

# Infrastructures for Peace

## Nesting opportunities

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### 1. Infrastructure for Peace: some definitions

The word *Infrastructure* sounds a bit weird when associated to *Peace*. When we think of infrastructures, we usually have in mind a system or a structure built in order to provide the basic facilities and services needed for the functioning of a society, like, for example, schools or hospitals.

Peace and peacebuilding activities are usually not intended as “standard” human activities, which require an infrastructure or a physical space to be implemented. However, peace requires **multi-level and long-term investments** targeted at building capacities and create a **social system that supports and facilitates the manifold processes of peace**.

Infrastructure for Peace (I4P) is a very vast concept and it is open to new definitions and original contributions.

The concept of I4P was originally formulated in the 1980s by **John Paul Lederach**. Starting from his experience with local peace processes and the use of committees in peace negotiations, he intended I4P as a part of a **comprehensive approach to address protracted internal conflicts**. This approach would have to embrace an understanding of the dynamic interdependence between the various levels of society and the commitment to sustainability through **locally rooted peacebuilding**.<sup>1</sup>

According to **UNDP**, infrastructures for peace are “[a] network of **interdependent systems, resources, values and skills** held by government, civil society and community institutions that promote dialogue and consultation; prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs in a society”. Further, “Recurring conflicts and extended, turbulent, transitions cannot be addressed through discrete one-time mediation or a single peace process. They require **standing and sustainable mechanisms for mediation and dialogue**—‘infrastructures for peace’—at local and national levels within the country itself.”<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, the **International Network of I4P** defined them as “dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values, and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building in a society.”<sup>3</sup>

It is paramount to consider that I4Ps are not needed only in conflicting and unstable regions, but also in situation of political stability, like in Western Countries; stability, in fact, do not equate peace: Infrastructures for Peace can bring a lot including in those societies, as no country live completely in a culture of peace.

The establishment of a Department for Peace can be a step in this sense, as it would be carrying out peace education and training, human and economic rights, nuclear disarmament, civilian peace service and domestic violence prevention.

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1 *Background Paper on Infrastructure for Peace – Seminar on Infrastructure for Peace*; Paul van Tongeren

2 *Background Paper on Infrastructure for Peace – Seminar on Infrastructure for Peace*; Paul van Tongeren

3 <http://www.i4pinternational.org/infrastructures-for-peace/defining-i4p>

## 2. Overview on I4Ps around the world

In order to better organize the framework of Infrastructures for Peace, and looking into the different practices, it is useful to distinguish between Infrastructures for Peace led by governments and those led by civil society organizations (CSOs).

### 2.1. Infrastructures for Peace with a National Mandate: Experiences in Governments

The concept of I4P based on a National Mandate rises from the necessity of institutionalize mechanisms and systems that can face with fragile societies. In these contexts, in fact, Infrastructures for Peace require key stakeholders to adopt a co-operative, problem solving approach to conflict based on negotiation and non-violence. Institutional mechanisms, appropriate to each country's culture and context, must be in place to manage this approach at a local, regional and national level.<sup>4</sup>

Essential components of peace infrastructures can include:

- **National, District and Local Peace Councils**, comprised of trusted and highly respected persons of integrity who can bridge political divides and who possess competence and experience in transforming conflicts;
- **National peace platforms** for consultation, collaboration and coordination of peace issues by relevant actors and stakeholders;
- **Conflict Analysis and an Early Warning & Response system**;
- **A Government bureau, Department or Ministry of peace building**;
- **Passage of legislative measures** to create national 'Infrastructures for Peace' with appropriate budgets<sup>5</sup>.

Some examples:

#### Ghana

After the bloody eruption of the Konkomba-Nanumba conflict in 1994, when up to 5000 people died, NGOs in Ghana initiated a different approach by integrating peacebuilding and development work, trying to involve communities in finding solutions to improve dialogue and mutual understanding. NGOs formed a working group called the *Inter-NGO Consortium*: they organized and facilitated a series of peace and reconciliation consultations and workshops among the warring ethnic groups. These negotiations brought to the *Kumasi Accord on Peace and Reconciliation* (March 1996). When in 2002 a new wave of violence erupted; on the base of the success of the approach used in the precedent conflict, the government established in 2004 the *Northern Region Peace Advisory Council*, which succeeded as a mediation and conflict resolution mechanism to deal with the issues of trust among the factions.

