

PEACE SCIENCE DIGEST

A PROJECT OF THE WAR PREVENTION INITIATIVE

IN COLLABORATION WITH



INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED TRANSITIONS

IN THIS ISSUE

Research to Action: Building Peace from the Middle

DIASPORA: Local Elites Hold Negative Views of
Diaspora as Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina

FEMALE RELIGIOUS ACTORS: Religious Knowledge
as a Source of Legitimacy for Women Peacebuilders
in Afghanistan

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Working Together
(or Not) in Peacebuilding and Civilian Crisis Response

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS: What Contributes to
a Successful Business-Peace Initiative?

YOUTH: Why Are Youth Overlooked and Underutilized
in Peacebuilding Movements? Lessons from the
African Great Lakes Region

A 2020 Vision for the *Peace Science Digest*

SPECIAL ISSUE PEACEBUILDERS



Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.

Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.

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Nearly 80,000 of the Syrians who have escaped the deadly war raging in their country have sought shelter at Jordan's largest refugee camp, Za'atari, where UN Women provides economic empowerment and protection programming for women and girls.

Need for the Digest photo credit: Christin Hume on Unsplash

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Research featured in the *Peace Science Digest* is selected based on its contribution to the field of Peace Science, and authenticated by the scientific integrity derived from the peer-review process. Peer-reviewed journals evaluate the quality and validity of a scientific study, giving us the freedom to focus on the articles' relevance and potential contribution to the field and beyond.

The editors of the *Peace Science Digest* do not claim their analysis is, or should be, the only way to approach any given issue. Our aim is to provide a responsible and ethical analysis of the research conducted by Peace and Conflict Studies academics through the operational lens of the War Prevention Initiative.

NEED FOR THE DIGEST

Peace and Conflict Studies (henceforth: Peace Science) has emerged as an academic discipline with its own graduate programs, handbooks, research tools, theories, associations, journals, and conferences. As with most scientific communities, the slow migration of academic knowledge into practical application becomes a limiting factor of a field's growth, its impact, and the overall effectiveness of its practitioners.

The expanding academic field of Peace Science continues to produce high volumes of significant research that often goes unnoticed by practitioners, the media, activists, public policy-makers, and other possible beneficiaries. This is unfortunate, because Peace Science ultimately should inform the practice on how to bring about peace.

The research and theory needed to guide peace workers to produce more enduring and positive peace, not only more peace studies, have come to stay. Bridging the gap between the peace movement moralism and foreign policy pragmatism is a major challenge facing everyone who seeks to achieve peace on Earth. (Johan Galtung and Charles Webel)

To address this issue, the War Prevention Initiative has created the *Peace Science Digest* as a way to disseminate top selections of research and findings from the field's academic community to its many beneficiaries.

The *Peace Science Digest* is formulated to enhance awareness of scholarship addressing the key issues of our time by making available an organized, condensed, and comprehensible summary of this important research as a resource for the practical application of the field's current academic knowledge.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

This special issue—the final issue of Volume 4—focuses on peacebuilders: Who are they? How do they work? What are their unique needs and capacities? What challenges do they face? We've partnered with the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) to bring these analyses to the forefront of conversations on how to build sustainable peace by focusing on the type of actor who is doing the work.

Anyone and everyone dedicated to deescalating violence and preventing its recurrence can be a peacebuilder. This special issue takes a closer look at certain types of peacebuilders, including members of the diaspora, female religious actors, international organizations, business associations, and youth. While certainly not exhaustive, this list can help us begin to appreciate the great diversity of peacebuilders in different contexts around the world and how each category of peacebuilder has something unique to contribute to this complex work.

Though the context may change, these actors face similar challenges. For instance, since peacebuilders do not work in isolation, they must figure out how to cooperate and coordinate effectively with different types of peacebuilding actors working in the same physical space. The challenge of cooperation and coordination with other actors is a cross-cutting theme in several of the analyses featured below (*Diaspora*, *International Organizations*, and *Business Associations*). Additionally, although one of the goals of peacebuilding is to transform power inequalities that gave rise to violent conflict, social identities may continue to exert influence on who gets access to resources and recognition for their work, posing another challenge for the peacebuilding process (*Female Religious Actors* and *Youth*).

This special issue also allows us to launch an exciting new initiative of the *Peace Science Digest*: a new section called Research to Action. We partnered with IFIT on this special issue to highlight their work in supporting “middle-tier peacebuilders.” As you will read below, IFIT adopted a research-informed approach by examining this category of peacebuilders who “help bridge national and community-level peace processes” and then developing “brain trusts” to support the unique role they play. It is precisely this kind of research-informed action that we plan to highlight in the new Research to Action section. A key goal of the *Peace Science Digest* is to help bridge the gap between research and practice. We are not the only ones who are interested in doing so. Thus, we want to show our readers what putting research into practice can actually look like by featuring work by other incredible organizations who are applying research insights to their work to prevent war and build peace.

Along with the new section, at the end of this issue we outline a new 2020 vision for the *Peace Science Digest*. As we move into a new decade, we are delighted to introduce a few changes to the *Digest* and how it communicates its commitment to identify, challenge, and transform militarism.

Your *Peace Science Digest* Editorial Team,



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Research to Action: Building Peace from the Middle	6
DIASPORA: Local Elites Hold Negative Views of Diaspora as Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina	10
FEMALE RELIGIOUS ACTORS: Religious Knowledge as a Source of Legitimacy for Women Peacebuilders in Afghanistan	14
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Working Together (or Not) in Peacebuilding and Civilian Crisis Response	18
BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS: What Contributes to a Successful Business-Peace Initiative?	22
YOUTH: Why Are Youth Overlooked and Underutilized in Peacebuilding Movements? Lessons from the African Great Lakes Region	26
A 2020 Vision for the <i>Peace Science Digest</i>	30

RESEARCH TO ACTION

BUILDING PEACE FROM THE MIDDLE: THE CRITICAL WORK OF NATIONAL BRAIN TRUSTS

OVERVIEW

The Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) is a global think tank that provides interdisciplinary analysis and advice on complex questions of negotiation and transition in fragile and conflict-affected societies. Over 200 experts work at IFIT, most of them as members of its global practice groups or its country brain trusts (described in more detail below). Mark Freeman is the executive director of IFIT, and Phil Clark is an expert member of IFIT's Law and Peace Practice Group.

RESEARCH

Strategies for building sustainable peace after violent conflict tend to focus on two levels of leaders: national elites who negotiate peace agreements and community actors who oversee local mediation and reconciliation efforts. Often overlooked in peacebuilding is the critical role of an intermediary level of peace actor—"middle-tier" or "go-between" leaders who help bridge national and community-level peace processes.

As Joseph Nye elaborates through his concept of "leading from the middle," go-between leaders are defined by their membership and mobility: they are typically full participants in national and local endeavors, who move regularly between these levels, sharing ideas and information. Extending Nye's theories to peacebuilding, we argue that, because go-between leaders occupy multiple spaces and belong to multiple constituencies, they play a vital role as bridging agents, educators, and ethical exemplars.



Photo Credit: Mohamed Hassan form PxHere

Go-Between Leaders as Bridging Agents

Go-between leaders often interpret their role in terms of connecting disparate communities of actors and the multiple spaces they occupy. They actively help to reduce the danger of national peace processes overlooking the expressed needs of local communities and thus delivering a detached peace that fails to resonate with more local concerns or root causes. They ensure that national elites are aware of how the conflict is felt and understood at the local level (including the extent to which elites themselves are blamed for fomenting violence) and what diverse constituencies believe peace should entail. This kind of bridging role requires leaders to possess a combination of technical, political, relational, and emotional intelligence, without which they cannot expand spaces for participation and help key constituencies feel connected to processes they often deem aloof. This includes indigenous, women, youth, and diaspora groups, as well as others that may have been directly targeted during conflict but remain marginalized.

