

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP IN SECURITY, PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT: GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM, INSTITUTION BUILDING AND POLICY MAKING

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This issue, Volume 2, Number 3, examines international and local efforts to achieve security, peacebuilding and development at different levels and in different forms, revealing aspects of their interconnectedness around issues of participation, accountability and national ownership. Underlying the main theme lie several sub-themes that critically revisit past issues of *JPD*, providing new insights that carry the debates forward in new ways. These include the need for Africa to steer peace and development in ways that are socially and politically accountable (*JPD* 2:1) – here revisited through cases involving the development of institutions, policy-making processes and content, and citizens’ involvement in the design and implementation of security arrangements. Where *JPD* 1:3 examined peace, development and economic policy interventions and corresponding local impacts, perceptions and emerging practices, this issue delves even more deeply into national-international relationships, highlighting some good – and not so good – practices. Related to national ownership is the importance of culture in effective peacebuilding and development programmes – particularly when they are carried out by external agencies.

Security-development linkages are examined from three vantage points in this issue: 1) a regional institutional perspective in Africa, 2) the role of civil society in maintaining security needed to support a peace process in the Philippines, and 3) at the micro level on the Afghan-Tajik border region of Central Asia with respect to strategies to address food security and livelihood threats faced by poor families. Ultimately the articles reinforce the notion that security, like peacebuilding and development, is more sustainable when it is linked institutionally, and through policies and practices at all levels, to development and wider processes of peacebuilding.

Examining regional cases on the African continent, *David Francis* assesses to what extent African states – most of which have weak, failing and cash-strapped economies – are able to lend themselves to the difficult and demanding project of linking peace, security and development both at national and regional levels. Francis argues that while efforts to date are unpromising in revealing challenges and questions of sustainability, they nevertheless ‘unfailingly illustrate “why” and “how” we need to understand the peace-security-development nexus in Africa’. They illustrate the impossibility of achieving growth, development and integration in an environment

of war, armed conflicts and regional instability. The European model, he argues, recognised the importance of this link and revealed that regional economic and security integration needs to be built upon strong, viable and modern states. Not a 'quick-fix' project, however, it has taken Europe more than six decades to successfully link regional peace, security and development. While some nascent institutional attempts are emerging in Africa to deal with this nexus, the approach to date has amounted to ad hoc 'fire brigade' interventions. Francis argues that much work to ensure successful implementation and practice is needed, and while lessons can be gleaned from Europe, attention should be given to exploring alternative strategies of linking the nexus that are context-specific and historically relevant and reflect the African realisms.

Pointing to the need for national ownership in building peace and security arrangements with an eye towards sustainability, *Nat Colletta* examines the case of the Bantay Ceasefire in Mindanao. This grassroots movement has built a constituency for peace in a context of ceasefire and ongoing peace negotiations and shaped the government's response to the needs and aspirations of those affected by conflict through its involvement in the process. Colletta points to the ways in which processes of citizen security are able to integrate the peacebuilding process both horizontally and vertically. For example, NGOs and CBOs are able to build broadly based ownership as they strengthen the bridge to social capital (horizontal cross-cutting ties) among war-affected communities. They also have credibility to facilitate the building of vertical relations between the state and communities among the various layers of formal and informal, state and citizen institutions and processes. Colletta's article illustrates an array of constructive outcomes and impacts of citizens' participation in the design and implementation of security measures in Mindanao: how, for instance, it changed the discourse of security by promoting 'good governance'; how similar discourses and practices are emerging in peacebuilding and development processes; and how it has empowered war-affected communities as they have become more informed about the specifics of the peacemaking process – being 'transformed from victims with needs to survivors with capacities'. In general, there are very few cases in post-agreement societies in which a bottom-up (civil society-led) approach was genuinely incorporated into a peace process, specifically in the design and implementation of the ceasefire security arrangements. This good practice case offers many useful examples for policy makers in other conflict areas.

In *Bridging the Panj*, *Daniel Gerstle* also examines the security-development nexus at the micro level, from the perspective of food security and livelihood threats faced by poor families on the Afghan-Tajik border region of Central Asia. Gerstle describes how small traders, labourers, and poor families often submit to local systems with poor distribution of benefits because they do not know how to address their grievances or because of threats they face by militias or other armed actors if they attempt to do so. The case also illustrates linkages between the micro and macro levels – how drugs and weapons smuggling, militia mobility and localised violence can threaten regional trade policies, putting 'aid and trade' actors on a collision course with security actors. While Gerstle focuses largely on international actors in putting forward a peacebuilding livelihoods strategy, he underlines that the success of international

development strategies is largely dependent upon 'how poor families, struggling small traders and threatened monopolists understand how to address their grievances peacefully and whether they perceive that political actors are responding positively to their quest for progress'. He also emphasises the critical role of government development strategy and policy in ensuring the fairness of cross-border trade.

