

1<sup>st</sup> of February 2010 / Nr. 84

## KOFF – swisspeace

- E-Learning Tools on Mediation
- Consultancy Mandate in the Pacific Region
- Evaluation of Peacebuilding Projects
- Environmental Change as a Challenge to Global Security
- Practice Day on „Reflecting on Peace Practice“

## Focus

- Reparations as a Policy of Recognition

## News from Swiss NGOs

- Brücke · Le Pont Supports the Prevention of Youth Violence in El Salvador
- Geneva Call: Training on Humanitarian Standards in Kurdistan
- Review of the Campaign „16 Days against Gender Violence“
- Geneva Peacebuilding Platform Annual Forum

## News from Swiss Government Agencies

- Political Affairs Division IV, Human Security: Annual Review and Goals for 2010
- Mediation Retreat

## International Partner Organizations

## Events, Publications, Web Tip

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## KOFF – swisspeace

### Links

- [E-Learning Tools](#)
- [Peace Mediation Course](#)
- [Mediation Support Project](#)
- [CSS/ETH Zürich](#)

Further information:

MSP

[Elisabeth Baumgartner](#)

### E-Learning Tools on Mediation

The Mediation Support Project (MSP) – a joint venture of swisspeace and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETHZ) – is offering new e-learning modules on its Peace Mediation website. In just 45 minutes, with the help of texts, videos, photos and case studies, visitors to the website can familiarize themselves with mediation-related topics. A multiple choice test at the end of the module makes it possible to test your new knowledge.

Yet, practical experience and conventional classroom courses remain indispensable for mastering negotiation and mediation skills. The e-learning modules should be considered as an introduction – not a fully-fledged educational program. They enable users to learn about the most important aspects of a given subject, which can be further developed in workshops. This method improves the efficiency and quality of a classroom-based mediation course.

Two e-learning modules, on Interest Based Negotiations and Interpersonal Mediation, already exist. In the planning stage are courses on the following: Conflict Analysis, Building Blocks of Peace Processes, Security in Peace Processes, Power Sharing, Wealth Sharing, Dealing with the Past and Public Participation. The content of each module is prepared by MSP, and technically implemented by the International Relations and Security Network (ISN) at the ETHZ, before being published on the Partnership for Peace Programs website. 14.01.2010

### Links

- [KOFF Conflict Sensitivity Websites](#)

Further information:

KOFF [Roland Dittli](#)

### Consultancy Mandate in the Pacific Region

KOFF fulfilled a consultancy mandate on the Solomon Islands in November and December 2009 for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The purpose of the mandate was to develop, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, a strategy and implementation structure in order to deal with the causes of the 1998-2003 conflict on the Solomon Islands in a purposeful and coordinated way. Proposals were also put forward for a national dialogue process to seek ways to solve the structural challenges facing this Pacific state and thus contribute to the prevention of further conflict. The results of this consultancy mandate contribute to the development of a long-term UNDP program that will sustainably strengthen the Ministry's capacities for the support of peacebuilding on the Solomon Islands. 20.01.2010

## Links

- [Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs](#)

Further information:  
KOFF [Roland Dittli](#)

## Evaluation of Peacebuilding Projects

KOFF conducted a training course on the evaluation of peacebuilding projects at the beginning of December, since impact assessment is one of its focus topics. The first of this two-part course looked at the question of how to carry out a meaningful evaluation of peacebuilding projects. The training included examples of the kind of decisions that need to be taken in the conceptual stage of a project to ensure that its results can be properly evaluated at a later stage. At an even earlier stage the fundamental objectives to be pursued in an evaluation should be made clear, and whether in this context priority is to be given to accountability or to learning and improving one's work.

The course is facilitated by Cheyanne Church, a trainer with international experience who combines wide-ranging practical know-how with a sound theoretical grounding and teaching experience. Participants in the first part included representatives of all the main Swiss aid organizations as well as the federal administration.

The second part of the course on 4-5 February will look at various evaluation methods and criteria, the ethical aspects of evaluation and practical case studies.

