



The Civil Peace Service in Rwanda

Background, Programs, Results



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The Civil Peace Service (ZFD)

Formation and Objectives

The Civil Peace Service (ZFD) was created in 1999 and currently works in 35 post-conflict countries around the world. Its objective is to reduce all forms of violence through establishing partnerships with local civil society organisations and building their capacity to work effectively in the fields of peaceful conflict resolution and conflict reduction.

The ZFD, financed by the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is a consortium of nine member organizations from governmental, civil society and church-based backgrounds working in the areas of peace and development, who pool resources and combine approaches to achieve the vision of a 'connected peace'.

Work and Expected Impact

Based on an assessment of local needs, the ZFD sends advisors to support local partner organisations in pre and post-conflict regions through developing their capacity to solve conflicts peacefully and enhancing their ability

to act as agents for peaceful change in society, based on the concept of human rights.

As external observers, ZFD advisors are able to remain objective and transcend party lines, offering unbiased viewpoints and analysing conflicts from different perspectives. This helps them to facilitate peace processes through the different stages of a conflict.

Civil Peace Service in GIZ

As the only governmental deployment agency of the ZFD, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) employs around 100 international and 100 national peace experts in 18 countries. The ZFD is a country-based program in line with the relevant ZFD country strategy, and is most active in areas where, due to its history, Germany is regarded by the international community as both competent and credible:

- Historical reappraisal
- Coordinating and implementing processes of reconciliation and dialogue
- Advocating and working for human rights

The Civil Peace Service in Rwanda

Background

Rwanda gained independence from Belgium in 1962. Increasingly violent conflicts between the Tutsi and Hutu led to massacres and civil war, culminating in the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 in which at least 800,000 people died. The violence created millions of refugees whose return presents another source of conflict in present day Rwanda.

The Rwandan Government has committed both itself and the Rwandan people to the task of overcoming the division between different identity groups, while trying to resolve the dilemma between demands for justice and the need for reconciliation as the basis for a shared future. This reconciliation process is further complicated by the huge numbers of traumatized people, the need to accommodate returning refugees, daily encounters between victims and perpetrators, high prevalence of domestic violence, poverty and social inequality, and unemployment.

*Supporting the Rwandan
peace-building process through
fostering reconciliation*

ZFD Work in Rwanda

Since 2001, the Civil Peace Service has contributed to peace-building efforts in the Great Lakes region of Eastern Africa by supporting the Rwandan reconciliation process and by improving conditions for developing a culture of peace. Its goal is to contribute to

positive peace and peaceful conflict resolution, while working towards preventing renewed violence by helping people to deal with the past in a constructive way. The work of the Civil Peace Service in Rwanda is jointly carried out by the

German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the German Association for Development Cooperation (AGEH).

The ZFD programme in Rwanda is currently implemented by a group of seven international and five national peace advisors who support six Civil Society organisations.