After this event, the government started to design a range of activities to consolidate Peace and build confidence and dialogue among the factions. In March 2006 a *Roadmap to Peace* was signed by the chiefs in Kumasi, as basis for the establishment of the **National Peace Council (NPC)**. The NPC was helpful for the following tensions resulted with the national elections of 2008, as it helped mediate a peaceful political transition.<sup>6</sup> The Ghana's NPC became an independent body in 2011, with a clear mandate (establishing regional and district peace councils), which sets both legal backing and limitations. Its mission is promoting peace and people's engagement through different activities: networking and coordination, strengthening capacities of peacebuilding institutions, developing conflict prevention mechanisms while including indigenous perspectives, women and youth.<sup>7</sup>

Favourable features: Ghana's NPC was initiated bottom-up and then given legitimacy by the government through a bill in parliament, in order to reproduce the good work done locally and raise funds. The Civil

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4 <http://www.i4pinternational.org/infrastructures-for-peace/defining-i4p>

5 <http://www.i4pinternational.org/infrastructures-for-peace/defining-i4p>

6 *Background Paper on Infrastructure for Peace – Seminar on Infrastructure for Peace*; Paul van Tongeren

7 *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

Forum Initiative, including different stakeholders, managed to bring together political parties in a proactive manner in order to cooperate with civil society produce concrete results.<sup>8</sup>

Future perspectives: during a meeting held in Accra on 10 September 2013, all ECOWAS countries decided to establish similar mechanisms within 3 years' time.<sup>9</sup>

## Kenya

Kenya's experience started at the local level in the Wajir District in the 1990s through an initiative led by local women, which then spread to other pastoral areas. The decision to integrate all the peace initiatives into one structure brought to the establishment of the **Wajir Peace and Development Committee**, in May 1995. Members included the heads of government departments, representatives of Peace groups, religious leaders, representatives of NGOs, traditional chiefs and security officers. Furthermore, in 2001, the *National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management* was established. After the 2007 post-electoral violence, the government thought it would be important to establish **District Peace Councils (DPCs)** in all districts.

The National Peace Policy of July 2012 aims at strengthening the visibility and performance of DPCs and elders' councils, improving early warning and response systems, increasing capacities for mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution through the training of stakeholders, engendering peace work through the increased participation of women in teams heading DPCs, infusing the peace dividends concept in peace work (rehabilitation of vandalized schools and health facilities), increasing research and intervention studies, developing the engagement with media and political leadership, and documenting peace processes.

Although Infrastructures for Peace started at the local level, the involvement of the national government in Kenya was important in order to apply the mechanisms for peace to other parts of the country, providing capacity and technical support, together with the presence of an effective early warning systems.<sup>10</sup>

## Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan represents a symbol of an original approach to dealing with inter-ethnic tensions. The ethnic and religious composition of society has changed over time (1989-2013) but too less has been done for the integration of minorities. Despite the fact that ethnic violence had already occurred in 1990, a violent inter-ethnic conflict followed the regime change in June 2010. After the 2010 events, more attention has been given to ethnic violence both internationally and nationally, and more efforts have been made to facilitate dialogue between civil society and government.

The strategies proposed by the government to build Infrastructures for Peace as sustainable development mechanisms to strengthen the unity of people and inter-ethnic relations involve the **Defence Council**, the **Department of Ethnic, Religious Policy and Cooperation with Civil Society** of the Presidents' Office created in 2010, which is working on a comprehensive concept on ethnic development, and the **State Agency on Local Self-Government and Inter-Ethnic Relations** within the Government created in 2013.

