

# Survey Brief:

## Pathways to Peace

### Global Perspectives on U.S. Funding Cuts

In July 2025, Humanity United conducted an online survey to better understand the perspectives of proximate peacebuilders, as part of an ongoing initiative that began in January 2025.

Led by a Steering Committee made up of proximate peacebuilders, the initiative and survey results will inform **Pathways to Peace: An Engagement Framework for the Next Evolution of Peacebuilding** that will be published in October 2025.

Humanity United is publishing this Survey Brief now because it provides a snapshot of the striking and immediate impacts of the United States' retreat from international development programming across the globe.

Between January and July 2025, the Trump Administration systematically dismantled the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), cancelled thousands of contracts, fired thousands of civil servants, closed U.S. missions abroad, and terminated 83% of the agency's programming. Critical peacebuilding activities that helped support durable and inclusive solutions to conflict lost funding, support, and resources. Communities are now feeling the consequences.

#### Key findings:

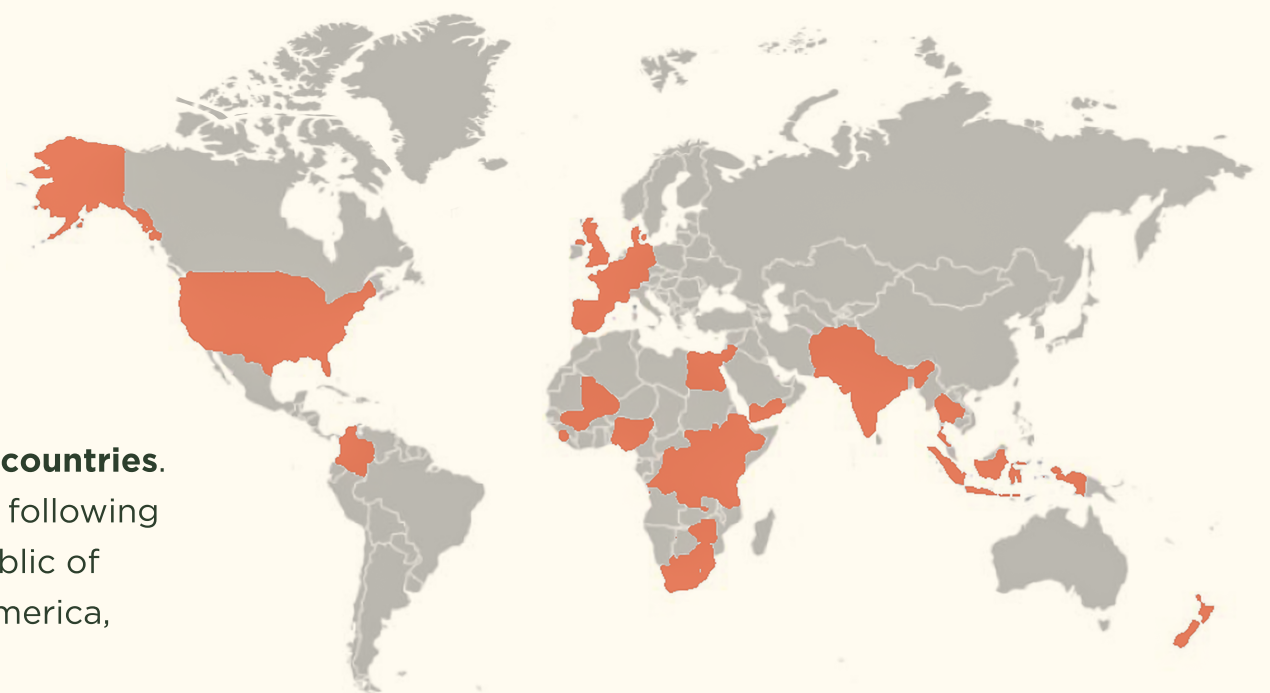
- 71% of respondents reported a **decrease in funding** since January 2025.
- 44% of respondents reported that their **organizations will run out of funds** by December 2025.
- Funding cuts and disruptions are creating the **enabling conditions for conflict** and have reduced the ability of proximate peacebuilders to prevent or mitigate conflict.
- **The effects of disruptions are already being felt by communities.** Survey participants noted a significant reduction of programs which has led to a decrease in trust with the communities they work with.

### Survey Scope and Geographic Reach

**97 people completed the survey from 32 countries.**

More than five people responded from the following countries: Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Nepal, the United States of America, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The greatest response rate came from people identifying that they primarily represent local peacebuilding organizations (**34%**), followed by international non-government organizations (**23%**), community-based or civil society organizations (**19%**), and activists (**8%**).



# Massive Shifts in the Funding Environment



**71%** of participants noted a significant impact on peacebuilding programming and activities.

**27%** respondents stressed that as a result support to communities had decreased.



**44%** of people reported that their organizations have less than six months of funds remaining, of which 17% are currently out of funds<sup>1</sup>. Survey participants indicated that October 2025 will be a pivotal movement for many organizations, as they do not expect new projects to begin – raising concerns about the sustainability of their operations.

