



Report on the Conference

“Creating a Community of Practice on Armed Violence and Development in Eastern Africa”

Nairobi, Kenya, 2-3 November 2010

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1. Introduction

Background

Civil society has a central role in preventing and reducing armed violence. Community-based organizations, associations and leaders, have tremendous experience in supporting violence prevention programmes and projects at the grassroots level. They are focusing not just on removing the tools of violence from circulation, but also on reshaping the motivations and means that give rise to violent behaviour. Building on earlier global consultations organized by the Quaker United Nations Office-Geneva in 2008 and 2009, two pilot meetings were organized in November 2010 for practitioners that are directly involved in the design and implementation of AV&D programmes in Eastern Africa and Latin America. These are steps aimed at encouraging the development of sub-regional communities of practice on armed violence and development. The results of these two meetings will feed directly into the preparation process for the 2d Ministerial Review Conference for the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, to be held 31 October – November 2011.

The main objectives of the Nairobi conference were to:

- connect a selected group of practitioners that are leading the implementation of good practices on AV&D in East Africa
- promote the exchange and peer-to-peer learning among them
- create and animate a virtual community of practice that follows and supports the work of these practitioners
- draw concrete lessons from practice that better inform policy and programming locally and globally
- inspire governments, through briefings in Nairobi, Geneva and elsewhere by sharing lessons learned from the meetings and to integrate the good practice experience into the preparation for and program of the Geneva Declaration Ministerial Review Summit in 2011

Some 35 selected experts participated in the Nairobi meeting, including civil society practitioners with programmes in Southern Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Burundi, Uganda and the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and others operating on a more regional or global basis.

The programme was designed to encourage participants in sharing and exchanging experiences, good practices and lessons learned in armed violence prevention and reduction. The key areas of pastoral conflict, disarmament and reconciliation, and armed violence reduction in conflict areas & fragile states provided the framework through which the discussions took place over two days. This was done through a series of presentations, working groups, and two practical, interactive workshops on communication and monitoring and evaluation of armed violence and development programming. A more extensive overview of the background to the conference and the conference agenda can be found in Annex 1.

The present report provides a summary of what were some of the key results of the meeting with further details presented in the Annexes. A summary report cannot hope to capture the richness of the human interaction that takes place in such a workshop. We thank all those who participated in the meeting and trust that the opportunity of meeting and learning from each other will have strengthened them in their work in this crucial area for human welfare.

We also thank the Swiss government for their financial support which made this meeting possible.¹

Good Practices and Lessons Learned

The conference revealed a number of good practices and lessons learned by participating organizations in their armed violence and development programming. Some, such as the inclusion of women and youth, and the importance of community ownership were preconceived ideals that participants felt needed to be reemphasised. Others however were revealed through the dialogue and reflection over the course of the two days. It was noted that the varying socio-political contexts of individual localities faced different challenges and therefore required context specific approaches to armed violence reduction. Examples of new structures such as 'local peace committees' and 'formal participatory community security plans' encouraged participants to think innovatively about potential programmes in their own contexts. A summary of some of the key points raised by the participants is provided in Section 2 below, with a more elaborated presentation of the results of the discussions presented in Annex 2.

Recommendations

The meeting also produced some key recommendations that were supported in the final plenary of the meeting by the participating groups. These are presented in full in Section 5 below. These were offered to civil society, national governments and the UN and included the following:

The **recommendations to civil society** encourage a bottom-up, participatory approach which empowers communities and gives them ownership of programme design, implementation and evaluation. Facilitating the linkage between development and armed violence reduction, they should implement programming that considers how these are closely intertwined both as root causes and potential solutions.

The **recommendations to national governments** underline the need for civil society access and respect for their contribution to and involvement with security issues. For example, by facilitating coordination of NGO efforts without controlling, and wherever possible link development and armed violence reduction programming. In doing so they should recognize that partnerships with grassroots organisations are central to successful and sustainable armed violence reduction programming. Furthermore, they should develop a more thorough integration of policy and practice, related to armed violence and development and, consolidate this with the "reality on ground" as interpreted by local communities.

The **recommendations to the UN** focus on its role as a convener, sponsor of coordination and as a meeting point between national government and civil society. The UN can promote greater coordination on AV&D programming by convening interagency meetings at the national level. Once again, it is crucial that UN agencies recognize the value and importance of partnerships with grass roots organizations.