Thanks to the support of UNDP, at the provincial and at the district levels several **Oblast Advisory Committees (OACs)** have been established in the seven oblasts (regions of the country), which brought together government and civil society representatives. For example, the OAC of Issyk-Gul facilitated dialogue between law enforcement agencies and youth and conducted awareness raising campaigns on the risks of religious extremism.<sup>11</sup>

Current challenges: the reform of law-enforcement agencies is yet to be completed; the efforts of integrating the various ethnic groups results difficult; an approach of early violence prevention is not yet systematic, and the results of the monitoring are not shared widely enough.<sup>12</sup>

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8 Ozonnia Ojielo, Head of Conflict Prevention and Recovery at the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction of UNDP; *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

9 Emmanuel Asante, current Chairman of the National Peace Council

10 Guyo Liban, member of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission of Kenya, *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

11 *Background Paper on Infrastructure for Peace – Seminar on Infrastructure for Peace*; Paul van Tongeren

12 Mira Karybaeva, Chief of Division of Ethnic and Religious Policies and Interaction with Civil Society of Kyrgyzstan; *Nesting Peace: Creating*

## Costa Rica

Costa Rica has a long history in peacebuilding actions and reforms: in 1948, it was the first country to formally abolish the military forces; its Constitution forbids a standing army; in 1980 the *United Nations University for Peace* was established there; in 1997, a law for the *Alternative Resolution of Conflicts and Promotion of Peace* passed, which introduced peace education programs in schools.

A very important step was taken in September 2009, when Costa Rica created another important institutional structure for the promotion of peace: through the Law 8771, which defines peace as an inalienable right, the **Ministry of Justice and Peace** and the Vice-Ministry of Peace have been established.

**National Plan for the Promotion of Peace** (2011- 2014) includes special protection of children, adolescents and families, communication for peace projects, disarmament projects, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The *Observatory on Violence* provides useful statistics and data, while the *Peace Network (Red de Paz)* promotes civil society's involvement in peace processes.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2. I4Ps promoted by CSOs and other non-governmental actors

There are many examples of NGOs and other non-state actors which are committed in establishing I4Ps in different countries. Some examples:

**Shalom Educating for Peace (SEP)** is an NGO based in **Rwanda**, working for building and sustaining positive peace through education. Projects implemented by SEP are aiming at cultivating the culture of non-violence and peace through social activities such as sports, theater and performance. Shalom also offers the possibility to speak on a weekly community radio program in Rwanda, a platform where peace principles are discussed and debated.<sup>14</sup>

**Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD)** is a **Sierra Leonean** civil society organization working with the purpose of strengthening the capacity of CSOs to effectively engage communities for the peaceful transformation of society. To this end, NMJD implements programmes on Peace and Security, Accountable Governance and Youth Empowerment.<sup>15</sup>

**The Liaison Office (TLO)** is an infrastructure established in **Afghanistan**, in order to give voice to the population's bodies committed in conflict resolution, bodies that have solid roots in the Afghan tradition; TLO is committed in creating connections between the national institutions and the local and regional community structures. The specific tasks of this Office are: conflict analysis and research; dialogue facilitation between traditional governance mechanisms and the modern State structure; alternative dispute resolution infrastructures.<sup>16</sup>

### Other initiatives creating I4Ps:

- **Restorative system and restorative circles:** Restorative systems are very good example of an infrastructure for peace, as they support healing, reconciliation and the creation of a culture of peace. A Restorative Circle is a community process for supporting those in conflict, within an intentional systemic context, to dialogue as equals. Restorative Circles are facilitated in three stages designed to identify the key factors in the conflict, reach agreements on next steps, and evaluate the results. As a circle form, they invite shared power, mutual understanding, self-responsibility and effective action.<sup>17</sup>

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*Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

13 Mira Karybaeva, Chief of Division of Ethnic and Religious Policies and Interaction with Civil Society of Kyrgyzstan; *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

14 <http://www.shalomeducatingforpeace.org>; contribution of Jean de Dieu Basabose at the Nesting Peace Summit

15 <http://www.nmjd.org/home/index.php>;

16 Masood Karokhail, Director of the The Liaison Office (TLO); *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

17 <http://www.restorativecircles.org>

- **Peace Education projects in schools:** Intervening in schools represents an important instrument to develop a culture of peace in our society, as school age is a crucial stage in the development of a human being. Schools committed in Peace Education programs organize projects that allow children to learn how to deal peacefully with conflicts, or to get familiar with important social values such as teamwork and fair-play. Some examples of such projects are promoted by the ministry for Peace in Costa Rica, such as the “Weapon-Free Schools” program, the “Sports For Peace” program, or the “Art For Peace” program.<sup>18</sup>

