

**Civil Society Engagement in Peacebuilding and Human Rights: The *LISACT E* Model for
Conceptualising Planning, Theories of Change, and Evaluation, with the Case Study of Israel-
Palestine**

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(1) Introduction

The paper proposes a meta-theory of civil society engagement in peacebuilding, and applies this meta-theory to a case study of Israel/Palestine relations in Australia. The theoretical foundation for the *ethics* and *social dynamics* for this paper is based on a perspective of peacebuilding which draws on: (1) the challenges of intervention, including neo-colonialism (2) the elicitive approach to peacebuilding developed by John Paul Lederach (3) integrating human rights and peace, often termed “Peace with Justice” or “Positive Peace” (4) considering the human rights required for successful dialogue to occur, for example freedom of opinion and movement, freedom from arbitrary detention, the right to life, liberty and security of person (5) the large body of research which demonstrates that an imbalance of power and associated violence and human rights abuses are major blocks to successful dialogue and peace negotiations (6) a social-psychological and relational approach to conflict, where violent conflict is understood as the result of both conscious/objective interests and unconscious/subjective drivers. The *epistemological* and *communicative* theoretical foundation is based on *Critical Theory* and *Applied Theory Triangulation*.

(2) Paralegal methods to drive human rights and peace

The paper will then consider how civil society can engage on human rights, from the perspective of human rights law as a *method* (using conventional legal mechanisms such as drafting legislation and the courts) versus human rights law as an *ethic* (human rights as a goal which can also be

pursued using methods beyond conventional legal mechanisms, termed “paralegal methods” such as education, activism, nonviolent social movements, and negotiation and dialogue). These paralegal methods often utilise public engagement and public opinion to promote change – that is they are *social movements*.

(3) LISACT E

LISACT E is a meta-theory of civil society engagement through paralegal methods, which sets out the following stages and tasks in civil society engagement for human rights, peace, and social change:

- i. **Listen** to: the problem and affected communities, your own subjectivities/assumptions, own values and ethics (and values and ethics of your organisation), and lessons learned from previous attempts at change;
- ii. **Identify** key change-makers (for example political constituents) who you can directly engage with, and identify relevant bridging values and bridging frames;
- iii. **Share** the value/problem link (build concern with change-makers);
- iv. **Activate** concerned people with attractive and realistic actions for change to influence decision-makers (activating unmobilised sentiment pools);
- v. **Coordinate and Mobilise** activated people and partners for coordinated action;
- vi. **Transform and Negotiate** the problem with decision-makers who have been engaged by the campaign and other change-makers;
- vii. **Evaluate and Learn** what worked, what didn't work, unintended outcomes, what would you do differently next time, and other lessons-learned.

(4) Strategies and tactics through the LISACT E model: roles, inputs, communication, and key partners

This paper will then further elucidate the *LISACT E* model through demonstrating the model's connection with: common roles in social change; inputs for social change (Resource Mobilisation, Political Opportunity, Framing, and Relationship Building); and how different stages of change can be associated with differing communication richness, communication approaches, and key partners.

(5) Case Study and the LISACT E model: Israel/Palestine relations in Australia

The *LISACT E* model will then be applied to a case study of Israel/Palestine relations in

Australia: a campaign carried out in Australia by the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) to support civil society engagement by the Australian public on the Australian governments' problematic involvement in the Israel-Palestine conflict and other Israel-Palestine peace and human rights issues. The campaign was based on an elicitive approach, aiming at empowering, supporting, and scaling-up resources and people in the Australian community concerned about and affected by the Israel-Palestine conflict. Specifically, the campaign focused on encouraging people to engage with their local election candidates during the 2016 Australian Election, both online (through an online platform for communicating with election candidates, and on social media) and face-to-face meetings and events with election candidates. The *LISACT E* model will be used to analyse: the campaign's social, political, and cultural context; theory of change and change processes; and campaign asks (how civil society members were asked to support the campaign).

(6) The *LISACT E* model as an evaluation tool for social movements

Finally the *LISACT E* will be utilised as a framework to examine the outcomes/impacts of the campaign case study, and look at how different outcomes are part of different stages of social change.

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