Two articles in this issue examine the role of policy process and content in contributing to peace, security and development in post-conflict contexts. **Fred Coccozzelli** focuses on the need for social policy to be a pillar of post-conflict reconstruction for human security to develop and be sustainable. **Tore Rose** makes the case for the United Nations' stated commitment to peacebuilding to be fully incorporated into the post-conflict UN policy development process, highlighting the political and practical challenges and means for addressing them.

Social policy, Coccozzelli argues, is central to the repair and reconfiguration of the social fabric as it lays a normative and economic foundation for post-conflict reconstruction. 'Social welfare systems intercede to reduce the potential impact of negative outcomes in the labour market through the redistribution of material goods and the extension of insurance to guard against risk.' Drawing on the United Nations role in Kosovo, he emphasises that the international community's role is often dominated by a project-centred focus, when instead what is needed is a focus on social policy.

Rose examines the United Nations' mandated generation of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) – policy documents that, respectively, assess the development challenges in a country and define a five-year strategy for assistance coherent with national strategies and the plans of other donors. Rose identifies two central and recurring problems that arise in the preparation of these documents: 1) the *introspection conundrum* – the need to draw out the roots of conflict and to present ways to overcome them, while having the endorsement of the country's political authorities who can perceive threats to their interests or to national security due to destabilising consequences, and 2) the *marathon sprint paradox* – the difficulty of having legitimate participatory processes produce results within externally imposed timelines. With the first, the Sri Lankan case illustrates that in the context of contested or fragile states politics may prevail and the UN cannot expect to overtly promote independent root-causes analysis – even if all know that this must be faced up to if durable peace and development are to be achieved. With the second, despite the widely understood notion that conflict prevention and durable peacebuilding require time, patience, flexibility and local ownership arising out of legitimate, participatory national processes – something regularly alluded to but not practised – the UNDAF exercise is bound to a tight calendar. This, Rose argues, flows from the management imperatives of donor organisations, in turn imposed by their dependence on political funding decisions.

Coccozzelli discusses the 2001 UN policy making process in the Kosovo case, also linking participation with outcomes. Addressing the theme of the importance of social policy in post-conflict contexts, he highlights the lack of attention to this in the UN-

drafted *Kosovo Common Assessment*; state agencies, political parties, and organised labour and capital – the historic forces behind social policy – were missing from the policy-making table. Cocozzelli reinforces Rose's discussion about the political challenges in moving towards more genuinely participatory processes of post-conflict policy making. In particular, the raising of contentious issues to be discussed by former combatants practically requires the identification of new and unorthodox partners for the international relief and development community.

While both recognise benefits of national participation in and ownership of the policy-making process, Cocozzelli underlines the necessity of 'external mediation' of the process given the immediate history of conflict: it is 'a necessary and potentially fraught component to such policy making, but the difficulty of the process does not negate its value'. Rose importantly concludes that 'while the assumption is not that internal actors will always develop better policies than external actors, externally driven peacebuilding, much like externally driven development strategies, often generates resentment, inertia and resistance'. Externally driven peacebuilding is thus usually unsustainable and has a limited function in constructively affecting the development of such societies. For this reason, the international community needs to fully embrace and practise 'letting go' of its control over development policy and practice in order for local national ownership to assume its natural role. Instead it should focus on striving to understand the diversity of interests at play, and the different perspectives and agendas present in the society, an argument which is echoed by Francis when examining development policy in the African context.

Clearly a critical parallel practice to 'letting go', and a requisite factor for achieving national or local ownership, is capacity building – a common priority for donors in post-conflict countries. *Reyko Huang and Joseph Harris* examine a large UNDP capacity building programme in East Timor with the view to facilitating deeper understanding of its actual meaning and the ways in which capacity is 'built'. The quality of the partnership between the advisor and counterpart, they argue, is the pre-eminent factor in success in capacity building and, more broadly, post-conflict peacebuilding. Thus, efforts must be made to strengthen factors that improve human relationships – i.e. communication, patience and mutual respect – particularly in the context of the asymmetries of the power dynamics between national and international actors in a peacebuilding context. Closely related to this is the need for advisors to recognise that capacity building is a 'highly cultural endeavour'. This reinforces *Tanja Hohe's* look in *JPD* 1:3 at how international 'empowerment' projects in East Timor were undertaken without sufficient knowledge of local dynamics and consultation with local actors, resulting in a lack of popular legitimacy and even conflict. Huang and Harris conclude by underlining the need for a clearer delineation of how capacity building occurs at both individual and institutional levels, the relationship between them, and how this leads to changes that might culminate in a stronger state.

