

Conference Report

Peace Building in Africa: Bridging Theory and Practice

Bujumbura

28 to 30 November 2012

The Life & Peace Institute has been engaged in conflict transformation research and practice for more than 25 years. It favours a participatory approach that combines research and action to transform conflicts across the world. The mutual complementarity of the two is still not exploited to its full potential in peacebuilding. The persisting gap between theory and practice in this field was the primary reason that inspired the Life & Peace Institute's programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in collaboration with its Burundian partner Initiative et Changement, to arrange for an occasion for practitioners and academics to come together to share their perspectives on peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding in Africa: Bridging Theory and Practice took place in Bujumbura, Burundi, at the end of November 2012. Over the course of three days, the conference gathered together peacebuilding practitioners and scholars from the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions in order to advance mutual learning and promote synergies in future peacebuilding practices. Three key aspects of peacebuilding were discussed in Bujumbura: Identity and conflict transformation, research and participation, and participatory evaluation, both in theory and practice.

The conference itself adopted a participatory and inclusive approach, whereby general discussion and reflection was encouraged and sought. Presentations were accompanied by lively workshops and group work sessions, after which participants were able to share and compare their experiences. Of the many acclaimed participants attending the conference, the main speakers included Dr. Barry Hart from the Eastern Mennonite University, Mark M. Rogers, programme director from LPI Uppsala, Dr. Séverine Autesserre from Columbia University and country director for LPI DR Congo, Pieter Vanholder.

This report offers an overview of the main themes examined during the conference and provides a brief synthesis of some of the discussions and recommendations that emerged over the course of the three days. We hope it will recapture some of the moments of the conference for those who participated, and allow them to continue reflecting on these issues with their colleagues and peers. The report should also benefit the many scholars in this field to assess the shortcomings of theories put into action and encourage them to collaborate with their counterparts in the field to further improve both theory and practice. Similarly for practitioners, this report aims to increase the curiosity around the theories behind peacebuilding and how practitioners can test their action by a better understanding of these theories. Finally, we hope the results of the conference and this report will find its way into the hands of students of peacebuilding and encourage future learning to take on a much more holistic yet hands-on approach.

Peacebuilding: Approaching Action through Theory

Recognising the importance of identity in conflict transformation

The concept of peacebuilding has a tendency to adopt different meanings in different contexts, different colours depending on which lenses it is viewed through. Essentially, the core objective of peacebuilding is to support a sustainable transition to peace of a conflict-torn society: this is done by striving to achieve strategically targeted change of conflict toward non-violent relations reflective conflict transformation practitioners seek to test their programme theories of change in order to better understand how change happens. During the process of conflict transformation both tangible and intangible structures have to be influenced. Classical approaches to development tend to focus on tangible structures of a conflict or post-conflict environment, such as building roads, schools as well as the transformation of entire justice systems. This is done as these transformations are more easily comprehensible, and provide donors with measurable results. It is however also important to consider the more complex, intangible aspects present within a society touched by conflict, e.g. ethnicity, identity, values and world views. These form intangible structures that define us as human beings and individuals, and hence have a profound impact on our lives.

Identity is one such intangible aspect that is also crucially central to basic human needs. A person stripped of identity is stripped of his/her sense of being, his/her sense of dignity. Dignity dishonoured can become a major source of conflict. Identity does indeed often appear in a negative light, becoming a common cause of conflict. Participants to the conference considered the case of inter-tribal conflict in Kenya as an example of how intangible structures can be used for stigmatisation and manipulation, instead of as tools to bring about positive change (see box 1). But identity, along with other intangible structures, can also serve as a positive tool in building peace and should be considered as a central dimension to any conflict transformation process. In a conflict environment, peacebuilding should bring change at a personal, relational, structural and cultural level, as we identify ourselves at all of these. If identity needs and values are not properly understood, the resulting peacebuilding process may remain only at a superficial and technical level.

