Chapter 8
Civil Society and Peacebuilding in the Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Georges Bomino Bosakaibo

Abstract A robust and organised civil society is vital in preventing violence. Congolese civil society organisations (CSOs) have supported citizens' interests since the time of the Second Republic from 1965 to 1997. The civil war eruption in the 1990s in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) motivated the CSOs to engage in political dialogue for sustainable peace. Despite this dynamism, the CSOs weaknesses limited the impact of their action against violence in the eastern provinces. This chapter explores how effective or not has civil society been in ending armed conflict and building sustaining peace in Kivu provinces via the use of seven civil society's peacebuilding functions. The findings are drawn from desk research, mainly exploring data from books, journals, reports, and official documents; and the assessment reported here is conducted within civil society's functions that the literature in this field provides. This chapter contends that CSOs still exert a weak influence in building peace due to various factors that hinder the fulfilment of peacebuilding functions aiming for a sustainable peace.

Keywords Civil society · Peacebuilding · Conflict · Violence · Kivu Provinces · Democratic Republic of Congo

8.1 Introduction

Between 1998 and 2003, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) experienced the so-called world's most violent conflict since World War II between 1998 and 2003 (Malan/Porto 2004). Many national armies from Africa were involved in the war as well as Congolese and non-Congolese armed groups. It caused the death of 3.9 million people while displacing over 8 million more both within and outside the country (Coghlan et al. 2006, p. 49). The war resulted in the division of the DRC into several autonomous parts controlled by armed coalitions focusing on natural resources to sustain their war efforts and make a return on their 'war investment' (International Crisis Group 2000, p. 66). Civil society emerged not only to denounce exactions and crimes caused by the war, but also to call for a negotiation to resolve

Dr. Georges Bomino Bosakaibo is an assistant professor in the Department of Policy Studies, Faculty of Policy Studies, Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan.

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the conflict as protagonists in the war explored ways to defeat their opponents on the field using force.

During the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) held in South Africa from 2002 to 2003, civil society participated in the peace negotiations. Subsequently, civil society had representatives for all transitional institutions. The strategical conception to avoid a potential polarisation of the transition in case it only consisted of former warring groups led to direct inclusion of civil society in the transitional institutions. Despite the persistent and recurrent instability in the two Kivu provinces, the transition process (2003–2006) was successful as it led to the first multiparty elections in the DRC in 41 years. The role of civil society can be investigated while several Congolese and non-Congolese stakeholders contributed toward the success of the transitional process and the resolution of the conflict, even though currently, nowadays the recurrent instability and killings of civilians continue in the eastern part of DRC, particularly in the Kivu provinces.

Despite a certain dynamism of the restoration of a lasting peace, the civil society has shown many weaknesses that limit the impact of its actions in contributing to finding solutions against the violence in the persistent conflict. Indeed, this situation in DRC, especially in its eastern provinces suffering from the recurrent violence, is addressed by the following research question: How effective has civil society been in ending armed conflict and sustaining peace in conducting the seven peacebuilding functions of protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialisation, social cohesion, facilitation, and service delivery in Kivu provinces? This research relies on the secondary qualitative data from books, journals, reports, official documents. The frame of analysis, as presented in Thania Paffenholz's (2010) critical work on civil society and peacebuilding, is considered a lens through which the data are explored. This chapter argue that the civil society, despite its slight development, continues to exert a weak influence in building peace due to various factors that hinder the fulfilment of peacebuilding functions and that need to be identified and addressed in order to create mechanisms that can impact its action towards a sustainable peace.

This study explores the role played by civil society in peacebuilding with emphasis being placed two Kivu provinces. The scope of the study extends from the beginning of the war in 1996 to the current situation in the eastern parts of DRC in 2021.

This chapter is articulated as follows: after this introduction, Sect. 8.2 gives a conceptual framework; Sect. 8.3 historical background to the civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly in the context of Eastern Congo; Sect. 8.4 offers the findings identified as the weaknesses of the civil society; Sect. 8.5 analyses the findings with regards to the weaknesses of the civil society and their impact on the peacebuilding process; and the final section, Sect. 8.6 the conclusion for the chapter. The subsequent section clarifies the concept of civil society in the peacebuilding process.

8.2 Civil Society and Peacebuilding

8.2.1 Conceptual Framework

There is no general consensus between observers on the importance of civil society to peacebuilding. Civil society and civic culture have the tendency to frustrate change and progress towards a just and equitable society according to supporters of the Marxist ideology. International community faced the complexities of peacebuilding efforts that accompanied the proliferation of armed conflicts in the 1990s. However, according to Ekiyor (2008), civil society actors have increasingly become vital forces in discourses, initiatives and programs that foster peace and security across the world.

Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced different civil wars and intrastate wars in the recent decades, including countries such as DRC. These wars have resulted into an acrimonious number of deaths, displacements of communities, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), thus rendering growth and development stagnant. The civil society has been at the forefront of dismantling authoritarian regimes to replace them with democratic governance, initiating and promoting reconciliation processes, carrying out localised peacebuilding initiatives, and advocating for the adherence to peace agreements and the tactical building of capacities through peace education (Mbayo 2012).

The vital involvement of Civil society actors as primary providers of basic social services in war affected areas cannot be overemphasised, where the public institutions and state apparatus had ceased to function or had been considerably weakened due to the conflict. In these situations of anarchy, CSOs have often played the role of mitigating conflict and building peace (Mbayo 2012, p. 41). However, Ekiyor (2008) underscores the fact that civil society is not a homogenous group and, therefore, not all members of civil society can be regarded or defined as peacebuilders.

In recent years, there has been an increase of interest in discovering how strengthening civil society can contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding rather than the activities of civil society that have led to its recognition and many more of its envisaged and potential roles. In the move towards the capacity building process of CSOs in conflict societies, the international community has provided significant support, both financially and physically to achieve this goal. It is interesting to note however, that despite the massive rise in peacebuilding initiatives that is aimed at strengthening civil society, these initiatives have not been backed by a systematic research and documentation agenda. This incongruity has led to minimal exposition of the role of civil society in peacebuilding and its potentials in reducing conflict, ending violence, ending armed conflict, and the building of peace (Paffenholz 2010) in Africa, especially for the eastern provinces' CSOs in the DRC.

As a contested concept, civil society has various meanings shifting according to rhetorical needs (Purdue 2007, p. 1). The concept initially gained momentum in the late eighteenth century with the emergence of capitalism and was originally understood as the ability of individuals to deal with strangers without using force,

particularly in urban centres according to various authors (Purdue 2007; Edwards 2009; Pishchikova/Izzi 2011).

Although the practical involvement and scholarly discussion of the role of civil society in peacebuilding emerged in the 1990s, the "context of the global war on terror focus shifted again from peacebuilding to military intervention, from local civil society to the role of the state and its institutions in reforming governance and promoting development" (van Leeuwen 2009, p. 50). In 2010, the World Bank and Paffenholz worked for the re-emergence of civil society (2010) in academic literature partly, through the work of the Global Partnership on the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

In the context of peacebuilding, promoting the development of independent CSOs was part of the typical formula for liberal peacebuilding along with the promotion of civil and political rights and marketisation (Paris 2004, p. 19). The discussion of civil society participation in peacebuilding within the liberal tradition tends to focus on the inclusion of CSOs in peace negotiations, as well as their advocacy function in relation to the state. Models and specific types of civil society engagement are presented in peacebuilding which also assume their existence within a liberal state (Paffenholz 2010, 2014; Richmond/Pogoda 2016).

