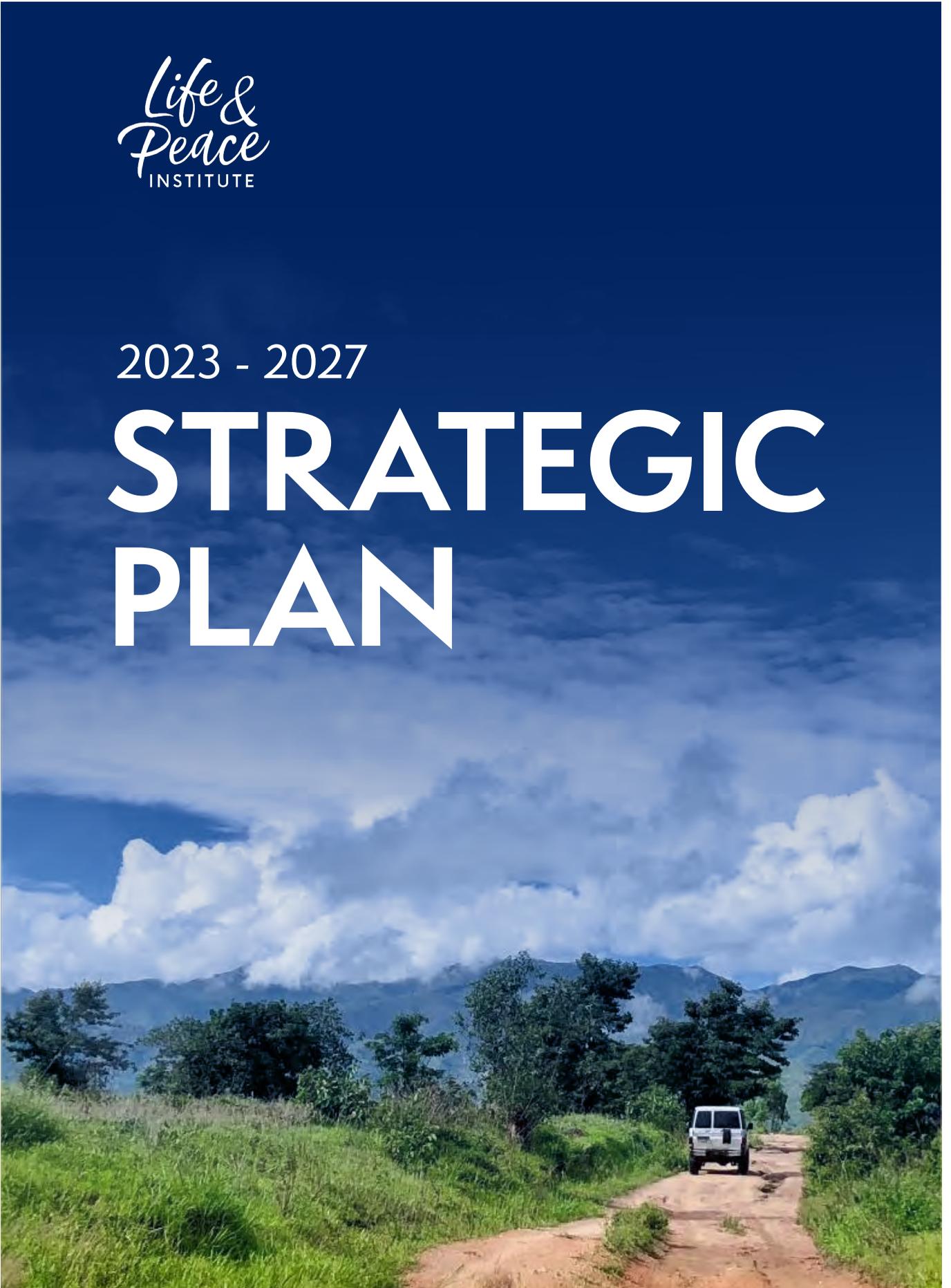




2023 - 2027

STRATEGIC PLAN



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Foreword

This strategic plan emerged from a consultative process with staff, partners, and close collaborators. During the consultation regarding the Strategy for 2023-2027, it became clear that LPI should continue to work in the same direction as the previous strategies but deepen and strengthen our work.

In addition, we were challenged to seek ways to incorporate new thinking and ways of working on the current and emerging crises facing the world. Therefore, while this new plan builds upon and is closely linked to the two previous strategic plans, LPI has new thinking regarding how it works. We will be adding new themes that have emerged as critical areas of work including a new focus on climate and conflict, exploring how incorporate a trauma informed approach, and building upon LPI's commitments to inclusive peacebuilding through grassroots approaches, multilevel policy engagement, and mutual learning.

