaptations to the ToC in January 2019, the consultancy sought to propose to Christian Aid and CIJP an approach that could be used to track future shifts during the remainder of Ten Years, to build up a detailed, long-term picture of the strategic evolution of a CSO in a shifting political context.

The paper provides a brief background to the armed conflict and to the emergence of CIJP and its Theory of Change (ToC) before the Peace Accord. It goes on to describe some of the contextual shifts and how CIJP has adapted its ToC, before proposing a structure for tracking future change.

Background to the armed conflict

Colombia's armed conflict began in the 1960s, and has involved a complex array of different actors – the state at all levels, multiple guerrilla groups with different political identities, multiple paramilitaries with different interests, and so-called 'third party opportunists', who profited from and prolonged the conflict. From the 1980s onwards, successive attempts to negotiate peace between one or other guerrilla movement and the state generally ended in failure and returns to war. The conflict has left 7.7 million internally displaced people².

Although the roots of the conflict are as complex as the actors involved, a particularly important contributing factor is extreme inequality in access to land. This has caused profound economic exclusion, correlated with social and political exclusion, for a very significant part of the population, particularly peasant producers. It has limited the development of democracy.

The exclusion of peasant producers from the legal economy has given rise to the growth of an illegal economy. Over the past fifty years, the cultivation, processing and commercialization of illegal drugs have pervaded Colombian agriculture, commerce and economy, increasing both violence and corruption. In this context, the emergence of a new Constitution in 1991 – which characterises the country as a "social and democratic state, subject to the rule of law"³ owed much to demands from civil society and the political left.

The government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002–2010) was marked by a notable deterioration in respect for human rights and considerable increases in internal displacement, forced disappearances, persecution and judicial harassment of human rights defenders. Under Uribe's policy of 'democratic security'⁴, Colombian democracy receded, accountability for the human rights of ordinary citizens worsened, and the "social and democratic state subject to the rule of law" became more unattainable than ever.

In 2012, a new government led by Juan Manuel Santos initiated exploratory peace talks with the FARC. Civil society and the international community supported these through mediation, advocacy and negotiation on several levels. The talks culminated in the six-point Peace Accord which was put to a people's vote in October 2016, and was rejected by a small majority of voters. Nonetheless, the ceasefire held and, after hurried adjustments to the text, a modified Accord was signed by the government and the FARC in November 2016.

CIJP: emergence, identity, adaptation

CIJP was founded in 2002 to continue with the rights-claiming work started in 1988 by the Inter-Congregational Justice and Peace Commission, the human rights programme of the Bishops' Conference of Colombia.

It is driven by its conviction that the Colombian state falls short of the vision and commitments of the 1991 constitution. The consequences are particularly damaging for communities that are marginalized because of their ethnicity, culture, livelihood or territorial location. CIJP therefore exists to help provide the conditions and necessary support for all Colombians to play their part in ensuring that the state fulfils its constitutional commitments. As such, the vision and assumptions implicit in its ToC during the years of the conflict can be summed up as shown in Box 1.

Box 1. CIJP's ToC before the Peace Accord

Vision

The Colombian state fulfils its constitutional status and commitments as a social and democratic state subject to the rule of law, through Colombians claiming, affirming and exercising their rights, collectively and as individuals.

Fundamental assumptions

To be able to exercise their rights safely, people and their organisations need support. CIJP can contribute to providing this support.

The relationship between CIJP and the state: While the 1991 Constitution is a viable legal framework for a social and democratic state subject to the rule of law, the state has actually been one of the principal violators of human rights. The state has horizontal accountability mechanisms (e.g. Human Rights Ombudsman, Procurator General, Attorney General), but their power to contain rights violations is very limited.

CIJP's relationship with communities: The communities CIJP supports need permanent accompaniment and intermediation to be able to interact with authorities, and with state and non-state armed actors. 'Communities' are collective actors with unified priorities and interests.

CIJP's relationships with allies in civil society, government and the international aid system: In the absence of basic service provision by the state, CIJP can fill gaps. CSOs and the international community are allies in CIJP's work accompanying communities, and in advocacy for the protection and guarantee of human rights.

The private sector: Some private sector actors are part of the problem, due to their interests or roles in dispossessing communities of their land, extraction of natural resources and mass displacement, which occurs with the state's consent.

