Art and Peacebuilding
Editorial

Eager to expand their range of approaches, peacebuilding actors have for some years witnessed a growing interest in the role of art initiatives in conflict management. For their part, increasing numbers of artists are using it as a means to escape traditional art institutions. The professionalisation of the field has led us to consider the role that art could play in peacebuilding, as well as the advantages and associated risks of this approach and the challenges that must be overcome.

By focusing on the current developments in the field of art and peacebuilding, this issue offers us some answers. Examples of various projects conducted in Central and Latin America, Georgia, Central Asia, and South Africa illustrate the problem and provide an overview of the current situation.

Marie Seidel
Editor

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The Role of Art in Peacebuilding – Recent Developments

Supporting rap musicians in a refugee camp, theatre work involving young people in occupied territory, an exhibition of historical photographs in a war-torn city – attempts to further peace processes through art are by no means a new phenomenon. What is new, however, is the increasing professionalisation of such schemes and a greater focus on sharing experiences in this area. Previously, the tendency was towards isolated initiatives by individual artists or occasional art projects run by humanitarians, but now the potential offered by art is being explored in a more systematic way, as Dagmar Reichert from the organisation artasfoundation explains.

There are two reasons why the field of art and peacebuilding is gaining increasing significance and efforts are being made to develop expertise in this area. The first is due to developments within the art world: artists are showing a growing interest in various arenas for their work outside established art institutions, with a new generation of socially and politically engaged artists trying to break away from the philosophy and gravitational pull of these establishments. Furthermore, there is a heightened interest in expanding the repertoire of approaches within the areas of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and humanitarian rehabilitation through art projects. This could partly be explained by the fact that artistic initiatives are rarely profitable and present people affected by conflicts not so much as people in need but – more positively – on the basis of their skills and abilities.

Art projects geared towards peacebuilding are relatively cheap, usually locally based and small-scale and tend to be more process- than results-oriented. This may explain why a lot of valuable and dedicated work involving art has hitherto gone unnoticed. In the past few years, some organisations have started collecting information on art projects in conflict zones or peacebuilding processes and making it accessible. Occasionally this documentation has been extended to independent research and active networking too. Some organisations have even gone another step further by initiating and implementing their own art projects, such as the Swiss-based artasfoundation or the Acting Together initiative at Brandeis University. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) also supports this approach through bodies such as the Team Culture and Development and initiatives in the framework of its “At least one percent for culture” fund.

The issues currently being discussed worldwide in the increasingly professional field of art and peacebuilding relate primarily to the specific potential offered by art projects: if artistic work – be it theatre, dance, fine art or music – is characterised by an approach to the world based on altered perceptions, by its own “aesthetic” rationality which complements the dominant scientific/technical rationality, then what opportunities does this open up for peace processes? In the unique domain of art, is it possible to conceive, try out and put into practice something which is (still) inconceivable in an everyday reality fraught with tension? Do artistic forms of expression have the capacity to visually depict latent social conflicts and show their complexity, and, in doing so, do they pave the way for change? Can people whose hopes and prospects have been destroyed by violence prove that they have the ability to be inventive through artistic activities? Can art bring together people from different backgrounds for a communal exchange in the public domain and thus help to create a public sphere?

These questions can be discussed within the context of specific projects – for instance, as part of a process of exchanging experiences between a theatre project in Sri Lanka, which encourages young people to critically examine the traditional roles played by men and women in a free and enjoyable way, and a project in Palestine, where young people express their doubts and aspirations on stage, thus rejecting outdated notions of heroism. The artists share their observations on the impact of their work and develop new concepts of sustainability. The growing trend towards networking and professionalisation in artistic approaches to peacebuilding also makes it possible to identify specific criteria for successful art.
projects before, during and after armed conflicts and to distinguish between different objectives, such as conflict transformation or strengthening psychological resilience.

