

**Coexistence International at Brandeis University
2005-2008**

Strategic Plan

**Prepared by Jessica Berns, Program Manager
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Acknowledgements

Coexistence International's Strategic Plan reflects the knowledge, observations, and energy of many individuals. A list of all those who contributed their ideas, to whom I am very grateful, can be found in Appendix 1. In particular, the following individuals provided concrete contributions throughout the strategic planning process and made my task a less lonely endeavor. Thank you.

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I. Executive Summary

Coexistence International at Brandeis University proposes the following Strategic Plan designed to strengthen the coexistence field. This Executive Summary highlights the most salient points raised in the Plan. It presents a synthesized version of the findings, analyses, and proposals present in the Strategic Plan. There is, however, much that cannot be captured in an Executive Summary, and we urge readers to refer to the full Plan for more breadth and detail. For easy reference, the Summary is organized by the same section headings as the full document.

Introduction

The current strategic planning process responds to a need articulated by the Alan B. Slifka Foundation (ABSF), the Chair of CI's Advisory Board, and staff and faculty of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life to carefully define Coexistence International's (CI) mission, vision, goals, and programs before designing and executing a work plan.

The strategic planning process incorporates insights from four important processes:

1. Conversations with coexistence practitioners, scholars, networkers and policymakers, friends of The Coexistence Initiative (TCI), and others about the coexistence field and CI's work.
2. Analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses of CI and the Opportunities and Threats it faces in relevant contexts (SWOT).
3. A comparative analysis between different INGOs, regional NGOs, think tanks, and networks focused on coexistence and peacebuilding.
4. Two gatherings held in NYC in conjunction with the Global Platform for the Prevention of Armed Conflict conference.

The comprehensive, collaborative, and participatory process serves to strengthen the substance of the plan, to establish credibility, and to enlist commitment from diverse partners.

The plan is consistent with the agreement between Brandeis University and the ABSF, which sets the broad terms for the next three years. That agreement establishes CI's central focus as creating opportunities for coexistence advocates to learn, grow, and act together. Among the actions it calls for are four to six yearly gatherings; facilitation of information sharing and the creation of communication tools; networking; the development of leadership within the coexistence field; and including arts and culture as one focal topic.

The agreement establishes an initial time period of three years, presented in the current Strategic Plan as Phase One of a ten-year vision for Coexistence International.

Lessons Learned from TCI

In its early years, TCI grappled with the meaning of the term "coexistence"; currently, there is a consensus about a more inclusive understanding of the word that is focused on shared objectives, and one that embraces a wide variety of approaches rather than worrying about distinctions.

TCI appears to have done a solid job networking individuals and organizations working towards coexistence and producing information-sharing tools for that constituency, including an electronic bulletin. TCI also initiated useful research and developed initial work that may still have relevance for CI's future plans.

While the different constituencies valued the communication and networking tools, TCI seems to have had difficulties in maintaining its focus and articulating a clear mission and vision.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

A SWOT analysis was carried out to acquire an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing CI. Strengths and weaknesses refer to the internal framework and organization of CI, while opportunities and threats are external. The meeting of strengths and opportunities indicate that with clear goals and the substantive and administrative support of many actors, CI is well positioned to contribute to the strengthening of the coexistence field. There are few other organizations whose explicit mission is to strengthen and build a comprehensive and inclusive coexistence field. CI's complementary approach and its capacity to partner with existing networks will help it to facilitate dynamic new synergies and collaborations instead of creating overly formal, structured networks.

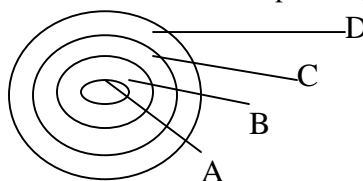
Vision

Coexistence International envisions a world in which people of different religions, races, ethnicities and cultures relate with respect and recognize their interdependence, where diversity is embraced for its positive potential, and where equality is valued and actively pursued.