Go-Between Leaders as Educators

Middle-tier leaders routinely interpret their role as educating national elites and community-level parties during peace processes. Finding effective remedies to decades-long conflicts is a question not only of strategies and negotiations but also of fresh ideas regarding the nature and causes of conflict and possible responses, including perspectives and lessons from other conflict-affected countries. Middle-tier leaders can contribute substantially in this regard, not only by directly educating national decision-makers, but also by educating a wider set of key stakeholders about how to influence and gain the trust of such decision-makers. Drawing on their own knowledge of elite dynamics, middle-tier leaders can empower community-level actors and marginalized groups to express their views more strategically in critical national (and international)

spaces and discussions in which the actors may come from very different professional, geographical, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds.

Go-Between Leaders as Ethical Exemplars

It is important for middle-tier leaders to maintain credibility at both the national and community levels by expressing clearly their core values and motivations. Local communities and key groups in society often view with suspicion the national level—and by extension the go-between leaders who participate in that arena. As such, middle-tier leaders must embody values of transparency, respect, and inclusivity in order to gain the trust of a country's diverse communities, avoiding the competitive forms of leadership that often persist among national elites and fuel conflicts, and modeling alternatives that alter the terrain on which peace is constructed.

PRACTICE

Because middle-tier peace leaders often act alone, they are necessarily limited in their reach, vulnerable to being pigeon-holed politically, and prone to feeling isolated. Informed by the insights on middle-tier leadership and interested in overcoming these challenges, IFIT has pioneered an approach that creatively leverages the unique strengths of this special category of peacebuilder.

The innovation is known as national “brain trusts.” Typically, an IFIT brain trust consists of a multidisciplinary group of 15-18 middle-tier leaders from a particular country, chosen for their policy expertise, personal integrity, and influential local networks. The members of an IFIT brain trust must be diverse in background, professional affiliation, political perspective, and thematic expertise, but all must share a deep commitment to respectful dialogue and the overarching, country-specific purpose of the brain trust (e.g., facilitating a negotiated solution, ensuring the successful implementation of an accord, etc.).

Once a brain trust is in place, IFIT's staff and global experts provide it with real-time policy support based on a continuously evolving and locally elaborated set of peacebuilding priorities. A brain trust will usually meet in plenary at least once per month. In between, its members will be in constant contact with each other, and with IFIT, through a dedicated chat group through which ideas are exchanged, policymaker meetings organized, key articles and draft documents circulated, and so on. Meetings of the brain trust are

always private, and each one establishes its own internal regulation covering issues such as confidentiality, external communications, and similar matters.

IFIT currently operates purpose-built brain trusts in seven countries: Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Libya, Syria, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria. Its experience highlights several key lessons of relevance for peacebuilding practitioners globally.

For the country in question, a brain trust:

1. Offers unusually deep and integrated thinking about peacebuilding challenges and possible ways forward that are not filtered through any particular group's interests.
2. Brings actors together who may not normally meet regularly, allowing them to overcome previously hard-to-solve collective action problems and individual limitations.
3. Promotes key ideas or policies that normally would not be sufficiently articulated, in particular ones that help generate consensus, reframe the set of perceived options, and build bridges.

For the members of the brain trust itself, all of whom are go-between leaders, the main benefits include:

1. Continuous access to hard-to-obtain information that is circulated within the group.
2. Expansion of their professional community and political networks and, with it, a multiplication of their individual voice and social impact.
3. Additional legitimacy and visibility—upwards to national decision-makers, downwards to community leaders, and sideways to fellow go-between peacebuilders.
4. Opportunities for integrated policymaking and intellectual enrichment—through discussions, meetings, courses, and workshops supported by IFIT at the national and international level.

Members of IFIT's brain trusts often find the space hard to understand at first. But within a few months they tend to consider it indispensable to their understanding of critical issues of negotiation and transition within their country. This is the best validation of all for this unique IFIT experiment in combining and harnessing the intellectual expertise, moral credibility, and quiet bridge-building talent of peacebuilding's most overlooked actor: the go-between leader.

Authors

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Mark Freeman is the founder and executive director of the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT). He has published extensively on issues of negotiation and transition. His most recent book is *Negotiating Transitional Justice: Lessons from Colombia and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

DIASPORA: Local Elites Hold Negative Views of Diaspora as Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Source | Hasic, J. (2018). Post-conflict cooperation in multi-ethnic local communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina: A qualitative comparative analysis of diaspora's roles. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 13(2), 31-46.

Keywords

Bosnia-Herzegovina,
peacebuilding,
economic development,
diaspora, ethnicity,
post-war

In the roughly 25 years since the end of the Bosnian war, a multi-ethnic diaspora has actively engaged in local peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). This paper focuses on how local elites perceive the role of the diaspora in peacebuilding and, importantly, how it influences cooperation among local elites as well as local peacebuilding dynamics. Analyzing across multi-ethnic municipalities in BiH, the author finds that local elites have a largely negative view of the diaspora's role in peacebuilding, perceiving them as part of a foreigner-led peacebuilding process and as having a mostly negative effect on cooperation between local elites.

Diasporas, specifically those dispelled from their original homelands due to armed conflict, are increasingly viewed by both academic and practitioner communities as transnational peacebuilders. They are uniquely situated to support peacebuilding activities in their countries of origin. Theoretically, "it can be argued that [their] proactive engagement in local peacebuilding can have reconciliatory effects on local democratization and institution building." Yet, members of the diaspora must engage with local elites (including middle-tier peacebuilders like mayors or city councilors or those in bureaucratic or administrative positions at the municipal level) whose views of the role of the diaspora in peacebuilding are shaped by partisan politics and power dynamics.

The author develops this case study by looking at nine municipalities in BiH while conducting fieldwork over six months between 2015 and 2016. In particular, she analyzes similarities and differences across the nine municipalities along three variables: how local elites perceive the difference between themselves and the diaspora, how local elites seize opportunities to engage with the diaspora, and how local elites communicate about the role of the diaspora in peacebuilding (either formally or informally). Evidence is sourced from 35 interviews with local elites from the nine municipalities included in the case study.

The nine municipalities in this case study include: Brčko, Bosanski Petrovac, Fojnica, Dobož, Stolac, Bugojno, Jajce, Mostar, and Vitez. The author is able to classify the municipalities into four groupings that generally describe the distinct ways in which local elites perceive the diaspora's role in peacebuilding.

**Continued reading:**

Peace Science Digest. (2019, August). *Special Issue on Refugees & Migrants*. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://peacesciencedigest.org/special-issue-refugees-migrants/>

Peace Science Digest. (2019, August). *Refugee resettlement as a form of transnational peacebuilding*. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://peacesciencedigest.org/refugee-resettlement-as-a-form-of-transnational-peacebuilding/>

Peace Science Digest. (2019, November). *Diaspora support for militant groups contributes to a shift towards nonviolence*. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://peacesciencedigest.org/diaspora-support-for-militant-groups-contributes-to-a-shift-towards-nonviolence/>

Peace Science Digest. (2019, November). *Sharing family photos elicits inter-group dialogue among Arabs and Israelis*. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://peacesciencedigest.org/sharing-family-photos-elicits-inter-group-dialogue-among-arabs-and-israelis/>

Brezar, A. (August 14, 2019). *Bosnian war hotspot becomes focal point for peace-building*. *Balkan Transitional Justice*. Retrieved February 19, 2020, from <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/08/14/bosnian-war-hotspot-becomes-focal-point-for-peace-building/>

First, the author identified a distinct approach in Brčko where local elites believe that the diaspora can be a peacebuilding agent but think that the peace process requires administrative reform to take place before serious diaspora engagement with local institutions can begin. Specifically, local elites believe that, prior to diaspora involvement, they “need first to work on establishing pathways of constructive cooperation on less contentious political topics” among themselves, as *they*—not the diaspora—are the ones directly responsible for building strong, local institutions. Because members of the diaspora are located away from their community of origin, local elites do not seek their input except through a limited role in economic development.

