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Peace

Building from the Ground Up
Preventing and reducing armed violence

Good Practices to Inspire Good Policies on AV&D

More than 740,000 people die as a result of armed violence every year – that's 1.5 people every minute. We are learning that it is the combination of many factors, rather than one alone, which increases the risk of violence breaking out.

It is also clear that the factors shaping armed violence are often the very same as the causes of underdevelopment: acute income and social inequality, chronic unemployment, uneven access to resources, unregulated urbanization, and various forms of marginalization.

More and more states are starting to make this connection between security and development. Since 2006, more than 100 countries have acknowledged these linkages by signing the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and, in May of 2010, 61 states re-iterated their engagement by signing the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence and the MDGs.

Civil society has a central role in this struggle to prevent and reduce armed violence. Community-based organizations and leaders have tremendous experience in supporting violence prevention programmes and projects at the local level. They are focusing not just on removing the tools of violence from circulation, but also on reshaping the motivations and means that give rise to violent behaviour.

Building on the first NGO consultations organized by the Quaker United Nations Office-Geneva in 2008 and 2009, the conference "Creating a Community of Practice on Armed Violence and Development (AV&D) in East Africa" took place in Nairobi, 2 – 3 November 2010. It gathered civil society practitioners directly involved in the design and implementation of AV&D work. The aim was to highlight evidence of good practice in AV&D programming as part of the preparation for the 2d Ministerial Review Conference of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development in late October 2011 (see www.genevadeclaration.org) and to foster the development of a sub-regional community of practice on AV&D.

This *Comunidad Segura* "Good Practices" magazine, in addition to highlighting the work of the selected organizations, aims to serve as a source of information on grassroots initiatives that can help to inform advocacy campaigns and national and international public policy and programming.

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Relieving Poverty to Create Peace

Gun violence and underdevelopment form a vicious cycle in the Karamoja region of Uganda. CECORE, the Center for Conflict Resolution, a local NGO founded in 1995, is attempting to tackle both problems through an educational disarmament campaign and job training workshops. The organization has become a regional reference point on Small-Arms Violence prevention, having forged partnerships with NGOs and governments both within Uganda and in the international arena.

The organization has organized public-education campaigns on the dangers of small arms, established local task forces to control illicit

arms in their communities, and trains citizens in conflict prevention. CECORE also trains local media to play a positive role in conflict resolution and has lobbied for

“Armed violence destroys social structures and disarms the rule of law.”

families and other social structures, and disarms the rule of law,” says Johnfisher Tumwesigye, the program coordinator for CECORE’s Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) program. Recognizing the importance of poverty relief in disarmament, the organization sponsors job-training workshops for

“peace studies” in school curricula.

“Armed violence closes learning institutions, destroys markets, demolishes health service structures, destroys

alternative sources of income, like beekeeping.

Recently, the organization participated in a United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament project to develop software to register and collect data on existing arms brokers in the region.

But CECORE still faces the challenge of operating in a system with murky gun-control laws and conflicting public attitudes toward private weapons. Tumwesigye says the organization practices ‘mental disarmament’ by teaching the public “...that one can still survive and achieve their goals without using the gun.”

Country:
Uganda
Organization:
Center for Conflict Resolution



“My Brother, My Enemy, Now My Best Friend”

By Jean Marie Nibizi,

*Executive Director of Trauma,
Healing and Reconciliation Services*

In a few simple words, I would say our work here says ‘my brother, my enemy, now my best friend’. One case illustrates the urgent need for healing in a community.

We gave a three day seminar in Tubirengere (the Great Lakes Region), on trauma, conflict resolution, human rights and the damage that small arms do to families and the community. Minani Jean and Ndikumana, two brothers, attended our workshops. They were both former rebels in two different fighting groups in the bush. They planned and tried to kill one another. After our workshops, they each approached THARS facilitators in secret, asking how to forgive and how to ask for forgiveness from the other brother. After being guided in the two aspects of healing, they forgave each other and asked for each other’s forgiveness and also announced they had decided to give away their weapons to the police. The entire community rejoiced at the news, since they were all afraid of the two former fighters.”