Emerging Conceptual Framework

The strategic planning process greatly contributed to a new understanding by CI of the current state of the coexistence field and the different players and relationships in the field. This understanding has been converted into a conceptual framework that is diagrammed in the full Strategic Plan. The framework helps to define how we approach our work and to articulate the goals CI has for the different constituencies identified in the framework.

The framework takes as its starting point the observation, identified by the strategic planning process, that the coexistence field is fragmented. There are different disciplines working to build peace, but practitioners of the different disciplines lack an awareness of the extent to which they are working towards the same goal and the way in which their assumptions and practices differ from each other. There is a lack of clarity about commonalities and differences among those working in distinct but related fields and a lack of coordination and sharing of knowledge. With this as a starting point, the framework maps out four layers of actors working on coexistence. While the layers are distinct, there is, of course, movement and overlap among them.



The **inner core (A)** includes those directly working on the mission of coexistence. The focus of their work is strengthening relationships across difference, whether through facilitation of groups, reconciliation of conflicts, directing organizations, doing advocacy work, coordinating networks, conducting research, or developing policy at local, national, regional, or international levels. Gatherings with participation from Layer A will provide opportunities for sharing lessons learned, nurturing leadership, and discussing possibilities to coordinate strategies among various sectors and across levels (local, national, etc.).

The **next layer (B)** includes practitioners and researchers who are working in related disciplines, and whose work affects the quality of intergroup relations even though that is not the articulated focus. Layer B includes, for instance, people and organizations working in humanitarian assistance, refugee resettlement, sustainable development, community development, cultural development, education, recreation and sport, etc. Members of this group may not see themselves as part of the coexistence field. The field will benefit from gatherings that focus on players in B or bring actors from A and B together.

Layer C includes policymakers, funders, and IGOs who influence coexistence work through financial contributions and policy decisions. Work within Layer C, and between Layer C and the others, will concentrate on raising awareness of the importance of the field, placing coexistence issues on policy agendas and developing a cohort of influential coexistence advocates. There will also be opportunities to reach out to policymakers from Layer B.

Those reflecting on the field from a meta-perspective are represented in the **outermost layer (D)**. They come from circles A, B, or C and from varied regions, but they possess a consciousness and concern about the field in general. CI hopes to engage with all these actors in thinking about the fuller coexistence picture and encourage more players to think and act at this level.

Mission

Coexistence International strengthens the field of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, advocates, organizations, and networks promoting coexistence at local, national, and international levels.

Goals

The long-term goals for CI are defined as:

1. To contribute to a complementary, inter-disciplinary vision of the coexistence field that includes Layers A, B, C, and D across local, national, and international levels.
2. To strengthen coexistence leadership at all levels, with a special focus on leaders from developing countries and minority communities.
3. To encourage the development and coherence of coexistence policies.
4. To promote a commitment to coexistence and an acceptance of holistic vision of coexistence by public and private funders, leading to increased financial support for coexistence work.

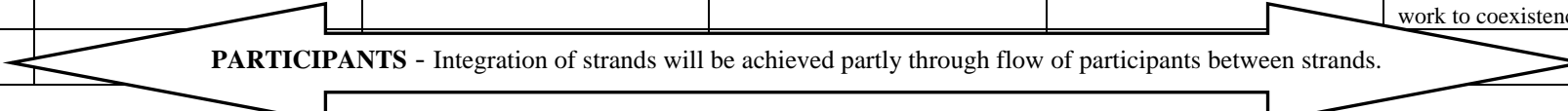
5. To create a change in public awareness and governmental policies towards the vision of coexistence.
6. To reflect coexistence values and principles in the working of CI as an organization.

Objectives

Concrete three-year objectives for Phase One have been developed as a means to achieving CI's long-term goals. There are multiple objectives corresponding to each of the above-mentioned goals. See the objectives on page 23 of the full Strategic Plan.

