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Great Lakes Region
Peace From the Ground Up

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Sustainable peace – local peace

THIS NEW ROUTES ISSUE is the result of a fruitful collaboration between the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) and the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation (IJR). Based at the opposite ends of the African-European continents, we have joined efforts in presenting possible ways forward to peace in the Great Lakes Region, with special focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Inspired by the IJR and Kroc conference “Peace From the Ground Up”, we give examples of theories and analyses of keynote speakers at the conference, as well as other researchers and practitioners with years of experience from the region. The process of seeking trust, justice and reconciliation cannot be imposed from above or from outside but must involve local actors and stakeholders, that is, grow “from the ground up”.

We extend our warm thanks to everyone involved in making this a very special outcome of the teamwork between IJR and LPI.

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Spaces for difficult dialogue

Fanie du Toit

During a recent tenure as Visiting Fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, USA, I was approached by Daniel Philpott, Professor of Political Science and Peace Studies, with a request to co-host a conference on peacebuilding in Africa.

– What would be different this time? There have been so many of these conferences, I asked Dan. His response, that this conference would focus on comparing bottom-up approaches to facilitate post-conflict socialisation through religious and cultural initiatives, not only convinced me that it would be worth pursuing. It also cohered perfectly with the mandate and vision of the organisation with which I had been associated for the past thirteen years, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR).

As the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission began to wind down, key figures within the Commission felt that this exact question, how to stitch together communities left broken and fragmented in apartheid’s wake, had received inadequate attention during the life of the Commission, and needed further thought and carefully-constructed engagement. And so, in 2000, the IJR was born.

Fourteen years on, and after nearly two decades of democracy, South Africa faces enormous pressure on its already weakened social fabric. Catastrophic job losses associated with the international financial crisis, massive, uncontrolled urbanisation and a faltering education system are combining to foment a “perfect storm” which, with increasing frequency, is spilling over from peri-urban slum areas into more well-to-do areas. It is as if the poor are telling the rich: “We are in this together. Our futures are interdependent. Inequality will, eventually, be as damaging to you as it has already been to us.”

This dilemma, of course, is not unique to South Africa. In the various post-conflict societies where the IJR is engaged, the restoration of a basic trust and cohesion, based on truth and justice, has proven elusive.

As Kenneth Lukuko, one of my IJR colleagues recently noted: “Have’s and Have-Not’s continue to live in vastly different worlds inside the same country. Their realities hardly touch sides, and they agree about so little. What we should be doing is creating spaces, where, at the very least, these groups can learn to disagree together.”

Cross-cutting debates

This idea, of creating spaces for difficult dialogue, is a core part of the IJR’s mandate, and precisely the focus of the conference, Peace From the Ground Up, that we report on in this publication. Itself a space for “disagreeing together”, the conference produced a series of fascinating panel discussions and cross-cutting debates about what, really, constitutes post-conflict peacebuilding from the bottom up.

The conversation moved from the complex relationship between African and international frameworks for peacebuilding, such as Ubuntu, restorative justice and liberal peace, to key strengths and weaknesses of actors who work tirelessly for peace on an everyday basis. Here the conference benefited greatly from the presence of many “practitioner-scholars”, who could speak with first-hand experience of on-the-ground challenges, as well as with insights into key theoretical issues at stake. Finally the conversation turned to some of the resources, tools and practises which seemed to yield positive results, however counterintuitive they may seem at face value.

John Ashworth, a Catholic priest who has been at the forefront of peacebuilding in the Sudans for many years, noted that peacebuilding in Africa often simply means being with people in good times and bad, and being prepared to gain their trust incrementally by assisting in everyday mundane tasks with which no one else is prepared to help. “The last thing we ever thought was that we were engaged in peacebuilding. And yet it turned out that this was exactly what we were busy with”, he said.

I would like to thank the Life & Peace Institute, with whom the IJR has recently signed an important Memorandum of Understanding, for this opportunity to publish the results of a meeting we are proud to be associated with. My thanks to my colleague and friend Dan Philpott for his leadership and energy in making this event happen. And many thanks too, to my IJR colleagues, especially Felicia Thomas, for coordinating conference logistics in Cape Town. Thanks also to Tim Murithi for encouraging us to combine the outcome of the conference with this special focus on the Great Lakes Region. Finally, thank you to the colleagues and friends from across Africa who have sacrificed their valuable time to contribute to the insights produced here. I sense that this publication will contribute significantly towards making their sacrifice worth while.
The question whether religion is a promoter of peace or conflict is a recurrent item on the agenda, both in high politics negotiations and in the local village talks. With no definite answer in sight, what is more obvious is that for peace to be systematic and sustainable, it needs to come from the ground up.

Elements of sustainable peace

Daniel Philpott

At least since the waning days of the Cold War, Africa has seen an especially intense wave of a phenomena that has taken place all over the world – the coming to an end of a civil war or a dictatorship and an emergent flurry of peace negotiations and politics dealing with the injustices committed during the war or authoritarian rule. This is high politics taking place at the national level, sometimes involving international personalities, often marked by lively debates and memorable media images. The South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission marks what first comes to mind when we think of truth commissions or transitional justice. There were also the truth commissions of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Morocco.

There was the trial of Charles Taylor and of Thomas Lubanga, the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) first conviction. The indictments of Omar Bashir, Joseph Kony, and Jean-Pierre Bemba loom large in the international public imagination. There has been the debate surrounding the ICC in general and its rather involved relationship with Africa in particular. The Arab Spring has raised the question of justice in Libya and in Egypt. There have been memorable peace processes: the Mozambique case and the role of the Community of Sant’Egidio, the Juba talks towards the Ugandan civil war, and the talks that ended the war in Sudan. We read of an African reaction force taking shape. There have been the interesting dogs that didn’t bark, to use Sherlock Holmes’ famous image – the truth commission in Congo that gained little attention, countries like Burundi and Uganda who are still talking about truth commissions, or Mozambique, which has enjoyed a remarkably stable piece since October 1992 with neither a truth commission nor trials.

In this high politics, a concept has arisen that had little place in global politics a generation ago: reconciliation. Again, Africa reflects, and has strongly contributed to, a global trend. Again, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa was formative. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, maybe more than any other global figure except perhaps Pope John Paul II, put reconciliation on the map. South Africa was not the first transitional country to make reconciliation central, but it became a template for numerous other countries that held truth commissions, many of them indeed called truth and reconciliation commissions.

Real peace?

What happens, though, after the high politics – the klieg lights, the high-profile debates, and the international attention – has died down? Are African societies now reconciled? Has their social fabric been repaired? Does an embryonic peace settlement or democracy enjoy legitimacy? In country after country it is difficult to answer yes. Take Uganda, for instance. Is there peace in the wake of the North’s civil war? Many people in that region have said that there is an absence of violence but there is no peace. Of course, as we know, the Juba talks were never concluded, so this is true in the formal sense of high politics. It is also true on the ground, though, where tensions from the war remain ripe. Not least, land disputes abound throughout the region.

History will not put us at ease either. Thoughtful analysts know that the war was not merely the evildoing of a bizarre army and its cultish leader, Joseph Kony, but rather the manifestation of a tension between the North and the South that has beset Uganda from colonial times. Whether a peace agreement is signed or the Lord’s Resistance Army leaders are captured or killed, tensions among the people will have to be addressed. Even if there should be another Ugandan truth commission, which is now being discussed in the Ugandan parliament, popular participation will be essential for its success.

A parallel story might be told about Congo, where the international community and several heads of states and rebel leaders concluded a peace agreement in 2003 and began to speak of a post-conflict environment. But we know that the environment has been anything but one of post-conflict. Numerous other post-violence African societies are discovering that social integration remains a long way off, if it is not on the verge of collapse. Where can these societies look for help? Although high politics remains indispensable, other sources of social repair deserve a closer look.

An agent of reconciliation?

Here enters the role of civil society, which has seen a global resurgence in the past few years, evinced in the Arab Spring, the global occupy movements, and other manifestations of popular awakening. Particularly important is religion, which plays an integral role in peacebuilding in Africa. In part this is because, according to a recent Pew Forum report, Sub-Saharan Africa is the most religious region in the world, while northern Africa is not far behind. Here again, Africa exemplifies a global trend especially intensively.

But religion has also played an important role in peace processes because
of the enterprising efforts of religious actors. In Rwanda, churches brought a stress on reconciliation and forgiveness to gacaca courts, shaping their character. In Uganda, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Morocco, Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Ghana, and other African countries, the religious have also advocated reconciliation and shaped national processes accordingly. Closely related to the role of religion, and sometimes blending with it, is the role of culture. During the same period, another fascinating and consequential development has been the adaptation of traditional tribal rituals of reconciliation to large-scale crimes committed in the context of modern nation-states.

Might religion now prove an agent of reconciliation after and beyond high political processes? More broadly, what role does culture play, including traditional tribal rituals and mechanisms for reintegration? Do religion and culture carry a promise for social integration that high political processes do not? Numerous controversies revolve around these central questions.

**A force for peace or war?**

First, it is not at all obvious that religion and culture are sources of peacebuilding. In the famous diagnosis of the late Samuel Huntington, the world-defining clash of civilizations would be fought between groups defined by religion. In some African countries, religion contributes to conflict as it does in Nigeria between Muslims and Christians (though one must remember that religion is mingled with other causes like economic resources and social status). In other countries, conflicts have their origins in part in spiritual forces, as with the Lord’s Resistance Army. When is religion a force for peace rather than war?

Second, some would raise questions about whether religion is appropriately “public” for political processes. In the West, many regard religion as private, a matter of soulcraft, not statecraft, and best kept out of the public square. That view may well be less prevalent in Africa, but the appropriate roles and boundaries of religion and state are still an issue. Almost every religion, whether Christianity, Islam, or any other religion, represents only a portion of the population. Can a single religion contribute to social integration in a nation that consists of several religions?

Many of these problems will be faced by tribal rituals and other culturally based mechanisms. Both religion and culture often face a third issue, which is whether they reinforce traditional hierarchies at the expense of equality, for instance, gender equality. Perhaps they contribute to social integration and unity but in a way that falls short on inclusiveness.

A fourth issue is the role of religious and cultural communities themselves in war and dictatorship. If, for example, all or part of a religious community was complicit in a genocide or authoritarian rule, what role can it play in social integration in the aftermath of such an episode?

A fifth issue is simply that of effectiveness. Perhaps the influence of religion and culture are far more marginal than their scholars and practitioners imagine them to be. Perhaps all of their activity does not add up to much on a national scale.

A sixth issue is whether religious and culturally influenced notions of reconciliation resonate at the popular level. Or are they little known? Or perhaps viewed cynically, say as a mask for lack of justice. Perhaps reconciliation is simply the policy of leaders who do not want to face accountability or difficult questions surrounding equality and establishing democracy.

What does reconciliation mean to ordinary Africans? Through what social and cultural practices do Africans reconstitute relationships beyond violence? What influence do they have? What can exemplary cases of reconciliation on the ground teach us? In short, what are the prospects for peace from the ground up? These are the questions that ought to be foremost on the agenda of scholars and activists who are forging the next generation of peacebuilding in Africa and elsewhere. It is essential that they be answered if peace from the ground up is going to be effective and just. Peace from the ground up, in turn, is essential to pursue, if peace, more broadly speaking, is going to be systematic and sustainable.

Participants in the conference Peace From the Ground Up enjoy the beautiful surroundings at Monkey Valley Conference Center outside Cape Town, during a break.
Why have local and international actors failed to bring lasting peace in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo? Most responses to this question highlight the lack of good will from local and regional authorities and disparate economic interests. There is need for a greater role to be played by religion and traditional practices in the peacebuilding process.

Eastern DR Congo

Gaps in the peacebuilding process

Symphorien Pyana

This article underscores the role of public narratives and their negative impact on local and international responses to the crisis. It demonstrates how dominant narratives are precluding alternative discourses on the root causes of the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and advocates for a peacebuilding perspective that is less externally-driven and more enriched by local understandings, knowledge and social beliefs.

In June 2013, I participated in an international conference entitled “Peace From the Ground Up”. I was asked to share my views on “Grassroots Peacebuilding in (Eastern) DR Congo: The Role of Religion and Local Culture” and to highlight what seem to be gaps in the ongoing peacebuilding process. I argue that any discussion seeking to explain the persistence of violence and advocate for sustainable peace and democracy in the DRC must take care to avoid the numerous pitfalls associated with such analyses. Chief among such pitfalls is the fact that the dominant narratives framing international and national responses to the conflict are precluding alternative discourses on the root causes of the conflict. The major gap in the ongoing eastern DRC’s peacebuilding process is its continued focus on widely known macro symptoms rather than untold macro and micro issues and root causes of the crisis.

The 2006 elections were a moment of hope for the DRC and particularly the eastern region, where the country and its population were rising from the most intractable, deadly and violent conflict since World War II. Since then the international community has committed significant investments to local development, reform of state institutions and support to democracy. For instance, public development aid to the DRC since the end of the transition of what some called the ‘African World War’ has exceeded USD 14 billion. External funding represents almost half of the DRC national budget. The financial support to the United Nations peace mission in DRC, MONUSCO, has reached USD 1 billion per year. International institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund significantly supported the DRC’s economy in a way that led to the cancellation in 2010 of the USD 13.2 billion country’s external debt. In addition, it is worth mentioning the various trade deals, such as the Chinese mining contract (Eastern Congo Initiative, 2012).

However, an appraisal of the country’s profile and life conditions highlights appalling concerns and frustrations. Although the country organised its second local and national elections in November 2012, fear-based identity issues and political patronage often drive the agenda. Many Congolese politicians exploit their constituents’ historical distrust of their neighbours to win elections and avoid accountability. Most importantly, the eastern region never overcomes its security dilemma. Foreign and local armed groups, including the M23 and the Democratic Force for the Liberation of Rwanda continue to kill civilians, commit sexual abuses against boys and girls, men and women, and create humanitarian problems. About 1.7 million Congolese are nowadays internally displaced and 500,000 are refugees in neighbouring countries and beyond. The DRC is listed last in the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2012). Despite some improvements observed in the last two years, high child mortality remains an appalling concern. The DRC government has acknowledged that it will not reach any of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

A number of recent research reports (Institute for Security Study, 2010; Eastern Congo Initiative, 2012) have appreciated the persistence of the crisis as due to lack of good will from local and regional authorities and economic interests. A few studies (Séverine Autesserre, 2006 and 2009) have explored why international support to peace and democracy in the DRC have failed to reach its expected results. Drawing from the latter perspective, this article intends to recognise the power and underscore the particular role of dominant narratives about local and international responses to the crisis.

Dominant narratives and security dilemma

By ‘narrative’ I simply mean a ‘story’ that people, deliberately or not, create to make sense of their personal or community lives and environments. H. Porter Abbot (2008) would call it a ‘frame’, an idea or a combination of ideas that help to shape the way we see the world and affect the way we react upon and within their environment. Narratives or frames are determinant to the social world, because social problems are not just given but have to be constructed. Frames shape the way we see the world and affect the way we prioritise social problems. They also determine the values we provide to social events, including which eventually should be taken care of and which should be neglected. In this way the most dominant frames become the central points and/or backgrounds from which we judge social problems and take actions to solving or maintaining them.

A recent study by Séverine Autesserre (2012) highlights three interconnected
narratives currently motivating efforts to address the crisis in the DRC. The first is a broadly held belief that the single root cause of violence is the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Second, most people believe that the major manifestation of violence is the sexual abuse of women and children. Third, the primary solution to these issues is seen as reconstructing state authority. Taking up these dominant narratives, the government, international diplomats and advocates have succeeded in placing the eastern Congo crisis much higher on the agenda of major world actors, giving a great deal of publicity to what has often been characterised as a forgotten conflict. These narratives have also underscored and/or orientated international and national responses to three major areas: regulating the trade of minerals, providing care to victims of egregious gender-based violence, scarce resources have resulted in the neglect of funding for other serious human needs such as food security, health, etc. Finally, a concentrated focus on reinforcing state authority has led to the neglect of other necessary measures, including resolving land conflicts, promoting inter-community reconciliation, jump-starting economic development, promoting human rights and civic education, and fighting corruption. Each of these responses highlights a major weakness in current peacebuilding efforts, which are overwhelmingly “top-down”, focusing on issues that are salient to donor audiences while overlooking the local everyday problems that persist in people’s lives, many of which have deeper roots and a structural background.