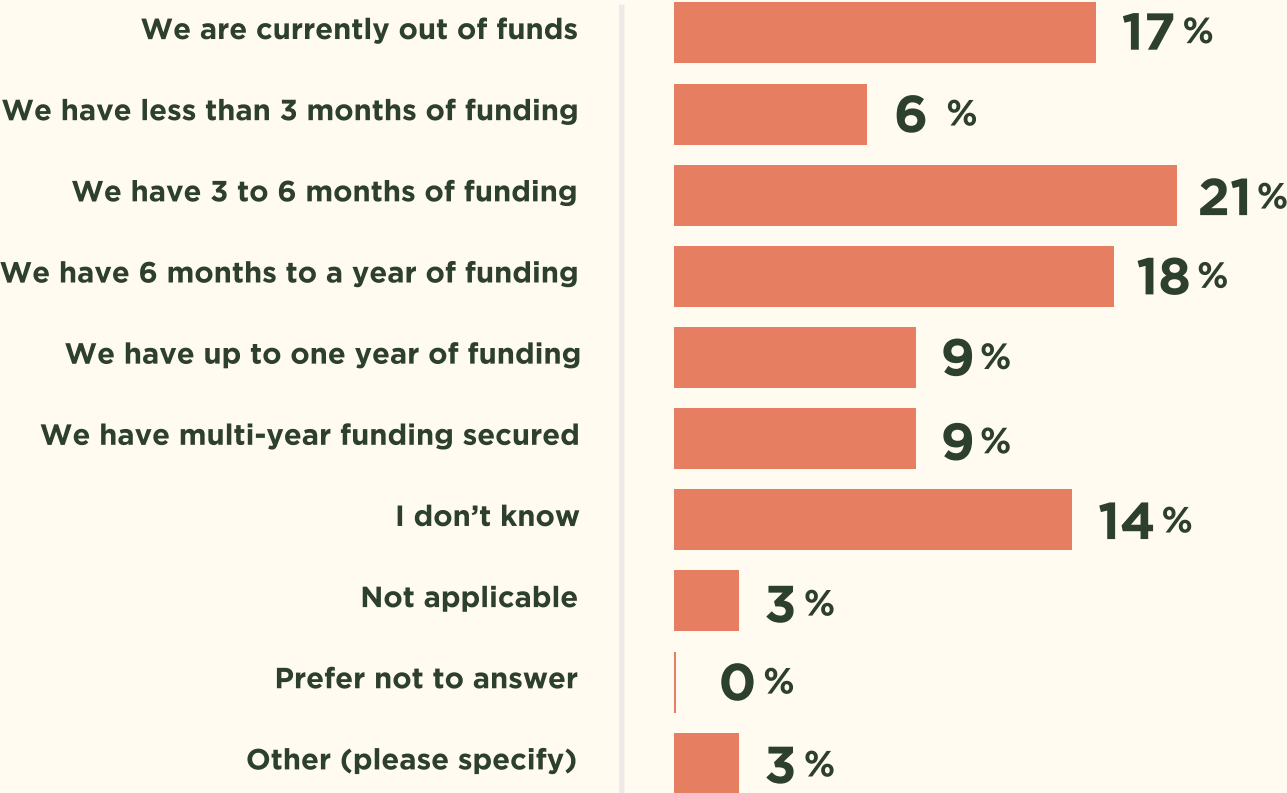


**55%** of local peacebuilding organizations<sup>2</sup> report that they are out or will be out of funds by December 2025.

**“Many of our donors are overwhelmed by the growing volume of requests. In addition to foundations, we also rely on private and corporate donors—many of whom have become hesitant or have withdrawn their support entirely from work related to human rights and democracy, largely due to fear of potential backlash from the administration.”**

**– Intermediary (INGO), United States**

## 44% of respondents reported that their organizations will run out of funds by December 2025



<sup>1</sup> This question was answered by 77 respondents.

<sup>2</sup> Local peacebuilding organizations include civil society organizations, activists, and proximate peacebuilders.

# Impact on Peacebuilding Programs and Activities

Survey participants were asked if their organizations had experienced operational disruptions since January 2025 and to reflect on the type of disruptions.<sup>3</sup>



**60%** of respondents noted that programmatic disruptions were caused by reductions in programmatic funding by the United States government and other bilateral donors. Additionally, factors such as war or local conflict (11%) contributed to interruptions of program implementation.



**27%** of survey respondents reported suspension, underfunding, or closure of activities, projects, and programs and 21% respondents shared a reduction of staff, including layoffs and numbers of hours or shifts worked.