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2. Good Practices and Lessons Learned

This event was the fourth organized since 2000 by QUNO in Eastern Africa. Inevitably, some of the experiences and lessons described by the participants paralleled ones that were shared at earlier events. But, as the 2010 event attracted a group of participants who were even more experienced with the topic and more centrally involved in it, many of the lessons gleaned were quite new. More detail on the thematic discussions and a presentation of the results can be found in Annex 2. The introductory presentations for the three thematic areas are presented in Annex3.

a) Some of the prominent recurring lessons included the following:

- **Centrality of linking violence reduction and development:** The participants agreed that poverty and lack of infrastructure have been some of the more conspicuous attributes of areas in eastern Africa. At the individual level the effects of violence include trauma, fear and lack of confidence, all of which affect how people participate in effecting change in society. This leads to the conclusion that one of the major reasons for under development in the region is armed violence; therefore armed violence and under development cannot be separated.
- **Focus on youth:** Given the large numbers of youth in society and their susceptibility to being recruited into armed groups, many programmes emphasize the participation of youth and the inclusion of their perspectives. Some advocate the reform of education systems so as to empower the young people with skills that enable them to contribute to development and security goals.
- **Involvement of women:** The engagement and active leadership involvement of women is a common feature of programmes. Programmes that focus on building the capacity of women were singled out as being more effective in bringing about social change since women, despite their marginalized position at the household level; often have some control over certain issues that are crucial to the survival of the family. Also, in areas where the state has little or no presence and local non-state armed groups are dominant, it is safer to initiate AVD programmes focused on women (and children) as central actors, as this is less threatening to groups holding power.
- **Local Focus:** In most programmes the emphasis is on locally based programming with clear local ownership and the engagement of all relevant stakeholders. In a fragile state governments come and go but community stays. So investment in communities is crucial. In turn this brings with it an emphasis on empowerment and inclusion which help to insure that everyone in the community participates and is represented.
- **Community ownership of programmes:** All of the participants emphasized the use of participatory community development principles in their work. They routinely base programming on needs clearly identified by the host communities and share this information with other NGOs. The group also saw the need to work out ways of eliminating donor dependency by encouraging the identification and utilization of local resources hence promoting ownership of the intervention by the community.
- **Inclusiveness:** The participants agreed that it is important to develop strategies that will open communication channels and involve all stakeholders. The involvement and

support of local leaders in decision making is crucial to success and it is equally important to engage and involve ex-combatants.

b) In addition a number of the lessons were new or much more nuanced than before:

- **Socio-political context:** Participants at this meeting came from very different socio political contexts including: post-war societies, fragile states where government is mostly absent, pastoral societies experiencing traditional violence. The major challenges for each of these contexts were quite different. For the pastoralist situation it was building trust, cooperation and respect between national government structures and traditional tribal groups in a context threatened by severe environmental and socio economic stress. For post-conflict societies eager to launch disarmament and reconciliation work, the central challenge was gaining the confidence and respect of both the civil community and government actors. In fragile, conflict ridden states the challenge was the creation of local humanitarian and development programming with cooperation (or at least tacit acceptance) from armed non-state actors in the midst of continuing violence.
- **Humanitarian Emergency versus Development Opportunity:** Most organizations take into account the need for economic development activity, sometimes starting with humanitarian service, but also expecting to bridge the gap between emergency work and long term development. Many participants noted the importance of working on programs that generate income and support households They recognized that this requires long term engagement from donors in addition to their more immediate crisis response.
- **New Structures:** A number of programmes support the establishment of local “peace committees” which respond to immediate conflict situations and then in many cases grow organically to include development functions and goals. This evolution has been driven by local perceptions of the links between violence and underdevelopment. In a very different context work in Somalia now includes formal participatory community security plans and the networking of such efforts through a national level council. These developments might have applications in other geographic areas, especially those where capacity has been built through community demining or small arms control programmes.
- **A New Thematic Approach:** In the Great Lakes region a trauma healing approach has provided the basis for personal and community reconciliation, but it also provides a foundation for more sustainable community security and development programming, especially in post-conflict settings.
- **Links between development and violence reduction programmes:** Many participants shared the view that “without peace there cannot be development and without development there cannot be peace,” but their groups took very different routes to establishing this linkage within their programming. Some began with a security focus (small arms or landmines) or a conflict resolution approach and then added development programming as its need became apparent. Others began in development and humanitarian work and then applied the same methodology when accepting the need to respond to an increasingly violent context.
- **Measurement and Evaluation:** The participants’ experience with monitoring and evaluation is still largely focused on collecting fairly simple kinds of evidence: compiling activity reports (many using log-frame analysis and in-house monitoring systems) and creating visual (photographic) documentation along with commentary

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based on maintaining strong communication links to the communities with whom they work. Several participants agreed that when they see a community start to take its own initiatives and analyse its own situation then these are clear signs of success. Some local committees have begun reporting on numbers and types of violent incidents. But they caution that shifting the norm from listing log-frame outputs to assessing quantitative impact will take considerable time. There is some limited experience with (and wider curiosity about) the development of baseline and participatory impact assessment related to armed violence, and interest in the use of victimization surveys and other means of working with UNDP to begin creating a snapshot of current levels of violence.