Aside from the potential offered by art, in-depth discussions over the past few years have also focused on the overarching methodological framework for analysing, planning, monitoring and evaluating art projects. It is first necessary to clarify the specific risks involved in initiatives based on art – not just in relation to well-known cases from the past in which art has been turned into a tool for propaganda, but also regarding the fundamental question of which aspects of conflict sensitivity are particularly relevant to art projects. It generally becomes apparent during the project planning phase that art projects are not “just” about artistic creativity. The right scope has to be carefully built up first to provide a framework in which these initiatives can take place. Once this has been accomplished, it is easier to allow the artists involved the open-endedness and flexibility they need for their artistic endeavours. Experiences from many art-based peacebuilding initiatives in the past have taught project organisers how to live with uncertainty in planning and open-ended outcomes as a necessary flip side to being able to adapt to extremely fluctuating situations and allowing local actors the required degree of autonomy. The problem of measurability and obtaining quantitative evidence of effectiveness – a difficulty which is inherent in artistic initiatives – is also something that is now well understood. Practitioners, at least, are taking a more relaxed approach to tackling this challenge and are trying out alternative, qualitative methods. Developing these further is one of the main concerns of the international dialogue between people and organisations keen to promote peacebuilding through art.

If artistic work reveals a way of approaching the world that constantly calls existing categorisations into question and brings new specifications to the fore, classification into pre-existing methodologies cannot be expected. This, however, may be not so much a problem as a strength for artistic contributions to peacebuilding.

REPORT

“Resort to Art” – a Project run by artasfoundation in Georgia

artasfoundation
Maren Haartje

Links
Resort to Art project
„Connecting Spaces“ – another project run by artasfoundation Georgia/Abkhazia

“Resort to Art” has a double meaning: it suggests a recourse to artistic activities, but also refers to the transformation of a health resort into a creative space. This project is run by artasfoundation in Tskaltubo, a famous thermal spa resort in the Soviet era which is now home to 4,500 “internally displaced persons” (IDPs) who fled here from Abkhazia during the war of 1992/1993 and set up home in the rooms of the luxurious sanatorium complexes left behind by the Soviets. More than 20 years later, they are still living these buildings which have now fallen into a very poor state of disrepair.

In January 2013, representatives from the Tskaltubo IDP Women’s Association, the Community Development Centre and artasfoundation met to discuss the possibility of reviving an old tradition – the annual festival.

The project is geared particularly towards young people from the IDP community, with a local project team coordinating with the art, music and dance schools to select interested participants. Various aspirations and opportunities are explored and artists from both Georgia and abroad are invited to come and hold one-week workshops in Tskaltubo. The ultimate aim is to showcase the participants’ work at the festival. The workshops are an essential part of the project – it is during these week-long courses that hidden talents are discovered and the
young people have the chance to work on their creative ideas together. The festival programme ranges from classical music and modern dance to painting workshops, performances, exhibitions and readings. More than 300 people from Tskaltubo took part in the festival in October 2013, which was the first to be held in over 20 years.

One of the most impressive items on show was a video and photography exhibition entitled “In my view”, which was made possible thanks to a camera-collecting scheme in Switzerland. During the workshop, the young people learned how to capture moments in their everyday lives. Through their photos, they invite viewers into their homes, something which is not possible in reality. The predominant theme in the videos was the burden of family history, but there was also an element of hope – hope of being in the right place at the right time and of heading into the future with paid employment.

“Resort to Art” aims to enable the people of Tskaltubo to help bring a new lease of life to the former spa resort and prevent them from being resettled (again) in another region against their will. Work has already begun on preparing the programme for the third Tskaltubo Art Festival, which will take place in September 2015.

Gender, Art and Peacebuilding

To successfully implement a peacebuilding strategy geared towards gender equality, context, social conditions and balances of power must be taken into account. This applies to all fields of activity, including art. The places where art evolves into an instrument of peace policy, the symbolism to which it refers and the perspectives, media and images it exploits can have a crucial impact on everything that artists create through their work.

