

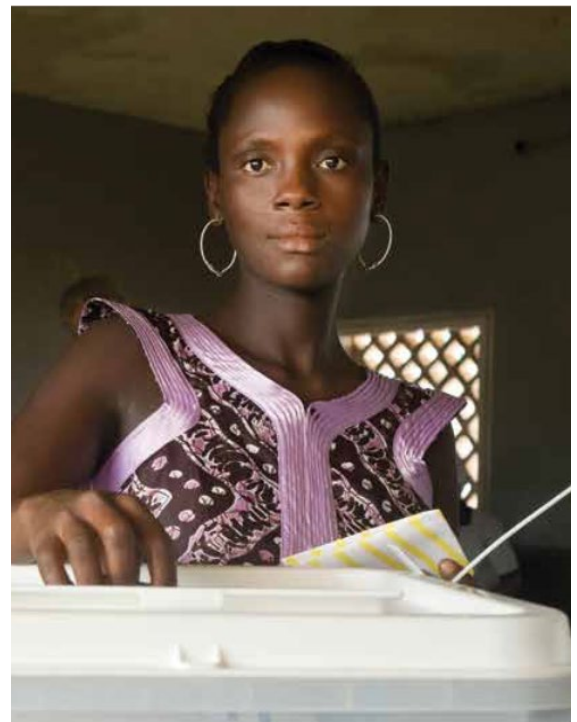
THE
CARTER CENTER



PEACE PROGRAMS

Strategic Plan

April 18, 2022



Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope.

Table of Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: WAGING PEACE.....	3
II. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING EXERCISE: AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH.....	5
III. RESPONDING TO A CHANGING WORLD: SEVEN TRENDS THAT DEFINE THE EMERGING GLOBAL LANDSCAPE .	6
IV. PEACE PROGRAM VISION, PRINCIPLES, AND OBJECTIVES.....	9
V. THE CARTER CENTER’S CAPABILITIES IN A DYNAMIC ECOSPHERE.....	11
VI. PEACE PROGRAMS CORE AREAS.....	12
VII. CRITERIA FOR ENGAGEMENT AND DISENGAGEMENT.....	21
VIII. UPGRADING OUR TOOLS, CAPABILITIES, AND PARTNERSHIPS	23
IX. CONCLUSION: VISIONS FOR 2027	25
ANNEX A.....	26
ANNEX B	27

I. Executive Summary: Waging Peace

For almost 40 years, the Carter Center Peace Programs have been at the forefront of advancing peace, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. However, the global landscape is changing rapidly. Rising authoritarianism, disinformation, growing inequality, pandemic shocks, climate change, unregulated migration, and China's increasing influence on the world stage are among the more obvious manifestations. Coherent and innovative approaches are essential to meet the current set of challenges.

This strategic plan, which was developed based on extensive internal and external consultations, presents the Carter Center's Peace Programs' response to these new challenges. The plan builds on the extraordinary legacy and direction of President and Mrs. Carter over the past four decades. The plan commits The Carter Center to continue responding where other organizations are unwilling or unable to act, and implementing high-quality, evidence-based programs.

The Carter Center Peace Programs will expand their focus within the four areas that have defined its work: conflict resolution, democracy, human rights, and rule of law. To deepen our commitment to these four areas, this strategic plan includes the following new programming tools and program approaches:

- Enhanced collaboration with and empowerment of local stakeholders with clear expectations for transferring knowledge, skills, and tools to local actors.
- Extensive integration and purposeful coordination across the four program areas to ensure more impactful programs that apply a systemic approach to addressing challenges to peace.
- An analytical approach incorporating specified cross-cutting themes, including gender, climate change, and health.
- A country assessment process that leads to more coherent country and regional strategies.
- Articulated criteria for engagement and disengagement to guide and define how Peace Programs make decisions for future programming.

In addition to the new program tools and approaches, The Carter Center will develop new activities to:

- Address climate justice and climate conflict challenges and to build community and country resilience in response to climate change.
- Improve Peace-Health collaborative programming in areas such as conflict prevention, racial justice, and mental health.
- Reduce digital threats to democracy, human rights, and rule of law caused by disinformation campaigns, internet shutdowns, cyberattacks and unlawful surveillance in accordance with international human rights principles.

- Counter democratic decline and increased authoritarianism by increasing partnerships with academic institutions and nonprofits to advance common interests and more sustainable development impacts while remaining committed to Carter Center human rights principles.
- A commitment to respond proactively to the challenges facing democracy and human rights in the United States.

These elements will be enhanced to facilitate better development outcomes through effective utilization of data and evidence, and more inclusive programming in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race, and other marginalized groups. The Center's Peace Programs will design, implement, and manage activities to inform decision-making, tactical interventions, and impact evaluation to the extent possible. Peace Programs will seek to maximize effectiveness and efficiency by identifying opportunities to leverage accessible and open data and developing reusable and cost-efficient analysis methods and tools. They will also seek to implement activities that leverage information in innovative ways in collaboration with technology companies, academic institutions, and like-minded peer organizations.

This strategic plan will guide The Carter Center Peace Programs for the next five years. An accompanying implementation plan will operationalize the key elements of the strategic plan and set specific targets for measuring success. The plan is also envisioned as a living document that projects a clear direction but provides sufficient flexibility to ensure that The Carter Center can respond to unforeseen global developments and ongoing assessments of program effectiveness.

