



Introduction to 'Peacebuilding'

The concept of "peacebuilding" appeared in the international lexicon with the 1992 *Agenda for Peace* report drafted by former Secretary-General Boutros Ghali. By differentiating 'peacebuilding' from peacekeeping and peacemaking, Boutros Ghali's aim was to conceptualize peacebuilding as a post-conflict enterprise focused at addressing the root causes of conflicts to bring a sustainable and long-term peace in war-torn societies. Indeed, too often the international community interventions in conflict-ridden societies have focused solely on short-term development and humanitarian aid. By putting peacebuilding on top of the international community's agenda, the UN recognised the necessity to refocus international aid to address the structural causes of violence with a long-term vision of assistance oriented toward the transition to a positive long-term peace. This was further acknowledged by researches which showed that about half of the countries emerging from war return to war within five years. Hence to provide direction and coordination to the peacebuilding agenda, the UN created in 2005 the Peacebuilding Commission aimed at regrouping major donors, national governments and international financial institutions to support the peacebuilding efforts of recovery, development and reconstruction in post-conflict societies.



The photos (above & right) show Global Development Group staff speaking on the Global Development Group funded Radio station in Kitgum, Uganda. This is a vital link in the PRDP process.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding and Development

Peacebuilding and development are two concepts closely intertwined. Development is necessary to implement a lasting peace and peace is an element which facilitates development. The combination of peacebuilding and development is thus necessary to counter the strong correlation which exists between poverty, hunger, inequalities and the propagation of violence and war. Indeed, a World Bank report called *Breaking the Conflict Trap* asserts that the dependence on foreign commodities, poverty and economic despair are amongst the main causes of civil war. However, the same report states that while war hinders development, development retards war and contributes to peacebuilding by making countries safer from violent conflicts. Therefore, reducing economic inequalities and poverty is one of the main components to alter the conditions that breed violence and steer the country on a path towards reconciliation and peace.

The Role of the International Community

Since the 1990's, peacebuilding has made its way to the major international organisations, governmental agencies and NGOs which have adopted the term and recognised its paramount importance in shaping their vision and purpose. Through their development aid and humanitarian relief, these organisations play a crucial role in promoting peacebuilding efforts. They can help to build up competence, capacity and institutions which facilitate peace incentives. Meanwhile, a large part of the budget of these organisations relies on the generosity of private donors and governments. Many grass-roots level projects which are aimed at making a difference in the everyday life of local populations are financed with funds coming from private individuals and/or governments.

Australia at the Forefront of the Peacebuilding Agenda

Australia was elected a member of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2010 reaffirming its commitment to peacebuilding issues and its assistance to post-conflict societies. The country is deeply involved in post-conflict societies such as East Timor, Bougainville, Solomon Island, Cambodia and Iraq. One of the major focuses of the Australian government, through its development agency AusAID, is centred on the reduction of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development. Moreover, Australia's

activities cover a broad range within the peacebuilding spectrum ranging from peace monitoring, humanitarian relief, reconciliation efforts, reintegration of former soldiers in the society to assistance with election, return of refugees and internally displaced people, post-conflict reconstruction, income generation programs, etc.

GDG and its partners working on peacebuilding initiatives through development projects

With this in mind, Global Development Group (GDG) – with its Australian and In-Country partners – is working hard to incorporate peacebuilding initiatives in its development strategy for each country. Many of our projects are located in areas where local populations have suffered psychologically and physically from repeated cycles of violence. This is the case in East Timor, where GDG is working with The Charitable Foundation and CEPAD (J551) on the provision to local communities of neutral safe havens, called Peace Houses, aimed at promoting dialogue, breaking the cycle of violence and resolving conflicts through peaceful means. Moreover, GDG is also a strong supporter of the Global Peace Index – produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace - which acts as an internationally-recognised database providing indicators on the evolution of peace in the world. In Northern Uganda Global Development Group has a number of projects supporting the program of President *Yoweri Kaguta Museveni*, 'Peace, Recovery and Development Plan' (PRDP) for Northern Uganda. The PRDP is a comprehensive development framework aimed at improving socio-economic indicators in those areas affected by conflict and a serious break-down in law and order. The PRDP has four strategic objectives: 'consolidation of state authority, rebuilding and empowering communities, revitalisation of the economy, and peace building and reconciliation.'



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