Second, in Bosanski Petrovac and Fojnica, the author found that local elites assert the diaspora’s importance in economic development but display an approach towards the diaspora that is “spontaneous, rarely proactive, and reserved or even resentful at times.” There are no formal lines of communication with the diaspora, but informal, and often sporadic, communication takes place to solicit economic remittances. Some of the interviewees from these municipalities expressed concern that these solicitations for remittances could be counterproductive, “as they could further polarise local parties and affect mutual cooperation.”

Third, the author found that ethnic political partisanship among local elites in Dobož and Stolac has led to a perception that the diaspora’s role is “imposed” by a foreigner-led peacebuilding process, “rather than of benefit to them.” Further, diaspora engagement with local institutions has created contentious politics in Stolac where the mayor (a member of the Croatian Democratic Union political party) has not formally reached out to a multi-ethnic Stolac diaspora but instead has informally reached out solely to Croat members of the diaspora for economic development, fueling tensions between Croat and Bosniak political parties.

Finally, in the municipalities of Bugojno, Jajce, Mostar, and Vitez, local elites do not believe that partnership with the diaspora is beneficial because they believe the diaspora is “critical of the local context.” While local elites expect diaspora members to take the initiative to support economic development, they also argue that these members of the “diaspora only negatively affect the [peacebuilding] process” by potentially unsettling the “fragile” balance established among local actors who have begun to work together and build mutual trust.

Cooperation among local elites is essential to peacebuilding. In most municipalities, the author finds the local elites view diaspora involvement as a constraint on their ability to cooperate with other local elites. Particularly, this finding shows how important local political parties are to peacebuilding. In a worst-case scenario, diaspora involvement may be exploited to deepen existing political or social divisions within a municipality.

TALKING POINTS

In the context of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- While a multi-ethnic diaspora has engaged in peacebuilding, how local elites perceive the diaspora informs the ways in which its members are involved at the municipal level.
- In most cases, local elites hold a negative view of the role of the diaspora in peacebuilding and, at best, view diaspora engagement as limited to economic development.
- In most cases, local elites believe that diaspora involvement constrains their ability to cooperate with other local elites, highlighting the critical importance of political parties to decision-making on peacebuilding.

Photo Credit: Roy Thaniago
Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2017

INFORMING PRACTICE

An important contribution of this research is to highlight interactions among different types of peacebuilders and how their perceptions of each other influence the types of roles they can play in peacebuilding. *What actually happens* at the local level when different communities with varying interests merge to build a sustainable peace after war? While this research may be limited to the examination of interactions between only two types of peacebuilding actors—local elites and the diaspora—it still draws out a number of important reflections.

Members of the diaspora are in a difficult position. They may often feel unwelcomed in both their country of origin and their country of residence, straddling multiple, overlaying identities and struggling with the trauma associated with forced migration (see “Sharing family photos elicits inter-group dialogue among Arabs and Israelis” in Continued Reading), while acting with the best intentions to support local peacebuilding and institution-building in their homeland. For example, research featured previously in the *Peace Science Digest* (see “Refugee resettlement as a form of transnational peacebuilding” in Continued Reading) found that Liberian refugees in Canada supported peacebuilding in Liberia “through remittances, the transfer of social capital, and political engagement in their host country.” These are common activities in which diasporas are engaged.

However, when members of the diaspora seek to engage with their country of origin, they likely do so in unfamiliar territory. It is essential to note the totally disruptive nature of war—how it reshapes power dynamics and alters the previous political landscape so much so that this landscape may be completely unfamiliar, even to those who used to live in the country. For example, in analyzing some of the cases in this research, the author found that “the multi-ethnic character of different diaspora communities abroad is not a positive indicator of their constructive involvement locally, [as they] might unwittingly trigger further divisions in the distribution of resources, or alter delicate institutional set-ups and employment policies.”

Unintended consequences abound even in interactions between local elites and the diaspora, despite the many shared characteristics like language, culture, or intention. This finding reinforces the utter importance of local elites and other middle-tier actors in peacebuilding (see “Building peace from the middle: The critical work of National Brain Trusts” in this issue’s Research to Action section). The research examined here highlights the consequential role local political parties play in determining local peacebuilding activities and outcomes, as “peace does not necessarily trickle down to the sub-national level in a uniform fashion.” How peacebuilding is accomplished locally depends on the decision-making powers of local elites—those who, in comparison to the diaspora, remained during and after war. They may feel justified in building and reshaping local institutions as more authentic representatives of the current population. This serves as a note of caution for well-intentioned members of the diaspora who wish to involve themselves in peacebuilding efforts in their countries of origin—highlighting the need for them to carefully examine the role they play in local politics and the possibly unintended effects of their involvement.

FEMALE RELIGIOUS ACTORS: Religious Knowledge as a Source of Legitimacy for Women Peacebuilders in Afghanistan

Source | Fabra-Mata, J., & Jalal, M. (2018). Female religious actors as peace agents in Afghanistan. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 13(2), 76-90.

Keywords

religious peacebuilding, women, peacebuilding, gender, Afghanistan, mediation, peace education

Although recent scholarship has focused on both women and peacebuilding and religious peacebuilding, there has been scant attention paid to the role of female religious actors in peacebuilding. The authors of this research aim to “give voice” to female religious actors working for peace in Afghanistan, both to recognize their work and to gain a fuller understanding of religious peacebuilding in the country. They are curious to find out “how local female religious actors understand and work for peace.”

By “religious actor,” the authors mean someone who is “assigned...to function as in charge of a Mosque, to serve as a member of the Shuras (councils) at the district or provincial levels, and/or to lead educational teaching activities.” Women in Afghanistan are not granted leadership roles in mosques, but they can serve in the other two capacities (and are also granted some respect as religious figures if they are married to mullahs). The authors interviewed twenty female religious actors in 2017, from diverse provinces, ethnic groups, and sectarian affiliations (15 Sunni, 5 Shia), but all part of a network of religious peacebuilding actors in Afghanistan. Of the 464 members of the network, only 108 were women—many of them teachers at schools, madrassas, or universities.

The authors also carried out a statistical analysis of the types of activities conducted by members of the religious peacebuilders network, which could be broadly grouped into three categories: “conflict resolution” (at the family or community level), “peace pedagogy and awareness raising,” and “facilitation of dialogues between non-state armed groups, communities and state officials.” Female members were found to engage predominantly in educational activities, which constituted well over half of their overall activities, compared to one-fifth of men’s overall activities. These educational activities might include teaching peace and conflict resolution from an Islamic perspective, or raising awareness within their families—or more publicly through Facebook—about what Islamic sacred texts say about peace.