In their briefing, *Sigrid Gruener and Thomas Hill* provide a practical example of how national ownership in development processes, specifically through local staff training in conflict assessment, has resulted in improved capacity for peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development in Northern Iraq. Through their case study of an NGO

response to the conflict created by a water project in an Iraqi village and the resulting programme that institutionalised conflict assessment in the NGO approach to development projects in Iraq, the authors demonstrate the linkages between individual and community-level work and the impact they have on constructively engaging with local conflict rather than simply delivering development assistance.

Noor Johnson's article examines strategies of a large development NGO in Sri Lanka and the philosophies underlying them. It touches upon many of the themes noted, providing unique insights from the vantage point of a local NGO. The case reinforces the need to honour and cultivate local ownership of development projects and finds that pluralism (which goes beyond acknowledging other religions like an 'inclusivity' perspective) is one means of achieving this. Pluralism, as practised by Sarvodaya, is rooted in the belief that we are stronger in our diversity than we are in our singularity.

As in the East Timor case, Johnson illustrates that NGOs must pay attention to the way their organisational philosophies impact their work, even if the NGO is locally based. Being locally staffed and managed does not necessarily lead to local ownership – quite the contrary in conflict areas where many of local NGO policies and practices contribute to domination over or exclusion of minorities. Johnson explores concrete ways in which local NGOs can develop inclusive ownership of their programme by all beneficiaries, by paying attention to issues such as how the organisational infrastructure (staff, directors, funding, etc.) relates to minority groups, general attitudes in the NGOs toward minority cultures (in this case the Muslim culture in Sri Lanka) and how diversity in leadership positions is fostered. The need for greater systematic evaluation and monitoring of the gap between declared organisational development policy and philosophy and capacity to produce a genuine sense of ownership among their beneficiaries on micro or macro levels of operation is a theme that rings true for many of the cases examined in this issue.

Clearly there is a profound need for organisations to clarify and accept the roles and added value of international and local actors. Coordination and collaboration between the external and internal agencies involved in peacebuilding, security and development operations are crucial for the long-term sustainability and day-to-day implementation of all intervention programmes. For Colletta, international NGOs play important advisory and financing roles, while local civil society can easily mobilise with their reach and local knowledge. Gerstle emphasises how aid agencies can complement government action – they can take a greater role in educating vulnerable groups how to address their grievances appropriately – and the critical need for government forces to intervene to deal with the concerns of threatened large traders who resist regulation. In the case of East Timor, Huang and Harris state that without the full buy-in of local actors, capacity building programmes would collapse once the external agents of change leave the scene. Moreover, external actors in East Timor brought in professional expertise yet had no knowledge of the local cultural dynamics – a crucial dimension for effective development programmes. Instead of running and even competing through their own parallel development and security programmes, such local and international agencies need to create forums and opportunities for collaboration and coordination.

The impact of a lack of coordination and collaboration between local and international organisations (in both government and non-government sectors) can also be seen in the context of African development and security programmes. Francis emphasises the need to reverse the process of designing, implementing and evaluating such programmes from external to internal ownership, and in the process redefine the roles and responsibilities of internal and external agencies. Cocozzelli similarly suggests that the development of effective social policy requires a high level of coordination and collaboration among all economic, political, military and legal entities or forces in a post-conflict context. The case of Mindanao illustrates that civil society should not be left out. In this case it critically served to build the needed foundation to own and carry forward the ceasefire agreement through its monitoring phase. Ultimately, developing national or local ownership of any political agreement, policy or development programme is a determining factor of its impact and effectiveness – a point which many of the articles provide material to support.

In thinking about security along with peacebuilding and development, there is a resounding reinforcement of the need for coordination, collaboration and participation of all stakeholders. Perhaps this is because security in post-conflict settings is focused on ensuring that there is no return to violent conflict. The ‘emergency’ phase of international response generally captures more public attention and more donor support – and thus is somewhat less contentious with respect to intervention – than issues of peacebuilding and development. The international community has recognised, in part because of the challenges posed by implementing external security arrangements, that security is likely to be more sustainable with greater buy-in and participation of local actors. A related realisation is that peacebuilding and development are critical to ‘securing’ peace, and there is the same need for coordination, collaboration and participation of all stakeholders for success. Due to the important linkages between security, peacebuilding and development, *JPD* will devote a full issue to this with an emphasis on security sector reform in a forthcoming issue, Volume 3, Number 2. We hope you will join us in exploring this topic.