Role of religion and local culture
We now know that, even though the three dominant narratives have resulted in programmes that direct significant attention and resources into eastern Congo peacebuilding efforts, the results are negligible and/or slight. The country profile and life conditions highlighted above are vivid and call for new perspectives. The recent national consultations initiated by the DRC government (September 2013) provide an additional explanation why there must be a paradigm shift in the ongoing DRC peacebuilding process. Opponents of these national consultations argued that it was a waste of time and resources. Others stressed that it was another political game from the ruling party. But beyond this criticism, it is worth mentioning that, to some extent, the government realised that the majority of the people were left out of the peace efforts and felt that it was necessary to consult with grassroots and even with the Diaspora.

From this backdrop, and if the international community wants to be relevant and really support sustainable peace in the DRC, it must be open to this paradigm shift. Likewise the DRC government must learn from past mistakes and opt for new approaches towards peace and security in the country. In order to address the above-mentioned weaknesses in the ongoing peacebuilding process,
there should be a more sophisticated understanding of how local Congolese understand peace and how they envision a peaceful society. Adopting a perspective that is less externally-driven and more enriched by local understanding, knowledge and social beliefs also allows a greater role to be played by religion and traditional practices in the peacebuilding process.

This is vital for a country with more than 200 diverse ethnic groups, where almost 65 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and traditional beliefs about self and the other, power and authority, land and belonging, etc. strongly influence how local communities understand peace and conflict. People in the DRC are generally very religious: 50 per cent are Roman Catholic, 20 per cent Protestant, 10 per cent Kimbanguist, 10 per cent Muslim, and 10 per cent adhere to syncretic sects and indigenous beliefs. Too often religion and traditional practices are ignored by the secular community and government actors, without noting that religious communities and local culture possess enormous potential that could be used for peacebuilding. Religious communities, mosques, churches, temples, and other religious structures are virtually located throughout the entire country in provinces, districts, villages and cities. These structures and organisations range from assemblies designed for worship and reflection to those dedicated to education, health and communication.

When properly mobilised and equipped, religious communities and traditional leaders can serve as effective avenues and actors for promoting participatory governance and peace education. This goes a long way in curbing social vices and instituting democratic values among them. Such a perspective provides a common ground in promoting peace and justice by establishing consensus regarding common challenges. Although religion is one of the major factors that needs to be taken seriously in promoting sustainable peace in the DRC, it is not enough merely to recognise its importance. Religious groups and their leaders also need to transcend their internal divisions and strengthen their moral authority by becoming the real community voices in favour of peace, moving beyond dogmatisms, self-interests and ideological manipulations.

Conclusion and recommendations

Any analysis tending to explain human crisis as the result of a single cause and neglect other factors is doomed and can lead to wrong and ineffective solutions. Illegal exploitation of natural resources and weak state authority are only a few among the many factors that explain the persistence of violence in (eastern) DRC. This article underscores the role of public narratives and their negative effects on local and international responses to the crisis. It demonstrates how dominant narratives are preventing different discourses on the root causes of the crisis. The ability to reach sustainable peace depends on the country’s determination to address the root causes of conflict and engage the society as a whole by mobilising institutions that can bring together all human experiences, including religious groups and traditional practices.

One recommendation would thus be that advocacy organisations working in the DRC highlight other causes and consequences of violence, such as corruption, food insecurity and lack of civic education. This could help raise funds to address these other issues, while reinforcing the existing contestation of the dominant narratives (Autesserre, 2012). In addition, the reconstruction of state authority may put an end to sexual violence and the problem complex with conflict minerals. But for this to happen, there must be strong community peace education and economic development programmes for all Congolese.

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Civil society, and particularly the Catholic Church, plays a leading role in the democratization process in the Great Lakes Region. This article presents an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of different civil society functions in the region. The church’s potential in peacebuilding and conflict resolution has, however, never been fully utilized.

Great Lakes Region

The Catholic Church – an actor with a unique outreach

John Katunga

This reflection is an expansion of a contribution I recently made at a conference in Cape Town. The conference’s theme was “Peace From the Ground Up: Post Conflict Socialization, Religion, and Reconciliation in Africa”. During this conference I highlighted the contribution of civil society to peace and democratization in the Great Lakes Region (GLR) of Africa. I singled out the contribution of faith based organizations, particularly the Catholic Church, in the region. I consider the contribution of this actor as being key to peace, stability and the democratization process in the GLR.

The Catholic Church is an actor that cannot be ignored. If democracy is all about numbers, no politician, in her/his right mind, would overlook 65 percent of the population in Burundi, more than 50 percent in the Democratic Republic of Congo and 49 percent in Rwanda. These are numbers that make up the Catholic population in the GLR. For the purpose of this piece, I will not dwell much on the historical relationships between the church and the state in the process of democratization. Instead I will just highlight, using existing frameworks, the roles or functions the church is playing, and will continue to play, in shaping the democratic dynamics in the GLR.

It is obvious that the concentration on the Catholic Church is illustrative of the tremendous contribution of faith based and the larger civil society organizations to peaceful democratization in the region. Faith based organizations constitute a unique category of civil society because of their dual allegiance: the spiritual and temporal. It is this duality that distinguishes them from other civil society members. However, I will concentrate on the temporal contribution in the region. At this juncture, it will be worth defining what civil society is, how the church fits into it, and what functions the church plays in democratization, understood here as peaceful political competition in the Great Lakes Region.

Nonviolent civil society
While reflecting on this, I came to conclude that there could not be a single definition of “civil society” that would satisfy every single researcher. However a consensus seems to emerge when considering civil society as anything outside government, private market spheres (for profit-business), and family. For the purpose of this discussion, I will borrow the World Bank definition as a working definition albeit with some amendment of my own. The World Bank defines civil society as the “wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide array of nonviolent organizations (…)”. With such an improved definition, the church is a member of civil society.

Civil society and democratization

The nexus between civil society and democratization (political competition) is well summarized by Professor Thomas Goll in his interesting article on the Role of Civil Society in Transformation and Democratization in Post-Communist Europe. Although his primary research in this article concentrates on Europe, the lessons he draws could be applied anywhere. Reflecting on the role of civil
society in the regime changes in Central and East Europe, he comes up with three broad categories of how developed and relevant the structures of civil society are in each case: strong (in Poland), weak (in Czechoslovakia) and dependent (in Russia).

From Goll’s typology, I interpret that civil society is weak when its structures and leadership are fragmented and/or lack credibility. The civil society thus keeps a low profile and appears fearful and subdued. In this case, civil society becomes absent in the public space and seems to be swallowed by a domineering regime. A civil society is dependent when its manifestation is fully controlled by the state. This includes regime sponsored civil society. Finally civil society is strong when it has strong structures and leadership. It enjoys popular credibility and is treated as a serious partner by other actors in the society, including the government and private sector.

It is worth noting that civil society is not a frozen entity. It is dynamic and changes over time and is highly influenced by the political make up of the society. I therefore concur with Goll when he affirms his hypothesis that “the historical and cultural context of the countries results in equal or different rudiments of civil society.” This is also true for the Great Lakes Region.

**Functions of civil society in the democratization process**

To highlight the different functions that the Catholic Church plays, I will make reference to the excellent framework developed by Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk in their publication on civil society engagement in democratization. They identified seven functions of civil society in democratization and peacebuilding: Protection, Monitoring, Advocacy/Public communication, Socialization, Social cohesion, Intermediation and Service delivery.

In the table above, Paffenholz’ and Spurk’s typology of the civil society functions are adapted in combination with Goll’s categorization of civil society’s strength. I will then assess civil society’s contribution to the democratization process in the Great Lakes Region.

**Some observations from the table**

The table shows some good efforts of the church on Protection. According to the Secretary General of the Common Market for East and Southern Africa, “In addition, the Catholic Church gives assistance to displaced people, giving them not only food but also education to enable them to return faster to a normal life.” In times of crisis, the church has always been a hub of safety and humanitarian assistance for the victims of atrocities. This role has strengthened local and international credibility and trust in church institutions such as Caritas – the social wing of the Catholic Church – or the Justice and Peace Commissions. The dynamism of Caritas has made it recognized as a credible partner to governments, the international community and the donor community. It is upon such trust and credibility that the church could become strategically complementary to the state’s recovery and development programs, especially in the crucial domains of reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. This role, however, has had its hiccups. In Rwanda particularly, some church amenities became a killing ground during the genocide, some of which have since become memorials. Though only some individuals were involved, this has taken a heavy toll on the credibility of the whole church.

On Socialization and Service delivery, the table reveals that the Catholic Church in the Great Lakes Region is strong.

1. Through the church’s extensive education institutions (60 percent of schools in DRC, 31 percent of primary and secondary schools in Rwanda and similar in Burundi) and training centers, the church is a powerful agent of socialization. It builds the capacity of its members and the society at large to prepare to prevent violent conflicts and sustain peaceful interactions among member states and communities and to promote democratic spaces. In all countries in the GLR, there are Catholic institutes of higher learning and universities. Departments of peace, human rights education with curricula teaching tolerance, alternative conflict resolution, active nonviolence, civic education and reconciliation are being offered to adults and young generations. The use of media has further contributed to socializing communities for greater mutual understanding.

2. If fully utilized, the church could become the driving force of democratization and institution building through popular participation. Through small Christian communities, the church in the GLR has re-
Public communication.

3. Relationships between state and civil society, particularly the Catholic Church, are at their best when it comes to service delivery, especially in the health sector. Indeed, the Catholic Church is one of the best health service providers in the GLR. In some cases, (for example recently in the South Kivu province of the DRC), the government enters into a formal partnership with the Catholic Church to run the health facilities on its behalf. Caritas is partnering with the government and international aid agencies to promote health centers throughout the region.

The church insufficiently uses its potential in both Monitoring and Advocacy/Public communication. This weakness is not primarily due to its inaction, because many of the church leaders have had the opportunity to advocate regionally and internationally. It rather comes from their inability to forge a common agenda that transcends their individual interests and the influence from their crystallized social capitals. Yet the Catholic Church potentially has an influential voice. No other member of civil society has the capacity and the structures to reach out from the top to the bottom of society in the GLR. Through its Justice and Peace Commission, the church documents human rights violations and is very vocal in denouncing violence against women, including advocating for victims of rapes, and in providing protection of orphans and vulnerable children. These structures have the ability to engage the state to account to the people. Fully utilized, these structures could become a formidable force to demand transparency and accountability in the region.

On Social cohesion, the table scores poorly. There is a manifest fear among church members in the region to decisively engage with the governments on their democratic records. This might be explained by the recent history of this region: the repetitive massacres and rebellions in Burundi, the genocide in Rwanda and the millions of lives lost in the ongoing violence in DRC are still vivid in people’s memories. Unfortunately, the absence of a regional voice of the church seems to condone undemocratic behaviors in the region characterized by intolerance, unequal distribution of opportunities and inequities in the sharing of the country’s resources, corruption, and constant use of violence as a means to control and maintain power.

This silence has also given an excuse to political leaders to jeopardize the move to greater social cohesion in the region. Instead, they have created conditions for a sectarian crystallization of social capitals in the form of ethnic groups. They have consolidated the “us” feeling that instinctively creates conditions to exclude the “other”. The Great Lakes Region is much more socially divided today than it was 25 years ago. Social cohesion in individual countries and in the region as a whole has been hampered by the political leadership’s inability to forge a consensus on how members of interdependent communities can live and work together for the common good.

On Intermediation, the DRC and Burundi are scoring high. Overall, the church has been a peace broker par excellence, as the Secretary General of the Common Market for East and Southern Africa testified: “Allow me to personally pay a tribute to the Catholic Church regarding its mediation role in conflicts that have and continue to plague the Great Lakes Region.” The Catholic Church has been instrumental in its role in promoting constructive dialogues at all levels in the region. This role is often played out quietly, informally, for example in Burundi’s peace talks, and sometimes officially, as in the DRC and Burundi. At the regional level, through the structures of justice and peace commissions, the church in the GLR has engaged communities from neighboring dioceses in prejudice reduction encounters and created space for more cooperation between Congolese, Rwandans and Burundians living side by side. Women are taking the lead in this process.

Conclusion

The Catholic Church as a member of civil society in the Great Lakes Region is an indispensable partner in search for durable peace and expansion of democratic space. However, its potential to infuse peaceful transformation to democracy has never been fully utilized. “If adequate resources are allocated and due recognition as a legitimate and credible partner in the overall UN and individual states intervention structures is given, the church offers better predispositions than any other civil society actor to efficiently respond to democratization challenges posed to the region.”

Government efforts should be combined with constructive dialogues and reconciliation initiatives led by the church or church based institutions, as part and parcel of peacemaking and democratization “package”.

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1 The conference was jointly organized in June 2013 by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies of the Notre Dame University, USA, and the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, Justice of South Africa.

2 (http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sc1.html)


4 Thomas Goll, “The Role of Civil Society in Transformation and Democratization in Post-Communist Europe – “Aspects of the Democratic Transition in Selected Central and East European States in Comparative Perspective”

5 Ibid.

6 “Civil Society, Civil Engagement and Peacebuilding” (Paper no. 36 of October 2006 in Social Development Papers, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction)

7 http://allafrica.com/stories/201208290591.html

8 Ibid.

9 In the 1990s Cardinal Monsengwo was appointed president of National Sovereign Conference in DRC and Fr Malumalu headed the National Electoral Commission in the 2005 general elections. Recently, Fr Emmanuel was appointed Chairman of Burundi Human Rights Commission, while Fr Malumalu has been reappointed President of the National Electoral Commission in the DRC.

10 John Katunga, Lessons about the Catholic Church in Peace Process (http://cpn.nd.edu/conflicts-and-the-role-of-the-church/)
Starting off with a retrospect of DR Congo’s history from 1960, this article describes the role of the Catholic Church in peacebuilding and development in the country, through the dismantling of the society during the civil war, onto the still ongoing reconstruction period. The author also presents two framework theories, which contribute both to the understanding of the church’s role and suggests possible ways forward.

The missing paradigm

Fr Paulin Manwelo

This paper intends to make a critical examination of the role of the Catholic Church in the task of peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In order to achieve this goal, I begin with an outline of the main achievements of the Catholic Church in peacebuilding in the DRC after 50 years of independence. Next, I will discuss an appropriate conceptual framework that will help to understand both the achievements and setbacks in the task of peacebuilding by the Catholic Church in the DRC. Lastly, in the light of this analysis, I will draw a few conclusions and make a few suggestions as a way forward for building lasting peace in the DRC.

One can distinguish three main phases in the history of the Catholic Church in the task of peacebuilding in the DRC: the first phase from 1960 to 1980 can be called the golden phase. The second one, from 1990 to 2006, can be described as the crisis phase. And the third phase, from 2006 to date, is the reconstruction phase. The main concern here is not to provide a full historical description of each phase but rather to highlight dominant traits of each period with respect to the role of the Catholic Church in peacebuilding.

The golden phase
From 1960 to 1980, the Catholic Church played a major role in setting up structures and mechanisms of evangelization that promoted peace. The first phase of evangelization was mainly done by foreign missionaries, mostly Europeans, but also some missionaries from Latin America. The main investment was in education, healthcare, road maintenance, farming and micro economic initiatives. During this period, the Catholic Church had the best schools in the country, including the best and most prestigious university in the country, namely, the current university of Kinshasa, created in 1954. Most of the elite today were educated in the best schools run by the Catholic Church.

In the area of health care, one could find throughout the country, even in very remote areas, nuns running a dispensary or a hospital, providing access to healthcare to poor people. Economic matters were also at the heart of the evangelization and not only left to business people. Indeed, the Catholic Church took an active role in setting up small economic units for selling basic products for people and/or buying local products (maize, coffee, millet, rice and the like) in order to sell them to the big cities.

Thus, wherever the Catholic Church set its feet, there was not only a church in the middle of the village or a parish in the area, but also schools, a health center, economic structures, and other various structures and mechanisms for maintaining order and discipline and promoting a good life.

This model of evangelization explains why the country enjoyed some stability and peace for many years, despite of 32 years of dictatorship by the Mobutu regime. Although the credit should not be given to the Catholic Church alone, one cannot deny the fact that basic elements for stability and peace were laid down by the Church.

The crisis phase
The second phase, from the 1990s to 2006, marks the period of crisis due to the collapse of the education system and the social and economic structures that were built during the first phase described above. Many reasons underlie this crisis: first and foremost, the corruption of the elite who took part in a corrupt and autocratic regime, and, at the church level, the failure of the indigenous church to continue with passion and perseverance the work done by missionaries.