Box 1: Identity manipulation and conflict

Tribal identity in Kenya remains strong, often surpassing the feeling of national identity. Manipulation of identity and mobilisation of identity-based conflict is not a new phenomenon in the country, where local grievances and a feeling of marginalisation are easily instrumentalised to serve political interests. The case of the Coast Province is just one of many in Kenya where violence regularly takes place around election time. Historically marginalised both politically and economically, the indigenous Coastal population remains reserved towards upcountry settlers from inland Kenya. Much of the land has been bought and claimed by settlers with land titles awarded by the central government, leaving the original population largely as landless tenants on their traditional home lands. While the Coast serves as the primary driver of Kenya's economy thanks to

the port of Mombasa and the successful tourism industry, the province itself remains one of the least developed in the country as the wealth and infrastructure is distributed elsewhere. Of the indigenous swahili Mijikenda people, the most disproportionately high rates of illiteracy, landlessness and unemployment are found amongst the Digo, a sub-ethnic tribe of Mijikenda. In 1997, the Mombasa-Likoni-Kwale region experienced high levels of violence in the run up to the general elections of that year. This period of violence is today commonly referred to as the Kaya Bombo raids. These raids were carried out by individuals belonging to the indigenous Digo ethnic group and mainly targeted the upcountry settlers. Investigations into the raids done by bodies such as the Kenya Human Rights Commission¹ and Human Rights Watch² have since found that campaign discourse by the ruling KANU party in government at the time had encouraged the Kaya Bombo raiders by instrumentalising their grievances and feelings of an identity dishonoured. KANU rallies in Coast Province called for a federal system of 'majimboism' which was to return land to the indigenous populations and give the region more autonomy from the central government. The previous campaign for majimboism in the Rift Valley in 1991 had already demonstrated the violence that surrounded this concept. Calls for majimbo in the coast were therefore based on tried and tested prior experiences. But while the promises that majimbo offered resonated well with the people from the Coast, they were empty from the beginning and used only as a means to further KANU's political position in the Coast by intimidating the opposition which consisted mainly of the targeted upcountry Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu and Kamba tribes. The case of the 1997 Kaya Bombo violence in Kenya serves as just one of many examples of the manipulation of identity by politicians, who are able to exploit identity divisions to consolidate and expand their own power.

Theories developed around the question of identity help to explain how to bring about positive change, which in turn can serve as practical tools for practitioners. Theories of identity often underline the way a shared human identity links perpetrators of violence in conflict to their victims. Sympathising with the victim and ignoring the perpetrator is a common pitfall in many peacebuilding programs because it fails to recognise that violence inflicts both victim and perpetrator with trauma. The concept of the human bond, developed by Daniel Sigal, explains the natural need of humans to form relationships and bond with others. An act of violence breaks the bond between two individuals, causing both the victim and the perpetrator of violence to lose part of their inherent human identity.

While the violation of one's identity can be the cause of social chaos, it can also be the starting point for healing processes. Rediscovering one's identity often requires the support of a (new) narrative that gradually allows the individual to reconstruct and come to terms with what has happened. Narratives are central to positive identity formation. But it is also easy to shape and manipulate identity with new narratives. This has been the case in many African conflicts where divisions

¹ Kenya Human Rights Commission: "Kayas of Deprivation, Kayas of Blood. Violence, Ethnicity and The State in Coastal Kenya (1997).

² HRW: "Playing With Fire. Weapons Proliferation, Political Violence, and Human Rights in Kenya" (2002).

between different identity groups have been exploited by leaders, rival groups, or completely external actors. Peacebuilders should encourage society to recognise the positive aspects of diversity and to draw on identity differences in order to foster more empathic and tolerant/accepting human relations.

Working with narratives carries its own risks. For example, there might be a gap between how a person is perceived by others and how this person identifies himself. This can be a starting point for peacebuilding practitioners to support the formation of new, positive personal identities which could question the dominant narratives currently inserting pressure on identity formation. Yet, from the experience of one of LPI's peacebuilding programmes in Kenya, it seems that concerns might exist for creating more confusion than coherence within society when trying to support the development of new positive narratives. Practitioners also noted a common risk of focusing on those identity aspects which are most familiar to them, such as religion, and are thus easiest to grasp and recognise. This kind of an approach may risk overlooking the actual underlying causes of conflict.