Yet art goes even further too: it transcends boundaries between conflicting parties that seem set in stone in negotiations. And through feminist art, the images of masculinity and femininity that we take for granted are called into question. Art is disconcerting, because it turns attributions on their head and casts gender roles in a new light. The autobiographical graphic novel by the Iranian artist and writer Marjane Satrapi is a prime example of a work of art that breaks down conventional portrayals of place, topic and gender and thus encourages people to adopt a different perspective with regard to gender stereotypes. Its publication opened up new opportunities for debate.

The Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF) can also create the kind of artistic spaces that stimulate dialogue between member organisations inspired by local artists and give a voice to artists who, for example, use creative methods to move away from the image of women as victims of conflict and reshape it. These play an important role in re-evaluating the history of women in war and challenge people’s views – sometimes even those of actors involved in official peace negotiations – through provocative works. This year’s KOFF discussion on Switzerland’s architecture of peace presents the perfect opportunity to influence and shape design, perspectives, planning and aesthetics in an artistic way that creates scope for gender-oriented peace policy. Now that 15 years have passed since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, KOFF intends to play an active part in creatively remodelling this project and thus putting the objectives of feminist peace policy back on the agenda.
Eirene Suisse and Nicaraguan Muralism

Eirene Suisse has been committed to regularly supporting local art initiatives in Nicaragua that aim to promote peace and human rights. The organisation is currently supporting a socio-educational project in the South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS) on the country’s Caribbean coast; this project makes use of muralism – an art movement originating from the Mexican Revolution that involves collectively creating mostly politically themed mural paintings on the walls of town buildings – as a tool for dialogue and building citizenship.

The RAAS is home to a multilingual and multiethnic society that hardly benefits from the revenue generated by the exploitation of the region’s natural resources. 63% of the population live in extreme poverty, unemployment is rife and there are no infrastructure and basic services to speak of. The migration of Hispanic farmers has fuelled conflicts with local communities, and drug trafficking from Colombia to the north affects a large part of the region’s population. Together with a lack of prospects, this has led to violence becoming a part of day-to-day life, and young people are its main victims.

Initially, the project supported by Eirene Suisse and led by MURALES RAAS aimed to bring together young people from different ethnic backgrounds and communities from the RAAS’s capital to teach them about the techniques of mural painting and make them work together on a joint project that requires creativity, while at the same time steering them away from violence and raising their awareness of the region’s diverse cultures.

Since then the project has evolved. Preliminary workshops on topics such as multiculturalism, drug use or environmental protection enable young people to inform themselves and to learn how they can express themselves, discuss, negotiate and take on responsibility. The subsequent painting is a collective illustration of the topic discussed. Thanks to the interest and support of local authorities and civil society organisations, now also young people from different municipalities of the RAAS are involved in creating such paintings. This way, the project contributes to conflict prevention and promotes living together, one of the key elements of peace.

terre des hommes schweiz – Combatting Youth Violence Through Art

In Colombia, Brazil, Nicaragua and El Salvador, terre des hommes schweiz is supporting youth projects aimed at helping to create a more peaceful society through cultural initiatives.

In contexts marred by extreme social inequality and high levels of violence, a diverse range of cultural activities – such as mural painting, street theatre, dance, music and video production – help to promote the social inclusion of young people on the margins of society and reinforce social cohesion in poor districts.

The youth projects based on art and culture work on a number of different levels. On the one hand, creative activities provide a way of reaching out to young people in social risk situations. By giving youths who feel excluded from society opportunities to express themselves in a creative way, they gain self-confidence and a sense of belonging, which reduces the risk that they will fall into delinquency.
On the other hand, in Latin American cities where violence is rife, young people are often collectively stigmatised in the eyes of the public as a threat to security. Through cultural performances, such as theatre productions or concerts, young people receive recognition within their communities. Furthermore, artistic forms of expression provide an ideal channel for young people to come to terms with their personal experiences of violence.

Youth organisations also use creative schemes such as street theatre, videos, dance and music to express their concerns. Through performances in public spaces and other creative methods, for example, organisations dedicated to young women are able to launch a debate about violence against women, ensuring that their message reaches a wide audience.