CIJP: CIJP and its members are fit to play the roles assigned to them by the ToC, acting coherently and consistently with the principles that the organisation espouses.

During the years of negotiating the peace process, CIJP – along with many other CSOs – played an active role in pushing the negotiations forward. For example, as part of the movement 'Colombians for Peace', it

helped secure the exchange of kidnap victims held hostage by the guerrilla for guerrilla combatants imprisoned by the state, which had been a stumbling block in the negotiations, and which significantly swung public opinion towards support for the peace negotiations.

It also played a strong advocacy role in the conception and construction of the transitional justice system created for the implementation of the Accord, described in Box 2.

Box 2. Transitional Justice System

Central to the Peace Accord agreed between the government and the FARC is an ambitious peace with justice strategy. It is an effort to address the conflict's nearly 8 million victims' rights to truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-repetition through a comprehensive process of transitional justice.

Implementation of those aspects of the Accord that relate to transitional justice – a commission on truth and reconciliation and on missing persons, a special tribunal for determining accountability for human rights violations, protection for community leaders, and reparations to victims – has moved forward in fits and starts.

Source: Ted Piccone (2019) *Peace with justice: The Colombian experience with transitional justice*, The Brookings Institution

Time passes: keeping abreast of events

The years in which the Peace Accord was constructed and negotiated were a period in which CIJP took stock of their own identity, purpose and position, in common with the rest of Colombia's democracy-building civil society – and above all the human rights organisations born amid prolonged internal armed conflict, acute human rights abuse, state violence and impunity.

The operating context for civil society as a whole, and especially human rights organisations, has changed radically since the signature of the Peace Accord and subsequent developments. New challenges and opportunities have emerged as the some of the state apparatus for the implementation of transitional justice has been rapidly established: the Integral Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition System, the Truth Commission and the Search Unit for People Assumed Disappeared, and the slow or negligible progress of other elements of the Accord. This shifting context drives changes in the outlook and fabric of the human rights movement at local, regional, national and international levels.

These contextual changes modified CIJP's understanding of its scope and spaces of operation. The principal internal and external changes concerned the dynamics of the conflict and international perspectives on it, the formal and informal norms that define and govern the sphere and scope of CIJP's actions, and the changing priorities of the communities CIJP supports.

Further, in 2015–16, the reconfiguration of various institutional spaces and the opening up of new ones made CIJP re-think some of its strategies and ways of working, while retaining essentially the same ToC. Table 1 summarises how CIJP's ways of working have adjusted to shifts in three of the spaces of work that map onto the assumptions in the ToC shown in Box 1.

Table 1. Spaces of work and adjustments in ways of working

Spaces of work	Adjustments in ways of working and being
Relationship with the state	<p>Engaging with new spaces of the state and new framing of justice</p> <p>CIJP started working with the new Integral Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition System, helping enable it to reach victims and perpetrators and fulfil its mission of constructing peace with justice – understood now as transitional and restorative justice, rather than traditional criminal justice.</p>
Relationship with communities supported	<p>From protection to supporting development</p> <p>With the ceasefire between government and FARC, CIJP reduced its emphasis on self-protection by conflict-affected communities under international humanitarian law. It shifted from providing communities with permanent <i>in situ</i> accompaniment to forming regional interdisciplinary teams to offer support and technical assistance to ever more autonomous and self-driven processes and actors.</p> <p>Although it started supporting these communities to become ‘Peace Eco-villages’ running productive projects, and strengthening capacity in memory and justice, territory and environment, democracy and participation, this initiative has been in abeyance as the conflict did not subside as much as had been hoped.</p> <p>CIJP has also problematized the concept of ‘community’ as its the unit of intervention, and nuanced its position and its interventions accordingly.</p>
Relationships with the private sector	<p>From caution to selective engagement</p> <p>CIJP sought funding and support for community projects by forging alliances with private sector actors who are committed to the fulfilment of human rights and environmental protection.</p> <p>Achievements in non-formal and formal education in accompanied communities and the progressive strengthening of communities themselves led to CIJP proposing and supporting a new project: UniPaz - the Peace University. This educational, peace and ‘socio-environmental reconciliation’ initiative in supported communities is a collaboration with both public and private universities that want to play a role in constructing peace in the regions of Colombia.</p>