Partners and Programs

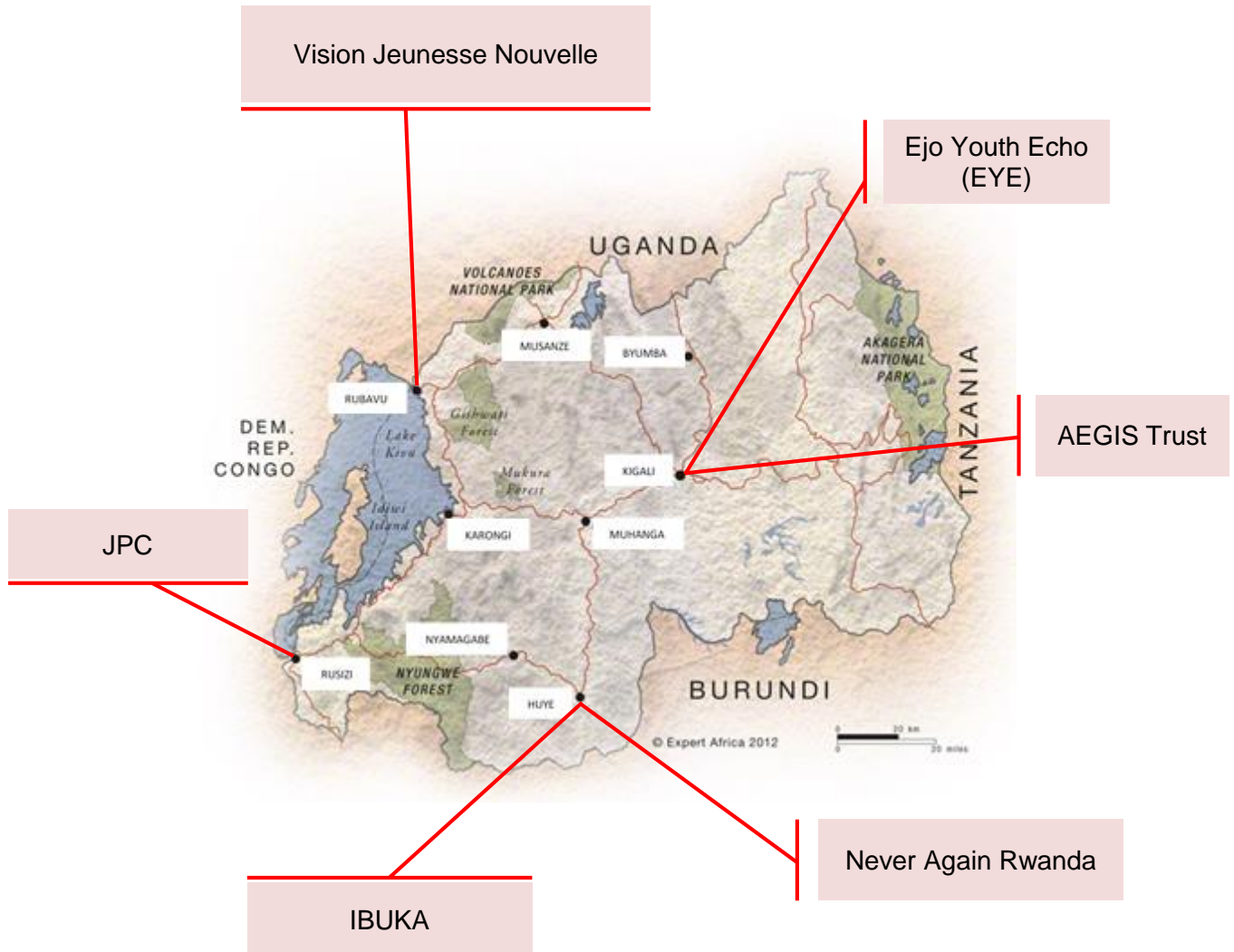
The ZFD partners with Civil Society Organisations working in the areas of peace education, conflict transformation and trauma, conflict-sensitive journalism, and empowering youth and vulnerable people (such as genocide survivors). A key task of the programme is to enhance our partner organisations' capacity to apply civil conflict resolution and violence prevention methods. Both national and international experts focus on reconciliation and conflict transformation through:

- Acting as consultants on peace and reconciliation processes
- Trauma counselling
- Human Rights sensitisation
- Youth orientation
- Constructively dealing with the past, commemoration, and memory
- Conflict-sensitive journalism

In the broader context of interregional peace-building activities, the ZFD supports the formation of structures for enhancing cooperation and dialogue between various actors of the Great Lakes region, with a strong focus on youth.



Project Locations and Descriptions of Partner Organizations



IBUKA

IBUKA (meaning “remember”), formed in 1995, is the umbrella organization of genocide survivor associations.

Its duty is to represent the interests of genocide survivors and to coordinate all actions relating to their support and rehabilitation

<http://www.ibuka.rw/>

AEGIS

The Aegis Trust is an international non-governmental organization working to prevent genocide

Aegis has been responsible for the Kigali Genocide Memorial since 2004, honouring the memory of the victims, and for establishing the Genocide Archive. Aegis works through education to build long-term peace and confront the prejudices and beliefs that lead to genocide.

Aegis is currently working on providing evidence-based policy advice on genocide prevention and reconstruction to appropriate decision-makers.

<http://www.aegistrust.org>

Justice and Peace Commission (JPC)

The JPC is an institution of the Catholic Church. It works in the Cyangugu Diocese, trying to build a society guided by the principles of peace, justice and human dignity.

The JPC is active in the areas of peace education, social cohesion and unity, conflict resolution, and easing cross-border tension.

www.diocesecyangugu.com

Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle (VJN)

Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle is a church-based nongovernmental organization founded in 2002 which works in Rubavu District with disadvantaged youth affected by the genocide.