To promote short-term projects as well as offering youth organisations long-term support, terre des homes schweiz has set up a fund specifically for youth initiatives. The experiences gained so far with the youth fund are currently being evaluated.

**SDC: Cultivating a Cross-Border Cultural Scene in Central Asia**

As an integral part of Switzerland’s cooperation strategy for Central Asia, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is supporting people involved in art and cultural activities in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This aims to strengthen one of the most dynamic areas of civil society, since it is often writers, filmmakers or stage directors who come up with new ideas that break down deeply entrenched perceptions, enabling them to take on an important role in tense political situations.

Inter-state relations in Central Asia are increasingly marked by conflicts over natural resources, particularly the use of water. Against this backdrop, politicians sometimes turn to art and culture to emphasise the differences between countries or to interpret history in a way that serves the particular interests of their nation. In this context, it is vital for Central Asia’s free cultural scene not to be subordinated to the political objectives of individual states – it should be able to develop on a cross-border basis instead.

The programme launched by the SDC has set itself the ambitious goal of reinforcing the dialogue between artists from different regions. One example of this is the “Colors of the Orient” festival held two years ago. The theatre director Nurlan Asanbekov invited four distinguished colleagues from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Lithuania to rural Kyrgyzstan to work on four productions with local theatre professionals. This communal initiative not only allowed the experienced directors to pass on their knowledge to the younger generation; it also provided a platform for intensive dialogue between actors from different national cultural scenes. Firmly convinced by the success of the project, Asanbekov is now planning to organise a major theatre festival involving participants from the whole of Central Asia as a way of forging more constructive links within the region.
Post-Apartheid Johannesburg, Social Conflict and Artistic Interventions

Fiona Siegenthaler

The end of Apartheid and the dawning of democracy in South Africa prompted a dramatic transformation in inner-city Johannesburg. This change was caused by black South Africans exercising their newly acquired freedom to choose where they lived and worked and an increase in immigration from other African countries after the borders had been opened up. As its living space became overcrowded, the city went through an economic and infrastructural crisis, which its new inhabitants often resorted to informal and illegal means to overcome. With crime levels rising, the city centre was labelled as a no-go zone with one of the highest homicide rates in the world. Later on, the inner-city area was “reconquered” by the authorities, who encouraged private investment and gentrification and reinforced social injustice with regulations and forced evictions.

Attempts have been made to mediate between various conflicting groups through art. Terry Kurgan, for instance, has launched a range of initiatives, such as a participatory photo project as part of the wider Joubert Park Project (2001) or the Hotel Yeoville scheme (2008-2011), which gave population groups a chance to get to know one another through communal activities, thus dispelling prejudice and animosity. Other artists such as Ismail Farouk criticised the gentrification of Johannesburg and actively campaigned for socially compatible solutions. For example, he used performance-based, mediatory interventions to promote the formalisation of the “trolley pushers” (2008-2009), who transport goods between taxi stations and had become a target for corrupt police officers due to their unclear residence status.

The social impetus provided by such projects helps to raise awareness amongst actors, usually over the long term, and thus alleviate conflict situations. However, this is often a long and drawn-out process, which does not hold much appeal for an artist who has to keep bringing something new onto the art market in order to gain recognition. Art critics also claim that this type of artistic practice often makes too much of a compromise, favouring the social aspect to the detriment of aesthetic relevance. Recent trends to incorporate artists into conflict resolution programmes may spark further discussion on the issue of social practice as aesthetic practice.

Making Peace Exhibition

Ashley Woods
Making Peace curator and project manager

The Making Peace outdoor photo exhibition was presented in Basel between August and December 2014. Produced by the International Peace Bureau (IPB), the exhibition will be shown at this year’s World Summit of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates in Atlanta.

