April 2015

April 1 2015: A monthly selection of the best new research and resources on local peacebuilding worldwide, as chosen by Insight on Conflict. This month's edition features articles on Syrian civil society, community-led resilience, and more. Sign up here to receive the newsletter by email each month.

Latest research

International and local/diaspora actors in the Syria response

"The question is not which of the two groups is better: both have their limitations, as well as capabilities and potential. The formal system has its place just as local actors do. The question is how they can work together where doing so will enhance the humanitarian response, while also recognising that at times they will choose to operate separately."

International and local/diaspora actors in the Syria response, from the Overseas Development Institute, examines the work of local organisations in Syria, with a particular focus on the relationship between locals and internationals. The paper argues that the situation in Syria demonstrates the limits of the formal humanitarian aid system, and the need to rethink how it responds to similar crises in future.

Leveraging local knowledge for peacebuilding and statebuilding in Africa

"The nature of conflict settings today, the repetition of violence, and the frequency of relapse in most conflict-affected states require new strategies and approaches from actors seeking to build peace and governance."

Leveraging local knowledge for peacebuilding and statebuilding in Africa, from the International Peace Institute, explores how local ownership and knowledge can inform international decision-making processes. Drawing from five case studies of locally-led peacebuilding in action, the report provides recommendations on how better to promote and learn from local knowledge.

#PeaceTech: Everything You Need to Know, from Social Media in Afghanistan to Humanitarian Drones in Syria
#PeaceTech's point of departure is that technology, per se, is not inherently good or bad, powerful or not; it is people’s decisions that have the power to design, use, or misuse technology—and influence where it leads us.

#PEACETECH, the latest edition of Building Peace, focuses on the potential of new technologies to contribute to peace. The publication features articles on technologies in action, as well as the policy issues they can raise.

Community-led partnerships for resilience

Many policymakers are unaware that community-driven initiatives are already underway addressing the needs of impoverished, marginalized communities in the face of disaster and climate change.

Community-led partnerships for resilience, from the World Bank, looks at examples of grassroots women’s organizations that are strengthening resilience to disasters and climate change in their communities. The case studies demonstrate how, although often hidden, these community-driven projects have a vital role to play in building resilience.

Peace and security along the Ivorian-Liberian border: the local perspective

Tensions between different sectors of society remain deeply entrenched. There are widespread and often contradictory accusations that certain ethnic groups harbour and assist militant groups.

Peace and security along the Ivorian-Liberian border, from Conciliation Resources, shares the perspectives of local communities and government officials of violence across the border between Ivory Coast and Liberia. By providing a detailed analysis of the concerns of local people it is hoped the paper will inform peacebuilding practice in the region.

Civil society under fire

Taking the time to find a partner that has a high degree of local trust and legitimacy, and with whom you share ideas about what peace looks like and how it can be built matters.

Civil society under fire, from INTRAC, explores the issues international organisations face when choosing local civil society groups to partner with. The paper identifies three questions that internationals need to answer when looking for partners, and offers advice on how to answer them.

From the blog

The art of peace: Bosnia and Herzegovina

By Balkan Diskurs: How local organisations in Bosnia are using the arts to encourage reconciliation and forgiveness. Read more »
International volunteering and local peacebuilding

By Nicholas Barker: Nicholas Barker, an EVS volunteer in Georgia, discusses how international volunteers can contribute to local peacebuilding. Read more »

A plea for peace: violence in Yemen must end

By Ahmed Hezam Al-Yemeni: Insight on Conflict's new Local Correspondent for Yemen, Ahmed Hezam Al-Yemeni, issues a plea for peace in the wake of disturbing developments in the country. Read more »

South Sudan peace talks: the role of IGAD

By Khamis Cosmas: What is the role of IGAD in South Sudan's peace talks? Read more »

Building bridges in Bosnia: using storytelling to close the gap between theory and practice

By Nerkez Opačin: Nerkez Opačin reports on the unique way in which Sarajevans are remembering the victims of the Bosnian war. Read more »

Demystifying the wars of the future: the past and current state of water conflicts
By Adan E. Suazo: Adan Suazo argues that conflict over water is not just an issue for the future. Read more »

Iraq’s continuing struggle with conflict pollution

By Wim Zwijnenburg: While Iraq is still recovering from the environmental impact of both Gulf wars, the current conflict with Islamic State presents new environmental problems. Read more »

Calling all conflict researchers

By Kevin McCann: Insight on Conflict is looking for volunteer researchers to help provide background information on conflict zones around the world. Read more »

Making waves in the mountains: the women’s groups fighting for a fairer future in Nepal

By Ambika Pokhrel: Ambika Pokhrel describes the dedicated but under-reported work being done by volunteer women’s organisations to foster peace in Nepal. Read more »

Speaking up: indigenous voices in the Philippines’ peace process

By Nerea Bilbatua: Nerea Bilbatua tells the story of Froilyn Mendoza, the woman chosen to represent the Teduray in the Philippines peace process. Read more »

Just getting on with it: a Burkinabé attitude to change

By Lise Østergaard: Lise Rosendal Østergaard argues that a national sense of pragmatism helped prevent violence after the removal of Burkina Faso’s president last year. Read more »
You can help broadcast the work, experiences and opinions of local peacebuilders through the social media tabs on your left. As a forum for peacebuilders we actively encourage debate, and so if the above piece provoked any thoughts or opinions please share them in the comment box below.

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