

# Civilian peace workers and conflict prevention

Editors: Christiane Kayser and Flaubert Djateng



## Building Peace



Civil Peace Service (CPS) /  
BfdW – Mano River Region, DR Congo  
and Cameroon

# Building Peace

**Brot für die Welt (BfdW)**

Bread for the World

**Financed by the BMZ** (Bundesministerium  
für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit – German Federal  
Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)

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**Civil Peace Service**

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# Introduction

Recently the notion of conflict prevention has spread from diplomatic and military efforts to also concern living together in a given society and therefore requires the participation of the people primarily concerned: the population subjected to potentially violent conflicts. We are living in an era of increasing migration flows due to armed conflicts, natural disasters related to the environment and climate change and structural deprivation engendered by a globalised system that favours a small number to the detriment of everyone else. Solutions for this spiral of violence and suffering cannot be found in advocating a grotesque form of isolationism, erecting fortresses for the privileged, denying the problems and preaching the good word of opening to all without managing the consequences... It is therefore essential to find together new approaches to conflict prevention.

In this publication, we propose first of all some articles defining the concept and opening up our vision to global considerations:

The Swedish organisation SIDA explains succinctly the fundamentals of conflict prevention and its links with the new agendas of the international bodies.

Catherine Barnes of the European centre for conflict prevention expands on the questions around the role of civil society in prevention, stabilisation and peace building.

Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk summarise a study carried out by the World Bank on civil society, citizen commitment and peace work.

The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) presents, in a brief and schematic way, a strategic framework for preventing violent conflicts.

To close this section, we have included a very recent article by Cameroonian political theorist Achille Mbembe, “*The great riddance*”, on migration flows and the dehumanising of refugees, the questions of liberty and security.

We are of the opinion that these windows onto broader reflections can strengthen our colleagues in the different countries of Africa which are often in the frontline in the struggle to prevent conflicts.

In the second section, our colleagues and partners working on the ground in various African countries share their experiences. Often they were not initially aware of their essential role in conflict prevention.

From *Cameroon*, Marilyn Douala Manga Bell, the president of doual’art, illustrates experiences with young Cameroonians where her organisation uses art as an emancipation tool for peace.

Flaubert Djateng, against the background of the acute crisis in Cameroon, queries the potential of religious leaders and traditional chiefs as stakeholders in conflict prevention.

In an interview conducted by Alexandre Vojvoda, Professor Steven Youngblood explains the role of community media as dialogue facilitators between parties in conflict.

In *Liberia* colleagues from NGOs NAEAL and CJPS describe their experiences with community workshops in the villages to institute facilitators for the prevention and transformation of conflicts.

In *Sierra Leone* Bamike Williams of NGO SLADEA explains their concept of conflict prevention in a pre-electoral situation.

Edmond Kposowa from NGO FIOH discusses the challenges encountered in Sierra Leone and Liberia in relation to conflict prevention, especially in relation to the situation of young people.

From the *DR Congo* Odile Bulabula of RIO explains their holistic approach to peace building in South Kivu.

Also in South Kivu, Evariste Mfaume of SVH describes several initiatives creating a wind of peace blowing from the deep south of a province that is sorely afflicted by armed conflicts.



From the province of Tanganyika also in DRC, Jean-Marie Toro, working on a German cooperation project, tells us of experiences in conflict prevention as part of the work of transitioning between humanitarian and development.

From the other end of this vast country, Pastor Fidèle Mikiama from Kongo Central speaks of the obstacles often encountered by peace builders and insists on the necessity of boosting local capacities in this domain.

Divine Kasimbi and David Mukamba from the Coordination of Protestant Schools in South Kivu share their experiences of working with school children.

Pierre Murhula Kaheto of CBCA in South Kivu describes the history of the conflicts in Ruzizi Plain and the intercommunity approaches developed by his Church in response.

We hope these contributions will help you in your work and encourage you to share your own experiences.

*Christiane Kayser  
Flaubert Djateng  
Berlin and Yaoundé  
September 2018*

# African citizens as stakeholders in conflict prevention

*By Christiane Kayser\**

**“Conflict prevention is about making societies resilient to violent conflict by strengthening the local capacities for peace (systems, resources, structures, attitudes, skills).”<sup>1</sup>**

There are a plethora of definitions of conflict prevention. It is often mentioned in the context of government intervention or international diplomacy. A distinction is made between direct prevention and the structural prevention that keeps violent conflicts from occurring or flaring up again over the medium and long term. Military and diplomatic interventions are no doubt useful and necessary in certain contexts but it has been established that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without structural prevention, which requires the active participation of the different layers of the population, or even of the various key stakeholders in a society.

The links with the transformation of conflicts, stabilisation and development are essential. The definition given by the Swedish development agency quoted above seems all the more eloquent, for it includes the efforts of civil society players in the different countries and regions of Africa. These players often work in difficult conditions and are not always aware of their role in conflict prevention.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from: SIDA Conflict Prevention: Opportunities and challenges in implementing key policy commitments and priorities (s209461\_thematicoverview\_conflict\_prevention\_webb\_final), for the French translation see page 16 in this publication

\* Consultant and independent researcher

The notion of “civil society” comprises a very diverse range of stakeholders with greatly differing goals and loyalties<sup>2</sup>. As it has often been used as a blanket term in discussions over the past few years, the signification is no longer very clear so we shall avoid using it here as much as possible and speak rather of certain examples of African citizen movements which, through their behaviour and actions, correspond more to the fundamental principles of the essence of civil society: groups, associations, traditional and modern organisations which defend civilian interests in a non violent way.

## Young Africans facing challenges

These past few years many young Africans, who form the absolute majority of the population in most countries,—if they are not incarcerated, crushed, killed, chased away by the violence committed by the militia or military of their own State or of a neighbouring State—find themselves faced with cruel choices of life prospects:

- ◆ Either join a militia or an army to fulfil their needs using weapons and violent force.
- ◆ Or seek to migrate essentially through illegal and dangerous channels to Europe, the United States, Canada, South Africa, etc. to live there – if they are lucky enough to survive the ordeal of the journey – mostly a life of sub-proletarians or beggars.
- ◆ Or they resign themselves to struggling with no future and often become prey to destructive beliefs and manipulative sects.
- ◆ Or they decide to tackle the poor governance, corruption and marginalisation in their own societies.

Any structural prevention work has a critical need for these citizens who stay and fight for a better life. It is very encouraging to see the emergence over the past few years of movements of young Africans in many

<sup>2</sup> See also: Mapinduzi Journal 4, Civil Societies in Africa, [www.peaceworkafrica.net](http://www.peaceworkafrica.net)

of the countries south of the Sahara, even if they are repressed, chased out, considered terrorists, thrown in prison or sometimes killed by the corrupt elites in their country. The road to effective prevention is therefore still long and winding.

## Small steps and major trends

Having said this, small steps also make a difference. They are often forgotten, and the short and long term effects ignored. And it is precisely insisting on their value that can provide African citizens with the necessary courage and energy and boost the appropriate structures and systems.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Stockholm Declaration<sup>3</sup> on the answers to the instability in the world and to violent conflicts take into account the necessity of integrating the civil society stakeholders in the countries concerned. The political evolution marked in particular by the American President Trump and the progress of rightwing populist movements call strongly into question the advance of the international systems since the Second World War towards sustainable solutions at international level and refers everyone back to their own country or camp. You have to build yourself up to crush those weaker than you. In parallel, we observe in certain African countries, DR Congo in particular, a pseudo-patriotism that preaches hatred of everything that comes from the outside. The flaws of neo-colonialism and the imperialist systems are confused with any form of opening towards others. Everything that comes from outside is necessarily bad for the country. Africa cannot advance by isolating itself from the world and often even from the other African countries. At a time in History where, through the social networks and multiple contacts, the peoples of Africa have the possibility of bolstering themselves and advancing together, including with the citizen movements of the northern part of the hemisphere, such an ideology weakens all those who wish for a sustainable social transfor-

<sup>3</sup> See more details in the SIDA article pages 16

mation by countering the *Internationale* of the multilaterals and financial systems by an *Internationale* of citizens. This is the exact contrary of Trump's "America first", of the construction of a "European fortress" and it only serves those who cling to a corrupt power.

Fortunately women's and youth movements among others resist this trend for the main part and set up networks that are increasingly extensive and effective.

### LUCHA (Struggle for Change) in DR Congo<sup>4</sup>

LUCHA is a movement created by young Congolese people from all walks of life, origins and religions who have chosen to peacefully combat cronyism and corruption in a country where things are often settled using firearms.

A citizen movement that first appeared in January 2012 in Goma, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Among the principal founders of the movement, there are a certain number of women, such as Micheline Mwendike and Rebecca Kabugho.

Driven by the desire for a new, truly independent and democratic country, LUCHA militates, through non-violent actions, for access to water, education, the end of impunity for armed groups and the holding of presidential elections. The movement quickly drew the attention of the authorities who regularly repress their actions.

Since 2015, LUCHA has forged strong bonds with other African citizen organisations such as *Balai citoyen* in Burkina Faso or *Y en a marre* in Senegal. In March 2015 activists from LUCHA, the Filimbi movement and other activists were arrested in Kinshasa and Goma. Some spent 6 months in prison, others even 17 months and

4 <http://www.luchacongo.org> and also: « Lucha, chronique d'une révolution sans arme au Congo », une bande-dessinée imaginée par Annick Kamgang et Justine Brabant. © La boîte à bulles, [http://afrique.lepoint.fr/actualites/rd-congo-justine-brabant-personne-n-a-raconte-l-histoire-de-la-lucha-04-07-2018-2233226\\_2365.php](http://afrique.lepoint.fr/actualites/rd-congo-justine-brabant-personne-n-a-raconte-l-histoire-de-la-lucha-04-07-2018-2233226_2365.php)

without a trial. Since then, there have been regular cases of intimidations, kidnapping, torture and arrests. In parallel, LUCHA is growing. When it began in Goma they only numbered around ten. In 2017, there were almost 400 members. In 2018, it doubled again, without counting the major sympathies through the country and beyond. They have won a number of international awards. On 8 June 2018, militant Luc Nkulula was burned alive in his home in Goma. There is strong evidence that what is formally described as an accident was an assassination. The funeral in Goma, with mass parade and fanfares, was a worthy and impressive testimony to the influence and popularity of LUCHA, but also of its unwavering commitment to non-violence.

Members of LUCHA like to say: “We have the impression that non-violence is easy because it means abstaining from something.” However, it is extremely difficult to maintain this line of conduct faced with state bodies and a secret service that are brutal and violent. This young movement also had to make not always easy choices in relation to political alliances and positioning. Its horizontal structures that refuse a traditional leadership prevent entrapment in the cult of personality and power grabbing by individuals, but decision-making and the unity of the movement remain difficult to achieve. There are many traps and infiltrations, but the enthusiasm and commitment of the young activists form a counterweight.

Whatever happens subsequently, LUCHA has given hope to many young people in DR Congo who no longer see themselves as victims, but as actors of their own destiny. The image of the DRC has been transformed by this. A second irreversible success is that all over the world we are at last beginning to hear, through LUCHA and other movements, the voice of African youth: an essential foundation for the common future of us all.

## Local and international: acting together

The challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are planetary and cannot be resolved behind closed doors but progress is based on pragmatic local action and not on grand declarations.

The Civil Peace Service's partner organisations work in a variety of different ways to edge forward the work of prevention<sup>5</sup>. It is important to listen to them and strive to understand the obstacles across their paths, the advances achieved and also the diversity of the approaches corresponding to the diversity of situations.

They do not often use the buzzwords of the UN institutions and the international community. There is still an enormous chasm between the local stakeholders and the international institutions. Anything that can build bridges and contribute to the recognition of local efforts is a step forward.

We must become aware of the fact that it is essential that civil society stakeholders from the south and the north work together to support local efforts and influence national and international decisions. Among other things, the Civil Peace Service programmes endeavour to forge links between stakeholders in the south and in the north, but also between African stakeholders in different countries. All in order to boost local capacities for peace.<sup>6</sup> For whether through direct prevention or structural prevention, the success and sustainability of the actions of all the outside players depend on local efforts.

5 See inter alia the examples from DR Congo, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Liberia in this publication.

6 See regarding the importance of local stakeholders, the publications of Severine Autesserre, in particular her latest book: *On the frontlines of peace*, 2018 <http://www.severineautesserre.com/research/on-the-frontlines-of-peace/>

# Conflict prevention: opportunities and challenges in implementing key policy commitments and priorities

By SIDA\*

**Peacebuilding** and **conflict prevention** are overlapping concepts and processes. Conflict prevention does not only refer to preventing the out-break of conflict, but also resolving or preventing a relapse into conflict. Theory and evidence, however, suggest that structural prevention is most effective in the early (or latent) stages of the conflict.

## What is conflict prevention

Conflict prevention is about making societies' resilient to violent conflict by strengthening the local capacities for peace (systems, resources, structures, attitudes, skills).

International conflict prevention initiatives are often distinguished from other peacebuilding concepts and approaches mainly by *when* it comes into play in the conflict cycle, and to some extent by the specific tools and approaches applied. Early prevention initiatives seek to improve the relationship of parties before the out-break of violent conflict, while late prevention pertains to resolving or preventing the recurrence of violent conflict. The methods, approaches and mechanisms for engagement are often categorised as *direct prevention* and *structural prevention*, although the methods often overlap and so do the phases of the

\*SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY  
Excerpts from: Peace and Conflict (Thematic Overview) Conflict Prevention,  
December 2017, [www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se)



## The 2030 Agenda and the prevention of violent conflict

The 2030 Agenda can serve as a global framework of cooperation to prevent violent conflict. Many common root causes of conflict are addressed through its goals and targets. For example, SDG 16 goes beyond preventing and addressing violence, to transforming structural issues such as inclusive and participatory decision-making and the protection of human rights. SDG 10 includes targets on promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, while SDG 5 promotes gender equality.

The 15-year time horizon should enable donor programming to focus on issues that require patient, long-term attention. Moreover, the indicators that will monitor progress towards the SDGs will be disaggregated along identity group and social lines, allowing for exclusion and horizontal inequalities to be identified and acted upon. Indeed, the 2030 Agenda's call to 'leave no-one behind' from development progress provides a strong basis for action to promote political, economic and social inclusion—and thus development action that helps prevent conflict.

conflict cycle. Direct prevention refers to shorter-term initiatives that are put into place in a critical moment with the aim to have a direct de-escalating effect on tensions or violence. Such initiatives include for example dialogue, mediation and other confidence building measures, preventive international deployment and the establishment of peace zones. Structural prevention refers to longer-term development cooperation initiatives in a variety of sectors that aim to address root causes of tension and violence. From an inclusive peace and development perspective, structural prevention is the most relevant aspect of conflict prevention ... Structural prevention entails long term initiatives that

aim to transform key socioeconomic sources of conflict, political and institutional factors that keep countries and societies from addressing tensions meaningful and peacefully and could lead to the outbreak of or relapse into armed conflict.

## Opportunities to contribute to conflict prevention

**WHAT:** Identifying and targeting context specific root causes of violence and conflict

Violent conflict is the result of a complex range of factors, and conflict prevention is a complex process, which requires a timely and tailored approach in each context. The combination of good knowledge of the actual circumstances on the ground and a good overview of available conflict prevention tools and approaches can help strengthening the conflict prevention potential of longterm international development cooperation. This means that, in any given place, conflict prevention activities and strategies must be based on conflict analysis that draws on a variety of sources and perspectives, not at least the knowledge, experience and perspectives of local actors. The conflict analysis should always include a gender perspective, to get the full picture of patterns of violence, grievances, risks and opportunities as experienced by women and men, girls and boys. The required depth of this analysis varies between contexts, and between various types of interventions. It is generally recommended to view the analysis as an ongoing and reflective process involving multiple stakeholders and views.

While recognising the context-specific nature of any situation of fragility, violence and conflict — two factors stand out as important causes of most conflicts of today: (i) Destructive power dynamics and (ii) Patterns of marginalisation and exclusion. Other root causes may include injustice, human rights violations, inequality, exclusion, poverty, poor management of natural resources, the absence of inclusive political settlements and capable and responsive institutions.

## The Stockholm Declaration: Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World

*Focusing on root causes of fragility, conflict and violence*

“At the root of conflict and fragility lie injustice, human rights violations, inequality, exclusion, poverty, poor management of natural resources and the absence of inclusive political settlements and capable institutions. Supporting transitions out of fragility requires political and not just technical responses.

It is crucial for these processes to be grounded in indigenous contexts. They must be locally driven, locally owned and locally led. There can be no sustainable peace without the meaningful inclusion of civil society, and a particular focus is needed to ensure gender-sensitivity and women’s effective participation in peace processes and peacebuilding.”

WHO: The importance of stakeholder and power analyses

Careful partner and beneficiary selection is key to successful conflict prevention strategies and approaches, and careful balancing between working with formal and informal state structures, civil society and their constituencies, private actors as well as between various gender, age and identity groups in society. This selection needs to be based on an in-depth stakeholder and power analysis that identifies the needs, interests, positions, power and resources among potential connecting factors and actors as well as the key driving actors of violence.

HOW: Structural conflict prevention by supporting inclusive politics, economies and societies

Since patterns of marginalisation and exclusion are key futures in global violence and conflict trends, structural long-term conflict prevention initiatives can be thought of in terms of efforts to promote more inclusive politics, economies and societies. The sections below provide some further guidance. The examples presented below include both targeted conflict prevention initiatives, as well as initiatives having conflict prevention as sub-target as components and activities built into a variety of long term development cooperation initiatives.

#### A) SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE POLITICS

In countries at risk of conflict, politics is often exclusionary at both the level of elites, where some are excluded from power, and at the level of society, where the political participation of social groups may be limited based on their gender or identity. Studies on the recurrence of civil war have found political exclusion to be one of the most important factors. Countries with inclusive political institutions are also often more successful in achieving long-term economic development. Efficient institutions and good governance becomes central strategies for preventing that large parts of the population resort to armed violence because of unmet needs and perceptions.

#### B) PROMOTING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

*Horizontal inequality is defined as inequality among culturally defined (or constructed) groups, in contrast to vertical inequality, which is inequality among households or individuals.*

The risk of conflict is higher among countries with lower per capita incomes and economic growth. By 2030, most of the world's poor are expected to live in conflict affected areas. However, economic underdevelopment, low growth rates and poverty do not inevitably lead to con-

flict; not all poor countries are affected by violent conflict and middle-income countries are not immune, as illustrated by the outbreak of violent conflict in for example Syria and Iraq. Specifically, when economic inequalities—be it access to jobs, income or assets—fall along identity group lines (‘horizontal inequality’) the risk of conflict increases. Identifying differences in income and multidimensional forms of poverty between regions and gender etc., as well as perceptions of exclusion, are important factors in assessing situations of rising tensions and developing an early warning system.

### C) SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Whilst it is often assumed that the provision of social services can strengthen state-society relations, recent research suggests that the perceived fairness of the delivery itself matters more. The equitability of access to security and justice services appears to be a particularly important predictor for violent conflict. Cultural inequalities between groups can also drive conflict. For example, decisions on official languages, religion or cultural events that favour some groups over others can exacerbate social divisions, creating cleavages that can be mobilised for violence. Conversely, peaceful and conducive state-society relations, and within and between communities, can contribute to conflict prevention. Cultural norms that define gender roles, such as masculinities that are defined by participation in acts of violence, can also be a driver of conflict. In contexts of rising tension, support to strengthened gender equality is important, both in terms of inclusion of women in decision-making processes as well as preventing gender-based violence.

WHEN: Supporting conflict prevention in all phases of the conflict cycle

... Sida currently supports a wide range of initiatives broadly defined as structural prevention and peacebuilding. Nevertheless, most initiatives are implemented in contexts that already experience violent conflict, and in post-conflict situations, while theory and evidence suggest

that structural prevention is most effective in the early (latent) stages of the conflict cycle. By systematically integrating conflict sensitivity in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance strategies and approaches, Sida and its partner organisations can identify additional opportunities to maximise the conflict prevention potential throughout all phases of the conflict cycle.

## Some key challenges

### Increasingly complex patterns of violence and conflict

Conflict and its consequences are not limited to one country and its boundaries. National and local root causes of conflict are coupled with, and interacts with, transnational risks and conflict drivers such as illicit drug and arms trafficking, human trafficking, health epidemics and violent extremism. In addressing such transboundary risks and conflict drivers, the UN has introduced a third category of conflict prevention, ‘**systemic prevention**’. In this category of conflict prevention approaches it is increasingly recognised that early warning systems and analytical frameworks need to include regional factors to ensure a holistic approach. Cross-agency collaboration and sharing of data and experiences becomes an important aspect of successful prevention initiatives. For Sida, this could also mean emphasising conflict sensitivity and conflict prevention in the information-sharing and coordination with partners and other stakeholders, also in contexts that are not immediately regarded as ‘conflict contexts’.

### Understanding and dealing with armed nonstate actors

Conflicts have become more complex and multifaceted, driven by numerous internal and external factors and actors. They often involve a myriad of actors with non-traditional conduct and low respect for international humanitarian law and are characterised by irregular warfare, terrorism

and elite driven politics. The need to understand the perceptions of, and negotiate with nonstate armed groups for securing humanitarian access, a peace agreement and implementing long-term development activities in conflict-affected areas is increasingly recognised.

### Risk of doing harm

It is highly challenging for external actors to fully capture inter-dependent local, national and regional violence and conflict dynamics, which is key to effectively shape conflict sensitive strategies and responses. Conflict prevention initiatives risk exacerbating tensions and conflict if not carefully planned and managed. Policies or programmes that for example seek to address inequalities, especially those that target economically or politically disadvantaged groups, with the objective of redistributing power or assets, promoting employment or boosting income can themselves fuel tensions if not carefully managed. They can for example contribute to perceptions of bias or favouritism of one group over others, and highlight or reinforce the salience of identity issues as a conflict faultline, thereby inadvertently deepening social divisions.

### Measuring the results and impact of conflict prevention

Measuring the effectiveness of conflict prevention is a key challenge, as averted conflicts are simply invisible. However, through clear theories of change it is still possible to make a qualified analysis of an intervention's contribution to conflict prevention in a wider system of inter-related factors. Such theories of change favourably include a detailed understanding of key sources and drivers of tension in the specific context; proposed methods and activities for addressing those tensions as well as an explicit intended contribution of the initiative in terms of e.g. improved relationships and strengthened capacities to manage tensions peacefully.

# Agents for change: civil society roles in preventing war and building peace

*By Catherine Barnes\**

## Main findings

### Agents for change: key functions of civil society peacebuilding

Civil society responds to conflict in numerous ways. While often part of the forces supporting war, it is also one of the powerful forces promoting peace. CSO roles in humanitarian relief, development and human rights protection are well understood. What is less well known are the myriad ways that they actively build peace. Yet they play roles at every point in the development of conflict and its resolution: from surfacing situations of injustice to preventing violence, from creating conditions conducive to peace talks to mediating a settlement and working to ensure it is consolidated, from setting a global policy agenda to healing war- scarred psyches. These roles can be mapped out into eight main functions of civil society peacebuilding.