Connecting theory with practice

All peacebuilding practice is built upon theory, regardless of whether or not practitioners articulate their theories. Programme theories of change are;

An explanation of how and why change happens; and

An innovative tool to design, monitor and evaluate social change initiatives, such as peacebuilding.

Programme theories of change are also used to understand the dynamics and explore the causal links between different actions, using the heuristic "*if (we do something), then (something will happen), because (explanation why this will happen).*"

Box 2: Transforming traditional practices: female genital mutilation

An example of the use of a programme theory of change concerned female genital mutilation in a village in Kenya. The programme set out to try and change this particularly painful practice, not by condemning it but by trying to understand it. By conducting a thorough analysis of the context, the programme managed to understand that the practice was a symbol of a deep-rooted, important rite of passage for young women entering into adulthood. With this understanding the programme managed to introduce an alternative practice, a change that fitted into the cultural context of the rite of passage, but spared the pain and suffering of the young women. The project, like most, has numerous programme theories of change distributed throughout a hierarchy of results. For example;

If there is wider awareness within society of the health dangers of circumcision, then society will demand an alternative rite of passage, because people are more capable of weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the practice of circumcision.

If an alternative rite of passage respects other traditional considerations then it is more likely to be accepted within society because the inherent cultural and social values relating to passage from childhood to adulthood will be preserved.

If the alternative rite of passage is widely accepted within society then girl's health will be improved because they are not subject to the hazards and risk associated with female genital mutilation.

Box 3: Tana River Basin identity perception

In Kenya, certain peacebuilding initiatives in Tana River basin and Marsabit work to improve relationships between different tribal communities and enhance the inclusion and participation of minorities in conflict transformation. Both of these regions experience tense competition for resources between the different socio professional groups (farmers, pastoralists, fishermen), which are further divided into different tribes. There is minimal infrastructure in both areas, which also suffer from underdevelopment and a weak presence of state institutions. The extremely dry climate makes every day life a constant struggle. Minority groups in these areas have been forced to integrate into bigger communities, sparking grievances such as loss of dignity and honour, a loss of identity and a rupture of a particular way of life.

The peacebuilding programme in Tana River and Marsabit found that most of the minority groups were called different names by others than what they themselves preferred and identified with. In almost all of these cases the names given had a negative connotation making the particular group feel dishonoured and stigmatised. The programme hence started to refer to the different groups with their preferred names. By doing this, the programme noticed that these groups became more and more interested in participating in a process of non-violent conflict transformation. Hence, using the theory of change model the following conclusions could be drawn:

If we start to call the different communities with their preferred name, then they will be more interested in participating in non-violent conflict transformation, because they will feel less dishonoured and more respected.

In addition to this it was found that there was no platform on which these minority groups could share their concerns. The programme therefore created a platform and, using the model above, the following theory of change can be developed:

If the programme creates a discussion platform for minorities, then these minorities will become stronger actors of transformation, because having a discussion platform which allows them to voice their concerns strengthens these communities in a positive way.

Recommendations

Peacebuilding should not only be limited to preventative or post-conflict action. In bridging theory and practice, academics and practitioners should actively strive to build peace all the time. The term *provention*, coined by Joseph Burt, illustrates this continuous effort at engaging everyday practices in peacebuilding.

Several frameworks of different programme theories of change have been developed including the programme theories of change developed by the Life & Peace Institute, as well as the Seven Families framework used by USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation.

In the complex environments, it is crucial for practitioners to clearly state the changes, which they are trying to achieve. "What is the change that we are looking for?" It is also useful for the practitioners to pay more attention to programme theories of change in general, as these inevitably underpin the basis of their actions.

Programme theories of change should be held lightly, tested at the design and implementation stages, and abandoned when demonstrated to be false.