The qualitative findings are grouped under five main themes. The first two relate to how the women define peace (mostly as the absence of direct violence but also as individual or group welfare) and what motivates them to work for peace (predominantly a moral obligation grounded in religious belief, shaped by the harms caused by war).

**Continued reading:**

Grande, N. (2016, April/May). Religious actors for peace in Afghanistan. Retrieved March 2, 2020, from <https://norad.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/publikasjoner-2016/ngo-gjennomganger/religious-actors-for-peace-rap-in-afghanistan.pdf>

Marshall, K., & Hayward, S. (2011). Women in religious peacebuilding. *Peaceworks Report No. 71*. United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/women-in-religious-peacebuilding>

Kadayifci-Orellana, S. A., & Sharify-Funk, M. (2010). Muslim women peacemakers as agents of change. In Huda, Q., ed., *Crescent and dove: Peace and conflict resolution in Islam*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Myers, E. (2018, April). Gender & countering violent extremism. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Gender-and-CVE-FINAL-1.pdf>

Associated Press. (2020, February 21). US, Taliban truce takes effect, setting stage for peace deal. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/02/21/world/asia/ap-as-afghanistan-peace-talks.html?searchResultPosition=8>

The third theme relates to reflections on the role of religious actors in peacebuilding. Most startling was that the women interviewed assumed the term “religious actor” referred not to them but rather to men—those religious actors who lead congregations and therefore have a particular kind of access to and authority in the community, making them influential peacebuilders. When asked specifically about female religious peacebuilding actors in Afghanistan, the women underscored the importance of this role but mainly within limited spheres of influence: their families and other women. But, crucially, their religious knowledge served to amplify their influence within—and beyond—these traditional spheres. As the authors put it, “[w]hereas gender determines to a large extent the spaces for women’s peace engagement, religious literacy not only increases the opportunities for women to work for peace but also enlarges those very same spaces.” For instance, such women may teach peace beyond the family in schools and madrassas or “gain acceptance to mediate in intra-family conflicts as well as inter-family, community-level conflicts related to customary practices,” contexts where they, unlike male mediators, would have access to the women involved. In a country where religion is so powerful, “religious literacy [is] an empowering force” that garners respect for women peacebuilders who have it—respect they might not otherwise enjoy. One respondent noted how Afghan women engaged in peacebuilding can often be branded as “western” (and thereby delegitimized), but if they demonstrate religious knowledge people will pay attention.

Fourth, knowledge of Islam also creates opportunities for female religious actors to coordinate with male religious actors in ways that contribute to peacebuilding in the country: either by referring disputes to them that may not be seen as appropriate for women to mediate or by jointly taking on conflicts to mediate, with each accessing the community members to whom they have distinct access.

Finally, female religious actors face numerous challenges in their peacebuilding work, including disdain, disregard, verbal aggression, humiliation, or discouragement. Many women, however, reported overcoming “initial skepticism within [their] communities” and ultimately earning the support of most of the community for their work.

Although female religious actors face more hurdles than their male counterparts do, their “religious knowledge is a powerful means to overcome social barriers and facilitate peacebuilding work,” enabling them to both “reach beyond” traditional spaces and make the most of those already available to them; it also opens up opportunities to work with male religious actors in ways that are beneficial for peacebuilding.

TALKING POINTS

In the context of female religious actors engaged in peacebuilding in Afghanistan:

- Women comprised less than a quarter of the Afghan religious peacebuilders network examined, and most of them were engaged in peacebuilding work focused on education, including teaching peace and conflict resolution from an Islamic perspective or raising awareness in their spheres of influence about what Islamic sacred texts say about peace.
- Although female religious actors face more hurdles than their male counterparts, their knowledge of Islam can be a powerful way to “overcome social barriers” and legitimize their role as peacebuilders, enabling them to both “reach beyond” traditional spaces and make the most of those already available to them.
- Knowledge of Islam opens up opportunities for women to work with male religious actors in ways that are beneficial for peacebuilding, especially when they can take on the mediation of a family- or community-level conflict together, leveraging their distinct forms of access with different people.
- Religious knowledge protects female peacebuilders in some measure against allegations of foreign/western influence, providing them with greater local legitimacy and respect with which to do their peacebuilding work.

Photo Credit: Mette Bastholm/Helmand PRT/Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Department for International Development Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Fatima (right), is one of five women members of the District Community Council in Nahr-e-Saraj district, in Afghanistan's Helmand Province, pictured on International Women's Day, 10 March 2012.

INFORMING PRACTICE

Two findings here merit further discussion. The first is that religious literacy can provide a powerful form of legitimation for women peacebuilders, who may not otherwise be taken seriously in a particular context, whether Afghanistan or elsewhere. This finding speaks to a broader insight that peacebuilders are more effective when they can speak to and connect with traditional values and sources of meaning in the community, especially when building peace requires challenging social norms. The ability to connect in this way may be especially important for those actors who do not automatically enjoy sufficient prestige or authority, which is often the case with women. Therefore, to the extent that women peacebuilding organizations in Afghanistan (and other countries where religion is a powerful force) can include religious actors in their ranks, cultivate religious literacy in their membership, and draw on religious perspectives in their efforts, they should do so—as long as doing so does not fundamentally violate their core principles. Such an approach should not be seen as a form of cynical calculation but rather as respectful recognition of the fact that there are many paths to understanding and transformation—and that religious belief can be an important one for many people.

The second key insight here is that women's spheres of influence—though limited—can be extremely valuable when it comes to peacebuilding efforts, both in limiting the violence of armed conflict and terrorism and in limiting other forms of violence affecting women and girls. With the recent surge of interest in CVE (countering violent extremism), one area that has received much attention is the ability of mothers to influence their sons away from so-called “extremist” violence. But women's influence in the family goes beyond CVE—especially with religious knowledge, they can enter into conversations with loved ones about the religious bases for both peace and violence of any type, providing a counterpoint to narratives these family members may be hearing from other sources. In addition, women peacebuilders' access to other women outside the family can have ripple effects as these women in turn influence *their* family members. It also provides a means to address sources of insecurity that might otherwise go unnoticed if only male peacebuilders are available to mediate family and community conflicts in a particular area. With attention to either sphere of influence, we must of course be careful not to assume that all women take on traditional roles limited to these spaces or, at the other end of the spectrum, that women always possess sufficient power within these spaces to influence others in the ways desired (though, as noted, religious literacy contributes significantly to that power). In other words, while it is worthwhile to validate and support women's peacebuilding efforts in these spaces, doing so should be coupled with recognition of women's peacebuilding beyond them (in schools or other institutions in the public sphere, as noted here) *and* with broader struggles to challenge patriarchal systems and bring about gender equality.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Working Together (or Not) in Peacebuilding and Civilian Crisis Response

Source | Dijkstra, H., Mahr, E., Petrov, P., Dokic, K., & Horne, P. (2018). The EU's partners in crisis response and peacebuilding: Complementarities and synergies with the UN and OSCE. *Global Affairs*, 4(2-3), 185-196

Keywords

international organizations,
civilian crisis management,
peacebuilding,
Mali, Kosovo, Armenia,
EU, UN, OSCE

International organizations (IOs):

Institutions with formal procedures and formal membership from three or more countries. Often thought of as the same as **intergovernmental organizations** (where the members are countries themselves) but can also include international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (where the members are not countries but rather individuals or other transnational actors).