01.01.2010

## Links

- [Facing Global Environmental Change](#)
- [Reconceptualizar la Seguridad en el Siglo XXI](#)
- [Interview with Ursula Oswald Spring \(DRS4 News\)](#)
- [Presentations, Information and Photos](#)

Further information:  
swisspeace  
[Heinz Kruppenacher](#)

## Environmental Change as a Challenge to Global Security

A swisspeace presentation in December focused on the security publication „Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts“. The co-editors and authors present – Hans-Günther Brauch, Ursula Oswald Spring, Heinz Kruppenacher and Albrecht Schnabel – discussed the global security challenges of today with emphasis on policy and a multidisciplinary approach. The consequences of climate and environmental change such as advancing desertification, pressure on water resources, population growth and urbanization are all matters for concern, requiring a new, non-military understanding of security. A security policy that meets the actual challenges can therefore no longer be merely the state's answer to saber rattling, violence and terror. It must above all focus on human security – the protection of human beings. The concrete approach to a solution proposed by the speakers includes the integration in early warning systems of aspects of human security such as drought, famine and environmental catastrophes. In an appreciation which included some constructive criticism Hans Hurni of the Centre for Development and Environment of the University of Berne welcomed the fact that the authors are from a wide range of geographical origins, the many contributions of researchers from the South and the internal coherence of this comprehensive and seminal book.

10.12.2009

## Links

- [KOFF Conflict Sensitivity Websites](#)
- [CDA: RPP](#)

Further information:  
KOFF [Cordula Reimann](#)

## Practice Day on „Reflecting on Peace Practice“

In an effort to ensure a smoother transfer of theory into practice KOFF provides a so-called „practice day“ for each training course in the 2009 series. This enables participants to reflect on what they learned in the workshops and discuss the challenges involved in implementation at the practical level.

A first practice day was organized in January relating to last year’s training cycle. This was a follow-up to the „Reflecting on Peace Practice“ (RPP) training session. RPP is an approach designed to improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding projects. The practice day was used not only to discuss the latest developments with regard to RPP instruments but also the actual challenges at the implementation level. In a presentation, one of the participants described the kind of problems she had been confronted with in the application of RPP in a project in Guatemala, as well as the instruments which proved to be more or less practical. A lively discussion followed the presentation.

19.01.2010

## Focus

### Links

- Rule-of-Law Tools for Post-Conflict States (OHCHR):  
[Truth Commissions English | French](#)
- Reparations Programmes  
[English | French](#)
- Amnesties  
[English](#)
- National Consultations on Transitional Justice  
[English](#)

## Reparations as a Policy of Recognition

**Reparations include a variety of psychological, social, political and legal measures. However, the debate about reparations tends to focus on financial aspects and to neglect the need to establish the facts of what has happened and to acknowledge the injustice that victims have suffered. The author discusses official recognition and truth-seeking as key elements to successful reparation processes.**

Victims of serious human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law are entitled to adequate, effective and prompt reparations for the harm suffered. According to the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation, reparation should be proportional to the gravity of the violation and the injustice suffered. States have a duty to provide reparations regardless of whether it was their actions or omissions that caused the harm to victims.

### A Holistic Approach

The debate about reparation policies is often reduced in the public perception to an arrangement pertaining to the transfer of resources or services to certain groups. For policymakers, the main concern is that adequate reparation, consistent to the enormity of the damage to a massive number of victims, will impose a heavy burden to the State’s finances. However, reparations are not limited to financial compensation for damages; the concept embraces a range of measures including restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. Restitution refers to the restoration of the rights and situation the person had before the violation. Rehabilitation is the provision of services to ensure medical, social and psychological well-being. Satisfaction includes a number of possible

- [UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation](#)
- [Study on Best Practices](#)
- [Instance Équité et Réconciliation \(Marokko\)](#)
- [ICTJ: Reparations](#)
- [ICTJ: Colombia transitional justice program](#)
- [KOFF: Dealing with the Past](#)

measures aimed at recognizing the dignity of the victim, including the revelation of the truth, commemoration and state apologies. Guarantees of non-recurrence are measures of institutional and security sector reforms aimed at changing the conditions that facilitated the violations.