HEALING THROUGH Reconciliation

Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo are three nations where a legacy of violence is being addressed by the Trauma, Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS). For the past ten years, the organization has helped locals make peace possible by strengthening the foundations of community life and healing psychosocial trauma.

According to Jean Marie Nibizi, THARS’ executive director, one important tool in reducing armed violence is to start victim support groups.

“We help female and child victims of armed violence and domestic violence. We also reach out to former rebels, demobilized fighters and perpetrators of violence,” said Nibizi. THARS runs workshops and campaigns to promote, peace, reconciliation, recovery from trauma, as well as to

raise awareness on small arms and light weapons. “THARS has also created Listening Rooms for victims and perpetrators, and once they are reconciled, mutual support groups,” said Nibizi.

“In our mutual support program for victims of violence, we help them create small groups, we train them in group management, development and group dynamics. Victim’s groups also have access to small-scale savings and loans programs, where they can use weekly savings to qualify for revolving and small group loans. It’s a way to start them generating their own income,”

according to Nibizi.

THARS has reached over 200,000 people through local campaigns; they have trained over 100 community leaders to replicate the

program, held 20 workshops and started 10 mutual support groups. The continuing presence of guns however, concerns Nibizi, who alerts to challenges posed by illegally owned guns and weapons, the fact that demobilized fighters are still armed and likely to commit crimes with their weapons. “It is a poor country and people are fearful of what they see as increasing insecurity and criminality,” contends Nibizi.

“That is why our work concentrates on awareness, education, voluntary disarmament and generating mutual support between victims and perpetrators,” said Nibizi. ■

“Our mutual support program trains victims of violence in group management, development and group dynamics.”

Countries:
Burundi,
Rwanda,
DR Congo

Organization:
Trauma,
Healing and
Reconciliation
Services



Creating a Culture of Peace

What is left after civil war?

Psychological trauma, ruined infrastructure, pervasive violence, and a devastated economy are just some of the lasting effects of internal conflict.

The Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross (MI-PAREC), a nonprofit founded in 1996, is working toward recovery in Burundi, where the country's 12-year civil war killed 300,000 civilians and left the country in tatters. The organization's Demobilization, Disarmament, and Recovery (DDR) program seeks to help rebuild Burundi through

a series of programs centered on weapon collection, vocational training and trauma counseling.

One of DDR's foci is on improving community infrastructure and livelihoods, many of which were destroyed during the civil war. This involves the construction of schools, health centers and transportation infrastructure as well as financial literacy and vocational training.

The organization also works to prevent future conflicts. MI-PAREC trains communities in conflict management and convenes youth groups from disparate backgrounds to ensure that the next generation

lives in peace. As many as 6,000 youth between 15 and 18 have participated in workshops to discuss children's rights and other policy issues.

"We established a permanent platform for children to meet other children and adults to discuss issues affecting their everyday life," said Dieudonne Kibinanawal, MI-PAREC's country representative. "Now children have the feeling that they can change their living conditions by working together."

Country:
Burundi
Organization:
Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross

Bringing the Grassroots to National Level

Burundi's 12-year civil war killed as many as 300,000 people. It also left a legacy of violence and an abundance of illegal arms.

CENAP (Centre d'Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits), founded in 2001, is working to consolidate peace and reduce gun

Country:
Burundi

Organization:
Center d'Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits

violence in Burundi through community-based disarmament campaigns. The organization liaises between the national

government and community grassroots organizations to recommend policies that address the needs and concerns of Burundian citizens.

One way CENAP is doing this is through improving relations

between citizens and police officers.

The organization forms community groups who serve as "neighborhood watch" committees, and who have

regular dialogue and contact with the officers serving their neighborhood. "The population is encouraged to work hand in hand with the police and the administration to prevent criminality and banditry," says Serge

"The population is encouraged to work hand in hand with the police and the administration to prevent criminality and banditry."

Ntakirutimana, a researcher for the organization.

CENAP worked with the government on a national disarmament campaign, which, between 2006 and 2009, collected more than 80,000 small arms. The organization has partnered also with international organizations like Interpeace (based in Switzerland) and the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace in Rwanda and the Puntland Development Research Center in Somalia to produce research papers highlighting best practices on disarmament.