International organizations (IOs), especially **intergovernmental organizations**, are prominent representatives of the international community in countries experiencing armed conflict and other crises, whether offering to mediate, providing humanitarian aid, or assisting with broader peacebuilding efforts. As they are often joined by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and either state or multilateral military forces, the number of international actors on the ground can be formidable, creating the potential for redundancy and/or competition between different agencies. As such, many organizations—including the European Union (EU) in its 2016 Global Strategy—have been trying to enhance their coordination and collaboration with other actors in crisis situations. The authors focus on the EU in particular and how successful it has been at working more closely and effectively with partners in **civilian crisis response/management**, especially the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

To examine this question, the authors first assess the geographical reach and functions served by each of the three organizations to see what potential there is for “complementarity” and then analyze interviews conducted in three field sites (Kosovo, Mali, and Armenia) to determine the extent to which these organizations are actually combining efforts to the extent that they could. They find that, “while there is potential for complementarity,” given the different functions and locations served by the three organizations, this potential is not being fulfilled. In other words, the EU, UN, and OSCE could be doing much more to create “synergies” in their civilian crisis response work.

While the OSCE operates in member states in Europe and Central Asia (especially former Soviet states), EU civilian missions are found more broadly in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and UN civilian missions are even more widespread, spanning both hemispheres. The authors identify a total of 10 functions carried out by the three organizations, several of which are part of the organizations’ respective mandates. However, each organization has its particular area of focus, with the EU specializing in police support, security sector reform (SSR), and border management; the UN

Civilian crisis management

(CCM): “a policy which involves the use of civilian assets to prevent a crisis, to respond to an ongoing crisis, to tackle the consequences of a crisis or to address the causes of instability... EU CCM is about addressing various causes or effects of conflicts or state fragility through activities that include, *inter alia*, support to good governance and the rule of law, security sector reform, development and humanitarian aid, support to political and electoral processes, border and coast management, counter-terrorism, anti-corruption, etc.”

Tardy, T. (2017, January). Recasting EU civilian crisis management. Report No. 31. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies. https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Report_31.pdf



Continued reading:

Tardy, T. (2017, January). Recasting EU civilian crisis management. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Report_31.pdf

Batora, J., Osland, K., & Peter, M. (2017, March). The EU's crisis management in the Kosovo–Serbia crisis. Retrieved February 25, 2020, from <http://www.eunpack.eu/sites/default/files/deliverables/D5.1%20The%20EU%E2%80%98s%20Crisis%20Management%20in%20the%20Kosovo-Serbia%20crises.pdf>

Reeve, R. (2018, July). Mali on the brink: Insights from local peacebuilders on the causes of violent conflict and the prospects for peace. Retrieved on February 25, 2020, from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/P772-PD-Mali-LVP-Report-ENG_WEB.pdf



Organizations/Initiatives:

European Union External Action Service: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/82/about-european-external-action-service-eeas_en
OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe): <https://www.osce.org/>
United Nations: <https://www.un.org/en/>

in monitoring, mediation, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); and the OSCE in judiciary support. Therefore, there appears to be a division of labor between the organizations that would seem to point to “complementarity [rather] than overlap and competition.”

Nonetheless, interview research in Kosovo, Mali, and Armenia indicates that the EU, UN, and OSCE civilian missions, though working together in a limited capacity, may not be fully capitalizing on the potential for “synergy” in their work. By “synergy,” the authors mean not simply coordination—already challenging enough—but rather “the actual exchange of civilian capabilities, such as diplomatic and political support for each others’ work, project funding, exchanges of staff, and use of equipment.”

At the level of *coordination*, there is evidence of regular meetings between the various civilian missions in Kosovo and Mali, though not in Armenia (at least in the area of SSR). As for *synergy* or *exchanges of capabilities* among the organizations, the authors find a few examples but nothing extensive. There is some evidence of *political and diplomatic support*. For example, the EU and UN supported the authority of the OSCE as the mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the UN and OSCE were often strategic about which organizational logo was used in which locale in Kosovo, depending on how the organizations were perceived by the various parties. The EU provides a measure of *financial support* to other agencies, especially the OSCE, as it often sees itself mainly as a donor who therefore partners with other organizations to implement projects. There is only limited evidence of organizations *sharing mission support capabilities* on an ad hoc basis. For example, the EU would draw on UN intelligence in Mali or on UN and OSCE field monitoring and reporting in Kosovo. The authors did not find any evidence of *personnel exchanges* between the organizations. In short, while some exchanges of capabilities occur, they are usually “unidirectional,” “ad hoc,” or “informally coordinated,” and the organizations seem to operate mostly on parallel tracks. The authors suggest that there remains much more room for the creation of systematic synergies between EU, UN, and OSCE civilian crisis management missions.

TALKING POINTS

In the context of EU, UN, and OSCE civilian crisis management missions in Kosovo, Mali, and Armenia:

- The European Union (EU), like many international organizations, aspires to enhanced coordination and collaboration with other agencies in crisis situations.
- “[W]hile there is potential for complementarity” between the EU, UN, and OSCE in their civilian crisis response activities, given the different functions and locations served by the three organizations, this potential is not being fulfilled.
- EU, UN, and OSCE civilian missions could do much more to fully capitalize on the potential for “synergy” in their work, through more systematic exchange of capabilities like staff, mission support, equipment, funding, or political and diplomatic support.



Photo Credit: U.S. Department of State from United States / Public domain. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry sits among his counterparts on December 8, 2016, as he attends a meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe hosted by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and held at the Hamburg Messe in Hamburg, Germany

INFORMING PRACTICE

Before discussing the specific findings of this research regarding possible synergies between international organizations on the ground, it is worth taking a step back and noting the significance of this research in its focus on civilian crisis management.

Often the assumption is that although civilian actors can be useful for long-term peacebuilding and development work, more immediate crises involving security concerns require a military response. The concept of civilian crisis management unsettles this view, as it suggests that civilian actors have a key role to play in addressing crises and immediate threats to security. Put differently, the tools often associated with long-term peacebuilding can also function as means to immediate violence reduction. That said, a few activities examined in this research are ones that tend to be addressed in militarist fashion—anti-terrorism, riot control, or, obviously, support to armed forces—potentially blurring the distinction here between military and civilian response. The activities examined also do not include several peacebuilding activities that could effectively contribute to violence reduction, like inter-group dialogue, nonviolent resistance, anti-war activism, or unarmed civilian protection (UCP). In other words, policy-makers and practitioners serious about responding meaningfully to crisis situations should consider a whole range of civilian-led activities that are well-equipped to address the underlying causes of violence, often with immediate as well as long-term effects.

With regards to the specific focus of this research on opportunities for synergies between the EU, UN, and OSCE's civilian crisis response, the clear recommendation is for these organizations—and others working on the ground amidst armed conflict and other crises—to take stock of their capacities and those of other organizations to be more strategic about working together to maximize not only efficiency but also effectiveness in preventing further violence. Although doing so is clearly important, it is also worthwhile to highlight the background assumptions that inform a focus on international organizations engaged in war zones. As others have argued, in the context of armed conflict, there is a tendency to see the problem as “local” (produced by the local political or cultural context) and the solution for addressing it as “international” (with representatives of the international community intervening in various ways). Many if not most of the armed conflicts raging today, however, have their roots in colonial history and/or present-day international geopolitics, forces that have shaped “local” politics in crucial ways. At the same time, as the emerging body of research on the “local turn” in peacebuilding has argued, solutions, to be sustainable, must be locally led. These points are not meant to negate the findings here on more effective collaboration between international organizations but rather are only meant to put such efforts into perspective—not as the centerpiece of a crisis management and peacebuilding strategy but as one facet of it.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS: What Contributes to a Successful Business-Peace Initiative?