The functional approach suggested by Paffenholz/Spurk (2010) remains one of the most prevalent definitions of civil society. It identifies seven key functions of civil society in peacebuilding contexts including: protection, monitoring, advocacy and public communication, in-group socialisation, social cohesion, intermediation and facilitation and service delivery (Paffenholz 2010, pp. 65–75). This approach represents a liberal definition of civil society. These seven key functions, discussed in further detail in the following subsection, are considered the frame of analysis for this chapter.

8.2.2 Functions

The seven key functions of civil society in peacebuilding contexts are explained as follows: *Protection, Monitoring, Advocacy, Socialisation, Intergroup social cohesion, facilitation and mediation, and Service delivery.*

- *Protection* refers to the provision of security needs by civil society actors, either acting alone or in cooperation with other agencies. The main provider of this function is the state; however, in cases of acute state fragility and conflict, the relationship between state and society can break down. During and after conflict, protection becomes a precondition for other civil society functions, as civil society actors are substantially hindered from taking up peacebuilding roles when threatened by violence.

  Civil society protection is often associated with specialised protection non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as Peace Brigades International, that support local actors, either directly or indirectly. During a civil war, a number of

local human rights organisations can monitor human rights violations and send all information to the National Human Rights Commission, the media and Amnesty International (AI). These bodies have used the data to successfully lobby, at the international level, for the establishment of a United Nations (UN) monitoring mission. Local civil societies can negotiate 'zones of peace', within which arms are not allowed, and have occasionally taken over responsibility for human security initiatives such as de-mining, disarmament, and demobilisation when official programs have been found wanting.

- *Monitoring* concerns international and local civil society groups that monitor relevant issues such as the human rights situation, or the implementation of agreements, and provide recommendations and information to decision-makers or human rights and advocacy groups. Such monitoring can work to hold governments and armed groups accountable for abuses or substandard performance and can also serve as an early warning system. Monitoring activities is most effective when designed to harmonise with protection and advocacy initiatives.
- *Advocacy* refers to agenda-setting and the application of pressure by CSOs. Civil society actors can push for the commencement of negotiations and the implementation of negotiated agreements, or work against the recurrence of warfare. Equally important are global international advocacy campaigns that lobby. Advocacy can be divided into public and nonpublic forms. Public advocacy can involve petitions, demonstrations, press releases, social media, or public relations campaigns. Non-public advocacy is generally backchanneled and operates through informal dialogues and relationships. The impact of advocacy initiatives is increased when organisations have campaigning knowledge, base their advocacy on results of monitoring initiatives, and know how to use the media to support their cause.
- *Socialisation* refers to in-group bonding that supports democratic behaviour and promotes tolerant and peaceful values within society. This is realised through the active participation of citizens in various associations, networks, or movements. Socialisation takes place only within groups, not between former adversary groups.

Every national or local association that practises peaceful coexistence contributes to this function. There are two main types of interaction or socialisation: socialisation for peace and in-group identity-building. Socialisation for peace involves activities that promote a culture of peace whether in society at large or within a single group. In-group identity-building is an important way for marginalised groups to develop a sense of political identity that allows them to operate peacefully in the political space available.

The key institutions in society that influence how people learn democratic and conflict-response behavior are families, schools, religious groups, secular and cultural associations, and the workplace. In most countries in conflict, these socialisation spaces tend to reinforce existing divides. The overwhelming focus of socialisation initiatives has been on conducting short-term projects with NGOs, which, due to their limited reach and access, have no real power to socialise people.

- *Intergroup social cohesion* focuses on social capital between groups as it is invariably degraded or destroyed during wars between those groups. Therefore, it is crucial to build 'bridging ties' across adversarial groups as well as (peaceful) 'bonding ties' within specific groups. The objective of social cohesion is to help these groups learn to live together in peaceful coexistence.

  Social cohesion is an area where CSOs face challenges in making an impact. As explained in the discussion on socialisation above, divided societies have many strong institutions for interactions, including families, schools, and religious organizations. When these institutions are polarised and hostile, few social cohesion initiatives can be highly effective.

  Social cohesion initiatives may generate more impact when they aim at bringing people together to work for a common cause (for example, joint water management) rather than focusing only on reconciliation. Long-term systematic initiatives have been more effective than short-term scattered ones, especially when they have focused on a wide range of societal cleavages and also bridged the gap between difficult groups.
- With regard to *facilitation and mediation,* civil society can function as a facilitator to help bring parties together in a peace or transition process. Facilitation can take place both at the local and at the national level. At the national level, prominent civil society leaders, international NGOs and research institutions are occasionally engaged in mediation or facilitation. This facilitation can also be issue-oriented, as when civil society groups facilitate violence-free days to secure access for service delivery (vaccinations, food programmes, etc.). Hence, facilitation can operate in support of both protection and service delivery.
- As far as s*ervice delivery* is concerned*,* during armed conflict, state structures are either destroyed or weakened, and the population may be starved of essential services. Civil society actors (mainly NGOs, but sometimes associations as well) can and do step forward to provide aid and social services. There is no doubt that this function is extremely important to help the war-affected population and to support reconstruction of the state and society at large. However, service delivery can only have an impact on peace processes only if agencies create entry points for other functions such as protection and social cohesion, especially when large-scale violence ends. Then, the next section presents civil society historical background in the DRC context.

8.3 Historical Background of Civil Society in DRC

Given the emphasis on context and local knowledge in the post-liberal peacebuilding literature, many case studies have been published considering locally driven peace initiatives, including in the DRC. This is likely related to Severine Autesserre's argument in her book entitled 'The Trouble with the Congo' where she claimed that the dominant international peacebuilding culture shaped the intervention in the

Congo in a way that precluded action on localised violence such as individual land conflicts, ultimately dooming externally-led efforts. She argues as follows:

> The eastern part of the Congo remained so violent during the transition not only because of regional and national tensions, but also because of the presence of distinctively local problems. These included conflicts over land, mineral resources, traditional power, local taxes and relative social status of specific groups and individuals (Autesserre 2010, p. 176).

In addition, Vlassenroot/Raeymaekers (2004) edited a book arguing that efforts to end the war in the Eastern DRC should be grounded in the causes of conflict that exist below the international and regional level. They highlight that:

> The Congolese conflict can only be fully understood with reference to the ways in which conflict, together with a legacy of colonial and state policy that preceded and informed it, has created a situation in which the rational pursuit of individual livelihood ends up reproducing the collectively irrational phenomenon of war (Vlassenroot/Raeymaekers 2004, p. 290).

A significant amount of the literature on the DRC concerns on the history of and the regional and national causes of the conflict (Prunier 2009; Stearns 2011, 2014). Although this literature does not advance the participation of local actors in peacebuilding and peace formation processes, it provides a historical context for both local peacebuilding efforts and it helps to situate local efforts in relation to the state.

For instance, in 2013 the Congolese state still enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy despite being powerless in an administrative and in a coercive sense (Raeymaekers 2013, p. 600). Thus, Raeymaekers concludes that "political legitimacy remains rooted in a tight association of political protection, military coercion and economic capital between violent elite networks" as opposed to popular embeddedness or alternative justice (2013, p. 614). In addition, the structural, political, and historical causes of state-building failures in the DRC result in the powerlessness of local, national, and international stakeholders to influence Congo's unmanageable political landscape (Trefon 2011, p. 122).

Some of the more recent literature on the DRC addresses the themes like local approaches to peacebuilding and civil society. Stearns (2014) questions the validity of addressing local causes of conflict such as land and ethnic disputes rather than national causes of conflict including political cleavages and military elites, which he indicates are broadly perceived by experts on the conflict as the main sources of conflict.

