



Report

**Promoting a culture of peace
and active nonviolence in the Great Lakes Region of Africa**

Niwano Peace Foundation

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OVERVIEW

«PROMOTING A CULTURE OF PEACE AND ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE IN THE GREAT LAKE REGIONS OF AFRICA»

Project Duration:

Nine months, (March-November 2015)

Responsible for the Project:

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General Objective:

The primary objective of the project was to strengthen a culture of peace and nonviolence in the region of the Great Lakes of Africa, through the support of youth development and civic engagement.

Specific Objectives:

The project aimed to improve conflict transformation skills of young men and women through trainings in a culture of peace and active nonviolence in selected towns in the DRC and Burundi.

Range of Action:

The activities took place in the border area of the Great Lakes region in Africa, in particular the towns of Goma and Butembo in the province of North Kivu, Uvira and Bukavu in South Kivu in the DRC and Bujumbura in Burundi.

INTRODUCTION

The Great Lakes Region has been home to some of Africa's most turbulent conflicts. Despite many efforts to promote a culture of peace and stability and work for conflict resolution, conflicts persist with profound effects on the human security of local communities and the stability of the region.

Given the interrelationship between the conflicts in the Great Lakes Region, peace-oriented activities take on a regional approach rather than focusing on a single country: communities near multiple borders are extremely vulnerable, due to inter-ethnic tensions and high levels of violence. Social differences between ethnicities have contributed to political unrest in the region between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. This reality makes the promotion of a culture of active nonviolence and peaceful transformation of conflicts imperative. Training young people in a culture of peace as a means to prevent conflicts and considering women as key peacebuilders in society became one of the most powerful tools in combating violence.

Together with its local Pax Christi member organisations (focal points) Pax Christi International has implemented the project "Promoting a culture of peace and active nonviolence for young people in the Great Lakes Region of Africa".

This report outlines the main activities carried out with young people from Butembo, Goma, Bukavu, Uvira (Democratic Republic of Congo - DRC) and Bujumbura (Burundi) from March to November 2015. It also touches upon achievements, challenges and draws conclusions.

I. ACTIVITIES AND MANUAL

| PLANNED ACTIVITIES | COMPLETED ACTIVITIES |
|--|---|
| Produce and distribute the manual on active nonviolence and conflict transformation | The manual on active nonviolence and conflict transformation was produced and distributed to the young trainers. Reprinted manuals were also distributed during the project's final evaluation session. |
| Organise a training session on gender equality, peacebuilding and active nonviolence | A training session was organised for 50 young people on 5 sites (Butembo, Goma, Bukavu, Uvira, and Bujumbura), 10 young people (girls and boys) per site. |
| Organise 4 multiplying activities by each young trainer to ensure multiplier effects for the project | 170 multiplying activities were organised, the average being 3 activities per young trainer in all the target sites. |
| Train 1000 people as beneficiaries of the multiplier effects of the project | 3341 people (men, women and local authorities) were reached through multiplying activities on different themes based on the manual |
| Follow up the local networks' activities created in the region through exchange of experiences, online conversations and a project evaluation session for the young trainers of the five sites | A final evaluation meeting was organised in Uvira (DRC). |
| Produce the final reports | Activity and evaluation reports were produced. |

The 170 multiplying activities were organised by 42 young trainers out of the 50 that were trained. After the initial training, six young trainers moved because of studies, work or marriage, and two others could not continue for personal reasons.

The number of people benefitting from the multiplying activities exceeded expectations. This is, above all, linked to the young men and women's enthusiasm to be trained by their young peers on the promotion of a culture of peace and active nonviolence, especially in Uvira where the number of planned and scheduled feedback/review sessions exceeded the average by far.

All 50 trainees received a 'certificat de participation'.

II. MULTIPLYING ACTIVITIES

Table I : Number of multiplying activities per site and number of men/women reached

| | # of sessions | # of persons attending | Men | Women |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Burundi | 41 | 490 | 256 | 234 |
| Butembo | 23 | 802 | 370 | 432 |
| Bukavu | 28 | 584 | 284 | 300 |
| Uvira | 46 | 1294 | 689 | 605 |
| Goma | 32 | 171 | 90 | 81 |
| Total | 170 | 3341 | 1689 | 1652 |

Table II : Major themes and topics covered in the multiplying activities

| | Principal Themes | Topics Covered | Achievements | Challenges |
|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| Burundi | Develop a philosophy to avoid conflicts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cycle of the conflict - Youth and nonviolence - Nonviolence against environment - Truth and reconciliation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a local peace network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing the training material and logistic material - Insecurity issues |
| Butembo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching a culture of peace - Practical methodology of crisis management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin of conflicts - Conflict Analysis - Culture of peace and nonviolence - Role of women in peacebuilding issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a local peace network - Development of technical capacities of dealing with gender issues, active nonviolence and conflict transformation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity issues - Social inequalities |

| | | | | |
|---------------|--|---|---|---|
| Buvaku | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender - Conflict transformation - Main qualities to be considered a good mediator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict and violence - Origin of the conflicts - Conflict analysis - Mediation - Role of women in peacebuilding issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a local peace network - Implication of local youth in a culture of peace and nonviolence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying information about conflict resolution - Lack of involvement of authorities in conflict management - Fear of denouncing an existing conflict - Lack of respect between communities - Existence of important negative stereotypes between communities |
| Uvira | Crisis Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict and active nonviolence - Peace Education - Spirituality and nonviolence - Nonviolence communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a local peace network - Mediation in local conflict using tools learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative stereotypes between communities - Existence of the conflict - Political manipulation - Proliferation of armed groups in the region - Lack of trainings for young people in conflict transformation |
| Goma | Tools to resolve conflicts non-violently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin of the conflicts - Conflict resolution - Spirituality and nonviolence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a local peace network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “If you want peace, prepare for war” mentality of some communities - Manipulation of young politicians - Lack of participation of young people in decision making - Foreign infiltration into country’s natural resources |

III. PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The fifty young participants trained to become peace trainers in their own local communities were selected based on the following criteria:

- Young people between 16 and 24 years old. Young people in this age group are targets of religious and political leaders to be inducted in practices such as lynching, sharia, summary execution, stoning, recruitment into the ranks of armed groups etc. Preventing the enrolment of young people into these practices through trainings is a key issue to creating peace.
- Young people with a level of influence in their communities and good relationship with key members of the community.
- Young people with a level of education to understand the content of the trainings and developed oral and written skills.
- Young people with availability to attend the trainings.