#### WAGING CONFLICT CONSTRUCTIVELY

Sometimes the prevailing power structures in a society are deeply oppressive. While there may not be full scale warfare, life for many is impaired by profound structural violence, often combined with actual or threatened direct violence. Civil society activists can play crucial roles in changing these situations by surfacing the conflict and escalating it nonviolently to bring about necessary changes. Often mobilized by some triggering situation that provokes an ‘enough is enough!’

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response, they gather the sparks of resistance throughout the population into a movement capable of challenging the relevant power structures. Sometimes they use existing institutional and legal systems to hold regimes to account or to address injustices. They often combine formal legal strategies with approaches that aim to foster public awareness and the transformation of conflict attitudes and relationships. CSOs can bear witness to violations and undermine the moral authority and legitimacy of abusers. The very act of public disclosure and/or denouncing the situation can make the truth evident in ways that are very difficult to ignore and may empower people to take action to change the situation. This exposure sometimes stimulates conditions that lead to the collapse of regimes over the long term. They can also dissuade the wider public from accepting or participating in acts that enable abuse and oppression.

CONFLICT IS THEREFORE EMBRACED AS A WAY OF WORKING proactively toward social change goals and is a feature of the struggle for justice. Civil society activists can manifest both the ‘power to resist’ oppressive forces—typically through mobilizing effective mass movements for change—and the ‘power to expose’ oppression and thereby de-legitimize the authority of the oppressors. Furthermore, they have the ‘power to persuade’ both popular opinion and decision-makers of more constructive ways to respond to specific conflict situations and to address the structural problems that give rise to conflict. This points to the importance of channeling conflict through peaceful processes capable of delivering constructive change.

#### SHIFTING CONFLICT ATTITUDES: THE POWER TO RE-FRAME AND CHANGE PERCEPTIONS

Many grassroots peacebuilders in societies locked in protracted conflict promote people-to-people dialogue across the conflict divides to begin to shift entrenched conflict dynamics. This is often facilitated by establishing direct communication between people with some common

attribute: such as a similar occupational role (e.g., teachers, journalists), identity characteristics (e.g., women, youth), or common experiences of the conflict (e.g., ex-combatants, policy advisors). The experience of encountering those who have been regarded as enemies and perceiving them as human beings can shake perceptions of ‘the other’ and challenge the discourses of hate. This can shake-up their perceptions of the conflict and ultimately result in personal transformation. They—and those in the circles around them—may begin to seek alternatives to continued war because they now know that there are people in the other community who are similar to themselves in seeking a reasonable solution to the conflict.

#### ENVISIONING A BETTER FUTURE: POWER TO IDENTIFY, TO ANALYSE AND TO PROPOSE

Civil society actors can help shape peace policy by identifying overlooked problems and policy gaps, analyzing issues and recommending solutions. In short, they can identify the central agenda of issues that need to be addressed in responding to a conflict situation and dealing with peace and security issues more widely. Civil society groups can analyze the situation, formulate recommendations, develop policy options and engage in policy dialogue to address conflicts. They can also mobilize advocacy campaigns to generate political will amongst decision-makers and implement strategies to achieve the desired results. Thus civil society efforts at raising public awareness about a particular set of problems is intertwined with efforts to motivate political decision-makers to take action to address them.

Sustainable peace processes need to be about more than finding ways to end the fighting; attention must also be directed to supporting societies on the path towards a more equitable and peaceful future. In some conflicts, civil society activists have stimulated widespread public deliberation about what kind of society members want to create. This has resulted not only in a ‘blue print’ of the goals for the future but has also helped to reveal the deeper causes of conflict that must be addressed

if this aspiration is to be fulfilled. In some cases, these ideas have fed directly into the negotiating agenda for peace talks and proposals for how these issues should best be addressed.

#### MOBILIZING CONSTITUENCIES FOR PEACE: GENERATING SUPPORT AND APPLYING PRESSURE

Those involved in armed conflict often justify their actions on the basis of their authority as governments or by claiming to represent popular causes. Civil society actors may challenge these assertions by demonstrating that public opinion rejects military approaches and supports alternatives. Peace media, art projects, concerts, and other creative methods have all been effective in reaching out to the wider public. Sometimes efforts involve mass protests at the use of military force or demonstrations in favor of peace processes. By revealing that there are significant constituencies for peace, they can be a persuasive force in altering the responses of governments and armed groups. This can help to transform social and political dynamics to support atmosphere conducive to peacebuilding and a factor in the viability of a political peace negotiation process.

Yet local people are often unable to address all the dimensions and drivers of conflict on their own. This can be especially challenging when there are severe power imbalances; when there are numerous external parties to the conflict (such as powerful countries allied to one of the armed groups); or where the conflict parties are largely motivated to sustain the benefits derived from the 'war economy'. In these cases, strategies may well require solidarity and collaboration from key partners elsewhere in the global system. This implies the need for a more systemized approach to collaboration between the civil society actors with governments and others who have an interest in or influence over the situation. This can be enhanced through coordinated lobbying and raising awareness among domestic and international audiences.

## PROMOTING SECURITY: POWER TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AND PROMOTE STABILITY

It is very difficult for people to engage in and support peacemaking when their basic security is threatened. This is one of the reasons why those who want to wreck a peace process escalate violence against civilians. While conventional state security forces can play an important role in protection; too often they are a part of the problem or are simply incapable of fulfilling their responsibilities. Military peacekeepers are often deployed too late, too few or with a mandate that is inadequate to provide sufficient protection of the civilian population. Yet state security forces and internationally-mandated peacekeepers are not the only ones equipped to respond to violence effectively. Violence-affected communities are not merely victims of events. In many cases, they have been able to take action to prevent violence and ameliorate the effects of armed conflict. Community level structures—especially when they work in partnership with authorities and international missions—can monitor developments and take proactive steps to de-escalate violence. In a number of places torn by violence, one of the most effective ways to address this problem is for the community to become proactively involved in trying to prevent the violence by resolving localized disputes and preventing those with specific personal grievances from mobilizing others in conflict. Furthermore, cooperation in helping to achieve mutual security can be a powerful confidence-building measure. This experience can help prepare communities for peaceful co-existence in the wider society.

*Power to alert and to act: early warning and early response.* People based in a society are often best placed to identify the reasons for a conflict, the motivations of those who are driving it, and to suggest specific actions that could channel it in a more peaceful direction. These insights can support the development of subtle and highly targeted strategies that do not require extensive resources or coercive measures, especially when addressed at an early point in a conflict cycle. While CSOs can be the

source of vital inputs shaping international responses to conflict, it is also vital to stimulate local systems for responding to the risk of violence.

*Civilian monitoring.* Civil society monitoring initiatives explicitly aimed at supporting peace processes little known. Yet they can be uniquely influential in creating sufficient stability and space needed to underpin official political negotiations and to address the local dimensions of wider conflict contexts. They typically draw upon detailed local knowledge of the specific dynamics and developments that can trigger conflict escalation. Utilizing credible (and usually independent) monitors, they can issue information and analysis that is accepted by the conflict parties and other stakeholders. They often issue recommendations explicitly aimed at fostering confidence building and may work with all involved to see them implemented. Their credibility often stems from the fact that they are perceived as either non-partisan or multi-partisan (e.g., comprised of people with links to all the conflict parties), with the interests and needs of non-combatant civilians their primary concern. In addition to monitoring formally agreed ceasefires, community monitors can become involved in activities that help to generate public confidence, such as monitoring developments in state institutions or relations between communities.

*Interpositioning, accompaniment and civilian peacekeeping.* Based on the observation that the mere presence of outside witnesses can help to deter violence in many—if not all—contexts, there has been an emergence of unarmed, civil society efforts to reduce political violence and protect civilian noncombatants. Civilian peacekeeping activities include monitoring, protective accompaniment and inter-positioning, i.e., physically positioning themselves between opposing forces to prevent violent attack. Many initiatives are based on using a system of international-local contacts, with foreigners linked to locals to provide a symbolic presence, thereby indicating that the world is watching.

Success often rests on perception of potential attackers that the for-

eigners have international linkages. This perception can change their assessment of the 'costs vs benefits' that could be gained by attacking. These initiatives can also provide support for local people's conflict resolution efforts.

#### MAKING PEACE: HELPING TO REACH AGREEMENT

Negotiations to end armed conflict are often viewed as the exclusive realm of governments and the leaders of armed groups, with concerned governments and IGOs acting as conveners and mediators. The 'official' nature of these processes meant that the potential contributions of civil society were overlooked. Numerous civil society peacemaking initiatives since the 1990s, however, have revealed their invaluable potential for supporting the prospects of a sustainable agreement.

*Back channel communications and unofficial dialogue.* As well as helping to create a climate conducive for talks, civil society actors sometimes have a direct peacemaking role. They can help open channels of communication between parties in conflict. Using their unofficial and low-key status, they can provide confidential 'back channels' to convey messages between opponents. CSOs can also facilitate unofficial Track II and Track 1 1/2 dialogue processes, involving those close to government leaders and armed opposition groups. Both methods provide parties the opportunity to engage in the communication necessary to determine whether political negotiations may be viable, build relationships and deepen understanding of the others' perspectives on the conflict and explore options for its resolution.

*Mediating/facilitating peace negotiations.* Unofficial civil society actors have also served as the main mediators and facilitators of formal peace negotiations. This role is more typically taken by diplomats from concerned governments or by the UN or regional organizations. These mediators often offer financial resources and, in many cases, bring political pressure to bear on the negotiations. Yet in some circumstances the

very fact that civil society-based mediators can offer only their trustworthiness and skill is a key reason why they are acceptable when other mediators are rejected. They typically deploy non-coercive and participatory processes to enable those involved to better understand the reasons for the conflict and what needs to be done to resolve it. Instead of relying upon an external force to exert pressure and inducements for the parties to reach an agreement and then supply the resources to help implement it, the parties must instead work jointly through the options until they are able to reach mutually acceptable arrangements. The agreements are then more likely to endure because those involved tend to understand why the compromises were necessary and why the agreement reached is the best one possible.

*Public participation in peace negotiations.* Yet there are some peace processes where civil society groupings participate directly in the negotiations. Such processes are usually aimed at reaching comprehensive agreements on new state structures and other key issues at the heart of conflict. It is here that civil society can be especially invaluable because they are typically motivated more by the desire to promote sustainable change than by the quest for governing power

*Consolidating peace agreements.* Conflicts are not transformed by agreements alone; they need a commitment to address ongoing problems through political means. Civil society also plays important roles in helping to sustain agreements reached by the parties, including through raising awareness and educating the public about the agreement itself. They can be crucial for consolidating support. A sense of public ownership of the peace process can be crucial to its durability. If the public and organized civil society have been excluded from the process or believe that it has not addressed their real needs, they are less likely to work actively towards its implementation. Without a broad public constituency in support, there are few safeguards against those who want to derail the agreement.

### ‘PRAGMATIC PEACE’: COMMUNITY-LEVEL PEACEMAKING

Many initiatives—especially those undertaken by civil society peace-builders—are aimed at peacebuilding at the local community level. Protracted armed conflict within states generally penetrates all levels of society. National and regional conflicts interconnect with self-sustaining conflict dynamics at the local community level. In some cases, continued violence at the community level generates pressure towards greater chaos, undermining efforts at macro-level peacemaking. Conversely, effective conflict prevention and peacemaking locally can underpin macro-level peace processes by creating sufficient stability so that wider political processes towards peace can take hold. This is particularly true when people in other communities see what is being achieved and are inspired to launch their own initiatives.

Even when national level peace processes are stalled or non-existent, local communities can act to address the issues that generate conflict and escalate violence locally. Sometimes they address volatile local dynamics that could escalate into violence and intensify conflict and war in the wider society. Often they are connected to efforts to make a practical difference in the daily lives of people of the community. Sometimes they are able to foster ‘islands of peace’ amidst a wider context of war. Local peace agreements rarely have any formal legal status. They rely on people keeping the commitments they made—often backed by considerable peer pressure by other community members. Yet it is precisely because community members realize that it is in their own self-interest to find a way to live together peacefully that these outcomes can be so durable.

### TRANSFORMING THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT

*Addressing the structural causes and consequences of armed conflict.* Agreements on paper mean very little if people are still suffering from the consequences of war and if the inequities that gave rise to it are left unaddressed. Sustained financial, technical, and political commitments are necessary to transform these conditions. Determined government



efforts combined with appropriate international aid is needed to facilitate the rehabilitation of war-affected communities and help ensure that a 'peace dividend' is widely experienced. This can be strengthened through the involvement of local and international CSOs in policy analysis as well as program implementation and service delivery.

Ultimately, however, it requires government commitment to policies that will create structures and conditions that are more capable of equitably meeting the needs of all. Civil society can play an important role in generating the political will to shore up this commitment. Yet simply recreating pre-conflict structures — which for many seems the most obvious action after a war — may contribute to prolonging the conflict (or even restarting the violence) rather than solving it. Local civil society, often supported by their international partners, can play a crucial role in promoting this structural transformation over the longer term and in helping to address ongoing conflicts over developmental priorities through peaceful processes.

*Demilitarizing minds, healing psyches and fostering reconciliation.* While addressing the practical needs is imperative for sustainable peace, transforming conflict-impaired relationships can require even more complex processes that enable people to reclaim their dignity and foster empathy across conflict divides. This may involve parties fully acknowledging their responsibility for abuses they committed and taking steps to address past and continuing injustices. It also requires a shift in the attitudes that enabled and sustained the conflict; a shift from seeing the 'other' as enemy-implicitly questioning their membership in the human community — to perceiving them as fellow human beings with whom one can, at a minimum, co-exist. Although such transformation may not be necessary to ensure a formal end to war, the failure to do so can mean that underlying conflict dynamics remain unresolved, potentially creating the seeds for future discord. While governments can — and should — take a leadership role in fostering reconciliation, this involves a transformation of the 'hearts and minds' of those who have been

touched by the conflict and, as such, cannot be engineered. These changes can be triggered by the authentic initiatives of civil society actors, who rely essentially on creativity to generate experiences that allow people to connect across divides and to spark changes in perceptions. This often involves activating cultural traditions and spiritual resources that touch upon the deepest sources meaning for those affected by conflict. Civil society groups have often found ways of fostering truth-telling processes and ensuring that the past is not simply hidden behind a wall of denial. Initiatives can range from documentation projects and academic studies, to theatre and other artistic and literary projects, to memorials and symbolic or ritual expressions of grief, atonement and recognition of those who suffered. All these forms can provide access points that enable people to remember and to engage with the past.

*Disarmament, demobilization and re-integration.* Protracted armed conflict tends to militarize significant sections of the affected population. Societies are often saturated with military weapons, as well as with soldiers—sometimes including large numbers of children—whose lives have been shaped by the experience of fighting. A significant factor in the success or failure of DDR processes is the degree to which they are inspired by and respond to the ideas and needs of those involved. Prospects of success are enhanced if weapons collection programs are seen as promoting the interests and needs of community members from which the fighting forces are drawn. Local civil society actors can serve as a kind of lightning rod to elicit and implement appropriate and sustainable strategies.

*Transforming values and cultures: educating for peace.* Many CSOs aim to address sources of structural violence and to promote human security. Through participation in political processes, policy dialogue, monitoring, advocacy campaigns, and protests they help to make governments and state structures more responsive to the needs of their citizens. They can also play important roles in helping to alleviate social tensions

and conflict. They challenge racism, xenophobia and discrimination and promote tolerance and a culture of peace. Person-focused methodologies, such as prejudice reduction workshops and inter-faith dialogue, can complement efforts to address discrimination through policy reform and structural change. Often these initiatives are focused on youth, who may have greater capacities for change than older generations. Summer camps, integrated schools, and exchange programs can all promote what has become known as ‘next generation work’. People of all ages can be empowered to address conflicts from the grassroots upwards. As their knowledge and skills grow, it should become entrenched in the mainstream consciousness. One of the means of doing this is through changing norms and supporting constructive responses to conflict by systematizing peace and conflict resolution education.

### Partnerships for peace

In sum, civil society initiatives are often the source for innovative responses to conflict. While civil society as a whole is not necessarily a force for peace, the debates and initiatives cultivated by CSOs are often the motor for it. Their contribution to the underlying transformation of conflict and building peace extends from efforts to support individual development and cultivate positive norms in communities to tackling exclusionary policies, systems and structures that give rise to grievances. Ultimately, a widespread, inclusive and vibrant engagement within civic life can be the incubator for the institutions and habits needed to resolve conflict peacefully and generate more responsive and better governance needed to make peace sustainable.

While it is rare for grassroots efforts to transform wider systems of conflict and war; it is also not possible for these wider systems to be transformed without stimulating changes at the community level. Therefore many analysts and practitioners are agreed with John Paul Lederach’s observation that there is a need to build peace from the bottom-up, the top-down and the middle-out. Yet the methodologies for

crossing the scale barrier, simultaneously and in a coordinated manner, are not well developed. Therefore the key seems to be in negotiating dynamic and strategic partnerships.

Primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national governments and other local actors. Greater ownership is likely to result in a more legitimate process and sustainable outcomes. The primary role of outsiders is to create spaces and support inclusive processes that enable those directly involved to make decisions about the specific arrangements for addressing the causes of conflict. Outsiders should help to build on the capacities that exist and avoid actions that displace and undermine homegrown initiatives or that promote short-term objectives at the expense of long-term prevention. Based on a collaborative understanding of the sources of conflict and the factors that continue to generate it, people based elsewhere can seek to address some of the causes that 'located' elsewhere in the conflict system (such as arms suppliers in third countries or policies promoted by foreign governments that further escalate war).

Partnerships for peace may be the antidote to systems and networks sustaining war. Yet to achieve this potential, we need to acknowledge the legitimacy of CSOs in peace and security matters and to strengthen official recognition of their roles in the conflict prevention partnership. This can then be operationalised through stronger mechanisms and resources for interaction between IGOs, CSOs and governments in order to institutionalize the capacity for prevention.

It is likely, however, that efforts to shift to a culture of peace and to prioritize prevention over crisis management will be sustained only when there is widespread awareness amongst the general publics around the world that common security cannot be obtained through the barrel of a gun; instead, we can best work towards sustainable peace through collective efforts at meeting basic human needs and strengthening systems for managing differences peacefully.

# Civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding

*By Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk\**

## Conclusions and research hypotheses

A good understanding of civil society's roles is required when civil society aims to have an impact on peacebuilding. This is equally important for national or local civil societies and their strategies as well as for outside supporters.

This research suggests that merging the civil society discourse in democracy theory and development, with the peacebuilding discourse leads to a clearer and more focused understanding of the role of civil society in peacebuilding. In particular, applying a functionalist analytical framework is a major contribution to the current state of debate. Application of the analytical framework, based on a general literature review and information from case study research and evaluations yielded a number of results.

Six of the seven civil society functions are applied in current peacebuilding practice. However, in peacebuilding some functions are understood differently than in democratization or need adaptation for peacebuilding purposes. The service delivery function (already questioned in democracy research) has proved to be not a separate civil society function for the objective of peacebuilding. However, service delivery can

\* Excerpts from: Thania Paffenholz, Christoph Spurk, Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding, World Bank SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PAPERS Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Paper No. 36/October 2006, <http://www.worldbank.org/conflict>

*Table 1: Comparing Civil Society Functions in Democratization and Peacebuilding*

<b>Civil Society Functions Democratization</b>	<b>Understanding in Democratization</b>	<b>Civil Society Functions Peacebuilding</b>	<b>Understanding in Peacebuilding</b>	<b>Research Hypothesis on Relevance + Effectiveness in Phases of Conflict</b>
Protection	Against attacks from state against freedom, life and property	Protection	Protection against attacks from all armed actors	High relevance during armed conflict
Monitoring	Monitoring and controlling state activities and citizen's rights	Monitoring & Early Warning	Same as in democratization, plus monitoring relevant issues for early warning	High relevance during armed conflict, however only effective together with protection and communication function
Advocacy/public communication	Articulating interests and bringing relevant issues to the public agenda	Advocacy & public communication	Same as in democratization, plus participation in the peace process	High relevance in all phases of armed conflict
Socialization	Forming democratic attitudes and habits, tolerance and trust	Culture of Peace & Socialization	Attitude change for inculcating 'culture of peace' and reconciliation	Long-term effects, only important in post-conflict phase
Social Cohesion	Building social capital, bridging societal cleavages, adding to social cohesion	Conflict sensitive social cohesion	Building bridging ties across adversary groups	Relevance during armed conflict but most of all post-conflict; more effective then 'Culture of peace'
Intermediation	Balancing interests with the state	Intermediation/ Facilitation	Facilitating between all kinds of different actors, not only citizen-state	Int. involvement of CS less important; local CS involvement relevant during and after armed conflict
Service delivery	Providing basic needs oriented services to citizens (questioned).	Service delivery	Can serve as important entry point to other functions for peacebuilding in case actors are aware of potential	Not a civil society function in peacebuilding

create important entry points for civil society peacebuilding, mainly for the functions of conflict sensitive social cohesion and facilitation.

The analytical framework itself is geared toward a better understanding and analysis of the constructive roles of civil society. It does not deal with existing or potentially negative roles civil society actors might develop nor does it describe the obstacles for an enabling environment for civil society in peacebuilding. So far it does not address the timing and sequencing of civil society support, the role of different actors, and the impact of various functions on peacebuilding nor the role of external support. Detailed answers to these questions need to come from in-depth case study research. Nevertheless, this study has generated a number of insights and can also identify some obstacles for a constructive role of civil society in peacebuilding and its enabling environment.

This concluding chapter presents general conclusions from the research so far, discusses further research questions that need to be addressed in in-depth comparative country case studies.

## 1. Lessons learned and obstacles for civil society peacebuilding

*Civil society has important roles to play in peacebuilding.* Based on an analysis of civil society functions, this study concludes that civil society can make important contributions to peacebuilding in the short, medium and long run. Democracy research shows that civil society has played a crucial role in democratic transitions in Eastern Europe. The most striking result in civil society peacebuilding research shows a direct correlation between civil society involvement in peace negotiations and the sustainability of the agreement—the greater the involvement of civil society the more likely the peace agreement will be sustained. The most important civil society function in peacebuilding seems to be advocacy, particularly in terms of making the voices of civil society heard and bringing important issues to the peacebuilding agenda. Other civil society roles are also important for peacebuilding, especially human rights monitoring which contributes to the protection

of civil society, and through joint activities that can build bridging ties across divided societies.

*Beware of simple civil society enthusiasm.* The mere existence of civil society and general efforts to support it does not automatically contribute to peacebuilding. Civil society (as well as external supporters) needs to clearly identify its objectives and demonstrate the relevance of particular roles/functions in different phases of conflict/peacebuilding. Civil society support needs to be based on expected results rather than purely by good intentions. Civil society has much to contribute to peacebuilding during all phases of conflict, but where external support is provided it needs to be based on careful analysis and clear objectives.