3. Workshops

3.1 Communication

The purpose of the workshop was to bring practitioners together to discuss, organize and edit a media product highlighting what works (and does not) in violence prevention and reduction, focusing on their own experiences. Drawing on a participatory methodology, participants was provided with instruction on communications strategies for partners, the press, and the wider public. Focus was on applying a range of different media, including online and social network platforms. The introductory presentation to this workshop is presented in Annex 3.

The workshop will generate a **Good Practices Magazine** that documents practitioners' experiences in preventing and reducing armed violence. It will be based on stories and lessons emerging from both the Media Workshop and the larger event. Specifically, the Magazine will highlight key insights and concrete lessons emerging from the front lines of violence prevention and reduction. It will contribute with perspectives of what works and why it works. The Magazine will be published virtually (as a PDF file) via the Geneva Declaration Secretariat but also various NGO working group websites, Comunidad Segura and a wide range of partners. Moreover, an official web-launch is feasible through online web conference software.

3.2 Monitoring and evaluation

Humanitarian and development policy makers and practitioners increasingly support interventions with a proven record of success. Today, results- and evidence-based programming is widely practiced, including in relation to security provision. Efforts are also increasing to make all kinds of service delivery more efficient by making providers accountable to affected groups.

The MDG review process – starting with the UN's MDG Review Summit on 20 - 22 September 2010 – offers an opportunity to assess how armed violence prevention and reduction can play a role in achieving specific development goals. In order to advance this process, the UN Secretary-General has recommended systematically measuring armed violence and developing clear goals, targets and indicators to monitor and measure armed violence prevention and reduction within and across countries.²

Following this recommendation, the Geneva Declaration Secretariat and UNDP brought together a group of experts in December 2009 to reflect on the challenges of developing goals, targets and indicators in measuring and monitoring armed violence. This work led to the publication in 2010 of the report "Measuring and Monitoring Armed Violence". The full report is available online at www.genevadeclaration.org. It sets out a framework of 3 goals, 8 targets and 22 indicators for international partners, national and local governments and civil society a roadmap to systematically measure and monitor armed violence prevention and reduction efforts.

The focus of the workshop was on how to build on the Geneva Declaration Secretariat and UNDP and develop goals, targets and indicators that will fit to the context of CSOs operating in Eastern Africa. Three questions provided the bases for the group's discussion:

² Report of the United Nations Secretary General (2009), *Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence*, 19.

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- A. How can we adapt the goals, targets and indicators on armed violence to project and area specific needs?
- B. How can we measure the indicators and which system can we set up on local, national and regional levels to ensure data compilation and analysis?
- C. What are the specific recommendations for governments and UN on how to effectively monitor and measure progress on armed violence reduction?

A summary of the discussions that took place in this workshop and key recommendations can be found in Annex 2. The introductory presentation from the workshop can be found in Annex 3.

4. Commitments and Ways Forward

The following matrix represents a summary of the suggested 'next steps' for civil society in the contexts of pastoralist conflicts, disarmament and reconciliation and, armed violence reduction in conflict areas & fragile states.

Pastoralist conflicts: <i>(Northern Kenya)</i>	Disarmament and reconciliation:	Armed violence reduction in conflict areas & fragile states:
<p>Way forward</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research on AV&D dissemination; 2. Strategic advocacy (Round tables & media engagements); 3. Awareness creation on AV and the linkage with development (Geneva declaration) (forums, meetings, magazine); 4. Continuously sharing best of practice through central depository unit; 5. Enhancing communication with the community of practice on AV & D; 6. Build institutional capacity in AV & D through training, exposure visit (CPMR, Active non violence (ANV) 7. Research/monitoring strategic institutional engagement with RECs (IGAD, EAC, IGGLR, COMESA, AU); 8. Establishment Corporation with other COPS in the world. 	<p>Way forward</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing information; 2. Create a database and electronic newsletter; 3. Create an eastern Africa network for AV & D and national network; 4. Identify of other stakeholders/interest groups and organize a forum where they could share experiences, challenges and the way forward; 5. Interim steering committee; 6. Interim focal point on national level. <p>Commitments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify other stakeholders on national level; 2. Create a web link (Eva), blog (Eric); 3. Eva of PeaceNet Kenya will create a link on the PeaceNet Kenya website; 4. Eric will create a blog on AV&D and also create a FLCKR link. 	<p>Way forward</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outputs of the workshop to be shared; 2. Put new targets indicators to use; 3. Knowledge & data (i.e., baseline studies) sharing forum (interacting/online); 4. Country specific meeting for Somalia; 5. NGO working group (like a cluster) with strategy; 6. Somalia conference conduction M&E in crisis areas; 7. Conflict reduction and early recovery cluster → advocacy for it. <p>Commitments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Domesticating goals, target, indicators and use them; 2. To share information (provide a system); 3. Establishing NGO working group and participate in meetings (Somalia conflict reduction & early recovery); 4. Reach out to like-minded organizations; 5. Provide necessary input to the production of magazine by community safety.