In addition to working with international organizations, much of CENAP's research is done at the grass-roots level. Recently,

CENAP researchers filmed interviews with community members, law enforcement, and former combatants on their experiences. They then produced a video and written report on the findings to be presented at the national level. A participant in a CENAP research group explained the importance of involving communities in the national peace process: "One cannot start by plowing the top of the hill." ▶

Armed violence

both the cause and consequence of underdevelopment

Societies affected by armed violence are often off track when the goal is development. According to the UN, 22 of the 34 countries farthest from reaching Millennium Development Goals are in or emerging from armed conflict. This suggests that armed violence is both cause and consequence of underdevelopment. The initiatives portrayed in this magazine work to lower risk factors that shape armed violence, such as: weak public institutions, systemic inequality, the persistent exclusion of minorities, highly unequal gender relations, lack of education, high unemployment, illicit markets for firearms.

Peace is Our

By Joseph Ngala ,

Director of People for Peace in Africa

People for Peace in Africa (PPA) is an Ecumenical gathering of people joined together to explore the power of love and truth for resolving human conflict. We focus on governance, security, environmental protection, reconciliation, and peace education. Based in Kenya, we work with churches throughout East Africa and the Horn of Africa. PPA mobilizes support through the

Let's support EACH OTHER

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development suggests setting three goals and eight targets to reduce armed violence:

Goal 1: To reduce the number of people physically harmed from armed violence

- To reduce the number of conflict deaths
- To reduce the number of non-conflict violent deaths
- Reduce the number of people with non-fatal injuries caused by armed violence
- Reduce sexual and intimate partner violence

Goal 2: To reduce the number of people and groups affected by armed violence

- Reduce the number of children associated with armed violence
- Reduce the number of violence-related refugees and IDPs

Goal 3: To strengthen institutional responses to prevent and reduce armed violence

- Increase the effectiveness and accountability of justice and security systems
- Increase national investments in armed violence prevention and reduction programs.

Only Option

power of prayer, and raises awareness on the plight of refugees: we have initiated a pilot program for peace education in local schools, and provide guidance to refugees and displaced people.

A peaceful world is the greatest legacy we can leave for future generations. Men, women and children must work together to build that peace. We all have a role to play.

When one combatant decides to lay down his weapons, he sets a precedent that can reach thousands. This is what Eric Niragira did, in Burundi. When he founded the Training Center for the Development of Former Combatants, (CEDAC) in 2005, he helped 25,000 other former combatants leave armed conflict and transition into peace. Eric's vision: to harness the energy used to destroy the country to rebuild it.

Since then, "CEDAC has grown to become the largest former combatants' umbrella organization in the country, with peer support groups for former combatants and victims of war, micro-projects (some funded by donors, some funded as mutual support and self-help projects), that support for their members, including a training center for young people in Bujumbura", said Laura Gordon, a UK researcher in Burundi for the Advocacy Project.

Among its many activities, CEDAC campaigns for the voluntary hand-in of guns and ammunition, provides training in conflict prevention and management, and monitors the activities of former combatants. Its

work with female ex-combatants has reached a group that is often overlooked by similar initiatives.

Women take part in conflict in many roles, from direct engagement with military weapons to being forced into becoming cooks and sex slaves. But they are often excluded from Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs because they do not have a military weapon to hand in, or because they were involved with rebel groups. Having children, being illiterate or being rejected from their own communities because of previous sexual involvement with rebel groups all conspires against them.

"Whether they chose to fight or were forced to, or did not fight directly, women involved in conflict often have more difficulty in adapting to peace," according to Niragira. CEDAC's "Dushigikirane" project (which means "let's support each other") has equipped hundreds of female ex-combatants with rice seeds, micro credits, and small grants, having reached several hundred women so far.



Country:
Burundi

Organization:
Center for the Development of Former Combatants

Preventing Violence

Against Women and Vulnerable IDPs

Armed conflict doesn't just displace citizens from their homes. It also creates a class of individuals who are particularly vulnerable to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). SGBV, in turn, doesn't just harm its victims; it also hampers efforts toward development and reconstruction.