As a matter of fact, since the 1980s there has been a decline in the number of expatriate missionaries and, at the same time, a rise in the number of Congolese priests and religious men and women. However, the transition from the missionary era to the local one has been painful. For various reasons, schools, dispensaries or hospitals, prosperous economic initiatives run by missionaries have been, if not abandoned, at least poorly managed to the great despair of the population, especially in rural areas. Actually, one could observe a tendency within the church to live in big cities rather than in rural areas.

The consequences of this situation have been enormous: the rise of all kinds of religious movements, called *Eglises de réveil* everywhere in the country, and the return to traditional practices and customs which are not always in favor of the promotion of human rights, human dignity and progress. Everywhere, schools have been replaced by "churches", and the teacher has become a prophet. People spend hours, nights and days in prayers, chanting and dancing.

In the capital city Kinshasa, it is said that every Sunday there are at least ten thousands places of prayers where most of the “faithful” spend the whole day.

If on one hand, one can praise the spiritual dynamism of Congolese people in particular, and of African people in general, to the extent that Pope Benedict XVI declared that Africa is the “spirtual
lung of humanity”, on the other hand, one cannot avoid noticing the weakness of this kind of evangelization that some authors rightly describe as an evasion in a spirituality that is not connected with real life.

The reconstruction phase

The year 2006 represents the start of the third phase in the history of the DRC, a historical moment in the research for democracy. This process started in 1990 with the popular demand for multipartyism and democracy in the country. This demand was strongly supported by the Catholic Church. It eventually led to a National Dialogue, called Conference Nationale Souveraine, headed by a Catholic Bishop, the current Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo. Here, once again, the church played a major role in the process of building up just and democratic institutions for the country to such an extent that, on February 16, 2004, Christians were martyred while marching and demanding for the reopening of the Conference Nationale Souveraine that was abruptly stopped by the Mobutu regime.

However, the transition from that period to 2006 was long and painful. 2006 represents a milestone in the search for peace and democracy. It is the year of the first democratic elections in the country. They were followed by the second ones in 2011. Since 2006, there has been a momentum in terms of involving everybody in the building up of a new and democratic society. And, in this process, the church has also played an important role in the process of the consolidation of democracy. During the 2006 elections, the Electoral Commission was under the leadership of a Catholic Church member, Fr Malumalu. But most important was the involvement of the church in the civic education and sensitization of the population for fair, just and transparent elections.

But, the overall assessment of this period is that of a failure to implement true peace and true justice for all, despite a few gains made here and there. The reconstruction of a sound and prosperous country is still an illusion for millions of Congolese who continue their daily struggle in order to sustain themselves.

In the eastern part of the country, the situation is even worse: war has been raging since 2006. An appalling six million people are said to have died as a result of conflicts and wars since the end of Mobutu’s regime in 1997. In front of this gloomy picture, the crucial question is: why is it that, despite all the efforts by various actors, and among them the Catholic Church, to build peace in the DR Congo, so little has been achieved?

Setbacks and ways forward

In the literature, there are several theories that attempt to understand the phenomenon of war or conflict and from which one can extrapolate appropriate solutions. First of all, it is worth noticing that each conflict or war is unique, and therefore, needs a specific conceptual framework. In the case of the DRC, I would like to rely on two interconnected conceptual framework theories in order to understand the setbacks of the role of the church in peacebuilding and at the same time, provide a few suggestions as a way forward to building up a lasting peace in the country. These two theories

Christianity is the majority religion in the DRC, followed by about 90 percent of the population. In 2011, UKIAMKA, the network of Pentecostal churches in Central and East Africa, organized a peace manifestation in Bukavu, focusing on free elections, peace and the fight against corruption and sexual violence.
are the Human Needs Theory and the Democracy Theory. The combination of these theories can help to understand why little progress has been done and how we can go beyond the current approach to peacebuilding in the DRC.

The Human Needs Theory originally comes from Aristotle, but was further developed by Abraham Maslow and later John Burton. It states that there are some basic human needs like food, health, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, housing and air that must be satisfied gradually with the priority of basic life needs. These needs stand above all human expectations and in order to satisfy them, human beings will sacrifice other values, like family ties, responsibility, morality or obligations to the state. It is only when these needs are satisfied that human beings will care for safety – protection, security, order, law, limits, and stability. This implies that any society that does not meet these basic human needs will be condemned to face disorder, protracted or intractable conflict and violence.

The Human Needs Theory helps, indeed, to understand the root causes of the lack of peace in the country as a whole and in the eastern part in particular. At the same time, it helps to show the necessity to ensure basic needs in society as the *sine qua non* condition for promoting peace and justice for all.

The Democracy Theory comes from the study of Nobel Prize Economist, Amartya Sen (*Poverty and Famines*, 1981; *Development as Freedom*, 1999b). He has demonstrated that the main cause of countries facing unfavorable conditions, such as famine, poverty, and protracted conflicts and wars, is the lack of democracy, the lack of respect for basic human rights. And this truth applies everywhere, be it in Africa or elsewhere.

“Empirical studies have shown that a strong correlation exists between peace and democracy. The fact that a regime is democratic does not automatically prevent it from waging war. However, the intrinsic properties of democracy contain stabilizing mechanisms and tend to reduce the possibility of war” (Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines*, 1981).

On May 23, 2013, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited the DRC, including the eastern region of Goma where there is still fighting between government troops and rebels from the M23 Movement. In his speech in Goma, Ban Ki-moon outlined two main arguments: first the need to implement the peace agreement recently signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by all parties. This agreement includes the intervention of a brigade with the mandate to use force against rebels in order to ensure stability and protect civilians. But the UN Secretary-General pointed out that this is only one element of a much larger political process. He then added the second point that must be part of the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding: the economic element: “A peace”, he said, “must deliver a peace dividend: health, education jobs, opportunities”. It is in this context that he announced a pledge of USD one billion to promote development in the region.

**The justice paradigm**

From these considerations it becomes evident that the task of peacebuilding cannot be done one-sidedly. It needs a new paradigm that implies a more comprehensive or holistic approach.

German Bishops have written a very challenging pastoral letter with a provocative title, Just Peace. They advocate for a comprehensive approach in dealing with the issue of peacebuilding, following the motto of Pope Pius XII: “*Opus iustitiae pacx*” (peace as a work of justice). Put otherwise, justice creates peace.

My assumption is that perhaps the difficulty or the malaise to properly address the root causes of conflicts and wars, and thereby to find appropriate solutions resides in the words we use. The evil is perhaps in the concept itself. That is why I strongly advocate for a shift of the paradigm in addressing the issue of peacebuilding in Africa.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle rightly argues that justice is the “sum of virtues”, the “mother of all virtues”. And by justice, he understood not only “commutative justice” that implies “consensus” and “reconciliation” or “mutual recognition”, but also “legal justice” or “universal justice” (contribution to the common good) and “distributive justice” (fair distribution of resources).

Indeed, the role of the church for promoting a peaceful society, be it in Africa or somewhere else, lies primarily in the fight for justice for all. It is unfortunate that we tend to avoid the justice debate. Perhaps, the implications of such a debate will make us all feel uncomfortable, given the demand for equity and fairness in the sharing of resources and goods of humanity. Yet, without such a strong approach, the peacebuilding revolution will still remain a mere *flatus vocis* (whisper).
Cet article présente l'expérience de Life & Peace Institute dans l'utilisation de la Recherche Action Participative comme une approche de consolidation de la paix bottom-up dans l’Est de la République Démocratique du Congo. L’approche est une méthodologie innovante et constitue un terrain fertile pour le changement social.

Actions et participation – la construction de la paix

Pieter Vanholder et Jean-Louis Nzweve

Depuis la parution de The trouble with the Congo, le monde humanitaire en Afrique centrale est atteint d’une sorte d’effet Séverine Autesserre1. A la suite de cette auteure, les organisations internationales reconnaissent les biais d’une approche top-down de la construction de la paix, recherchent volontiers à comprendre la dimension locale des conflits et voudraient impliquer les communautés locales dans la réponse à la crise actuelle. L’appui au dialogue communautaire est retenu désormais dans le programme de stabilisation de l’Est de la RDC exécuté conjointement par le gouvernement congolais et la MONUSCO dans le cadre de la Stratégie Internationale de Soutien à la Sécurité et la Stabilisation (ISSSS). L’engouement pour la méthode ne risque-t-il pas de la vider de sa substance ? A quelle condition cette approche peut-elle contribuer efficacement à la construction de la paix ? Nous nous inspirons de l’expérience de LPI qui, depuis l’année 2007, a opté pour la Recherche Action Participative (RAP) pour contribuer à l’édification de la paix à l’Est du Congo à partir des communautés pour partager les défis et les conditions de réussite de l’approche bottom-up dans la construction de la paix.

Une démarche forgée dans le roc

Loin d’être une invention de LPI, la RAP remonte à l’école de l’alphabétisation conscientisante du pédagogue brésilien, Paulo Freire. Elle repose sur le paradigme qui pose la méthodologie participative comme un terrain fertile pour une innovation méthodologique et un changement social2. Ainsi, une recherche participative est scandée et fécondée par une rétroaction auprès de la population concernée3. En l’appliquant à la transformation de conflits, nous avons systématisé la RAP en quatre étapes : Analyse de contexte, recherche-analyse, dialogues, actions.

L’étape de la recherche-analyse est une enquête de terrain qui combine focus group et entretien de recherche avec les différentes parties du conflit. A lieu et place d’une analyse systématique, le chercheur se contente d’une classification thématique des données de l’enquête qui permette de restituer les différentes lectures du conflit fournies par les parties. C’est aussi pendant cette phase que le chercheur forge des relations de confiance avec les différents acteurs impliqués dans le conflit.

La phase des dialogues est constituée des séances de restitution des résultats de l’enquête aux délégues des acteurs. Ces séances sont organisées pour chaque communauté d’abord, c’est-à-dire pour chaque partie au conflit, pour valider ou amender la synthèse, développer le désir d’une solution pacifique au conflit et formuler les thèmes du dialogue avec l’autre partie. C’est donc une phase d’analyse participative et de prise de conscience. Un dialogue est finalement organisé pour l’ensemble des parties en conflit, dans une table ronde. C’est un moment par lequel les parties affrontent les différentes lectures de l’histoire du conflit et leurs revendications respectives. Dans le meilleur de cas, les participants clarifient et s’accordent sur leurs divergences, développent une vision de paix et adoptent un plan d’actions. Enfin, la phase des actions consiste par la mise en place des plateformes de transformation de conflits et la mise en œuvre des actions.

Cette méthode a été expérimentée par LPI à travers plusieurs projets de RAP au Nord-Kivu et au Sud-Kivu.

Les exigences de la méthode

A travers ces projets, la méthode s’est révélée longue et coûteuse. Et les étapes successives sont plutôt itératives dans la réalité. De l’analyse de contexte à la table-ronde, un projet RAP peut facilement durer 3-4 ans. Ce temps fort prolixé s’explique par le délicat passage de la recherche de terrain au dialogue, conditionné par la volonté des acteurs à dialoguer. Tant que les communautés n’expriment pas le désir de dialogue avec l’autre partie, le processus de RAP peut être bloqué. Talonnée par le temps et le devoir de recevabilité aux bailleurs, l’organisation facilitatrice court le risque de forcer le dialogue et biaiser le processus. Elle se contentera alors de sélectionner quelques délégés compréhensifs au sein des communautés qui à la fin d’un atelier vont signer un accord et s’embrasser à l’occasion.

Pour éviter ce piège, la construction de la paix devrait être inscrite dans un programme à long terme, parce qu’il exige un engagement durable des intervenants. C’est tout le contraire de l’intervention humanitaire qui est souvent limité dans le temps et qui recherche une réponse rapide. Quelle paradoxe que la construction de la paix et le développement durable mobilisent peu d’argent contrairement aux moyens mobilisés et investis dans la guerre et l’intervention humanitaire d’urgence4.

En sus de la longue durée de la démarche, les étapes de la RAP doivent
être interprétées comme itératives. En effet, en incitant les acteurs à réfléchir sur leurs conflits, les entrevues et les focus groups constituent implicitement des actions de conscientisation. Les dialogues sont en eux-mêmes des actions de rapprochement de communautés autant qu'ils sont des moments de collecte des informations supplémentaires. D'ailleurs, les résultats des actions confirment ou infirment les hypothèses de départ pour ouvrir de nouvelles pistes de recherche.

A tout état de cause, la longueur de la démarche est dictée par l'évolution du contexte, souvent imprévisible. L'itération de la méthode sous-tend aussi sa flexibilité nécessaire pour aborder la complexité des conflits.

**La complexité des conflits dans la Région des Grands-Lacs**

Conditionnée par les horreurs des génocides burundais et rwandais, l'opinion occidentale est naturellement encline à retenir les conflits ethniques comme la variable principale de la crise de l'Est de la RDC. Effectivement, tous les conflits sur lesquels LPI a été emmené à intervenir s'exprimaient avant tout sous la forme de clivage ethnique. Cependant, au bout de la recherche, tous ces conflits se cristallisent le foncier, menant en avant le déficit de la gouvernance comme le facteur principal des antagonismes. Ils confirment l'hypothèse selon laquelle le foncier est un fait social total, mettant en branle un ensemble de rapports sociaux, économiques, juridiques et politiques qui lient les personnes habitant un même espace. Dans le milieu rural, le conflit ethnique apparaît dans une trilogie de la lutte pour l'accès et le contrôle de la terre, du pouvoir coutumier et de la protection des identités.

Comme le dit si bien Mafikiri Tsongo, l'enjeu principal autour duquel les interactions entre acteurs se réalisent est la gestion de l'espace dont l'appropriation se fait dans le but de contrôler le pouvoir, les institutions et les populations, de maîtriser les règles de gestion du territoire et d'utiliser la possession des terres comme moyen d'expression de son identité sociale régionale. Pour l'ensemble des Grands-Lacs, il nous semble que la conjugaison de la compétition foncière au sein de la population et la compétition politique, dans un contexte d'érosion de la régulation sociale, soit à l'origine des escalades locales. En effet, la crise identitaire ne devient violente qu'à partir du moment où les acteurs politiques exploitent l'identité ethnique dans la mobilisation politique, en recourant au besoin à des milices formées à cette fin.

**Actions de transformation**

L'amplitude des violences ne doit pas faire oublier une longue histoire de cohabitation pacifique des communautés ethniques de la région des Grands-Lacs. Pour construire la paix, il faut croire à la suite de William Ury que « La relation entre individus, groupes humains et Etats-nations sont beaucoup plus souvent marquées par la coexistence pacifique que par le conflit destructeur. Même en ce siècle meurtrier, tous les habitants de la planète ont davantage connu la paix que la guerre : la paix constitue la norme. »

La question est de savoir le type d'actions appropriées pour reconstruire cette norme sociale d'harmonie entre les communautés déchirées.

En conséquence de la multiplication des intervenants internationaux, il existe une panoplie d’actions de paix à l’Est de la RDC. Les fonds d’édification et de la consolidation de la paix, de la stabilisation des zones post-conflit vont de l’aménagement des sources d’eau potable à la lutte contre les violences sexuelles, de la réinsertion socioéconomique des ex-enfants soldats et à la réhabilitation des prisons. Faute d’un paradigme commun guidant l’action des intervenants, les ressources ont été dilapidées et la paix n’a pas suivi.

La difficulté de choisir une action pertinente de transformation de conflits s’explique par la complexité des besoins non assouvis et des intérêts gâchés. Etant donné la multiplicité des besoins, l’action de construction de la paix risque d’être diluée, et c’est ce qui est arrivé à l’Est de la RDC, dans les programmes de développement et des opérations humanitaires.

Dans sa méthodologie, LPI a évité cet écueil en distinguant clairement l’action de paix des autres actions. Inspirées des dimensions relationnelle, structurelle et culturelle du conflit proposées par J.P. Lederach, les actions de transformation de conflits s’établent à trois niveaux :

- Les actions de rapprochement des communautés ;
- Les actions visant l’amélioration du cadre institutionnel qui puise baliser le chemin de la paix ;
- Les actions axées sur le changement de mentalité.

Les plateformes de transformation de conflits constituent le principal cadre de rapprochement des communautés, par la promotion d’un dialogue permanent, la négociation et la médiation permanente, à l’instar des palabres anciennes. De même le plaidoyer pour une gouvernance foncière revient souvent comme une action de transformation de conflits.