Alongside this overarching Strategic Plan, we are developing a set of accompanying strategies to explore and delve into our approaches to other areas of work that deserve more space, including:



Resource Mobilisation Strategy



Communications Strategy



Learning & Knowledge Strategy and Framework



Programming Framework



Organisational Development Strategy

Who We Are

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international organisation that supports and promotes **bottom-up nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation and positive social change** through research, policy engagement, and action.

Forty years ago, nuclear war was a worldwide threat. To address this concern, the Life & Peace Conference brought together a diverse range of ecumenical peace actors and movements to discuss the threats to the peace of that era. One of the key recommendations of this conference was to support peace research and nonviolent action. In 1985, as a direct result of this recommendation, the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) was established as an independent institute for the promotion of international peace through research and action.

Inspired by the belief that change comes from self-determination and local ownership, an appreciation of strength in diversity, and the critical role of civil society in contributing to peace through inclusive dialogue, LPI works through and in collaboration with civil society, including youth, women and religious actors, and other institutions. Our goal is to contribute to a more equitable and just world by promoting sustainability and collaboration for peace, social justice, and reconciliation among people and the environment.

Since our inception, LPI has carried out strategic peacebuilding programmes to support conflict transformation in various countries and contexts. We have also conducted research, supported policy development, and produced numerous publications on nonviolent conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Primarily focused on Africa, LPI established programmes in the Horn of Africa in the early 1990s. We are currently engaged in Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Sweden. A critical component of our work is also to engage at regional and global levels in policy debates.

LPI is registered and has offices in Sweden, Kenya, Ethiopia, DRC, Sudan, and Somalia, with appropriate governance structures aligned to national laws. We are governed by a diverse international board and benefit from support from an international advisory council consisting of peacebuilding experts, practitioners, and researchers from Africa, the United States, and Europe.



What Guides Us



Vision



Mission



Core values



Vision

We believe in a world where people work together to transform violent conflicts, create sustainable environments, and build inclusive, just, and peaceful societies.



Mission

We work with partners and other allies to support all stakeholders to play an active role in preventing and transforming violent conflict and promoting inclusive and sustainable societies through a combination of action and research.



Core Values

We value human dignity

All people are born equal in dignity and rights as expressed in the International Bill of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

We value local ownership

We assert that all people deserve to achieve their full potential while bearing responsibility for their actions, considering the common good.

We value collaborative action

To achieve positive change, we must collaborate and work with others to create peace and transform power relations and conditions that drive violence.

We value equitable, inclusive, and just societies

We believe that all people deserve to participate fully in societal life and be treated equally in their societies and globally.

We value and care for the environment

We take responsibility for our impact on the environment, and work to sustain and rehabilitate our natural environment for all life.

Our Sphere of Operation



DRC



Ethiopia



Kenya



Somalia



Sudan



Sweden

LPI intends to move forward with our current geographic footprint, particularly the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes Region and Sweden. This focus enables us to leverage our long-term relationships, existing foundational work, and ongoing expertise. We also will explore ways to bring our experience of peacebuilding, research, and policy influence to other contexts.

Aligned with our systemic approach to addressing conflict and developing sustainable peace, we always seek to create appropriate horizontal and vertical connections to national, regional, and global levels to effect change. We do this in two ways: 1) always being grounded in the realities of conflict-affected communities; and 2) using our access to policymaking realms to create space for their experiences, needs, and voices.

We are open to expanding into new geographic areas or policy arenas if they link strategically with ongoing work and increase possibilities to support systemic change. We will only invest in expansion if the conditions enable us to maintain existing programme quality, are sustainable, and offer the prospect for long-term work to address conflict in a meaningful manner.

Strategic Priorities: 2023- 2027⁷

Our work focuses on **three interrelated strategic priorities**, seeking to implement them in a coherent way over the **next five years**.



1. Inclusive engagement for peace
2. Policy engagement and awareness raising
3. Collaborative learning to enhance practice and policy

⁷Correlating to this broad five-year strategy, during this period we also intend to develop a set of accompanying strategies to explore and delve into our approaches to other areas of work that deserve more space, including: 1) Resource Mobilisation Strategy; 2) Communications Strategy; 3) Learning & Knowledge Strategy and Framework; 4) Programming Framework; and 5) Organisational Development Strategy.



Strategic Priority 1: **INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT FOR PEACE**

Civil society actors and community members play a critical role in the systemic transformation of conflict to sustainable peace at all levels of society. We support civil society and other actors through collaborative joint engagement in research, action, policy influencing, and capacity enhancement.