Source | Miklian, J., & Medina Bickel, J. P. (2018). Theorizing business and local peacebuilding through the “Footprints of Peace” coffee project in rural Colombia. *Business & Society*, online publication, 1-40.

Keywords

Business-peace initiatives,
private sector,
conflict resolution,
FARC, Colombia,
conflict-affected settings,
peacebuilding

Blue-washing is a practice employed by companies whereby they collaborate with United Nations agencies to showcase compliance with the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact by paying lip-service to environmental and human rights goals but not actually complying with them.

Berliner, D., & Prakash, A. (2015). “Bluewashing” the firm? Voluntary regulations, program design, and member compliance with the United Nations Global Compact. *Policy Studies Journal*, 43(1), 115–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12085>.

Recent enthusiasm for the untapped potential of the private sector in peacebuilding has meant that multilateral organizations and peace practitioners have begun advocating for the participation of the business community in peace and development work. Yet, there is concern that these initiatives can do more harm than good. For example, private firms may usurp the role of local government in their development initiatives and “blue-wash” their practices in conflict-affected settings.

As business-peace initiatives become more sought after, it is important that research be directed towards understanding what is working and what is not working to avoid exploitation of local populations for profit. Considering the research gaps in the field of business-peace activities and the growing popularity of the approach, the authors seek to investigate the conditions that contribute to the success or failure of business-peace initiatives through a case study of a business-peace initiative in Colombia.

The Footprints of Peace (FOP) project by the Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia (National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia, or FNC) was implemented from 2011 to 2015. The FOP project was designed by FNC and a Spanish nongovernmental organization (NGO), Humanismo y Democracia (Humanism and Democracy, or H+D), and funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID). Founded in 1927, FNC is a membership organization of 500,000 coffee farmers and represents all of Colombia’s coffee growers. Among the several peacebuilding and development projects pursued by FNC in collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, intergovernmental agencies, and multinational corporations since the 1990s, FOP is the largest, having assisted 50,000 disadvantaged people affected by armed conflict in four of Colombia’s 32 departments (geographical regions akin to U.S. states or counties). Implemented solely through local FNC trainers, FOP was designed to provide business skills, promote sustainability of water resources, and encourage community conflict resolution. Participants were recruited to attend monthly sessions, which included corresponding economic, sustainability, and social modules.

The authors examined FOP through a qualitative case study, conducting 70 interviews at seven sites between January and September 2017. The interviewees were relevant stakeholders, including farmers, conflict victims,



Continued reading:

Mapping Militant Organizations. (2019). Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Stanford University. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/revolutionary-armed-forces-colombia-farc>

Seyle, C., & Wang, J. (2019). Private sector peacebuilding: A review of past cases and lessons learned. OEF Research. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from <https://oefresearch.org/publications/private-sector-peacebuilding>



Organizations/Initiatives:

Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia (FNC): <https://federaciondefeteros.org/wp/federation/about-us/?lang=en>

government officials, FOP project principals, and conflict actors. The interviews consisted of 20 open-ended questions to assess the local population's impression of the program.

The interviews indicated that FOP was successful with regards to both social and economic outcomes: 64% of respondents reported improved social fabric in their community, “including increased dialogue, social cohesion, integration, communication, and brotherhood,” and 80% of respondents said FOP had produced at least one positive economic outcome in their community, mostly related to coffee production. FOP provided tangible assets, such as coffee trees and/or seeds, as well as training on cultivation techniques, as components of its economic assistance. The authors also noted that the auspicious timing of FOP, which took place after a major demobilization of different paramilitaries but prior to the formal cessation of hostilities between FARC and the Colombian government. FNC trainers were able to “gain deeper access into communities and hold events more openly” because of the reduction in armed conflict.

In addition to indicating the success of FOP at building social cohesion at a local level and providing at least one economic benefit, the interviews conducted in this study identified the circumstances that enabled its success. Three main narratives emerged from the interviews as possible conditions contributing to FOP's success: the positive reputation of the implementing business association, a focus on family- and village-level violence, and the integration of local trainers.

The success of FOP also confirmed five existing business-peace arguments. First, the experience of FOP affirmed that businesses can help build peace. Second, the centrality of local FNC trainers to FOP's success validated how imperative local ownership is in project implementation. Third, the importance of relationships with the local power structures was confirmed. As a business entity, FNC was able to obtain permission from conflict actors to operate without disruption in rebel-controlled areas. Fourth, FOP demonstrated that under the right conditions, collaboration between businesses and international development agencies can yield success. FOP was the result of a collaboration between a business association (FNC) and an NGO (H+D) and was funded by an external partner (AECID). H+D's project design complemented FNC's goals, and local communities played a role in determining the allocation of international funding based on need and merit throughout the project. Lastly, FOP proved that it is possible for businesses to reap rewards from business-peace initiatives, specifically related to improving community relations, reputational gains, and profit. Bearing in mind the lessons learned from the FOP initiative, this case study provides an actionable foundation for the private sector to design and implement peace and development projects in post-conflict scenarios.



TALKING POINTS

In the context of conflict-affected areas in Colombia:

- The positive reputation of the business association in question, a focus on conflict resolution at the community level, and the integration of local community members as trainers are all factors that can contribute to the success of business-peace initiatives.
- Business-peace initiatives can be successful: 64% of respondents reported improved social fabric in their community, and 80% identified at least one positive economic outcome of the project.
- Businesses seeking to build peace should embrace local ownership of project development and establish relationships with local conflict actors, which can, in turn, grant access to conflict-affected areas.
- Striking an appropriate balance between local ownership of project implementation and international funding can be an asset in business-peace initiatives.

Photo Credit: UN Women/Ryan Brown
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)
Growing coffee is hard work. Often, small farmers don't make nearly enough for their products.

INFORMING PRACTICE

Practitioners and peacebuilders should pay attention to the research contributions related to project mandate and implementation from this study.

The social module of the project was designed to facilitate community conflict resolution by “promot[ing] societal change as individuals,” and excluded reference to any “conflict history or national conflict elements.” The authors do not discuss the rationale for concentrating efforts at the interpersonal level. It is interesting because building peace in the context of civil wars often pertains to addressing big ideas and conflict actors, such as distribution of wealth, security sector reform, etc. Yet, in the case of FOP, the project focused on building peace between individuals at the family and village level. Because of this decision, participants in the project could readily apply the training to their daily lives, and positive outcomes were immediate. The success of FOP’s project mandate supports the notion that successful peacebuilding projects in civil war contexts can address more than just national-level issues with known conflict parties by creating opportunities for peace at the interpersonal level, as well. Building peace amidst a civil war can, and should, occur at multiple levels of the conflict and be inclusive of civilians and their immediate communities.

FOP was a successful collaborative project funded by an international organization, designed by an international NGO, and implemented by a local entity. This level of collaboration should not be overlooked—especially, as the authors point out, since “many unsuccessful or ineffective business-peace ventures have been unilateral activities by firms.” Moreover, many peace projects are undertaken by international NGOs and external funders without the input and participation of the local communities in project design or implementation. Top-down approaches to peace face an uphill battle, as they can be viewed as nefarious by the local community and may fail to consider adverse impacts of their peace work. Bearing in mind finite time and resources for successful peacebuilding interventions, external stakeholders should be cognizant of all factors that can contribute to success. In the case of FOP, project designers and external funders recognized the importance of local implementation and took advantage of the far-reaching network of FNC and its positive reputation. Participants were receptive to the training, and conflict parties did not disrupt project activities because FNC trainers were trusted and familiar. External peacebuilders can constructively work to build peace from afar through business-peace initiatives, but they must be mindful to identify a local entity that has a positive reputation in the region and the capacity to successfully implement the work.