**Participation**

Si l’on considère la longue tradition de la coopération qui a posé depuis longtemps la participation populaire comme...
la condition et la conséquence d’un déve-
loppement authentique, l’on s’étonne de l’intérêt tardif accordé à l’approche bottom-up dans la construction de la paix. Or cet idéal de la participation est elle-même complexe et difficile à esti-
mer à juste titre.

LPI a recherché la participation des acteurs dans tous ces projets et tout au long des processus RAP. Les commu-
nautés ont proposé le conflit à étudier et à transformer, elles ont fourni l’infor-
mation nécessaire, elles ont délégué leurs membres aux séances de dialogues, elles participent à la mise en œuvre des actions de transformation de conflits. Mais cette participation est biaisée par l’intervention exécutant des projets

d’outils de transformation de conflits. A

dans les communautés rurales, ce sont les mêmes personnes qui sont déléguées

commune interlocuteurs des intervenants

externes : le lecap de village, le pré-
president de l’association villageoise de

développement voire l’animatrice d’une

eglise locale.

 Avec la multiplication des interven-

tions humanitaires, ces relais commu-
nautaires passent beaucoup de leur
temps dans les réunions de planifi-
cation, de mise en œuvre ou d’évalua-
tion des projets qui sollicitent tous la

participation locale. Pour compenser

le manque à gagner, les intervenants

leur distribuent des ‘per diem’ ou ‘frais
de transport’ symboliques. Dans un

environnement de pauvreté extrême,

l’interférence des per diem, introduit un

biais dans la mise en œuvre des

actions participatives. On ne sait plus si le délégué de la communauté s’engage

par conviction ou pour gagner ce revenu.

La meilleure formule de participation

populaire dans le cadre des structures

communautaires de transformation de

conflit est encore à éventer.

**Structures de transformation**

Les structures communautaires s’im-
posent dans tous les projets comme les

outils de transformation de conflits. A

chaque fois qu’elles doivent être mise

en place, il se pose le dilemme de l’in-
tégration des structures préexistantes

et des acteurs étatiques. Bon nombre

d’intervenants exécutant des projets

autonomes, talonnés par l’obligation des

résultats devant leur bailleur de fonds et

don non devant les bénéficiaires sont tombés dans le piège de la multiplication de structures de transformation de conflits.

En conséquence, dans un même village, on trouve diverses cellules de paix se fai-
sant même une concurrence déloyale dans les services de médiation propo-
sés à la population. Pour éviter ce genre d’impasses, il est urgent que les actions s’inscrivent dans un plan cohérent et

coordonné.

En principe, cette coordination devrait être assurée par l’Etat. Mais au Congo, l’Etat est diffus et dilué dans diverses

institutions publiques qui ne sont même

pas informées par le programme de sta-

bilisation exécuté conjointement avec la

MONUSCO. Il n’est rare de trouver un

administrateur de territoire qui n’est pas

du tout informé des protocoles d’accord

signé par le gouvernement en ce qui

concerne le programme de stabilisation

de reconstruction soutenu par l’ISSSSS.

Face à la faiblesse de l’existence de l’Etat, les ONG ont pris l’habitude d’agir sur terrain en l’ignorant. A définitive, cette manière d’agir non seulement n’est pas durable mais aussi contribue à affai-

bler davantage l’Etat qu’on est sensé aider à se relever. Un programme cohérent de construction de la paix à partir des communautés devrait clarifier la nature de la collaboration avec les différents échelons de l’administration publique, quitte à l’assortir de protocole d’accord.

A cette condition, le peacebuilding à partir de la communauté contribuera à la reconstruction de la nation.

**Conclusion**

L’approche bottom-up dans la construc-
tion de la paix dans les Grands-Lacs est aujourd’hui à la mode. Pionnier, LPI en a fait son cheval de bataille depuis plus de deux décennies, à partir du cas de la Somalie. A travers cet article, il s’est donc le devoir de partager sa modeste expérience développée à l’Est de la RDC. Les principales leçons portent sur la nature du conflit à trans-
former, les actions pertinentes à mettre

en œuvre, la participation populaire et l’implication des structures communau-
taires. En effet, la dimension locale du

conflict aux ramifications nationales et

sous-régionales émerge de la compé-
tition foncière et politique auxquelles se livrent les populations et ses élites. Elle dégénère parfois en escalades vio-

dentes faute d’une gouvernance foncière et d’une régulation politique à la hau-
teur des défis d’une société en muta-

tion, entrainées dans les tourbillons de la mondialisation.

Si les actions de transformation de conflits doivent être inscrites dans un plan de développement local, elles ne devraient pas être diluées et méritent une spécification au regard des résultats attendus : le rapprochement des com-

munautés, le changement du contexte générant du conflit et le changement positif des mentalités. Mais leur planifi-
cation participative authentique doit être ficelée en valorisant l’impérative collabo-

ration avec les institutions publiques.

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1 Séverine Autesserre, The trouble with the Congo. Local violence and the failure of international peacebuilding, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010


6 Angelus Mafka Tsongo, La problématique foncière au Kivu montagneux, ed. CIDEP et Academia – Erasme (Cahiers du CIDEP n°21), Louvain-la-Neuve, 1994, pp. 163-164


9 Thania Paffenholz, Construire la paix à partir de la communauté, ed. Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, 2006, p. 23
Peacebuilding actions and participation from LPI’s experience in Eastern DRC

English summary of Pieter Vanholder’s and Jean-Louis Nzewe’s article

In view of the weaknesses of the top-down peacebuilding approach, international organisations have geared their interventions toward understanding the regional dimension of conflicts and involving local communities in addressing crises. This concept of community dialogue has been reflected in the joint DRC government-MONUSCO International Security and Stabilization Strategy. This article shares the Life & Peace Institute’s experience of employing the Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a bottom-up peacebuilding approach in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a method it has used since 2007.

The PAR approach is an innovative methodology and provides fertile ground for social change. LPI has systematised the PAR approach for conflict transformation in four stages: context analysis, research analysis, dialogue and action.

- Context analysis allows the identification, in collaboration with affected populations, of the conflict to be transformed.
- The research analysis stage consists of a field survey combining interviews with focus groups and stakeholders. It allows researchers to build confidence and trusting relationships with relevant actors and gives the latter the opportunity to become familiar with the process.
- Dialogues are sessions in which the results of the research are discussed, with the purpose of gathering stakeholders together to introduce them to the various facets of the conflict.
- Action follows from the dialogue and consists of the implementation of an action plan based on the conclusions of the dialogue.

LPI’s work has revealed that PAR projects can be long and expensive due to the delicate nature of the transition from research to dialogue. PAR is an iterative process, which prompts relevant actors to think critically and to establish a dialogue. In view of the continuously changing and unpredictable local context of eastern DRC, the PAR process must be flexible and ought to ensure accurate reflection of ever-shifting circumstances. It is therefore necessary to give enough time to build trust and for a constructive dialogue between stakeholders to be established.

The complexity of conflicts in the Great Lakes Region

Influenced by the genocides in Rwanda and Burundi, outsiders are prone to view the crisis in eastern DRC as primarily triggered by ethnic conflicts. Yet the majority of these conflicts are also linked to land tenure, which, because of a complex social and historical context, have not been resolved by state intervention. Land in the Great Lakes Region is a factor of eminent importance connected to exerting social, economic, legal and political leverage.

The multiplication of international interventions in eastern DRC has led to a range of conflict transformation actions. Yet, a lack of coordination and opposing interests has rendered many actions ineffective. In order to avoid such pitfalls, LPI clearly distinguishes peacebuilding action from other interventions. Drawing on relational, structural, and cultural dimensions of conflict – three of the four dimensions defined by J.P. Lederach – LPI has divided conflict transformation actions into three levels:

1. Actions for community reconciliation
2. Actions for improvement of the context
3. Actions oriented toward mind-set changing

LPI has sought to engage relevant stakeholders in all its PAR projects. Communities have participated in the process by suggesting specific, well-defined conflicts to research and transform, providing relevant information, having their representatives participate in the dialogues sessions, and taking part in the implementation of actions.

Transformation structures

The process of conflict transformation requires that community structures and public participation be used taking into account preexisting structures and state authorities. The role of the DRC government as a coordination body would be recommendable, but has been limited or absent in terms of broader top-down peacebuilding interventions, and its terms of collaboration with MONUSCO and NGOs have been equivocal. Therefore, in order to allow community peacebuilding processes to grow into a reconstruction of the nation as a whole, the modalities of collaboration need to be coherent, tailored and well-coordinated.

For over two decades LPI has been using the bottom-up approach. This article serves the objective of sharing the experience of LPI in eastern DRC. The main subjects treated cover the nature of the conflicts to be transformed, the appropriate actions to be implemented, the popular participation approach and the involvement of community structures. In order to integrate conflict transformation actions into a local development plan, the following factors should be taken into consideration: community reconciliation, change of the context that is triggering the conflict, and improvement of the general frame of mind.

Desislava Vezenkova

1 La Stratégie Internationale d’appui à la Sécurité et à la Stabilisation
New publication

**Conflict transformation – theory carried into practice**

It was a warm, sunny day in Bukavu, capital of the South Kivu Province in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Tharcisse Kayira, coordinator of a local conflict transformation organization, took a deep breath and strolled past a fragrant rose garden, toward the conference room where some sixty community representatives from the province were filtering in. This was it, the Inter-Community Dialogue, which would bring his own community, the Banyamulenge, face to face with other communities in a secure environment for the first time. Preparations had been ongoing for nearly four years to get to this point, where these four communities were ready to sit down together and talk through the conflicts that had been troubling them for so many years.


The particular incompatibility highlighted in this chapter revolves around the local tradition of *itulo* in the Fizi and Uvira territories of South Kivu. This is a fee levied on those who use land but do not own it in the local traditional understanding of the term. The fee is resented by the Banyamulenge, a pastoralist community, who see the Kivus as their homeland. The Belgian colonial administration established the precedent that a group was “indigenous” only if they or their ancestors were present on Congolese soil at the time of colonization. But in South Kivu, the Banyamulenge were not given a native authority despite being present in Congo at the time of colonization.

The problem is also exacerbated by the fact that on the one hand cultivators are angered by the damage caused to land and crops as cattle pass through; on the other hand, pastoralists are angered by the lack of predictable taxation and the pillaging of cattle.

Conflict transformation is at the heart of the work of LPI. It is the belief that conflict is a part of everyday life, but violence need not be. If efforts towards destruction and violence were engaged towards construction and positive outcomes, conflicts could be resolved without fighting.

Based on the conflict transformation theory, LPI and its civil society partners introduced an innovative approach to dealing with conflict in the DRC. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) process functions as a kind of reconciliation process. The central idea is that inquiry precedes action in order to better inform it, and in order that the partners and conflict actors may better understand conflict dynamics.

The PAR process begins with an attempt to understand the circumstances of the conflict in what is called a context analysis. After this, wider stakeholder consultations and analysis takes place to more completely understand the complexities of the conflict. The research is conducted and verified by the communities themselves to take into account the positions of diverse groups such as youth, men and women. The verification is essential to arrive at common understandings of the conflict to provide a base for routes forward.

When these phases are complete, intercommunity dialogue is undertaken to bring the different sides together in an attempt to find common ground and possible solutions to the incompatibility. If this is successful, it is followed by the implementation of actions identified, involving the creation of conflict transformation platforms that would facilitate future dialogue between the communities.

The chapter in the upcoming book highlights many salient issues, including the unpredictable nature of PAR with specific challenges faced in this case at both the research and validation, as well as the intercommunity dialogue phase. In this specific case, extensive intracommunity dialogue was required to address micro-conflicts within communities before intercommunity dialogue could commence. It also brings to light the necessity of extensive stakeholder consultation, beyond which most would think necessary. Those who claim to represent their communities in other contexts are often found to have differing opinions on the conflict from their home communities themselves.

So, make sure to get a copy of the upcoming book and find out how all these obstacles were overcome and learn from the fascinating case of the Fizi-Uvira PAR!

*Phillip Nelson/Kristina Lundqvist*
The situation in Congo is continuously unsettled, even though its civil war has officially been over for years and the United Nations’ largest peacekeeping mission is based there. The international community has failed to help Congo achieve peace and security because it fundamentally misunderstands the causes of the violence.

Peacebuilding in Congo needs to be reconsidered

Séverine Autesserre

Since the end of Congo’s transition to peace in late 2006, living conditions in the country (formally the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire) have become the worst in the world, according to the most recent Index of Human Development.

Average life expectancy at birth is 48 years, and close to 80 percent of the population survives on less than $2 per day. Various armed groups, including the Congolese army, are committing horrific human rights violations, especially in the eastern part of the country.

The civil war in Congo was the deadliest conflict since World War II, and it created the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. More than five million people died from 1998 to 2007 as do –

Foreign diplomats, UN peacekeepers and many NGOs tend to view the fighting exclusively as a consequence of national and international tensions.

raped. Some two million people – and as many as 80 percent of the inhabitants of Congo’s eastern provinces – fled their homes to escape the violence.

African and Western diplomats, along with UN officials, actively supervised negotiations to end the war. In 2002, they brokered a peace deal, and in 2006 they organized the first democratic elections in Congo’s history. To this day, the peacekeeping mission they set up is the only force capable of protecting the population from the ongoing violence.

But it has been a case of misguided intervention. One reason is that foreign diplomats, UN peacekeepers and many NGOs tend to view the fighting exclusively as a consequence of national and international tensions – especially power struggles among Congolese and foreign elites – and a spillover from the Rwandan genocide. And they typically consider intervention at the national or regional levels to be their only legitimate responsibility.

They neglect to address the other main sources of violence: distinctively local conflicts over land, grassroots power, status and resources, like cattle, charcoal, timber, drugs and fees levied at checkpoints. A lot of the violence in Congo is not coordinated on a large scale. It is the product of conflicts among fragmented local militias, each trying to advance its own agenda at the village or district level. Those then percolate and expand.

Consider tensions between the Congolese of Rwandan descent and the so-called indigenous communities in the eastern provinces of South Kivu and North Kivu. These have roots in a longstanding competition over land and traditional and administrative power that began in the 1930s under Belgian colonial rule.

The conflict escalated after Congo’s independence in 1960 as each camp recruited allies outside the province. With the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the crisis in the Kivus took on a regional dimension: local actors forged alliances with various Congolese and Rwandan armed groups, all in the interest of promoting their own agendas.

Rather than address these issues, though, international peacemakers have lately singled out three features of the ongoing conflict: as a primary cause of violence, the illegal exploitation of natural resources by Congolese and foreign armed groups; as a main consequence, sexual abuse against women and girls; as a central solution, reconstructing state authority.

International programs have thus emphasized three priorities: regulating the trade of minerals, providing care to victims of sexual violence and helping the central government extend its authority. This approach has provided a simple narrative that was easy to sell to audiences and donors in the West.

It has also backfired. Perversely, attempts to regulate the trade of minerals, providing care to victims of sexual violence and helping the central government extend its authority. This approach has provided a simple narrative that was easy to sell to audiences and donors in the West.

The measures focused on stopping the illegal trade of minerals but did nothing to destroy the actual power
base of armed groups. In the absence of any broader political, economic or social reforms, local military leaders have managed to remain the principal power brokers in the rural areas of eastern Congo. In some cases, they have even expanded their mining operations while vulnerable populations lost their livelihood.

The international community’s disproportionate attention to sexual violence has also raised the status of sexual abuse in a dangerous way. Some combatants now use it as a bargaining tool by threatening to commit mass rape if they are excluded from negotiations. And state-reconstruction programs have done little more than boost the capacity of the authoritarian central government, and of administrative officials at all levels, to oppress the population.

Addressing the consequences of sexual violence and these other abuses is important, of course, but donors should do more to address their underlying causes. Most important, they should approach the resolution of conflicts in Congo from the bottom up. They should assist local groups – official authorities, NGOs and civil-society representatives – with the funding, logistical means and technical capacity necessary to implement narrowly tailored programs.

For example, it’s worth supporting the work of the Life & Peace Institute and its Congolese partners. After extensive field investigations in South Kivu, including interviews with some 800 local actors, LPI and its partner Action pour la Paix et la Concorde set up intercommunity forums to discuss the specifics of local conflicts over land and manage the violence.

And in cooperation with other Congolese organizations, LPI has helped broker precise agreements among pastoralists, traditional chiefs and state authorities to regulate the seasonal movement of livestock, including by establishing pathways to guide the cattle through the lowlands with minimal disruption to farmers.