*Current civil society support neglects understanding of civil society roles and composition.* The current practice of civil society support has an actor-oriented approach, focusing on identifying civil society groups that can support peacebuilding. The approach is mostly based on the simple hypothesis that civil society needs to be supported and will somehow contribute to peacebuilding. Instead, support needs to be based on a solid analysis of the composition and characteristics of civil society in a specific country context and the specific functions of civil society in support of peacebuilding in a given phase of conflict/peacebuilding.

*Not all civil society functions are equally effective in all phases of conflict.* It is also important to recognize that depending on the functions of civil society, these will have different priorities depending on the phases of conflict. During armed conflict or in the immediate aftermath the functions of protection, monitoring and advocacy/public communication seem to have clearly priority. Other functions, such as culture of peace, seem more long run and thus should have less priority during the early phases of peacebuilding. Nevertheless, more empirical evidence is needed to verify these preliminary findings.

*Civil society is not always good — beware of ‘uncivil’ society.* Civil society also has a dark side. Many civil society actors show uncivil behavior, preach hatred against other groups, and can incite violence. This seems to be especially likely during and in the immediate aftermath of armed



conflict, when the weakness of the state offers greater opportunities for uncivil groups to thrive. This reinforces the previous lesson on the need for sound analysis that can assess the constructive as well as the negative potential of civil society and the contexts in which they emerge.

*The role of the state is equally important.* Civil society needs a functioning state to operate effectively. During and after conflict civil society confronts a difficult enabling environment due to weakness of the state and unclear power relations and networks, or may be affected by a strong authoritarian state that suppresses civil society. In the case of a weak state, civil society support may need to focus on the enabling environment, including support to state structures and law enforcement as well as specific support to civil society functions. Support to civil society should avoid weakening the role of the state, and attempt to develop both in a way they can be mutually reinforcing. Further insights are needed on the specific features of the enabling environment that should be targeted.

*Civil society is more than NGOs.* Although NGOs have a role to play in peacebuilding and have received the most attention and support, they are not the only relevant civil society actors. The democracy discourse shows that there are many more actors that fulfill—even if only temporarily—a civil society function. Evidence from a range of countries shows that donors tend to support mainly moderate, middle class groups that often act as gate-keepers vis-à-vis other groups in society. Critical parts of civil society, such as mass movements, who may have greater representation and legitimacy, tend to be pushed aside. Donors seem to devote little effort to identifying appropriate actors, preferring instead to maintain a relationship with those they already know. In contrast, many of these new national urban NGOs often have a weak membership base, lack country-wide and balanced political or ethnic representation, and are often linked to the political establishment. Donor-driven NGO-civil society initiatives have limited the capacity to create domestic social capital, and ownership of the peace process, undermining empowerment and leaving domestic groups in a weak and

subordinate position. As Edwards states: “The number of NGOs is the easiest thing to influence, but also the least important” (2004, p. 95).

*Critical assessments of NGO peacebuilding effects.* Two key lessons emerge on NGO peacebuilding effects. First, donor support to NGOs tends to favor urban-based, and weakly representative local NGOs, crowding out space for other, often more representative, manifestations of civil society. The donor emphasis on unrepresentative NGOs and service delivery leads to a monetization of peace work, and makes NGOs accountable to their external fund providers rather than domestic constituencies. Second, NGO peace initiatives have very limited effects on macro peace processes. It was assumed that initiatives by national NGOs would automatically influence peacebuilding at the macro level, but recent studies show that only under certain conditions can peace work influence the macro peace process.

*Effectiveness and timing of various civil society functions.* The few studies on the effectiveness of peace work confirm that its success is contingent on very specific conditions. More studies are needed to gain additional insights and develop typologies. The recent focus on impact evaluation in peacebuilding, however, mainly looks at the project level of interventions without asking what kinds of civil society functions/roles can have an impact on peacebuilding in the various phases of a peace process and under different conditions

*Need for holistic view/approach.* Whether civil society can play a constructive role in peacebuilding must be based on a holistic understanding of civil society itself and the support it needs. It is not only necessary to identify the relevant civil society functions, but also to assess the composition of the civil society in question, and the conditions and obstacles that affect its enabling environment, including the behavior of potential or existing uncivil society and the role of the state.

# Peacebuilding toolkit



## About This Series

Working with a wide array of partners from non-governmental organizations, governments, militaries, international organizations, and the private sector, the United States Institute of Peace is helping develop common doctrine, frameworks, and methodologies in support of peacebuilding. This is part of a series of Strategic Frameworks that the Institute is helping to craft, the first of which was USIP's Framework for Success: Fragile States and Societies Emerging from Conflict.

## About USIP

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan, national institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase conflict management capacity and tools. The Institute does this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by directly engaging in peacebuilding efforts around the globe.



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## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: Preventing Violent Conflict

Few would contest that preventing violent conflicts is preferable to managing their consequences. Indeed, conflict prevention is now frequently affirmed as a goal in settings as diverse as the UN General Assembly, the U.S. National Security Council, and gatherings of grassroots NGOs. Accordingly, several governments, international organizations, and NGOs have taken steps to enhance their institutional capacities for prevention. Despite tangible progress, practitioners still lack common frameworks for thinking systematically about how to design and implement prevention strategies. To help fill this gap, USIP has developed the enclosed strategic framework. It is designed to be useful to a wide range of conflict prevention practitioners—from policymakers to local field workers.

This framework is organized around a desired end state, key objectives, and leadership responsibilities.

The framework describes the desired end state as “stable peace.” This does not mean the absence of disputes. The airing of differences can lead to positive change if properly handled. Thus, the goal of this framework is not the avoidance of conflict, but rather the avoidance of violent conflict.

The core of the framework is found in the key objectives. These are divided into three broad, potentially complementary preventive strategies—mitigate global risks, mitigate societal risks, halt and reverse escalation—and a series of objectives under each.

The critical leadership responsibilities identify several cross-cutting themes about the ingredients of successful prevention strategies. These underscore significant challenges, including the need to prepare in advance of crises, to plan and coordinate multifaceted strategies involving a diverse set of actors, and to ensure that short- and long-term strategies are complementary.

This strategic framework should not be mistaken for a checklist or a “one-size-fits-all” template for preventing conflict. For a strategy to succeed in any given circumstance, it must be tailored to the specific context and dynamics as described in a thorough conflict analysis. The relevance of each of the broad strategies and corresponding objectives must be assessed in each specific case.

This framework was informed by a wide review of scholarly literature and practitioner tools on conflict prevention including the UN Secretary-General’s report on the prevention of armed conflict (2006), the UK Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit’s Investing in Prevention (2005), the OECD Development Assistance Committee’s Ministerial Statement on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict (2001), the European Union’s Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict (2001), and the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict’s final report (1997). Earlier drafts were refined based on comments from internal and external reviewers.

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DESIRED END-STATE	STABLE PEACE		
KEY OBJECTIVES	Mitigate global risks*	Mitigate societal risks	Halt and reverse escalation of crises
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Manage demographic change</li> <li>♦ Reduce environmental pressures</li> <li>♦ Ensure stability of international monetary system and markets</li> <li>♦ Restrict illicit financial networks</li> <li>♦ Remove incentives for illicit trafficking in narcotics</li> <li>♦ Establish effective regulations on extractive industries</li> <li>♦ Restrict availability of small arms and light weapons</li> <li>♦ Control WMD materials</li> <li>♦ Strengthen respect for universal human rights</li> </ul> <p>*Global risks can also be addressed at the regional and societal/national levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Support stable security environment (e.g., reform security forces, engage in multilateral security structures)</li> <li>♦ Strengthen rule of law (e.g., support legitimate legal framework; reform police, judiciary, corrections; support legal empowerment)</li> <li>♦ Support effective governance (e.g., build capacity and accountability of governing institutions; support elections; support independent civil society, free and responsible media)</li> <li>♦ Stimulate equitable economic growth (e.g., reduce gross economic inequalities, promote inter-communal economic ties)</li> <li>♦ Promote social well being (e.g., support health services; promote human rights, non-discrimination)</li> <li>♦ Promote understanding and cooperation across identity groups (e.g., help identify superordinate goals, facilitate power sharing, support peace education)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Facilitate cooperative problem solving among parties (e.g., via mediation, good offices, dispute resolution mechanisms, crisis management systems)</li> <li>♦ Alter parties' incentive structures in favor of peaceful solutions (e.g., via conditional incentives, threat of sanctions/force, public diplomacy/pressure, engagement of additional parties)</li> <li>♦ Strengthen moderates, manage "spoilers" (e.g., via assistance, inducements, conditional integration, threats/coercion)</li> <li>♦ Restrict capacity of parties to wage war (e.g., via arms embargoes, targeted economic sanctions, preventive military deployment)</li> <li>♦ Protect civilians (e.g., via human rights monitoring, observer missions, effective policing)</li> </ul>

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES	<b>Institutional capacity and preparedness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Build preventive capacity (in domestic, regional, and global institutions)</li> <li>♦ Build a “culture of prevention” (in domestic, regional, and global institutions)</li> <li>♦ Obtain necessary resources</li> </ul> <b>Prioritization and planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Monitor risks and provide early warning</li> <li>♦ Set priorities based on likelihood and consequences of conflict</li> <li>♦ Plan multifaceted preventive strategies tailored to specific locations based on (1) stage of escalation, (2) conflict dynamics, (3) interests and capabilities of the disputants, and (4) interests and capabilities of third parties</li> </ul>	<b>Timing and coordination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Mobilize preventive action early (anytime significant risk factors are exhibited) and with greater intensity and urgency as soon as signs of escalation toward large-scale violence appear</li> <li>♦ Coordinate preventive measures across types of actors (e.g., government, military, NGOs, IOs)</li> <li>♦ Coordinate preventive measures vertically among local, national, regional, and international actors</li> <li>♦ Coordinate preventive measures across sectors (e.g., security, governance, legal, economic, civil society, humanitarian)</li> <li>♦ Ensure short- and long-term preventive measures are complementary</li> </ul>
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# The great riddance

## Opinion

*By Achille Mbembe\**

Once more, something extremely troubling is taking place at the heart of Europe. Unmistakably, an ever-increasing multitude of voices are making themselves heard. Spurred on by the strength of fellow living souls, human chains of solidarity are forming. In the darkness of fear and denunciation, and faced with unrelenting waves of repression, compassionate men and women seek to awaken the sleeping fireflies of hospitality and solidarity.

In the midst of an otherwise troubling anaesthesia, an active minority is taking a stance. With renewed vigour they seek to denounce acts carried out in their name against the Other—who, it is claimed, is not one of us.

### What is going on?

Forced from their homes, millions of desperate men, women and children have set out on paths of exodus. Another great cycle of repopulation is taking place in the world.

However, these people are not deserters. They are fugitives. Threatened by one calamity or another, they have escaped their places of birth and childhood—places where they lived, but which one day became uninhabitable, impossible abodes.

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In response to this great upheaval, familiar, well-rehearsed refrains sound out in unison. “Demographic explosion.” “Armed conflicts.” “The rise of religious extremism.” “Gold rush to Europe.” “The migrant crisis.” “Why are they coming here?” “They should just stay put.”

Propping up the fable of “foreign aid”, there are many who still believe in fairy tales. Despite the fact that, between 1980 and 2009, net transfers of financial resources from Africa to the rest of the world reached the threshold of approximately \$1 400-billion, and illicit transfers totalled \$1 350-billion, the belief somehow holds firm: the countries of the North subsidise those of the South.

Besides, it seems to count for little that the countries with weak or intermediate gross domestic product have welcomed more than 90% of the 65.6-million refugees currently displaced and uprooted in the world.

In this sector, as in others, an era of fantasy and closed-mindedness is upon us. Old prejudices are constantly recycled from the scrap heap, and in a cyclical process typical of racist discourses, new fantasies are suggested. “It’s both cultural and civilisational,” proclaim the erudite pseudo-experts. “They are fleeing because of tensions between generations.”

“The poorer they are, the more likely they are to leave, but as their condition of life improves, their desire to live elsewhere grows.”

From the depths of the shadows, an old spectre returns to haunt people’s minds with invasions of hordes from overpopulated lands — countries “where women still give birth to seven or eight each”.

## The solution?

We must close the borders. Filter those who make it across them. Process them. Choose who we want to remain. Deport the rest. Sign contracts with corrupt elites from the countries of origin, transition countries.

They must be turned into the prison guards of the West, to whom the lucrative business of administering brutality can be subcontracted.

These states must become the protectorates of Europe — at once prisons for those seeking to leave, and dumping grounds for those it would

be better to rid ourselves of. And above all, we must make Europeans want to have more children. This is the essence of the cornerstone of European migratory policy at the start of this century.

## Borders and borderisation

In truth, the problem is not the migrants, nor the refugees, nor the asylum seekers.

Borders. Everything begins with them, and all paths lead back to them.

They are no longer merely a line of demarcation separating distinct sovereign entities. Increasingly, they are the name used to describe the organised violence that underpins both contemporary capitalism and our world order in general—the women, the men and the unwanted children condemned to abandonment; the shipwrecks and drownings of hundreds, indeed thousands—weekly; the endless waiting and humiliation in consulates, in limbo; days of woe spent wandering in airports, in police stations, in parks, in stations, then down on to the city pavements, where as night falls, blankets and rags are snatched from people who have already been stripped and deprived of almost everything, bare bodies debased by a lack of water, hygiene and sleep.

In short, an image of humanity on a road to ruin.

In fact, everything leads back to borders—these dead spaces of non-connection that deny the very idea of a shared humanity, of a planet—the only one we have, that we share together, and to which we are linked by the ephemerality of our common condition. But perhaps, to be completely exact, we should speak not of borders but instead of “borderisation”.

What then is this borderisation, if not the process by which world powers permanently transform certain spaces into places impassable for certain classes of populations? What is it about, if not the conscious multiplication of spaces of loss and mourning, where the lives of a multitude of people judged to be undesirable come to be shattered?

What is it, if not a way of waging war against enemies whose means of existence and survival we have previously destroyed—with the use

of uranium warheads and banned weapons such as white phosphorus, with high-altitude bombardment of basic infrastructures, with a cocktail of cancerous chemical substances deposited in the soil, which fill the air, the toxic dust in the ruins of towns razed to the ground, the pollution from burning hydrocarbons?

And what should we say about the bombs? In the last quarter of the 20th century, are there any types of bomb to which civilian populations have not been subjected?

Conventional blind bombs, reconverted with central inertial systems in the tail, cruise missiles with inbuilt infrared head-hunting systems, e-bombs destined to paralyse the enemy's electronic nerve centres, bombs that explode in towns emitting rays of energy like lightning bolts, other e-bombs that, though not deadly, burn their victims and raise the temperature of their skin, thermobaric bombs that release walls of fire, absorbing all the oxygen from surrounding spaces, which kill with shockwaves, asphyxiating nearly everything that breathes, cluster bombs that devastate civilian populations as they break up in the air, dispersing mini-munitions designed to explode upon contact over vast areas, a plethora of bombs, absurd demonstrations of untold destructive power. In short, ecocide.

Under such conditions, is it at all surprising that those who can, the survivors of a living hell, take flight, and seek refuge in any corner of the world where their lives might be spared?

This kind of war of attrition—methodically calculated and programmed, and implemented with new methods—is a war against the very ideas of mobility, circulation and speed, and the age we live in is precisely one of velocity, acceleration, increasing abstraction and algorithms.

Moreover, the targets of this kind of warfare are not by any means singular bodies, but rather great swaths of humanity judged worthless and superfluous, whose every organ must be specifically incapacitated in a way that affects generations to come—eyes, noses, mouths, ears, tongues, skin, bones, lungs, intestines, blood, hands, legs, all these maimed people, paralytics and survivors, all these pulmonary diseases

such as pneumoconiosis, all these traces of uranium in their hair, the thousands of cases of cancer, abortions, foetal malformations, birth defects, ruptured thoraxes, dysfunctions of the nervous system—all bear witness to a terrible devastation.

All of the above, it is worth repeating, belongs to the current practice of remote borderisation—carried out from afar, in the name of freedom and security. This battle, waged against certain undesirables, reducing them to mounds of human flesh, is rolled out on a global scale. It is on the verge of defining the times in which we live.

## Human meat and the manhunt

Often this battle either precedes, accompanies or completes the campaigns that take place among us, or at our doors—namely the tracking of those bodies who made the mistake of moving.

Movement, incidentally, is the very essence of human bodies, but these bodies are assumed to have illegally broken into certain spaces and places where they should never have been—places that they now pollute by their presence alone, and from which they must be expelled.

As the philosopher Elsa Dorlin has suggested in *Se Defendre: Une Philosophie de la Violence* (Self-Defence: A History of Violence), this form of violence sets its sights on a prey. It bears a likeness to the great hunts of yesteryear, to both fox hunting and trapping, and their respective techniques—research, pursuit, entrapment before driving the prey to the point where it is surrounded, captured or killed with the aid of foxhounds and bloodhounds.

But it also belongs to a long history of manhunts. Grégoire Chamayou has studied the modalities of these in his book *Les Chasses à l'Homme* (Manhunts). The targets are always roughly the same: maroon slaves, Red Indians, blacks, Jews, the stateless, the poor and, more recently, the homeless.

These hunts target animated, living bodies, bodies that are mobile, fugitive and endowed with a presence and intensity, yet that are marked

and ostracised to the extent that they are no longer thought of as bodies of flesh and blood like our own.

What's more, this hunt is rolled out at a moment in which the acceleration of technologies shows no sign of relenting, creating a segmented planet of multiple speeds.

The technological transformation of borders is in full swing. Physical and virtual barriers of separation, digitisation of databases, filing systems, the development of new tracking devices, sensors, drones, satellites and sentinel robots, infrared detectors and various other cameras, biometric controls, and new micro chips containing personal details, everything is put in place to transform the very nature of the border phenomenon, and to speed up the implementation of this new type of border — one that is mobile, portable and omnipresent.

## Confinement and cleansing

Migrants and refugees are thus not, as it stands, the main focus of the argument. Furthermore, they have neither proper names nor faces, and possess no identity cards.

They are merely a kind of hollowed-out entity, walking vaults concealed by a multitude of organs, empty yet menacing forms in which we seek to bury the fantasies of an age terrified by itself and of its own excess.

The dream of perfect security, which requires not only complete systematic surveillance, but also a cleansing policy, is symptomatic of the structural tensions that, for decades, have accompanied our transition into a new technical system of increased automation — one that is increasingly complex yet also increasingly abstract, comprised of multiple screens — digital, algorithmic, even mystical.

The world has ceased to present itself to us in the old terms. We are witnessing the birth of a previously unseen form of the human subject/object relationship, as well as the emergence of new ways of conceiving space. The phenomenological experiences that we hold of the world are

being thoroughly shaken up. Reason and perception cease to match up. Panic ensues.

We see less and less of what is given to us to see, and more and more of what we desperately want to see, even if what we desperately want to see does not correspond to any given reality.

Perhaps more than ever before, others can present themselves to us in a physical and tactile way, while remaining in ghostly absence in a similarly concrete void, almost as phenomenon. This is indeed the case with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. It is not only the way in which they appear among us that plunges us into a chronic, existential anxiety. It is also the matrix of their being, of which we suppose they are merely the mask, that plunges us into a state of agitation and radical uncertainty. After all, what really lies behind what we can see?

In an increasingly balkanised and isolated world, where are the most deadly migrant routes? Europe! Who claims the largest number of skeletons and the largest marine cemetery in this century? Europe! The greatest number of deserts, territorial and international waters, channels, islands, straits, enclaves, canals, rivers, ports and airports transformed into iron curtain technologies? Europe! And to top it all off, in these times of permanent escalation — the camps. The return of camps. A whole Europe of camps. Samos, Chios, Lesbos, Idomeni, Lampedusa, Vintimille, Sicile, Subotica, the list goes on.

Refugee camps? Camps for displaced people? Migrant camps? Waiting rooms for people in process? Transit zones? Detention centres? Emergency accommodation centres? Jungle? Composite, heterogeneous landscapes, certainly.

Let us sum up all of the above in a single phrase, the only one that paints a truthful picture of what is going on: camps for foreigners. In the end, that's all they are. Camps for foreigners, both in the heart of Europe and at its borders. This is the only suitable name for these devices and for the kind of penitentiary geography that they serve to enforce.

Some years ago, the anthropologist Michel Agier counted some 400 such camps at the heart of the European Union. This was before the

great influx of 2015. Since then, new camps and new sorting infrastructures have been created both in Europe and on her borders, and on her insistence, in developing countries. In 2011, this array of detention spaces contained up to 32 000 people. In 2016 the total grew to 47 000. The detainees are simply people without visas or leave to remain, judged ineligible for international protection.

Essentially, they are places of internment, spaces of relegation, a way to sideline people considered to be intruders, lacking valid permits, rendering them illegal, and ultimately undeserving of dignity.

Fleeing their worlds of places rendered uninhabitable, persecuted both at home and from afar, they have come to be in places where they were never supposed to be without invitation, and where their presence is undesired.

It is very difficult to claim that rounding them up and sidelining them in this way is being done in their best interests. After detaining them in camps, placing them in limbo and stripping them of any human rights status, the aim is to turn them into objects that can be deported, stopped in their tracks, even destroyed.

It must be repeated that this war—which aims to hunt down, capture, round up, process, segregate and deport—has only one end-goal.

It is not so much about cutting Europe off from the rest of the world or turning it into an impenetrable fortress, but rather to grant Europeans alone the privilege of the rights to possession and free movement across the whole of the planet—a planet on which, in truth, we should all have the same entitlement.

Will the 21<sup>st</sup> century prove to be the century of assessment and selection on the bias of security technologies?

From the confines of the Sahara, across the Mediterranean, the camps are once more on their way to becoming the last step in a certain European project, a certain idea of Europe in the world, its macabre emblem, just as was foretold by Aimé Césaire only too recently in his *Discourse on Colonialism*.

One of the major contradictions of liberal order has always been the tension between freedom and security. Today, this question seems to have been cut in two. Security now matters more than freedom.

A society of security is not necessarily a society of freedom. A society of security is a society dominated by the irrepressible need for adhesion to a collection of certainties. It is one fearful of the type of interrogation that delves into the unknown, unearthing the risks that must surely be contained within.

This is why, in a society of security, the priority is, at all costs, to identify what lurks behind each new arrival—who is who, who lives where, with whom and since when, who does what, who comes from where, who is going where, when, how, why, and so on and so forth.

And moreover, who plans to carry out which acts, either consciously or unconsciously. The aim of a society of security is not to affirm freedom, but to control and govern the modes of arrival.

The current myth claims that technology constitutes the best tool for governing these arrivals, that technology alone allows for the resolution of this problem: a problem of order, but also of awareness, of identifiers, of anticipation and predictions.

It is feared that the dream of a humanity transparent to itself, stripped of mystery, might prove to be a catastrophic illusion. For the time being, migrants and refugees are bearing the brunt of it. In the long run, it is by no means certain that they will be the only ones.

Under such conditions, how else might we resist the claim by one province of the world to a universal right of predation, if not by daring to imagine the impossible—the abolition of borders, that is to say, giving all inhabitants of the Earth (human and nonhuman alike) the inalienable right to freedom of movement on this planet?