YOUTH: Why Are Youth Overlooked and Underutilized in Peacebuilding Movements? Lessons from the African Great Lakes Region

Source | Kasherwa, A. C. (2019). The role of youth organizations in peacebuilding in the African Great Lakes Region: A rough transition from local and non-governmental to the national and governmental peacebuilding efforts in Burundi and eastern DRC. *Journal of Peace Education*, online publication, 1-38.

Keywords

youth peacebuilding,
African Great Lakes Region,
Resolution 2250,
inclusive peace processes,
youth organizations,
peace processes

Youth are often overlooked as valuable actors in peacebuilding, even in regions where they are actively and constructively working toward peace. In this study, the author examines the role of youth organizations in building peace in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi. The author argues that youth are effectively working to build peace at a local and community level, yet they are not included in peacebuilding activities and decision-making at the national level in Burundi and eastern DRC. This study outlines the factors contributing to the effectiveness of youth organizations working for peace, identifies key challenges that hinder youth inclusion at a national level, and recommends steps to overcome these barriers.

In this study, the author conducted interviews and focus group discussions with youth from both countries—all with participants ages 18 to 35 years. Participants included active and hard-to-reach young people selected from youth organizations, networks, social movements, or governmental agencies associated with the Ministry of Youth. The youth organizations included in this study were not working exclusively in peacebuilding but rather were working across many sectors. The interviews and focus groups shed light on how youth are constructively working for peace and the challenges they face in implementing their peacebuilding activities.

The interviews revealed that the real strength of youth peacebuilding in these countries was the diversity of views youth held about peace and therefore the broad range of peacebuilding activities they engaged in. Perceptions of peace ranged from reducing violence to building tolerance and respect to encouraging individual freedom. In line with **transrational peace theory**, which argues that “peace is not a singular, monolithic and monological concept,” youth organizations were particularly capable of positively contributing to peace because their diverse conceptualizations of peace fostered multidimensional approaches to peacebuilding. These included educational sessions and campaigns, human rights activism such as sit-ins and strikes, community activities such as sports and music, and production of peace research reports and documentary films. Additionally, youth organizations took an **elicitive conflict transformation approach** in their work, therefore they were “more effective than any other organizations in [the] peacebuilding processes [of Burundi and eastern DRC].” Youth emerged from and worked within the conflict-affected communities, meaning they

Transrational peace theory:

“a theoretical model that takes into account a multiplicity of overlapping, yet not completely coinciding viewpoints in building sustainable peace.” When applying this theory in the field, peace workers developed the **elicitive conflict transformation approach**, which “draws out, highlights, and catalyzes existing or communally held knowledge related to transforming conflict between individuals, groups, and communities.”

Dietrich, W. (2013). *Elicitive conflict transformation and the transrational shift in peace politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dietrich, W. (2018). *Elicitive conflict mapping*. London: Palgrave Macmillan

had a vested interest in what they were doing and could readily apply their indigenous knowledge to resolve local conflicts.

Despite the positive role that youth organizations play in the peacebuilding process, the interviews identified four main barriers that make it more difficult for youth to contribute to peacebuilding at the national level:

1. **Stigmatization and discrimination:** Youth were consistently identified by decision-makers, at the international and local level, either as victims of conflict needing assistance or as perpetrators of violence threatening stability, but never as peacebuilders. This stigmatization is reinforced by the on-going recruitment of youth into armed conflict (a by-product of the failing post-war transition to peace—see below).

2. **Funding and budget constraints:** The youth organizations in this study all depended on external donors and consistently struggled to secure funding for their activities.

3. **Inadequate institutional support:** At the local and international level, there is little to no support for inclusion of youth in decision-making or peacebuilding activities. If there is, it is restricted by the prevailing stigmatization and discrimination of youth and by operating restrictions imposed by political authorities.

4. **The failing post-war transition to peace:** Burundi and eastern DRC have both achieved milestones toward ending civil war and armed conflict, yet conflict among armed groups for access to power, resources, and land remains. In both countries, recurrent instability and poor implementation of key reforms “compromise the trajectory of many young people from violence perpetrators to peacebuilders[.]”

The author recommends key changes to help facilitate the transition of youth from constructive peacebuilding at the local level to inclusion in peacebuilding activities and decision-making at the national level. Different peacebuilding stakeholders (governmental, non-governmental, and traditional) must acknowledge the positive role of young people in peacebuilding by assigning “key roles to the youth as a social category in all initiatives for peace, security and development...[and]...national policies.” Furthermore, adequate budget and resource allocation should be provided to youth peace initiatives and related sectors that directly impact youth, such as education, employment training, and sports. Engaging with young people and establishing programs to increase their representation in decision-making structures at the national and local level is paramount. The author also recommends a youth-sensitive approach be developed by peacebuilding stakeholders and implemented across relevant sectors, including the establishment of a youth desk in strategic sectors.



Continued reading:

Cirhigiri, C. C. (2019, June). Youth and peacebuilding: Key insights and lessons from a global online consultation. Peace Direct. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from <https://www.peaceinsight.org/blog/2019/07/youth-and-peacebuilding/>

Fix, E. (2019, February 6). The future of Afghanistan lies in the hands of its youth. Counterpart International. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from <https://www.counterpart.org/stories/the-future-of-afghanistan-lies-in-the-hands-of-its-youth/>.

Haqqani, S. (2020, February 20). What we, the Taliban, want. *New York Times*. Retrieved February 20, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/opinion/taliban-afghanistan-war-haqqani.html>.

Hassan, S. (2018, August 18). After 17 years of war, a peace movement grows in Afghanistan. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/after-17-years-of-war-a-peace-movement-grows-in-afghanistan/2018/08/18/662e4812-a0cc-11e8-a3dd-2a1991f075d5_story.html.

Klar, R. (2020, February 17). Peace deal with US to be signed by months' end, Taliban says. *The Hill*. Retrieved February 20, 2020, from <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/483346-us-taliban-to-sign-peace-deal-by-months-end>

Simpson, G. (2018, March). The missing peace: Independent progress study on youth, peace and security. UNFPA. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy.

TALKING POINTS

In the context of youth organizations working to build peace in Burundi and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):

- Youth organizations are particularly capable of positively contributing to peace because of their varied conceptualizations of peace, which foster multidimensional approaches to peacebuilding, and their ability to integrate indigenous knowledge into their conflict resolution efforts.
- Inclusion of youth in national-level peacebuilding was impeded by stigmatization and discrimination, funding and budget constraints, inadequate institutional support, and the failing post-war transition to peace.
- The following changes would facilitate the inclusion of youth peacebuilding at the national level: the assignment of key roles for youth in initiatives for peace, security, and development; adequate resource and budget allocation for youth initiatives and tangential sectors; the establishment of programs to increase youth representation at national level; and a youth-sensitive approach across all sectors.



Photo Credit: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0

INFORMING PRACTICE

In light of on-going peace talks between the U.S. and Afghanistan, the conclusions of this article are timely. Thus far, peace talks have included the U.S. and the Taliban, with expectations of a formal peace agreement.¹ Once the U.S.-Taliban peace deal has been signed, presumably the Taliban will engage in peace talks with the Afghan government and people. The inclusion of Afghan youth, especially young women, in these peace talks is paramount to their success. International and national stakeholders should ensure that they are meaningfully included.