Participation in Peacebuilding: in Action and Research

Local participation as key to peacebuilding: challenges³

International interventions in the name of peacebuilding have had varied success. Missions have ranged from the effective to the ineffective, at times even counterproductive. It has been widely recognised that local ownership, context sensitivity, exchange of knowledge and expertise between international peacebuilders and local community, as well as a long-term commitment to the process influence the effectiveness of peacebuilding. The lack of understanding of local context reduces the

³ Synthesis of presentation and discussion with audience based on book manuscript "Peaceland – An Ethnography of International Intervention" by Severine Autesserre (under review with Cambridge University Press).

peacebuilders' work to a level of technical engagement only. Unfortunately, local stakeholders rarely participate in the design of a peacebuilding process - we need to question why.

Box 4: Dominant narratives in DRC, 2008-2011

Expertise gained from international experience and an acclaimed academic background is often highly valued in classical peacebuilding. Yet research shows that this often comes at the expense of local, in-depth knowledge. Expatriates may have a hard time understanding the local context due to their high regard of 'experts' or the difficulties they face in collecting information at local level due to language barriers, cultural differences or a belief that alternative sources of information are not necessary. Making sense of the local context through a simplistic narrative without an in-depth appreciation of it can have immense negative consequences for a peacebuilding process, resulting in poor strategies and misunderstandings.

During the period 2010-2011, three narratives dominated the action of international peacebuilders in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These focused on the role of natural resources in fuelling the conflict, sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war, and the lack of good governance and effective state infrastructure. While these narratives gave the conflicts in the DRC a rather simplistic and three-pronged explanation, they were beneficial in bringing the conflicts on to the international agenda. But by focusing on only three simple narratives, attention was diverted from other root causes of the conflict. By identifying only these types of simplified narratives, the risk of international intervention having unintended and even negative consequences increases.

Summary of article "Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and their Unintended Consequences" (African Affairs, 2012).

In addition to commonly recognised weaknesses of peacebuilding approaches - such as limited time and resources, valuing external expertise at the expense of local knowledge - peacebuilding can experience setbacks due to conditions extending to the peacebuilders' personal sphere and everyday practices. Cultural and societal misunderstandings between the local and expatriate communities can distort the image and mutual perceptions of the other. Further, the working methods and often strict security standards of international organisations can contribute to deepening this gap in understanding. Recruitment patterns seem to suggest that external expertise is indeed valued over local understanding: leading posts are most often occupied by expatriates. Yet, knowing the local language, region and culture should be as important as technical expertise and international experience, in order to engage more effectively within the peacebuilding context.

On a personal level, some non-local peacebuilders tend to keep at a distance from the population. This is often not only due to strict security rules set by their employers, but also due to misperceptions. According to a common fallacy, the cultural dividing lines between the expat community and the local community may be perceived to be too big to allow for social integration at a personal level. This type of auto-distancing by both sides feeds into existing narratives which portray the other in a negative and uninformed light.

A more structural problem of peacebuilding is how we approach it as only one branch of a wider conflict context. Starting from an academic and training environment, we unfortunately often see limited and specialised concentrations being offered to students, rather than inclusive and holistic programs. Students are offered to a Masters Degree in e.g. either humanitarian and development affairs, or in conflict resolution and mediation - rather than a programme that would combine all four disciplines. As a consequence, this pattern of concentration continues in practice. Various units of peacekeepers and peacebuilders are sent out with separate mandates from humanitarian and development workers present in the same conflict area. These actors feel their roles are distinct from one another, while they are in fact all involved in peacebuilding and are indeed perceived as a homogenous group by the local community. Thus a more coordinated, overlapping and holistic approach is needed from the very outset to grasp the complexities of the multiple layers that exist in conflict environments.

Research as part of peacebuilding: Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a long-term, localised and participatory approach to peacebuilding that takes into account many of the aspects often overlooked. There is a variety of forms of PAR, such as Systemic PAR, conception PAR etc. The Life & Peace Institute strives to combine elements from all these versions of PAR in order to achieve better results.

The main idea of PAR is to learn from doing, where researchers test their hypotheses in practice and their action informs research which in turn reinforces the theory behind the practice and improves the next stage of action. Thus PAR relies on a cycle of research and action, where action reinforces theory throughout the process.

