



LEVERAGING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE FOR PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING IN AFRICA

**SEMINAR
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CONCEPT NOTE

In recent years, important institutional and policy developments at the international level have addressed numerous challenges in conflict-affected states as they strive to achieve sustainable peace, build legitimate state institutions, and avoid relapses into conflict. The UN established an institutional architecture dedicated to peacebuilding in 2005, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), and the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund. The ongoing efforts of major international stakeholders, such as the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), continue to assess and tackle the wide-ranging challenges of conflict prevention, statebuilding, and peacebuilding.

Accompanying these developments is an increasingly frequent call for national and local ownership of peacebuilding and statebuilding design and practice. The principles of leveraging local knowledge and attending to local context have gained increasing prominence and visibility in international policy. Standards of field practice for international NGOs and peacebuilding missions regularly now include consultation of local perspectives and engagement of local actors. But regional, national, and community-level knowledge have not found effective channels to influence and inform the international decision-making process.

There is a considerable disconnect between the policymaking process of the United Nations and the realities and urgent demands of communities on the ground. In other words, while local knowledge and research exist in conflict-affected regions, it is under-represented in both the global academic and policymaking circles. More work is needed to ensure that a broader cross-section of local actors are consulted, that local perceptions, understandings, and solutions are taken seriously as existing peacebuilding capacity, and that this capacity is leveraged for statebuilding and peacebuilding practice. It is time to connect these levels of analysis and intervention, and to move local knowledge from the bottom-up.

The seminar will feature five case studies on local peacebuilding and statebuilding initiatives, presented by the African practitioner-scholars who served as authors. Their case studies include women's statebuilding initiatives in Egypt, youth-centered peace programs in Burundi, violence transformation training in Zimbabwe, the use of online and mobile technologies to counter election violence in Kenya, and efforts to build local governance in Mali. The cases illustrate an array of innovations and adaptations in locally-driven peacebuilding and statebuilding initiatives, and will provide the context for discussion of the challenges and opportunities in linking local knowledge to international policy and practice.

AGENDA

9:00 – 9:15am **Breakfast**

9:15 – 9:30am **Welcome**

9:30 – 10:30am **Session 1 – The Local Turn in International Peacebuilding: *The state of policy and practice from international and local perspectives***

The frequent invocation of terms like “national ownership,” “local ownership,” and “inclusivity” in key documents and statements by the leadership of the United Nations and other international organizations points to a growing consensus on the importance of locally-focused approaches in peacebuilding. Translating these principles into practice—in terms of peacebuilding mechanisms, processes, and programs on the ground—is an enduring challenge. To address these issues, key findings from IPI’s *Leveraging Local Knowledge* project will be presented. Representatives of both the UN and African civil society will offer their understandings of leveraging local knowledge and expertise, offering concrete examples from their work in peace programming in Africa.

Presenters: **Andrea Ó Súilleabháin**, *Policy Analyst, International Peace Institute*

Vincent Kayijuka, *Peacebuilding Support Officer, UN Peacebuilding Support Office*

Harriette Williams Bright, *Advocacy Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité*

Moderator: **John Hirsch**, *Senior Adviser, International Peace Institute*

10:30 – 10:45am **Coffee break**

10:45 – 12:30pm **Session 2 – Linking Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: *The relationship between state structures and local peacebuilders***

In the past few decades of peacebuilding policy and programming, international and multilateral actors have increasingly looked toward the strengthening of state institutions, or statebuilding, as a necessary component of sustainable peace—typically focused on the national level. This session will critically examine the relationship between statebuilding and peacebuilding through two case studies. In some cases, state structures can undermine the efforts of local actors to build peace in their communities and influence national-level processes. The case study on Egypt outlines innovative programs that engage women in local governance and statebuilding initiatives, including mechanisms that link their work to national policymaking. The case study on Burundi analyzes challenges for youth-centered peacebuilding due to state mobilization of youth groups according to their political affiliation, causing tensions with grassroots initiatives.

Presenters: **Yasmin Khodary**, *Governance Program Manager at the UNDP Social Contract Center in Egypt and Leveraging Local Knowledge Case Study Author on Women, Local Governance, and Statebuilding in Egypt*

Nestor Nkurunziza, *Professor of Law at the University of Burundi and Leveraging Local Knowledge Case Study Author on Youth Peacebuilding in Burundi*

Discussant: **Lamii Moivi Kromah**, *Research Fellow with the Center for Peace Operations at IPI*

Moderator: **Maureen Quinn**, *Senior Director of Programs, International Peace Institute*

12:45 – 2:30pm Working Lunch / Session 3 – *Practices in local and participatory peacebuilding and statebuilding*

This session will explore innovative examples of local approaches to peacebuilding and statebuilding in challenging contexts, through three case studies. In Zimbabwe, locally-adapted peace training demonstrates the need to transform politicized narratives in local communities in the aftermath of election related violence. In Mali, a coalition of civil society groups comes together to advance effective governance, in the face of transnational organized crime. In Kenya, new technology initiatives contribute to conflict prevention following outbreaks of violence, highlighting the complementary roles grassroots, national, and international actors can play in peacebuilding and statebuilding. Participants will discuss what lessons these initiatives offer for regional and international responses to peace and security challenges.