VJN's goal is to give every young person a better future through occupational training, sport and cultural projects that develop their talents and improve their lives.

www.visionjeunesse.rw.org

Ejo Youth Echo (EYE)

EYE, founded in 2014, is a radio program run by young journalists who produce periodic radio shows for young people in Rwanda, DRC and Burundi.

It aims to increase tolerance for diverse opinions and encourages critical thinking amongst their audience.

Never Again Rwanda (NAR)

NAR is a human rights and peace-building organization, established in 2002 in response to the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi.

It addresses post-genocide divisions between young Rwandans and works with youth to develop their capacity as leaders and empower them to contribute to sustainable peace and development in their nation.

<http://www.neveragainrwanda.org/index.php/en/>

Some Examples of ZFD's Projects with Partner Organizations

IBUKA

The ZFD works with IBUKA to develop and consolidate the use of civil conflict resolution methods through local and interregional activities.

Background

The consequences of and tensions arising from the genocide remain pervasive in Rwanda; perpetrators and survivors face each other in their daily life, domestic violence is high, and there is a strong correlation between the return of refugees and land conflicts. Large numbers of traumatized people and a lack of knowledge of and access to methods of civil conflict resolution in all districts lead to problems for reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation.

Project Goals

- Developing cooperation and dialogue structures across conflict lines and the creation of an enabling environment
- Reintegrating and rehabilitating people affected by violence

- Training and support in the use of instruments and methods of civil conflict resolution and trauma counselling, and the development of a conflict mediator network

Counterparts and Target Groups

- Psychologists and IBUKA staff members
- Volunteers ("Animateurs Psychosociaux": APS), who work at village level
- Governmental and civil society actors
- Stakeholders in the Burundi psychological sector
- People living in the three target districts - Huye, Gisagara and Nyarugugu
- Target groups from Burundian partners

Results

- Ninety volunteers have been trained in trauma counselling and conflict transformation, providing psychosocial and mediation services to over 2,000 people each year
- Establishment of a conflict resolution and trauma counselling network amongst trained APS and international actors working in this area

Peaceful conflict resolution in southern Rwanda

‘Trauma can be both the root and the result of violent conflicts.’ This principle, on which IBUKA developed the “Management of Community Conflicts” project in 2011, was drawn from many experiences of working in Rwandan society, where residual trauma from the genocide continues to resonate within current conflicts. For instance, a man became involved in a violent dispute with his neighbour over the ownership of some land. This sparked a recurrence of symptoms of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which he suffered from the genocide, such as insomnia, losing consciousness and confusion, and made it much harder for the land conflict to be resolved. In another example, a woman suffering from PTSD had trouble getting up in the morning, felt depressed, and suffered from recurring fantasies of death in the family. She was unable to run her household and became increasingly isolated, while her family did not understand what was happening, leading to daily conflicts within the home.

IBUKA has trained 90 voluntary social workers (APS) to help people in similar situations through supporting reconciliation processes in the villages. During their training they learnt to understand the dynamics of conflict and to recognize the symptoms of trauma. Furthermore, they learnt methods for dealing with conflict and trauma and for solving conflicts non-violently. The project offers ongoing support to the volunteers through regular supervision sessions, guided by professional psychologists, providing the APS with an open space to exchange experiences and receive counselling themselves where necessary. This enhances both the volunteers’ professional qualification and their personal self-care mechanisms, and helps them to intervene effectively in response to the needs they encounter in the community in trauma and conflict cases.

During their daily work in the villages, the APS talk to conflict parties about the symptoms of trauma and the consequences of violent behaviour, and work to rebuild relationships between conflicting



neighbours, married couples, and even between victims and perpetrators of the genocide. Reconciliation often leads to an economic empowerment of the affected people. The high demand for their services in the community increases the volunteers’ motivation and self-esteem, while also highlighting the need for alternative, peaceful solutions for the consequences of the mass violence of the genocide which are still being felt within Rwandan society.

Never Again Rwanda (NAR)

The ZFD works with Never Again Rwanda to support the promotion of civil conflict resolution methods and the development of critical thinking skills amongst young people.

Background

In addition to the problems arising from the aftermath of the genocide, such as the reinforcement of hostile stereotypes, many other sources of conflict exist, such as the unstable political situation in neighbouring countries and land disputes, as well as conflicts between young people arising from divisionism and incompatible ideologies.