Country:
Somalia

Organization:
INTEROS
Humanitarian Aid
Organization

Interos, an Italian nongovernmental organization with operations in East Africa, the Middle East, Haiti, the Balkans and Central Asia, works to prevent large-scale violence by preventing it at the individual level. Founded in 1992, the NGO offers humanitarian relief to at-risk populations and victims of

natural calamities and armed conflict.

The organization's work in South Central Somalia focuses on the most marginalized of the country's Internally Displaced People: Women and Children. "We help them to cope with a difficult situation through capacity building, advocacy activities, psychosocial support, community mobilization and by strengthening the health referral system," says Interos' program coordinator for Kenya and Somalia, Barbara Chiarenza.

Interos also provides safe learning spaces to primary and



secondary school children, educating students and teachers on topics like: mine risk education, disaster preparedness, health and hygiene, risks related to early marriage, human rights, female genital mutilation, and child recruitment into armed violence.

These programs, Chiarenza hopes, will ultimately help to foster stability and development in an otherwise tumultuous region: "We approach crises management and humanitarian relief in armed conflict as bridges between interrupted development paths."

Educating for Peace

Since civil war broke out in 1991, Somalia has been mired in violence. Somalia Relief Agency, or SORA, an NGO founded in 2007 mediates disputes and trains youth and community leaders in conflict resolution.

“Children under 18 are the major perpetrators of armed violence in this country,” says Ahmed Mohammed Hassan, a field officer for SORA. Hassan says a lack of social services and parental guidance lead youth to violence. “Some children have lost their parents to armed violence, and others have been

abandoned.” These children are prime recruits for armed militias, he adds, so SORA works with parents on the importance of the family in preventing violence.

SORA also recognized the importance of education as a tool to prevent violence. “Education has broadened minds of the entire community and greatly minimizes children’s exposure to and influence by armed groups,” said Hassan.

When prevention fails, SORA mediates. In the Lower Jubba region, two formerly friendly clans were in conflict over the use of common

land for extracting coal. “Their bond was broken due to separate interests over use of their resources. Hatred emerged,” says Hassan. SORA worked with councils of elders on each side. “We explained the importance of rebuilding ties between the communities by creating a common memorandum,” Hassan said. Each side disarmed their militias, displaced persons were returned to their homes, and “a sense of community” was restored.

Country:
Somalia
Organization:
Somalia Relief Agency

Conflict Mitigation and Empowerment of Isolated Communities

“While guns continue to roar, all efforts for peace will be in vain.” This caustic message came from members of the Turkana clan, referring to high rates of violence between cattle herders along the Kenya-Uganda border. Violence in the area came to a head in 2005, when 30 herdsman were killed.

The competition for resources, cattle rustling, and the proliferation of small arms have aggravated tensions in an area where people depend on cattle for their livelihoods.

“While guns continue to roar, all efforts for peace will be in vain.”

Turkana Development Forum (TUDOF) works with the Turkana clan on creating institutions for sustainable peace. Based in Kenya’s Turkana region, TUDOF has been leading efforts to connect groups who are isolated from the management of local resources. In 2005, the organization facilitated a peace agreement, the first signed by the warriors themselves, between Uganda’s Dodoth, and Kenya’s Turkana clans. While it paved the way for reducing violence, much hinges on taking the communities out of isolation.

The peace-building and conflict-management project aims to restore trust among the communities and build confidence in their respective governments by arranging meetings between clan leaders and government officials. Inter-clan meetings and workshops aim to create peaceful cross-border engagement. The communities are taking more active roles in designing budgets and policies, and are more aware of their rights and of good governance.

Countries:
Uganda and Kenya
Organization:
Turkana Development Forum

Refugees: Peace for the Displaced



behaviors that contribute to violent conflict.

DDG presence is increasingly shaped by the conflict and displacement patterns in Somalia. Its areas of intervention follow the various conflict and displacement routes in the region, most of them located in transit areas or in areas receiving displaced peoples.