Joint Engagement in Conflict Transformation

Recognising that conflict is complex, multifaceted, and demands collective efforts to transform, we will:

- Undertake participatory and multistakeholder analyses of contextual issues influencing conflict dynamics.
- Ensure collaborative and inclusive civil society engagement and action with critical actors, including informal and formal civil society, traditional and local authorities, non-state actors, and marginalised groups such as women, young people, and other minority groups.
- Ensure gender and intersectionality are at the centre of our conflict transformation processes.
- Apply interdisciplinary collaboration and partnership models to tackle and transform complex societal issues, such as climate change and those affecting the triple nexus, (the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors), that require integrated approaches involving multiple sectors.

- Research how participants' greater inclusion can enhance results and their sustainability to develop lessons and build an evidence base.

LPI will always ground its strategies and approaches on contextual peacebuilding needs and partner priorities. Using an iterative and reflective approach, LPI and partners will apply both proven methods and develop innovative approaches as appropriate.

Capacity Enhancement, Mutual Support, and Role Complementarity:

Capacity enhancement is a mutual learning process: Because the nature of the relationships between different peacebuilding actors is evolving, we will:

- Recognise greater mutuality in partnerships while identifying the complementarity and differentiated roles each sees as strategic and should play.
- Work together with diverse partners to address and balance choices, needs, responsibilities, and priorities associated with technical skills and organisational development to maximise efficacy in bringing about and sustaining peace.
- Acknowledge relational power dynamics based on gender, age, social class, race and ethnicity, refugee status, etc. We emphasise empowerment, mutual accountability and learning, trust, and transparency, in all aspects of our relationships.
- Enhance connectivity between like-minded and diverse civil society groups to encourage horizontal collaboration, networking, collective support, and understanding.



Strategic Priority 2: POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS- RAISING

Policy frameworks and legislation play a critical role in shaping institutional behaviour and people's lives to bring about sustained peace in societies. Engagement and informed linkages between all levels—local, subnational (state or province), national, regional, and global—are crucial for creating systemic change. We engage directly and in collaboration with others on raising awareness among policymakers. We do this by supporting inclusive policy development processes on issues affecting peace and conflict in people's lived experience. We encourage and motivate influential actors to fulfil their responsibilities to promote peace and address potential grievances and drivers of conflict through this engagement. We enhance awareness of civil society conflict transformation processes and raise pertinent policy issues deriving from the work in the field.

Policy Influence and Engagement:

We work in environments often hostile to public discourse on peace and security issues, particularly for civil society actors. Recognising the need to ensure contextually appropriate ways to engage in influencing policy, we will:

- Undertake targeted policy engagement on our own or through other organisations, networks and coalitions in collaboration with partners. Indicative policy issues include climate change and conflict, support for reconciliation processes, and continued funding for peacebuilding and development assistance.
- Support the creation of safe spaces and convening of stakeholders for constructive discussion of barriers to peace, different experiences, combined strengths upon which to draw, and opportunities for collaborative action.

- Facilitate active, meaningful participation and engagement in policy arenas of local actors and communities directly affected by the issues at stake.
- Work to ensure our policy engagement is primarily rooted in our organisational experience, engagement with local actors and in our values and principles.

Awareness raising and understanding:

Mindful that power differentials between actors and differing interpretations of reality and experience, often fundamentally influence policy dissonance in addressing social change and conflict drivers, we will:

- Support reciprocal engagement and mutual understanding between different policymakers at all levels and those affected by conflict.
- Explore, research, and support ways to bridge gaps in understanding between policymakers and affected communities by developing appropriate evidence bases and building inter-connectedness.
- Support and emphasise collaborative policy development processes that bring people together across spheres, levels, and disciplines to address issues of mutual importance.



Strategic Priority 3: **COLLABORATIVE LEARNING TO ENHANCE PRACTICE AND POLICY**

Through learning and documentation, we both improve our practice and share our knowledge and experience with relevant stakeholders. The experience of participants at all levels and in multiple forms is critical for knowledge generation. We seek to establish strategic partnerships between conflict-affected communities and linking them to relevant local, regional, and international researchers, policymaking organisations and institutions, academic actors, peacebuilding practitioners. Simultaneously, we gather relevant concepts, research findings, and experiences from other contexts, sectors, and organisations to communicate this information to LPI staff and partners.

Documentation, learning and sharing:

Reflective learning is critical for LPI to improve its work. Where we believe our experience and knowledge can add value to the broader sector, we will invest in sharing it strategically. To support this, we will:

- Ensure high quality, utilisation-focused, and, when appropriate, participatory monitoring, reflection, documentation, and evaluation of our programme initiatives. This will consider programme approaches, processes, and methodologies.
- Develop a coherent Learning & Knowledge Management strategy that provides an organisation-wide perspective and framework to guide institutional learning across all LPI programmes.