### **Act of Recognition**

The idea of recognizing that murder or rape is wrong and that nobody should suffer such treatment strikes the mind as self-evident. The fact is, however, that in countries emerging from periods characterized by the absence of rule of law, the public discourse often justifies past human rights abuse and regards the victims of such abuse as suffering the consequences of their actions. Formally affirming that the State has no right to execute anyone without a trial or that torture is not justified under any circumstances is a message not only to the surviving victims, but to the population at large as well.

Recognition – the *essence* of reparations – is an act by the State affirming that the abuses committed were unjust, based on the acceptance of its responsibility for violating rights and/or failing to protect them. The act of recognition is therefore a key element to reparations and a pre-requisite to re-establish a link of trust between the victimized population and the State. If reparations were merely a transfer of money or services, they would be no different from humanitarian aid that is delivered after a natural catastrophe: an act of solidarity, not of responsibility. Victims of concrete agents acting in pursuance of a brutal policy are not victims of a tsunami or an earthquake. For them, and for the citizenry at large, establishing meaning to reparations is the only element that may restore – or help to restore – a basic belief that the State is more than just another perpetrator.

The current process in Colombia, where the official demobilization of paramilitary groups has been coupled with policies of reparation to victims illustrates this problem. The Colombian government has refused for a long time to accept that reparations follow from the principle of State responsibility and it has affirmed, on the contrary, that they are just an act of solidarity. In addition, the State has refused to include victims of State agents in reparations packages, which are primarily designed for victims of illegal groups, such as paramilitaries or guerrillas. As a direct result, victims' organizations tend to reject State policy or to see it with suspicion and cynicism.

### **Instruments to Uncover the Truth**

A substantial approach to reparations is only possible when certain conditions are met: to recognize wrongdoing requires official instruments to uncover the truth. Reparations policies work better in conjunction with truth commissions or judicial procedures establishing the facts. Without the report of a truth commission or firm court decisions, it is difficult to establish clear responsibilities and provide a substantive basis for reparations. Also, in practical terms, without an accurate identification of the nature and extent of crimes, it is impossible to establish objective criteria to award reparations.

ICTJ [Eduardo González](#)

Eduardo González is the director of the Truth and Memory Program at the International Center for Transitional Justice.

Morocco provides a case study of the practical difficulty to repair without recognizing the wrongs. A program of payments to victims of state repression under Hassan II failed when victims rejected what they saw as blood money and when the authorities in charge of the procedure realized that it was impossible to decide fairly on how to repair as long as it was unclear what exactly had happened. Seeking the truth has emerged as a necessary, logical precursor to effective reparation. As part of a re-design of its reparations program, Morocco launched a truth commission – Instance Équité et Réconciliation – to establish the facts and award reparations based on recognition.

Policies of reparation, in spite of difficulties, have made progress by learning from mistakes and also from good practices. In 2004, the UN Commission on Human Rights approved a report on best practices in combating impunity, which also included an overview of policies on reparations. In addition, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a publication on reparations programs in its Rule of Law series which focused on lessons learned from government programs. As a result, governments facing the challenge of designing effective reparations programs now have sufficient information at hand to strike the proper balance by focusing on questions of substance rather than only on dollar value: Reparations are about recognition, acceptance of facts and responsibilities. Money will never restore trust by itself; truth will.

19.01.2010

## News from Swiss NGOs

### Links

- [Brücke · Le pont](#)
- [Brücke · Le pont: Vista hermosa](#)

Further information:  
Brücke · Le pont  
[Tanya Berger](#)

### Brücke · Le Pont Supports the Prevention of Youth Violence in El Salvador

The youth of El Salvador is growing up in an environment marked by the aftermath of civil war, political instability and poverty. Many have abandoned their school education and the rate of unemployment is high. The level of neglect and hopelessness is such that young people join criminal gangs. As a result they are affected more than the average by violence, either as perpetrators or as victims. Up to the present the reaction of the State has been repression. There are hardly any projects on dealing with violence or conflict prevention.