Armed violence undermines development, while underdevelopment fuels armed violence. This double predicament has quadrupled the number of displaced Somalis in two years, to over 2 million in 2009. After 20 years of conflict, Somalia is a nation strained by displacement. Results are dramatic: a fragmented society, high levels of food insecurity, an erosion of the rule of law and the massive proliferation of small arms.

Country:
Somalia

Organization:
Danish Demining Group

The Danish Demining Group (DDG), a humanitarian mine action unit part of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is in Somalia to protect refugees, the displaced

and people affected by conflict. In order to help stabilize fragile areas of the country and improve quality of life, DDG helps locals “enhance community safety and generate livelihoods.” Its activities are designed to strengthen the capacity of local communities to withstand pressure, and prevent and resolve

DDG’s activities include: addressing small arms as a tool of violence; building capacity for conflict management and peace; addressing immediate threats to life and limbs by explosive remnants of war; and finally, strengthening relationships between security providers and communities.



Training Leaders for Tomorrow

In 2003, a group of Somali intellectuals got together to develop and empower local communities from the ground up, founding the Development Initiative Access Link, (DIAL) based in Kismayo, Somalia. Hoping to undo the legacy of violence through community reconciliation, DIAL has been bringing together clan elders, members of the nation's cultural leadership, political and community leaders. It has also reached out to youth groups, women's groups and the elite.

"Our work on armed violence and development is unique in the region, it has stopped many from engaging in violence, and has even helped rehabilitate those who perpetrated violence in the past.



We work in high-risk areas, but we have good results in terms of peace and prosperity," said Abdi Gedi Mohamed, DIAL field officer.

This work has led DIAL to train members of the Somali Transitional Parliament and regional

leadership in Baidoa (the Bay region) on disarmament and good leadership, while raising awareness

on sexual and gender based violence.

"Drop guns, pick up pens" is one of DIAL's long standing programs. It opened vocational centers in

Kismavo and Badade, in the lower Jubba region of Somalia, offering new skills and income-generating activities. This has attracted militia youths, helping them transition to formal life. By taking a non-partisan stance, it overcame the militias' initial distrust.

"Communities are willing to support any anti-violence initiatives. Violence rates in the lower and middle Jubba have dropped since our project was implemented," said Gedi Mohamed.

DIAL's work on AV&D has attracted and reintegrated many youths who used to belong to militias.

Country:
Somalia
Organization:
Development Initiative Access Link



Peacebuilding in Somalia:

“It is critical to restore the role of traditional leaders”

INTERVIEW / Celestin Nkundabemera

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Somalia assists the country’s peace-building efforts through promoting development, human rights, community safety, conflict prevention and mediation. In real life this means going into communities ravaged by 20 years of war and rebuilding their capacity for peace.

Where do you work in Somalia, and how many people does the Somalia Peace Program reach?

We have been working with the Peace Program for the past two years in the Gedo region in Somalia. We are involved with grassroots organizations: the water project is located in Berbera, youth skills in Burahowa, and peace committees and mediation projects are located in Elwak. Every project includes learning about peace.

We are currently working closely, directly, with 900 individuals. Indirectly,

if you consider that every Somali family has [an average of] 7 children... you see we reach many more people.

What kinds of challenges does the program face?

The two main challenges in the region, after 20 years of war, are are finding sources of livelihoods for youths, many of whom are displaced, who are living away from

their traditional homes. The second challenge is resource-based conflict, in our case, it is guaranteeing that communities have access to water, which is a continuous source of strain and motivation for clans to in Somalia to invade land that belongs to other clans.

In Somalia, we must first consult Somali elders, who are key to creating an environment of peace before starting any program, and we have also found that women are an important secondary factor in sending men to war. So the role of women cannot be overlooked.

What kinds of skills do you teach youths?