Project Goals

- Developing and consolidating civil conflict resolution methods and promoting mutual respect amongst young people
- Enhancing dialogue and developing critical thinking skills
- Establishing public speaking contests
- Creating a forum for exchange and discussion for youth and other civil society members and governmental institutions
- Strengthening youth clubs and associations with regards to conflict resolution and transformation

Counterparts and Target Groups

- Staff members of Never Again Rwanda
- Teachers from project partner schools
- Young people in secondary schools and Universities
- Local communities and local authorities

Results

- An annual commemoration conference with 200 participants has been held every year since 2011, giving youth the opportunity to discuss commemoration policy and practice and develop recommendations for policy makers
- A mobile exhibition tour, which has been seen by around 4500 people, enabling dialogue on the past and on peacebuilding in the communities
- Creating spaces for exchange and discussion on the present and past has helped to create cohesion among youth and empowered them to overcome divisions
- Synergies and trust have been created between all relevant actors by exchanging information and knowledge in a transparent way

Creating a network for peace

NAR's Peacebuilding Institute (PBI) is a bi-annual event which poses the question: "What can Rwanda teach the world?" Responding to a situation where conflicts within both Rwanda and the surrounding region have been fuelled by divisionism and negative stereotypes, the PBI brings together university students from across the Great Lakes area and from all over the world to discuss the history of genocide, transitional justice, unity and reconciliation, as well as development, focusing on the Rwandan experience. The two weeks are structured as a learning process, and include presentations from experts alongside visits to memorial sites, museums and governmental institutions. The visits to memorial sites in particular lead to discussions not only on what has happened, but also on how the past should be commemorated. These open discussions between the participants are at the heart of the learning process, with everyone bringing their expertise, discussing their own countries' experiences, and learning from each other. These discussions are instrumental in giving the participants the opportunity to form their own judgements.



One discussion might see participants from South America sharing their experiences on dealing with the past and overcoming violence, another might see students from different parts of the Great Lakes region compare their own models of development with what they see in Rwanda. The discussions are diverse and cover both achievements and challenges, and for many participants this reflection on the history of the Rwandan genocide becomes a starting point for reflecting on the conflict situation in their own countries and contexts. Over the two weeks of the PBI, the diverse participants begin to form a team of young people who work together to overcome their own stereotypes, learn more about the situations in other countries, make new friends, and develop the wish to become active in peacebuilding. Their exchanges help them to learn from each other about activities in their respective countries, form platforms for maintaining a continuous dialogue over the internet and become active in writing circles, forming their own associations and implementing their own projects.

The PBI Alumni have established a vibrant worldwide network which remains in contact with NAR, discusses peacebuilding issues from the viewpoint of the youth, and also adopts and implements some of NAR's peacebuilding activities with youth in their own contexts.

Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle (VJN)

The ZFD works with Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle on cross-border conflict prevention and dialogue promotion.

Background

The unstable political situation in eastern DR Congo still leads to violence and conflict in the Rubavu region, where various rebel movements operating in the border area terrorize the local population, leading to anger, fear and aggression. This in turn leads to fear of repression, and makes people from both sides frightened of crossing the border between the DRC and Rwanda.

Project Goals

- Strengthening the political, social and individual participation of young people
- Developing and consolidating a network between actors working in the field of civil conflict resolution
- Creating a space for exchange, dialogue and opinion-making about critical topics
- Educating people on Human Rights and capacity building in conflict resolution and reconciliation methods

- Promoting peacebuilding activities to reduce hostile stereotypes and create awareness about the effect of prejudices

Counterparts and Target Groups

- VJN staff members
- Animators, youth leaders, teachers and members of local partner and youth organizations
- Staff members of ministries and district administrations
- Representatives from youth and culture associations
- Young people from the border regions of Goma, Rubavu, South Kivu and Burundi

Results

- Approximately 280 students and 40 teachers use skills in “CINEDUC” and “Public Speaking” methods in local, regional and national competitions
- The “Tujenge Amani” peace-building program has allowed around 170 participants from Rwanda and DR Congo and 25 trainers to participate in projects to reduce prejudice and negative perceptions, reaching 1,400 people

Participatory Theatre

What happens when 18 youth from Goma in the DRC and from Rubavu in Rwanda meet for a few days, get to know each other, share food and rooms, tell their own stories, discuss the experiences they have had with each other's countries and reveal the images they have of "the other" in their minds?