As international interveners ponder how to better help Congolese people build a sustainable peace, they should consider refocusing their efforts on supporting grassroots projects directed at resolving local conflicts, especially over land. If the international community continues to address the consequences of the violence in Congo rather than its most important causes, it will only add to the death toll.

This article originally appeared in the New York Times, 2012/06/23, with the title The Only Way to Help Congo.
While it is generally recognised that the Congo wars are the result of a complex interplay between regional, national and local dynamics, the local level dimensions of violence and conflict have for a long time received limited attention both in academia and in policy circles. As a result, a sophisticated understanding and critical analysis of the local drivers of conflict and their interconnectedness to larger dynamics have been lacking. More recent studies have emphasised the need to look at the local level and have argued that policy approaches have largely failed to address local conflict dynamics. Séverine Autesserre states that, in their approach to the conflict, international actors (including diplomats and UN staff) “neglect to address the other main sources of violence: distinctively local conflicts over land, grassroots power, status and resources, like cattle, charcoal, timber, drugs and fees levied at checkpoints”. Other studies paid extensive attention to local conflict drivers and have produced fine-grained analyses of local grievances, and of how local networks and coalitions are shaped around localised politico-military and economic competition, in many cases affecting relations between different communities.

The advantage of such focus on the local level is that it helps us to embed expressions of violence into local society and to develop responses that promote localised solutions in addition to classic top-down approaches. The downside, however, is that it risks putting too much emphasis on the local level and ignoring how local violence is shaped as much by larger power dynamics as it is informed by local grievances. In a critique to an over-emphasis on the local, some authors have therefore argued that we need to approach local violence as the outcome of dynamics and strategies that are shaped at the local, national and sometimes even regional level. Erickson-Baaz and Verweijen, for instance, argue that in eastern DRC, “political-military entrepreneurs (...) do not merely draw upon and ‘voice’ existing grievances, but heavily contribute to their inflation, partly under the influence of incentives derived from national-level policies”.

In other words, since the start of the war, local issues of contestation have increasingly become linked to larger politico-military competition and local actors involved connected to larger networks and elites. What has started as local phenomena, has over time transformed into and been informed by larger struggles for power and control.

This is also illustrated by groups such as the Raia Mutomboki, which is often described as a grassroots reaction to a lack of security and protection but should be understood as the consequence of the failure of attempts to create the necessary conditions for sustainable peace in the region. The current Raia Mutomboki started operating in 2011 in Shabunda (South Kivu) as a response to new atrocities by the FDLR, a Rwandan Hutu rebel force that has been present in the DRC since 1994. These attacks against the local population triggered the remobilisation of the Raia Mutomboki group and started a ruthless campaign against the FDLR and from Shabunda spread over a large territory in South and North Kivu. The movement could count on the support of customary chiefs, and its military success triggered a massive mobilisation of local youth.

But as has happened before with similar groups, once having chased off the FDLR, the movement started to challenge the authority of the Congolese army, which, because of its failure to protect the population, was no longer considered as a legitimate force. It also began interfering in local conflicts and providing alternative justice mechanisms. Its strength eventually represented an interesting tool for external actors in search for local power. Several army commanders that had deserted, tried to get some control over the group, and politicians saw in it a perfect device for safeguarding their local power base. So even if the group was never able to transcend local agendas, its existence was a direct outcome of a failure of the peace process. Its military successes and popular support made it connect to larger power struggles through the actions of local strongmen.

**Necessary interaction between different levels**

The Raia Mutomboki are but one expression of violence that cannot be reduced to the local level and that illustrates the interaction between local and supra-local dynamics and actors. It shows that what is often explained as a result of local dynamics, in most cases is the result of factors that are all but local. The practical consequence is that local peacebuilding efforts, such as the different reconciliation initiatives, can only result in sustainable effects when these supra-local dimensions of conflict are also addressed.

The different inter-community roundtables, discussions, platforms and dialogues all have some positive impact in bringing local communities closer to each other, but will only have a longer-term effect on conflict dynamics when decisive leaderships are included. This
becomes a real endeavour when dealing with rebel leaderships, particularly when their strategies and interests are connected to larger political and economic networks. In these cases, the impact of reconciliation efforts on conflict causes and triggers risks being rather limited.

A good illustration of the limits and pitfalls of an overly local emphasis on violence and conflict is the way we need to deal with land issues, which are increasingly recognised as a dominant ‘root cause’ and sustaining factor of conflict in eastern DRC. Over the years, scholars and practitioners have identified a number of critical land-related factors contributing to violence and conflict, including a huge diversity of land governance forms, the existence of overlapping legal frameworks and the weakness of the statutory land law, competition between indigenous and migrant communities, limited access to arable land in densely populated areas, the weak performance of the administration and justice system in the reconciliation and arbitration of land disputes, growing stress on local resources caused by massive displacement, the expansion of artisanal and small-scale mining, and increased competition between elites for the control over land and the consequent land concentration.

These land issues have currently taken central stage in analyses focusing on the local level of conflict, and numerous peacebuilding strategies have been developed that particularly focus on mediation of land disputes. Existing approaches, however, so far have limited effect on the underlying causes of land disputes, which in most cases are left unaddressed, either because they are considered to be too complex or because of a lack of impact on powerful actors involved in these conflicts. In many cases, these approaches also neglect the interconnectedness between local land disputes and the larger levels of the Congolese war. While it cannot be ignored that land issues are informing local conflict dynamics, it would also be misleading to reduce these dynamics to a single ‘root cause’.

In eastern DRC land issues are closely connected to dynamics of violence and conflict. Historical processes with territorialised identity, have created a context of intensified competition between different communities for access to land, and have turned land into the key asset of political power. In the early 1990s, when a democratisation process was announced, these processes and dynamics came together and produced a context of violent conflict that until today has not found its resolution but has transformed during the war, with land being one of the underlying causes, yet also an instrument of contestation, mobilisation and violence.

**Weak governance and growing confusion**

For decades, the poor governance of land allocation and transfers has been a source of structural violence in the country, and small politically-connected and wealthy elites have tended to gain control over land for speculation and enrichment at the expense of the subsistence livelihoods of the poor majority. A context of multiple and often contradictory land rights, a weak governance framework and a failing justice system have had a dramatic impact on the socio-economic and legal position of rural populations and have led to growing confusion over land rights and access. In most cases, the consequent disputes and disagreements have remained limited to the individual level, including disputes over plot boundaries, inheritance, the validity of contracts, illegal occupation of plots belonging to absentees, illegal acquisition of land rights etc.

But in certain areas, land issues have been a major source of conflict between farmers and large-scale concessionaires, between rural communities and mining companies, between pastoralists and farmers (transhumance conflicts) or between the National Park administration and rural populations that want to force access to land in these parks. In most cases, these conflicts include very low levels of violence. However, when conflicts are linked to identity and have an inter-ethnic dimension, they tend to produce large-scale violence. This is amply illustrated by events in Masisi, Kalehe, Lubero, Walikale and Ituri.

The Congo wars have only reinforced the importance of land issues in local conflict. Land has become a key ingredient in mobilisation efforts by armed groups. These dynamics have confirmed the particular links between identity, political representation and customary rights. But the Congolese wars have also radically changed land access patterns through a number of processes and dynamics, including forced displacement, shifts in the level of authority enjoyed by different customary and administrative leaders, and changes in the various social, economic
and political structures that allow people to enjoy the benefits of agricultural and pastoral production. The Congo wars have produced new competition for land, as part of a wider renegotiation of the local economic space and have been re-drawing ethnic, class and other ‘boundaries’ within local society.

Access to land — access to power

At the local level, access to land has thus become one of the main currencies of power. It has informed local struggle, yet conflict has also had a crucial impact on the wider institutional network organising land control and access. Rather than being a single cause of violence, land, as a resource with multi-dimensional aspects (as a community territory, as an economic resource, as a source of administrative revenue, as a social asset, for example), plays a significant role in terms of ethnic identity-formation, the powers and revenue-streams of customary and politico-military elites, and larger networks of profit and protection. Even if the effects of these dynamics tend to vary from place to place, depending on the local history, the composition and density of the population, the local governance context and administrative organisation, and the implication of politico-military elites, land serves as a material basis for processes of inclusion and exclusion, political and economic competition, mobilisation and conflict.

These elements explain why land is a crucial component of claims to political autonomy and power, yet at the same time gives meaning to local claims and grievances. It would be misleading, though, to limit land competition to the local level or to read the conflict in eastern DRC as mainly driven by local land claims. Structural elements of land competition and exclusion have provided a conducive environment for local, national and regional actors to strengthen their control over territory, social mobility and natural resources. Land, in this sense, has become an objective of armed struggle, while at the same time land insecurity is manipulated to mobilise rural populations.

What does all this tell us about the Congo war? Land plays a crucial role on a local level, but there is need to integrate it into a nuanced analysis that recognises the complexity of conflict dynamics, the creation of armed actors and the production of violent strategies. The current focus on land issues thus illustrates two potential risks: while it would be a critical mistake to reduce the conflict to single narratives (such as land competition), a perspective only focusing on micro-dynamics neglects the larger dimensions of the conflict. As one observer said, this “leads to downplaying of a range of interlocking supra-local factors that are especially of importance for understanding when and why conflicts translate into violence”.

It is only when we have a clear understanding of the different layers of local disputes, and the complex networks connecting those involved in it, that we can start developing the right responses and tackle the supra-local factors affecting or determining local conflicts.

3 Some of the next paragraphs are based on Vlassenroot, Koen, Land Issues and Conflict in Eastern DRC, New York: Social Science Research Council, 2013.
Women’s involvement in peacebuilding activities and reconciliation in Burundi is the focus of this article. Although the social fabric of the society was destroyed during the civil war, women continued to play a key role as peacebuilders, peacekeepers and peacemakers. Much thanks to their efforts the country reached its current level of reconciliation and stability.

Women in post-civil war Burundi

Agents of change, drivers of progress and pillars of reconciliation

Triphonie Habonimana

The following article focuses on the role of women in sustaining peace and reconciliation after a long period of conflict in Burundi. They play a pivotal role in sustaining peace and development and are a strategic constituency to build on, in order to move forward towards effective reconciliation. A short introduction will explain the process of transitional justice in the country. I will then show why women may be said to be key pillars of reconciliation. A short conclusion will summarise the ideas developed. The thoughts and ideas developed are the viewpoints of the author.

Since independence from Belgium in 1962, a series of military and non-democratic regimes dominated the country. The conflict raged internally and caused a lot of psycho-social, physical, economic and political suffering among Burundians. The country experienced serious socio-political unrest associated with the exclusion of some major groups of the Burundian population, including women, and the social fabric was destroyed. An unknown number of Burundians was killed, some fled to neighbouring countries and many others became internally displaced. Infrastructures were destroyed, women and girls were raped and many of them became widows and orphans. The social fabric that used to characterise the Burundian society was completely destroyed.

In spite of their hardship, women continued to play a key role as peacebuilders, peacekeepers and peacemakers in their communities. They assisted orphans and displaced persons and continued to spread messages of peace. Supported by international organisations, they worked around the country to preach peaceful coexistence both at community and national level, because they were tired of conflict.

At the community level, many women initiated reconciliation through dialogue and trainings. They also played the role of conflict mediators wherever the conflict arose in their neighbourhoods. Although the situation in the country was insecure, some rural women who were internally displaced continued to go to the fields to ensure agricultural production and to provide for the daily needs of their children and husbands who survived.

At the national level, women’s organisations in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender organised different activities aimed at building peace across the country. In addition, a national seminar was held that led to the creation of a women’s network for peace and nonviolence, March for Peace. National campaigns for peace were organised in order to continue to show that women are peace actors and that they are tired of conflict.

Reconciliation as a healing process

There is no single and agreed upon definition of reconciliation. Some people may think that reconciliation happens once, but as it is commonly said, “reconciliation is a process”. Reconciliation has many challenges and hurdles all along
its way, and Burundi is in this process. It is not an easy goal to achieve, nor is progress easily realised. It has to be an inclusive process, because it needs to involve both victims and perpetrators, otherwise it may fail. Reconciliation can never be imposed; it is a product of an individual’s self-reflection and his or her decision to move forward.

It is obvious from what has been observed in the Burundian context that reconciliation must be supported by various activities in the community. Most of these activities are initiated by women, and often the activities aim at economic reintegration, trauma healing and social cohesion.

After a violent conflict, it is necessary to deal with the past. This helps citizens to go through what happened, discuss its aftermath and then decide which strategies and actions to take in order to move forward with hope for a better future. Reconciliation is a long process where people try to regain their social network and seek to return to the same position and place as before the conflict. Many people do not know which route to take, but the most important thing for any society is to arrive at the final destination: effective reconciliation.

In rural areas, women face many challenges, including cultural barriers and the fact that they often do not know, or choose to ignore, their rights. Though they were excluded from the peace negotiations and the conflict resolution process, they are now key drivers in the reconciliation process. They have also affirmed their position as community leaders. Their motivation to manage or resolve conflict is high. For this, the society gives them a space and values their viewpoints. Though they are not yet many in number, there are now women who have been elected by both men and women to be “Chief of hills”. This is a great step forward, as historically women were not allowed to speak in front of men and were under no circumstances allowed to be leaders.

In addition, in rural areas, women are now associated with the governance of their communities. They are now decision takers and makers.

In general, at the grassroots level, women have decided to be agents for the promotion of community reconciliation. They are conscious of the necessity to reach reconciliation, especially in a country like Burundi where the conflict lasted for more than a decade. The more they see the consequences of the conflict, the more they invest in reconciliation activities.

Women’s participation in the peace agreement

The Arusha Peace Agreement was the result of a long negotiation process that started in mid-June 1998. According to the parties, “since Independence and throughout the different regimes, there have been a number of constant phenomena which have given rise to the conflict that has persisted up to the present time: massive and deliberation killings widespread violence and exclusion have taken place during this period”. Representatives from seventeen political parties, the armed movements, the government of Burundi and the National Assembly were involved in the talks. However, the parties themselves excluded some groups, among them women, from the talks, although they were a key component of the community. Thus they underestimated their contributions.

Already by the time, some women began to mobilise and they organised themselves in different associations. They then started to claim their rights to be included in the negotiations. Strategic meetings were conducted with the message to negotiators, mediators, and diplomats to invite women to the negotiations. Not until February 2000, six months before the negotiations were to begin, did women gain the status of observers. They then succeeded to lobby for their inclusion and for a gender dimension in the agreement. As a matter of fact, a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women was guaranteed in the constitution. They organised in community associations in order to help victims of war and conducted different actions for peace, thus playing a crucial role in building peace in the country.

Women and peacebuilding

As said in the proverb, “actions speak louder than words”, peacebuilding and reconciliation necessitate action on the ground. After the 1993 crisis, Burundi entered a new phase of development in 2005. In fact, national actions were taken in the peace process. Though there was one rebel movement that was fighting until 2008, the president signed a law in January 2005 to initiate a new national army including integrating all other armed groups from divergent Burundian ethnic groups. The constitution was approved by voters in a referendum, which marked the first time for Burundians to vote since 1994.

Hence, from 2005, some refugees began to come back to the country and women became very much involved in the implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement. They took part in security sector reform, reintegration of war affected persons, the organisation of democratic elections in 2005, and the processes of peacebuilding and of national economic growth. Their involvement was facilitated by different national and international non-governmental organisations mainly through community workshops, seminars etc.

Since then, in some places, women have been trained in conflict transformation, conflict resolution, early warning tools and mediation techniques. Many of them have become conflict mediators within the cross-cluster peace committees in the communities where they live. They were helped by civil society organisations whose focus is conflict resolution/transformation. These organisations facilitated community workshops during which simulation exercises were organised to help them to contextualise their work and to have a better understanding of transformation. In some places, a follow up community committee has also been put in place.

“Widows brought food to men who were incarcerated for having killed these women’s husbands.”

In fact, women’s perception of themselves as victims has changed over time and they have become true agents of change, drivers of progress and pillars of reconciliation in Burundi. Returnees, displaced persons, and ex-combatants, both men and women, work together in harmony and have a strong will to develop the society. Women also participate actively in economic development, one of the essential conditions for reconciliation and transformation. At the community level, thousands of women are involved in a microcredit
system where they mutually give and receive loans/credits and reimburse at the lowest interest rates. This system allows them to access economic opportunities by initiating income generating activities. Consequently, their lives have improved: those who could not send their children to school are now able to do so and are able to pay the school fees, those who used to eat once in a day can eat three times a day, etc.