Program Activities

The full Strategic Plan develops programs for five strands of work: meta-level networking, regional, policy, funders, and arts/culture. The five strands are summarized in the chart on the next page. Although the Strategic Plan proposes five strands of work to be developed in parallel, the strands would each develop at their own pace and under different circumstances, making the full implementation of CI's programs more manageable.

	Strand 1: Meta-level networking	Strand 2: Regional	Strand3: Policy	Strand 4: Funders	Strand 5: Arts / Culture
PHASE ONE Years 1-3	Participants, mainly from Layer D meet to draft a <i>Coexistence Charter</i> . The drafting process will also serve to initiate discussions about commonness and differences in the field. Outcomes: Document drafted. Functioning network of coexistence networkers/meta-level thinkers. Campaign designed.	Gatherings of participants from Layers A–D from within a particular region. Gatherings would help those in the core of the coexistence field to see their work in relation to others in the field and to coordinate efforts. They would also enlarge the cohort of coexistence workers by reaching out to allies in Layer B. Outcomes: Attempts to coordinate activities, leadership cohort developed, learning consolidated.	Work w/ two policy groups: (i) Governance and Democracy (ii) Police, Military and Security. Research and meetings to assess the state of the field, its coexistence policies, and lessons learned. Outcomes: Booklets on best practice produced and leadership cohort developed in both fields.	Gatherings of “champion” funders and meta thinkers to raise awareness and examine how to reach out to other funders. Funders could include foundations, bi- and multilaterals. Outcomes: Cohort of funders committed to funding coexistence work. Funders leadership group sustains its work.	Gatherings with following participant mix: (i) theatre artists/cultural workers, (ii) peacebuilding practitioners, and (iii) scholars from both fields, to strengthen artists’ awareness of themselves as coexistence workers, provide them with a new knowledge base, and contribute to an expanded view of peace work. Outcomes: Theatre/peacebuilding anthology produced. A handbook for policymakers on the contributions of arts and cultural work to coexistence.
PHASE TWO Years 4-7	Campaigns. Test-run of <i>Charter</i> .	Learning model adapted and continued in same region. Other regions would be identified and the learning would be introduced the regions.	Booklets would be more widely disseminated and used for advocacy. Workshops to disseminate the key messages. New policy field introduced.	Cohort of funders committed to working in cooperation and to funding coexistence work. Outreach to new funders underway.	Awareness-raising of arts/culture work using anthology. Also, gatherings of artists from new genre underway.
PHASE THREE Years 8-10	<i>Charter</i> adopted	Model of networking and reflection carried out in other regions. Funding secured. Gatherings ongoing.	Good coexistence policy being widely developed and implemented in selected policy areas. A working group of professional associations and policymakers from these select areas is established.	Funders commit to support campaigns for adoption of <i>Charter</i> . Increased funding for coexistence and peacebuilding work, including CI’s initiatives.	Awareness-raising and outreach continued. Second anthology produced. Third anthology underway. Funders and policymakers commit funding and have increased awareness of key contributions of arts and cultural work to coexistence.
 <p>PARTICIPANTS - Integration of strands will be achieved partly through flow of participants between strands.</p>					

Information-sharing Tools

An important and appreciated component of TCI's work was communication and outreach and CI will develop information-sharing tools as part of its work. Some possible tools include:

1. **Coexistence International website**
2. **Forums**
3. **E-bulletin**
4. **Press releases**

Communications and Advocacy

In addition to the advocacy tools mentioned in the summary of programs above, and the information-sharing tools, CI needs to promote itself and lend substance to debates in the general public in an ongoing fashion. This is important in establishing CI's presence, credibility, and prestige, and it could serve to support CI's fundraising efforts. Furthermore, expressions and ideas presented in the media are a way to influence policy. Ideas to consider include:

1. **Website**
2. **Brochure**
3. **Op Eds**
4. **Events/Networking**
5. **Articles penned by CI friends**
6. **General media presence**
7. **Documenting gatherings**

Evaluation

It is important for CI to consider early-on possible indicators of success for CI over the next three years. CI and the ABSF may want to consider working with an outside evaluator to develop more specific evaluation criteria and to assess CI's work during this three-year period. As a matter of course, CI will also work to ensure that at each gathering there is an opportunity for feedback and evaluation and to assess programs in each strand.