# Art, an instrument of emancipation for peace

By Marilyn Douala Manga Bell\*

“What are Human rights?” This question is represented in a painting on drawing paper by a pupil of the Bilingual Lycée in Bepanda produced during a painting workshop in January 2017, organised by **doual’art** and run by artists. Some classmates also agreed to express their feelings — hopes, doubts and frustrations — after being invited to look around them, at their surroundings, the areas of rights and non-rights.

Within the framework of SUD2017 — the Douala Urban Salon festival — the theme of which was *The Place of the Human*, the “Human Rights Path in Douala” project was implemented, with the support of Bread for the World.



\*President of doual’art

A two-year process in 2015–2017 incited young people from three schools and two popular neighbourhoods in the city of Douala to take a careful look at their environment and especially to create platforms for public dialogue and for listening to the young people express themselves on their rights, the ones dear to their hearts and that concern them, in a social and political context where no one pays any attention to them.

The challenge was to place young people at the heart of the process. The idea was to stimulate their awareness of the place they can/must occupy in society and develop their capacities for dialogue on themes and subjects crucial for peace. A peace that can only be built through peaceful relations with others, even in the midst of discord or divergences. Learning to exchange serenely, to put forward an argument and defend ideas without the use of verbal or physical violence!

The process described below was based on a fundamental concept: in the communication and highly mediated era we live in, the plastic arts (photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, etc.) lend great visibility and legibility to discourse that can reach an extremely wide audience. The process took place in several stages.

## How do you engage young people and encourage them to talk? ...

By trial and error, gradually, it seemed obvious to us that to talk about history with a capital H was the best way to open the door. An exhibition about the birth of Cameroon as a territory with borders and a nation endowed with legislation: any pupil with this subject in their curriculum would surely like to be involved.

And so the Kamerunstadt exhibition was mounted and put on in the three secondary schools and two neighbourhoods. Open to all, it was very well received, in particular by certain history teachers who admitted to discovering whole segments of history they had been unaware of! Hence the exchanges and dialogues channelled by academic historians and legal experts able to widen the horizon on colonial domina-

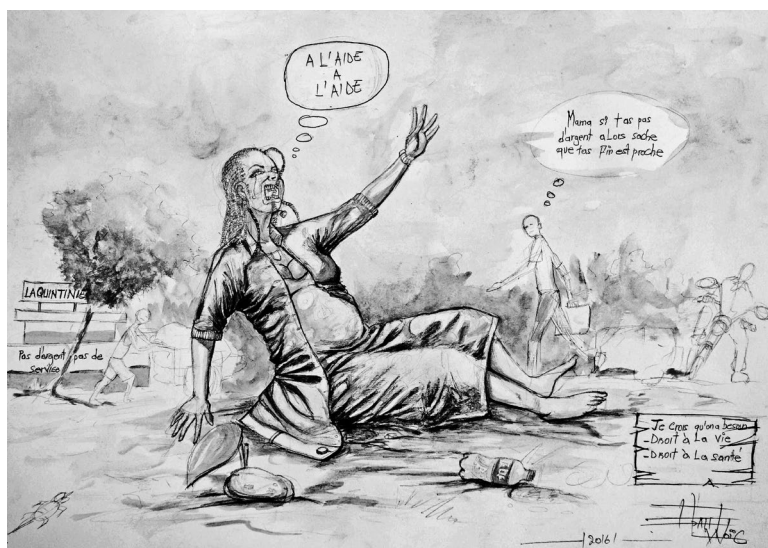
tions and their motivations and, above all, on the respect (or violation) of rights. It is easier to speak of time periods other than our contemporary world.

The artists entered the scene to run painting or theatre workshops, encouraging the participants to represent their understanding of the historical facts, resistances and violations of rights. Exhibitions of the results of the workshops were shown in each establishment and plays were put on in the neighbourhoods.

In each school, around the exhibition, the pupils were invited to present their drawing or painting, explain their choice of event or figure, placing emphasis on the question of rights.

And the magic worked!

Initially very intimidated to speak in front of an audience of strangers, that is to say the pupils from the other schools and their teachers, invited to join the audience, the young orators took command and gained the ability to defend their choices, the shapes, colours ... and speak of the rights violated during the colonial period.



On the strength of their success at having overcome their fear, some pupils then asked if they could express their feelings about their world today.

Hence a second workshop was organised, this time devoted to the portrayal of the rights dear to their hearts, that concern them directly.

... This liberated speech could not remain confined to their world of adolescence! ...

They were prolific artists!

The young people threw themselves into the drawing, painting and theatre as if they were clutching a life belt! They created visual forms and were more at ease talking about it than writing about it. And they painted themselves. And they painted us. They illustrated the Declarations and other Charters supposed to mark out the way we live together. New friendships were struck up; new dialogues. They talked to each other, commented on interreligious marriage which should be a right, the tensions between French and English speakers which could be attenuated if there were real mediation, etc.



This effervescence could not remain confined to the interpersonal, of course already transversal between establishments and teachers, but this is not enough.

On the occasion of the youth festival on 11 February 2017, **doual'art** allowed youth to speak.

In front of the authorities, adults, representatives of civil society brought together in a city hall, the young people were now invited to

show their painterly expressions and speak of their aspirations for a fairer society more respectful of rights, of their rights: a healthy/sanitary environment, social security, the right to free entertainment, education ... They dared to show and speak. They didn't want to come down from the podium. At last they had a platform. They were listened to ... questioned ... and they challenged ...

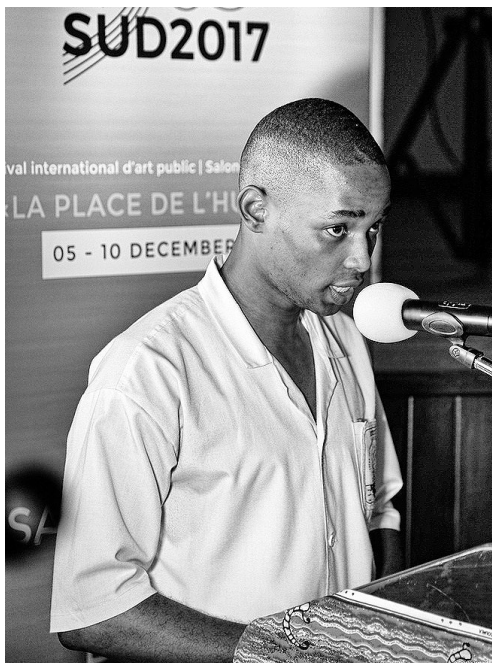


Feeling fulfilled with this exercise, they are now obliged to leave traces. And this is the work of wall frescos in their schools, in order to share with a maximum amount of people in their environment. In the neighbourhoods, this is the time for performing the plays on the themes chosen by the children themselves. In front of a very wide audience.

Finally, in December, the apotheosis, with strong, dignified speeches before the Government Delegate and numerous authorities.

They finally existed!







... This liberated speech must continue ...

On the occasion of the SUD2017 festival, from 5 to 10 December, it was the turn of the artists to inaugurate artistic projects to make the words of the young people last, to enable this young generation to define itself and carry on ...

Artist Eric Goengrich, with his work "*The arena of Humanity and the right to business*", created an arena inside the bilingual Lycée of Bepanda where the children are asked to think out loud about their chosen future occupations. Who takes the trouble here and now to help children to lift the veil on this or that profession...? and therefore to overcome their fears for the future!

Artist Jean-Jacques Kanté, with "*Partage de différences*", offers the Journal Club the possibility of collecting the writings of fellow pupils.

Artist Mustapha Akrim incites the head of the Technical Lycée to commit to civic education lessons under his piece called "*Article 1*".

Artist Hervé Yamguen vulgarises the articles of the Charter on the Rights of the Child, with "*Les Chaises de la Dignité*" and circulates a poster through primary school pupils who are very proud to hand them over to their parents, with comments.

Artist Jean-David Nkot installs on a façade of a busy street an excerpt from the speech made by Ruben Um Nyobe in 1952 at the United Nations to denounce the divide between Anglophones and Francophones in a single country, with all the risks of compromising a serene future in Cameroon.

... 15 artistic projects, all different, but which engage the artists and the audiences to not remain indifferent to their individual and collective responsibility regarding the quality of collective life and mutual respect.



## By way of a conclusion

As described above, the process seems simple.

And it perfectly gave the results hoped for.

But it was necessary to confront real difficulties of obtaining authorisations, at individual and domestic level (the parents) and institutional level!

The major question of the competing jurisdictions of the traditional authorities and the representatives of the State (municipality, decentralised services, local authorities, etc.) on decisions concerning public space, the right to speak loud and clear of the traumatism of history was raised during the destruction of “Forgiveness”, the work by Sylvie Blocher.

What we finally remember is the capacity of culture to reign in violent instincts, allow space for peaceful relations, even when here and there tense or even aggressive relations exist. This two-year process has shown that it is possible to promote human dignity and ensure its respect.

Photo credits: doual’art, by Linda Dreisen, Yves Makongo

# **Traditional chiefs, religious leaders and civil society: Peace capacities in the crisis in Cameroon?**

*By Flaubert Djabateng\**

## **Historical background and current situation**

At the end of 2016, strikes and violence erupted in the English-speaking regions of Northwest and Southwest Cameroon. It all started from the discontent of teachers and lawyers in response to the compulsory use of French in the schools, courts and other public institutions. The government's response did not appease the situation and a separatist movement then took hold of the affair and demanded independence for the English-speaking parts of Cameroon under the name of Ambazonia. It should be remembered that the State of Cameroon was originally formed in stages: colonised by Germany in 1885, occupied by France and England after the defeat of Germany in World War I, placed under the trusteeship of France and England, independence of the part under French administration, reunification with the part under British administration into a federal state and the advent of the unified State. For almost a century two regions, the Northwest, where the main town is Bamenda and the Southwest with Buéa as the main town were run under an Anglophone cultural system — language, education, and judiciary — inspired by the British system. The demands of the teachers and lawyers were added fuel to the English-speaking community's decades-long feeling of having been abandoned and exploited. It should be

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pointed out that the first oil wells were discovered in the Southwest but neither the local population living in proximity nor the wider Southwest region shared in the revenues of the oil extracted by French companies.

To date, the course of events has been continuously escalating. Each day that passes, Cameroonians are killed, civilians and soldiers, women and children are not spared. Since the Cameroon authorities, in liaison with neighbouring Nigeria, arrested the separatist leaders and triggered actions to counter the partisans of the division of the country, we have observed the emergence of some very active pro-secessionist groups. The latter strive by any means to prevent the running of the administration, the schools and are paralysing economic activities. They do not hesitate to kidnap the authorities and public figures, destroy buildings and schools, attack and kill the security forces. The government responds with force: brutal repression of the demonstrations, imposition of the state of emergency, restriction of circulation; the armed groups are hunted and their members killed. In this hatred, the practices of the soldiers go beyond the permitted limits and are condemned by the human rights organisations. The confusion between peaceful citizens and pro-separatist extremists reinforces the feeling of frustration and increases popular support for the ideology of the secessionists.

Numerous initiatives and voices have been raised to demand that the killing stop. In September 2018, at the start of the new school year, groups of women, the majority from the Churches, assembled on the public squares in Buea and Bamenda to demand peace and an end to the killing. They were carrying stems of *Draceana*, commonly known as “the peace lily” and used in mediation ceremonies and other customary acts requiring an agreement between players in conflict and peace in the communities.

The months of August and September 2018 saw a rise in the violence tainted with unparalleled cruelty. It is clear that the separatists want to profit from the pre-electoral context to make a mark. On 7 October 2018, presidential elections will take place in Cameroon. The secessionists are also surfing on the popular discontent aroused by the long reign of cur-

rent President Paul Biya, and bolster the bitterness of the Anglophone population which feels abandoned and, even worse, exploited. This rise in violence is a serious concern and everyone is wondering what will happen. In a word, the climate is toxic and the population is worried; the government refuses all initiatives towards dialogue, arguing that there is no dialogue possible with people engaged in killing and determined to split the country. The media are not left out; on 30 May 2018, *The Washington Post* announced that the next civil war in Africa would be in Cameroon. This type of alarm cry from outside the borders reinforces the theses of plotting by foreign elements, the principal argument often put forward by the government.

## What can we do?

For the organisations and people committed to peace, this situation raises not only questions, but also the necessity of finding ways out of this quagmire. We wonder who could do what at this time? And if an institution or a stakeholder did have the potential to intervene, which factors should they act upon?

Organisations such as International Crisis Group (ICG) have mentioned in the past the Roman Catholic **Church** as the only organisation capable of working to end this crisis. There are other churches, such as the Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Convention, which have tried to propose ways out for the protagonists of the conflict.

Before colonisation and currently, Cameroon is structured in so-called traditional **Chiefdoms**. Although devoid of a part of their power, the monarch that lead these chiefdoms still have a hold on the lives of the citizens, but could they play a role in stopping the crisis? Very often we speak of **civil society** as an independent actor present for the citizens. This presence confers on it a legitimacy that can be useful in situations such as the one the population of Cameroon is experiencing. The **international community** is also mentioned, with players such as the United Nations and its various branches supported by a legal and mili-

tary system of volunteer countries to step in between the belligerents or perform mediation.

At the level of the international community, multiple voices have joined those of the organisations, countries and embassies, to propose an inclusive dialogue to encompass all the belligerents. France, with cautious and secret diplomacy, has been scarcely visible since the start of this conflict. The ambassador of the United States made a controversial statement regarding the President's reign, and condemned the violence perpetrated by both sides. Discussions were held on the forms of organisation of the State that could offer a potential in the search for answers to the demands and reduce the feeling of frustration of the population. In the debates, federalism has been opposed to decentralisation as a viable alternative to the secession the separatists wish to impose. Cameroonians living abroad, such as Achille Mbembe, have made public their concerns, while emphasising the dangerous abuses of the current situation.

## Churches and faiths: potential and limits

More than a third of the population of Cameroon are members of a Christian Church. The church is a heavyweight player with respect to its missions and the services it provides. In a number of communities, education, health and drinking water are the work of the Christian faiths. There are platforms and institutions that facilitate the meeting of Christian and other faith communities such as Islam, which offers a real potential. But it has to be said that since the beginning of this crisis, the Christian Churches and especially the priests and pastors have shown themselves to be much divided on the question. The Church leaders, depending on their geographic positions or according to whether they are Anglophone or Francophone, have had different positions, sometimes opposed to those of their fellows in the same congregation. Certain leaders, in particular from the Roman Catholic Church, have come out very openly in favour of secession, thereby diminishing their medi-

ation potential. Furthermore, the government is suing the moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, the executive president of the Cameroon Baptist Convention and certain Anglophone Catholic bishops, arguing that their positions were favourable to the closure of the schools, reducing this to a pro-separatist stance.

Despite these difficulties, the Church remains a stakeholder with a potential to be exploited. All that is needed is courage and serenity to get together around constructive proposals. The leaders who take the current constraints into account and commit to pulling the country out of the crisis will have served the entire population of the country as a whole. A general conference, at the initiative of Cardinal Tumi with the Imams of the Mosques in Buea and Bamenda, and the leader of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, was scheduled for August and postponed till November 2018, with the aims of choosing the spokespersons for the population groups within the framework of a national dialogue. The prior cease fire demanded on both the side of the defence forces and that of the secessionists was not respected at all.

## The traditional chiefs: changes and possible ways forward

The traditional chiefs have always been treated with suspicion by the colons and today by the power in place. Due to their charisma and the consideration they enjoy from the population, the chiefs have the capacity to constitute effective forces of opposition against the authorities. The latter have brought into play laws and other legal mechanisms to reduce the influence of the traditional chiefs. In the past these chiefs held positions related to justice, tax collection, the mobilisation of funds for basic services (education, health, roads, etc.) and many other things. Today all these powers have been removed from them. Then, they have suffered pressure on the part of the current government and to continue to exist practically all the chiefs have had to ally themselves with the party in power. This survival approach adopted by the chiefs has not been to their benefit overall. Most have lost their credibility in the eyes

of the population. Their political role has become partisan and this has been shown during this crisis. In January 2017, the traditional chiefs of the Northwest wrote to the President of the Republic to demand the release of the people arrested during the crisis in order to relax the atmosphere and create the conditions for dialogue; those of the Southwest sent a motion of support to the President by way of an answer. The strong bond that remains between the chiefs and the population is to be found in the cultural spheres (traditional rites, customs, guardian of the cultural symbols that represent the identity of the peoples, etc.).

The current crisis has been very trying for the traditional chiefs in the Southwest and Northwest. They are the target of the separatists in the English-speaking regions, because they see them as the representatives of power. Some have been kidnapped and tortured; at least ten of them have even been killed. Several chiefs have had to abandon their villages because they feared for their lives. At the level of the French-speaking chiefs, there is an observable silence that astonishes the analysts. In Cameroon there are institutions whose aim is to represent the interests of the traditional chiefs. The attitude of the Francophone chiefs and their institutions shows a lack of solidarity on their part with respect to their peers in the Anglophone regions. While the cultural links that maintain the relation between the population and the chiefs make them potential players in the search for solutions to this crisis, this opportunity is weakened by the fact that there is no space to meet and discuss the question, no sharing of the values that create solidarity in situations like the prevailing one.

### Civil society: overwhelmed and fragmented

Civil society is practically overwhelmed by this crisis. It is difficult to perceive its place and even its role. The first players who claimed to be part of civil society and interested in this unpleasant situation were mostly Anglophones with very close ties to the frustrated Cameroonians abroad. With opposite positions to those of the government, their

movement was banned very early on and the leaders arrested. Two civil society groups stood out and voiced their opinion or printed it during the crisis. First of all the **unions** who were able to meet the government and this led to measures which have not yet been implemented. Then **Human rights** organisations. On the side of the separatists, they deplored the burning, closures of schools and markets, kidnapping, torture and killings, intimidations and barbaric acts. On the side of the government, the abusive use of force, torture, the burning of houses and villages, the indiscriminate killing of young people, all lumped in with the secessionists, the brutality towards peaceful citizens, etc. But they did not instigate any action in the direction of overcoming the crisis. We can mention a few workshops aimed at understanding what is happening, such as those organised by the Civil Peace Service, which has the merit of putting the partners from the Anglophone areas and the Francophone areas together. As with the traditional chiefs, the general attitude of the Francophone civil society organisations is unsettling. On the one hand, there are those who are silent and do nothing. On the other, those who are not aware of what is at stake in the crisis and who confuse it with the problems of governance, development or political performance encountered all over the country.

## The obstacles to fruitful intervention and small steps to envisage

It is clear that before the elections in October 2018 useful action will be difficult or even impossible. But beyond this deadline, the major obstacles to a way out of the crisis seem to be the divisions and disagreements within the faiths, the chiefdoms and civil society. The whole country is highly divided by this crisis and it is in relation to this that we must act.

How can trust be instigated and nourished among the different groups?

Even tiny steps within the various groups of legitimate players, such as the meetings around the Civil Peace Service—where Francophones



and Anglophones come together—can push forward mutual trust if they create an atmosphere of frankness and mutual respect. The conference scheduled by Cardinal Tumi, the Imams of Buea and Bamenda, with the Presbyterian Church could also be a step forward.

In view of the violence that is currently rampant, the displacement of the population inside the country or towards neighbouring Nigeria, and given the growing polarisation, we may say that the dialogue options as proposed, even with good mediators, have little chance of success. How can the stakeholders find the capacity to own the question together and develop a strategy that allows them to review the past, identify the questions that have been answered and those that have not yet been addressed? Is it possible to have a strategy and people capable of opening a public consultation which brings closer together a people that is currently divided? How can we find the subjects that will reconcile and decrease the topics that separate? What systems can be used for communicating, coming together, exchanging and seeking the points of convergence and divergence? Religious leaders, traditional chiefs and civil society, if they succeed in overcoming their internal constraints, would have the potential to resolve this crisis. They possess the organisations and legitimacy among the population which could be exploited in this direction. We must try not to fool ourselves; this will take time.

*Bafoussam, September 2018*

# Community media are in a perfect position to facilitate dialogue among players in a conflict

*Interview by Alexander Vojvoda\**

*Professor Steven Youngblood<sup>1</sup> is Director of the Centre for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Parkville/US. Since 2017 the Centre for Global Peace Journalism collaborates with the CPS project of the Communication Department of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) and the Cameroon Community Media Network (CCMN; [www.communitymedia.cm](http://www.communitymedia.cm)) within the framework of the project #Election2018: Community Media, Peace Journalism and Election Reporting on establishing peace journalism as an alternative to conventional journalism in Cameroon. The CPS seconded personnel Alexander Vojvoda conducted an interview with Prof Youngblood on the potentials of community media as dialogue platform during conflicts.*

<sup>1</sup> Steven Youngblood is the founding director of the Centre for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Parkville, Missouri USA, where he is a communications professor. He has organized and taught peace journalism seminars and workshops around the world. Youngblood is a two-time J. William Fulbright Scholar (Moldova 2001, Azerbaijan 2007). He also served as a U.S. State Department Senior Subject Specialist in Ethiopia in 2018. Youngblood is the author of "Peace Journalism: Principles and Practices" and "Professor Komagum". He edits "The Peace Journalist" magazine, and writes and produces the "Peace Journalism Insights" blog.

\*Alexander Vojvoda is a community media activist, CPS seconded personnel in Cameroon. He holds an MSc in Sociology and an MA in Political Communication. Since 2014 he has collaborated with the CCMN – Community Media Network Cameroon ([www.communitymedia.cm](http://www.communitymedia.cm)) on community-based journalism, community development and peace journalism within the framework of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) Programme.

*Media escalating conflicts and fueling violence is well documented e.g. during the Rwanda Genocide 1994 or the elections in Kenya 2007. However, the role of media in the prevention of conflict or to mitigate the effects of violence has not been exhaustively discussed. In your opinion, what is the role of media in preventing conflicts and/or mitigating its effects?*

I first wrote this blog in Uganda a few years ago, and its central message about the power and responsibility of news media in preventing or mitigating conflict resonates today more than ever.

From: *Peace Journalism Insights*, 2009:

MUNYONYO, UGANDA – As I peered out at the Ugandan radio journalists in my peace journalism class, I came to the stark realization that they are literally in a position to make life and death decisions.

Radio in this part of the world is that important, that influential. The wrong words said the wrong way at the wrong time can, and have, led to violence, even death.

Radio has a singular, awesome power here in Uganda, and throughout much of Africa. For many, radio is the only medium available, since it requires neither electricity nor the ability to read. It doesn't depend on broken down trucks and rutted roads for delivery. Also, radio is often the only medium that speaks in local ethnic languages.

Sadly, recent history in two countries that border Uganda demonstrates the frightening power of radio stations to manipulate their listeners. In Kenya in 2008, 800 people were killed and 250,000 forced to flee their homes following post-election violence. Hate-filled radio broadcasts played a hand in the mayhem, helping to incite tribal violence. Even more frightening was the role hate radio played in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda where 800,000 people were killed. *Radio Mille Collines* has become notorious for its role, which began with hateful speech directed against the Tutsi minority that devolved into thinly veiled references to exterminating "cockroaches."