The young participants in this cross border theatre project have reproduced their own stories in the form of dialogues, monologues, light, colour, dance, music and visual art. "Tomate ya kuhalibika" (rotten tomato) is a special kind of theatre play which produces a strong emotional effect amongst the audience. Stereotypes, prejudices and accusations which are rarely talked about are confronted head on, and the scenes that are performed are both provoking and only too familiar to people living in the Kivu area.

The border region around Goma and Rubavu has been a crucible of violence, manipulation and insecurity for decades. Prejudices in people's minds on both sides of the border form a significant obstacle to building a sustainable peace in the region. Mistrust has become a major characteristic of the relationship between Rwandans and Congolese. The participatory theatre play is used as a tool to open discussions, breaking down taboos and creating a space for exchange and dialogue. The audience itself becomes an actor and tries to find solutions for concrete problems.

The Rwandan-Congolese theatre group, which has become a family since its creation in November 2013 and which has performed regularly in Goma and Rubavu ever since, is living proof that no one in this region is unconcerned by the prejudices and the violence which affects daily life. But it is also proof that these prejudices can be overcome and that friendship and peaceful co-existence are possible. The young actors' performance is so strong and convincing that no spectator remains unimpressed. The audience will go home with a few questions and maybe, the next time a critical situation arises, they will be better equipped to resist prejudice and stereotypes dictating their actions.

Ejo Youth Echo (EYE)

The cooperation between ZFD and EYE aims at promoting conflict-sensitive journalism in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region.

Background

Due to the deeply-rooted and complex history of conflicts in the Great Lakes region, violence and its consequences are still visible and have a significant impact on the socio-political situation in Rwanda.

Project Goals

- Developing conflict-sensitive reporting skills within the EYE team
- Reducing prejudice through the production of cross-border radio shows for young people in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC
- Promoting critical thinking and the responsible use of media through the support of media clubs at schools
- Establishing a network between EYE and other radio stations and journalists in the Great Lakes region
- Broadening an audience base through both producing conflict-sensitive radio shows and discussing them critically

Counterparts and Target Groups

- EYE staff members and journalists
- Other young journalists from Burundi and DR Congo
- The EYE radio audience and students from the Great Lakes region

Results

- Over 700,000 listeners in the Great Lakes region follow the EYE radio transmissions
- Youth are being appreciated as responsible actors in developing future perspectives for making peace impacts sustainable
- A number of young journalists from Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC are now trained in conflict-sensitive, fair and impartial journalism that enhances the quality of the programs they produce, and fosters peaceful relations by reducing stereotypes
- Young people from the Great Lakes region feel that the radio shows reflect their problems and give them a voice through participation

Neighbours on Air

With a recorder in her hand, Betty Ndayisaba tries to navigate around the concert visitors. The densely packed crowd stands on the dry grass and cheers a regional rap star while he shouts the slogan of the event - *“For Peace!”* - into his microphone. The rapper is one of more than ten musicians from the DR Congo, Burundi and Rwanda who perform this day on the stage in Goma. This music festival on the border of Rwanda and DR Congo is a perfect event for the youth radio program, EYE. Political tensions in the Great Lakes region affect the civil society and create distances between people, and it is something special for people from these three countries to sing and celebrate a concert together.

EYE’s program shows young people from all three countries how much they have in common, such as all liking good music! Betty Ndayisaba and her team have been producing a radio show which has been broadcast by the American international radio station Voice of America since 2008. Once a month, the EYE team works together with journalists from DRC and Burundi on a program for young listeners which discusses a relevant topic from all three countries’ perspectives. The show is a huge success, and young people constantly call in to report how the program has changed their attitudes and perceptions towards people in their neighbouring countries in positive ways. For example, 26 year old Ildephonse Nsekanabo had only ever heard negative things about his neighbouring countries, but since listening to EYE’s programs he has been trying to save money so he can visit them for himself one day.



The young journalists also became friends during their common projects, and when Betty meets her Congolese colleague Chantal Salumu in the crowd the girls hug each other saying that political tensions are not their concern; they want to work at a local level to foster and improve relationships between people from the region. They smile and enjoy the concert together, while the *“Free Press”* slogan on Chantal’s T-shirt shines bright and visible in the concert crowd.