II. The Strategic Planning Exercise: An Inclusive Approach

A rapidly changing global landscape and the arrival of new executive management prompted The Carter Center to initiate a Peace Programs Strategic Planning Process in May 2021. A steering committee of 16 staff from Atlanta and three countries where The Carter Center operates led the process, which was facilitated by an external consultant. [See Appendix A for list of steering committee members.]

The committee met weekly to review five previous strategic planning exercises undertaken between 1995 and 2019, to consider survey data collected from 69 Peace Programs staff, and to hold multiple feedback sessions with program directors and country office staff, including through an all-Peace-staff meeting. To garner additional perspectives, the steering committee coordinators met with senior officials from several peer organizations and sought input from the Carter Center's Board of Trustees and executive leadership. The process included two retreats with participants from the steering committee and the senior leadership of Peace Programs and peace operations staff.

The committee examined emerging challenges in the Peace Programs ecosphere and assessed the programming and operating principles that take advantage of the Carter Center's unique capabilities and respond to contemporary global challenges. Steering committee members also prepared short thematic pieces on climate change, localization, gender and inclusion, and new technologies that help define the political and social context in which The Carter Center Peace Programs will operate during the next five years.

III. Responding to a Changing World: Seven Trends that Define the Emerging Global Landscape

The discovery phase of the strategic planning process included staff surveys, internal discussions, and research leading to the identification of seven major trends that The Carter Center must consider in designing and implementing Peace Programs during the next five years.

- ***Democratic Recession, Rising Authoritarianism, and Regressive Human Rights Policies:*** The ideals and principles of democracy are under serious threat from autocratic and populist leaders across the globe. Repressive human rights policies, along with the silencing of voices that seek to hold accountable those responsible for delegitimizing democratic institutions and engaging in corrupt practices, are the consequences of the ongoing democratic recession. Moreover, disinformation is being weaponized by domestic and foreign actors to sow discord, while non-democratic and democratic governments are restricting access to information, curbing freedom of expression, and eroding privacy rights under the guise of preserving security. Freedom House reports show that global freedom has been declining for the past 15 years. Since the start of this downhill trajectory, the number of countries in democratic decline has reached a high point of 73, and the number of nations considered “Not Free” has increased to 54.¹ Peace Programs are especially important in this context, as they work to address democratic vulnerabilities and human rights violations.
- ***Growing Inequality:*** The economic and social gaps between developed and developing nations, between the rich and poor within nations, and between men and women within communities are increasing. Climate change continues to exacerbate these inequalities and is expected to send as many as 132 million people into extreme poverty during the next eight years.² The growing inequalities undermine the social compact necessary to preserve a fair and equity-based society that is capable of enhancing the quality of life for large segments of the population. Inequality and the injustice behind it are well-recognized drivers of political and violent extremism.³ Allowing these trends to continue will inhibit the collective action necessary to respond effectively to such global threats as climate change, pandemics, and unregulated migration.

¹ "Democracy Under Siege," Freedom House, last modified February 17, 2021, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege>.

² "Overview," World Bank, last modified October 8, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange/overview#1>.

³ "Preventing Violent Extremism Through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity," United Nations Development Programme, 2016.

- ***Changing Nature of Conflict:*** Most armed conflict today is protracted and occurring within countries. But violent conflict between nation-states continues, including between major powers through proxies as seen in Syria and Libya. Moreover, new forms of conflict are emerging, including cyberattacks – which can be launched from anywhere to destabilize governments and for which rules of engagement are not established – as well as drone-warfare and climate-induced conflict. They represent peculiar challenges for those, like The Carter Center, traditionally focused on promoting peace and ending armed conflict. Further, conflicts are inadvertently or deliberately exacerbated by actors seeking to influence others, destabilize society, gain political leadership, and turn people or groups against each other through manipulation of media. This trend is worsened by social media algorithms that magnify hate speech and disinformation and by the lack of information governance, digital literacy, and media literacy.
- ***Climate Change, Pandemics, and Other Environmental Changes:*** A rapidly changing climate is heightening tension over scarce resources, transforming conflict patterns, and posing new challenges to peace. Rising sea levels, desertification and deforestation, and catastrophic weather events are increasing food insecurity and the spread of deadly disease. Inequality and scarce resources lead to difficult short-term livelihood choices for some communities and creating long-term implications. The consequences are less-livable habitats, which contribute to mass migration flows, and which have a disproportionate effect on women and children. Like climate change, disease – and pandemics by definition – defy borders and pose regional and even international threats. Given the disruptions already caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the global landscape for the next several years will be shaped by the international community’s political, economic, and social recovery efforts.
- ***Refugee and Internal Migration Flows and Impacts of Increased Urbanization:*** Conflict, climate change, and other factors are affecting global demographic and migration trends. As rural economies become less sustainable, populations migrate to urban centers, where overcrowding often leads to adverse health impacts, heightened struggles over resources, inadequate basic services, and increased personal insecurity. In parallel, conflict, violence, and human rights violations are swelling the numbers of those forcibly displaced within their own countries or seeking refuge in other countries. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees counted 41 million displaced persons in 2010, and this number had doubled to 82.4 million by the end of 2020.⁴ These flows, in turn, contribute to regional destabilization and the complexity of peacebuilding efforts.
- ***China’s Role:*** The People’s Republic of China increasingly influences the direction of great power relations, the international political economy, and global non-

⁴ "UNHCR Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2020," UNHCR Flagship Reports, last modified June 18, 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globaltrends/>.

governmental activities. In much of Africa, for example, China is a central player in economic and infrastructure development. Similarly, in Latin America, China has emerged as a major trading partner and has sought investment opportunities for infrastructure development. China's influence has accentuated the slide toward authoritarianism in several countries, has weakened the liberal international order, and has bolstered international resistance to the United Nation's human rights agenda. Additionally, the policymaking community is increasingly concerned that the current trajectory of U.S.-China relations will erupt into hot conflicts over flashpoints such as Taiwan and the South China Sea.