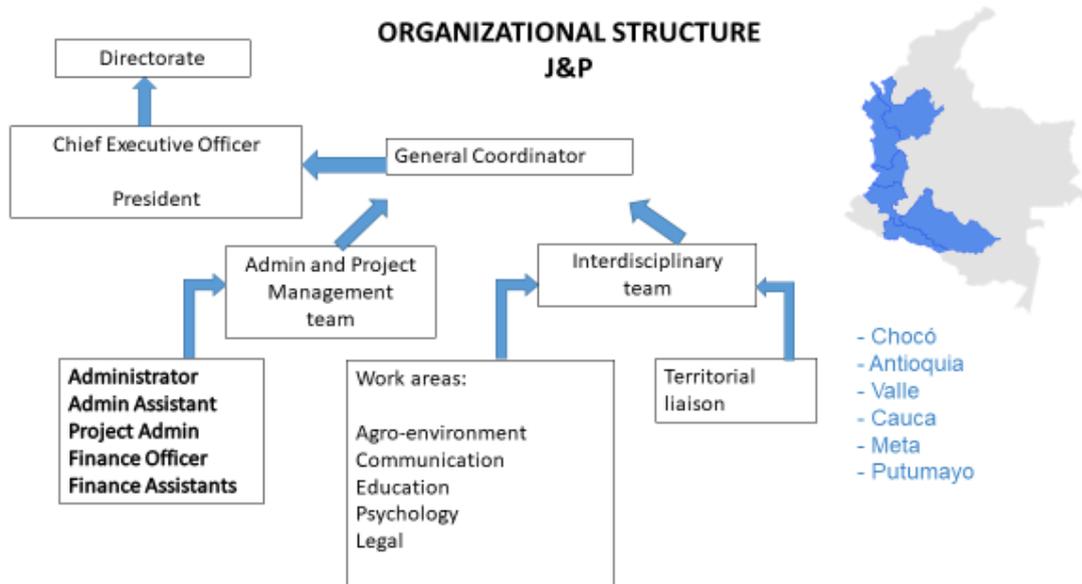
As well as these outward-facing considerations, a central aspect of CIJP’s rethinking had to do with the internal culture of the organisation. In the midst of a transformative era for Colombia in terms of truth, justice and reparation, CIJP problematized and debated its own identity and positioning in relation to these concepts. It also shifted its understanding of victims of the armed conflict and those responsible, changing the language it uses to describe them from ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’, to those ‘affected’ and those ‘responsible’. Finally, it moved from conducting reflection to refine its social and political action, to conducting ‘self-reflection’ to enhance coherence between its internal state of affairs and its outward-facing work. This has implications for power relations, gender relations and inclusivity in the organisation.

Adapting to a time of peacebuilding

The reflection process of 2015–16 gave rise to an organisational restructuring to align the structure with new ways of working. The restructuring consisted of realigning CIJP’s internal structure to re-framed areas of work – not a wholesale revision, because all of these areas had been worked on for some time, but an updating of emphasis and ways of working. Among other things, the restructuring enabled CIJP to

demonstrate the results of its work more easily and systematically. This was motivated by an internal need to tighten up its work by basing it more closely on evidence and systematic learning, rather than by external demands from funding agencies. The current structure is captured in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Organogram CIJP



The overall operational approach is interdisciplinary, and the priority of supporting and strengthening organisational processes cuts across all areas.

- **Agro-environment:** Technical advice and assistance in territorial demarcation and protection; building capacity for productive initiatives; implementing of local development plans.
- **Communication:** Promoting freedom of expression and democratization of communication and media, to give space to marginalised voices in public policy capacity-building processes, and multimedia campaigns.
- **Education:** Promoting the right to education and autonomous processes for basic literacy, primary and secondary education with contextually relevant curricula and methodologies; promoting the Peace University as a contribution to constructing a new culture of peace and democracy.
- **Psychology:** Support to people and organisations to overcome individual and collective trauma, and to recognize the effects of violence, through working individually and collectively with mind, body and soul.
- **Legal:** Support for protecting the rights of those affected by political, environmental and social violence, using national and international legal systems and extrajudicial initiatives emphasising truth and memory.