- **“Museum for Peace”:** the Museum of the Red Cross & Red Crescent, in Geneva, is a good example of a “Museum for Peace”, as it represents a permanent structure for learning about war and peace, the dangers of organized violence and the work of the Red Cross in peace processes. The museum is thus a non-formal learning space functioning as a support for the development of the culture of peace.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Outlook for the future: some considerations and challenges of I4Ps

- A peacebuilding process has not necessarily to be managed by one single, all-encompassing structure but that it is possible to have different elements, different organizations that cover different roles.<sup>20</sup> In order to face possible challenges, we thus have to perceive **peace structures not as separate elements**, but as **related to each other**; in this way it will be possible the development of **“collaborative capacity”** of I4Ps.
- For an effective achievement of I4Ps, it is important to act **both at the community level**, in order to mobilize people, **and at the political and institutional level**, in order to mobilize the necessary political will and increase the understanding of the concept of peace infrastructure.<sup>21</sup> It is thus crucial that these levels are interlinked and work complementary.
- It is paramount to note the importance of having **legislation and policies anchored in the constitution**, and the recognition on all levels. At the international level, some movements are currently sustaining a campaign for a UN General Assembly resolution on Infrastructures for Peace, and *PeaceNow petition* is calling for Departments of Peace in governments worldwide<sup>22</sup>.
- Establishing an I4P is a process which takes time. Key features of success are social cohesion, citizen participation and ownership. It is also fundamental to consider the **different contexts** and the peculiar **background of each country**, and consequently design different I4Ps valid for that specific context.
- A National Peace Infrastructure has no legislative or executive power; it uses its **soft power** to create relations, develop networking and coordination activities.
- A National Peace Infrastructure needs the capacity to **build bridges** in a divided society. This may be compromised, when it is part of the government. Therefore, the **independence** of a peace infrastructure is a very important element<sup>23</sup>.

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18 *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

19 *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

20 Ulrike Hopp Nishanka, German researcher in the field of Infrastructures for Peace; *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

21 Ozonnia Ojielo, Head of Conflict Prevention and Recovery at the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction of UNDP; *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

22 *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

23 *Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructure to sustain diversity*. Report of the Summit

#### 4. Conclusions

As showed before, an I4P can display various forms and patterns, different faces according to the specific situations of each Country. What is important is the fact that the establishment of so various and diversified I4Ps are **changing the way of conceiving peacebuilding processes**: I4Ps systems aim at ensuring not only the absence of violence in situations of war (e.g. through ceasefires, peace agreements, arms control conventions, etc), but also at creating the basis for the promotion of active and comprehensive peace in all societies.

I4Ps in fact represent strategic systems of **reconciliation and connection between people**: they provide tools to **transform conflicts**, they open the possibility of developing new and **creative solutions**, they create **spaces for dialogue** and facilitate conditions for enhancing **empathy among people**, they transform the violent social structures in which we are living, offering alternative methods in re-addressing conflicts that occur in our families/communities, and they develop new ways of **nonviolent communication**.

I4Ps contribute in moving from a conception of traditional “negative peace”, considered as needed in situations of violent conflict, to a new conception of positive **culture of peace**, to be promoted everywhere.

Supporting documents available at:

<http://www.gamip.org/summits/switzerland-2013-nesting-peace/summit-documents/>

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The essay was elaborated starting from the result of “[Nesting Peace: Creating Infrastructures to Sustain Diversity](#)”, the sixth Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP), which took place from 16th to the 20th of September 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. The event which brought together 212 participants from 54 different countries, was designed to enhance awareness and understanding of peace infrastructures and their essential role in sustainable strategies of peace promotion.

The Nesting Peace Summit was the occasion to reflect and discuss on the definition of I4P, and on the various meanings and results of it. The event also included a Seminar on Infrastructures for Peace with a National Mandate, organized together with the International Civil Society Network on Infrastructures for Peace.