- ***Rapid Technological Advances:*** The next decade is expected to see significant development in the use of artificial intelligence, big data, genomics, cryptocurrency, and the internet-of-things. These advances will raise a host of political, economic, and ethical challenges within and between countries, will exacerbate technological gaps, and will require a rethinking of the principles that currently govern the international order. At the same time, they offer a unique opportunity to enhance the quality and reach of Peace Programs work and to ensure that the technologies are used in a rights-respecting manner in accordance with international human rights principles.

IV. Peace Program Vision, Principles, and Objectives

The Carter Center Peace Programs build on the pioneering role that President Carter personally played in conducting high-profile facilitation and mediation in multiple settings and always with an emphasis on human rights. Moving forward, Peace Programs will focus on contexts where it has expertise, has nurtured networks, has built trust over time, and has demonstrated added value as a niche actor. Success will be achieved through long-term, upstream investment, foresight, and vision.

The Carter Center's Peace Programs upholds the vision of the Center's founders by working with local stakeholders to prevent and mediate conflicts and to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

The following Carter Center principles reflect the legacy of President and Mrs. Carter and serve as inspiration for the ongoing activities and operations of the Peace Programs.

Peace: Mediating persistent conflicts and eliminating the injustices that serve as the drivers of conflict are essential in responding to wars and other violations of basic human rights.

Human Rights: Advancing the full panoply of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights for everyone regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, as articulated in various international instruments, is essential for creating a just world.

Accountability: Enhancing trust among local actors – government, private sector, and civil society – strengthens the legitimacy of democratic institutions and promotes the rule of law.

Transparency: Disseminating fact-based and credible data and information broadly and in a comprehensible, accessible, and timely fashion promotes good governance and the active participation of citizens in public affairs.

Equity: Providing fair and just opportunities and resources ensures that all people can reach their full potential.

Inclusion: Enabling marginalized groups to participate in decision-making, including peace processes, and to obtain access to information and justice, strengthens democratic societies and reduces the potential for deadly conflict.

Regional, Country, and Thematic Expertise: Incorporating deep knowledge and understanding of countries and issues based on in-country expertise and local voices is necessary for contextually appropriate and impactful programs.

PORTFOLIO-LEVEL ASPIRATIONS

- ⇒ ***Advancing Peace through Conflict Resolution, Democracy, Human Rights, and Rule of Law-Centered Work:*** The Carter Center recognizes that peace is essential to achieving its human rights and health goals. Specific program interventions are informed by comprehensive country assessments and a deep understanding of complex political environments. These interventions may involve high-level engagements and a mix of activities reflecting expertise on a range of issues.
- ⇒ ***Addressing Needs of Women, Girls, and Other Marginalized Communities:*** The Carter Center supports local efforts to achieve gender equality and an equitable, safe, and secure environment for women, youth, and marginalized communities. Programs encourage inclusive participation in electoral processes for all members of society, respond to the risks associated with gender-based violence, enhance access to legal remedies and accurate information, and address persistent socioeconomic inequities.
- ⇒ ***Enhancing Local Ownership, Capacity, and Sustainability:*** The Carter Center supports in-country stakeholders through meaningful partnerships and co-creation processes that leverage their expertise, promote their technical and organizational growth, and prioritize the needs of the program beneficiaries.
- ⇒ ***Incorporating Analysis of Climate Impacts:*** The Carter Center seeks to integrate climate elements, whether with respect to environmental governance, climate justice, or addressing climate drivers of conflict into country assessments and project design across all programs.
- ⇒ ***Integrating Public Health Activities:*** The Carter Center aspires to promote democracy, human rights, mediation, and conflict mitigation efforts to support peace along with improved public health outcomes, not only for violence-affected populations, but also places where democracy is consolidating or at risk.
- ⇒ ***Leveraging Data-and Evidence:*** The Carter Center strives to leverage data to inform decision-making, tactical interventions, and impact evaluation. Programs maximize use of open data and develop high-quality, reusable, and cost-efficient analytical tools and methods to increase efficiency and effectiveness and reduce costs.

V. The Carter Center's Capabilities in a Dynamic Ecosphere

The personal involvement of President and Mrs. Carter in The Carter Center Peace Programs has contributed to four decades of positive and transformative outcomes. Their commitment inspires the Carter Center's work across the globe and has allowed them to build an institution with strong internal capacities and an extensive external network. Their determination to build an enduring institution and their recognized fiscal responsibility ensures that The Carter Center will have the capacity to address the most difficult challenges well into the future.