Asked what distinguishes CIJP from other human rights organisations, staff of the organisation pointed to five features:

- The absolute priority assigned to the needs, perspectives and experiences of communities CIJP supports (including those affected by conflict) above all others, including those of CIJP's own members.
- A commitment to living with and accompanying communities (once permanently, now via continual and close-at-hand support), so as to share their experiences and bear compelling, legitimate witness; avoiding speaking for people but giving them enough space and safety for the, to speak for themselves – in the words of CIJP Executive Secretary Fr. Alberto Franco “not for people but with people”.

- The span of CIJP's work, from the most local to the truly global (international) level, which has lately been complemented with the regional logic introduced in the restructuring (i.e. a consolidation of staff and attention on south-west Colombia; and on the lower Atrato river basin in the north-west).
- A commitment to contributing to building the movement for human rights, victims and peace, by providing some services such as the alternative radio station *Contagio Radio* (Radio Contagion) and the commemoration initiative *Sin Olvido* (Never to be Forgotten) which CIJP uses to convene, mobilize and support allies and potential allies in the movement. A further example of this is CIJP's capacity-building of journalists in 'human rights journalism'.

Together, the unique identity of CIJP and the processes of reflection and re-structuring have been woven into an adapted ToC for the organisation that reflects the contextual changes and a shift in emphasis from conflict to peacebuilding, shown in Box 3.

Box 3. CIJP's ToC in a time of peacebuilding (early 2019)

Vision

The Colombian state fulfils its constitutional status and commitments as a social and democratic state subject to the rule of law, through Colombians exercising their rights.

Strategies and interventions

CIJP promotes, defends and supports the exercise and claiming of the rights of rural and urban people, and community organizing processes.

CIJP works on three strategic programme areas: memory and justice; environment and territory; and democracy and participation. It uses a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to carry out agro-environmental, communication, education, psychological and legal activities.

Wherever possible CIJP supports community and collective mobilization for rights-claiming.

Outcomes

Mobilised communities, an operational rule of law, democracy based on justice, and peace.

Fundamental assumptions

To be able to exercise their rights as individuals and community organizing processes as part of building peace, and in search of a democracy based on justice, people and their processes need support which CIJP can provide.

The relationship between CIJP and the state: Needs to become less adversarial and based on denunciation and accusation, and more focused on taking advantage of new spaces for engagement.

CIJP's relationship with communities: Now that physical harm has become less of a risk, support to communities needs to facilitate them to function autonomously and independently.

CIJP's relationships with allies in civil society, government and the international aid system: Education-focused engagement with public and private actors and aid donors needs to increase.

The private sector: Some private sector actors are part of the problem, due to their interests or roles in dispossessing communities of their land, extraction of natural resources and mass displacement, which occurs with the state's consent. But others can contribute to peace building. CIJP needs to open up to selective engagement with corporate actors, who can support peace.

CIJP: The health of the organisation needs addressing, rather than taking for granted.

Adapting the ToC to a moment of peacebuilding – and to the challenges of implementing the Accord – is ongoing. Consultations with communities and regular regional team meetings ensure that CIJP is fuelled by continual analysis of regional and local contexts, and an annual 'council' of the whole organisation debates and analyses priorities and key actions, before strategic decisions are finalised at the level of the Directorate. The debates and discussions of the 2015-16 reflection process happened within this existing structure, established to accommodate the need for constant adaptation.

Interviews with civil society actors external to CIJP suggested that the organisation is in synchrony with the rest of the human rights movement and, in the eyes of some, it has gone further than most in 'making the turn' necessary to operate strategically, effectively and consistently with its own mission in the new scenario. The picture of CIJP that emerged from the interviews was of an organisation that has proved able to open up and to intelligently, bravely and coherently embrace the new realities of human rights defence, environmental restoration and peace-building in Colombia. Box 4 shows an example of new work in this phase.

Box 4. UPaz: towards a new culture of peace and democracy

UPaz (Peace University) is CIJP's response to various needs. On the one hand, in the communities CIJP supports, young people, lacking employment or training opportunities, tend to leave and migrate to cities. On the other hand, the Integral Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition System needs physical footholds in remote communities deeply affected by conflict, so that it can fulfil its roles of hearing the testimonies of victims, and of involving them in the design and implementation of alternative sentencing for perpetrators, according to the provisions of the transitional justice framework.