The exhibition aims to educate the public, especially young people what key elements are necessary to create a sustainable peace; providing an opportunity for people of all ages to get involved in bringing about positive change. In doing so Making Peace pays tribute to the people who – all over the planet – devote their time, energy and resources to the cause of peace and how these persons and organisations have shaped and influenced the course of the 20th century. Making Peace comes with a detailed Educator’s Guide (with lesson plans and case studies) as well as an active online social media network.
There are international treaties and declarations that define economic justice, international law and human rights; however, there is no simple explanation as to what peace is all about. Making Peace, therefore, aims to educate the general public about the five key elements necessary to create a sustainable peace: 1. disarmament and nonviolence, 2. conflict prevention and resolution, 3. economic and social justice, 4. human rights, law and democracy, and 5. environment and sustainable development. The IPB believes that only by bringing these five elements together can we create a sustainable peace. All Making Peace activities that involve local as well as international partners are built around this concept.

Making Peace has already made a strong initial impact in Europe. By the end of 2015, the goal is to reach an audience of 20-25 million people. At the same time, the IPB hopes that schools will see the importance of teaching their pupils about the five elements of peace; and in turn that young people will be inspired to contribute to Making Peace.

If you would like to help bring Making Peace to your city, please contact the organisers.

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Gold and Conflict Sensitivity in the Andes

Bolivia is rich in gold. This valuable resource is extracted from the country’s numerous mines, but often under adverse circumstances, such as precarious working conditions and child labour, serious environmental pollution (especially in the watercourses of the Andes), illegality and widespread informality, with none of the profit from the gold rush going towards paying taxes. There are also regular outbreaks of violence connected with attempts to smuggle the precious metal, which often go unpunished.

Switzerland, which receives large quantities of gold for processing, is already running a project called “Oro Responsible – Better Gold Initiative” in Peru. It is now planning to extend this scheme to Bolivia, with the aim of ensuring that gold mining meets appropriate legal, environmental and ethnic standards and that the profits it generates are used to help the inhabitants of local communities. This project, which was initiated by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is also designed to be conflict-sensitive right from the start, with four studies being carried out during the preparation phase. With this in mind, swisspeace organised a workshop on conflict sensitivity in La Paz.

First of all, the analysis of the context of the conflict with the appropriate strategic and operational adjustments showed how important it is to form alliances between governmental and non-state actors, bearing in mind the difficulty of involving key actors from the informal sector in the project. Secondly, it revealed that the concepts of Madre Tierra (“Mother Earth”) and Pachamama (a fertility goddess revered by indigenous people in the Andes), which advocate a harmonious coexistence between mankind and nature, are useful linking elements that could be helpful to the project. Finally, the analysis highlighted the significance of implicit ethical messages calling for an impartial and independent approach even as early as the preliminary study stage of the project, especially in dealings with the workers in the mines.

The participants’ active involvement in the workshop demonstrates how conflict-sensitive work can be integrated into the project cycle, right from the planning phase. This is also recognised as best practice for the SDC in La Paz.
KOFF Training Series

In its training series 2014/15, the Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF) offers governmental and non-governmental peacebuilding actors opportunities for mutual learning, skills training and experience sharing. The practice-driven trainings are held in English and take place in Bern. KOFF trainings can now be combined to a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Peacebuilding Methodologies. Following KOFF trainings will take place in April/Mai and June.

› Managing Programs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations
  29 April - 1 May 2015

The KOFF training course on “Managing Programs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations” explores what it means to work in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, what it needs and how it could be done. It provides an overview of current discourses, gives policy guidance and familiarises participants with the concepts and application of conflict and context sensitivity. Registrations close on 8 April 2015.

› Connecting Human Rights and Conflict Transformation – from Concepts to Practice
  10-12 June 2015

Despite wide recognition of the close links between human rights, conflict, peace and development, these fields are often treated separately. This course seeks to go beyond this divide and focuses on moving from concepts to practice and how this can be implemented in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects.