The following are among The Carter Center Peace Programs most prominent and distinguishing capabilities:

- A commitment to **pragmatic, values-driven, and nonpartisan approaches**, which applies flexible and innovative mechanisms, responds to real-time and complex challenges, and facilitates results-oriented collaboration.
- The effective use of **convening power and high-profile engagement** in facilitating negotiations and dialogue among conflicting parties, encouraging democratic transitions, ensuring acceptance of the credible results of hotly contested elections, obtaining freedom for political prisoners, and promoting the institutionalization of forums for addressing the most serious international human rights issues.
- A **willingness to take on politically sensitive issues** that other organizations are unwilling or unable to tackle, including a focus on the most intractable conflicts.
- **Strong, collaborative, and longstanding relationships** with multiple stakeholders in many countries, including civil society organizations, community and faith-based organizations, government and quasi-government actors, intergovernmental organizations, and bilateral donors.
- The **translation of data-driven and evidence-based programming**, informed by country contexts, into outcomes that result in changes in laws and policies consistent with international norms and human rights principles.
- Effective programs that **focus on reaching the most vulnerable populations** (women, youth, and minorities) and produce tangible impacts.
- A **longstanding relationship with Emory University**, which has provided The Carter Center with a built-in platform for the open, civil, and critical exchange of ideas – across disciplinary, institutional, and national boundaries.

VI. Peace Programs Core Areas

The Carter Center Peace Programs thematic expertise and operational capabilities in four program areas – Conflict Resolution, Democracy, Human Rights, and Rule of Law – contribute to the goal of achieving a more peaceful world. Work in these program areas is interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Hence, the Center’s projects across these four program areas will be harmonized and integrated in a manner that responds effectively to local needs, reduces redundancies, improves efficiency, and increases prospects for program impact.

PEACE PROGRAMS

The Conflict Resolution Program (CRP) aims to prevent violent conflict in the areas where it works. The program currently focuses on Africa, the Middle East, and the United States but could expand to Asia and Latin America. The program employs a variety of approaches that are tailored to specific contexts. These approaches include: a) support for grassroots-driven efforts to build peace; b) independent observation of peace agreements; c) dialogue with political and military decision-makers to influence policymaking with regard to specific conflicts and conflict issues; d) analysis of ongoing conflicts to better inform humanitarian and diplomatic action and to address the root causes of violence; and e) building the capacity of organizations that can address conflict on local, regional, and national levels.

The Center’s longstanding reputation for trustworthiness and neutrality has made it a go-to entity for addressing conflicts. This reputation is what led The Carter Center to be named the official Independent Observer of the Mali peace agreement and to be central in supporting Sudan’s transition to peace and democracy. On Israel-Palestine, the program supported the Oslo Accords as well as other negotiations among various stakeholders. The Center has influenced the Syria peace process by providing unparalleled levels of information about aspects of the conflict and through innovative thinking related to a proposed step-by-step approach to the conflict. Currently, CRP is uniting people in the U.S. across political divides to actively promote stability and democracy to counter current destabilizing trends.

Aspirational goals to achieve by 2027:

- *Peace Accords and transition processes implemented in three countries through high-level diplomatic engagement and other Carter Center interventions.*
- *Violence and other forms of conflict prevented and mitigated in four countries through actions of local partners.*
- *Violence and other forms of conflict prevented in four countries through accurate curation, analysis, and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data.*
- *Political polarization and potential for violence reduced in five communities in the United States through understanding of conflict dynamics peculiar to the United States and appropriate approaches for addressing them.*

- *Psychosocial approaches and their influence on conflict resolution enhanced through research and integration of methodologies into CRP programming.*

The Democracy Program (DP) advances credible, transparent, and inclusive democratic elections and strengthens participatory rights and governance consistent with universal human rights standards. The program is a recognized leader in fostering global consensus on standards for democratic elections and implements observation missions to assess both elections and broader political transition processes. In parallel, DP draws on its expertise and tools to build the capacity of local civic society partners to observe elections, monitor transitions, and advance participatory rights.

Given the global stagnation of democracy and the rapid growth of threats to democracy – including the rise of authoritarianism, the deliberate efforts to manipulate public opinion, and the suppression of freedom of expression and participation in public life – DP is focused increasingly on strategies to address key problems. These strategies include mitigating disinformation, responding to restrictions on online expression, and preventing the erosion of privacy rights. DP will counter these problems both in its election missions and through other program activities.

The Center has observed more than 100 elections across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America to provide trusted analysis and public reporting on the quality and integrity of electoral processes. It also has dispatched numerous other electoral expert missions for similar targeted efforts. Democracy Program election missions and political transition initiatives contribute to the international community’s support for building democratic processes and institutions.

Specifically, DP election missions help to identify and publicize fraud and manipulation when it occurs, and to develop recommendations for steps to improve future elections and transitions. Given that elections are ever-increasingly intermediated by technology, DP missions also focus on evaluating the security of voting technology to make it more difficult for would-be spoilers to cast doubt on processes, mitigating disinformation that may undermine trust in the process and ensuring that voter data is protected from privacy abuses. Recommendations from Carter Center missions catalyze the democratic reform agenda and open avenues for additional activities centered on advocating for reforms with key policymakers, in collaboration with local partners. DP activities share a common commitment to advancing the effective political participation of women, youth, racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, elderly people, and other marginalized groups.