This persuaded Brücke · Le pont to put greater emphasis on the prevention of youth violence in its program. It has thus supported the „Vista hermosa“ project of its partner organization Servicio Social Pasionista de El Salvador (SSPAS) since 2009. The project includes a center for young people in the suburbs of the capital San Salvador, where a number of activities for youth between the age of 14 and 26 are organized by the youths themselves, including leisure activities such as music and dance workshops and theater performances in order to bring young people away from the street. They also attend courses on the prevention of violence and conflict resolution, learning to deal with the violence they have experienced in the past and to defuse conflictual situations without resorting to violence. For many this process is the basis for a new perspective: they resume their education, undertake vocational training and learn how to negotiate the difficulties of the job market or to become small-scale independent entrepreneurs. Each year around 150 complete a vocational training. Furthermore, these youths make concrete proposals to the local authorities with regard to youth policy and help to make the public aware of their concerns.

Brücke · Le pont provides financial support for the project and organizes exchanges of experience with similar organizations and local experts in the area of violence prevention. The project will be subjected to an external evaluation in the second half of the three-year pilot stage.

15.01.2010

### Links

- [Geneva Call](#)

### Geneva Call: Training on Humanitarian Standards in Kurdistan

In October 2009 Geneva Call provided two-days trainings in humanitarian standards for commanders of each of the following four Iranian-Kurdish armed non-state actors (ANSA): the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, the Komala Party of Kurdistan, Komalah the Kurdistan Organisation of the Communist Party of Iran and the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan. These four ANSAs are among the signatories to Geneva Call's „Deed of Commitment“ banning anti-personnel (AP) mines. The courses, held in Iraqi Kurdistan, dealt with the banning of AP mines and the relevant obligations under the „Deed of Commitment“ as well as

Further information:  
Geneva Call [Armin Köhli](#)

with international humanitarian law and human rights. The commanders of the four ANSAs, in consultation with Geneva Call trainers, compared their own guidelines and values with international humanitarian standards and discussed the possibility of adapting their rules and regulations when necessary. The ANSAs aim to make the relevant adaptations in the military training of their fighters, the Peshmerga. In many cases, all four ANSAs grant even greater humanitarian protection than international law.

26.01.2010

## Links

- [Information on the „16 Days against Gender Violence“ Campaign](#)
- [YouTube Short Film on Women and Security](#)

## Review of the Campaign „16 Days against Gender Violence“

Every year around the world political events, street actions and public conferences on the subject of gender-specific violence and discrimination take place during 16 days. A total of 60 organizations participated in the second such campaign in Switzerland. At the beginning of the campaign, Federal Councilor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf underlined the importance of bringing the subject of violence against women more frequently into the public limelight. Together with the activities, the media can make a substantial contribution in this context. A number of organizations that work with women on a day-to-day basis welcomed the common thematic background of the campaign so as to shed light on the many different aspects of gender violence. Thanks to cooperation with a wide variety of partners, including bookshops and pharmacies, it was possible to reach a new public. The many events organized – including cultural events – focused on topics such as direct violence, sexism in advertising, women’s rights, and possible solutions. Street drama performances dealing with household violence in various languages attracted the attention of both Swiss and migrant women and men. To reach a younger audience, events were recorded and videos placed on YouTube. The feminist peace organization cfd for example presented seven short films to show that women feel safer in a home where there are no weapons, when they have their own income and are paid a fair wage, when women’s rights are respected, and when there is neither stalking nor sexual assault to fear.

The participating organizations would like to see the 16-day-campaign become a fix annual event in Switzerland, between 25 November and 10 December.