- Young people with the ability to recreate the training for other young people in their communities.

All fifty participants came from local groups of young people, youth associations, high schools, colleges and undergraduate universities, religious circles, former child soldiers and leaders of youth associations. This guaranteed a similar level of understanding for all participants. Around 50% of participants from each community were women (19 young women and 21 young men), from different ethnicities.

IV. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional activities took place:

- Individual or group interviews with the young trainers in Uvira, Goma, Bukavu, Butembo, and Bujumbura; telephone exchanges with young trainers on the progress of project activities.
- Twelve advocacy initiatives led by young trainers in Uvira with the local authorities on the removal of illegal barriers, and two sessions for community awareness on the fight against lynching in the Ruzizi plain in the Uvira area.
- Ten successful mediation sessions involving youth organised in Uvira, Butembo and Bukavu.

V. CHALLENGES

Despite the success of the project some overall challenges were encountered during its development.

- Difficulties in the coordination due to the political situation in Burundi after the presidential elections
- Unforeseen expenses
- Difficulties translating some concepts from the manual from French to local languages (like Kiswahili)
- Insufficient number of manuals for all participants in the multiplying activities due to the large number of initiatives organised by the young trainers
- Communication problems with the focal points due to bad internet and phone connections
- Difficulties in linking with authorities and educational institutions such as schools, colleges, universities to work on the promotion of a culture of peace and active nonviolence

CONCLUSION

The promotion of a culture of peace and active nonviolence in the Great Lakes Region of Africa is one of the priorities and primary needs of young people in the region, who represent the majority of the active population and are often manipulated through different means into committing acts of violence and intolerance.

Because of this reality, it is hoped that the project's activities continue in the short-term with and for young people in order to consolidate lasting peace and active nonviolent practices, and to guarantee sustainable development in the region.

It is highly recommended to strengthen the regional peace networks already created by the five local networks among these 3341 young people, by proposing new activities such as organising more trainings for young people on the culture of peace and active nonviolence in the region and developing a basic kit to be used in these activities.

The project has been full of learning opportunities. Firstly, the peace activities carried out through local, traditional and religious authorities with the participation of girls and boys in the Great Lakes region of Africa was an opportunity for society to educate the new generations in a new nonviolent culture. Secondly, this project underlined the importance of conflict transformation using peace and active nonviolence tools among young people. Finally, the engagement of young trainers has definitively contributed to the objectives of Pax Christi and the final objective of this project to strengthen a culture of peace and active nonviolence in this region.

It is also important to be aware of the existing threats such as political manipulation, general insecurity and the lack of financial and human resources to develop new activities and to follow up existing projects.

It is worth highlighting the success of the project and the importance of the lessons learned. The project has awakened the conscience of the local community, with regard to the importance of youth involvement in peacebuilding issues.

Financial Results

Africa - Great Lakes

Promoting a Culture of Peace and Active Non-violence in the Great Lakes Region of Africa

| EXPENDITURE | <i>Budget in USD</i> | ACTUAL in USD | ACTUAL vs Budget |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Training Sessions | 6.185 USD | 5.890,05 USD | 95,2% |
| 2. Actions: Multiplying Effect in Peace Culture | 2.000 USD | 2.000,00 USD | 100,0% |
| 3. Evaluation Session on the Impact of the Trainings in Peace Culture | 10.810 USD | 12.363,01 USD | 114,4% |
| 4. Educational Material | 2.000 USD | 6.563,64 USD | 328,2% |
| 5. Coordination of the Project | 4.725 USD | 5.984,47 USD | 126,7% |
| Grand Total | 25.720 USD | 32.801,17 USD | 127,5% |

RESOURCES

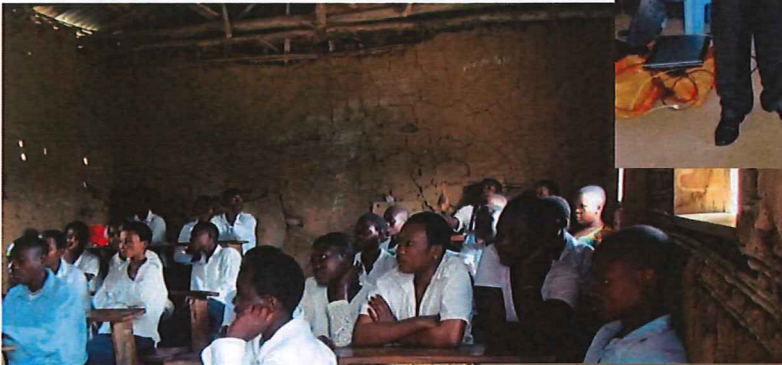
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|--|---------------|----------------------|
| 1. NIWANO Peace Foundation (JPY 1,600,000) | JPY 1,600,000 | 14.516,57 USD |
| 2. UNESCO | | 15.000,00 USD |
| 3. Own Contribution | | 3.284,60 USD |
| Grand Total | | 32.801,17 USD |



Burundi



Bukavu



Butembo



Uvira