Further, a small amount of locally published literature written by Congolese authors exists regarding the local causes of conflict and community level conflict resolution and peace agreements in the Eastern DRC. This literature addresses on the local causes of conflict as well as traditional conflict resolution mechanisms which exist at the low level of administration called "les chefferies". Nonetheless, it is important to remember that such works are also embedded in local power and conflict dynamics.

The socio-political organisation of rural communities is composed of chefferies as well as secteurs where 70% of the population live in these spaces and their leadership are responsible for governance and development. The core difference between the two is that secteurs are governed in accordance with the laws of the state whereas

chefferies are governed through customs and by traditional leaders (Maneno 2014, pp. 177–178).

More scholarly work also needs to be undertaken to understand the nature and design of CSOs in the DRC as well as highlighting their contributions to peacebuilding. There is minimal literature discussing how the Congolese civil society functions within the context of a fragile state. There is also no existing literature which outlines the dynamics within these organisations in addition to whose interests they represent and how. Further, there is limited information on how these organisations engage with national and international partners, and there is not any literature on how they interact with grassroots structures with whom they have formal and informal relationships.

The point of departure for this chapter is as follows: while the international community's role is known, in peacebuilding in the DRC, only little is known about how peacebuilding priorities are negotiated between local and international actors. Thus, in DRC, one can speak about civil society with its challenges in the course of its history.

Under the second Republic in Mobutu regime between 1965 and 1990 some forms of organised civil society existed, but the full emergence of CSOs was the result of the democratisation process decreed by President Mobutu on 24 April 1990. This emergence of civil society occurred according to a policy similar to the one that freed the political opposition parties allowing them to function again since their ban in 1965.

The convening of the National Sovereign Conference which took place between 7 August 1991 and 6 December 1992 brought together a certain coalition between opposition political parties and CSOs. This National Sovereign Conference considered to be a national political dialogue brought together 2 842 delegates, representing all strata of society, with the aim of identifying the causes behind the country's post-colonial failure and making recommendations on a new path for the country's development (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, p. 190).

The first instance of the politicisation of civil society in the DRC was the abovementioned conference, particularly after reaching the agreement for the conference to be responsible for the establishment of political institutions needed to manage the country during the transition (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, p. 190). Civil society soon emerged as an influential force between the irreconcilable government and political opposition. Unsurprisingly, the presiding elected officer of the conference was one of its members, Archbishop Monsengwo (from the Roman Catholic Church). At this time, the civil society movement split into two factions. The first faction was composed of organisations that joined the main opposition coalition known as the Sacred Union of the Radical Opposition (USOR) which was subsequently renamed to the Sacred Union of the Radical Opposition and Allies from Civil Society (USORAS). The second faction comprised of organisations that held a conciliatory view vis-à-vis the regime (Koko 2016, p. 118). Civil society remained aligned to political parties, considering itself as both a (political) power broker and contender until 1997 when the Mobutu regime was overthrown.

State-civil society relations had a new dynamic with the rise of Laurent-Désiré Kabila to power in May 1997. Throughout the war period, Laurent-Désiré Kabila and his movement called the Alliance des forces democratiques pour la liberation or Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL) showed the mistrust and hostility toward CSOs accusing them to be accommodative of Mobutu regime. For their part, the CSOs made their criticisms toward the AFDL for the group's role in human rights violations committed against civilian populations, especially Rwandan Hutu refugees (Koko 2016). The CSOs were also concerned with the prospect of losing the space they had gained during the transition should the AFDL have emerged victorious on the battle front (De Villiers/Omasombo, 1998, p. 57). They openly advocated for a negotiated settlement of the war as well as the AFDL's absolute dissolution.

The AFDL embarked on a process of reducing civil society's space of operation when it took over state power in May 1997. Thus, it set thus the stage for future confrontations between the two entities. Indeed, leaders of NGOs and churches presented a different type of challenge for the regime according to the International Crisis Group (ICG 1999, p. 13). In principle, "their policy options were similar to those of the non-violent opposition parties. They urged for rapid moves toward elections and democratisation, and they affirmed the legitimacy of the National Sovereign Conference … which was the one time in the Congo's constitutional development, when they participated formally" (Koko 2016, p. 118).

Two major factions of the civil society held competing views regarding the AFDL regime during the National Sovereign Conference and the subsequent period: the Congolese Civil Society (CCS) the origins of which may be traced back to the group that formally drew closer to the Mobutu regime – appeared more conciliatory toward the regime and opted for 'constructive engagement' and the civil society of the DRC the origins of which can be traced to the bloc that associated itself with the political opposition during the first transition – adopted a 'confrontational approach' (Koko 2016, p. 119). This latter group was more effective with dynamic networks such as the National Council of Development Non-Governmental Organisations (NCD-NGOs) with its vibrant provincial structures known as Regional Councils of Development Non-Governmental Organisations (RCD-NGOs).

Notably, over 250 delegates representing all the country's provinces attended CNONGD's successfully organised national conference on reconstruction, held in Kinshasa in June 1997. Among other issues, the conference 'declared its concern for the protection of fundamental liberties' and addressed "the absence of political dialogue, indiscipline in the army, the absence of a clear-cut division between the state and the AFDL, and the absence of a constitutional framework' (ICG 1999, p. 13). A month later, the Roman Catholic Church, through its Bishops' Permanent Committee, echoed NCD-NGOs complaints in expressing concern over the new authorities' decision to reject the constitutional project adopted by the people at the National Sovereign Conference and 'noted that certain acts were being committed by members of the new regime which did not respect the dignity of the human person' (ICG 1999, pp. 15–16), acts that negated the rule of law. In response, the regime attempted – albeit unsuccessfully – a number of strategies to gain control over civil

society including directing through government channels all NGOs' financial and other aids coming from abroad, arresting activists, centralising the NGOs' registration process through the ministry of justice and dissolving NGOs that failed to comply fully with the new legislation (Koko 2016, p. 119). However, the Kabila regime adopted a more conciliatory approach in its engagement with civil society after the eruption of the Second Congo War in August 1998. The following section presents the findings.

8.4 Weaknesses of Civil Society in the Kivu Provinces in DRC Citizen Protection Strategies

Communities tend to understand their own problems and needs, and they confront conflict together. Mahony's respondents mentioned many collective community protection practices in the Kivu provinces: going to fields in groups to minimise risk; using whistles to alert each other to danger; reorganising agriculture in order to cultivate crops at a safer proximity to their village. Some mentioned examples of the non-Rwandophone population protecting Rwandophones. Answer to the question "Who helps communities mobilise these protection strategies?" included church leaders, community social groups, cooperatives, and essentially any existing structures where people would meet to talk about problems (Mahony 2013).

There exist also larger structures extending beyond single communities. Inter-ethnic traditional structures such as Baraza la Wazee try to bring together moderate leaders of multiple ethnic groups to try to confront interethnic conflict and promote unity. Although some of Mahony's respondents expressed concern about the politicisation of such inter-ethnic structures, and although there is some risk of bias or exclusion, Baraza La Wazee spokesmen emphasised that high-level examples of ethnic collaboration can influence people's thinking (Mahony 2013, p. 20). Multi-ethnic leadership delegations were able to negotiate with authorities or armed groups and express people's needs.