Division of Responsibilities

On a day-to-day level, the three primary roles are that of Program Manager (PM), Administrative Assistant, and Director of Coexistence Research and International Collaborations. The PM has primary responsibility for the development and implementation of CI's strategy and programs. CI's Administrative Assistant's tasks will fall into three main categories: office management, event planning, and communications. The Director of Coexistence Research and International Collaborations has ultimate oversight for the decisions and programs of CI and is an active participant in the development and implementation of CI's plans.

The former TCI Board has now been converted to an Advisory Board whose role is to advise on strategic questions and serve as a sounding board in an ad-hoc fashion. Concrete tasks for the Advisory Board might include: reviewing the strategic plan, participating in a teleconference twice a year with the PM, recommending resources and contacts for CI's programs, and participation in one to three gatherings over the next three years.

Allocation of Resources

Once there is approval of the strategic plan, a work plan and corresponding budget will be drafted. However, it should be noted that certain strategic decisions will have implications on the existing budget, and there are initiatives that will likely not be covered by present resources. Committed resources can be maximized through partnerships, involving Brandeis students as short-term workers, and perhaps piggybacking CI gatherings on other conferences and events. Nevertheless, once the present Plan is approved and a detailed work plan and budget are developed, the PM may need to propose revisions in the pace of work and the need of additional resources. In any event, the PM will begin to focus on fundraising in years 2 and 3.

Links to the Ethics Center and Brandeis University

CI will gain in administrative and substantive terms from its presence at the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life and Brandeis University. At the same time, CI is also in a position to contribute to the intellectual life on campus and at the Center and is poised to create synergies and links between its work and existing programs.

Next Steps

The most critical next steps are finalizing the Strategic Plan, drafting a work plan and budget, hiring the Administrative Assistant, beginning to work on communication tools and planning for a gathering to be held in December 2005.

Appendices

The following five Appendices can be found at the conclusion of the Plan:

1. List of interviews
2. SWOT
3. Arts and Culture SWOT
4. Comparative analysis
5. Brandeis House participants

**COEXISTENCE INTERNATIONAL
EXPECTED OUTPUTS, YEAR ONE**

AREA OF WORK	JUNE 30, 2006	COMMENTS
Strand 1: Meta-level networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strand Convener on-board 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose group of meta-level thinkers (Layers A-D) formed with commitment to contributing to work throughout Phase One 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two gatherings held, one with participants from Layer A (Nov 05) and one with participants from Layers A and B (March 06) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A larger gathering is planned for the beginning of Year Two (July 06), possibly in conjunction with the IPRA¹ conference in Calgary; gathering will focus on finalizing Charter and planning next steps.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coexistence Charter drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year Two will focus on further rounds of consultations and dissemination of Charter
Strand 2: Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region and Strand Convener identified 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals from identified region participate in CI gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regional gathering will be held in the first quarter of Year Two
Strand 3: Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research conducted on coexistence policies and work of the <i>Governance and Democracy</i> field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gathering to examine the research and lessons learned will be held in Year Two
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive document produced on the policies and lessons learned from this field 	
Strand 4: Funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultative meetings held between Program Manager and “champion funders” 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest gathering with “champion funders” held and work of this group defined (Feb 06) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research underway to identify and meet with potential new “champion funders” 	
Strand 5: Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering held in collaboration with Theatre without Borders group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and Culture workshop will likely be held in July 06 at IPRA conference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Cal Arts events on Theatre and Genocide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CI will provide substantive input to program
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CI website developed and online (Dec 05) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CI brochure produced and distributed 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Bulletin produced and two issues distributed 	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation ongoing in Year One 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report ready for circulation in Aug. 06

¹ International Peace Research Association

