

Coordination Group: *Building Trust in Post-Conflict Communities*

“Only if people can reconnect to ‘inner peace’ they will be able to create ‘outer peace’ “

Please join us on an inspiring journey to find out how to build trust and lasting peace in post-conflict communities

Losing trust in conflicts and wars...

During wars, conflicts or other crises many people have suffered from violence, destruction, losses, human rights violations and often unimaginable atrocities. Habitually, these people are then left behind with traumatic experiences, deep psycho-social wounds and destroyed livelihoods.

In such situations, unresolved and trans-generational traumatic experiences continue to poison the psycho-social stability and socio-cultural integrity of individuals, families and entire communities. Specific ethnic or religious groups or whole nations might develop resentment, distrust, hatred and a segregating attitude of “we and the others”, towards those whom they now perceive as the enemies and aggressors. Minor conflicts can stir up again new hostile clashes and continue the vicious cycle of violence, hatred, psycho-social destabilization and new trauma.

As a result, the capacity of communities to rebuild trust and reconciliation will be much reduced and as such threaten the efforts for sustainable peace-building.

So, how can these people build again trust, find reconciliation and finally create lasting positive peace in post-conflict communities?

Well-being and Peace - from ‘Inner Peace’ to ‘Outer Peace’

We want to explore and highlight how the strengthening of inner ‘well-being’ and ‘inner peace’ can definitely contribute to reduce violent conflicts and establish lasting positive ‘outer peace’.

People need to restore their internal psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual balance and resilience within their communities by empowering themselves!

The importance of the internal human preconditions for peace-building starts to be recognized, yet, still remains widely under-estimated.

New approaches of psycho-social rehabilitation and re-integration, like transformation processes of “community healing” aiming to overcome trauma, fear and hatred as well as culture-based self-help processes of individual and collective “trauma-healing” need to be integrated into holistic peacebuilding initiatives.

Holistic approaches of sustainable peace-building also need to combine external (e.g. security/safety, socio-economic reconstruction) and internal human (psycho-social rehabilitation) conditions of ‘well-being’, as both are interdependent.

We want to promote the recognition and integration of such holistic and community-based self-help approaches for psycho-social rehabilitation and lasting positive peace!

Within our group of “*Building Trust in Post-Conflict Communities*” we want to promote and support projects in the Balkan, in the DR Congo and in Georgia who are already developing and implementing such holistic approaches.

Project 1: Ending the Cycle of Violence: Empowering communities to overcome conflicts and trauma for building a peaceful future (Eastern DR Congo, South Kivu and beyond)

Eastern D.R.Congo has passed through unimaginable chaos caused by the wars for many years.

People are suffering from displacement, disruption of family and community structures, traumatic experiences and impoverishment. Minor reasons can quickly cause new violent conflicts. The project wants to develop local multiplication systems of trainers of trainers, who can reach out to the communities to train and assist them in conflict resolution skills as well as in self-help-oriented individual/collective trauma rehabilitation in order to strengthen participatory “community-healing”

processes of peace-building. This training model and manual can later be extended to other communities. Partner: PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION (PCR Foundation, Bukavu); Karin Augustat, Rotary Peace Fellow

Project 2: Creating the human conditions for overcoming trauma, hatred and fear

We will focus on the Balkan region where there still remains an urgent need to build trust in post-conflict communities, to heal existing scars and to promote a more inclusive and collaborative way of living. We aim to develop projects using a specific toolkit that promotes peace and reconciliation with an approach "From Inner to Outer Peace". This toolkit can later be applied to similar projects, globally.

Project 3: Women Peace Ambassadors in Georgia

This project is an outcome of an already conducted field research on ethnically mixed families revealing the huge potential of women to be the role model peace-builders within and between conflict divided communities. Unfortunately, these women feel marginalized and powerless. Therefore, the purpose of this specific project is to support women with holistic approaches to reconnect to their own power and ignite wisdom in order to develop them as positive change-making actors. Partner: Peace Research Centre Tbilisi; Nino Lotishvili, Rotary Peace Fellow