Churches constitute another vital mobilising structure among the population. The Catholic Church network, as the largest, reaches to nearly every remote corner of the country. Although some of Mahony's respondents expressed concern that the churches were factionalised and competitive, or that their leaders had lost some credibility due to their prominent role during the election period, their legitimacy is nonetheless broadly recognised. Church networks are important sources of information and analysis. The Catholic Church has a "Justice and Peace" network with a commitment to confronting human rights issues (Mahony 2013, p. 20). A Catholic Church delegation led by the bishop travelled to Rutshuru, for instance, to speak with the M-23 rebel group about their concerns for the population. There are hundreds of small organisations, many more than have existed in the past, especially due to increases in the availability funding for their work (Gouzou 2012). Although single charismatic leaders dominated many small and weak organisations, other

organisations have significant networks of activists, technical skills, and ideas for political change in the Congo. Unfortunately, the prevalent dynamic of security threats also constrained their activism and advocacy efforts. The killing or threatening of so many human rights activists occurred to such a large extent in the past several years that United Nations organisation for stabilisation mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) human rights division established a special Protection Unit for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists and Witnesses (Mahony 2013).

The mobilisation of power bases for action shows that the weaknesses of CSOs tend to attract more programs, and over time, more programs, and many international actors have over time given up on partnering or working closely with the Congolese civil society. The acknowledgement of change in the DRC requires mass-based support and functional civil society structures to mobilise it. International organisations themselves cannot mobilise a Congolese popular base for change, but they can think strategically, identify opportunities for such mobilisation and strengthen and protect the organisations and individuals who might be promising. They support the convening of Congolese discussions and even participate in the debate. The humanitarian community helped this process by engaging more with civil society forces outside the professional NGO "assistance" community (Mahony 2013, p. 39).

Another important area of mobilisation recommended by Mahony's several respondents was to encourage greater involvement of women in the work for political change. Experiences in other countries, such as Liberia, has shown how women can use symbolic action and mass mobilisation to effectively break through traditional attitudes about conflict and violence as well as pressure armed actors to alter their behavior (Mahony 2013, p. 40). To date, there does not appear to be any large-scale movement of women in the DRC working on conflict reduction, but any broader mobilisation strategies must ensure that they are inclusive of women at the leadership level to take advantage of these possibilities (Mahony 2013, p. 40).

8.4.1 Human Rights Monitoring Problems

Human rights activists and humanitarian actors as well as other civil society leaders in North Kivu suffered harassment after having denounced the arms distribution and subsequent abuses against civilians in North Kivu, specifically attributing responsibility for these acts to the governor and his associates. Several also asserted that Rwandan army troops had supported soldiers linked to the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD) [Congolese Rally for Democracy] based in Goma town (RCD-Goma) rebel movement. The consequence of these statements involved several activists who had signed them receiving anonymous telephoned death threats and warnings by unidentified armed men. As a result of such threats, four leading human rights activists fled Goma the capital city of North Kivu province.

When a Human Rights Watch researcher raised these cases with provincial security officials in early February 2005, they admitted that security agents might have threatened the activists but denied having ordered them to do so. They promised

to investigate and to prevent future threats. However, later, another activist and his wife were beaten and robbed in Goma. Another instance of harassment took place in Goma on 23 April 2005 against a human rights defender by unidentified armed men who threatened his family and beat one of his relatives.

The work of humanitarian agencies was disrupted, and soldiers threatened staff and looted the property of humanitarian organisations in Masisi, Rutshuru and Lubero, disrupting the delivery of assistance to civilians. Soldiers linked to RCD-Goma looted two health centers and caused damage at a third, and 10 health centers had to restrict their operations for more than a month. Other many cases of looting occurred during the combat at Nyabyondo.

Local actors and authorities are rather different from one another but they share certain characteristics that are different from those of other peace initiatives in eastern DRC, International Alert (2012, p. 45) presents the difference in the following ways: They both provided for significant involvement by local actors in defining the content and implementation of the solutions required to resolve their problems in the long term. These actors were chosen on the basis of their legitimacy, influence, and expertise in the area concerned. They are thus directly contributing to establishing "social contracts" and government accountability in DRC. In doing so, they help to create a more inclusive style of governance that is transparent and democratic. The main problem in using for this approach is encouraging the actors and authorities involved to embrace the dialogue and follow up on the commitments reached.

École de la Paix organisation led the initiative in Bunia in sharing certain characteristics. It involved rehabilitating and addressing the trauma of former child soldiers caused by opposing armed groups through creative activities such as singing, drawing and drama. The initiative, which is entirely based on the children's first-hand experiences, adopts a playful and creative approach to transforming their trauma into a positive force for social change. This is an aspect that is often lacking in more traditional initiatives designed to help victims (International Alert 2012, p. 45).

The initiatives led by civil society actors led initiatives offer particularly relevant and interesting alternatives to the more traditional large-scale programs. Nevertheless, they remain very much on the fringes of the response seeking to bring an end to conflict in Eastern DRC. The principles that form the basis of these initiatives should inspire the entire peacebuilding sector, whether it be government, international or local actors (International Alert 2012, p. 46)

8.4.2 Advocacy Challenges for Peace

Few civil society initiatives have been found as an alternative and grounded approach to peacebuilding. Such an approach represents a promising counterpoint to the technical interventions that took place under the stabilisation and reconstruction program for areas emerging from armed conflicts or the National Stabilization and Reconstruction Program (STAREC) and The International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) frameworks (International Alert 2012, p. 44). The

first initiative is advocacy work led by the *Forum des Amis de la Terre* (FAT) [the Friends of the Earth Forum], the *Syndicat de Défense des Intérêts Paysans* (SYDIP) [the Farmers' Defence Union] and the *Fédération des Organizations de Production Agricole du Congo* (FOPAC) [the Federation of Agricultural Production Organizations of Congo], as part of the negotiations that led to the new agricultural code. The second is the participatory and dialogue-based action-research project put in place by partners of the *Institut Vie et Paix* (IVP) [the Life and Peace Institute], the *Action pour la Paix et la Concorde* (APC) [the Action for Peace and Concord], the *Réseau d'innovation organisationelle* (RIO) [the Organizational Innovation Network] and the *Action pour le Développement et la Paix Endogènes* (ADEPAE) [the Action for Endogenous Development and Peace]. Lastly, the *École de la Paix* [the School of Peace] in Bunia developed a program with a significant interest in addressing trauma and rehabilitating conflict victims using artistic activities, according to International Alert (2012, pp. 44–45).

The advocacy work in relation to the new agricultural code was carried out by a coalition of peasant unions and CSOs. Various consultation documents in North Kivu contain their demands and recommendations which were integrated into the agricultural code. APC, RIO and ADEPAE organisations led the second initiative which involved participatory action-research that led to the implementation of a bottom-up dialogue process, bringing together local actors and the authorities (International Alert 2012, p. 45). Its implication is that the authorities and other actors take responsibility for monitoring the way in which the solution is put in place.

A common challenge for CSOs in conflict settings has involved engaging with decision makers. In DRC, for instance, CSOs struggle to engage in constructive dialogue with political authorities and to secure their participation in peace initiatives, reforms, and efforts to increase accountability, according to Ellis (2017). In other case studies, CSOs have felt they would be more effective if international actors supported them to develop locally appropriate advocacy strategies and to build cross-cutting local, national, regional, and international advocacy networks and platforms (Stephen 2017, p. 36).