5. Recommendations to Civil Society, Governments and the UN

The Eastern Africa Recommendations on Armed Violence & Development

We, the representatives of civil society in the field of armed violence reduction and development in Eastern Africa, met in Nairobi 2-3 November 2010 to create a Community of Practice on Armed Violence and Development.

We call upon the signatories of the Geneva Declaration in our region and, as appropriate, the Oslo Commitments, to take action to fully implement the commitments that they made. We encourage governments, UN and civil society practitioners to acknowledge that reducing armed violence is a prerequisite for development, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and urge states to include armed violence prevention and reduction as a cross-cutting issue in their development policies.

We encourage civil society practitioners to:

1. Adopt bottom-up strategies that empower communities and give them ownership of design, implementation and evaluation of projects;
2. Promote participatory approaches that include all groups represented in communities and are based on voluntary participation;
3. Organize in communities of practice to share lessons learned and coordinate activities;
4. Facilitate the linkage between development and armed violence reduction and implement programming that considers how these are closely intertwined both as root causes and potential solutions;
5. Undertake conflict sensitive programming and to monitor and evaluate the impact of projects, that can improve programming as well as inform research, and formulate policy;
6. Promote policies and implement programmes aimed addressing the needs of survivors of armed violence, including the provision for their adequate care and rehabilitation and their social and economic well-being.

We urge that Government practitioners:

1. Recognize that partnerships with civil society organizations, particularly those working at the grassroots, for example local Peace Committees, are central to successful and sustainable armed violence reduction programming;
2. Seek the development of regional approaches to armed violence reduction, including the harmonization of national policies;
3. Measure and monitor [gender disaggregated] the incidence and impact of armed violence at national and sub-national levels in a transparent way, and develop a set of specific indicators to assess progress in efforts to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence;
4. Publicly share information on the incidence and impact of armed violence and on National Budgets for Armed Violence and Development activities;
5. Incorporate armed violence prevention and reduction strategies in their development programming;
6. Ensure a comprehensive understanding of the motivations of individuals for possessing weapons in the development of policies and programmes related to disarmament, addressing weapons threats, and enhancing community safety;

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7. Provide a special focus on the needs of youth, including skills training and economic alternatives, as key to armed violence prevention and reduction;
8. Provide access by civil society to the process by which national policies are implemented, reviewed and evaluated;
9. Support the establishment of national Violence & Crime Observatories, Early Warning mechanisms and community based data collection;
10. Redouble efforts to fully implement the national level actions to which they are committed under the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, and the legal obligations they have entered into through the Nairobi Protocol.

We recommend that UN practitioners adopt approaches that:

1. Facilitate the active engagement of all relevant actors - agencies, governments, and civil society organizations - in meeting the challenges of armed violence prevention and reduction;
2. Promote greater coordination on AV&D programming by convening interagency meetings at the national level;
3. Adopt and articulate Armed Violence & Development linkages in relevant policies and programming;
4. Recognize that successful and sustainable armed violence prevention and reduction will depend largely on the degree to which it is community-based from the start;
5. Guarantee that national and local capacities for sustaining armed violence reduction and development work are in place as a part of exit planning;
6. Support the establishment of national Violence & Crime Observatories, Early Warning mechanisms and community based data collection.

Signed in Nairobi, 3. November 2010.

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6. List of Annexes

Annex 1:

- Background document
- Agenda
- Participant's list
- Evaluation sheet

Annex 2:

- Summary of thematic discussions
- Matrix presentation of thematic discussions
- Matrix presentation from Monitoring and Evaluation workshop

Annex 3:

- Presentation on 'Armed Violence and Development in Somalia'
- Presentation on 'Voluntary Disarmament and Reconciliation in Burundi'
- Presentation on 'Pastoralist Conflict in Northern Kenya'
- Presentation for Communication workshop
- Presentation for Monitoring and Evaluation workshop