Participation is an essential criterion of PAR. It enables inclusive research where power relations between participants are equal, meaning researchers have power within and not over the target group. The added value of PAR being an inclusive, egalitarian and long-term process of collaboration is its quality to build trust with and between different groups in conflict. Convincing local communities to engage with the PAR process varies case by case. Difficulties arise where participating groups doubt the capacity of PAR to fulfill its promises, or where hesitation develops due to the inclusion of rival groups.

PAR does admittedly not offer the most donor friendly approach, as by nature it needs to adapt to changing circumstances and will need to revise research if the operating context changes. This means PAR processes operate with rather fluid deadlines and produce less predictable results than

what many donors expect. Patience and flexibility form the core of PAR, as they should in any peacebuilding process.

Box 5: Q&A about PAR

Q: *What is the significant minimum for participation? What elements should not be neglected?*

A: Ensure the whole spectrum of society is represented, taking into account age, gender, ethnicity, profession, social status. Confidentiality and provision of a safe environment for participants is critical. Participation must be consensual, and the research carried out must be agreed to by everyone. On a technical level, basic financial and human resources must meet the long-term requirements of PAR, as well as its contextual requirements.

Q: *What determines the quality of PAR?*

A: The whole process, not only the outcome. Local facilitators can help to mobilise the community as a whole, thus increasing the effectiveness of PAR. Trust-based relationships guarantee the commitment of all parties.

Q: *How are the criteria for participation derived?*

A: On an iterative basis – adjustments are always made accordingly to the changing context.

Q: *How is legitimacy ensured in the PAR process?*

A: Every individual is important and needs to be heard. This can be ensured by holding separate meetings for groups representative of the different dimensions of society, if needed (e.g. men and women separately). Ensuring that the research thoroughly reflects the diversity of the community in question may require several rounds of research, with increased numbers of participants. Participation must be consensual and participants should be encouraged to recognise that PAR offers them the opportunity to bring forth their own narratives of the conflict in the interest of ultimately transforming it.

Q: *What is the aim of PAR?*

A: PAR aims to lead conflict-affected communities to study the causes of the conflict by including all levels of society in the process. The end goal is to build confidence and understanding within the communities of being able to transform conflict into more productive relations themselves.

Recommendations

Involving better local participation, emphasising local sources of knowledge, modifying organisational structures and increasing everyday socialisation of expatriate and local communities would improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding in general.

Although PAR is by its essence inclusive and adoptive to local context changes, challenges persist in its implementation phase: questions over representation, timing, and complexity of the conflict transformation environment. These issues need to be recognised as aspects requiring constant reflection and attention.

In order to achieve adequate participation, solid mechanisms and criteria's should be put in place jointly with local partners in order to ensure a representation, mirroring the demography (community, gender, age) of the selected area as well as a continued communication with the different actors during the whole process. The same mechanisms should be developed to interact with and influence other key actors within the sphere of the project, ranging from the wider civil society, media, government, regional and international actors to local armed groups and spoilers.

External pressure over the outcome and implementation of PAR by donors, local partners or participating groups should be avoided if possible by keeping in mind that PAR is a long term, sensitive and non-linear process that links different levels of actors to the conflict.

Participatory Evaluation

Evaluation as a means to improve practice

Popular perceptions of the purpose of evaluation tend to focus on accountability and judgements of merit or worth. However, peacebuilding practitioners can approach evaluation as a means to help better understand how programmes work and the theory behind achievements, generate new knowledge and improve programme development.⁴ Evaluation can serve as a learning experience at the end of an implementation process (summative evaluation), during implementation (formative evaluation), or even at the very first stages of design (developmental evaluation).

Conceptualizing an evaluation, is similar to designing a project and begins with setting objectives, articulating how the evaluation will be used, and determining the evaluation approach(es), the

⁴ For more information on evaluation see LPI's Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Tool, <http://www.life-peace.org/what-we-do/implementation/planning-monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-pmeandl/>

audience, and the role of the evaluator and planning the evaluation activities. There are a lot of different choices and options that go into developing a coherent evaluation plan. For example the evaluator's role can vary from having an operative and directive function, to acting as a learning facilitator.