International Partner Organisations

News from the international peacebuilding scene and KOFF partner organisations

Berghof Foundation
CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
Conciliation Resources
EIP
EPLO
ForumZFD
FriEnt
Geneva Peacebuilding Platform
GIZ
GPPAC

International Alert

International Alert recently helped to set up the Syrian Platform for Peace (SPP) gathering UK-based Syrian civil society organisations. The aim of the platform is to find entry points for peacebuilding in Syria and support the growing role that the Syrian diaspora plays in promoting peace in Syria. Through both their networks and relationships, the Syrian diaspora can act as agents for peace and as a bridge between the British government and those on the ground. International Alert will now continue working with Syrian individuals and organisations to help establish the SPP as an independent entity. Any Syrian organisation or individual based in the UK is invited to join the platform.

FriEnt

In the latest edition of FriEnt-Impulses, FriEnt has published the summary of an essay on the challenges of transitional justice and justice in Syria. Entitled “My Kingdom for a horse! Geopolitics and the challenges of transitional justice and justice in Syria”, it makes no recommendations, but rather attempts to identify and analyse the challenges to be overcome in terms of justice and transitional justice in Syria, so as to present decision-makers with potential strategies for adoption once the conflict is over. The national complexities and the role of external actors (involved in the ongoing violence and protecting major geopolitical interests) are also presented as obstacles to the implementation of an impartial justice process. Furthermore, the essay argues the need to demonstrate genuine international political will to end the conflict and deal impartially with the past.
CDA Collaborative Learning Project

CDA will be facilitating the training “Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) II, Advanced” in collaboration with the Barcelona International Peace Resource Center. This training is an intensive 5-day course, with a focus on systems approaches to peacebuilding. Basic RPP concepts and tools will be practiced in more-depth, with a focus on practicing conflict analysis from a systems perspective, identification of points of leverage, as well as designing programmatic strategies for intervention. The workshop will be very interactive, with plenty of opportunities to practice the application of RPP tools from a systems point of view. This training workshop will be most useful for participants who play mid-to Senior level technical or managerial roles in designing and implementing peace initiatives within their own organisations or who advise and support national and international partners in this area. Familiarity with RPP at the introductory level is a precondition to attend this workshop.

Gender-Oriented Peace Policy

The issue of women and girls being the targets of rape during war was long considered a taboo subject. Despite publicised incidents in countries such as Bosnia, dealing with gender-specific discrimination was for a long time left to chance when it came to peacebuilding. A breakthrough was not reached until October 2000 when, following a year-long civil society campaign, the UN Security Council’s Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted. Many countries responded to this new commitment by drawing up their own National Action Plan (NAP) – including Switzerland, which approved its first NAP along with corresponding courses of action and indicators in 2007. The first KOFF Essential to be published this year reviews the development of gender-oriented peace policy in parallel with the activities of swisspeace and KOFF. It aims to open the topic up to a wider audience and to prompt a discussion about the exploitation of the conceptual and operational achievements of UN Resolution 1325 – and beyond.

Mapping KOFF’s members

Who exactly belongs to KOFF? And where and in which area are these organisations involved? To answer these and many other questions in a clear and simple way, KOFF has introduced a new “member mapping” feature on his website – a tool that offers information about individual member organisations and their activities. Using a filter function, the member database can be searched by mandate, country or organisation. The clearly presented results, which are updated annually, provide a visual indication of possible areas of cooperation and potential synergies to be exploited.
Arterial Network

Arterial Network is a dynamic, non-profit civil society network of artists, cultural activists, entrepreneurs, NGOs and various institutions involved in Africa's art and cultural scene. It is committed to developing a creative civil society sector that promotes art both in its own right and as a tool for advocating development, human rights and democracy. Since it was established in 2007, Arterial Network has grown to become one of Africa's largest intercultural networks, bringing together 5,000 members from 50 African countries. The network’s website provides information about projects, publications and training programmes. It also offers downloadable “toolkits” on a variety of topics. For example, young artists can learn how to use social media in a meaningful way, while young entrepreneurs can discover an introductory guide to project management in the world of art and culture.

Upcoming Events

1 April 2015
Can theatre and the creative arts transform conflict? This is the question that participants in the conference organised by International Alert will be asking on 1 April in London. This event, entitled “The art of building peace”, is part of the “Peace Talks” series of conferences. Further information and registration.