**“We’ve had to scale down key activities... This has meant pulling back from commitments we had begun to share with our community, which affects trust, continuity, and the momentum of the peace processes we support. The pauses and reductions disrupt the relational depth that our work depends on and limit our ability to respond with consistency and care in moments that require it most.”**

**- Other (did not specify affiliation), Kenya**

<sup>3</sup> This question was answered by 62 survey respondents, of which 10 noted that they had not experienced any disruptions (16%). Participants were able to identify more than one disruption. This was a qualitative question that was coded manually.

<sup>4</sup> This question was answered by 55 respondents. This was a qualitative question that was coded manually.

# Impact on Communities

Survey participants noted alarming changes in the communities that they work in.<sup>4</sup> Disruptions are creating the enabling conditions for conflict and at the same time reducing the ability of proximate peacebuilders to prevent or mitigate conflict.



**22%** of participants noted a significant impact on peacebuilding programming and activities and 27% respondents stressed that as a result support to communities had decreased.



**18%** of survey participants noted a reduction of trust by communities and among partners occurred due to program disruptions.



**11%** of survey participants noted an increase in fear, violence, and/or deaths since January 2025.



**11%** of survey participants noted that the disruptions weaken local momentum towards peace and reduced the ability for civil society to provide a timely response to conflicts.



**15%** of participants, of which 10% were from the Global North, noted that the disruptions negatively impacted local partners. One United States based INGO noted, *“We’ve had to stop resourcing our partners and this has led to many organizations being in deep trouble financially.”*

**“The termination of the partnership cooperation has had a significant impact on our local peacebuilding efforts. This clearly contributes to the rise of autocratic regimes in our African regions. The civic space is rapidly shrinking and is increasingly being targeted by state entities.”**

**- Activist, Ethiopia**

# Adaptive and Coping Mechanisms of Peacebuilding Organizations

Participants were asked to share the coping and adaptive mechanisms that their organizations were implementing based on the global decrease of funding to peacebuilding.<sup>5</sup> They reported that since January 2025, their organizations are adopting two main strategies:

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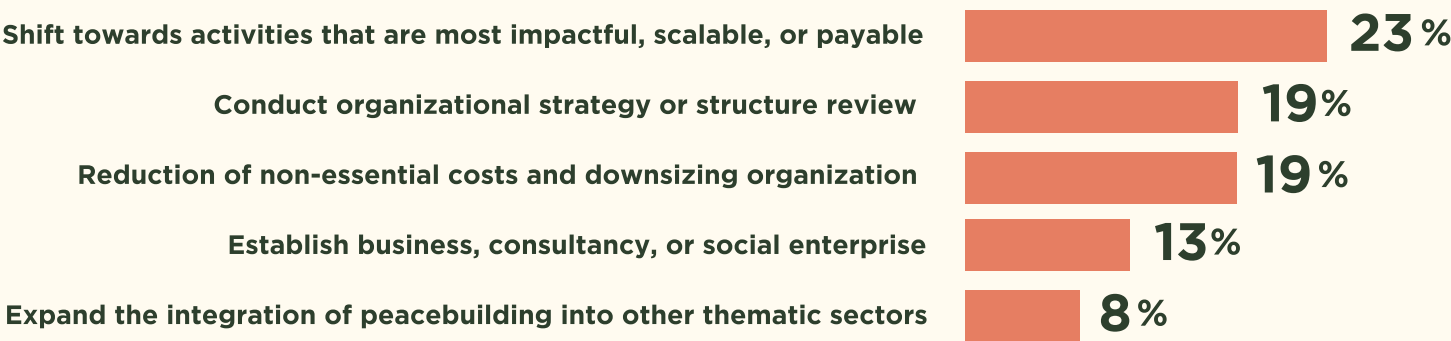
**Looking externally:**  
Diversifying funding sources and cultivating new partnerships, and,
- 2

**Looking internally:**  
conducting organizational reviews, downsizing, re-prioritizing types of programs, establishing consultancies or social enterprises.

## Looking Externally



## Looking Internally



**Conclusions:** The survey results give insights into the devastating impacts of global foreign aid cuts and the urgent need for a new peacebuilding paradigm. Pathways for Peace, coming this fall, will present a new vision in which peacebuilding is a locally led and context-specific endeavour that is rooted in community agency. It is sustained by creating equitable long-term partnerships and coalitions with the aim to build a more just and inclusive world.

**Survey Background and Limitations:** The online survey took place from July 06 to July 28, 2025 and was comprised of 32 questions (all but two were optional). It was disseminated via the project’s Steering Committee, Humanity United’s networks, and word-of-mouth to target proximate peacebuilders. The survey was part of a series of ongoing conversations with proximate peacebuilders, INGOs, and thought leaders. The results of this survey are not intended to represent the entire peacebuilding sector but provide insight into the current state of the peacebuilding sector from the perspective of 97 people across 33 countries. A more comprehensive survey report will be released in late 2025. For more information on the survey or Pathways to Peace please email [peacebuilding@humanityunited.org](mailto:peacebuilding@humanityunited.org)

<sup>5</sup> This question was answered by 62 respondents.  
This was a qualitative question that was coded manually.