01.01.2010

### **Masculinity and Gender Violence in Post-Conflict Contexts**

In the framework of the campaign cfd organized a lecture by Sheila Meintjes of South Africa on the subject of „Masculinity and Gender Violence – Implications for Security in Post-Conflict Contexts“. Meintjes, a former member of South Africa’s Commission on Gender Equality, emphasized the importance of a historical perspective for the understanding of gender dynamics during and after a violent conflict. Women in South Africa have always been under

Further information:

cf [Amanda Weibel](#)

cf [Ursula Keller](#)

the authority of patriarchal systems, which have remained unchanged even after the transition to a democratic State. Nonetheless women used the conflict as an opportunity to strengthen their status in society through participation in the resistance movement, and there has been increasing empowerment of women in the post-Apartheid state. The other side of the coin is that women more than ever have become the victims of a massive increase in gender-specific violence, and in particular of new forms of public violence such as gang rapes. Young men in the townships, who unlike the black elite could not occupy important positions in the State apparatus, have begun to use violence against women as a way of resisting their own political and economic disempowerment in an effort to reclaim status within society. For this reason it is important to pay attention in peace and reconciliation processes not only to the empowerment of women, but also to changes in gender relations as a whole, promoting alternative images of masculinity that do not relate to violence.

## Links

- [GPP / Full Report of the Forum](#)
- [Peacebuilding Support Office](#)

Further information:

GPP [Frédérique Guérin](#)

## Geneva Peacebuilding Platform Annual Forum

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP) held its Annual Forum on 11 December 2009. The agenda was devoted to the humanitarian/peacebuilding nexus, providing a neutral space meant to sensitize the two communities to the nuances of each other's work.

The GPP Annual Forum is designed as an annual meeting between representatives of the Peacebuilding Support Office/Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Geneva peacebuilding experts and stakeholders, field-based practitioners, and representatives of post-conflict societies with backgrounds in security, media and government. The first panel addressed observations from external actors regarding the multifaceted impact of emergency aid on peace and conflict dynamics, and the difficulty to reconcile civilian-military integrated missions with the quest for neutrality in conflict-affected regions. The second panel explored the importance of taking into account perceptions by local populations. It revealed that humanitarian and peacebuilding activities are not perceived as dichotomous but part of the same international effort. The third panel highlighted that the two competing approaches are based on common misperceptions regarding the role of humanitarian aid and peacebuilding in different phases of the conflict. Both should undertake complementary efforts for the well-being of the affected populations, according to the consensus among the participants.

Significantly, the Forum provided the first opportunity for Ms Judy Cheng-Hopkins, the new Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, to publicly address the Geneva community. The hope is that such experience-sharing will contribute to a sustained dialogue between New York and Geneva, aiding the PBC in its task to enhance the coherence of international peacebuilding response. 01.01.2010

## News from Swiss Government Agencies

### Links

- [PA IV: Human Security](#)

Further information:

PA IV [Peter Aeberhard](#)

### Political Affairs Division IV, Human Security: Annual Review and Goals for 2010

The Political Affairs Division IV (PA IV) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) had a good year in 2009. Three quarters of the objectives were fully achieved, another 15% required small adjustments, while only 8% of the goals proved impossible to accomplish within the given timeframe. Some of the Division's activities in 2009 reached a wider audience. These include the Durban Review Conference against Racism, mediation between Armenia and Turkey which resulted in the signing of two protocols in Zurich, the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on armed violence and development, the creation of a Swiss based Center for human rights and the PA IV annual conference on the subject of Dealing with the Past. Less noticed by the public, in Switzerland at least, are the following: the work of PA IV's human rights and peacebuilding advisors in the field, the implementation of the new migration policy concepts in the framework of migration partnerships and the „Protection in the Region“ program.

In 2010 the legislature report on human rights foreign policy is due. Three major conferences are already planned: the World Congress against the Death Penalty in February, the G-24 Colombia Conference (government/civil society/donors) and most probably the Conference on Gaza of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions. The most important policy processes include facilitation in the UN Human Rights Council Review and further steps in the implementation of the FDFA „Strategy for the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict“.

PA IV is to continue its commitment in its priority areas such as mediation and Dealing with the Past. The 2010 annual conference in October will further develop the interrelations of religion, politics and conflict.

The geographical priorities of PA IV remain unchanged: the West Balkans with emphasis on Kosovo, the Middle East, Burundi, Sudan/Horn of Africa, Central and West Africa with emphasis on Chad and Mali, Colombia and Nepal. As in the past about one fifth of the geographically allocated finances is earmarked for pilot and smaller projects, for example in the North Caucasus or Indonesia.