Aspirational goals to achieve by 2027:

- *Electoral policies aligned with international standards and good practice as measured by public opinion surveys and assessment by respected organizations adopted in at least 10 countries.*

- *Democratic governance strengthened through credible nonpartisan and evidence-based citizen observation of elections and democratic processes in six countries.*
- *Policies promoting women's political participation adopted in six countries through effective advocacy work by partner organizations and recommendations from international observer missions.*
- *Mis/disinformation mitigated through professional and sustainable fact-checking initiatives undertaken by partner organizations in at least 10 countries.*

The Human Rights Program (HRP) envisions a world where all people have the freedom to reach their full potential and to live in dignity. HRP distinguishes itself from peer organizations and advances this vision by providing situationally responsive support across a broad range of human rights (civil, political, economic, social, cultural). While the Center does not shy away from taking important public stances, HRP is not driven by a naming/shaming approach but instead provides data-driven, collaborative engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders at local, national, and international levels to raise human rights standards and compliance.

President Carter's legacy of promoting human rights has provided a unique foundation for The Carter Center to become a well-respected leader on human rights issues, enabling the Center to convene prominent human rights actors and policymakers to influence the global human rights agenda. HRP programming has promoted the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the post of the U.N. High Commissioner of Human Rights, facilitated collective action on critical human rights issues by diverse stakeholders, publicized human rights abuses and advanced policy and practice reforms to prevent their continuation, and facilitated solidarity among human rights defenders.

HRP is recognized for its history of engagement around the protection of human rights defenders, promotion of the rights of women and girls, advancement of economic and social rights for all, and mobilization of faith communities on human rights issues, making HRP an ideal implementer and partner for programs such as establishing human rights defender protection networks, increasing transparency in the extractive industries sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and confronting racial injustice in the United States. A recent initiative in the Center's home state of Georgia is applying a human rights framework to the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow and will result in recommendations for policymakers on ways to address historic injustices and advance human rights for all. Collectively, these efforts, which are now complemented with virtual programming through the Forum on Human Rights, have advanced innovative and consequential approaches to defending human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Aspirational goals to achieve by 2027:

- *Global human rights are strengthened by convening influential stakeholders annually with a new thematic focus/emerging issue each year.*

- *Protecting human rights defenders, promoting women’s rights and youth engagement, and increasing transparency and accountability in the extractive industries is expanded through locally driven programming in at least three new countries.*
- *The impact of The Forum on Human Rights is broadened by hosting a minimum of 12 roundtables per year, with increasing annual targets for live audience numbers, post-event video views, and active use of discussion boards, and by converting more site visitors to members.*
- *Racial justice and truth-telling efforts are strengthened and supported through networking, dialogue, and public messaging with key partners in Georgia and nationally.*

The Rule of Law Program (RLP) seeks to transform lives through advancing information, accountability, and justice, which are critical ingredients in building trust and in strengthening the social contract between governments and the citizens they serve, particularly women and marginalized groups. For more than two decades, The Carter Center has partnered with government, civil society, and other stakeholders in countries across the globe to implement programming that improves the quality of governance, enhances access in the informal and formal justice systems, and advances local efforts to increase transparency, accountability, and access to information. For all programming, the Center has applied a gender transformative approach and incorporated marginalized populations.

RLP has achieved success in a variety of areas. The program has participated in the formulation of international and regional norms related to access to information. RLP’s development of an access to information tool helps assess the extent and quality of an agency’s implementation of freedom of information laws. RLP has also promoted women’s right to information and the creation of a methodology to assess gender-based inequities in the exercise of this fundamental right. The launch of the Inform Women, Transform Lives campaign in 24 global cities has raised awareness of women’s right to information and helped local governments reach women with information about critical municipal services. RLP has more than 15 years of work with traditional and community leaders to assure increased access to justice and to help national security forces be more transparent, accountable, equitable, and trusted.

Aspirational goals to achieve by 2027:

- *Justice systems (both formal and informal) that are responsive and accessible to citizens enhanced in Liberia and two other countries.*
- *Access to information available equally to women and men in six countries.*
- *Accountability, transparency, and gender equity in the security sector advanced in three countries.*
- *The Inform Women, Transform Lives campaign expanded to 80-plus cities to promote the strategic use of information as a bridge to assure that essential municipal services reach women.*

CROSS-PROGRAM COLLABORATION

Within the evolving dynamic contexts of the 21st century, The Carter Center Peace Programs will continue to address cross-cutting, international challenges. Several examples of cross-program collaboration currently exist within the Peace Programs portfolio, including collaboration between CRP and DP in South Sudan in support of a youth citizen observer activity; between DP and HRP to build civil society capacity and advance policy and practice reforms related to elections, human rights, and good governance; and between CRP, DP, and HRP to address holistically the situation in Israel and Palestine.

These collaborative efforts will expand through systemic country assessments prior to preparing strategies and designing projects. The assessment process may lead to more integrated and rigorous cross-program implementation or a decision that the most effective programming option is for one sector to remain the lead project implementer. To further operationalize this “de-siloing” mandate, a new Peace Programs coordinator will facilitate joint initiatives across Peace Programs, will overhaul “business as usual” approaches, and will guide coherence across programs. To facilitate sharing of information and knowledge of data-driven and evidence-based approaches across Peace Programs, the Peace data scientist will establish a data community of practice across the programs that will foster great collaboration and learning.

CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS

The global landscape analysis undertaken as part of this exercise highlights the importance of incorporating five themes into the design and implementation of Peace Programs projects: climate; localization; vulnerable populations; technology and disinformation; and China’s growing influence. Two other issues of importance – inequality and migration – may also inform programs depending on the country or regional context.

