

## Donor-Practitioner Roundtable Series on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) for Peacemaking

### What is the MEL Roundtable?

The *Donor-Practitioner Roundtable on MEL for Peacemaking* is a trusted space for candid, practical exchanges on how to define, assess and capture the value of conflict mediation and dialogue. Convened by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), it brings together MEL experts and enthusiasts from leading peacemaking donor and practitioner organisations.

### When does it take place?

HD has convened the MEL Roundtable in-person in Geneva every 12-18 months since 2014. The ninth edition was held in September 2025.

### What happens at the Roundtable?

HD develops the agenda in collaboration with other interested participants. Select practitioner and donor representatives are invited to host sessions or prepare short opening remarks to inform specific discussions. Exchanges are held under the Chatham House Rule, enabling honest and constructive exchanges about recent MEL challenges and successes. To support peer-to-peer learning, participants also share relevant research, discussion papers, and practical MEL guidance and tools during and after the event. Key takeaways are captured in an outcome note that is shared with the wider peacemaking community and informs follow up.

### How has the MEL Roundtable informed peacemaking practice?

Since 2014, the MEL Roundtable series has helped build consensus around, and capacity for, fit-for-purpose MEL systems and ways of thinking about peacemaking results. Over the course of nine Roundtables, the conversation has evolved to reflect increased mutual understanding between donors and practitioners, the growing professionalisation of the peace sector, and changes in the global conflict landscape.

- **2014-2015:** Discussions aimed to establish awareness of the need for **new and more pragmatic monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** approaches that would enhance rather than hamper mediation efforts.
- **2017-2018:** Practitioners began sharing lessons from their experiences in **piloting adaptive M&E tools**, which donors increasingly recognised as relevant and appropriate.
- **2019-2020:** With diverse tailored M&E approaches now being used across the peace sector, Roundtable exchanges turned to selecting **‘the right tool for the right moment.’** Discussions highlighted the importance of **combining qualitative and quantitative methods**, as well as shaping relevant policies alongside practice.
- **2022-2024:** Participants developed a **‘whole-of-peacemaking’ M&E vision and toolkit** and began placing greater emphasis on learning (i.e. shifting to ‘MEL’). It was agreed that the sector needs and wants to take MEL seriously in ways that align with operational realities.
- **2025:** The focus shifted from developing and socialising adaptive MEL approaches to considering how MEL practice can support the peacemakers’ needs to better **communicate the value and impact of their efforts**. Discussions explored what participants can do, individually and collectively, to use MEL insights to inform credible narratives for diverse audiences.