Participation in evaluation

Participatory evaluation is an “educational process through which social groups produce action-oriented knowledge about their reality, clarify and articulate their norms and values, and reach consensus about further action.”⁵ This definition resonates closely with Participatory Action Research.

Each component of an evaluation design (including the design process itself) represents an opportunity for participation and all evaluation approaches can be adapted to encourage participation. Some evaluation approaches, however are known for greater and more genuine forms of participation, notably; Action Evaluation, Empowerment Evaluation and Utilization-focused Evaluations. For example, Action Evaluation and peacebuilding share a number of common underlying philosophies, such as:

Empowerment

Self-determination

Stakeholders engage as reflective practitioners

Collaboration

Inclusion

Contextually adaptive action

Using iterative processes to deal with complexity

There are a number of development authors who have established different scales of participation, ranging from manipulation to tokenism to consultation to stakeholder control. Evaluators have identified three common participation variables which can be thought of as scales or spectrums relating to the selection of participants, control over the process, and depth of the participation.

As with many projects, achieving optimal participation in an evaluation can be challenging given time demands on participants, needed commitments from the organizations involved and resources needed to prepare and support participants as they move through the evaluation process. In peacebuilding this is further complicated when participation requires people in conflict to work together as part of the project and/or in the evaluation.

⁵ Brunner, I., and A. Guzman, “Participatory Evaluation: A Tool to Assess Projects and Empower People.” In R. F. Conner and M. Hendricks (eds.), *International Innovations in Evaluation Methodology. New Directions for Evaluation*, No. 42. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. 1989

Theory-based Evaluation

Theory-based evaluation holds a lot of promise for new fields such as peacebuilding because it is a prime vehicle for testing and developing programme theories of change. Theory based evaluation explores the links between inputs and results and between lower level outcomes and higher level outcome. Whereas outcome identification and impact evaluation help determine whether or not change happens, theory-based evaluation seeks to explain how and why change took place.

Criteria-based analysis

One common analytical practice within the field of evaluation is to establish criteria of success, set performance standards and compare actual performance against the standards. These analyses then serve as inputs into a judgement of worth. OECD-DAC and the Reflection on Peace Practice Program have set up criteria, but left standards undefined. In part this is due to the uniqueness of each context. Those seeking to use criteria-based analysis often have to establish their own criteria and standards in order to compare performance with standards. The following example builds upon the work completed by one of the small practice groups during the conference.

Box 6: Performance Criteria & Standards: Evaluating representativeness

| Criteria | Standard |
|-----------------|---|
| Legitimacy | Their participation has been approved by the group |
| Diversity | Gender, education, ethnicity, (cultural and context environment might intervene), religion, nationality, wealth |
| Availability | A presence throughout the process; sufficient time to engage efficiently |
| Awareness | Aware of the situation, of the group's needs, environment, aware that they represent the group and not just themselves) |
| Involvement | Active participation, able to speak in large public gatherings |
| Relevance | Part of the target group, knowledge relevance |

Recommendations

Evaluation must be adaptive to changing and emergent contexts and fluctuations in participation. This is one of the challenges of working with indicators which are by definition static. Indicators can be helpful tools for monitoring purposes and can easily become irrelevant in a rapidly changing context. They also risk blinding evaluators to other changes which take place. In addition to indicators, evaluators are encouraged to also use ethnographic and qualitative data.

Participatory evaluation adds credibility and nuance to evaluation findings and strengthens evaluative thinking for those most directly engaged. Participation is highly valued in many organizations, but needs to be adequately resourced.

Self-evaluation is gaining credibility where participants observe evaluation standards, follow generally recognized good practices and subject themselves to robust methods. Self-evaluators like all evaluators must master evaluation standards relating to feasibility, accuracy, propriety and accountability. Within these standards there are specific standards relating to stakeholder participation. As more and more peacebuilding organizations train staff in evaluation, engage in evaluation and develop in-house competency in evaluation, we can anticipate more reliable lessons coming from self-evaluation.