The subject of civil society and women in peacebuilding is another challenge as the DRC is emblematic of how violence and conflict produce different gender impacts. Congolese women and girls suffered disproportionately during and after the country's 1998–2003 war (Adekeye/Paterson 2010, p. 28). The country's peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction processes provided to women the opportunities to engender societal structures, especially with regard to political participation, transitional justice, and security sector reform. Some Congolese women formed a caucus to participate in the ICD, in which they played a paramount role in lobbying for an agreement between the feuding parties. It is important to note that women's networks and non-NGOs also actively engaged in campaigns advocating the recognition of women's rights during and after the DRC's constitution making processes (Adekeye/Paterson 2010, p. 28).

The advocacy resulted in the 2006 constitutional provision of a 50% quota for women's participation in government and called on the government to respond effectively to sexual violence. Women's organisations also helped to mobilised and train

women to participate in political processes, boosting the women's voting at the 2006/2007 polls. It is necessary to place gender at the heart of the Congolese peacebuilding processes as a pre-condition for succeeding in effecting a broader transformation of structures, policies, norms, and relationships, which are still shaped by ideas of patriarchy (Adekeye/Paterson 2010, p. 28). However, to this day, this 50% quota has never been achieved.

Rather than being a fundamental right that is necessary for the development and implementation of effective peacebuilding strategies, the perception of gender equality in the DRC is often being that it is solely a "women's issue" and a matter of political correctness. There is a general belief that women are entirely responsible for incorporating gender issues into peacebuilding programs. The widely held perception that women and civil society can best deliver the gender aspects of projects has further undermined collective efforts at achieving gender equality in peacebuilding processes. However, some progress has been made in engaging men to a greater extent in the struggle for gender equality, and to engendering peacebuilding and social justice concerns in the Congo. Nevertheless, activists from the sector have contributed significantly to governance, security sector reform, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR); peacebuilding, and state building while civil society's peacebuilding efforts may have been relatively weak so far. Civil society in the DRC has also played a critical role in mobilising social capital to hold the government accountable and make it more responsive to public needs. Furthermore, civil society groups have delivered services to prevent and resolve conflicts, and have promoted democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (Adekeye/Paterson 2010, pp. 7–8).

The burden of sexual and gender-based violence persists in the DRC despite the presence of the UN mission (MONUSCO) presence, and the Congolese government's endorsement of international conventions such as UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), and 1888 (2009) on women, peace, and security. More than 8,000 Congolese women were raped in 2009 during fighting between warring factions, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and to date, the rape is still ongoing. Sexual violence is particularly widespread in the war-torn eastern region of the country, considered as the "rape capital of the world" (UNFPA 2010, p. 28). Meanwhile, the lack of a fair and effective national justice system has made it difficult to address the rights of rape survivors and victims of other sexual violence (Bosmans 2007).

Since the DRC's independence in 1960, religious organisations and other NGOs have played a pivotal role in the country's peace processes, including in the run-up to, and after, the historic democratic election of 2006/2007 (Adekeye/Paterson 2010, p. 29). Such groups continue to be integral to peacebuilding processes in delivering services. The international donor community has often channeled aid through civil society actors in a political climate in which the central state is weak due to internal and national conflict as well as poor governance practices. However, such actors often lack capacity and cannot be a substitute for building an effective state, which must remain a key priority (Adekeye/Paterson 2010, p. 29).

8.4.3 Socialisation Hindrances

Furthermore, International Alert underscored the basic weakness of civil society which is due to the difficulty it has in positioning itself in a coherent, clear and constructive manner in relation to three groups: its 'base', i.e. local populations, political authorities, and international bodies. These relations have prevented CSOs from playing their role for change. This problem derives from the civil society, which is highly politicised, organised within ethnical ties, and the manipulated by donors imposing their priorities instead of basing programs on strict analysis of the specific context (International Alert 2012, p. 44).

The base is not neutral due to its close proximity to an ethnic territory where associations for peace and development are created for the defense of its particular interests in Minembwe, Bunyakiri, and Fizi. This attribute enhances the competition and power struggles that are identified in parts of civil society, as each association tends to work primarily for its own area or community (International Alert 2012, p. 44). In addition, civil society depends financially on international organisations that limit its role in the program execution of the international agencies (International Alert 2012, p. 44). Such dependency hampers Congolese organisations in the development of innovative strategies for peace.

Trust and the deficit of trust within civil society in conflict settings is another issue because the levels of trust are very low and people rely on personal connection and social groups to survive due to the religious, and ethnic identity mobilisation by conflict actors. Civil society often reflects and replicates these patterns. In DRC, conflict dynamics are based on geography as different refugees settled around different local communities for which they had an affinity. Subsequently, many CSOs emerged from within local communities to serve their needs therefore limiting the reach of service to reach other conflict-affected areas.

Thus, to some degree, CSOs working at the local level in DRC reflect the way in which conflict has shaped society (Ellis 2017; Stephen 2017). This limited opportunities for dialogues between communities lead to a trust deficit that hampers their effectiveness within CSOs. They often have 'limited opportunities to raise funds or build joint platforms and alliances to engage in advocacy, which can curb their ability to contribute to broader goals such as ending violence and supporting peaceful political change and sustainable development' (Stephen 2017, p. 26). This trust deficit in turn tends to reinforce the fault lines along which the conflict has developed.

8.4.4 Social Cohesion Issues

Highly politicised Civil society is an important factor in Eastern DRC. It is difficult to distinguish the boundaries between civil and political society due to political competition and formal mechanisms for political representation being weak. CSOs are targeted by political actors for their own interests while civil society to acts to

foster its own agendas (Stephen 2017, p. 49). When the Rwandan refugees arrived in Congo, the civil society mobilised against Rwandan backed armed groups. The mobilisation involved nationalist and anti-Rwandan discourse with effect of solidifying divisions and tensions between communities. This politicisation placed the peacebuilding in jeopardy (Stephen 2017, p. 49). Bilak (2009) affirms the following:

> The civil society politicization fact indicates the problematic relationship between its members and those in power. Civil society is a locus of political competition that is synonymous with opportunity and power as well as difficult to distinguish from the political sphere (p. 157).

International Alert (2012, p. 44) describes it as an "incestuous" relationship with those in power and which often acts as an advantage to a political career. The power struggles have affected the civil society and prevented it to implement real strategies for advocacy or constructive dialogues with the authorities, and they have undermined its neutrality and legitimacy.

Finally, politicisation prevents the preservation of expertise and key skill sets within civil society, as the most competent personnel are almost systematically absorbed by international organisations. This hierarchical relationship of dependency is a factor in civil society remaining in a position of structural weakness. This situation raises a real problem in terms of the long-term impact of the international community's presence (International Alert 2012, p. 44).

8.4.5 Dialogue Facilitation Deficiency

Civil society represents a significant dimension of the peacebuilding sector. For example, it has played a central role in political discussions and peace accords from 1991 to 1992, the Sun City Accord in 2002, and the Goma Conference in 2008. To date, it continues to engage in peace initiatives across all levels of society to the grassroots level. Many CSOs civil society organisations are active in the peace sector in North and South Kivu alone, and are often local organisations working with support from international NGOs. Activities include increasing awareness, peace education, skills development (training), advocacy and mediation, reconciliation, and arbitration (International Alert 2012, p. 43).

However, the failure of the peace processes in DRC derived from the misunderstanding of the nature of civil society in the Kivu provinces and exclusion of grassroots' representatives according to Santoso (2010, p. 35). Research concerning the role of civil society in DRC has suggested that international organisations involved in the Congolese peace process had tendency to assume that civil society in the Kivu provinces viewed its Western counterpart where civil society represents the needs of the people to the state and keeps the state accountable to the people. Civil society in the Kivu provinces, however, developed rather differently, with today's distinctive social and bureaucratic structures having been shaped by the colonial administration of earlier years (Santoso 2010, p. 35).