17 - 25 April 2015
Georgia will be the focus of the international film festival Visions du Réel, being held in Nyon. Around fifteen documentaries and a day of discussion about Georgian cinema will offer the chance to find out about the creative momentum that defines it. With the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), this project aims to showcase contemporary film production and to encourage international collaboration with Georgia. Further information.

23 April/19 May 2015
swisspeace is organising an information event on its postgraduate education programme at 6.30 p.m. on 23 April (in Basel) and 19 May (in Bern). Further information and registration by 20 April/15 May.

29 April - 3 May 2015
“Les arts en toutes lettres” (The Arts Writ Large) is the theme of the African Book Fair at this year’s Geneva Book and Press Fair, which will take place from 29 April to 3 May 2015. Novelists, playwrights, graphic novelists, film-makers and cartoonists who are putting their stamp on the contemporary African arts scene will be the guests of honour. The African Book Fair is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Further information.

30 April 2015
The fight for access to natural resources has long been at the heart of the armed conflict in Colombia and the success of the current peace process largely depends upon the fair distribution and use of resources. KOFF is organising a roundtable to be held on 30 April in Bern to discuss the various challenges in Colombia, from peace-building efforts to the continuing conflicts over resources. Further information.

4 - 10 May 2015
Finding a way to deal with a violent past following events such as civil war, the end of an authoritarian regime or occupation, is often argued to be the basis for lasting peace, democracy and rule of law. The postgraduate course in “Dealing with the Past” focuses on the potentials and challenges of designing a dealing with the past process, and the ways in which actors can work together to ensure effective policy decision-making. Further information and registration.
From 26-28 May, artasfoundation is organising a conference on the potential and limitations of art initiatives in supporting the processes of social transformation and peacebuilding. Organised in cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), “Art in Conflict” aims to foster discussion between different international stakeholders involved in the fields of art and peacebuilding. Further information and contact.

The annual conference series “VOIX DES FEMMES”, organised by Terre des Femmes, will take place from 28 May to 4 June. Entitled “Women.Human.Rights.”, this year’s series of events in Bern, Zurich, Liestal and Geneva celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women and aims to reignite discussion on human rights, women’s rights and social justice in Switzerland. Irene M. Santiago, feminist and peace activist in the Philippines, will be the guest of honour. Further information.

Trainings and seminars in peacebuilding, conflict transformation and conflict management by international and local experts are a central component of capacity development of civil society actors in crisis regions. Often international experts support national partner organisations in the implementation of educational offers. With its training “Designing trainings for peacebuilding”, Steps for Peace aims to familiarise participants with an overview of practical competencies for analysing, planning and implementing educational measures in difficult contexts. The subsequent learning steps on the road to becoming a professional trainer can then be identified individually. Further information and registration.

Between July and October 2015, SLE TRAINING is organising a number of practical training courses in the field of development cooperation. Registration by 15 April. Further information.

On the KOFF website you can find more information about upcoming roundtables and events organised by KOFF.

26 - 28 May 2015

28 May - 4 June 2015

29 June - 3 July 2015

July-October 2015

KOFF calendar

KOFF
Kompetenzzentrum Friedensförderung
Centre pour la promotion de la paix
Centre for Peacebuilding

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Editing
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Cover
Resort to Art II, Tskaltubo, Georgia.

Copyright: Evan Ruetsch

Previous issues available online

KOFF is a project of swisspeace. It is jointly supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the following swiss NGOs which are members of the platform:

Alliance Sud
APRED
artasfoundation
Baha’i
Brücke - Le pont
Caritas Switzerland
Caux - Initiatives of Change
cfd
DCAF
Eirene Switzerland
Fondation Hirondelle
Geneva Call
Grains of Peace
Green Cross Switzerland
GSoA
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
HEKS

Institute for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding
Interpeace
Lucerne Initiative for Peace and Security (LIPS)
Medico International
Switzerland
mission 21
MIR Switzerland
miva Suisse - transporte l’aide
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Peace Brigades International
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Pestalozzi Children's Foundation
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SCI Switzerland
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