With conditions similar to those in Burundi and eastern DRC, Afghanistan has a multitude of factors that could sway male and female youth to engage in violence or work for peace. Unemployment and poverty are rampant in Afghanistan, both of which can act as recruitment mechanisms for youth to participate in violence and can be considered drivers of conflict. At the same time, many youth are being drawn to peace work. The People's Peace Movement (PPM), begun in 2018 and comprised largely (but not exclusively) of Afghan youth,² has conducted marches, staged nonviolent protests, and met with Taliban leaders in an effort to pressure leaders to pursue peace. Decision-makers at the international and national levels, however, have yet to acknowledge the interests or concerns of the PPM. It is important to note that the exclusion of male and female youth in peace talks will likely lead to their failure, as illustrated by the Arusha peace talks of Burundi in 2000. The Arusha peace talks resulted in an agreement for peace and reconciliation, but the lack of input from youth ultimately led to a failure to implement the Arusha peace agreement and a continuation of violence. Excluding entire segments of the population from peace talks is a strategic misstep—as critical perspectives of those living in conflict will be omitted from the process, and root causes of violence will be overlooked.

As this study demonstrates, there are key steps that can be taken to elevate the role of excluded groups, such as young people and women, to the national level. Participants in the Afghanistan peace talks should, at the very least, acknowledge the role of young men and women in constructively and positively working for peace at the local level and facilitate their engagement in the next stage of peace negotiations if there is to be any hope of building a sustainable peace to end the 19-year war.

1. Klar, R. (2020, February 17). Peace deal with US to be signed by months' end, Taliban says. *The Hill*. Retrieved February 20, 2020, from <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/483346-us-taliban-to-sign-peace-deal-by-months-end>

2. Hassan, S. (2018, August 18). After 17 years of war, a peace movement grows in Afghanistan. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/after-17-years-of-war-a-peace-movement-grows-in-afghanistan/2018/08/18/662e4812-a0cc-1e8-a3dd-2a1991f075d5_story.html



Dear Readers,

This is the final issue of Volume 4 of the *Peace Science Digest*. It also happens to be the last regular issue. The Editorial Board has decided to end the volume-issue format and print subscription for the *Peace Science Digest* in March 2020. Instead, we will release one analysis on our website every two weeks.

This decision is the result of a year-long process of reflection and analysis beginning with a reader survey conducted in May 2019. From this survey, we learned how most of our readers access the *Digest*, their likes and dislikes, and how they use the *Digest* in their work or activism. Although we were heartened to hear from readers that they find great value in the *Digest*, we also wanted to be clear-headed in our assessment of how and whether we were effectively fulfilling our mission and keeping up with latest best practices in communications. The results surprised us and challenged our assumptions about the *Digest's* role in discourse on war, militarism, and peace.

Therefore, we are introducing this change for the following reasons:

- 1** Our survey results indicated that approximately 80% of our readers read the *Peace Science Digest* online. Ending the print subscription allows us to focus our attention on improving the online experience.
- 2** Our survey results revealed a demographically homogenous readership—meaning that our publication was failing to attract a diverse population of readers along racial, gender, age, and nationality lines. We want to do better at attracting a more diverse readership. To do so, we plan to prioritize our outreach efforts on innovative virtual and communications platforms that expand our existing network.
- 3** Our survey results indicated that approximately 20% of our readers report reading all five analyses in an issue of the *Peace Science Digest*. The remainder report reading anywhere between one to five analyses each issue, with approximately 18% reporting that they only read the analyses that pertain to their interests. By publishing a single analysis online every two weeks, we hope to increase the exposure of each analysis, and the corresponding research it highlights, to the appropriate audience.
- 4** Curating our analyses into a volume-issue format added an additional delay in publicizing knowledge from peace science—often times up to 4-5 weeks of writing, editing, and other administrative tasks. By focusing on publishing a single analysis online, we can more quickly summarize the findings from peace science, especially those which may speak directly to current events. This will also mean more regular updates from the *Peace Science Digest*, rather than waiting for the next issue to become available.

These changes will not change the substance or content of the *Peace Science Digest*, simply the way in which it is delivered to our readers. Additionally, this period of reflection and analysis brought forth several exciting new initiatives that we are happy to announce:

- We will maintain special issues of the *Peace Science Digest* moving forward and will strengthen our collaboration with partner organizations for these special issues. Special issues allow us to curate analyses on a single topic that speak to one another. We find that these issues gain the most traction with our readers and create opportunities for more focused discussion and debate on the applications of peace research to policy and activism.

- We are launching a new section of the *Peace Science Digest* called Research to Action. Bridging the gap between peace research and practice is one of the core motivations of our work at the *Digest*. We know it can often be helpful for our readers to hear concrete examples about how others are bridging this gap and applying knowledge in practical ways in order to better visualize how they could do so themselves. With this new section, we plan to shine a spotlight on individuals and organizations who are particularly effective in using academic research to inform their practice.

Thank you, readers, for your continued interest in and support for the *Peace Science Digest*. We are excited to jump into this new stage of the *Digest* with you. Please reach out with any comments, questions, or concerns to digest@warpreventioninitiative.org.

Thank you,
Peace Science Digest Editorial Team

The Peace Science Digest is a project of the War Prevention Initiative

<h2>OUR VISION</h2>	<p>Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.</p>
<h2>OUR MISSION</h2>	<p>Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.</p>
<h2>OUR CORE VALUES</h2>	<p>Nonviolence – We promote strategic and principled nonviolent solutions over any kind of armed conflict.</p> <p>Empathy – We view social problems through the eyes of others and respectfully communicate with each other in the pursuit of mutual understanding.</p> <p>Planetary loyalty – We consider ourselves global citizens, living in harmony with humanity and nature.</p> <p>Moral imagination – We strive for a moral perception of the world in that we: (1) imagine people in a web of relationships including their enemies; (2) foster the understanding of others as an opportunity rather than a threat; (3) pursue the creative process as the wellspring that feeds the building of peace; and (4) risk stepping into the unknown landscape beyond violence</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">AREAS OF FOCUS</p>	<h2>WE SUPPORT</h2> <p>Support Rotary International’s focus on peace by aiding the Rotarian Action Group for Peace with human, logistical and content-related resources.</p> <p>Support development of effective strategies to convince Americans that the United States should not promote war, militarism or weapons proliferation, but rather embrace conflict resolution practices that have been shown to prevent, shorten, and eliminate war as viable alternatives to local, regional and global conflicts.</p> <p>Support building grassroots social movements seeking a world beyond war.</p>
	<h2>WE EDUCATE</h2> <p>Actively contribute to peace science and public scholarship on war prevention issues.</p> <p>Share information and resources with multiple constituencies in an understandable manner.</p> <p>Provide evidence-based information on peace and conflict issues with immediately potential doable policy advice to public policy makers.</p> <p>Advance the understanding and growth of the Global Peace System.</p>
	<h2>WE ENGAGE</h2> <p>Convene national and international experts in ongoing constructive dialog on war prevention issues via our Parkdale Peace Gatherings.</p> <p>Connect likely and unlikely allies to create new opportunities.</p> <p>Participate in peacebuilding networks and membership organizations.</p>
<h2>UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS</h2>	<p>We are at a stage in human history where we can say with confidence that there are better and more effective alternatives to war and violence.</p> <p>A Global Peace System is evolving.</p> <p>Poverty, employment, energy, education, the environment and other social and natural factors are interconnected in peacebuilding.</p> <p>Peace Science and Peace Education provide a path to a more just and peaceful world.</p> <p>Multi-track diplomacy offers a sectoral framework for creating peacebuilding opportunities</p>