According to Santoso (2010, p. 35), civil society with its networks of national, regional, and provincial entities is also considered to include patron-client networks entities throughout the country. The influx of international aid and humanitarian intervention throughout the conflict as a second step of conflict resolution shows how international actors use local actors and associations without considering the needs of the local population (2010, p. 35). In addition, the inclusion of civil society in any peace process seems to distinguish whether or not civil society representatives are truly connected to the population or if they are simply the puppets of political elites or international organisations. If this is the case, then the civil society is not able to play its pivotal role in the peacebuilding process.

There was a failure to include grassroots civil society groups as the peace process catered primarily to the élite in the country and had little effect on realities on the ground. Thus, it is important to affirm, in lines with Santoso's statement that 'peace processes need to occur both from the top down and from the bottom up' (Santoso 2010, p. 35). However, there is evidence in the Congolese case proving that various forms of the peace process that tried to create mechanisms for inclusion of civil society in the peace process agreements with militia leaders and senior political leaders before 2008, the Goma Agreement in 2008. Hundreds of civil society leaders attended a conference to present their concerns for consideration.

The grassroots civil society members were marginalised and had little access to the peace process even though they were the most important stakeholders in the process. According to Santoso (2010, p. 35) representatives of groups present at the peace talks, as well as some who had been excluded, were from a range of groups. Some belonged to the official 'Civil Society' bureaucratic network while others were not part of this 'official' network but were leaders of NGOs either run by international organisations based in Europe or local to the area.

Santoso's research on the structure of civil society and understanding the degree of participation reached the following consensus that, in the Congolese context, the peace process has had little success not only because it has faced immense challenges due to the regional dynamics of the conflict but also because it has primarily existed in a top-down form and failed to integrate bottom-up processes. It has failed not only to include the right members of civil society but also to ensure that the shape of the peace process matches the society to which it hopes to bring peace (Santoso 2010, p. 35). Notably, the bottom-up processes have been successful in some areas like 'Somaliland where indigenous attempts at bottom-up peacebuilding succeeded in generating a relatively peaceful and stable situation' (Autesserre 2010, p. 248).

For Santoso (2010), civil society in the context of the Kivu provinces has developed separately from its European and North American counterparts as a hybrid of deeply entrenched patrimonial associations, transnationally controlled NGOs, and small local associations. It is important to take these realities into account when designing mechanisms for civil society inclusion in a peace process.

8.4.6 Frustration in Service Delivery

Impact of donor funding patterns on CSOs is illustrated by the research in DRC that highlighted the dependency on foreign donor funds. In addition, the desperation for financial support has led CSOs to adapt their focus to reflect donor priorities. They also reported frustration with international partners who did not support organisational development through fundraising activities to help CSOs achieve greater autonomy and sustainability (Ellis 2017; Stephen 2017). Furthermore, smaller CSOs have been marginalised by a reduction of transaction costs. Notably, donors and international NGOs continuously seek to decrease the transaction costs of aid. They often give fewer, larger grants to a small number of CSOs (often based in the capital city) that have shown their capacity to manage resources and meet complex reporting requirements. However, this condition impedes them supporting smaller grassroots CSOs that lack the capabilities to absorb and manage large grants, even though they may be in the optimal conditions to work with marginalised or remote communities (Stephen 2017, p. 40).

The professionalisation of CSOs has the potential for weakening their ties with communities and is another weakness. International actors seek partnerships with CSOs in conflict settings to push CSOs and social movements towards professionalisation, to make them able to meet complex donor reporting requirements. Over time, this can result in community-focused and/or politically active organisations becoming transforming into donor-facing technocratic service delivery organisations, and in the process, weakening their ties and engagement with local communities, a connection which is vital for their effectiveness in violent conflict settings (Pouligny 2005).

In DRC, local CSOs have worked with international actors to provide access to specific localities to deliver aid, but their role was mainly limited to implementing predefined initiatives by the later. Indeed, local CSOs report having little opportunity to help shape projects based on their understanding of local needs, which in turn affects their relationships with local communities and means they are unable to represent their needs (Stephen 2017, p. 40). The following section involves the discussion through which the effectiveness of civil society can be determined in the context of Kivu provinces.

8.5 Civil Society' Role and Effectiveness in Peacebuilding

In this discussion, the seven central functions, as suggested by Paffenholz/Spurk (2010: 65–75), are used as a lens to examine and to understand the civil society's role and its effectiveness in peacebuilding in the east of DRC particularly in the Kivu provinces. It is worthy to start with the first key function.

8.5.1 Protection of Citizens

Considering protection, the civil society has to provide security to people or in cooperation with other agencies. Notably, DRC government, as main provider of basic human rights, has been unable to do so due to the conflict and limitations in the ability to reach the war area being uncontrolled by the government. In this case, the civil society is the appropriate actor to reach the area and take care of the population in need to secure its basic human rights. However, 'the CSOs also need protection as they face an increasingly difficult working environment in order to play their role in peacebuilding where violence is prevailing' (Paffenholz 2010, p. 360).

During or after conflict, communities try to bring solution to their problems and needs. In the eastern provinces of Kivu, the existing structures like Church leaders, community social groups, and cooperatives help mobilise for the protection strategies using various collective community protection practices but these practices are usually limited to the protection of a certain ethnical community. This is a factor that hinders the structures from functioning properly.

In addition, the collaboration between the international actors and CSOs is also needed for mass mobilisation and encouraging the greater involvement of women to enhance protection in peacebuilding process. The women's role is not only wished in the Eastern Congo but also, they can learn from women involved in conflict and violence resolution in Liberia. Currently, even though women, unlike their male counterparts are involved but not yet fully integrated in the peacebuilding process in the Kivu provinces, they have much to offer with regard to constructing peace in the eastern provinces. The CSOs including women are supposed to become involved in humanitarian security to promote the international lobby but how this effectively carried out in the Kivu provinces is difficult to ascertain as it remains a sensitive issue among actors involved in the conflict. For the protection to be effective, its implementation needs to be monitored.

8.5.2 Monitoring of Relevant Issues

In this function, international and local civil society groups have the duty to monitor relevant issues which mainly involve human rights. However, in the context of eastern provinces, particularly in Kivu, sometimes, the international and local human right activists who are supposed to monitor human rights themselves become the target and victims. These civil society leaders and human rights activists denounced abuses against civilians, and subsequently suffered harassment by some government authorities who were very likely accountable for these human rights abuses. In my opinion, in order to play a monitoring role in a prevalent conflict dynamic, it is necessary for the local civil society actors to have security and be protected, but this is not the case in Kivu provinces. This linkage can allow the function of monitoring to proceed smoothly despite the delicate situation of human rights sensible issues.

Several reports have addressed the Rwandan army's involvement in supporting RCD-Goma rebel group in DRC. However, many activists who signed the publication of these statements received anonymous telephoned death threats, warnings to their families by unidentified armed men, to stop them from denouncing abuses. Consequently, those leading the protection of human rights could not stay in the area due to this threat on their lives, and they had fled out Goma to preserve their lives. This situation is a similar case for all Somalian organisations playing a monitoring role who have been vulnerable to pressure, threats, attacks and even assassination (Paffenholz 2010, p. 336). This situation illustrates the fact that the lack of protection for the activists or civil society actors can hinder the monitoring function if some important precautions are not considered.