CIJP has conceived UPaz, a 'barefoot' university which responds to both needs. In collaboration with six Colombian public and private universities and some local governments, it is developing course designs and curricula in academic and vocational subjects relevant to the young people in these communities. The plan is eventually to offer these in eleven remote, rural locations. The first physical facilities have been built in one community, and in several others introductory courses are being rolled out.

As well as learning, the physical facilities of UPaz are intended for use by transitional justice institutions, allowing opportunities for communities to access truth, justice and reparation, and for the transitional justice institutions to operate deep in the heart of those areas most affected by the conflict.

Looking forward and tracking change

Examining how CIJP has adapted to the post-Peace Accord context in Colombia sheds light on how a civil society actor has made sense of broad changes in the context where it operates. Looking ahead, the Ten Years study aims to continue to observe CIJP's approach and practice in the years to come. This section reflects a possible framework for future conversations.

CIJP operates at a high level of conceptual and practical clarity in relation to its ToC and the implementation of its plans. As such, the most appropriate tracking and interpretive framework is relatively light, helping to illustrate and exemplify contextual changes and their implications for the ToC and the organisation's practice.

A useful starting point for such a framework is a focus on the spaces of interaction with different structures and actors – state, current government, armed and formerly-armed actors, women and men in accompanied communities, allies and members of CIJP – spaces which the implementation of the Peace Accord infuses with transformative potential.

Analysis of these spaces – their nature, status and rules – and how they intersect with CIJP's areas of work at different levels will allow a structured interpretation of how the organisation adapts to change. For example, Box 4 illustrates three spaces which are changing in relation to the Peace Accord and which are important for CIJP's work, and discusses the implications of the changes for CIJP in each case.

Box 5. Spaces for change in the Peace Accord

Closed spaces are where elites such as politicians, bureaucrats, experts, bosses, managers and leaders make decisions with little broad consultation or involvement.

Invited spaces are new opportunities for involvement and consultation, usually through 'invitation' from various authorities, be they government, supra-national agencies or non-governmental organisations.

Created spaces are created by less powerful actors, or claimed from or against power holders.

Colombian justice system: When CIJP began work, this was a series of national-level, **closed spaces**. Over the past three decades, thanks to the continuous advocacy of a range of national and international social actors, a series of **invited spaces** has opened up in which CIJP can litigate against state impunity and seek guarantees of protection for the exercise of rights. The Peace Accord has also created a transitional justice system. Although this remains an invited space, its founding principles and operating rules were influenced by actors like CIJP and victims of the conflict, and offer them ways of pursuing peace with justice through the judicial route.

Dialogue spaces with armed insurgency: Before the Peace Accord, armed actors - non-state and state - routinely violated the human rights and security of people in the communities CIJP accompanied. Like many other human rights organisations, CIJP engaged in dialogue with non-state armed actors in various **created spaces** at the national, regional and local levels. From 2012 onwards, the Havana Dialogue process constituted an **invited space** of dialogue, offered by the Colombian government and legitimated and protected by the international community. The Truth Commission, created by the Peace Accord, is a series of