25.01.2010

## Links

- [PA IV](#)
- [Peace Mediation Course](#)
- [Mediation Support Project \(swisspeace/CSS ETH-Zurich\)](#)

Further information:  
PA IV [Murezi Michael](#)

## Mediation Retreat

The Political Affairs Division IV (PA IV) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) conducted in January a mediation retreat under the heading „What next in the Palestinian-Israeli Talks?“. The retreat was intended for diplomats as well as staff of the FDFA's Directorate of Political Affairs, Directorate of Public International Law and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It was also open to graduates of the Peace Mediation Course. The purpose was to freshen up peace mediation skills that have already been learned, acquire new ones and promote networking among diplomats and experts.

At the center of the two-day workshop was a simulation of negotiations between Israel and Palestine with mediation support from the United States, in which the topics and the dynamics of real peace negotiations were recreated in a realistic way. Each participant was assigned in advance the role of a specific person to play, who was involved in the negotiations between Israel and Palestine. This role play was geared to previous and future negotiations between the two parties. The aim was to bring both back to the negotiating table and agree on the framework for future peace talks. Two experts, from the Palestinian as well as the Israeli side, both of whom had been involved in previous peace negotiations, provided the participants with an insider view of the conflict and facilitated the role play regarding the content: They prepared both delegations for the negotiations and discussed negotiating strategies with them. At the end of the workshop the experts and trainers provided participants with feedbacks on their negotiating style and group dynamics.

The retreat enabled the participants to gain realistic insights into a very important and complex contemporary conflict while re-enacting a realistic mediation process. In this way they were able to test their negotiation and mediation skills and further develop these through direct experience in role playing. 23.01.2010

## International Partner Organizations

### Info

News from ten international KOFF partner organizations.

- [Akademie für Konflikttransformation](#)
- [Berghof Center](#)
- [CDA Collaborative Learning Projects](#)
- [Conciliation Resources](#)
- [European Centre for Conflict Prevention](#)
- [European Peacebuilding Liaison Office \(EPLO\)](#)
- [Gruppe Friedensentwicklung \(FriEnt\)](#)
- [GTZ](#)
- [International Alert](#)
- [Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung](#)

### International Alert

- International Alert presents a new [publication](#) which deals with the relationship between the exploitation of mineral resources and conflicts in the east of the DR Congo.

### Conciliation Resources

- Conciliation Resources has published its latest [report](#) on the new „Accord 21“ project dealing with the Somali peace processes: „Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peacemaking“. It describes Somali and international peace efforts and discusses how both could be better linked. Over 30 interviews and articles by a range of Somali elders, international diplomats, academics, peacemaking practitioners, civil society and women’s organizations are included.

### EPLO

- The Lisbon Treaty modernizing the institutions of the European Union and improving their working methods came into force on 1 December 2009. The December issue of the [EPLO-Newsletter](#) devotes four pages to the planned institutional changes heralded by the Treaty.

### FriEnt

- Major migratory movements, violent conflicts over resources and threats to international security are all results of climate change. In the light of the Climate Summit of Copenhagen the focus article of the latest [FriEnt-Impulse](#) looks at the current state of the international debate on climate and security and addresses some questions that remain open.

### Forum Civil Peace Service

- The Forum has inaugurated a [web portal](#) on „Dealing with the Past“ in Kosovo. With the help of this website the Forum provides support for many local Dealing with the Past initiatives.

## Events

### Info

This section gives pointers to selected events in Switzerland pertaining to civil peacebuilding.