The activists monitoring human rights, as reported in Kivu provinces, also encounter risks when they hold governments and armed groups accountable for abuses or substandard performance, and they can also serve as an early warning system. The denunciation of security agents involved in the threats made against activists resulted in the neglect of investigations by the provincial security officials who had promised to investigate the cases to prevent future threats. Surprisingly, different activists and their respective families were beaten and robbed without investigation and punishment of their perpetrators. These cases demonstrate how the government officials, as decision makers placed under a greater pressure, are themselves involved in human rights abuses (Paffenholz 2010, p. 337), but who are supposedly working hand in hand with human rights' activists. The denunciation bring fear to the official governments who condone the threat and try to silence the human rights activists.

This situation becomes complicated because the local official governments who are supposed to investigate the denounced abuse and bring the perpetrators to justice are themselves involvement in the abuse. If, after the government actors have promised to carry out investigations, the human rights watch activists or local civil society activists receive threats, then the complicity of the decision makers becomes evident; they are corrupted or silenced by obscure forces. The provincial officials may see human right activists as antagonists of their plans when their own interests, or those of individuals who support them to keep the status quo, are undermined by the denunciation of human rights abuse in conflicts areas for obscure interests.

The connection between the local civil society in Kivu provinces and international agencies for the victims and their own protection is crucial for a better motoring function in the peacebuilding process. There is also the question that comes to the mind of any observer regarding the human rights abuse in the Eastern Congo concerning the reasons human right abuses are committed vis-a-vis the provincial officials and UN peacekeepers, who are known and continue to live free with impunity. This shows the complicity of various stakeholders who prevent the actions of CSOs actions for their own interests. The monitoring function has a link to the advocacy function.

8.5.3 Advocacy for Peace Promotion

The advocacy function calls for CSOs to set the agenda and press for certain important issues. Civil society actors can push for the commencement of negotiations and the implementation of negotiated agreements, or work against the recurrence of warfare. In the Kivu provinces, the alternative and grounded approach to peacebuilding took place in the same way the advocacy work related to the new agriculture code. The push of the negotiation and the initiation of the participatory action research led to accomplishing the implementation of a bottom-up dialogue process contrary to the up down model that excludes some of the grassroots actors.

These initiatives brought local actors and authorities together to make them conscious of their responsibility for monitoring peacebuilding. Putting pressure on and convincing key actors to engage in conflict resolution and mobilising popular support for peace are necessary step to end conflicts nonviolently (Paffenholz 2010, p. 310). However, bringing decision-makers together is a challenge in conflict settings due to civil society struggling to engage in constructive dialogue with political authorities to participate in and secure initiatives and efforts to increase accountability (Ellis 2017). In this struggle, the civil society needs the support of international actors to develop adequate advocacy strategies to build advocacy networks and platforms. Subsequently, the collaboration is necessary to foster strategies.

While local and international actors need to work together, the consideration of women is another challenge as they are the mostly victims of the violence and conflict in the Kivu provinces. They have been becoming involved in the peace building process to use their skills to engender societal structures for various reforms in political participation, transitional justice, and security sector reform. In the case of DRC particularly the Kivu provinces, women's participation in campaigns advocating the recognition of women's rights and the ICD resulted in securing the quota of 50% for women's participation in the government at all levels and achieving the agreement between the rival parties for peace.

As a fundamental right the gender equality is not a women's issue but a carrier for incorporating and delivering gender aspects in the peacebuilding process. Just as men are involved in peacebuilding processes, women deserve to become involved and strengthened in peacebuilding efforts in Kivu provinces because:

> The promotion of women's peacebuilding programs will not be successful while the decision-making systems and mechanisms are still dominated by men and if the women themselves support the existing norms and practices and are not aware of their rights' (Angom 2018, p. 187).

Nevertheless, in Kivu provinces, women's exclusion is revealed in their 'quasi-absence from peace negotiations which have taken place to end try and end the conflict, despite a strong mobilisation of women's organisations to insist on participation in peace negotiations' according to Jane Freedman (2015, p. 114). The case of sexual violence calls not only on men but also on women to become involved in peacebuilding by meeting with victims. This approach can help women victims

to alleviate the stigma and trauma of the negative impact of rape. In doing so, the socialisation can take place for the reintegration identity in-groups.

8.5.4 Socialisation In-Group Identity

Considering the base in the Kivu provinces as in-group bonding that promotes democratic behavior and peaceful values within society, sometimes the base is not neutral as it is often linked to an ethnic territory because the formed associations or the community aim to defend only their own ethnic interests, implying non-security for those external to the ethnic groups. When the base is connected to an ethnic territory it loses the value of in-group bonding where socialisation can take place. Then it is impossible to go beyond this ethnical boundary to reach out to other people who need socialisation to bridge out the ties within the groups. This is that which the Kivu provinces are experiencing as a hindrance to this function.

This experience implies that the base structure does not learn to live together in peaceful coexistence with other ethnic groups as it is biased with regard to ethnic protection in the Kivu provinces such as the protection of the Tutsi ethnic group. This way of operation is contrary to Coleman's (1988) argument stating that the institutionalised social interactions can become available to individuals (Coleman 1988 cited in Howell/Pearce 2001, p. 28). Indeed, in this case, tolerant and peaceful values cannot be promoted in an ethnic territory that defend only its own interest.

Learning to live together in peaceful coexistence requires building trust to improve the trust deficit within the civil society and between the other people. In the conflict area, such as in the eastern parts of Congo, level of trust between communities are very low where people need social interactions, connections, alliance to survive. Civil society in the DRC reflets the way communities are connected and are dispersed geographically. As most of civil society came from within local communities to serve local needs there is a limit to exposure to other affected communities. Without this exposure to other affected communities in Kivu provinces, the trust and deficit of trust cannot be restored and each member is locked to their community to the detriment of socialisation.

However, CSOs are called to go beyond ethnical protection to consider everyone who needs protection and socialisation within and outside of the ethnic territory. This leads to the consideration of large structures that are necessary to reach out to those in need through their leaders. The obvious and vital mobilising structure in DRC is the catholic church. In Eastern Congo, the catholic church plays a central role in peace building despite the complaints of people about churches in general. The complaints imply that they are biased and compete with others with the consequence that many leaders lose their credibility due to their involvement in politics or taking sides in the electoral period. Their neutrality in the electoral period is necessary as it is one of the democratic consolidating pillars and values. This bias and competition in electoral period do not support the gaining of people's trust church leaders. The reason resides in the fact that people who benefit from their help have trust on them and want them

to remain neutral in order to reach out to everyone beyond ethnic group boundaries in the peacebuilding process.

One mentioned salient case is that of the catholic church with its Justice and Peace network that confronts human rights issues with regard to protection. These existing structures like the churches and other significant networks are also under prevalent dynamics of security threats that limit their action. Some of them have been assassinated, for example, the case of Bishop Munzihirwa who was slain in Bukavu (South Kivu) in 1996 during the conflict. Therefore, the protection is necessary to foster their activities for people's security in order to practice peaceful coexistence in socialising in families, schools, religious groups, secular and cultural associations, and the workplace, as is required by the socialisation function. The mobilisation of power bases for action is very important because the fragile situation of conflict can always downplay the function of socialisation. It is then difficult to evaluate the socialisation function in the cases of the Eastern Congo provinces due to certains issues such as division, competition, and the politicisation of CSOs which are supposed to be neutral. The socialisation function always operates alongside social cohesion in the peacebuilding process.