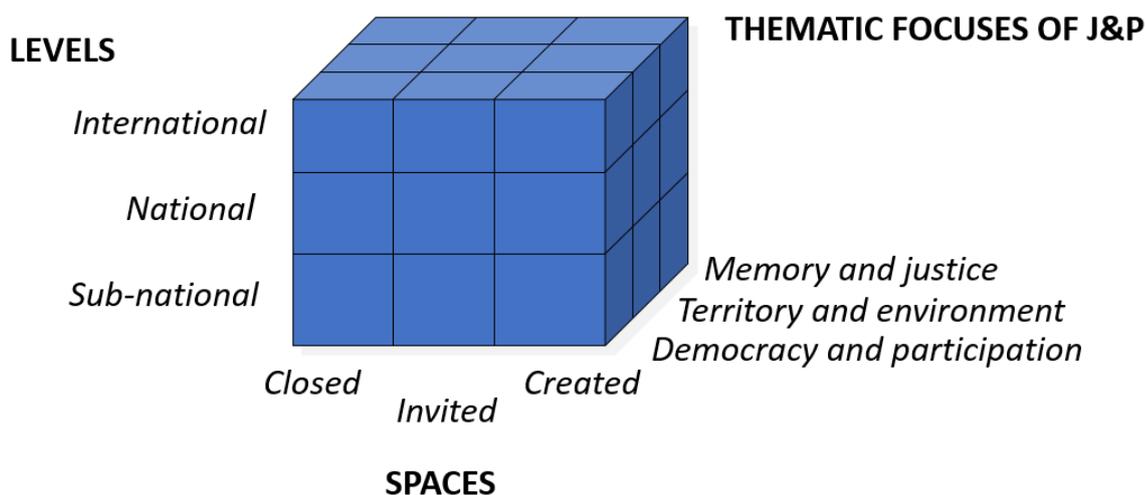
invited spaces with a high degree of autonomy from the state, in which the full range of victims' groups, human rights and peacebuilding organisations, members of the military, ex-guerrilla combatants and ex-paramilitaries can all engage in dialogue. As the ELN continues to operate as an armed actor, the challenge of creating and protecting humanitarian mechanisms that afford spaces for dialogue continues, at the same time as the need to keep defending the spaces opened by the Peace Accord between government and FARC, and engage constructively in them where possible.

Communications media: CIJP has always aimed to use the media to transmit messages and positions about the conflict from the perspectives of marginalised communities. In the past, the mass media were **closed spaces** from CIJP's standpoint. It therefore used independent media, and built its own platforms including *Contagio Radio* and *Sin Olvido* – examples of **created spaces**. Since the signature of the Peace Accord CIJP has found the mass media more independent-minded, and more open to reporting the conflict and human rights. This indicates that a broader range of perspectives now enjoy social legitimacy and credibility, and that mass media has become more of an **invited space**.

Definitions of spaces: www.powercube.net and Gaventa, J. (2006) 'Finding spaces for change: a power analysis', *IDS Bulletin* 37.6: 23-33

Figure 2 shows simple framework incorporating these three types of 'space for change', together with the levels at which CIJP operates and its thematic focus areas.

Figure 2: Spaces, levels and themes



In future, when Christian Aid resumes this conversation with CIJP, it can use this cube as a guide in discussions to identify the current most relevant spaces, from the perspective of CIJP's ToC; and what has happened in each of these spaces at the three levels in the interim period, with reference to the three thematic focuses of the organisation. The discussion can be fuelled by questions and probes derived from the literature on spaces for change, such as:

- Which rules operate in these spaces and how were these established? Are they open to modification? How?
- What is the relative value of pressing for access to closed spaces vs. accepting invitations to work in invited spaces vs. investing in the creation and maintenance of claimed spaces?
- How do the rules, terms of engagement and behaviours going on in adjacent and related spaces affect the possibilities of CIJP achieving what it aims for in that space?
- Is there a gap between theory and practice in these spaces? What are strategies for addressing this?

A version of the cube, with its multiple levels and kinds of space, can add depth and precision to future explorations of the various ways in which CIJP lives out its ToC, encouraging reflection on what has changed, how this relates to context at various levels, and what these changes mean not only for daily operations but for the ToC as a whole.

¹ The consultancy, carried out by Rosie McGee of the Institute of Development Studies, UK, comprised a review of documentation on CIJP sourced from Christian Aid, Christian Aid Ireland and CIJP, extensive group and individual interviews with seven CIJP staff, and semi-structured interviews with six respondents from other human rights and peace-building CSOs whose perspectives were used to triangulate and contextualize the interview material.

² Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018, p33, www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf

³ The Spanish rendition here is 'Estado Social de Derecho'. The correct translation of 'Estado de Derecho' is 'Rule of Law', but the Colombian Constitution specifically characterises Colombia as 'Estado *Social* de Derecho'. An accurate if cumbersome rendition of 'Estado Social de Derecho' is 'Social and democratic

state, subject to the rule of law' – thanks to James Lupton for this.

⁴ This long-term strategy promised to lend coherence to the security effort. See <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/colombia-president-uribes-democratic-security-policy>