Climate

To account for the new risks to peace and stability created by *climate change*, the Carter Center’s planning and implementation of projects must identify the specific risk factors facing in-country groups and address climate justice concerns. Programs should enhance the ability of local actors to build resilience by adapting their institutional structures to the challenges posed by resource scarcities and by planning for unpredictable scenarios that are generated by tensions over arable land and safe water, catastrophic weather events, desertification, and deforestation. Illustrative impacts of climate programs could include changes in international law, inclusion of citizens in decision making processes which lead to improvements in protection from environmental hazards, or changes in government policy to advance environmental sustainability, migration flows, and food insecurity.

Localization

Based on decades of work with in-country groups, The Carter Center recognizes its considerable capacity and contributions to progress across the spectrum of Peace Programs. Yet too often these groups lack agency in developing the solutions to the challenges their societies face. Hence, The Carter Center will increase efforts to support local actors through reliance on their expertise and through enhancement of their capacities. Carter Center **localization efforts** will place in-country actors at the forefront of the project design process and will rely on them for the implementation of programs, including assuming such tasks as the financial management and monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Vulnerable populations

The Carter Center's enhanced country assessment process will deliberately account for **the experiences of women, youth, members of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, and racial, religious, and ethnic groups**. Projects will help address the challenges faced by these often vulnerable and excluded groups and will minimize the potential for unintended consequences that may harm these communities. Most importantly, these groups will be directly involved in designing and implementing programs related to their political, social, and economic needs.

Technology and disinformation

The global digital transformation has made the world a more connected place but imposes a new set of challenges to attaining the Carter Center's vision. Peace Programs will proactively respond to the proliferation and weaponization of disinformation that undermines confidence in elections and trust in democratic processes; online hate speech that exacerbates tensions and increases the likelihood of violence; restrictions on access to information and freedom of expression that censor critical voices and obscure human rights violations; unlawful surveillance activities that prompt self-censorship and undermine privacy rights; cyberattacks that disrupt public and private sector functioning and sow discord; and the widening digital gap that threatens to exacerbate inequalities. In addition, The Carter Center will advocate for greater transparency in the tech sector and push to hold accountable those who violate recognized norms. In parallel, Peace Programs will utilize evolving technological capabilities to improve data collection and analysis and to use information for greater accountability and impact.

China

Given the impact of **China's policies and actions**, The Carter Center will continue to collect and disseminate data that improve policymakers' understanding of China. The Center's Peace Programs will also engage, as appropriate, with Chinese actors to diminish global tensions, take advantage of longstanding connections, promote collaboration on common goals, and advance win-win solutions to global challenges.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Carter Center Peace Programs will balance the opportunities to address new challenges with the fulfillment of ongoing commitments. During the next five years, The Carter Center will respond to a limited number of situations where there is a history of prior engagement and respond to new opportunities where the Center offers unique capabilities. Such engagements will generally be short-term, although they could evolve into longer-term commitments as authorized through a refined process for approving new projects. In countries where The Carter Center has not been engaged previously, additional assessment may be required.

Recent examples of Peace Programs' involvement in new activities include:

Digital Threats

In 2016, The Carter Center piloted a digital threats project responding to the emergence of social media activity that could suppress political participation, undermine confidence in the electoral process, or trigger hostility or violence during an electoral process. The Center, in collaboration with the Georgia Institute of Technology, is now committed to a long-term initiative that develops approaches and technological tools to monitor disinformation, hate speech, harassment, coordinated inauthentic behavior, and dark advertising online. The initiative monitors online political advertising to promote transparency, accountability, and a level playing field in electoral processes. The Carter Center recognizes that digital threats require long-term engagement and will be addressed within the context of broader program-wide challenges.

2020 U.S. Election

The Carter Center's decision to initiate projects related to the 2020 U.S. election is a high-profile example of The Carter Center reacting quickly to a crisis. The Center's traditional overseas work provided unique insights into the challenges facing the conduct of elections in the United States given increasing polarization, attempts by some to cast doubt on the integrity of the electoral process and in the context of racial unrest exacerbated by the George Floyd killing, and on ongoing pandemic. By responding, The Carter Center built credibility with overseas partners who appreciated the Center's willingness to act in its own backyard on such politically sensitive issues.

Based on the successes of the initial engagement, The Carter Center extended the initiative into a multi-year commitment with involvement by Peace Program areas and the **Mental Health Program** to address specific concerns about U.S. democracy. The U.S.-focused work focuses on threats to the electoral process, including by building resilience to identity-based violence and advocating for more nonpartisan election observation and adherence to democratic norms, as well as for the physical and mental health of election administrators. Another element seeks to promote truth-telling in the context of work on racial justice.

Peace-Health

With its robust peace and health programming, the Center is unique in its ability to develop and implement programming that recognizes the inextricable link between the two. Health is a right, and without adequate health it is impossible for people – particularly the most marginalized with whom the Peace Programs work – to reach their potential. War and regional or factional clashes catastrophically disrupt everything from commerce to education to food and medical supply chains. Additionally, conflicts have significant mental health implications on the impacted populations; this is both a serious public health issue and complicates peacebuilding activities. More generally, public health challenges – ranging from pandemics to neglected tropical diseases to lack of access to primary care – are shared concerns of civilians and armed actors. Reinforcing the Peace-Health nexus, The Carter Center will integrate public health activities with mediation and conflict mitigation efforts to support peace and improved public health outcomes for violence-affected populations.

