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Public Diplomacy and PeaceTech [1]

The halfway mark for delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) has passed, and we find ourselves considerably behind the required level of impact. As we consider new approaches that will accelerate impact, we ask can more citizens instigate impactful, highly scalable solutions to peacebuilding, to make a stronger contribution to Goal 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institution?

The answer may be yes, through public diplomacy. And the means to achieving this? *PeaceTech*. PeaceTech uses the power of entrepreneurship, technology, data, and media, to save lives and promote the development of positive peace around the world.

When the UN notes the lack of data and the particular challenges to progress on Goal 16, you know it is a particularly hard set of challenges, even when compared to the most pressing of our time. From our work in this area at PaxHax, we have identified four reasons why peacebuilding may require greater audacity of thought. For each, there is a public diplomacy opportunity.

First, the demographic of the peace movement. Many veterans leading efforts to see positive peace flourish express concern on how to engage a younger audience. Can PeaceTech provide a pathway for students and young professionals? It's a firm yes to this based on the peace innovation challenges Paxhax is currently running in partnership with Enactus across Australia, with New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and some Pacific islands to follow.

Second, peace as the domain of government. Others have described how it is not clear to them if they can get involved and if they have the licence to. International relations and peace are for diplomats and the UN, no? With violent conflict on several continents, oppression of people groups, and a major lack of positive peace in many countries filling daily newspaper headlines, new actors are needed. This is the licence for public diplomats and social entrepreneurs to act.

Third, the practicality of access. If violent conflict is taking place, safe access to immerse and engage in ethnographic approaches may not be possible. Yet through the right collaborations, PeaceTech can offer scale and overcome physical borders.

Social entrepreneurs are making great progress on many of the other UNSDGs, such as climate, affordable and clean energy, quality education, and addressing poverty, so why not peace?

Fourth, whose peace? Peace for this group may not be agreed to by another. The Institute for Economics & Peace provide a positive peace resource which we use as our framework for

action, to equip all of our participants, and coach them to get beyond the A or B thinking that is sadly so prevalent in coverage of international affairs. The goal is to remain unaffiliated to ensure they present no barriers to any collaborator that wishes to pursue non-violent progress.

So, if our research and work indicates that peacebuilding may require greater audacity of thought to engage citizens in action, how does PeaceTech enable this? PeaceTech is highly scalable, citizen-led, technology start-ups bringing solutions to the horrors of war and violent conflict, meeting the needs of those in or facing the threat of war, countering the spread of misinformation and hate which breed violence, and developing the conditions for positive peace. It is also a means to engage different and new demographics in peacebuilding, bringing scale to action on UNSDG 16 both from the technology and the people.

By engaging in such efforts, citizens engage in public diplomacy, because of the contribution of their work at an international institutional level (such as the UN), because the benefit of such efforts will cross borders (i.e. involving two states), or because their actions contribute to their own countries' reputation and contribute to soft power.

Social entrepreneurship stems from recognizing that there is a need in society that is not being met by government or big business and bringing an entrepreneurial approach to addressing the need. Social entrepreneurs are making great progress on many of the other UNSDGs, such as climate, affordable and clean energy, quality education, and addressing poverty, so why not peace?