We offer skills training in tailoring and also in metalwork. We help young girls learn to make clothes and use them, so they can sell them. Young men learn metal work, so they can make doors, windows, and other products with similar materials. We also help them learn how to start and manage small businesses, encouraging them to form small groups. All this goes hand in hand

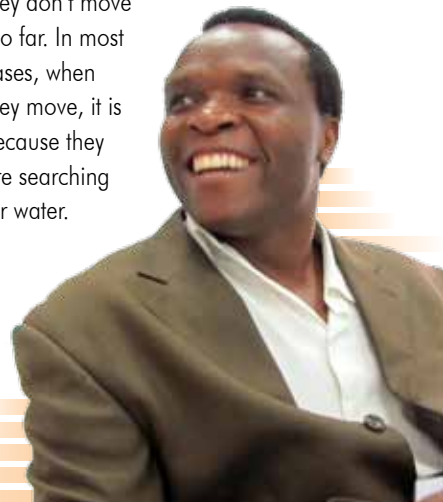
with competence in peace building and peaceful coexistence.

How do you help organize water resources in terms of preventing conflict?

We have created water management committees, and these organizations of course, are taught to deal with resource-based conflict. The idea is to enable communities to manage their resources in such a way that all animals have access to water and all households have access to water minimizing conflict.

Do these communities have permanent homes or are they nomadic?

Many have a home in the location, and although they move they don’t move too far. In most cases, when they move, it is because they are searching for water.



When they have water they tend to stay put longer, so increasing the availability of water also means increasing permanent residence of communities in a particular place.

This is good for reducing conflict because they won't move into land that belongs to other communities and is a means to avoid unnecessary confrontation.

What about the wells, do you import outside technology or experts?

Right now we're reactivating existing infrastructure that was damaged during the conflict. Because the country has been at war for 20 years, we are working with the community to rehabilitate them. Most of the technology exists locally. They don't need to ask for expertise from outside.

You said that Somali elders have an important role, can you explain?

In Somali traditional society, the role of traditional elders is very important. They are the pillars of society, society looks to them for inspiration and leadership and particularly in difficult circumstances. The AFSC believes it is critical to restore the role of traditional leaders in peace building. In Somalia they simply cannot be overlooked.

For example, in the water project, you cannot have youth participation in the project until the elders have been involved. So we start with a consultation in the area when our partners explain to the elders what



the project is about, what it aims to achieve, and what benefits it will bring to the community. Once the elders approve, they work with our partners to realize the project. They are very important in training youths and also in the water project. They are member of the water committees as well.

The elders, I would guess are men in general, right?

The elders are men, and most of the initial contacts are made with the men. So we try to encourage them to understand the role that women play in these projects. For example, we say, if the women cannot make dresses, the committee will have no clothes.

At the same time we tell them that the women will come to draw water for cooking and so on, that it is very important that they take part in the management committees of the water points. We also say that women need to be encouraged.

It's important to mention that women play a big secondary role

in conflict in Somalia, so likewise they have an important role to play in peace as well. We encourage women to participate in most of the leadership roles in Somalia.

You also work with the internally displaced in Somalia. Are they likely to resettle permanently where they are now?

We have close to one million internally displaced people in Somalia (in south central Somalia in particular). This is out of a population of roughly 3-1/2 million. So you have close to a third of the population displaced.

Our organization in particular has worked with refugee youths at the Daadab refugee camp in Kenya. We have worked with them on photography and video production skills, and an alternative to violence program. We recognize that they have lived with conflict for 20 years, many were born in the camp and have known no other form of government than the organization in the camp. ■



ARMED VIOLENCE: “A Preventable Epidemic”

Armed conflict destroys families, lives and communities. And it's also very expensive. Aside from stifling production and local economic growth, treating and rehabilitating the survivors of gun violence is costly and time consuming. No one knows this as well as the physicians who tend to its victims.

Countries:
Kenya

Organization:
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

The International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) is bringing worldwide awareness to the public

health consequences of armed violence through its “Aiming for Prevention” campaign, which “... mobilizes the unique expertise

and authority of physicians and public health professionals to document the devastating human impact of small arms, educate key stakeholders, advocate policy reform, and participate in victim assistance and rehabilitation.” IPPNW, which is based in Boston, Massachusetts, was founded in 1980 and has offices and partnerships in 63 countries.

In Kenya, IPPNW has partnered with the University of Nairobi and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at the Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) to publish a ten-year study titled Direct Health Cost Assessment of Firearm Injuries. “We are also on

the front lines of treating victims of violence,” says Walter Odhiambo, “so [we] are ardent advocates for armed violence prevention.” The report brings attention to the public

health costs of treating gunshot wounds.