Illustrative examples include:

- The Peace Programs will integrate public health activities with mediation and conflict mitigation efforts to support peace and improved public health outcomes for violence-affected populations. The inclusion of public health activities, including mental health activities, in conflict resolution efforts can be incentivized as peace dividends or help create the enabling environment for peacebuilding to take place, because peace dividends go hand-in-hand with peacemaking.
- As The Health Programs seek to improve health systems leading to greater sustainability and better use of resources, the Peace Programs can provide capacity-building support for its partners to develop more transparent and accountable processes. This will lead to improved efficiencies, reduced corruption/waste, and increased trust.
- At the intersection of peace and mental health, there are several potential areas of collaboration, such as:
 - Mental health support in a conflict environment, including peer-to-peer-supported increased access to basic mental health care in ethnic communities, and trauma healing for reconciliation.
 - Development of mental health resources and related information for U.S. election officials, many of whom faced threats and harassment around the 2020 election and worry about similar threats in upcoming election cycles.
 - Joint programming to address the legal, health, and mental health needs of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.
 - Integration of mental health considerations to the support provided to human rights defenders (HRDs) who routinely witness or are subjected to threats and violence, including increasing awareness of mental health and

wellbeing and providing HRDs with tools and resources to respond to mental health concerns.

VII. Criteria for Engagement and Disengagement

The decision to engage or disengage in a project or a country is often a difficult one. Resources, staffing, operational capabilities, time, and previous engagements all determine when and where The Carter Center should operate. The following guidelines provide the elements of consideration for this decision-making to engage or disengage.

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Carter Center conducts continuous monitoring of regions and countries relevant to Peace Programs. Once an opportunity is identified, The Carter Center will utilize a “**rapid assessment checklist**” to determine whether the situation meets the Carter Center’s criteria for engagement and warrants a more thorough assessment.

The checklist addresses the following:

- Does the opportunity fit within Peace Programs’ goals and objectives?
- Is there strong interest from local actors for The Carter Center to engage?
- Is this a situation in which others are unable or unwilling to act in specific ways that would advance the goals of the Peace Programs?
- Does the operating environment allow The Carter Center to pursue appropriate activities?
- Does The Carter Center have a comparative advantage in responding to the challenge?
- Does The Carter Center have access to the human resources required to manage a project?
- Are external funding prospects likely, or, in the absence of external funding, is the issue of such relevance to The Carter Center that it would prompt management to authorize internal funding?
- Given the above and other contextual factors, does The Carter Center think it can execute this program successfully?

If the rapid assessment checklist is overall favorable and circumstances permit, The Carter Center will proceed with a more **thorough assessment**, which involves a stakeholder mapping and an in-depth analysis of the sociopolitical context, programmatic options, and the benefits and risks of engagement. This assessment informs the initial project proposal and the follow-up project design. The completed assessment would articulate the theory of change, program goals/objectives/activities (logical framework), underlying assumptions, circumstances warranting disengagement, and a notional exit strategy (recognizing that this may evolve during the course of the project).

At the final review stage, Carter Center management would include consideration of the following factors:

- Institutional risks associated with operating in the proposed political environment.
- Projected effectiveness and impact of proposed activities.
- Opportunity costs of undertaking proposed activities.
- Availability of financial resources.

CRITERIA FOR DISENGAGEMENT

First and foremost, The Carter Center seeks to empower local actors by providing them with additional skills, knowledge, and resources to enhance their technical and organizational capacitation. Hence, the Center does not envision permanent engagement in a particular country setting, and a successful project may be defined by an outcome-driven exit strategy, which is shared from the outset with in-country partners and staff. At the same time, relationships established during the course of a project may form the basis for designing a follow-up activity, which will be assessed in accordance with the engagement criteria described above.

The Carter Center recognizes that circumstances may change during project implementation. As part of an ongoing monitoring process and in consultation with local partner, the Center should consider disengaging from a country or terminating a specific project when:

- The goals and objectives have been met.
- Progress has stalled and the continued investment of resources could better be used elsewhere.
- Resources are no longer available to pursue project objectives.
- The potential for causing more harm than good is evident.

VIII. Upgrading Our Tools, Capabilities, and Partnerships

To **enhance local ownership** of programming, the Peace Programs will develop and utilize collaborative methodologies for assessing and strengthening partner organizational and technical capacities, for including local partners in project design, and for relying more meaningfully on local partners for project implementation and sustainability.

To **take full advantage of the global digital transformation** and respond to its challenges, Peace Programs will enhance staff capacity to mainstream data utilization into new projects and to ensure that digital tools are accessible to local stakeholders. This process will entail partnering with organizations with technical capacities, recruiting staff with specialized data expertise, providing data literacy trainings for all Peace Program staff.

To **become more data-driven** in our activity implementation and impact evaluation, Peace Programs will leverage available and open data for analysis that informs program design and tracking, adhere to good data governance policies, and establish a committed community of practice among Peace Program staff working with data.

To deepen **subject matter expertise and language capabilities** in countries and regions in which The Carter Center operates, Peace Programs will provide access to training for those in-country, regional, and external staff and long-term consultants who guide country assessments and assist project development, implementation, and assessment.