As we discussed hate radio and its potential to ignite violence in Uganda, I asked if radio-incited bloodshed like that which occurred in Kenya and Rwanda could happen here. All the students unhesitatingly answered yes. Why? It could happen here because of the power of radio, and the ease of manipulating the populace. One student journalist noted that the most important identity people have in Uganda is ethnic identity, and if they see their people threatened, they would do what is necessary, on the air, to protect their people. Several other students nodded in agreement.

Seizing on the issue of ethnic identity, I led a discussion about what is best for their people. Did any of the ethnic or religious groups benefit from the violence in Kenya or Rwanda? Is Uganda a better place after 20 years of civil war? I emphasized that the best thing journalists can do for their group, and for their country, is to facilitate dialogues about peace and reconciliation, not inflame passions and hatred. Certainly, violence has left no winners here in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

As we closed the emotional discussion, I was encouraged when one student said that “it’s up to us to spread the word” about the power of radio, and the awesome responsibility radio journalists here have to use their platform to promote peace and reconciliation instead of hate and violence. All I could think was that the clock is ticking here in Uganda, and that I better teach as many peace journalism seminars as quickly as I can.”

The role of the media, then, is to responsibly report so as to not trigger or exacerbate conflicts. This leads us to peace journalism, which I define as when editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices, including how to frame stories and carefully choosing which words are used, create an atmosphere conducive to peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of good journalism. Peace Journalism gives peacemakers a voice while making peace initiatives and non-violent solutions more visible and viable. Specifically, this means exploring solutions; replacing “us vs. them” narratives with reporting

that unites conflicted parties; giving a voice to the voiceless instead of just elites; providing context; and carefully analyzing and choosing the words and images we use in our reporting.

*How does peace and conflict-sensitive journalism help media houses to anticipate potential crisis situations and prevent them from becoming violent? Can you please give examples for a successful peace journalism project preventing media induced violence.*

There are several examples from East Africa from my experience where peace journalism tools helped to prevent media induced or exacerbated violence around the time of elections. The Center for Global Peace Journalism sponsored more than 50 peace and electoral journalism seminars, summits, and lectures in Kenya and Uganda from 2009 to 2014.

One example of the impact of peace journalism can be found in the 2013 Kenyan elections. Kenyan media generally practiced peace journalism in the aftermath of the March 2013 elections, according to observers as well as a small study conducted by peace journalism students at Park University. Yet interestingly, Kenyan media came under fire for utilizing this style of reporting.

The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) wrote, ‘Some critics have condemned the media for not following up on claims made by politicians that the poll was rigged. For example, parliamentary candidate Ayiecho Olweny cried foul after he lost the Muhoroni seat which he had been expected to win easily.’ (March 28)

However, one anonymous journalist told IWPR that disseminating sensational accusations would have been irresponsible, especially given the media’s role in unrest that followed the 2007 election. The journalist said, ‘Can you imagine if we started running headlines about elections being rigged? What would have happened? There was already too much tension across the country. I thank all my colleagues for being responsible and interrogating allegations made before rushing to flash (sensational) headlines.’ (March 28)

A study confirms that Kenyan journalists in 2013 didn't 'rush to flash headlines' and instead practiced peace journalism. Using a rubric to measure different peace journalism criteria (language, framing, bias), a peace journalism class at Park University examined 35 Kenyan media stories produced in March after the election. A majority of the stories (51%) were rated peace journalism, while only 9% were deemed traditional/war journalism due to their inflammatory nature. The rest fell somewhere in between.

Many praised the responsible, non-inflammatory journalism practiced by Kenyan media. Kenya's information ministry said that media performed well compared to 2007, and played a role in propagating peace and national cohesion. (*Commonwealth Broadcasting Association*, March 18). Nicolas Benequista, on the London School of Economics Blog, wrote, 'Kenyan journalism can set a new, better standard. Election coverage in Kenya in 2013 gave us a glimpse of that possibility.'

In *Peace Journalism Insights* in 2013, I wrote, "Media in Kenya, America, and elsewhere can still fulfill their watchdog function, and expose election irregularities, without sensationalizing. Peace journalism doesn't advocate, and it doesn't inflame or otherwise serve political agendas, either. This is bound to upset political partisans, some of whom depend on hatred and divisions to advance their agenda; hence the criticism."

Another example can be found in Uganda, where tensions were high preceding the 2011 presidential election. The largest single project, executed in conjunction with the Uganda Media Development Foundation, was a Peace and Electoral Journalism project in Uganda in 2010-2011. During the project's seminars and lectures, participants, primarily radio journalists, began by analyzing their own reporting and that of their colleagues, usually reaching the conclusion that their reporting was partisan, one-sided, sensational, inaccurate, sometimes racist, and often inflammatory. Peace journalism, then, became an easy sell to both journalists and media managers who had no desire to spark violence.

Thanks to Ugandan project manager Gloria Laker and her colleagues across Uganda, the project succeeded. According to our data, there were no incidents of media induced or exacerbated violence, and according to journalists, this can be directly attributed to the peace journalism interventions that began 10 months before the election.

*In Cameroon you are collaborating with Civil Peace Service partners – the PCC Communication Department and the CCMN – Cameroon Community Media Network – on the potential of community media to provide dialogue platforms and the prevention of media-induced violence in the context of the up-coming Presidential, National and Local elections 2018/2019 and the current violent conflict between Anglophone separatists and government. What is the main focus of your work in Cameroon?*

I was working in Cameroon collaborating on a peace and electoral journalism project with the Cameroon Community Media Network. I first visited Cameroon in July, 2017. My July, 2018 project was both a follow-up to the 2017 initiative as well as an effort to assist journalists in beginning planning for and substantive peace journalism-based discussions about the October, 2018 presidential election in Cameroon.

After less than one day in Cameroon this July, a theme for the project already emerged: the safety of journalists, and those who train journalists.

My first meeting was with a journalist who fled the western Anglophone region of the country after he and his family were threatened. I won't use his name here for obvious reasons. In those Anglophone regions, the northwest and southwest, there is a violent, anti-government insurgency led by separatist rebels. My new journalist friend said he was targeted by rebel groups for doing his job and reporting factually.

This led to a discussion about how a journalist, or a peace journalism trainer like me, becomes a target in the northwest or southwest regions. The reporter said that discussing peace in the Anglophone regions put him in jeopardy since a pro-peace message is seen by the rebels as a pro-

government, anti-rebel stance. He said that he's even been accused of being bribed by the government to discuss peace.

I asked how this would impact our month-long peace journalism project, much of which was scheduled to occur in cities in the north-west and southwest regions. The journalist firmly advised us to not go to the regions because he believed the seminars' trainers and participants would be targeted by rebels. He said the rebels would see our peace journalism program as pro-government, and that some rebels would even believe that I am being paid by the government to blanket the region with pro-peace and thus anti-rebel messages.

We took his advice, and did not venture into the northwest or southwest regions. But this didn't keep us entirely safe, as our three day seminar in Bonaberi (near Douala) was shut down by authorities after just a few hours. The debate continues among those who believe the police action was merely an overreaction by nervous, paranoid government paper-pushers; or whether we were deliberately targeted because we were journalists and primarily Anglophones.

It should be noted that two other seminars in Yaoundé and Bafoussam went off without a hitch.

***What unique opportunities do community media offer to facilitate dialogue in conflict situations? How do peace journalistic tools and methods support community media in their work?***

Community media are in a perfect position to facilitate dialogue among players in a conflict. They can do this at the smallest local level, and in such a way that the discussion itself is seen as productive rather than threatening. One of peace journalism's key tenets is giving a voice to the voiceless. This is precisely what community media can do best. In providing this voice, those who have been traditionally marginalized feel empowered, and are less likely to strike out violently.

The principles that underlie peace journalism also provide a compelling justification for community media in Cameroon and elsewhere. These include not just giving a voice to the voiceless, but encouraging



dialogue, exploring solutions, and rejecting simplistic “us vs. them” narratives. Community media are uniquely positioned to promote each of these principles.

*How can community media using peace journalistic principles better serve IDP's and refugees and the communities that host them?*

Content analysis research in places that host large numbers of refugees like Turkey, Lebanon, Austria, and Germany show that migrants are typically portrayed negatively by news media, often as a burden, and often through the use of dehumanizing language (flood, wave, infestation, etc.)

Peace journalism asks journalists to offer counter narratives that portray the displaced in a more three-dimensional way, not ignoring the challenges their presence creates, but also reporting the positive impact that they may have on communities. PJ also recommends reporting that humanizes refugees and promotes the idea that the displaced themselves should be employed as reporting partners, especially on stories that analyze the situations encountered by the displaced.

# “Hand put it, hand take it”

## Peace Facilitator Workshop for four rural Communities in Varney Goya Town, Montserrado County, Liberia

*By Peg Koedel\*, Joseph D. Howard\*\*,  
Wladislaus Rzepka\*\*\*, Karen N. Domah\*\*\*\**

### Introduction of the Peace Facilitator Workshop

Liberia is a post war country. The last civil war ended 2003 and the country faces a lot of complex issues for rebuilding society, economy, culture and education. NAEAL—National Adult Education Association of Liberia and CJPS—Center for Justice and Peace Studies are members of the Civil Peace Service Network in Liberia. Both NGOs worked together in various educational and peacebuilding projects.

The Peace Facilitator Workshop we want to present in this publication is a part of a larger project of NAEAL called “Hand put it, Hand take it” [HPHT]. HPHT is a literacy project for 4 rural communities in Montserrado County (2) and Margibi County (2). The Communities created with the support of NAEAL learning circles in Level 1 and Level 2 for adults, who dropped out of school and are illiterate or can barely read, write or calculate.

While conducting former educational programs NAEAL figured out, that there are some more subjects which should be addressed. So the Team developed different workshops for topics like

- ◆ Conflict Management and Peace Building
- ◆ Economical Thinking and Business skills
- ◆ Leadership and participative togetherness

\*Consultant for knowledge management, \*\*ED of CJPS,

\*\*\*Programm support advisor, \*\*\*\*Projectmanager HPHT of NAEAL

As a good practice NAEAL asked CJPS to support the realisation of the Conflict Management and Peace Building Workshops, because it is their field of working and there is no need to invent the wheel a second time.

Introduction NAEAL –  
National Adult Education  
Association of Liberia

**NAEAL**

We burn for education!



NAEAL is a Liberian NGO. We are registered and accredited as a local non-government education and development organization. Our aim is to educate mainly adult Liberians and out of school youth in literacy, numeracy, business skills, peace, advocacy and community empowerment. NAEAL was established in 1977 by a group of young Liberian educators who were interested in promoting literacy in Liberia.

From 2011 up to now we have educated 31,000 adult learners with an impact on more than 150,000 stakeholders such as children and other family members. We have trained more than 1,100 Literacy Facilitators and 2,700 Peace Facilitators in 14 Counties.

Introduction CJPS –  
Center for Justice and Peace Studies

The Center for Justice and Peace Studies is a National Non-Governmental Peace Building and Development Organization established in 1998 and incorporated by the Government of Liberia in August 2002. The mission of CJPS is to reduce multidimensional poverty in rural Liberia. Since its establishment, CJPS has provided peace building and conflict transformation trainings for over 11,000 young people and over 3,000 local and community leaders in Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba Counties. Additionally,



CJPS has provided livelihood skills trainings for 350 youths in the areas of Carpentry, tailoring, masonry, cosmetology, computer science, and mechanics (car and motorcycle). The major target beneficiaries of CJPS programs are youths (in-school and out-of-school), people with disabilities, local leaders, teenage mothers, and commercial sex workers. CJPS is presently coordinating the Men Engaged Liberia Network and is also a member of several networks in Liberia.

### Illiterate adults and the necessity for non-formal education

According to UNESCO “38% of African adults are illiterate; two-thirds of these are women. Africa is the only continent where more than half the parents are not able to help their children with homework due to illiteracy”. According to UNESCO data on Gapminder, the rate of literate adults in Liberia is around 43%. That means the total of illiterate adults is about 57%! 20% higher than the average for the whole of Africa.

This high rate of illiterate people and the unbelievably high rate of illiterate women (73%) has kept NAEAL working together with international donors since 1977. But this is not enough! We need more projects in this direction, we need good ideas on how to reach out in more communities and we really need more donors, who are aware of this lack of education.

Besides help from outside we need a national strategy for adult literacy and non-formal education in Liberia too. We all have to be aware, that literate and educated adults are good for children. Beside the possibility for them to follow the progress of learning they also can support their children in difficult times, troubles and conflicts.

So let's conclude educated adults have a big impact for the next generation. They show interest in a not-ever-easy field of living for their children and manifest a deeper relations with them. With a deeper emotional and personal bonding within the family, there is also more respect in the family. And this respect between the generations is a big step out of the trauma of the civil war which still colors the Liberian society.

Non-formal education or as the Liberian Ministry of Education calls it “alternative education” is a must have besides formal education for children. Non-formal education helps in achieving a better understanding of social developments, changes and conflicts. This understanding of social, environmental, legal and political processes will be given through intra-family-communication to the next generation. Thus, the young generation starts with a richer knowledge basis and is open to adopt more knowledge from outside than the prior generation has transmitted. This is a fundamental premise for the understanding of peace, peace keeping and a peaceful togetherness.

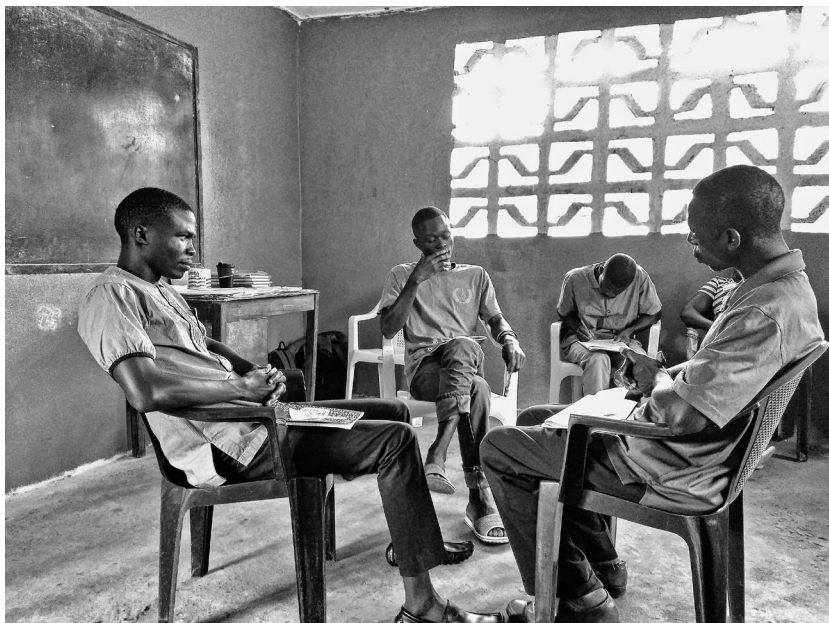
### A short description of the outcome of former workshops

Peace Education is one of the components of our Literacy Circles in the rural communities. We cooperate with the community leadership and literacy facilitators to organize community based facilitator training. Our facilitators are being trained to help community members find solutions in the case of misunderstandings, taking into account the needs and interests of all parties. The workshops include topics like...

- ◆ understanding peace and conflicts
- ◆ conflict management
- ◆ peaceful communication and
- ◆ mediation as a method of conflict solving.

After the facilitator workshop in the last year, the number of conflicts taken to courts and police stations has decreased in the participating communities. For example, in one of the communities we work with, the conflict rate (conflicts taken to the police) decreased from 4 to 5 conflicts per month to 1 to 2 per year. That is a reduction from around 50 cases to 1–2 per year.

The group of facilitators per community consists of two (2) representatives of youth. In accordance with gender equality principles we



train one female and one male participant per community. The decision for training the youth was made by the communities themselves. The background for this decision is that young people play an important role in most problems in the communities and so it makes sense to teach peace facilitating to the youth so that they can solve the problems they caused.

The peace facilitators are working together with the community leaders. The leaders of a community include, the town chief and representatives of the elders, the women's group and the youth. The presence of peace education helps the community members to build their capacity in making informed decisions and the number of cases taken out of the community is reduced. Town chiefs are now dealing with fewer and less serious cases. The implementation of community dialogue sessions on a regular basis aims at bringing community members together to address issues of conflict within their communities and steps for conflict transformation.

The facilitators' skills are enhanced to help community members deal with potential conflict issues in their dialogue sessions. The facilitators have won the confidence of the community members, which makes it easier for the latter to address an issue positively. It prevents an escalation of to violence which used to happen often in the past.

## Obstacles

With the view on the workshop

- ◆ Low attention span of participants due to other daily life experiences, not being able to concentrate for a whole day because of multiple new contents, methods, people, etc. This is the reason why only two different topics are being considered a day, we use a rapid method switch and personal switch of the facilitator.
- ◆ Daily life struggles are brought in with the participants and it is difficult for them to create a mental distance and concentrate on the topic.

Several follow up techniques were used to maintain the participants concentrating on the topic being discussed.

- ◆ In mostly illiterate rural communities, somehow the content may appear too abstract and not concrete enough: this is the problem of adoption of European abstract thinking into a society of concrete thinking structures. In consideration of this, a variety of methods (especially movement of participants, using practical examples and peer learning group work) helped to concretize learning.
- ◆ The conflict transformation method of mediation is internationally a certified course of minimum one year with many practicing hours ... here we do 4 days to 1 week!

With the view on peace facilitation in communities

- ◆ Community members are not willing to resolve conflict to have win-win solution. This is because most if not all community members lack the skills to resolve conflicts peacefully. Moreover, there is a competitive spirit among the people rather than a complementary one. Negotiation for good solutions is not a known cultural technique!
- ◆ Transportation—movement from one community to another in the effort to explore the means for peaceful co-existence is difficult. Bad or poor road conditions pose great challenges.
- ◆ They sometimes hide major conflict issues and deal with it traditionally. That might also be a solution. But experience shows that in the end, most cases go to court.

*“You touched my heart and I will bring peace to my community in your way. I will not stop.” ... said Papa Tamae in the recap session of the last day. He is 98 years old and has been the oldest participant in our peace facilitator workshop. He just dropped by, because he was interested in the topic and he followed up the content being very interested the whole time.*





We consider these workshops important little steps to transform and prevent conflicts with the participation of the essential stakeholders in the communities themselves. The workshops help by capacitating community members to develop peace building and conflict management/transformation skills

# Conflict prevention

## A case study of Sierra Leone

*By Bamike Williams\**

As long as human beings continue to exist on earth, conflict is always inevitable and as such conflict is as old as the creation of human beings.

But what is conflict? Conflict can loosely be defined as a clash or disagreement, often violent, between two opposing groups or individuals.

Today all over the world there are conflicts or disputes, such as border conflicts, tribal conflicts, inter-party conflicts, election violence and even rebel wars. Generally speaking there are many common causes of conflict, some of which include:

- ◆ Claims over land, as land is now insufficient for people due to large acquisitions of land by big multi-national investors
- ◆ Suppression of minority groups by bigger nations or tribes especially in governance
- ◆ Election related conflicts due to rigging and other related election malpractices
- ◆ Disregard for the rule of law and constitutional violations to suit the ruling class, for example extension of tenure of office of presidency
- ◆ Violation of human rights, due to dictatorship and bad governance.

As time progresses so should a nation progress in terms of political, economic and social development. But for Sierra Leone, it has regressed and its development has been at a snail pace due to political instability.

\* Executive Secretary of the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA)

The brutal Civil war of the 1990's plunged the political and economic development of the country into total disarray reducing all national development activities into complete disruption. This Civil conflict depleted the country's economy and infrastructure thus making it very difficult to access basic needs such as clean water, food and good health care.

Even though the impact of the civil conflict was colossal, peace was however formally restored in 1991 with a peace settlement backed by significant external interventions.

Most recently the country was faced with inter-political party conflict between the two major parties the APC and SLPP before, during and after this year's elections. This conflict almost took a regional and tribal dimension. This created a negative impact and destruction of lives and property, displacement of people, destruction of infrastructure, and collapse of the economy.

After the civil war four successful elections had been conducted, though not free from conflict or violence. They include 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2018—all of these witnessed series of violence that resulted to the death and displacement of many citizens.

These conflicts are mainly perpetuated by the two main political parties—SLPP and APC. It is sad to note that these two parties have succeeded in manipulating the citizens to the extent of dividing them along regional and tribal lines. The SLPP is said to be more appealing to the South Easterner, dominated by the Mende tribe, while the APC is more popular in the North/West region and dominated by the Temne tribe.

The causes of these party conflicts are many but the following are some of the main causes:

- ◆ Desire to dominate and get political hegemony over the other, by all possible means either positive or negative.
- ◆ Fear of exclusion from governance. This has made them resort to all forms of violence and illegal means to continue to exercise power so that they will not be removed from office by the other party.

- ◆ Greed — that is the desire to control the resources of the country often believing this necessary to promote and develop the regions they are popular in.
- ◆ Violation of human rights and disregard of the rule of law. This is evident in numerous violent clashes during party rallies and campaigns that have resulted in the death of peaceful citizens and loss of their property. Violation of the rule of law and the constitution: one example is the sacking of the elected former Vice President Samuel Sam Sumana.
- ◆ Systemic corruption and embezzlement of state resources has also been a source of conflict in the country. As a result of this, citizens are left scrambling to access the limited social facilities.
- ◆ Lack of effective civic and political education for the development of an enlightened political culture and political tolerance.
- ◆ Suppression of the press and political opponents. This has created tensions that often resulted in violent demonstrations.

However, these conflicts can be prevented or resolved by using the following mechanisms:

- a) Respect for the rule of law, the constitution and promotion and protection of human rights. If the constitution is upheld as a secured document to be implemented and not violated it will prevent conflicts.
- b) Formation of a government of national unity to prevent the “winner take all” tendency as this will reduce tension of wanting to dominate the political system.
- c) Proper civic and political education to broaden citizens’ knowledge of political tolerance and participation. This will provide an enlightened political culture that will make citizens see elections as a means of peaceful change of government.
- d) De-politicizing state institutions like the police, army, judiciary, the Independent Media Commission, the Political Parties Registration

Commission to enable them to discharge their duties without fear and favour as a means of upholding democratic principles.

- e) Strengthening of the De-centralization process to effectively devolve certain functions so as to ensure that people at local level access social facilities. This will re-distribute scarce resources especially to hard-to-reach communities.
- f) Serious effort should be made to tackle corruption to ensure that the country's resources will be properly managed and distributed equally for the benefit of all citizens.
- g) Appointment to certain key institutions should not be made by the president, but by independent commissions. This will help these institutions to effectively discharge their duties in the interest of the country. It will also prevent the institutions from being used to suppress opponents and other critics of the system.
- h) Above all the judiciary should be allowed to operate independently, so that justice will be seen to be done fairly without fear, favour or bias.