The youthful state of development of the field of conflict transformation needs theory-based evaluation, if we are to test our programme theories of change and contribute to theory development. All practice is built on theory. Theory-based evaluation can help practitioners articulate their assumptions, explain how and why they think changes will take place, and lead to greater effectiveness.

Conclusions: Bridging Theory and Practice

The initiative for this conference stemmed from a notion that peacebuilding conferences often rely heavily on theories and are quite empty with regard to practitioners' insights. In order to reach lasting and conclusive results in the field of peacebuilding, this distance between theory and practice must be bridged. The overarching aim of this conference was therefore to highlight the importance of the relationship between peacebuilding theory and practice.

Although practitioners present at the conference were already familiar with some of the theories discussed, most admitted to not being consciously aware that they were already applying these theories in their daily work. In turn however, they were able to provide important insight into the realities and challenges on the ground not necessarily comprehended by academics.

During the conference it was noted that although various informal relationships between academics and practitioners already exist, a deeper and more structured form of collaboration is needed. It was highlighted that current cooperation tends to be short-term in character, often based on ad-hoc projects and lacking information-sharing platforms.

Box: The conference proposed enhancing regular information exchange between academics and practitioners by:

- Intermingling researchers and practitioners both in field offices as well as in universities and research centres either by visits, short-term contracts, traineeships and other voluntary

programmes. This would enable a two-way learning process whereby academics would brief practitioners on new academic approaches, hence improving practices conducted in the field; and practitioners would reinforce academics' theories by testing them in the field and providing constructive feedback in return.

- Creating partnerships and established networks which facilitate collaboration and regular exchange of information on lessons learnt. These platforms could preferably be created between universities and field offices with initiatives such as joint research and action programmes, or by inviting practitioners as guest lecturers in order to introduce a more hands-on approach to universities and training institutes. In Ethiopia LPI has worked in close partnership with a local university and accompanied students on field visits, providing them with technical assistance, and sharing knowledge and academic ideas.
- Increasing the number of practitioners in think-tanks in order to further strengthen policy advocacy.

Resources for ongoing learning

To learn more about social theory relating to identity see:

Hart, Barry, Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University *Transforming Identities: Methods and Processes for Conflict Transformation*, A paper presented at the IPSA XXIIInd World Congress in Madrid, Spain, July 2012, <http://bit.ly/LckGgj>

To learn more about programme theories of change see:

USAID, Theories of Change and Indicator Development in Conflict Management and Mitigation, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS460.pdf

Weiss, Carol H. "Theory-based Evaluation: Past, Present and Future," *New Directions for Evaluation*. No. 114:41-55. 1997

Weiss, Carol H. "Which Links in Which Theories Shall We Evaluate?" *New Directions for Evaluation*. No. 87:35-45. 2000

To learn more about participation in peacebuilding see:

"Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and their Unintended Consequences" (African Affairs, 2012).

Autesserre, Séverine "Peaceland – An Ethnography of International Intervention" by (Book manuscript under review with Cambridge University Press).

To learn more about participatory evaluation see:

Brunner, I., and Guzman, A. "Participatory Evaluation: A Tool to Assess Projects and Empower People." In R. F. Conner and M. Hendricks (eds.), *International Innovations in Evaluation Methodology*. *New Directions for Evaluation*, No. 42. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. 1989

Cousins, J. B., and Whitmore, E. "Framing Participatory Evaluation." In E. Whitmore (ed.), *Understanding and Practicing Participatory Evaluation*. *New Directions for Evaluation*, No. 80: 5-23. 1998

Governance and Social Development Resource Centre: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/topic-guides/measuring-results/participatory-mande-tools-and-approaches>

Ross, Marc Howard. "Action Evaluation in the Theory and Practice of Conflict Resolution," *A Journal of The Network of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, May 2001

Rothman, Jay. "Action Evaluation and Conflict Resolution Training: Theory, Method and Case Study." *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, Issue 3: 451-70. 1997

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LPI supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation through a combination of research and action that entails the strengthening of existing local capacities and enhancing the preconditions for building peace. www.life-peace.org