The role of women can also be seen in the promotion of the rule of law where they actively participate in fighting against gender-based social injustice. This is currently seen through the development of national policies, laws and strategies which take into account the contribution of women. Examples of this are the Poverty Reduction Strategy Pillar II, the penal code of 2009, the UN Resolution 1325 action plan, the national strategy to fight against gender-based violence, and the 2025 vision, among others.

Women and trauma healing

Trauma healing and reconciliation, in which many women have participated, are key processes to sustain peace and development. Almost a decade after the conflict formally ended, these issues are still of vital importance in Burundian communities. When trauma healing and community reconciliation are provided, family relationships significantly improve, and reconciliation is better sustained. According to the Legal Representative of Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services in Burundi, David Niyonzima, "the seeds of tomorrow’s wars grow in the soil of today’s unhealed traumas; the seeds of tomorrow’s peace grow in the soil of today’s healing and reconciliation”.

In a nutshell, a community must heal itself, and this healing must be holistic in order to foster a culture of peace. For example, after they participated in the trauma healing and community reconciliation sessions, women of Mutaho, in Gitega Province, decided to visit the men who killed their husbands, who were currently jailed in the Central Prison in Gitega. This also happened in Ruyigi where widows brought food to men who were incarcerated for having killed these women’s husbands. They did it as a sign of reconciliation after the men had confessed their crimes and asked the widows for pardon. These actions carry a deep meaning of reconciliation and not many people would do the same. These women are dedicated to consolidating peace and reconciliation in their communities, so that life can regain the meaning it used to have before the conflict.

Recently, the international community became more interested in issues concerning the role of women in peace and security. The Platform for Action of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) said: “While entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex”. In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted an innovative resolution (UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security), which recognises that maintaining and promoting peace and security requires the participation of women in decision-making, and which calls upon all actors to adopt this perspective.

The international community recognises the need to increase the participation of women in conflict resolution and takes account of gender in all analyses, policies and programmes designed to overcome conflict and promote peace. As Burundi is waiting for the implementation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, women should be strongly represented in that commission, as they have already substantially started developing community initiatives to sustain peace, development and reconciliation.

Members of the groups who attended trauma healing workshops are stable-minded now, which can be observed by the way they meet one another. They actively listen to each other, and they have compassion for one another, which was not the case before. Many of them report that there are no more conflicts in the families of the participants in the workshops. They regained their trust in people which enabled them to say and believe that life, peace and reconciliation are intertwined and yet possible.

Though Burundi was affected by ethnic and political divisions, it remains a very beautiful country, where life has deep meaning and reconciliation is possible. On the basis of their achievements after the conflict and their contribution in the post-reconstruction period, women have shown that they constitute a force for peace and reconciliation and therefore should always be involved in peacemaking and peacekeeping. They are drivers of peace, sustainable development and reconciliation. 

Over 550,000 citizens were displaced during Burundi’s civil war. In 2005 some refugees began to come back to the country. A group of returnees holding a national flag as they listen to the welcome speech at Gatumba border post.

1 Arusha Peace Agreement, Article 3.1 – Post-colonial period
2 The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995): Platform for Action, paragraph 135
Politics and conflict resolution in the Democratic Republic of Congo are areas reserved for men. But a new project, strengthening women at the local level, aims to break this pattern of discrimination.

Women’s participation strengthens peace work

Anna Lithander

Violence, harassment, slander, threats, poverty, and corruption are some of the many obstacles facing women taking part in the daily life and future of their societies in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Several of the organisations in the region working with women’s rights and peace have been subjected to violent threats and harassment.

In the DRC, politics is not considered to be something that women should occupy themselves with. For many women, the mere thought of participating is totally alien, and women who do are at times even singled out as “rebels” or “prostitutes”.

Still there are many strong women in the country who try to enhance women’s involvement in politics. To support these struggles and to contribute to a more equal and sustainable peace, two organisations, the Swedish Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the Life & Peace Institute (LPI), have teamed up to finance a three year long project for women in conflict resolution.

LPI has worked with peace processes on a local level in eastern DRC since 2002.

– For several years we have tried to incorporate a gender perspective in our work, but we haven’t been able to do it systematically. With the help of Kvinna till Kvinna and the Congolese women’s organisations that they work together with, we hope to reach more women and make sure that their voices are heard when local disputes are being resolved, says Zaurati Nasibu at LPI in Bukavu, eastern Congo.

The conflict resolution methodology used by LPI is based on long term work which seeks to resolve local conflicts involving as many parties as possible to achieve peace. So far, however, not many women have been present and active. One reason is that LPI engages in participatory peace processes, letting parties to the conflict decide for themselves who takes part in meetings and dialogue processes. Imposing a gender quota is in itself contradictory to this methodological approach.

– We advertise about information meetings, but not many women come. Clearly we need to have a different approach. Perhaps we should invite women separately? says Loochi Muzaliwa from LPI.

– In the women’s organisations we also work with women’s peace issues, but we lack strategies and we don’t have the right connections. In this project we can all come together with our different points of view, but with the common idea that women are central in achieving lasting peace. We are very positive about this collaboration, it feels really important, says Gégé Katana from the women’s rights and peace organisation Solidarité des Femmes Activistes Pour la Défense des Droits Huimains (SOFAD).

Strongly committed project participants

The project kicked off in November 2012, when men and women from nine different women’s and peace organisations from eastern Congo came together in a two day meeting held in Bukavu. They discussed everything from how traditions discriminate women, to what the UN resolution 1325 on women, peace and security really means.

– Can we talk about women’s rights and participation at the same time? one of the participants asked himself and initiated a loud discussion.

– People have no idea that there is a UN resolution on women in conflicts – education and training will be needed, another person around the table said.

– Women make up half the society. They must be part of the work, otherwise the peace won’t last, a third participant pointed out.

The meeting ended with the participants listing the concrete tools they thought they would need to be able to work more systematically on women’s participation in peace work.

The peace organisations expressed a desire to learn more about what a gender perspective really means and about legal and other documents that support women’s rights. The women’s organisations wanted to learn more about mediation techniques, negotiation techniques and conflict analysis.

– In Association des Femmes des Médias we support women in rural areas and often help out as mediators when women who have been raped have been disowned by their families. We need to learn more about good mediation techniques, so that we really can help people reconcile, says Julienne Baseke.

Since the start of the project there have been two more meetings on the special techniques used in LPI’s conflict resolution method. Two organisations, namely the women’s organisation SOFAD and the peace organisation Union Pour la Paix et le Développement Intégré (UPDI), have been selected to cooperate in a pilot conflict resolution project in three different areas of the Uvira territory that is currently dealing with conflicts. The aim is to see more women taking part in the resolution talks and hopefully that will lead to more sustainable solutions.

Translation: Malin Ekerstedt
Fostering dialogue in societies torn apart by ethnic conflicts is a contribution to peacebuilding processes in general and to reconciliation, trauma healing and positive changes in particular. This article lifts up some of the media initiatives of organisations in the Great Lakes Region that contribute to engaging the traumatised communities in this process.

Media in Great Lakes Region fostering social dialogue

Patrick Hajayandi

The media is playing an increasingly important role in shaping history around the world. The recent debate on what was called the CNN effect, especially during the two Gulf Wars, is one among many examples that show how media can influence peace and conflict dynamics in the modern world. It is therefore not surprising that the media is being considered the fourth form of power, beside the executive, legislative and judicial.

Steven Livingstone, in his interesting article on the CNN effect, points out the three roles the media can play in times of war (Livingstone, 1997). According to him, the CNN effect can appear (1) as a policy agenda-setting agent, (2) as an impediment to the achievement of desired policy goals and (3) as an accelerator to policy decision-making. Hawkins shows the impact of the CNN factor on decision making processes and defines this concept as “the process by which the media influence foreign policy by evoking responses in their audiences through concentrated and emotionally based coverage, which in turn applies pressure to governments to act in response to a particular conflict” (Hawkins, 2002). It is obvious that media agendas can influence a broad range of policy initiatives and, by extension, the lack of media coverage contributes to lack of policy.

As stated by the UN Communication Department, “throughout Africa, different segments of the population have minimal access to communication media and are often not reached or provided with adequate information on issues of critical importance to national welfare and societal development. The availability and suitability of communication and information media are essential prerequisites for empowering and enabling the national population to express their views and opinions about significant development problems and to participate in the process of democratic transitions, conflict resolution and, ultimately, a peaceful society” (UNESCO, 1998).

Promoting dialogue in the Great Lakes Region

In the Great Lakes Region the role of the media, especially radio broadcasting, has been increasing and various. In 1994, the role played by the Radio Television des Mille Collines (RTLM) was overwhelmingly negative due to its contribution in the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. In fact, RTLM served as a propaganda tool and was used by Hutu extremists to spread ethnic hatred and to incite the Hutu majority to perpetrate the massacre against the Tutsi minority.

Since 1998 there were several media efforts, mainly by clandestine radio projects, supported by Hutu movements, to inform and manipulate the memory or history concept of their “groups”. These stations are maybe less known than RTLM, maybe less symbolic and efficient in the role as hate speech inciters, but they were nevertheless instrumental in creating or worsening the dualistic memories of antagonism between Hutu and Tutsi. One example is Radio Rutomorangingo (wrongly called Radio Democracy in French) that aired false lists of potential Hutu victims that were going to be killed in 1996.

Despite the negative role played by some radio stations, especially during the period of turbulence in the 1990’s, there were also some media that contributed to relieving the pain of people in distress, such as refugees, internally displaced people, lost children, raped women etc. For example, the availability of information during the first and second Congo war in 1996 and 1998 was vital for people who fled to the mountains where there was no connection with the outside world. In order to help these people be informed on what was happening, different NGOs working in the area dropped radio receivers that used the solar energy or manual power generators down into the forests for people who were fleeing. The aim was to help them stay informed about the situation around them, as well as help scattered families to reunite. This was the beginning of what is known now as the BBC Gahuzamiryango Programme (meaning in the local language ‘the one which makes families meet’). The impact of the initiative was highly appreciated because it particularly allowed parents and children who had been separated during the fighting to be reunited.

Another important example is the role played by media in Burundi, contributing to the peace process or even to reconciliation. After the assassination of the newly elected President Melchior Ndadaye in 1993, a political crisis, followed by ethnic violence, erupted in the country. Two main ethnic groups
in Burundi – the Hutu and the Tutsi – were engaged in a violent conflict. Consequently, around 300,000 lives were lost and thousands became refugees or internally displaced people. This situation triggered strong ethnic hatred.

Many efforts were made in order to help Burundians resolve this serious problem. Peace initiatives included negotiations and other diplomatic actions with the top leaders from every side. Further, there were also initiatives that targeted average people who were manipulated by politicians. Among the initiatives targeting the grassroots level, there were radio programmes oriented at promoting reconciliation through open discussions on the root causes of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. The message of peace was also transmitted through radio drama. For example, a radio soap opera called “Umubanyi niwe muryango” (Your neighbour is your family kin) which was supported by Search for Common Ground, had a strong impact on the mitigation of ethnic hatred in Burundi and on promoting peace and tolerance in different parts of the country during ethnic violence and civil war that erupted in the aftermath of the President’s assassination and the mass killings that followed.

Organisations promoting dialogue

After the signing and the implementation of Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in 2000, many organisations launched programmes designed to contribute to peace consolidation efforts. Three such organisations promoting dialogue through media are: La Benevolencija, Search for Common Ground and Eirene. All of them have programmes that are run across the Great Lakes Region.

Today, the programme Murikira Ukuri (Show me the truth), produced by Radio La Benevolencija in Burundi, plays a major role in the domain of conflict prevention by addressing different issues related to understanding the origins of ethnic hatred leading up to dealing with the past. Another important issue addressed by programmes from La Benevolencija is transitional justice and reconciliation. This issue is also addressed through a radio and TV programme called “Si ma mémoire est bonne” (If my memory is still good) and “Akahise kadasorongoye” (The past which was not revisited). These two programmes are oriented toward promoting social dialogue around problematic interpretations on concepts of Burundi’s past conflicts. They are seen as a significant contribution to the transitional justice process in preparation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In Rwanda and DRC, La Benevolencija has developed similar programmes (Musekeweya in Rwanda and Kumbuka kesho in DRC). In Rwanda, La Benevolencija is conducting a media project aimed at deepening reconciliation and trust among citizens in the post-Gacaca era, that is, the period after the judgments by popular courts called Gacaca of people involved in the genocide. The focus of La Benevolencija is on the importance of equal justice in a post-genocide society, on the sensitisation of journalists can play a significantly influencing role by sending a message that helps prevent conflict and promotes reconciliation.
the role of the free speech, the dangers of hate speech and the need of empathy for others. Accent is put on raising the awareness of leaders about the possible influence of survivor trauma and fears of decision-making processes.

Another organisation playing an important role in the Great Lakes Region and using media to promote social dialogue is Search for Common Ground (SFCG). The programmes of SFCG in Burundi are directed toward conflict management and violence reduction. Responding to the deteriorating political environment, especially in the aftermath of the 2010 elections and due to the boycott of the opposition parties, the organisation has been implementing a project aimed at encouraging Burundians, and particularly the youth, to engage in peaceful cohabitation in the midst of diversity.

One of the flagship programmes of SFCG is “Generation Grands Lacs”. It is a 60 minute radio talk show on air every Saturday, broadcast on five radio stations across the region – in Burundi, the DRC and in Rwanda. Its objective is to create a dialogue platform for the youth in the region and to enable them to give their views on political, social, economic and cultural matters. Further, the programme promotes debates on conflict related issues, allowing the youth to give their contribution on problem solving as well as calling other youth to become aware of the influence of some political entrepreneurs who use young people in advancing their personal hidden agendas.

“Generation Grands Lacs” has been successful and is believed to have contributed to a shift in knowledge and attitudes (Slachmijlder, L., 2012). The programme has proved that social dialogue through media is possible and that it can influence the youth positively and contribute to the creation of a new generation who is ready to resolve regional problems by peaceful means.

The “Projet Pigiste” of the organisation Eirene Great Lakes is a regional project whose purpose is to develop professional skills of journalists across the region. The project was launched in 2009 as a capacity building programme targeting journalists from three radio stations based in three countries of the Great Lakes Region: Radio Publique Africaine in Burundi, Radio Maendeleo in DRC and Radio Izuba in Rwanda.

The aim of the programme is to develop skills related to covering information in conflict affected areas in a way that promotes social cohesion. Also, the journalists are trained to cover traumatic events without causing psychological problems. The guiding philosophy is that the radio is to be used as a tool for peace.

In the Great Lakes Region there is a strongly developed oral culture, and according to Lothar Seethaler, who works for Swiss Cooperation in the DRC, “the community radios play a socially important role precisely because of such orality” (Haasen, B. and Capitolin, P., 2011). Journalists can play a significantly influencing role by sending a message that helps prevent conflict and promotes reconciliation. Through dialogue they address problems arising from stereotypes and prejudices.

Success and challenges

Despite the recorded success of the media efforts toward promoting social dialogue, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed. One of the stumbling blocks for media in the region, and in promoting social dialogue, are the repeated attempts by some government officials to limit the activities of the media. These limitations can be new regulations or policies implemented by the government. The training of journalists is another specific issue. People working as journalists do not necessarily have a solid training as media professionals. In some situations there is a lack of collaboration between different organisations involved in peacebuilding through media. This leads to the overlapping of some radio programmes.

Fostering social dialogue is one of the important tools that can be used in order to promote peacebuilding processes in the Great Lakes Region. The activities carried out by the three organisations mentioned in this article are good examples of how dialogue can be used in order to bring healing to traumatised communities. In the Great Lakes Region where the oral culture dominates, the use of media tools, especially radio, brings positive results, because it enables peacebuilders to reach wide audiences. Also, it is clear that the media can have a big influence on how people perceive their differences within communities divided along ethnic lines. These efforts towards peace and reconciliation need to be encouraged and supported.

References


Mapping civil society’s role in regional policymaking

Over the last year, LPI’s regional programme has carried out a detailed study of how civil society organisations in the Horn of Africa influence regional peacebuilding and conflict resolution policies.

After conducting a survey of over a hundred organisations, extensive and in-depth interviews with dozens of NGO representatives and workshops, LPI has produced a synthesis report on the role of civil society in regional policymaking.

As a matter of good practice and in order to further refine the findings, LPI held a round of consultations with the respondents and interviewees to validate the contents of the report. These validation sessions were organised in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Kampala (Uganda) and Nairobi (Kenya) in October and November. In addition to local and international NGOs and activists, representatives of intergovernmental bodies, think-tanks and research institutes contributed to the discussions.