SLADEA  
Hour at  
Culture Radio



To help prevent these conflicts and despite the numerous challenges, SLADEA has been involved in the following activities:

- a) Sensitizing the public through its radio drama programme 'Konkoma' which has now been transformed into films. Five episodes relating to post election violence have recently been produced.
- b) A discussion programme on Peace Building issues and Conflict Prevention is done on 'SLADEA Hour' which is a weekly radio programme with Culture Radio. Listeners have the opportunity to give their views and comments through phoning.
- c) The curriculum for SLADEA'S nation-wide adult Literacy programme includes Peace Education which deals with conflict, mediation, non-violent communication and human & child rights.
- d) During national elections SLADEA joins other partners to monitor and observe the election process. Also, SLADEA is a member of National Elections Watch (NEW) and provision is made for its members to serve as election observers.
- e) In addition, SLADEA joins other CPS and AGEH Partners to carry out nation-wide activities in observance of International Day of Peace on 21<sup>st</sup> September each year.



SLADEA  
in elections  
observation

# Charting a promising path for conflict prevention in the Mano River Union (MRU)

## A case study of Sierra Leone

*By Edmond Kposowa, FIOH-Sierra Leone\**

Sierra Leone and Liberia being part of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) under the MRU countries have had similar bitter experiences in their recent history, ranging from civil war to the deadly Ebola disease. In spite of these dark periods in their history, they have both come along strongly in developing their fledgling democracies, albeit against some challenges. A number of elections have been held in both countries, some of them leading to transfer of power from one political party to the other. Conducting elections and transition period where power is handed to another president or another political party creates several unrest although it does not resort to full-scale violence, such as we've seen in countries like Kenya is surely encouraging. This is largely viewed as a positive stride in the political development of these two countries.

These issues have made building a conflict prevention culture in the MRU region become an engineering challenge for both local actors as well as the donor communities. This challenge comes in the wake of the gross youth violence in elections that have littered these countries' sociopolitical landscape resulting from conflicts perpetrated by youth especially during elections. In a situation where post conflict states reconstruction is largely driven by external players as in the case of MRU region, any valuable attempt to build such a culture will depend to a large extent on the commitment of local actors. Being that conflict originates

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from extreme violence and these countries have been in terrible war and civil unrest which have brought them to a tremendous loss of lives, human suffering, intoxicating drugs addiction and loss of properties and opportunities, violence has become an addicted practice for people especially the youth.

Hence, different approaches such as public discussions with youths through focus group discussions and radio shows are being held to understudy the reason for youth participation in elections conflict. These approaches have provided data that prove that *youth are an active factor of conflict in elections and that they are often the actual perpetrators of conflict in elections*. From further discussions and contributions from different people, it is noted that youth are being manipulated to participate in these conflicts by influential people due to the fact that youth lack some key life supporting amenities listed below:

- i. **Employment**
- ii. **Literacy**
- iii. **Conflict Sensitivity and**
- iv. **Clientelism and Nepotism**

These are strong factors that lead to the fact that youth are being used over and over again for violence even if they realize they are going to suffer from it.

In an approach to prevent conflict in elections the observations from public discussions are closely analyzed and FIOH-SL with support from the Civil Peace Service (CPS) has so far implemented some further measures to end this unrest in elections. Below is a summary of how each factor contributes to conflict in elections.

- ▷ **Lack of Employment:** Most often youth in Sierra Leone after graduation from learning and skill training institutions, cannot get jobs. Thus, they are being used with promises of jobs and income before, during elections, to create conflicts by attacking the opposition of this or that influential patron. This youth will then without hesita-



tion create serious conflicts, destroy property and/or even threaten human lives.

- ▷ **Illiteracy:** The illiteracy rate in countries on the MRU region is about 62% of the total population. This is a key factor that prevents fluent understanding of things, spreading of serious information and differentiating our rights from our responsibilities. Rumors and manipulations find easy preys among the youth. Despair and the lack of a decent future might also trigger drug abuse.
- ▷ **Conflict Sensitivity:** This simply refers to building a better understanding of conflict triggering acts and showing the bigger picture for the individuals and the community they live what unrest conflict can resolve to in their individual lives. This is essential to prevent conflict generated in elections. Therefore, contributions from public discussions recommended conflict sensitivity training should be organized to improve policies and practices in support of Conflict Sensitive Approaches (CSAs) among NGOs, donors, youth serving organizations and policy makers. As this will aim at sharing understanding of CSAs across a network of national and international development, humanitarian and peace building organizations to strengthen expertise and capacity among organizations to institutionalize and implement CSAs and lessons learn and recommendations for putting conflict sensitivity into practice across a wide range of actors and sectors.
- ▷ **Clientelism and Nepotism:** Many people, especially youth see themselves as linked to or serving a “big man” from their community and are carrying out his orders. They do not reflect or decide for themselves, but always stay close to their “boss man” illustrated by the slogan “Pa you Borbor dae” (“Father, your boy/son is here”). The “big man” looks after them and uses their services. They are loyal to him and the situation has created a strong dependency.

From all observation and concerns from public discussions, FIOH-SL through the support of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) has been caring out some recommended activities which have created a big change in youth in our area of operations. These activities were aimed at mitigating the effect of the stated factors that lead to youth inability to withstand from being perpetrators of violence. Hence, below are the activities carried out by the FIOH-SL:

- I. **Unemployment:** FIOH-SL in partnership with the Farmers' Cooperative and Credit Union (FCCU) is providing motor-bikes for youth in the form of loan in the Mile 91 community. This has enabled the youth to be self-employed—becoming moto taximen—as they become the rightful owners of the motorbikes after the period of the loan. Although, the provision is in the form of a micro-credit scheme, youth are charged to pay a little sum as interest which is also functioning as personal savings for them. In due course, if any of them is doing well, he/she is offered this lump sum in addition to the motorbike. This has created employment and promoted the livelihood of a good number of youth in the Mile 91 community.
- II. **Illiteracy:** FIOH-SL has been empowering the youth with tailoring and “gara”-tie-dyeing skills and providing formal teachings for them in the Mile 91 community. This has given them hope to create their own future as tailors and fabric producers rather than just being perpetrators to violence which lead to conflict.
- III. **Conflict Sensitivity:** FIOH\_SL has been training youth in communities on conflict indicators and the outcome of conflict in elections. We have also been holding focus group discussions, radio discussions, community youth group discussions and organised school teams that discuss conflict related issues during school leagues, Literary and Debating Societies (L&D. S) and devotions. This has ena-

bled youth to understand the effect of their participation in violence and helped to avoid participation in conflict.

**IV. Clientelism and Nepotism:** FIOH-SL with its take on youth unemployment fight in the Mile 91 community has made the youth feel more independent and through their discussion (community based, radio based and in learning institutions) has taught them how valuable they are as individual persons. We hope this will diminish the fear of not being able to survive independently.

Additionally, FIOH-SL has also been participating in activities such as:

- ◆ **Community Engagement** wherein community stake holders (chiefs, youth leaders, teachers, women leaders, local police) are sensitized on the dangers of conflict through skits and drama. And the distribution of leaflets depicting violence in communities climax the occasion. Following this, communities were also engaged in mapping out strategies on how to prevent conflict in their respective communities.
- ◆ **Training of youths on the principles of non-violence.** So far FIOH-SL has trained over 50 youths in the Mile 91 community on the principles of non-violence so that they can express their needs and wishes in a nonviolent way.

After several meetings and workshops conducted by the Civil Peace Service we see that we can contribute to limiting or ending violence, in election times but also in general, by making youth realize they have nothing to gain by using violence. We use participatory approaches that support the development and success of the youth and their families in their communities and create a safe space where they can find recognition and express their wishes and needs in creative and non-violent ways.

# Preventive diplomacy, for a holistic approach to peace building

## The case of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

By Odile Bulabula Mbila\*

Preventive diplomacy, a concept used by the United Nations since 1950, has been defined as **the implementation of the art of political negotiation with the aim of peaceful conflict management**. In the 1980s, preventive diplomacy was enhanced by a new approach which consisted in preventing the outbreak of **potential conflicts by establishing Security Council surveillance of “high risk areas”**. At the end of the cold war, this notion became more important for the UN. It was a question of **appeasing tensions before they provoked a conflict, or, if a conflict had already broken out, of acting quickly to contain it and eliminate the underlying causes**” (UN: S/2411-A/47/227, 17 June 1992).

At the beginning of the 21st century, preventive diplomacy can be defined as the use of a set of diplomatic and operational procedures, with the consent of the players involved, aimed at peaceful **management of conflicts in three intertwined stages**:

- ◆ Detect the signs of a conflict that is about to erupt violently;
- ◆ Negotiate peaceful management of the differences and oppositions;
- ◆ Stabilise social relations to consolidate peace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.irenees.net/bdf\\_fiche-notions-10\\_fr.html](http://www.irenees.net/bdf_fiche-notions-10_fr.html)

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Preventive diplomacy is being experimented in the Democratic Republic of Congo, by the international community in partnership with the Congolese State and Monusco<sup>2</sup>, through the Stabilisation Support Unit, SSU, with emphasis on the third stage mentioned above. From this perspective, they provide special support to the international and local organisations in implementing the Provincial Stabilisation Strategies in the east. Concerning South-Kivu province, the “Ruzizi Plain, Mid and High Plateaus of Uvira and Mwenga” part has been deemed the number one stabilisation priority due to the recurring conflicts and the activism of the armed groups in this area.

The DR Congo has in reality been shaken by multiple wars and conflicts for more than two decades. South-Kivu is one of the provinces where there is a multitude of conflicts. In addition to international and governmental players, civil society stakeholders play an important role, which has allowed communities which were totally torn part to develop resilience mechanisms in the face of this daily reality. According to the report published by USAID and International Alert as part of the ‘*Tufaidike Wote*’<sup>3</sup> project, it emerges that negative identity dynamics complexify the conflicts marked by competition around three principal issues: identity, land and power. Identities (family, clan or ethnic group depending on the conflict) become increasingly rigid and antagonistic, sometimes under the effect of direct manipulation by certain stakeholders. These negative identity dynamics most often refer to discourse on native status, that only acknowledges the rights of the “indigenous” (the so-called “first inhabitants of a territory”), stigmatising “outsiders” or “foreigners” (even when they are Congolese) and aimed at calling into question their rights (social, economic, land ownership, political, etc.). Land signifies the structural, land-related insecurity faced by the Congolese peasant communities due to the duality between customary law and state land legislation and to the internal dysfunctionality within land

2 The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

3 The expression in Swahili can be translated literally as “let us enrich each other”.

institutions caused by patrimonial governance. Power refers to the type of patrimonial and clientelistic governance that strips the Congolese institutions of their substance (at every level), prevents them from functioning in a clear manner and excludes large segments of the population from decision-making.<sup>4</sup>

These conflicts are often associated with acts of violence and massive human rights violations perpetrated by the different national and regional militia operating there. The population are being continuously displaced, fleeing hostilities related to clashes between these different militia and also those caused by the joint operations to track them down by the national army, FARDC in collaboration with MONUSCO.

### What are the response mechanisms that have been set up?

In practical terms, the prevention of conflicts operates in stages. In the first instance, the work of education takes place before the conflict appears. By exploring the cultural heritage of the province, we find certain proverbs promoting the values of living together, social cohesion, complementarity and interdependence between the local inhabitants. For instance, in Kiswahili we say “*Mkono moja haupige ngoma*”, which means literally “a single hand never beats the drum”. This proverb, which is to be found in almost all the languages of the province, shows that alone, we can do nothing, but along with others we can achieve marvels. Taking other people into consideration and into account is crucial in the traditional culture in eastern DR Congo and in South-Kivu in particular. “Others” are not only brothers in the family or tribe but also the foreigner who, when passing through, was entitled to free food and board in traditional society. Itinerant traders who crossed villages and rivers only had to supply their physical effort to travel on foot and did not have to take money with them to buy food on the way unless they wanted to buy their own food in restaurants. In each village and neighbourhood, there

4 USAID, Tufaidike Wote, International Alert, Beyond stabilisation: Understanding the conflict dynamics in North and South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, February 2015, p. 9

were food huts or “Lubunga” open to everyone. These were round huts with a door on either side. They served as a place for initiation, school of wisdom, legal setting for transforming conflicts within or between families, clans and tribes; as a refectory for all the men of the village ...<sup>5</sup>, where the notables shared food together and spread cultural knowledge among the young men. These spaces were also open to travellers passing through and to visitors. In those days, families living in urban areas felt duty bound to take in children from neighbouring tribes to allow them to go to school when they did not have easy access from their home. Bonds of friendship grew up and turned into fraternal relations. In the event of suspicion in an act that could compromise this relation, it was spoken about freely with the aim of building over the longer term.

In this same framework, strong links forged between certain families exist following a blood pact concluded previously by their respective chiefs. In traditional South-Kivu society, when people/friendly families wished to consolidate their relations or make them last, they entered into a “blood pact”<sup>6</sup>. This act of family integration forced them to consider each other mutually as brothers and share the common responsibilities for the happy or unfortunate events that either one experienced. They also had the duty of mutual protection given the fact that, in the event of a transgression, the misfortune would come back to them. This type of practice, although discouraged today for health reasons, was a constraint and helped to prevent conflicts.

In addition to these cultural mechanisms, the RIO implements actions to reinforce confidence and break through the prejudice and stereotypes that exist between the people and communities in conflict in order to combat discrimination and promote diversity<sup>7</sup>. The work

5 Saidi Alo-I-Bya Sango and Nelson Bya'Ene Esongo, *Modes traditionnels de Transformation des conflits dans les communautés Tribales du Sud-Kivu*, Published by Kivu University Research Centre “CERUKI”, 2007, p. 89

6 A small incision is made on the body to draw blood that the other party committing to the pact has to drink, and vice versa.

7 RIO, “They are not their brothers”, Research report on identity prejudice and manipulations among women and young people in Ruzizi plain, 2017, unpublished.

strategy primarily targets young people and women. These two groups are often at the mercy of the conflict manipulators given their vulnerabilities related to poverty, lack of jobs and illiteracy. They are instrumentalised to propagate prejudice<sup>8</sup>. During the organisation of a games festival in Uvira in 2013, a youth from Uvira said that it was the first time he had played with a young person from another tribe that he considered to be “foreign”. He discovered to his surprise that this young boy was not wearing an explosive device because they fell down together and no bomb went off. In our experience of working with women, the basic structures created by “Amkeni, Mama anaweza”<sup>9</sup> have generated inclusive projects among women of different tribes. This experience worked at Baraka (with the Babembe) and at Bibokoboko (among the Banyamulenge). The women from these two tribal groups successfully co-managed a project for breeding cows and running a restaurant. Starting from this small project, other forms of relations grew up, the sponsoring of children for baptism, the co-organisation of weddings, compassionate visits on the occasion of painful events.

Furthermore, conflicts are defused in order to prevent an escalation of violence. Here the conflict already exists but we are working to attenuate it to prevent it from degenerating into violence. Depending on the case, use is made of three significant means: dialogue, mediation and maturation.

Concerning dialogue; we can define it on the basis of the understanding given by the following authors. For S. Gérard and P. Lefebvre, dialogue begins the moment people who have esteem for each other and respect each other decide to meet and forge authentic relations. Dialogue is therefore a way of behaving with the other, of welcoming them, giving yourself to them, entering into a relation. It is a lifestyle centred on the bonds created between people.<sup>10</sup>

8 Idem

9 Swahili expression meaning “wake up; women can...”

10 S. Gerard and P. Lefebvre, Dialogue, chemin de la communion, Kinshasa, *l'Épiphanie*, 1990. p. 11



In this instance, dialogue between the tribal communities being torn apart in the Ruzizi plain in DRC is the fruit of the democratic pillar of dialogue contained in the international stabilisation strategy agreed on by the different stakeholders in the stabilisation of eastern DRC. Thus, the global objective pursued in organising this process of democratic dialogue between State and population, through their representatives, consists in restoring trust between the different segments of society so that they can maintain cooperative relations likely to ensure the harmony and cohesion necessary for peace and stability. More specifically, it is a question of setting up “frameworks” to bring the communities closer together and create mechanisms for building trust between population and government institutions. This process should, on the other hand, enable the reinforcing of local and provincial initiatives aimed at promoting a collective vision of peace and sustainable development over the long term.

Once the topic to be discussed has been agreed, the protagonists start by organising internal dialogues to determine the roles to be played by the members of their delegation; who will speak, what will the message be, the non-verbal signals, the precise demands as well as any possible concessions in order to arrive at a peaceful solution. It is not all as easy as it may seem, for the people present at the internal dialogue also have different perceptions of the problem that should be harmonised before addressing the second level. The following stage is the intercommunity dialogue, which brings together equal numbers of stakeholders in the conflict facilitated by a “neutral” person. Once this stage has been completed, an agreement is signed by the protagonists, followed by a plan of execution. If the negotiation fails, the process is taken up again through to completion.

A second aspect consists in creating bridges between the communities and the public services. The Organisational Innovation Network, RIO, in a consortium with International Alert and other local civil society organisations, works on security governance. Among the strategies used in this pillar we find the organising of community fora which

consists in grouping together, on the one hand, the security services (the National Information Agency (ANR), General Migrations Division (DGM), Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and the Congolese National Police (PNC) and on the other hand the customary authorities with the civil society organisations as well as women and young people. The aim is to harmonise the different reports on the monitoring data on the cases of insecurity and violations of human rights gathered by different people. This results in adequate measures being taken to reduce or even eradicate the phenomenon of armed groups and the illegal possession of firearms within the community.

As for mediation, the Canadian Bar Association defines it as “*intervention in a dispute or in the negotiation process of a neutral and impartial third party who, without decision-making powers, can nonetheless help the disputing parties to come to an understanding to reach a settlement that is mutually acceptable*”. This type of intervention has been observed in conflicts on the worksites of the economic stimulus projects set up by the Social Fund of the Republic Democratic of the Congo, FSRDC, in Walungu territory. These were school building projects where the Local Executing Agency (LEA) for construction was in disagreement with the personnel at the worksite and/or with the community represented by the Local Development Committee. The mediation conducted by the local Walungu peace structure restored an atmosphere of trust between the different stakeholders and each of them rallied to enforce respect of the commitments made.

Here, it is appropriate to acknowledge and encourage the efforts made by the African Union to set up FemWise-Africa (Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation) endorsed by the AU Heads of State and Governments in July 2017, with a view to institutionalising the place and role of women in peace negotiations, as per United Nations resolution 1325.



*Training of the members of FemWise-Africa on preventive diplomacy and mediation: Addis Ababa, June 2018*

Lastly, we speak of maturation, when the community has developed survival mechanisms to cope with the negative effects of conflict. The community has become resilient; it assumes its responsibilities. In this case, spoilers manipulate and divide to take advantage of conflicts, but the community possesses in its midst local peace structures or competent personalities to whom it can turn in the event of a conflict. It knows the ways and means to gain access to the higher instances.

In any case, the “conflict sensitive” approach is necessary before any intervention in conflict areas. Thus, before the implementation of a project/programme whether related to peace, development or humanitarian intervention, the agents on the ground should know and recognise the status of a conflict; with the partner organisations, develop an acute awareness of the crisis symptoms, observe the tensions and conflicts in which they themselves are involved and reflect on the role they play; react appropriately to a conflict situation, that is to say, from an analysis of the causes and risks, as well as a reflexion on their operational options and their effects on the conflict, in a spirit of violence prevention and peace promotion.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Development and Cooperation Division, Management of conflict-sensitive programmes (GPSC), January 2006.

## Persistent challenges!

Despite the efforts made, enormous challenges persist that hamper the work of peace building. These are:

1. The activism of national and foreign armed groups and the Congolese State's inability to assure the security of the population: this phenomenon exists and has been maintained until today because of failures in governance. Despite the existence of operations that mix local armed groups commonly referred to as "Mayi Mayi" with the national army FARDC<sup>12</sup>, the local armed groups have remained engaged in their movements and often work in cooperation with foreign groups such as the FDLR<sup>13</sup>. Although there are contradictory statements concerning the size of the group, many researchers put forward a figure of between 1,000 and 2,500 members, which is several times larger than any other armed group in eastern DRC. Despite their size, however, the fact remains that the FDLR have been incapable of launching major raids in Rwanda since 2001. Their importance in relation to Rwanda is therefore more symbolic, while many of their leaders were members of the Rwandan army at the time of president Juvénal Habyarimana and were involved in the organisation of the 1994 genocide. In addition to the FDLR, two other armed groups from abroad continue to operate in the Kivus. These are the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Nzabampema wing of the Burundi National Liberation Forces (FNL). The two groups are small; the first with no more than 300 members and the second probably with about half that figure. The ADF was a key actor in a series of massacres around the town of Beni, no doubt the worst violence the country has experienced for a decade.<sup>14</sup>

12 Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

13 Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda.

14 Jason K. Stearns and Christoph Vogel, Study Group on the Congo, Mapping of armed groups in eastern Congo, December 2015, p. 5

2. The lack of jobs for young people: this factor is also associated with the lack of prospects for youth. On the basis of the context described above, young people seeking a livelihood are continually being recruited into armed groups and in this way remain within the reach of malevolent manipulators who use them at their whim. A deep divide is created and maintained by those who profit from the conflicts.
3. Aggravated poverty: the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the Congolese population has increased vulnerability to manipulation by the political players. For approximately two decades, environments that are potentially capable of agricultural production have been surviving on humanitarian aid. This has engendered a certain idleness among the population which has become dependent and inactive. In these milieus, the rare people who have been able to launch initiatives to promote themselves and to grow their own food are often despised by the rest of the population because of jealousy. The others remain ready to sabotage the success of their fellows. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that the advanced state of deterioration of the roads used for agriculture and of the major national roads does not exactly facilitate the flow of agricultural products towards the centres of consumption. For fear of losing out, the small farmers only produce enough for their own needs. The last aspect is related to the multitude of barriers erected by antisocial elements between village and market. When monitoring human rights violations, a basic structure in Kalehe found that a farmer who decides to go and sell a chicken on the market for an estimated retail price of five dollars must pay two dollars to cross these illegal barriers. Returning home with the three dollars, the person has to bear the costs of schooling and health care for their family.
4. The lack of independence of the legal system, impunity and corruption: these three factors are intertwined in the sense that those who

commit blunders are almost rewarded by those who hold power. They are promoted (this is the case of the military authorities) for having violated the civil population, in the sense that they have recourse to popular justice for revenge. In this way, innocent people are murdered for minimal faults. In addition, clientelist attitudes in favour of those who “support<sup>15</sup>” their dossier with the Congolese justice system remain.

