

Working with a Participatory Approach

Civil Peace Service in Kenya

Challenges and Opportunities

The re-occurring mantra of “Kenya as an island of peace in Africa” is belied by Kenya’s history. In many parts of the country, violent conflicts erupt regularly along ethnic lines. Mostly they relate to disputes over access to and ownership of natural resources, livestock theft, or are fuelled by political interests and abuse of power. Large parts of the country suffer from chronic insecurity and high levels of criminality leading to death and internal and external displacement, thus accelerating the conflict circle around resource distribution and land allocation. The post-election violence 2007/2008 marked one of the peaks of violent conflict in Kenya, leaving about 1.200 people dead and 600.000 displaced. It constituted the entry point for the German Civil Peace Service (CPS) engagement. Since then, the CPS programme in GIZ supports the conflict sensitive implementation of the Constitution, strengthens inner Kenyan processes for rehabilitation and reconciliation, and creates sustainable structures for non-violent conflict transformation. CPS also engages in strengthening conflict-sensitive media work and supporting the advocacy work of human rights actors.

Our Approach

Eight Peace Building Advisors strengthen the capacity of local organizations in the field of dialogue, conflict sensitivity, and non-violent conflict transformation. They support inclusive approaches and fostering socioeconomic justice.

Inclusive and participatory work approaches contribute to the sustainability of the partners’ activities. They guarantee the participation of all affected sections of the population processes of opinion-forming. People in CPS’ target areas increasingly join hands across ethnical and other lines of conflict, autonomously initiate dialogue processes and peace building approaches. Their

example attracts observers and makes them request for new and additional activities.

Project name	Fostering Dialogue and Reducing Violence – Strengthening Civil Society Actors
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Rift Valley, Eastern, Coast, Nairobi
Lead executing agency	Civil Peace Service of <i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH</i>
Duration	01/09/2009 – 31/12/2018

Since 2014, CPS also runs the special programme “Preventing Displacements – Reintegrating IDPs”. It focuses on reconciliation between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host communities, strengthening cooperation between IDPs, host communities and local government, as well as advocacy and legal awareness raising.

Our Impact

- Sustainable structures for non-violent conflict transformation within our partner organisations as well as on grass-roots level.
- An Early Warning Early Response System contributes to conflict mitigation and violence reduction.
- Governmental and non-governmental actors integrate means of non-violent conflict transformation in their daily work.
- Communities initiate their own activities on the ground – be it on the level of conflict transformation, of interethnic entrepreneurship or other initiatives.
- CPS offers and capacities are in demand.



Picture on the left: A warm welcome for Coastal visitors in the Rift

Picture on the right: Workshops are done wherever possible- no big hotels needed

An example from the field

Facilitating activities at Likoni, Coast, and Burnt Forest, Rift Valley, CPS and its partner organisations always took pains to have the participants take the lead. So we were surprised when one year into the activities and during a meeting in Nairobi, attendees from Coast and Rift Valley asked CPS to help them set up an exchange: “We will accommodate our friends in our houses. Just help us to get together.”

Thus, 18 representatives from Burnt Forest came to travel to Likoni and vice versa. Each group stopped in Nairobi for a guided tour through the city and for a photo workshop. They were to document the exchange visits themselves. In Likoni as well as in Burnt Forest, CPS and its partners facilitated sessions on perceptions of “the self” and “the other” and on conflicts in general. The participants learnt about each others’ challenges and joys. The exchange became a shared learning experience, based on the encounter among people from various communities and various parts of the country.

“Before I started to Burnt Forest I had the image of Kikuyus to be careless and selfish, untrustworthy. The warm hospitality I experienced changed my image of them”, one participant described the immediate effect of the programme. A participant from Burnt Forest said “I was a bit afraid of going to the Coast since you hear about terrorism. All bearded men seemed to be Al Shabaab but they are not. Most are people like us.”

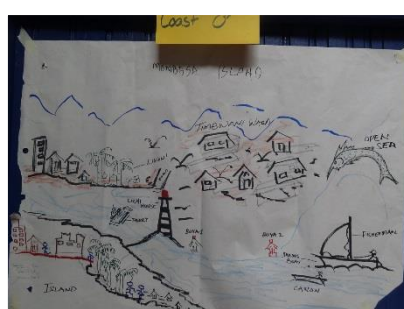
The exchange enabled the participants to look at their problems from distance and to reflect jointly on social conflicts and their dynamics. They developed a positive sense of identity in relation to “the other” and improved in exploring new vistas to deal with

daily challenges and conflicts. They enjoyed hosting their friends, and, as guests, they experienced new lifestyles. Friendships were strengthened, new ones established, business opportunities discovered and ideas freely exchanged.

Burnt Forest people praised the Coastal cuisine, bought spices and started preparing Coastal dishes at home; Coastarians appreciated the way Burnt Forest farmers use tractors for cultivation and apply modern fertilizers. “Their farms are very productive”, Rashid Mwashuhuli noted. “They have plenty of maize, vegetables and milk – that instilled in me a feeling that we are not working hard enough.” The exchange also showed economic opportunities: Coastarians discovered a ready market for their coconuts and mangoes in the Rift, as well as a market for potatoes from Burnt Forest at the Coast.

Burnt Forest people realized the serious land problems Coastarians face: Majengo Mapya residents e.g. are squatters, the beach area of the fishermen in Timbwani was grabbed by a private developer; Dongo Kundu residents are affected by a bypass construction: “Their land conflicts seem more serious than ours, because they often lack land titles.”

The exchange programme closed with sharing photos and experiences with the communities at home. There, the respective representatives also related to more comprehensive impacts of the project. In Burnt Forest e.g. school children nowadays are sent to the closest instead of the ethnically “right” school. Intercommunity trade has improved, joint enterprises been initiated. At the Coast, the fishermen founded a cooperative to lobby for their interests and involved the fishmonger women in decision making. Dongo Kundu residents also jointly advocate for their rights and strictly adhere to means of non-violent action.



Picture on the left: A joint reflection

Picture on the right: Where do we come from?

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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As at May 2015

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

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