The results are stunning. Citing the case of a victim who was survived being shot in the

face, the report concluded that the funds that went to treatment could have: provided one year of primary school education for 100 children in Kenya, fed an Kenyan family of six for 10 years, or immunized 250 children against common childhood diseases.

Aiming for Prevention mobilizes the unique expertise and authority of physicians to document the devastating human impact of small arms.

Changing attitudes towards guns

Country:
Kenya

Organization:
Pastoralist
Initiative
Development
in Kenya

How do you conduct peacebuilding and disarmament among nomadic communities who roam across national borders and are strained by competition over resources?

“We started our work because of the growing violence in the region: cattle theft was becoming ever more frequent, highways the scene of robberies and murders, and communities were being looted,” said Patrick Katelo, from the Pastoralist Initiative Development in Kenya (PACIDA). The program has been taking peacebuilding initiatives to nomadic cattle herders in northern Kenya and cross-border tribes between Kenya and Ethiopia.

PACIDA’s work targets young men who are often the warriors engaging in violent clashes. The organization establishes community-driven disarmament initiatives, and helps launch alternative sources of livelihood for youths. PACIDA trains youths in micro business management skills, and offers ‘food for work’ and ‘cash for work’ programs and funding for young enterprises. Its work not only helps ensure opportunities for peace among the mobile communities, it makes it possible for locals to choose to manage the scarce resources in the region cooperatively, while strengthening

controls over the illegal flow of firearms and ammunition across bordering regions.

Nomadic communities often lack a clear understanding of the role of the government in providing security for their lives and property. PACIDA discusses the effects of taking security into one’s own hands by acquiring weapons and the negative effects of entering into armed conflict to solve problems. Elders have taken on an important role by providing information on weapons and participating in disarmament.

PACIDA’s last disarmament drive

collected 1,200 firearms in less than three months. “Part of our success has been the fact that the very communities that bought the guns in the first place are now increasingly aware of the toll that gun violence has taken on their people,” said Patrick Katelo.

Lastly, PACIDA helps connect the nomadic communities to the people in governmental institutions. It makes sure that the flow of guns is replaced by a flow of information, and that the communities understand that they have the power to live in peace, and know, if they feel threatened, who they can turn to.

“The very communities that bought guns have become aware of the toll of gun violence.”



Building Bridges Between Agents of Change

Communities in East Africa have mobilized for disarmament and peace in the region. Their will is strong, but they are often poorly trained in the area. That's where Change Agents for Peace International (CAPI) comes in. The organization, founded in 2006, "... trains Change Agents in conflict transformation, democracy building, and human rights to strengthen the capacity of local African partners to design and deliver effective peace programs," says Jacinta Atemba Makokha, CAPI's chairperson. CAPI offers skills-building workshops and networking opportunities to smaller NGOs and religious institutions in Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Southern Sudan. "Our goal is to train strategic groups in violence reduction, governance and transitional justice in their communities," says Makokha. In addition to forming a regional women's forum of grass-roots leaders from the region, CAPI has also organized election observation teams in Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda. Beneficiaries include women leaders, refugee groups, teachers and students, community leaders and elders, and demobilized soldiers. "Change Agent training turns communities into strategic, empowered, long-term thinkers who take charge of their own destinies," says Makokha.

PEACE BEGINS AT THE grassroots

The violence following Kenya's 2007 elections shook the country and shattered long-standing community bonds. These rifts would lead Amani Communities of Africa (ACA), a local organization, founded by female lawyers on a mission to the shantytowns of

Country:
Kenya

Organization:
Amani
Communities
of Africa

Kibera. There, tensions between landlords and tenants (who had been relegated to the area

after being displaced in the 2007 violence) were still seething two years later. ACA's goal? To transform conflict through dialogue, and to pave the way for peaceful elections in 2012.

Entering a community from outside with the goal of bringing about social change is always a delicate issue, and it is especially challenging when relations among locals are strained by internal tension. The ACA knew this and engaged its local residents to make sure its work was sensitive to the community's demands and concerns.