In total, peace remains “*an art of preventing, calming and going beyond conflicts by proactive initiatives, by replacing violence with dialogue and transforming the violence of the other by peace reflexes*”<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Support means here to pay a bribe, donate a cow to silence reason and win a lawsuit.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.grainesdepaix.org/fr/ressources-de-paix/concepts-de-paix/ce-quest-la-paix/definitions-de-la-paix-vers-lelargissement>

# From prevention to non-violent management of conflicts, a wind is blowing in the direction of peace in South Kivu (Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga territories)

By Evariste Mfaume\*

I. Bembe and Fuliiru youth committee:  
a model of peaceful cohabitation

*Violence between young people in the Bembe and Fuliiru communities is diminishing, thanks to the actions of the inter-community barza in support of the Local Peace Dynamics (LPD). Becoming involved in social cohesion, young people launch and execute peace and local development initiatives.*

*“Since our grandfathers arrived in Mboko half a century ago, their relations with the members of the Bembe communities have been smooth. The tension began when the Babembe abused our rights and cultural values. We are deeply involved in the violence. It is positive for the moment, the young people of the Bembe community do things together with us”* says **Mr Makegeta Tekera**, young leader of the Fuliiru community.

\*SVH Coordinator, South Kivu, DRC

“Solidarity of Volunteers for Humanity” – acronym SVH, is a Congolese non-profit organisation. Created on 20 May 2003 following the general political turmoil in DRC, particularly in Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga territories in South-Kivu. SVH engages in research and analysis activities on the themes of peace and conflict transformation, human rights and natural resources ([www.svh-rdcongo.org](http://www.svh-rdcongo.org)). Within the framework of the civil peace service, SVH's efforts on the ground to build a culture of peace and non violence have been supported by the International Christian Peace Service “EIRENE” from 2015 till today.

**Mr Walengamina Loba Joalé**, former president of Kabondozi youth committee, specifies that several young people from the Fuliiru community quickly understood the necessity of shedding the bad habits that were compromising our relations: “for some time, certain young Bafuliiru had no longer been obeying the local customary authority, they took our arable land, cut down too many trees in our forests, stopped contributing to the solidarity fund and seized the military authority for civilian cases. Out of a concern for social cohesion in our entity, we praised the involvement of the local players, that is to say members of the inter-community barza, members of the LPD, the youth leaders at the level of the Tanganyika sector and the administrative and customary authorities. They led and encouraged us towards peace among us” he was delighted to say.

For their part, **Mr Misabe’o Wa Nunda**, village elder at A’AMBA (Mboko) acknowledges the peace and local development efforts of the Kabondozi youth committee. “These young people exchange with other young people about peace and social cohesion, hold meetings, organise inter-community football matches, support the rest of the members of the communities in carrying out community works”; says this customary authority figure in conclusion.

Example of Kabondozi, a model to be extended elsewhere

The Bembe-Fuliiru inter-community barza, the LPD and the authorities work together for the common good of the young people of different tribes. Kabondozi youth committee is an eloquent case with, to its credit, a decline in violence between young people and the inclusion of women and young girls on the committee. For the president of the Bembe-Fuliiru inter-community barza, the experience of the Kabondozi youth committee must be exchanged with other young people: “Mboko is a village with 14 neighbourhoods home to different ethnic groups. Young people are certainly responsible for the tension, it is important



## The Bembe-Fuliiru inter-community Barza, a traditional mixed tool for the pacification of the community leaders

- ◆ In 2015, the conflict between the Bembe and Fuliiru communities was characterised by a climate of high suspicion and verbal and armed confrontation between the armed and unarmed leaders of the two communities. In the beginning, there were armed community groups settled in the Middle Plateaux of Mboko and the abuses committed by these armed elements on the civilians. These are the Bwasakala Mai-Mai for the Babembe and Raia Mutomboki self-defence group for the Bafuliiru. With the full blessing of the members of the communities, these two camps accused each other mutually of perpetuating humanitarian incidents on unarmed people from other communities living in the Middle Plateaux.
- ◆ Taking advantage of the situation, the leaders of these two communities, in particular the young people, perpetrated violence (fights, quarrels, extortion, assault and battery, etc.)
- ◆ To prevent and better manage conflicts between communities in Mboko in the Tanganyika sector, those same leaders, at the initiative of the Mboko LPD, decided to create a traditional mixed structure, perfectly legitimately composed of the representatives of the two communities. The Barza is therefore a customary framework for analysis and concertation; exchanges on the activities of interest to the community; prevention and peaceful resolution of inter-community conflicts; a credible pillar of reference for the two communities.



for us to spread the good experience of Kabondozi to all the other committees. In my opinion, this reinforces peace between the communities. It is nonetheless true that the task will not be easy but overcoming the obstacles of the case of Kabondozi is work that cost all the actors too much” and which will inspire the different neighbourhoods, specifies Mr Bwengwe Ehota, president of the inter-community barza.

## II. Flagship actions in the High Plateaux area

Within the framework of the consortium of nine civil society organisations led by International Alert; working in Ruzizi Plain, the Middle and High Plateaux of Uvira and Mwenga (Itombwe) with activities to stabilise and consolidate peace within the programme called “Tujenge Pamoja Kwa Ajili ya Amani” (let’s build together for peace) which pursues the goal of “Building confidence and mutual legitimacy between State and society” to be able to resolve or attenuate together the principal driving forces behind the conflicts and out of a concern for achieving the result of seeing concerted peace solutions identified collectively within the local peace structures implemented in the area of the project, 8 months ago SVH proceeded to analyse the powers and revitalise the local peace structures. Not only to endow the local communities prey to violence with permanent dialogue frameworks, but also to promote the culture of prevention and peaceful conflict resolution, peace and social cohesion.

SVH being positioned on the pillars of democratic dialogue and secure governance, in the midst of the process of capacity building and technical support, consulting support (leadership, analysis and conflict prevention, mediation, negotiation, advocacy, conflict and gender sensitivity); the members of different local peace structures rally around collective peace initiatives and solutions with a mandate and committed credibility, increasingly become key players, in particular women, young people and men, through concrete actions on the ground including:

## **1. Kamati ya Amani Kalingi (Kalingi Peace Committee)**

In 2016, the chief of the Basimukindje1 grouping, Mr. Bitolwa, sold a vast expanse of land beside Kalingi market in the neighbourhood of the High Plateaux of Minembwe, estimated at 10 ha, to a well-known political figure, who subsequently regularised this sale with the competent state departments. Discontent with a sale that dispossessed the Kalingi members of the Basimukindje clan of what they call “the land of their ancestors”, the members of the Basimukindje clan from the Kalingi Babembe community continue to show suspicion towards their neighbours in the Banyamulenge community. This situation seriously affected social cohesion not only between the members of the reigning family at the level of this grouping, but also between the members of the Babembe and Banyamulenge communities.

After being revitalised in March 2018, the local mixed peace structure of Kalingi, with the technical support of SVH, is working on the question by organising inter-community meetings which so far have lead to an agreement in which the political figure committed to building certain elements of social infrastructure for the population of Kalingi, in particular the hospital centre, the construction of which is underway, and the local market, for which work has not yet started. At community level the dialogue continues on the other issues involved and the communication developed in this process is part of prevention in favour of social cohesion and local development.

## **2. Kamati ya Amani Kipupu na Tulambo (Kipupu and Tulambo Peace Committees)**

The involvement of the mixed local peace structures of Kipupu and Tulambo in the High Plateaux of Itombwe with the technical support of SVH, in the search for a peaceful, negotiated solution to the tension between the young Banyamulenge from the armed group commonly known as EL SHABAB and the Babembe Mai Mai — tension related to

the theft of livestock from Banyamulenge breeders at CHANZOVU by the Mai Mai during the events of Bijombo — is an approach which helps to dissipate identity prejudices and stereotypes and lead the communities into dialogue and giving precedence to the higher interest of collective peace for the whole community.

During the inter-community clashes opposing the armed groups of the Banyamulenge community on the one hand and those of the Babembe, Bafuliiru and Banyindu communities on the other hand, during the month of April 2018, in the different villages of the Bijombo grouping in Uvira territory, the Mai Mai members from the communities mentioned above had succeeded in stealing around fifty cows belonging to Banyamulenge stock breeders and took them to the village of Kiseke, where they sold them to itinerant traders. Unable to digest this enormous loss, armed Banyamulenge youths known as EL SHABAB from Bijombo in Uvira territory rallied alongside other armed Banyamulenge youths from Itombwe and occupied the village of Tulambo, where the majority of the population were from this community, with the purpose of attacking the village of Kipupu some 6 km away, to, in their words, liberate by force the livestock belonging to their families. This atmosphere raised animosity on the part of the Mai Mai who in turn rallied in Kipupu to respond to any attacks. This situation provoked an atmosphere of general psychosis among the inhabitants of the Tulambo-Kipupu-Kiseke route and the surrounding area, who moved massively into the bush to shelter from the possible clashes in their villages. Having realised the gravity of the situation, the facilitators from the local peace structures in Kipupu and Tulambo developed a flexible mechanism for swift communication, agreed to start a dialogue between the two parties to anticipate and prevent the clashes that were already perceptible at the gates of Kipupu. This is how the two sides began to negotiate, each with the armed group of their community denomination and invited them to calm down, exercise self restraint and a sense of responsibility in order to obtain the organisation of an inter-community meeting for face-to-face dialogue on the issue.





Having obtained the disengagement of these two groups on their forward positions, the two local peace structures sent for the customary chiefs and other influential community leaders representing all the communities living in the area to a meeting held at Tulambo on 28 April 2018. At the end of this meeting, in which the delegates of two armed groups had taken part, the following resolutions were passed:

- a) All the armed groups should return to their initial positions and allow the elders from the different communities to pursue the discussions about the stolen cattle.
- b) All the inhabitants of the different villages displaced in the bush should return to their respective villages and freely resume their daily routines.
- c) All the armed groups should liberate the different road routes they had blocked to allow the safe circulation of people and goods.

Having obtained the implementation of these resolutions, the two local peace structures succeeded in preventing hostilities between the communities and restored hope to the communities.

### **3. Itombwe elders advisory group**

The clashes between communities experienced in the village of Bijombo in Uvira territory had seriously affected the Itombwe sector. Not only are the same communities clashing in Bijombo to be found in Itombwe, but above all, the various parties took part in the clashes through the material and moral support given to the antagonistic communities on the ground in Bijombo. It is from this perspective that the majority of the combatants from both sides came either from Itombwe or Fizi territory where each community had sent young people to rescue their own.

In view of the rising tension in the Itombwe sector and the potential risks of the clashes spreading from Bijombo to Itombwe, the advisory group composed of the leaders of all the communities in the Itombwe sector met in Tulambo on 03 July 2018 to analyse the situation and put

in place a contingency plan to minimise the risks of the Bijombo conflict being displaced to Itombwe.

After analysis of the situation, it was decided that each community put in place a commission with the mission of raising awareness among the actors of violence within their community with the following aims:

- a) Avoid any provocation that could ignite clashes between communities in the Itombwe sector.
- b) Stop all support oriented towards the protagonists of the Bijombo conflict to give it a chance of being prevented and resolved peacefully

It is important to note that after the deployment of these different delegations, the acts of provocation between the communities living in the Itombwe sector declined significantly on the one hand, and the clashes became less intense in the Bijombo groupement where currently the situation has calmed down over a large area.

Furthermore, the analyses of the social and security context of the area of the High Plateaux of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga with the implications at cross-border, regional level (DRC, Burundi, Rwanda) as produced regularly by SVH in 2017–2018 with systematic updates, the technical advocacy memos shared with various partners in time enabled the mobilisation of the attention of government and non-governmental players on the problems of dualism of customary power, land ownership conflicts, DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration), conflicts between communities in the tense areas (Bijombo, Ruzizi Plain, Itombwe) with actions for prevention and stabilisation underway on the ground that require boosting to have more impact.

Within the framework of the Vijana Tunaweza (Youth we can) project implemented in the High Plateaux of Fizi and Mwenga, SVH in consortium with three civil society organisations lead by International Alert, helped to organise cross-border visits to exchange experiences among young girls and boys from the Bafuliiru, Banyamulenge, Babembe and Banyindu communities whose cohabitation is perceived negatively coming from the High Plateaux of Itombwe in DRC; even though they cov-



ered many a long kilometre together on motorbikes or on foot through the forest before reaching the part of the coast accessible to transport buses, with evident confidence headed for neighbouring Burundi and Rwanda to meet up with other young people there and discover new realities of life.

### III. Experience exchange visits for young people at regional level

#### III. a) Experience exchange visits to Rwanda for young Congolese people

In April 2018, 15 young girls and boys from the High Plateaux of Itombwe in South-Kivu visited the memorial site to the 1994 genocide in Kigali, coupled with a cultural evening together with the young Rwandans supervised by the non governmental organisation 'Rwanda Never Again'. During this time the young people learnt not only about cycles of violence, acute suffering, traumatisms caused by the genocide to the thousands of victims (women, children, young people, men), inner wounds with horrible social fragmentation, but they also learnt to understand the possibility of spaces for dialogue, listening, psychological and social support, sociotherapy, resilience, the capacity to resume life on the vast path of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation on which Rwanda is recovering today; from this great shock towards new ideas of tolerance, from the vast process of de-traumatisation, overcoming hatred to the implication of young people in entrepreneurship, leadership and the emergence of local development.

#### III. b) Experience exchange visits to Burundi for young Congolese people

In April 2018, 14 other young girls and boys from the High Plateaux of Itombwe in South-Kivu visited a cooperative of young people and women supported by the "Tushiriki wote" project (let us all participate) through AFRABU (Burundi Repatriated Women's Association). Pres-

entations on the normative framework, the legal framework relative to youth and security: reviewing of the mechanisms, the State youth policies in DRC and Burundi, making the logical association with United Nations resolution 2250 relative to youth, peace and security; from resolution to action.

In a cordial atmosphere, exchanges were opened on the achievements of the young people, attitudes and behaviour in a context of a serene electoral process. These encouraging exchanges should contribute to the regional conflict prevention dynamics by passing socio economic exchanges, advocacy on the involvement of young people in the democratic process in the Great-Lakes region. Added to this is the empowerment of young people as a factor for conflict prevention and peace building. In these exchanges of experience it was also a question of encouraging the promotion of art as an effective means of mobilising young people for peace, without forgetting the spaces of possibilities for promoting young people with talent.

Considerable efforts must still be invested and the road will be long, but we are convinced that the work of conflict prevention will bear fruit in our Great Lakes region.



# Conflict prevention in Tanganyika province, DRC: an essential task in an unstable environment

*By Jean-Marie Toro\**

German development cooperation represented by GIZ intervenes in the province of Tanganyika in the Democratic Republic of Congo in a vast area that has just been shaken by a long period of violent conflict opposing the Bantou and pygmy (Twa) communities, which have been living together for generations. The degree of violence and the losses suffered on both sides bear witness to the deterioration in the quality of the relations between the communities of the province in general and the area in particular. However, these relations have long been characterised by frustrations caused by marginalisation, domination and a negative perception of one community (the Bantous) in relation to the other (the “Twa” who are also called pygmies). Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that for thirty years the lifestyle of the Twa has continually suffered profound changes related to the political and social-economic developments of the province but also more globally with respect to the events that have marked the history of DR Congo. Added to this, a few years ago, there was a land grab by major land owners with the consequence of a perceptible reduction in areas for living and livelihoods for both the Twa and for the Bantou. Faced with this threat to their existence, the two communities react in particular using violence; they form

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or reinforce the armed militia to defend their heritage and their physical integrity. In view of the growing insecurity and the rise in violence in several regions of DRC related, among other things, to power struggles at national level intertwined with local conflicts, it is also important to take into account the driving forces behind the conflicts at local and national level.

German cooperation runs food and security projects with a crosswise dimension of social cohesion and conflict transformation.

It has adopted an approach of transforming negative, destructive conflicts into positive and constructive relations, by activities aimed at simultaneously managing aspects of behaviour and attitude as well as other dimensions of the conflict.

The transformation of violent conflict between the minority Twa and majority Bantous (in turn divided into several ethnic groups), into a constructive opportunity is therefore conceived as a conflict prevention measure in view of achieving the creation of conditions favourable to a return of sustainable peace. And so the violent conflict between these two communities is being transformed into an opportunity for positive social change resulting from a change of attitudes and behaviour, relations between the communities or individuals and perceptions (opinions) of the behaviour of the various parties ... The aim of all the activities conducted by the GIZ in this domain is the transformation of the structures underlying the conflict, with a view to creating new links between the groups and players. In this case, the violent conflict between the communities in the area is transformed into a positive social change resulting in a change of attitudes, relations between communities or individuals and behaviour of the individual parties, members of the communities concerned.

For German cooperation, conflict transformation associated with prevention turns around the following points:

- ◆ Identification of local peace capacities and entry points to the communities to speak of reconciliation and social cohesion.
- ◆ In-depth analysis of the conflicts and of their histories which is the basis on which the interventions of the projects are developed and executed. We integrate local players and conflict stakeholders into the spaces of reflection and analysis. Through these last, we simply aim to develop a common base and understanding of the deeper causes of the conflict, objectives to put an end to the violence and restore the conditions for peace, at the same time as we reflect together on the social change desired, as an alternative to conflicts and violence.
- ◆ The development of a sustainable partnership with civil society organisations with a view to perpetuating conflict management and transformation actions to build sustainable peace.
- ◆ Bringing the community closer together and implementing integrating activities aimed at social cohesion.

### In what ways can we boost local capacities for Peace?

Through community dialogue sessions, the GIZ team, together with its local partners, creates opportunities for establishing new relations and forms of interaction between the communities. This also presupposes the social responsibility of accompanying the peace-building process, supporting the drawing up of agreements within the communities and ensuring follow-up, special support to civil society organisations in their efforts to promote peace and, in particular, analyse conflicts, the development of alternative conflict resolution mechanisms (dialogue, mediation) offering the players formerly involved in the violence a new way of engaging. The German cooperation project provides the communities with support in their efforts of local conflict mediation. We support

the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church in the installation or reinforcing of the local conflict transformation structures known as “Baraza”. These inclusives group together the members of the local communities; they constitute a framework for concertation and conflict transformation at community level. We assist members of the Baraza in strategic planning of concrete activities and networking with other players in the area of the project.

The Baraza have developed their own forms of mediation to respond immediately to the conflicts arising in their geographic area and avoid escalation.

We work with a view to establishing a certain social legitimacy of these “mediators” to place them as key players in a conflict prevention and transformation approach.

The analyses performed by the members of the Baraza throw light on the social conflicts worsened by the violence that has shaken our area of intervention and they work at this when necessary.

We work with local civil society players to increase their analysis capacities, boost their knowledge in the domain of peace building, facilitate the emergence of a critical turn of mind as well as create spaces for reflexion and context analysis.

The community reconciliation activities we organise reinforce respect and solidarity between people and communities sharing a living space, develop instruments and spaces of communication between the players in conflict, invent mechanisms for the creation and sharing of a common vision. These activities lead at the same time to overcoming certain socio-cultural practices that incite discrimination and exclusion and thereby favour violence and destruction; they encourage rather the conception of new socio-cultural values which promote human rights and a social peace commitment to positive social transformation.

Given that violence and acute conflicts destroy wealth production mechanisms and place the population in a situation of dependence, the German cooperation projects bolster the means of agricultural production through input and equipment support and the promotion of high

potential agricultural practices. We work in such a way as to make sure this intervention is not a source of conflict. We enforce “do no harm” principles so that any discrimination or marginalisation that could be a source of conflict is addressed directly and social cohesion affirmed.

We have understood that certain services and goods put in place by the projects within the community can play a role of catalyst in the conflict and/or of capacity for peace. They can revive the tensions between the groups or reaffirm interpersonal or community bonds. These are drinking water points, mills, markets, agricultural service roads ... At the same time putting in place these and other rehabilitated infrastructures, the German cooperation projects facilitate the comprehension of the issues at stake around these goods and services in the domain of social cohesion. Through the actions of the projects and their local partners, the communities become aware of the integration capacity of community infrastructure and put in place prevention systems for eventual conflicts related to access to, the enjoyment or management of these facilities.

### What are the obstacles we come across?

We work in a vast area where public power is practically absent. Over a distance of approximately three hundred kilometres, there are absolutely no law enforcement stations and no signs of public power. The local peace capacities which should be supported by the public powers are abandoned to the community which has trouble acknowledging them as such.

### What kinds of questions are we asking ourselves?

- ◆ Between training and changing the behaviour of people or organisations, how can we move forward to achieve much more complex capacity boosting?
- ◆ Which capacities should be boosted as a priority: those of individuals? Organisations? A sector? Or should we target civil society as a whole?

## Are there any local mechanisms in the communities working towards conflict prevention?

The community that is the beneficiary of German cooperation projects is often composed of several ethnic groups and each group has a traditional conflict prevention mechanism. The common feature between the numerous mechanisms is:

- ◆ All are based on initiation: young people are prepared for taking over from the old by initiation to the traditional values including peace, community solidarity, succession, justice and community protection;
- ◆ The role of the elders who hold the power of mediation and guidance;
- ◆ The traditional or customary authority (sultanate) which enforces local conflict management and prevention measures around the traditional chief. This procedure ranges from negative sanction to reconciliation,
- ◆ The role of women and young people in the social conflict management process.
- ◆ Setting conduct and communication rules that allow individuals and communities to avoid differences and confrontations as a first recourse in the event of a conflict.

All the communities (ethnic groups or tribes) therefore have their conflict prevention system drawn from the resources of the traditional mode operated in the “village hut” or under “the mythical mango tree”. There, the decisions for living in harmony within the community or preventing violent conflicts are taken by the Chief, here called “Sultan” surrounded by other elders from the village.

We strive to use and reinforce the positive aspects of these traditional elements. However, we must emphasise that we wish to move forward towards the support and reinforcement of mediation and dialogue between communities, villages, etc. This will be the next step.

*Kalemie, September 2018*



# How civil stakeholders approach conflict prevention

*By Pasteur Fidèle Muanda Mikiama\**

**The prevention of conflicts is an urgent precaution to be taken to make societies more resistant to violent conflict.**

## 0. Introduction

Civil society players are invited to be proactive in terms of settlement, resolution and peaceful transformation of conflicts. It is a question of tackling the problem when it is still in its infancy. When there is foreseeable tension on a given issue or problem, the civil player must endeavour to quickly anticipate prevention instead of waiting for an open conflict to be triggered and then settling, resolving or transforming it.

It is certainly a difficult mission, but not impossible. To succeed requires regular capacity building of local players. In our context these are members of the parish, consistory and community committees of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

## 1. Building local capacities for peace: an imperative mission

Prevention is clearly better than the settlement, resolution and peaceful transformation of conflicts. Often, preventing a conflict poses enormous risks if the situation is not handled with attention to detail, care and wisdom. There are risks of provoking a more serious situation than the one you wished to prevent.

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Prevention succeeds more easily when mediation is sought by one of the people concerned before the conflict breaks out or at least when the conflict is still nascent. As soon as the tension rises, the peace worker must quickly try to defuse the foreseeable crisis.

This is why this approach requires the boosting of the capacities of local players committed to the path of building sustainable peace which causes fewer wounds among the protagonists.

In boosting local capacities, we invite the civil players to begin by identifying the nature of the latent conflict. What is the source of the antagonism; incompatibility or interest? Once the source has been identified, you must identify the people to be targeted through whom the conflict could break out. Then, move onto individual contacts having clearly received the information on the contours of the tension.