The main questions addressed in these workshops sought to determine what kind of data is generated by peacebuilding organisations and how that data is used and shared, and whether it is translated into analysis and policy work.

The final synthesis report, available in January 2014, will provide the basis for the Horn of Africa Regional Programme’s policy advocacy work.

Unique research on LPI’s work

LPI has supported the first ever randomised field trial of a “sustained dialogue” programme. The research, recently published in the Journal of Peace Research, found that Sustained Dialogue (SD) can decrease mistrust and increase the level of trust between people of different ethnic backgrounds.

716 university students, from LPI’s partner, Addis Ababa University (AAU), participated in the study, of which 77 had been randomly selected to participate in the SD programme for nearly one year. The remaining 639 were part of a control group of students who had not been enrolled in the programme, but had expressed interest in the process.

The effects of the SD programme were studied by conducting an attitudinal survey and a behavioural trust game with both the experimental and control groups. The research was a collaborative effort between researchers from Uppsala University, Otago University, AAU and LPI.

In Sustained Dialogue, participants meet on a bi-weekly basis to dialogue on issues that are most divisive on campus. SD has been the main methodology used by LPI and Addis Ababa Peace Club, LPI’s partner on Sidist Kilo campus at AAU. The SD at AAU is now in its fourth year and running without LPI support. LPI’s support for SD has extended to Haramaya University in eastern Ethiopia, and there are plans to expand to one other Ethiopian university within one year.

For more information about the research see A randomized field trial of sustained dialogue in Ethiopia, Journal of Peace Research. The article is available on: http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/50/5/563.abstract

Conducting research in an NGO

In the article Peut-on faire de la recherche au sein d’une ONG?, published in the French research journal Genèses, researcher and journalist Justine Brabant discusses the concept of conducting research while working within an NGO. It is based on the author’s experience of conducting research within LPI in the DRC. Justine Brabant spent six months researching agriculturalists, pastoralists and armed conflict in South Kivu in eastern DRC.

Kenya’s security after Westgate Mall

The Nairobi office of the South Africa-based Institute of Security Studies organised a seminar on 5 November to examine the security situation in Kenya in the wake of the attack on the Westgate Mall in September. LPI’s Policy and Communications Advisor, Najum Mushtaq, was invited to speak on the regional and international implications of the attack and how the Kenyan state and society have responded to it. Other panellists in the seminar included high police officials, security experts, and eminent academics. The event was co-hosted by the Hanns-Seidel Stiftung.

LPI at African Agenda 2063

Hannah Tsadik, LPI Representative for the Regional and Ethiopia programmes, recently participated in a civil society consultation for the African Union in Dakar, Senegal. The consultation regarded the AU “Agenda 2063” where the vision of Africa in 50 years was discussed, as well as strategies for realising that vision. Hannah Tsadik was part of one of the working groups tasked to give input on how to reach a peaceful Africa in 50 years.

Film section on website

LPI’s new film section on www.life-peace.org includes interesting documentaries on the work of LPI and local partner organisations in Ethiopia, Somalia and the DRC, as well as lectures from a series of Sudan seminars. Visit and learn more about peacebuilding and ongoing conflict transformation projects.

Staff changes

Uppsala, Sweden
Malin Brench, Programme Advisor, left LPI in mid-October to take up a position at Kvinnan till Kvinnan, Stockholm. Her successor is Karin Axelsson Zaar who earlier worked as General Secretary for the Swedish NGO Operation 1325, Anna Björklund, Senior Finance Officer, left LPI at the end of October to work as a finance consultant.

Bukavu, DRC
Yvette Katora has joined as a new bookkeeper for the 145 project. Desislava Vezenko and Alana Pool are new interns who joined the LPI team in Bukavu. Jean-Louis Nzwewe and Fiston Bonyiwiesz have left LPI.

Nairobi, Kenya
Shamsia Ramadhan, editor for the Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB), has left LPI for a position with Catholic Relief Service. Acting HAB editor is Najum Mushtaq, earlier Uppsala-based Policy and Communications Advisor.
Policy dialogue on the AU promoting peace

The past few months have been a busy time for IJR’s Justice and Reconciliation in Africa Programme with numerous events taking place as well as new publications and appearances in the media. On 27 June 2013, head of IJR’s Justice and Reconciliation in Africa Programme, Dr. Tim Murithi, participated in a conference hosted by the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa, at Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study at Stellenbosch University. At the one-day policy dialogue on the African Union’s role in promoting peace and enhancing good governance in the region, Dr. Murithi gave a presentation entitled: “The Role of the African Governance Platform in Monitoring Democratisation”.

South Sudan and South Africa exchange ideas on reconciliation

In September, members of South Sudan’s National Committee for Healing, Peace and Reconciliation came to South Africa to learn about its journey of reconciliation. The committee was established by presidential decree earlier this year. Chairperson is Rev. Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul. The delegation visited Cape Town to raise awareness about the South Sudan reconciliation process and to engage with likeminded organisations able to provide insights into developing reconciliation processes.

Bottom-up indicators of peace

The purpose of this programme is to provide opportunities for participants to enhance their knowledge by engaging with leading practitioners, local experts and IJR staff on transitional justice issues in South Africa and the rest of Africa. In turn, the fellows share their insights and experiences of furthering reconciliation within their own respective context, which will inform IJR’s programming in South Africa and beyond.

Publications and appearances in media

In the past few months, IJR has published various reports and policy briefs, such as “Opportunities for Gender Justice and Reconciliation in South Sudan”, by Friederike Bubenzer and Elizabeth Lacey, and “‘Home at last?’ Land Conflicts in Burundi and the Right of Victims to Reparations”, by Judith Binder and Tim Murithi.

IJR has actively participated in the media with Friederike Bubenzer, Senior Project Leader for IJR’s Transitional Justice in Africa Fellowship Programme, being interviewed on Voice of the Cape Radio, and Webster Zambara, Senior Project Leader for Southern Africa, featured on the TV channel CNBC Africa on two different occasions.
Reviews and resources

Rich analysis of an emerging Pan-African spirit

*Handbook of Africa’s International Relations, edited by Tim Murithi. Routledge, 2013*

During the 20th century, Pan-African policies were primarily driven by African intellectuals, scholars, politicians and citizens. However, in the 21st century great changes are taking place, for example, the establishment of the African Union (AU) and efforts to strengthen African participation in the international sphere.

In the *Handbook of Africa’s International Relations*, more than forty authors interrogate the notion of Pan-Africanism through various lenses. The editor of the book is a Research Fellow with the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town and Head of the Justice and Reconciliation in Africa Programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, South Africa. A book such as this one could not come at a better time. It offers a wealth of analysis and research from scholars from inside and outside the continent and aims to fill this analytical gap.

The handbook seeks to address the AU’s role as an emerging actor in the international sphere. It does so by examining the various positions that the AU has taken in international forums, such as reforms on the UN Security Council, climate change, efforts to address the controversial standoff with the international criminal court, efforts to address challenges of refugees and internally displaced persons, positions related to development, international trade, environment and public health issues.

This book challenges Africa’s position within the current international sphere by arguing that Africa’s international relations have not been on its own terms and usually are defined by international geopolitics. It traces the continent’s complex relationship with the west by locating its position within the colonial and Cold War eras. During that period, African countries were experiencing processes of decolonisation. However, peace and security were often compromised in countries which became sights of Cold War rivalries. The Cold War has left behind a legacy of instability on the continent. African international relations are still haunted by a paternalistic attitude of western powers to civilise and discipline.

Externally driven, dominant interests fuelled by globalisation continue to drive international relations in Africa, often at the expense of African economies. However, there is an emerging Pan-Africanist spirit within the African continent and the AU, which seeks to change these top-down relations into partnerships. Despite this, these ideals are challenged by a paradox that on the one hand there is willingness and a drive for a unified African voice in the international sphere, and on the other hand often a lack of political will from African leaders to address their differences and collectively solve their problems.

The book is divided into five sections. The first, titled *Theories and historical evolution*, delves into some of the existing theoretical frameworks relating to Africa’s international relations. The second section discusses *Institutional Developments* and illustrates how the AU has adopted a range of policy frameworks and operationalised institutions to govern its continental and international relations. Section three, *Africa’s international relations: issue and policy areas* assesses a range of policy issues that remain a challenge for the continent to address, while section four, *Global governance in Africa*, looks at an extensive range of topics pertaining to global governance and how it impacts upon Africa. In the final section, *Africa and international partnerships*, authors look at Africa’s international partnerships such as the EU, China, India and the US Africa Command as well as Africa’s relationship with South American countries and Iran.

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Time to take religion seriously


This report is based on keynote lectures, introductions and paper presentations given at a conference with the same title as the book. It is an ambitious consideration of the formation of civil society internationally and the importance of Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) for developmental issues and democratisation. The report draws on a multitude of research projects carried out in different parts of the world, together with responses from stakeholders in an unusual but creative combination. The report addresses a field of research which is growing, due to religious, social and demographic transformations in what is called “the global village”. This development challenges traditional European views on religion as a private and invisible phenomenon.

The content of this comprehensive report is divided into five themes: 1) Introduction, 2) The Gendering of the Arab spring, 3) Liberation theology, 4) Religion and grassroots politics in Africa, and 5) Socially engaged Buddhism. As all conference reports, it suffers from its number of short overviews, which not always fit with the theme. At the same time, however, these overviews give an interesting insight into ongoing research at very different institutions around the world. Most importantly, it raises questions about the pressing need to become more acquainted with the role of religion in both secular Europe and the religious global south. How is religion appreciated as a driver of social change?

The report discusses the need for dialogue between faith traditions and the role of history in this. A telling example is the complicated dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East (p. 71) and the fruitful dialogue in Haiti between Christians, Muslims and Voodoo people (p. 81). It indicates the necessity to implement a historical and genealogical perspective on present developments (p. 32).
The cleavage between liberal and conservative values is one of the most important factors in contemporary global politics. This report shows clearly how religion can be used to support both sides. Results show that, due to the sensitivity of family values and sexuality, the fight against HIV/AIDS in parts of Africa is hindered by both the Catholic Church in Swaziland (p. 100) and the Muslims in Mozambique (p. 164).

The report also discusses how religious communities are involved in development projects and health care. The developmental perspective is especially evident when including human rights. This is exemplified through the rights of women. It is shown that although women have been a strong part of the Arab spring, not least by being at the forefront of protest marches (e.g. in Egypt), they are side-lined once democracy has been reached. Tunisia and Morocco are included as examples of countries with an Islamist party. These parties seem to have greater focus on social than human rights issues. One of the articles asks if there is an ongoing Islamisation of democracy or a democratisation of political Islam (p. 118). There is no easy answer to these questions, especially not today.

The liberation theology theme shows that there is always a political side of theology – particularly when located outside religious institutions and directed towards the majority of the population. The development in Latin America is a telling example of the German sociologist and political economist Max Weber’s thesis that when theological principles and practices change, it may have unforeseen consequences on social and economic life. Furthermore, the section on Buddhism shows that there is a social side to all religions. The term “socially engaged Buddhism” was coined during the 1980s to explain a growing social movement “which seeks to adapt Buddhist principles and practices to contemporary social issues” (p. 181). In sum: the report shows how complex the relations are between the religious and the social/political realms. Religion is clearly connected to social development in the global South, while private and disconnected in the global North. The growth of the civil society has, however, propelled the prominence of FBOs in the development discourse, also in the North. This area greatly needs to be further investigated. I can only agree with the statement on p. 7: “It is, truly, time to take religion seriously”.

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at Uppsala University

The United Nations as a battleground for humanity


Kofi Annan (born 1938 in Ghana) was the seventh Secretary General (SG) of the United Nations (UN). He succeeded Boutros Boutros-Ghali from Egypt for two terms in office from 1997 to 2006 after a career as high-ranking international civil servant for most of his life. He was appointed as the organization’s first black African UNSG and so far the only one who qualified as a long-standing official – so to say from within the “belly of the beast” – after several bap-tisms of fire, not least in the Department for Peace Keeping Operations, which feature prominently in this book and shaped his future role as SG. On behalf of the UN, in 2001 he received the Nobel Prize for Peace, among others for “bringing new life to the organization”. His terms in office left marks within the international system and its normative framework maybe more than any other SG except possibly Dag Hammarskjöld, who died in a plane crash in September 1961 on a mission to seek a negotiated solution to the civil strife in the Congo.

Annan on many occasions as SG referred to Hammarskjöld as his role model. This recognition, however, is not visible in these accounts, which are more than personal memories and, according to the Preface, rely on competent inputs of many others acknowledged. Annan’s reflections rightly cover a much longer time span than his terms as UNSG. Hammarskjöld is in passing accredited for the institutionalization of the peacekeeping forces and in another context quoted (p. 156) – but blatantly wrong, while his popularized statement could have been easily checked.

Other SGs also do not feature prominently. While Annan remains uncommitted to his successor, he has nothing positive to say about his predecessor Boutros-Ghali, who was denied a second term in office for being – ironically somewhat like Hammarskjöld – too independent from the major powers in control over the Security Council. His leadership is classified as “secrecy style” (p. 44), based on “strict private control over his personal communications with representatives and leaders of member states, as well as special representatives of the secretary-general” (p. 38).

Similarly interesting, if not disturbing, is, despite the generally diplomatic tone, the engagement with Romeo Dallaire (in the index listed as “Reece”) and his trauma as commanding officer of the UN forces on the ground in Rwanda. Reporting on the alarming signs of the forthcoming genocide without being listened to in New York features mainly to explain a dilemma, in which Annan spends remarkably few thoughts on his personal role, though he admits, “it was one of the most shocking and deeply formative experiences of my entire career, laying bare the disjuncture between the public statements of alarm and concern for the suffering of other people on the one hand, and, on the other, the unwillingness to commit any of the necessary resources to take action” (p. 59). Annan’s observations on the “complicity with evil” (p. 73ff) that the big powers were willing to accept, or even enter for the sake of their own interests or domestic policy priorities in Rwanda and elsewhere, are indeed among the most instructive and illuminating aspects of his deliberations and testify to his own moral awareness and consciousness.

In the end, sadly so, 8,000 Bosnian Muslims executed in cold blood by Serbs in Srebrenica counted and achieved more attention from the international community than 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu massacred in Rwanda, while the plight of the Somali people under the chronic violence of warlords and religious fanatics only bothered the world community, when out of despair organised piracy started to threaten the sea route along the coast. Among Annan’s merits as UNSG is certainly his ability to use the dramatic lessons for initiatives such as the Brahimi Report on UN Peacebuilding Operations and other self-critical explorations for establishing a wide range of new normative frameworks and institutions in the post-Cold War era. These
Diversified roles of women in peace and conflict

Women Building Peace. Accord Insight.
Conciliation Resources, March 2013

This collection of articles presents nine inspiring case studies and examines the role of women as peacebuilders, and the challenges they face. The publication documents first hand testimonies from prominent women peace and human rights activists, who have played a key role in engendering peace processes, as well as promoting women’s rights in their respective countries. Covering the period from 1998 to 2010, the publication focuses on nine countries, namely: Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Northern Uganda, Somalia, Indonesia-Aceh, Northern Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, Angola and Sudan.

“Women Building Peace” is divided into two parts. The first is an overall comparative expert analysis of the case studies, highlighting the similarities of women peace and conflict practices in the nine countries. This part also looks at the differences, specificities and priorities inherent in each context. The expert analysis further highlights the added value women brought to peacebuilding in the nine countries, the opportunities and challenges they encountered as political actors, and finally, draws upon lessons learned from these experiences for policy makers and practitioners. The second part of the publication is devoted to the nine testimonies.

The case studies provide three major insights into the role of women in peacebuilding. The first is that women engage in a wide range of activities that have expanded the scope of peacebuilding itself. These activities cover the areas of humanitarian and social welfare, peacebuilding and mediation at informal and formal level, the promotion of women’s rights and political participation, advocacy and awareness raising, as well as social and economic reconstruction. Thus, women bring an added value to peacebuilding by advancing broader issues of social justice and fostering a vision of peace that goes beyond the negotiating table.