- Peace Brigades International – Switzerland is conducting a preparatory [training](#) on 16-28 March in Solothurn prior to field deployment to Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Indonesia and Nepal. There are still spare places.
- The European Institute of the University of Basel is offering a „Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in European Integration“, as well as a specialization in „Conflict and Development“ (major). Deadline for registration: end of April 2010. [Further information](#).
- „Gerechtigkeit kontra Profit“ (Justice vs. Profit) is the title of an [event](#) on 5 March in the Romerohaus, which deals with human rights efforts in the context of resource conflicts. Time: 19.00 - 21.30.
- Scheduled for 15-19 March and 06-10 September in Berlin: [training](#) of trainers of peace experts. The aim is to further develop training skills for culturally adapted and sustainable learning processes in peacebuilding, conflict transformation and conflict management in crisis regions.
- The Institute for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding ([ICP](#) – formerly IICP) announces its 3rd Annual International [Summer Academy](#) on political means of non-violent conflict transformation from 11-15 July in Berne.
- Take note of the dates for the International Caux Conferences 2010 (Initiatives of Change) in the summer already now! They will take place between 2 July and 17 August. [Further information](#).

## Publications

### Info

Didier Péclard (ed.)  
[„Environmental  
 Peacebuilding: Managing  
 Natural Resource  
 Conflicts in a Changing  
 World“](#). swisspeace  
 Conference Paper 1/2009.

### Conference Paper on Environmental Peacebuilding

With the current attention given to climate change and global warming, the issue of „environmental security“ is high on the agenda of the international community. Environmental degradation is increasingly considered as a potential cause for the (re-)emergence of violent conflicts due to shrinking natural resources such as drinkable water and land. However, research on the issue has shown that there is very little empirical evidence of a direct causal link between environmental degradation and violent conflict. In order to set effective priorities for environmental peacebuilding, it is important to understand – particularly in situations of environmental stress – how natural resource conflicts are embedded in social and political dynamics, how they are managed by local institutions, and how these institutional arrangements can be supported through outside intervention. Based on a research project conducted by swisspeace within the framework of the NCCR North-South, the swisspeace annual conference 2007 explored those complex linkages and formulated entry points for improving intervention strategies by external actors. The conference paper „Environmental Peacebuilding: Managing Natural Resource Conflicts in a Changing World“ can be downloaded from the swisspeace website or a print version ordered for 15 sfr.

01.01.2010

### Info

- [Non-violence Actualité:  
Guide des ressources](#)
- [Center Non-violence  
Actualité](#)
- [Friedensdorf/ Village  
de la Paix: KonfliXbox  
midlife](#)

### Learning a Culture of Non-Violence through Play

The Center for resources on the non-violent management of relations and conflicts has published a brochure – „Non-violence actualité“ – with a wide range of resources and ideas for non-violent education. They show in a playful way how to deal with conflicts non-violently in the everyday life. There are over 200 teaching aids from which to choose ranging from books for children of all ages and specialized literature to collaborative games and interactive pedagogical programs. The aim is to promote living together without frictions at school, in the family and in society.

Adults too can learn more about their culture of conflict through play, while developing new skills. The „Peace Village“ (Verein Friedensdorf) has created a so-called „KonfliXbox midlife“ that looks at everyday situations of conflict at work, in the family, as well as in a social context and with friends. The card game enables adults to deal with their culture of conflict in an entertaining and interactive way. The game encourages discussions, exchanges of opinion and self-reflection and shows that there are many ways of dealing with conflict. Furthermore, the game suits as a good ice-breaker exercise for a thematically related event.

12.01.2010

## Web Tip

### Info

#### ■ [Ibrahim Index](#)

### The Ibrahim Index

The website of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation offers a very useful online tool: an index on governance in African countries. The Ibrahim Index brings together data on political participation and human rights, rule of law and security, human development and sustainable economic opportunities in all countries on the black continent. In each of these categories the total score is based on a wide range of indicators. The index uses sources and figures from recognized international institutions including the World Bank and Freedom House.

The great advantage of this index is its user-friendly presentation of the data. This enables users to make direct comparisons of individual indicators for different countries, define their own parameters and generate graphs and maps. The results can then be easily downloaded. Yet, this compelling offer cannot hide the fact that reliable data has only been available since 2006. It is for this reason that the data cannot be used for any long-term comparisons. This shortcoming of the Ibrahim Index will eventually be corrected thanks to the new data being produced every year.

18.01.2010

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