- Encourage local communities of practice among LPI programmes, collaborating partners, and relevant peacebuilding and academic actors within and across contexts.
- Support the development of evidence-based research to understand better how to support positive social change, stability, and sustained peace.
- Design innovative projects and programmes with partners based on the evidence and learning we generate.

Networking and research:

Recognising that the exchange of knowledge and experience between regions (global south and global north as well as among conflict regions) and sectors (i.e., academia, policymakers, and practitioners) is an essential aspect of peacebuilding, we will:

- Undertake high-quality research, develop long-term partnerships with academic institutions, particularly in our geographic areas of operation.
- Develop collaborative learning opportunities with peers on issues and topics of mutual interest that contribute to global debates about peacebuilding.



Ways of Working

To create sustainable change, LPI believes that conflicts must be addressed **systematically, holistically, and in an inclusive manner**. Such change requires the involvement of all pertinent stakeholders, not only those directly involved in the violence. To achieve this, LPI seeks to support broader inclusive peace processes that link the different levels, bringing issues encountered by those affected by conflicts to the attention of those in the policy arena.

Our primary way of working is in **collaborative partnership**, especially with local civil society, particularly women and youth, and also with government, academia, and other key strategic stakeholders. Collaborative partnership means listening to others and ensuring that all participants work together equitably and benefit from the results of their work. This approach permeates all aspects of our work. As implementers, convenors, trusted facilitators, or intermediaries, we bring together and connect different actors and networks to address policy reform and conflict transformation.

In supporting collaborative action to achieve peace and influence policymakers, we are acutely aware of the need to honestly acknowledge potential **power differentials**

between actors that may negatively influence all aspects of a partnership, including disparities between LPI and our partners. Overcoming these power differences requires considered efforts to ensure all actors can participate meaningfully and ensuring programme and decision-making processes facilitate participant preparations, fair access, and deliberations based on merit, not power.

A key LPI strategic priority, learning permeates all our work, both as an objective and a way of working. **Learning requires honest reflection**. In addition to focusing on what succeeds, it is equally important to consider shortfalls and failures. This means we gather evidence about what works and does not at all levels and share that knowledge widely.

Our learning processes encompass and acknowledge **different types of knowledge**, including experiential insight and lived realities, policy lessons, and empirical and critical qualitative and quantitative research. We engage and generate these different types of knowledge to develop a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding that is rooted in systematic study, ethical principles, and a commitment to transparency.

Operational Capacities

We recognise that our greatest organisational asset is our staff in undertaking our work. So, staff well-being, continued development, and ongoing security are of paramount importance. To achieve this, we will continually seek ways to invest in our staff to enhance their skills, confidence, and professionalism to adhere to and implement our principles and values and challenge one another constructively. This entails providing opportunities for growth, learning, and sharing experience and skills within LPI and with academic and peer organisations to improve mutual performance and our organisational systems. We will likewise seek to develop and embed restorative principles and practices in the organisation to model peacebuilding habits in our internal relations and work ethos.

Addressing the complex issues in our work requires developing deeper technical expertise on particular themes, e.g. transitional justice and reconciliation, trauma healing, climate change, Youth, Women, Peace and Security and conflict. In addition, LPI needs to develop further critical skills such as the application

of research methods, data analysis and presentation of findings. Integrated interdisciplinary approaches to enhance the possibilities for inclusive and sustainable peace also necessitate learning and testing new ways of working with different types of organisations. This means collaborating more closely and creatively with colleagues in fields that intersect with peacebuilding, humanitarianism, development, environment, livelihoods, human rights, governance, and the private sector.

This strategy period (2023–2027) focuses on enhancing our programmatic quality and ensuring high consistency across all programmes. This means improving ways to share and apply lessons learnt from programmes across the organisation. It also means improving constructive collaboration and accountability to each other and those with whom we work (in addition to upward accountability to our donors). We aim to maximise effectiveness and impact in our peacebuilding work and be an efficient steward of resources.

How We Work – Guiding Principles

We base our peacebuilding work on ethical principles. Effective, sustainable conflict transformation and peacebuilding requires us to work in an inclusive and non-partisan way that engages all relevant parties and ensures participant diversity and inclusion while being mindful of equity issues. It also entails avoiding alignment with specific actors. In conducting our work, the organisation and its staff:



Work continuously to understand and learn about the context



Build on local knowledge



Work to be accountable, transparent, and build trust with all stakeholders



Ensure our work is coherent across all levels



Ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in programmes and processes



Challenge structures of oppression



Apply Conflict Sensitive principles



Ensure gender sensitivity and apply gender transformative approaches



Are Environmentally Responsible



Visit our website to follow or contribute to our work
life-peace.org