Prevention works better when the situation is still at the level of “tension”. Understood by this is a climate of cooling of relations observed visibly between two people or two communities.

Our societies are often in the habit of quickly extrapolating socio-professional conflicts into community conflicts. A problem between two community leaders very quickly becomes a problem between two communities, if prevention does not intervene early. This is the main reason for our permanent concern to always anticipate and prevent conflict before the situation worsens.

Preventing a conflict should be understood as “anticipating the eruption of a nascent or potential conflict. Aiming to inhibit the eruption of a violent conflict, avoid the conflict degenerating into violence”<sup>1</sup>.

To prevent conflicts, the social actor must play the role of educator and trainer, that is to say provide the other civil players with the know-how that allows them to manage their conflict in a constructive way, remove the appearance of legitimacy from violence, teach tolerance, the methods practiced to manage daily tensions. Avoid allowing the situation to break out into open conflict or violence.

<sup>1</sup> Fidèle MUANDA MIKIAMA, Pour une humanité réconciliée, Guide du formateur à la transformation pacifique des conflits, publisher, CEC, Matadi, 2010, pp. 21–22.

In our training, we insist on the advantages of being “proactive” as a social actor engaged in peace building. We start from the assumption that when your neighbour’s hut is on fire, the wind can carry the flames to your home. You must therefore always forestall within the organisation or society.

## II. The obstacles peace builders often encounter

We use the terminology of civil players who are also peace activists. This appellation seems very dynamic to us in our mission of peace building. Any positive action is always gripped by an internal or external opposition. Working more on the terrain of the Church but also of society, the obstacles we often come up against are the people who pull the strings in the shadows, the perpetually dissatisfied and the warmongers who make a living from conflict and violence.

Those who pull the strings in the shadows are people who spread malicious rumours, false information and divide people. They invent stories that oppose the people in charge of an organisation. They are content when people are squabbling within an organisation. They draw information from one side to carry gossip to the other side. As soon as the peace builder notices this, they must quickly tackle the problem at the root. They must first collect information from those pulling the strings without pointing the finger at them as guilty. They will then initiate discussions respectively with one and the other of the parties potentially in conflict.

As the dissension has not yet grown, it is easier to put out a small fire that could set the savannah alight. Once it has been ascertained with certainty that the string puller is the hub that wants to light the fire between the two protagonists, the peace worker must address them directly and suggest that they cease playing the role of chameleon. Subsequently, after listening to the two protagonists separately, suggest that they meet around a table to end the tension that was threatening to erupt into open conflict.

The perpetually dissatisfied are people who often play the role of spoilsport. Within society or an organisation they are used to discouraging those who are motivated to work, to give themselves for the life of the organisation by giving their best. They are deeply pessimistic about everything. When the civil actor, peace builder, wants to mediate between the chief and a group of people with grievances, the spoilsport will try to dissuade them, by leading them to believe the approach will not work. The way to be heard would be to rise up against the chief. They are great leaders in the shadows but very close to the chief. They have a lot of influence on the leaders of the organisation.

There are warmongers who feed the violence within an organisation. Sometimes they work a lot on peace verbally, but they sabotage it in action within the organisation. What is important to this type of person is “only do as I say”. They say that without violence, nothing can change the situation. These people are dangerous for society. They are the ones who say no war, no business. They make violence their working capital. They are agitators who are sometimes very entrenched and difficult to seek out.

Faced with these three categories of opponents, conflict prevention is urgent on every front for they exploit the cultural, economic and political terrain. The attitude of the peace builder must be constancy, the audacity to succeed in the initiative and the determination to not fall into the trap of discouragement.

### III. Our questions

There is a series of questions that sometimes cause my heart to ache on the subject of peace building in the Churches, in the organisations and in society.

- ◆ Why, with so many stones in front of us, do we prefer to use them to build separating walls, walls that fragment instead of building walkways and bridges to cement the peace between brothers and sisters, between humans on this people's earth?

- ◆ How can we build citadels in the hearts of humans to live in a pacified and reconciled humanity?
- ◆ How can civil players help the string pullers who fight peace so that they know that nothing is worth more than peace in the world?

#### IV. Local mechanisms used to prevent conflicts

We have several local mechanisms we use to prevent conflicts.

In our culture, prevention has always been given pride of place. Our ancestors even used a great many proverbs in this domain:

To introduce prevention concerning a situation which promises to be scabrous I would say for example “Before the finger is cut, you must already bandage it”. We therefore use silent diplomacy when the authorities are involved, open mediation when we are faced with two groups or two communities. Sometimes key civil players already experienced in prevention lead the action.

In our culture, prevention is given pride of place. “If you want to flee conflict go to the fields”: this proverb means the more idle one is the more one is exposed to conflicts because you are going to talk about everything and anything until you touch upon a controversial subject that could lead to a conflict and to war. We are taught from an early age that the busier you are working, the more you are spared arguments and discussions that turn into disputes.

In our Church we have peace commissions within the parish committees which take care of prevention of potential conflicts. They also take care of the settlement, resolution and transformation of conflicts.

These different concepts have, as we understand it, different nuances regarding their applications on the ground. Settling a conflict, means putting an end to violent behaviour by reaching a peaceful agreement. This idea from Pastor Martin Luther King can help us to pinpoint the problem issues of “peaceful conflict resolution”. This great peace builder said that “Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which

rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love”.<sup>2</sup>

Peaceful conflict resolution means “seeking a consensus between the protagonists. It means proposing dialogue and concertation after having answered the why and the how to end the conflict at hand. Resolution treats the causes of the conflict and seeks to establish new and stable relations between hostile groups”<sup>3</sup>.

Peaceful conflict transformation is an approach that consists in peacefully correcting realities and social structures that are unfair, unequal, discriminatory and exclusive into a situation and structure that are fairer, equal and inclusive. It aims for social, cultural and behavioural change to achieve dignified self-acceptance. Peaceful conflict transformation deals with all of the social and political sources of a conflict and seeks to transform the negative energy of the conflict into positive social and political change. It is therefore a question of making often unfair and unequal relations fairer and more equitable.

In the Churches, injustices and inequalities are often posed in terms of executive promotion in the two departments of cooperation between State and Church which are: education and health. There are sometimes places that are geographically aggrieved, consistories marginalised and minority communities given little consideration. Correcting all the injustices and inequalities consists in giving the same promotions to people with similar skill levels in all the consistories. It goes without saying that for gender, for equal skill levels, women must be given just as many promotions as men.

2 Martin Luther King, “I have a dream”, Nobel Prize acceptance speech, December 1964.

3 Fidèle Muanda Mikiama, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37

## Conclusion

Preventing conflicts has the advantage of making our societies and organisations more stable environments, that can resist violent conflicts and by ricochet effect be favourable to sustainable development. Already at the level of prevention, we speak of reconciliation when this is the salt that preserves the savour of human relations. It is an act that restores peace, and brings closer together tribes, ethnic groups, communities and peoples.

Conflict prevention is the bedrock of peace. Everything, or almost everything, in life is related to peace. The stable and sustainable development of a country, a society or an organisation is strongly conditioned by cultural, economic and political peace, for nothing can be built in cultural, economic and especially political insecurity.

Conflict prevention for a society resistant to violent conflicts is therefore an urgent mission, that is imperative and an obligation to us all.

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# Prevention of conflicts: experiences from schools in South Kivu

*By Divine Kasimbi and David Mukamba\**

There are problems both in the communities and in the Protestant schools located there. Injustices form areas of often latent tensions which may erupt into more violent conflicts later. This is evidenced above all by the tribalism and favouritism which can lead to a crisis. This is how the protestant schools of South-Kivu in DRC, undertake conflict prevention activities conducted by pupils who are members of the peace clubs.

In what ways can we build local capacities for peace?

## A) Training

Given that our Peace work is specifically oriented towards schools, we took the initiative of training educators (teachers and headmasters) and the pupils in certain schools on Peace education and the peaceful transformation of conflicts. This training aimed to capacitate the educational players on different themes, to wit:

- ◆ **Key concepts as basis of Peace Education (Peace, Violence),**
- ◆ **Notions about conflict** (Types of conflict, Causes of conflict, Evolution of conflicts, Style of behaviour in the face of conflict)

\*CPS Provincial Coordination team of the Protestant Schools, ECP/SK, South Kivu, DR Congo



- ◆ **Peaceful conflict transformation techniques** (Dialogue, Negotiation, Mediation)
- ◆ **Peace Clubs in schools** (transformation and prevention of conflicts, promotion of peace culture in the school community)

When the training has been completed, we create Peace clubs in each school, which are structured around the three intervention cells of conflict prevention, peaceful transformation of conflicts and the promotion of Peace culture.

There are conflict prevention activities for each Peace club according to the three cells. Among the activities we have songs, poetry, sketches, drama, etc. Here is an example of some poems, sketches and songs by the children in the schools:

### 1. Values for peaceful cohabitation

A: Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

Study with girls, me? No, no, no.

I really don't want to!

Like that one, a girl from another ethnic group? No, I refuse!!!

B: Hello Mr.

Eh! Eh! Eh! Eh! Eh! You are bad!

I can see you tormenting yourself,

But everything you said is anti-value.

There are stereotypes, hatred, tribalism and I haven't mentioned half of it.

A: What can I do my friend?

B: Live values such as:

Love they neighbour, team spirit, solidarity and even more.

C: Eh! eh! eh!, my brothers!

What are you arguing about?

Let us live in peaceful cohabitation!

Let us reconcile, forget the past in order to experience sustainable Peace in the Region.



## 2. Sketch for integration of all the tribes

Father: My wife, where is our son Jay?

Mother: Daddy, he went out for a walk dear!

Father: But it is already late for coming back home.

Mother: He's young, you know! He won't be long.

Father: That's alright then.

Mother: Have a seat, we'll wait for him.

Son: (tormenting himself on the way): Ah! Ah! I really like this girl! But will my parents accept her? She is Tutsi and with the tribalism that reigns in the region?

*Knock knock!*

Mother: Who is it?

Son: It's your son Jay, Mum!

Mother: Come closer my son!

Son: Good evening my dear parents! After my studies, I found a good job and now I want to marry a woman.

Father: Ah Ah! Eh Eh! This is really a very good thing my Son. But, where do you want to find a wife?

Son: Ah! My parents, I'm going to suggest some tribes and ethnic

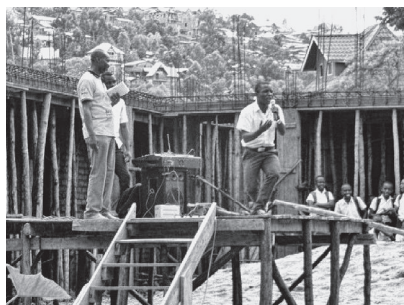
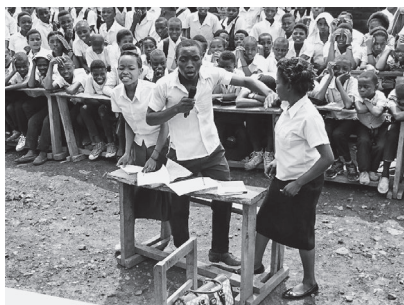
groups for you to guide me! Either from the Tutsi, the Hutu, the Hunde, the Nande, the Banyamulenge or the Bashi.

Mother: My son, in all these tribes there are good, beautiful women because they recognise the value of a man in the household.

Father: Listen my son! My wife is Nande, you elder brother has a Hutu wife, you can take a Tutsi wife, your younger brother will choose a Hunde or a Banyamulenge, and that way, our family will be extended.

Fils : Oh oh oh! Thank God! My parents are not like the others who are tribalist!

And now, what is there to stop me from marrying my darling Tutsi?



## Song

We refuse war, we want peace!

We refuse conflicts, we want peace!

All together,

Eeeh members of the peace club, Eeeh we promote peace!

All together for peace, let us rise up for peace!

Let us unite and seek Justice,

Let us unite and seek truth.

Ouah ouh Ouah ouh yelelele lele (2 ×)  
 Let us work together and pray together!  
 Let us act together and walk together!  
 And ban discrimination and segregation in this region  
 Seeking liberty and fraternity!

The poems, sketches and songs mentioned above as an example, are ways of raising the awareness of the school communities about the prevention of conflicts.



## B) Awareness-raising campaign

It is appropriate to mention also that we organise awareness-raising campaigns through participatory theatre. This campaign aims first of all to train the pupils on participatory theatre which is discussion theatre.

Participatory theatre is community theatre which explores the situations affecting a community and offers spectators a place for discussions aimed at resolving conflicts with the members of the community.

Pupils who are talented at theatre are trained to use their talent positively to raise the awareness of the others to have peace at school. In the performances organised, they are called upon to cover themes that relate to the situation which does not favour peace at school, then they allow the audience space to discuss and propose possible tracks for solutions to the problems.



### C) Regional meetings

Regional meetings aimed at capacity building are also initiated within the framework of educating for peace and promoting Christian values to further peace in the region. They bring together pupils and educators from Rwanda and from two provinces of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo: North and South-Kivu.

These activities are always accompanied by cultural presentations by the pupils through traditional dances, theatre sketches, poems and songs and then sanctioned by the planting of trees for peace.



### *Difficulties encountered*

As the field of action for the coordination of protestant schools in South-Kivu is vast, there are areas where there are frequent conflicts, but they are difficult to access due to the insecurity caused by the presence of several armed groups.

# **The CBCA's approach to reducing inter-community tension in Ruzizi Plain/Uvira Territory in South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2012–2018)**

*By Pierre Murhula Kaheto\**

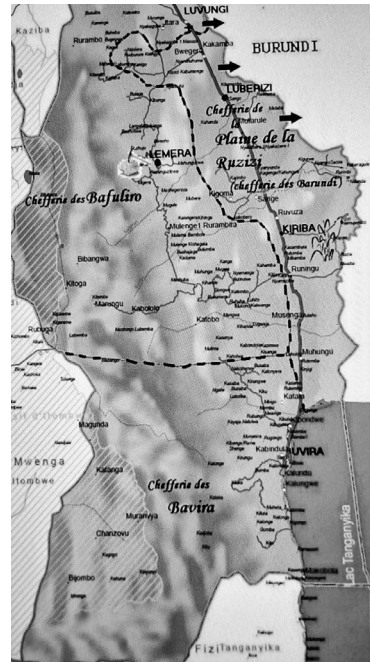
## **Summary**

This article describes the inter-community dialogue approach that the Baptist Community in the Centre of Africa (CBCA) is using to reduce conflicts and tension in the chieftaincy of Ruzizi Plain, Uvira territory, South Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was observed that conflicts between communities result from internal and external factors that are social, political, economic and cultural. These conflicts have more negative consequences than positive on the population of the chieftaincy of Ruzizi Plain in general and on the members of the two communities (Bafuliiru and Barundi) in particular. This article constitutes an overview of the CBCA's approach which has contributed to inter-community pacification in the area. Although these recurrent and persistent conflicts between communities are violent, the CBCA shares its experiences by showing some of its activities on the ground that are helping to reduce tensions today. As it would not be possible to discuss the CBCA's approach and its experiences in the reduction of tensions without an understanding of the context, the reader will also find some elements related to the context and historical background of the community conflicts and tensions in Ruzizi Plain.

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## 1. Introduction

The chieftaincy of Ruzizi Plain is situated in the North-East of Uvira territory on the border with Burundi which lies to the East. To the West of the chieftaincy are the Middle and High Plateaus of Uvira which adjoin the High Plateaus of Mwenga. Ruzizi Plain chieftaincy is one of the three chiefdoms in Uvira territory. The majority of the population are Bafuliru. The second largest portion of the population are Barundi, who are Tutsis originally from Burundi. There is also a significant number of Banyamulenge, Bavira and Babembe and other communities.



*Map of Uvira territory*

## 2. The context and chronology of the intercommunity tensions in Ruzizi Plain

The tension between Bafuliru and Barundi communities is the most recurrent in this chieftaincy. A good understanding of the history is necessary to grasp the dynamics of the conflict and current tensions. It is first of all important to understand the origin of the different communities that people Ruzizi Plain. The Bafuliru arrived at the end of the 19th century. The Barundi settled there during the first half of the 19th century. Although the Bafuliru arrived later, they consider themselves the “native” community, knowing that they had already been settled in the Middle Plateaus of Uvira since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Barundi



are often associated with the Banyamulenge who also belong to the Burundi and Rwandan communities which arrived in Eastern DRC (Kivu) after a number of waves of migration. The colons had installed Rwandan communities there. The Banyamulenge are Tutsi of Burundian and Rwandan origin who live mainly in the High Plateaus of Uvira, Fizi and Mwenga. The Babembe are considered “native” to Mwenga. Before this wave of organised migration, a minority of Banyamulenge lived in the High Plateaus of Mwenga, Uvira and Fizi and the Barundi lived in Ruzizi Plain. Other migrants also arrived following famines and political conflicts between 1905 and 1974, the anti-Tutsi riots in Rwanda during the crisis of independence (1959-1963) or again, from Burundi, in the years following the colonial period .

The tensions between these ethnic groups can be summarised in 4 stages: the first ethnic tensions, the violence between ethnic groups at the beginning of the '90s, the political manoeuvres and inter-ethnic land, power and identity.



*The JPSC/ CBCA sets up strategies to rescue and reduce tension through inter-community dialogue between farmers and cattle breeders in KILIBA: Uvira May 2018.*

### 3. The CBCA's experiences in reducing inter-community tensions in Ruzizi

Ruzizi Plain is a vast field of evangelisation for the CBCA, which cannot remain silent about a territory where intercommunity conflicts and tension are recurrent. Having analysed the elements that disturb the peace of the population, including, *inter alia*, identity-related problems, conflicts for land between livestock breeders and farmers, conflicts over power and many others, the CBCA decided to employ a community approach by organising dialogue between the communities.

The inter-community dialogue approach had mostly been missing from national agendas and yet the distant causes of the conflicts and tension in Ruzizi Plain always include a mention of certain decrees and ordinance laws by the state authorities which were signed without dialogue or consensus with the grassroots. We can also mention the dividing up of Ruzizi Plain into three chiefdoms without prior consultation of the grassroots beforehand.

The efforts invested by the CBCA in the inter-community dialogue approach have helped to expose the roots of the tendency to conflict and tension in Ruzizi Plain. The following roots were identified: ethnic tensions related to land, political manoeuvrings, power struggles and inter ethnic identities. These problems listed above must integrate tailor-made responses to the local conflicts and tensions that the players in conflict resolution still tend to ignore too often; this is the search for a solution that includes the participation of the stakeholders in the conflict.

The CBCA therefore took the initiative to group together all the layers of society: young people, women, customary chiefs, opinion makers and leaders in their respective milieus. After these meetings in February 2013, everyone expressed the desire to meet again for reconciliation. The CBCA organised a meeting in Bukavu on 30/06/2014 attended by all the stakeholders in the conflicts and tensions and a structure was created called Inter-community Cell for peace and development in Ruzizi

Plain. The observation was that the conflicts and tensions of the plain were already spilling over to affect the inhabitants of Bukavu, as well as those of Baraka and Uvira. With this dialogue, we therefore identified not only the roots of the conflicts and tensions in Ruzizi Plain but also their consequences and hidden ramifications across the entire province of South-Kivu.

Even if violence seems to dominate Ruzizi Plain, the work of listening to the stakeholders in the conflicts and tensions has shown that the majority of the population is in favour of dialogue around the existing problems. Out of a total 102 people who took part in dialogue, a majority of them leaders and opinion makers, 96, or 94%, said dialogue remains one of the most desired mechanisms in the framework of conflict resolution and reducing the tensions in Ruzizi Plain. They therefore wish to have frameworks for exchange and permanent dialogue in their entity.

#### 4. The CBCA's inter-community approach to reducing tensions in Ruzizi

The inter-community approach consists in meetings for exchanges, discussions and dialogue. The CBCA is currently using this approach, which allows the parties to the conflict to meet, exchange, tell each other about the realities of their divergences and seek concerted palliative solutions. The approach allows the antagonists to conduct peace actions together despite the differences opposing them. It is helpful for building peace, peaceful cohabitation and re-establishing trust between the former actors of social conflicts. In the construction of good interethnic social cohesion in Ruzizi Plain, the CBCA is currently conducting concrete actions for reducing tensions. Numerous meetings have taken place between the CBCA and the customary chiefs, between the CBCA and the opinion leaders. Certain meetings have taken place in Bukavu and others in Uvira in preparation of a calm dialogue between the communities. After the meetings with the chiefs and leaders, the CBCA met

with different layers of society, starting with young people, women and others. Listening to the different stakeholders led the CBCA to organise an inter-community dialogue, the results of which have enabled progress to be made. The CBCA also set up a committee for monitoring the recommendations from the inter-community dialogue and called it the Inter-community Cell for peace and development in Ruzizi Plain. The headquarters are in Kiliba. It meets once a month to assess and direct the joint, intercommunity actions, and the CBCA provides coaching. It comprises 6 members from different ethnic groups and communities living in Ruzizi Plain.

For the moment, apart from the actions mentioned above, for the pacification and consolidation of peace actions in Ruzizi Plain, the CBCA is pursuing the following activities:

- ◆ Bringing together the local players in mini intercommunity dialogues on peace every three months.
- ◆ Organising seminars and conferences aimed at peace culture and tolerance between the members of the different ethnic communities.
- ◆ Conducting activities likely to bring the communities closer together including sports and events for young people such as football, theatre, poetry competitions, etc.
- ◆ Circulating leaflets to disseminate messages on peaceful cohabitation and the importance of dialogue.
- ◆ Creating income-generating activities, for economic peace in favour of the members of the different ethnic groups. The CBCA has just set up a cooperative for cotton farmers and stockbreeders at Kiliba, with the aim of inter-community rapprochement. Also, we have initiated a revolving microcredit system for members.

Regarding the impact of the aforementioned dialogue, the tension has considerably diminished and the population (Barundi and Bafuliiru) who had already deserted their villages just after the massacres at

Mutarule) have agreed to return to their respective villages. The rapprochement and reduction of suspicion between communities is also a major impact of the sports activities involving young people plus the economic activities for farmers and stockbreeders. Meanwhile the radio programmes broadcast, the conferences and seminars are helping to reduce tension, by fostering a culture of tolerance, non violence and trust between the communities and ethnic groups in Ruzizi Plain. However, despite the efforts made by the CBCA, the path to full reconciliation is still long and above all it is a process.

For greater success in their social dialogue approach, the CBCA does not work alone. It cooperates with other civil society organisations and local churches. It also strives to capitalise on all the achievements of the other local, provincial, national and international partners who are activists for restoring peace in Ruzizi and above all who use approaches similar to that of the CBCA.

## 5. Conclusion

The approach the CBCA employs for reducing tension, essentially based on social dialogue and the reconciliation of social groups, has achieved significant progress in the pacification of Ruzizi Plain. The CBCA adopted this approach to reducing tensions in this part of Uvira territory at just the right time and is delighted with the results already obtained. It is therefore necessary to continue the social, intercommunity dialogues and joint peace and development actions to bolster the trust between ethnic groups in Ruzizi Plain.

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