To make **intelligent use of the breadth of available information**, The Carter Center will actively engage with academic, think tank, donor, analyst, and other implementing organizations in diverse countries. This requires establishing coordinated internal mechanisms for reviewing and sharing the data emanating from these entities and for actively contributing to knowledge generation opportunities related to Peace Programs' thematic and country priorities.

To track activities, outputs, and outcomes systematically, the Center will grow its **monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL)** resources and capabilities, create MEL minimum standards across program areas, seek technological solutions for its global MEL tracking, enhance internal capabilities for MEL, and regularly use data and evaluation for program tracking and design. In addition, the Center will create more robust and transparent MEL systems with local stakeholders to measure the effectiveness of programs, understand when a program is on track, enhance accountability, and shape future programs.

To encourage policymakers, influencers, and ordinary citizens to support peace, democracy, and human rights, The Carter Center must **harness the power of communications** to tell the story of Peace Programs work and to react swiftly when there are chances to insert Peace Programs messages into the news cycle. All mechanisms for communications should be utilized, including media interviews; speaking engagements; text and video stories; social media posts, campaigns,

and channels; in-person and virtual events; and up-to-date web pages and background materials.

Communications can also help deliver positive program outcomes in specific countries by informing citizens and mobilizing support for democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution. Over the next five years, The Carter Center will increasingly use strategic communications as a critical tool in its Peace Programs, using social media, traditional media, and campaigns to build public support and shape public opinion in targeted countries. Carter Center communications staff in Atlanta will work with country teams to help build in-country communications capacity and platforms and advise on strategy.

To maintain a diverse and high-quality staff, The Carter Center ***will use an inclusive process to recruit the personnel necessary*** to achieve the goals outlined in this plan. Specialized training will be provided to ensure staff have the requisite skills to apply available tools and to engage effectively with local counterparts.

To guarantee physical security and to account for the implementation delays associated with working in complex and fragile settings, The Carter Center ***will enhance capabilities to assess risk and to prepare for contingencies***, including closing of a project and evacuating staff from a country when circumstances warrant.

To ensure that its programming fills gaps and is complementary to others' efforts, The Carter Center ***will continue to maximize longstanding relationships with in-country partners and peer organizations***. Partners include civil society organizations, community-based organizations, governmental and quasi-governmental actors, intergovernmental organizations, and bilateral donors. We will continue to expand our special partnership with Emory University.

IX. Conclusion: Visions for 2027

President and Mrs. Carter have always believed that the human spirit can rise to meet even the most intractable of challenges. They established The Carter Center as a vehicle for translating their beliefs into reality and have worked tirelessly during the past 40 years to transform the quality of life for millions of people. Without doubt, the next five years will require continued commitment and innovation to recover from a global pandemic, to meet the threats posed by a changing climate, to stop the suffering caused by war, to confront the rise in authoritarianism, and to harness technological advances.

This five-year Peace Programs Strategic Plan draws strength from the Carters' legacy and represents the latest iteration of how the Center will prevent or mitigate the impact of war and conflict and will promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law around the world. This plan describes the world that The Carter Center envisions – with countries and communities that are more peaceful, inclusive, participatory, empowered, equitable, transparent, and accountable. And because this plan complements the Center's work in the health sector, achievement of the objectives described in this plan will significantly enrich the quality of life of peoples around the globe.

The plan reorients the Peace Programs to take on challenges in a new global landscape with technological advances that continued apace during the pandemic. The plan will be launched with new Carter Center leadership and the need to respond to changing programmatic opportunities in a new global context.

The Peace Programs Strategic Plan envisions the following next steps:

- Year 1 will involve the creation of an implementation plan to assure that the vision, goals, and objectives can be measured and captured to portray both success and lessons learned from the efforts.
- Years 2-4 will entail implementation of the strategy, with a midterm review in Year 3.
- Year 5 will include the groundwork for a follow-up strategy for the future beyond 2027.

The Peace Programs planning exercise is complemented by a Center-wide effort that is examining personnel, communications, technology, and other operations. Through these processes, The Carter Center will emerge as an even more powerful contributor to a better global future.

ANNEX A

Peace Programs Strategic Planning Steering Committee Members — 2021

Barbara Smith, Vice President, Peace

Larry Garber, Consultant, Peace Strategic Plan

Jennie Lincoln, Senior Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, Strategic Plan Lead

Abby Miller, Chief Strategy, Impact, and Learning Officer

Kari Mackey, Associate Director, Global Access to Information, Rule of Law

Jayanthi Narain, Associate Director, Overseas Operations

Michael Scholtens, Program Associate, Democracy

Soyia Ellison, Associate Director, Communications

Andrea Nelli Feroci, Associate Director, Democracy

Joshua Kpelewah, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Officer, Rule of Law

John Goodman, Associate Director, Conflict Resolution

Rachel Fowler, Country Representative, Democracy

Tynesha Green, Program Associate, Overseas Operations

Beth Plachta, Associate Director, Democracy

Lance Alloway, Senior Associate Director, Programs Development

Zoe Moskowitz, Consultant, Peace

ANNEX B

KEY CARTER CENTER REFERENCE DOCUMENTS (Chronological Order)

1995-1996 Carter Center strategic planning document

2014 Carter Center Board-Approved Strategic Plan

2015 – Initiative Review Process (IRP) Working Group Documents

Jodevi Seeding Innovation – The Carter Center – July-October 2018

2019 Strategic Priorities for The Carter Center