Presenters: **Webster Zambara**, *Senior Project Leader at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) and Leveraging Local Knowledge Case Study Author on Local Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Election-Related Violence in Zimbabwe*

Frank Okyere,* *Research Associate, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and Leveraging Local Knowledge Case Study Author on Local Efforts to Build Governance and Counter Transnational Organized Crime* (*Video presentation)

Grace Maina,* *Political Affairs Officer, UNMISS and Leveraging Local Knowledge Case Study Author on New Technologies for Peace in Kenya* (*Video presentation)

Discussant: **Munini Mutuku**, *Senior Program Officer for Reconciliation and Integration, National Cohesion and Integration Commission of Kenya; Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University*

Moderator: **Andrea Ó Súilleabháin**, *IPI*

2:30 – 3:30pm Session 4 – Looking Ahead: *Leveraging local knowledge for peacebuilding and statebuilding*

The closing session will address key questions and operational challenges for advancing local knowledge. Panelists will consider how international organizations like the UN can engage local practitioners and feed their ideas into peace and conflict analysis and planning. Panelists will offer examples of effective local consultation and best principles for local engagement. The concluding discussion will ask how the wealth of knowledge and policy analysis on peacebuilding and statebuilding in Africa can be better identified, supported, and integrated into global scholarly and policy networks—to advance local lessons and strengthen peacebuilding knowledge and action at all levels.

Presenters: **Cyril Obi**, *Program Director for the African Peacebuilding Network, Social Science Research Council* **TBC**

Matthew Kennis, *Strategic Director of the Local First Initiative, Peace Direct*

Discussants: *Case study authors will be asked to offer final remarks on lessons for policymakers, drawing on their research and previous project seminars in East and West Africa.*

Moderator: **Webster Zambara**, *IJR*

3:30 – 4:30pm **Break**

4:30 **Reception***

**IPI is hosting an informal reception for the UN and foreign affairs community in New York on November 21. Participants in the Leveraging Local Knowledge seminar are welcome to attend.*

PROJECT SUMMARY

With this project, **Leveraging Local Knowledge for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in Africa**, IPI will contribute to making local knowledge and experience in peacebuilding more accessible across the continent and to the larger policy community. The project aims to advance more efficient and effective peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts, as well as to enhance early warning and prevention capacities at the sub-regional and regional levels to avoid lapses or relapses into conflict or violence. This main objective will be achieved through three goals:

1. to facilitate a dialogue among African scholars and practitioners on their experiences in peacebuilding and statebuilding on the continent, both thematically and country-specific;
2. to promote the dissemination of this African knowledge and experience beyond the local level to sub-regional and regional African institutions and to international policymakers at the United Nations, in key donor countries, and the wider global community; and
3. to inform, with these local insights, the ongoing policy development and actions at the sub-regional and regional levels aimed at improving early warning systems and conflict prevention efforts.

Looking at select post-violence countries in north, west, east, and southern Africa, IPI commissioned five local scholars and practitioners to produce case studies that map original and experience-based peacebuilding and statebuilding initiatives across five thematic areas (transnational organized crime, women's leadership, youth participation, election-related violence, and new technologies for peace).

The project included two cross-regional meetings to bring together the case study authors with practitioners from relevant countries, as well as experts from sub-regional organizations, AU policymakers, and other governmental representatives. The first cross-regional meeting on May 1-2, 2014 at the Gorée Institute in Senegal included case study authors, experts, and practitioners largely from West and North Africa, for a discussion of peacebuilding and statebuilding challenges, innovative local initiatives, and recommendations for future policy and action. The second cross-regional meeting convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on September 4-5, 2014 facilitated further experience-sharing among experts and practitioners largely from East, Central, and Southern Africa.

The case studies and findings from both seminars will be incorporated into a final publication. This policy report will present concrete recommendations aimed at ensuring more effective and sustained use of local knowledge in regional, continental, and international peacebuilding and statebuilding initiatives, as well as early warnings systems and conflict prevention efforts.

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