



CENTRE FOR PEACE &
CONFLICT STUDIES

Peacebuilding Online: Lessons and Principles for a Changing World (2024 Edition)

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a rapid shift towards online peacebuilding, compelling organizations like the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS) to re-evaluate their approaches. While the initial transition was driven by necessity, it has yielded valuable lessons and principles that remain relevant in 2024.

KEY LEARNINGS



Critical Analysis

CPCS recognizes the importance of staying focused on its core strengths: accompanying peace processes and providing resources for conflict transformation. This means resisting the urge to address all issues and instead collaborating with organizations possessing relevant expertise in areas like health and economic development.



Seizing the Moment

The pandemic created unique opportunities. Increased availability of partners and stakeholders allowed for deeper reflection, skills development (e.g., public speaking), and strategic engagement with senior figures.



Reformatting for Impact

Multi-day workshops were reimagined as shorter, more frequent online sessions. This allowed for deeper dives into crucial topics, critical reflection between sessions, and knowledge sharing among participants.



Enhanced Inclusivity

Online platforms reduced barriers to participation, enabling greater inclusivity for individuals facing travel restrictions, security concerns, or scheduling conflicts.



Prioritizing Quality

With fewer in-person activities, CPCS emphasizes maximizing the quality of both face-to-face interactions and online resources.



Environmental Responsibility

Reduced travel and printing have significantly decreased CPCS's carbon footprint. The organization is committed to maintaining these gains by embracing electronic publications and a redesigned website.



The Value of Relationships

Strong, pre-existing relationships with partners proved essential for effective online collaboration. Trust, transparency, and open communication facilitated seamless transitions to virtual dialogues and analysis.

Principles for Online Peacebuilding:

Evolving Personal Leadership

Working remotely demands greater personal leadership, including proactive communication, clear boundaries, and a willingness to seek support when needed. Effective use of communication tools and scheduling platforms is vital.

Staying Focused and Balanced

Maintaining a structured workday with designated “online” hours ensure work-life balance and prevents burnout.

Strategies include:



Defined online hours
(e.g., 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM)



Planning in 4-week blocks to adapt
to changing circumstances



Restricting calls and messages
to working hours
(except emergencies)



Saying “no” to distractions (“noise”) that
divert energy from core priorities.



“Internal Housekeeping” days
for focused internal work

Staying Connected

Mindful communication is key. Before communicating, consider the audience, platform, timing, and clarity of the message. Utilize tools like email, iCal, and Zoom effectively. Prioritize transparency and keep all relevant parties informed.

Staying Human

Maintain relationships through virtual social events, celebratory calls, and regular check-ins. Foster a sense of community and support through:



Bi-weekly debriefing and
reflection sessions



Creative virtual celebrations (e.g.,
baby showers)



Fun weekly check-ins via
messaging platforms



Virtual coffee dates for informal
connection.

By embracing these lessons and principles, CPCS continues to adapt and thrive in the evolving landscape of online peacebuilding. The organization remains committed to its mission of fostering sustainable peace in Asia through strategic interventions and meaningful collaboration.

About the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies

The Centre for Peace and Conflicts Studies (CPCS) is a Cambodia-registered, regionally focused nongovernmental organisation which invests in Leadership and Facilitation for Lasting Peace in Asia. CPCS is committed to strong partnerships with people living in conflict systems and the external actors who are invested in sustainable peace. Our interventions emphasis analysis and facilitation of peace processes, cultivating transformation peace leadership, and the nexus of learning and practice to influence conflict transformation approaches.

CPCS is a value-driven organisation, and our core values guide us in making decisions and designing interventions.

Our values are:



Grounded:

We are committed to mindful interventions into violent conflicts. We design conflict transformation initiatives rooted in the critical and on-going analysis.



Courageous:

We embrace challenges, innovate, persevere, and push boundaries. We support and encourage others and ourselves to take the initiative and leadership.



Excellence:

We are committed to outstanding work. We strive to be excellent by challenging ourselves to ongoing improvement in our work.



Continued learning:

We critically reflect, evaluate, and adapt our methods, programmes, and goals. We share our learning and learn from the approaches and experiences of others.



Trust:

We create and nurture relationships with our partners and each other. Our relationships are honest, generous, heartfelt, and respectful. We practice humility, empathy, and solidarity. We value diversity.