The second insight is that despite their significant contribution to peacebuilding, women still face major challenges in achieving political participation, and continue to be excluded from formal peace processes, and post-conflict settlements. Yet the case studies show that when included, women can influence political negotiations and achieve political change, as illustrated with the experience of the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC). The NIWC and the Sierra Leone Women’s Movement for Peace (SLWMP) have sought to change the sectarian and partisan nature of political relations, and the political culture in their respective contexts, through adopting a new type of politics, based on inclusivity and consensus. The expert analysis further stressed that women have capitalised on their traditional roles and taken advantage of the widespread perception of women as “natural nurturers” to move their agenda forward and achieve some of their goals. Such was the case in Bougainville where women used their role as custodians of the land and in Somalia their position within the clan system, to act as a channel for dialogue between parties in conflict and exert influence. All nine case studies also give clear evidence of the central role women peace activists have played in the emergence of civil society in their countries.

The third major conclusion drawn from the case studies is the importance of understanding that conflict and peace are gendered and that the two impact on gender roles and relations. Hence it is essential that gender analysis is mainstreamed in conflict and peace analysis and that both women and men are included in peace work to transform gender relations and build sustainable peace.

Despite the adoption of an international policy framework on women, peace and security, which includes, among others, the Beijing Platform for Action, UNSCR 1325 and 1828, and the UN Secretary General Seven-Point Plan, there have been no concrete commitments for women on the ground. Among the reasons cited for this failure is the lack of political will from international and national policy makers, but also women’s lack of experience and confidence in engaging in formal political processes, along with lack of funding and resources. The report calls for policy makers to support women peacebuilders’ capacities and broad ranging initiatives.

This is a very useful publication that reveals the extent and variety of women’s peacebuilding initiatives. It is important that the nine testimonies and the expert analysis have not adopted an essentialist view of women and their role in conflict and peacebuilding. Rather, they give insights of the complex roles of women and show that although women have been specifically targeted for violence, they also participate in violence as combatants and supporters of armed movements. The report further acknowledges that women do not constitute a homogeneous category but have diverse identities and realities. This in turn determines their experiences of conflict and their peacebuilding initiatives and approaches.

Ndèye Sow
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After Cold War conflicts in Africa


This volume presents the work of ten scholars, all affiliated to the Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPCR) at Uppsala University and mainly engaged in analyses of conflicts and post-conflict situations in various parts of Africa. It hence also presents an overview on relevant research undertaken at this institution on a cross cutting level, complemented by a few specific case studies. It explores intra-state conflicts after the Cold War (which inside Africa amounted to one third of all registered conflicts in the world between a government and a rebel organisation during the period 1989 to 2007) and the opportunities to bring these to an end with a realistic rebel organisation during the period 1989 to 2007 and terminated conflicts in the world between a government and a rebel organisation during the period 1989 to 2007) and the opportunities to bring these to an end with a realistic perspective to avoid further physical violence bordering to civil war.

While dealing with a phenomenon commonly associated with the continent, there is also a noteworthy positive observation that, “significantly fewer armed conflicts are initiated in Africa now than ten or twenty years ago; and more wars are terminated by negotiated compromise than ever before” (p. 27). The shift in conditions supporting such a tendency is an important reference point for the contributions. These are sub-divided into a first part offering a theoretical macro-level analytical and conceptual framework, including new empirical data for the period under review. The second part investigates war termination issues with regard to their phases. The statistical evidence compiled within the Uppsala Conflict Data Program for intra-state armed conflicts for the time span 1989-2007 is attached as an appendix.

The volume is devoted to the memory of the prominent African scholar Claude Ake (1939-1996). But it also reminds of the legacy of its editor Thomas Ohlson, who was crucial in institutionalising the annual Claude Ake Chair in Uppsala (shared between the DPCR and The Nordic Africa Institute). After more than a decade of a determined and courageous fight, Thomas finally lost his battle against cancer. His wish to see this book published while still being alive did not come true. But he will remain remembered, not only but also for his contributions to the state of the art in the field of his scholarly endeavour.

Henning Melber
Senior Advisor of The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation
Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria and the University of the Free State

Examples of gender roles and relations in peacebuilding


Gender, Peace and Security is a great resource for policy makers attempting to design and implement National Action Plans (NAPs) in fulfilment of the requirements laid out in United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The book provides examples of women’s engagement in peacebuilding across some Commonwealth countries and also assesses the strengths and weaknesses of existing NAPs. With a long way to go – only 5 out of 54 Commonwealth countries have produced an NAP – the author envisions 1325 and NAPs as a way to create societal change toward gender equality.

Produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the book’s focus is clearly internal, designed for policy makers of the secretariat and member states, advising where best to focus their efforts and why. It is, however, also useful for students dipping into the topic of women in conflict resolution and practitioners of peacebuilding in the field, though it contains little practical advice for these groups.

On reflection, the subtitle Women’s Advocacy and Conflict Resolution would have made a better title, as the book discusses little of gender, not even defining it or discussing its role in peace and security. On the other hand, if your interest is in the current state of affairs with regard to the implementation of UNSCR 1325, then this is the book for you.

After Gender, Peace and Security my attention turned to another book on the topic of gender: Men as Perpetrators and Victims of Armed Conflicts. My hopes were high for this book, probably a little too high. I held aspirations of a great new resource for students, practitioners and policy makers alike. Perhaps I should have paid more attention once again to the subtitle: Innovative Projects Aimed at Overcoming Male Violence.

My hopes were dashed for two main reasons: One, this is yet another source on the topic of gender in peace and security that focuses too heavily on gender based violence (GBV). I dreamed of a guidebook outlining the sources of masculinity, and linking this with the help of theory and examples to many men’s participation in conflict. Whilst the book did indeed touch on this, the constant reference back to GBV made me feel as though it had missed a great opportunity.

As a student, I felt the book lacked some more clearly defined theoretical arguments. I can see the great benefits of having a book of examples, but I felt that true insights, which could have been brought from the illustrations, were skipped over in the heart of the book. The author, Rita Schäfer, does provide a ‘lessons learned’ section; however, this fails again to really drive home the important learning from previous discussions.

My high hopes aside, it must be said that the book is still inspiring. It is great to see examples of men’s efforts in the field of gender work and gender equality. It is great to see that the hopes and efforts towards gender equality are not gender specific.

This is a very useful resource for NGOs working with gender relations to learn from good examples, but it is also useful for other peacebuilding NGOs looking to find partners and sources of inspiration in their own gender-sensitive peacebuilding work. It outlines the need for women’s organisations and programmes aimed at women’s empowerment to consider that it is simply not enough to empower women;
From a multicultural empire to a modern nation-state


The unique and fascinating history of Ethiopia presents many possibilities for a greater understanding on the complexities of building a nation. In his latest book John Markakis offers a comprehensive yet concise historical overview of the political developments in Ethiopia, focusing on the compromises and conflicts of the nation-building process. During the analysis, of the more than a century long and still ongoing process of transforming Ethiopia from a multicultural empire to a modern nation-state, the author highlights the two main challenges of today. The first of these hurdles or frontiers, as Markakis eloquently puts it, is the remains of the power monopoly of the former ruling class of Abyssinian origin. The second is the challenge of integrating the country’s lowlands, an area which has historically and presently shown a great resistance to such integration into the Ethiopian state. The author argues that without overcoming these obstacles it will be very difficult if not impossible for the state to complete its transformation into a peaceful modern nation-state.

It is the focus on the relationship between the centre and the periphery, and this dynamic’s connection to the nation-building process, which is the strength of Markakis’s book. He provides a detailed examination of the development of the state from the perspective of the centre followed by the perspective of the different ethnic groups living in the periphery of Ethiopia. Whilst the centre vs. periphery contestation is not a new angle, the study is thorough and analytically very interesting. On a side note the book also contains a treat for those interested in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, as the chapters introducing the different ethnic groups include a fascinating discussion on conflict and peacemaking within the specific groups.

In “Ethiopia. The last two frontiers” Markakis skilfully combines historical facts with plenty of interesting examples and analyses which makes the reading of this book quite joyful. Whilst the study does contain some theoretical discussions, it does not appear as if building a detailed theoretical framework was the focus of the author. Despite that potential weakness however, this book presents a useful study on a topic which is, given the current global situation, certainly worth the attention. This is a valuable read both for the novice and those who are already knowledgeable on the political history and development of Ethiopia. It could further be recommended to anyone with an interest in land issues and land related conflicts, as the book entails a well-rounded discussion of those issues within the Ethiopian context.

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Human rights in conflict settings


In this text book, the author both marries together and contrasts the body of International Human Rights Law with that of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), being the law applying in times of armed conflict. Her premise is the International Court of Justice’s (ICJ) advisory opinion on Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, in which the ICJ first confirmed that International Human Rights Law continues to apply in times of conflict when there is jurisdiction for the application of IHL. That opinion has been confirmed in further jurisprudence from the ICJ and other international tribunals.

Human Rights in Times of Conflict and Terrorism offers us a guide to understanding human rights in conflict settings. It gives an easy to read introduction to International Human Rights Law as interpreted through jurisprudence from the international tribunals and an overview of absolute prohibitions, due process provisions and the remedies available to claimants who have suffered a breach. The text undertakes an interesting analysis of the role of IHL in Human Rights, the most notable difference between the two bodies of law being that Human Rights Law has traditionally regulated the state, whereas IHL has additionally specifically regulated for the actions of non-state actors.

Doswald-Beck suggests that there are indicators that Human Rights Law is being read more broadly to incorporate individual responsibility. This is particularly true regarding the state’s obligation to prosecute individuals for human rights breaches. Additionally, Human Rights Law is becoming increasingly part of legal interpretation in prosecutions against individuals in international criminal tribunals. Also noteworthy is the chapter examining human rights protection in times of terrorism.

Too often in the peacemaking and peacebuilding international community there is an ignorance of the basic principles of Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law as they apply to working contexts. Such an ignorance can further distance claimants from access to justice, can lead to missed opportunities for valuable evidence collection and at worst can cause or perpetuate breaches. This text is recommended as an easy to read and robust tool for learning more about Human Rights Law in times of conflict and terrorism.

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Modern rationality in contrast to traditional cultures

The Power of the West in the Economy of Grace, by Eskil Jons-

This book, by a former Executive Director of the Life & Peace Institute, is intended for leaders, students and schol-
ars interested in interdisciplinary studies of politics, reli-
gion, economics and ecology as well as peace and conflict
studies. The overall problem raised in the book is that the
Western culture of modern rationality, power and econom-
ics departs from a rather narrow, secular and ego-centric
worldview. It neither recognises the identity of traditional
cultures and religions, nor social, economic or ecological
justice in relation to the rest of the world. In one of the
chapters the author accounts for “Peace and Justice in the
Mysteries of Faith”.

Designing peace from an economic perspective

Peace Economics: A Macroeconomic Primer for Violence-
Afflicted States, by Jurgen Brauer and J. Paul Dunne. United
States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2012

Peace deals crafted without an economic perspective are
less likely to hold than those that provide a policy frame-
work and institutions for post-conflict economic growth
and stabilisation. The authors of this book argue that
economic policy and sound macroeconomic frameworks
are essential in the design of any peace agreement and help
prevent relapse into violence.

Combining rigorous data analysis with extensive theo-
retical and practical knowledge, this book explores the
negative relationship between violence and economic
development. Although the authors concede that “the
economic effects of violence are difficult to quantify .... it
is clear that war and other violent conflict have almost entirely
negative economic effects, both during active fighting and
long thereafter”. The main theme emerging out of the book
is how violence and recovery from violence affect economic
development and growth, macroeconomic stabilisation,
and global trade and finance.

What principles should guide peace negotiations and the
design of an agreement is a subject that has been widely
explored in peacebuilding literature. This primer, however,
offers a uniquely macroeconomic and institutional per-
pective. The authors present a package of 12 principles
— “complete and mutually reinforcing” — without which
any negotiation process and peace agreements will remain
susceptible to failure.

Another significant contribution this primer makes are
the policy lessons that practitioners of the art of peace-
building must learn from: “Designing peace from an eco-
nomic perspective — and creating the institutions that can
implement the policies stemming from peace agreements
— ultimately calls for practitioners to adhere to that aim to
redraw the social contract and re-establish social capital,
both among leaders and between the eventual govern-
ments and the public.”

The book makes a conscious effort to explain key eco-
nomic concepts, data and metrics in as simple and intelli-
gible a language as possible. It outlines the roles and responsi-
bilities of key institutions in peacebuilding and post-conflict
socio-economic reconstruction and describes how mitiga-
tion and prevention of conflict is linked to the economic
resilience and institutional strength of a post-war society.

As the first volume of the US Institute of Peace Academy
Guides, a series developed by the Institute’s Academy for
International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding,
this primer is a good example of how difficult theoretical
discussions can be turned into tools for practical use. This
reviewer recommends it highly, especially for peacebuilding
practitioners, diplomats and mediators as well as NGOs
and students.

Najum Mushtaq
Policy and Communications Advisor, LPI

Facts, statistics and analysis from SIPRI

SIPRI Yearbook 2013, Oxford University Press, 2013

In its Yearbook 2013 SIPRI (Stockholm International
Peace Research Institute) assesses the current state of
international security, armaments and disarmament. Key
findings include that among the five legally recognised
nuclear weapon states, only China expanded its nuclear
arsenal in 2012. The decrease is due mainly to Russia and
the USA further reducing their inventories of strategic nu-
clear weapons as well as retiring ageing and obsolescent
weapons.

— Once again there was little to inspire hope that the
nuclear weapon-possessing states are genuinely willing to
give up their nuclear arsenals. The long-term modernisation
programmes under way in these states suggest that nuclear
weapons are still a marker of international status and power,
says SIPRI Senior Researcher Shannon Kile.

The number of peacekeepers deployed worldwide fell by
more than 10 per cent in 2012, as the withdrawal of interna-
tional forces from Afghanistan got under way. The total was
still more than double the number deployed in 2003. These
personnel were deployed in 53 operations worldwide, one
more than in 2012.

Attempts to enhance international controls on the use,
production, trading and stockpiling of cluster munitions
had a disappointing year in 2012, as supporters of the 2008
Convention on Cluster Munitions proved unable to per-
suade any new states to sign the convention. Major cluster
munitions producers that have not signed or ratified the
convention include Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Israel, South
Korea, Russia and the United States.

SIPRI Yearbook 2013 also includes sections on patterns
of organised violence and the interactions between peace
operations and conflict management alongside authorita-
dive data and analysis on military spending, arms transfers,
arms production, nuclear forces, nuclear non-proliferation
and arms control, and chemical and biological weapon arms
control.

Adapted and abbreviated from SIPRI press release
Strong voices for peace

In this set of inspirational and original analyses, the reality of protracted conflicts and peacebuilding in the Great Lakes and particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo is brought forward to highlight the importance of peacebuilding from the ground up.

Among the strong voices in this special New Routes issue are experienced women and men from very diverse backgrounds. They are researchers, political analysts, leaders, journalists, religious authorities and “field workers”.

The contributors’ common denominator is a firm commitment to help bring about just peace. Being insiders and outsiders, they examine a region which has been suffering from violence and war for generations. The conflict in the DRC since 1996, following the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda, has been one of the deadliest since World War II. It has been called Africa’s First World War due to the involvement of numerous actors in different countries in the region and globally. Occasionally global media offers some coverage, some news pieces related to the escalation of violence, a new guerrilla attack, systematic sexual abuse or some progress in peace negotiations. But the analysis is often largely missing and so this issue of New Routes strives to fill that void and seeks out glimmers of hope for real and sustainable solutions.

This special public commitment to seek new routes in the Great Lakes Region has been developed in a creative collaboration between the Life & Peace Institute in Sweden, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in South Africa, the Kroc Institute at Notre Dame University and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, both in the US. The initiative sprung up after a conference in Cape Town, South Africa, earlier in 2013. There is a common interest to share experiences and to learn more about the prospects of “peace from [the] ground up”. This publication shows the growing universal commitment to contribute to a lasting transformation of the conflicts in the Great Lakes Region.

We are happy to introduce the chief collaborators in the production of this special New Routes issue. We welcome you to explore the respective websites and find additional useful publications and resources on peacebuilding.

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI), formed in 1985, is an international and ecumenical centre. It supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation through a combination of research and action that entails the strengthening of existing local capacities and enhancing the preconditions for building peace. LPI works with local civil society organisations in Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Check out our website: www.life-peace.org Contact for more information: info@life-peace.org

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) was launched in the year 2000, in the aftermath of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The aim was to ensure that lessons learnt from South Africa’s transition from apartheid to democracy were taken into account as the nation moved ahead. Today, the Institute helps to build fair, democratic and inclusive societies in Africa through carefully selected engagements and interventions. Check out our website: www.ijr.org.za Contact for more information: info@ijr.org.za