In designing the conflict transformation process ACA turned to local youth. "They are a 'huge resource' they are open, creative and enthusiastic, they

view social change positively," said Joy Mbaabu, executive director of ACA, who added that women are another key group. "Women, although usually afforded less freedom to act, have great potential in peace-building for their ability to bring people together, and to act as 'bridges of peace'," said Joy.

More than 100 people took part in the ACA conflict-resolution workshops. The sessions began as consultations and helped establish dialogue among the parties involved, helping decrease tensions.

The project was able to overcome social and economic issues that seemed daunting at first. It successfully engaged participants who searched for solutions and realized that peace has a social and economic repercussions. The fact that communities effectively

engaged in dialogue launched the conflict transformation process. As a result, some of the people displaced were able to return to their homes, tenants resumed paying rent

and landlords improved some of the services they offered. This work has also been instrumental in addressing transitional justice issues, and in preparing a peaceful environment that may help prevent a repetition of hostilities as the 2012 elections approach.

"Youths are a huge resource; they are open, creative and enthusiastic, they view social change positively."

Building Peace to Foster Development



Ethnic conflict along the Kenyan-Sudanese border has been worsened in recent years by tensions over pastures and scarce water resources and an abundance of illegal arms along the border.

Adakar Peace and Development Initiatives (APEDI) was founded in 2006 with the aim of brokering peace through cross-border

mediation and conflict-resolution workshops. The program serves 8 kraals, or communities with an estimated 120,00-150,000 beneficiaries, forming peace committees among women and youth, facilitating of cross-border dialogue, and tracking stolen property. APEDI monitors and reports potential sources conflict and provides ambulance services, basic

health care and food to rural beneficiaries.

APEDI has enjoyed substantial success, including a sharp reduction of crime in the areas in which it

works, restitution of property, and reunification of abductees with their families. The organization has also helped create a safer environment for aid workers, established trade between communities, and has helped to pacify previously disputed territories. Between 2005 and 2007, APEDI oversaw peaceful disarmament in Lokichoggio, Oropoi and Kakuma divisions, leading to the recovery of over 2,600 rifles.

“By engaging the communities to work for peace, we have seen livestock rebuilt, lives saved, relations improved, and resources shared,” says Alexander Flemings, APEDI’s programme coordinator. “Peace allows the communities to work towards a better life and enables the government to concentrate on providing basic services for community development and social-economic transformation.”

Countries:

Kenya,
Sudan

Organization:

Adakar Peace
and Development
Initiatives





EMPOWERING A NEW GENERATION OF Activists

Women and children comprise a majority of the 4.9 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Sudan, the country with the highest number of IDPs in the world. Many of these youth have been both the victims and – at times – perpetrators of violence in their country’s civil war.

The Youth Forum, founded in 2008 in partnership with Save the Children, works with young people – particularly IDPs,

girls, children with disabilities, youth affected by HIV/AIDS, homeless children, and former combatants – to help them create a more peaceful future.

According to Hawa Eltignai, YF’s director, it provides “... safe space for boys and girls to talk about issues that matter to them.” YF organizes weekly seminars for youth to discuss children’s rights, conflict resolution, HIV/AIDS prevention, and gender issues.

The organization encourages peer-to-peer learning, and participants are then encouraged to share what they’ve learned in workshops with their families and communities.

“The ‘Child-to-Child approach’ is ideal for changing children’s behavior and for

understanding new concepts,” explains Eltignai.

Youth Forum goes beyond just talking about children’s rights. It also trains participants to campaign for these rights through advocacy and media workshops. “We’re encouraging them to use their voices to be part of social change,” says Eltignai. It’s not just the students who are benefitting. Parents ask for the workshops and discussions to continue, and, according to Eltignai, there have been

requests for such discussion groups to involve entire families. ■

“The ‘Child-to-Child approach’ is ideal for changing children’s behavior and for understanding new concepts.”

Country:
Sudan

Organization:
Youth Forum

Creating a Community of Practice on Armed Violence and Development (AV&D) in East Africa

Nairobi, November 2-3, 2010

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