8.5.5 Intergroup Social Cohesion

The degradation or destruction of social-capital groups call for the social cohesion to function in order to bridge the ties to reunite adversarial groups divided by the war (Paffenholz 2010, p. 366). Social capital generates an inevitable public good, and it is an unwilled outcome of institutionalised social interactions which then becomes available to individuals, according to James Coleman (1988), and Putnam argue that social capital becomes a property of the groups or even nations (Putman 1993 cited in Howell/Pearce 2001, p. 28). Once the conflict destroys the social capital, it becomes necessary to reconstruct it for public good.

In Kivu provinces, the social capital is partly hindered where civil society operates in a highly politicised area as boundaries with political spaces are not clear. Political actors advance their interests and civil society moves between the two spaces. This can be illustrated in the way civil society in Kivu has mobilised against the presence of Rwandan-backed armed groups with nationalist and anti-Rwandan discourse. This politicisation has affected the civil society and is a threat to peace that needs to be eradicated by both international and local actors in order to contribute to peacebuilding and social cohesion for the public good. This positioning of civil society is a basic weakness because it is not coherent nor carried out in a constructive manner in relation to groups.

The relationship between the three main groups the local population, political authorities, and international bodies has not allowed CSOs to play a role for change. The rationale behind this comes from the characteristics of civil society, which is highly politicised with regards to power struggles, and organised according to ethnic groups and donors' tendencies to control civil society to reflect their priorities.

Many civil societies, within themselves live in contradiction to social cohesion as they do not promote dialogue. Consequently, there is no trust between them. This lack of trust within or between them hinder their effectiveness. With the deficit of trust, it is difficult for them to engage in fund raising to contribute to broader goals (Stephen 2017, p. 26). The opportunities for dialogue for tackling issues related to the common interest throughout the divided areas enable the reversal of the trust deficit in the affected areas in Kivu. Therefore, the social cohesion function is very important as it brings people together for a common cause.

8.5.6 Facilitation and Mediation

This function is also linked to the other functions, particularly social cohesion, to bring together opposing parties or communities during the wars. To bring people together, civil society has to work as a facilitator at all levels. This facilitating function is a central task for UN as a world organisation and involves its charter mandate for the peaceful settlement of disputes (Boulding 1994, p. 229). In the DRC, not only UN but also CSOs play a role in its context. Playing this role in the context of conflict is a big challenge. It is important to note that the representation by civil society actors as a key component to making a process such as peace negotiations more legitimate is problematic due to the conceptual difficulty regarding civil society and the power differentials embedded in such a representative act (Zanker 2018, p. 35). Despite this challenge, the facilitation function has been partly effective in DRC as the CSOs have played a pivotal role in different political discussions such as the peace accords from 1991 to 1992, the Sun City Accord in 2002, and the Goma Conference in 2008, and many other engagements in peace initiatives across all levels of society to the grassroots level.

Many CSOs are active in the peace sector in North and South Kivu alone, with most of them working with the support of international NGOs. The facilitation of civil service concerns also other issue-oriented violence-free days. Those activities include increasing awareness, peace education, skills development (training), advocacy and mediation, reconciliation, and arbitration (International Alert 2012, p. 43). It is important to note that facilitation is linked to and supports the protection and service delivery functions.

In addition to the above actions, a problem of perception exists where the nature of civil society is sometimes misunderstood, and the grassroots representatives are excluded, which has led to the failure of the peace process failure in DRC. The relationship between international organisations and civil society involved in DRC have certain perceptions of each other. International organisations think about the role of civil society in Kivu provinces as representing the needs and, accountability of the people to the state. However, civil society has developed differently with social and bureaucratic structures (Santoso 2010, p. 35). The perception is notably different from reality. This can sometimes prevent them from working toward a common end.

Often, International actors run local NGOs and associations which do not satisfy the needs of the local population. However, there are also grassroots local NGOs which do address local needs and are primarily funded by their own members from income generated by second or third jobs (Santoso 2010, p. 35). It is necessary to address the needs of local population are necessary and international actors sometimes ignore these needs and marginalise local NGOs that address these needs.

Notably, it is worthy to call on each actor involved to consider the role of the other in order to facilitate the process of service delivery reaching the local population. Each actor, according to their perception, works differently: the international actor follows the top-down approach, while their counterpart the local actor prefers the bottom-up method. In order to develop a useful process for the facilitation function, both approaches the top-down and bottom-up approaches can be used to reach out to the needy during or after the unrest.

8.5.7 Service Delivery Domination

During armed conflict, the population may be starved of essential services because the state structures are either destroyed or weakened. At this point the Civil society actors (mainly NGOs, but sometimes associations as well) can and do step forward to provide aid and social services. Related to protection and facilitation, the service delivery function is necessary. Nevertheless, in the case of the eastern parts in Kivu provinces, the CSOs show dependency on the foreign donor funds to foster their activities. This dependency forces the CSOs to adapt their focus to reflect donor priorities. This might not be the correct attitude because there is no freedom of thinking and using the service delivery for the appropriate or targeted needy population. Financial support becomes an obstacle for greater autonomy and sustainability of CSOs in the Kivu provinces. The CSOs have to work to find their own financial supplies in order to curb this dependency which can hinder their service delivery activities due to lack of finance.

The issue of the financial dependency is also connected to the marginalisation of the smaller CSOs (to reduce the costs of transactions) by the international NGOs. International actors have chosen a small number of CSOs based in the cities and they have the capacity to manage their resources. This manner of working puts aside the true population that can benefit from the aid due to the criteria based on the donor's priorities. Meanwhile, grassroots actors who are unable to manage large funds cannot obtain grants even though they can reach the marginalised population in the remote communities (Stephen 2017, p. 40). Unless, international donors consider these issues that hamper the service delivery in the grassroots level, mainly in Kivu where the conflict is still ongoing, the service delivery will not reach the well targeted persons in need.

Another important element is the professionalisation of CSOs by the international donor. It can be observed that that which happened in Kivu regions shows the difficulty to bring the local and international actor together for a common service

delivery function. The international donors tend to dominate the function due to their possession of finances and impose their views and methods on the local CSOs, as the latter lack funds. In addition, the international actors push the CSOs towards professionalisation to meet donor reporting requirements. This places the peacebuilding process in jeopardy as the objective to assist the needy depends on meeting those requirements.

If the international actor has to dominate and decide on all the procedures with the consequence of the grassroots people not receiving aid, the domination can weaken the CSOs' ties with the communities and the CSOs cannot have an impact in peace building process as they depend mostly on the international donors. This service delivery function needs facilitation such that it avoids the professionalisation of the CSOs and places more importance on reaching the population and providing for their needs. Many CSOs have a limited role in delivering aid as they lack opportunities to help shape projects based on their understanding of local needs, which in turn affects their relationships with local communities and means they are unable to represent their needs (Stephen 2017: 40). If there is a will to help the marginalised population during the conflict, the assistance must be sincere and reach the targeted population in need. Having understood how the seven key functions work in peacebuilding particularly in Kivu provinces, a conclusion is drawn from the study in its entirety.

8.6 Conclusion

This study objective was to examine how effective has civil society been in ending armed conflict and sustaining peace in conducting the seven peacebuilding functions of protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialisation, social cohesion, facilitation, and service delivery in Kivu provinces? Several important elements have been identified. Concerning the peacebuilding functions, protection is characterised by the mobilisation of protection strategies by various leaders in the existing structures and mobilisation of power bases including women. These strategies have helped to minimise the risk of violence but they do not ensure total peace. The monitoring is marked by the harassment of human rights activists and their families; local and international actors; and authorities' differences in their involvement in their problems, solving them sometimes without consensus.

In the advocacy function, various CSOs initiatives considered to be alternative and grounded approaches to peacebuilding have been effective. In addition, CSOs struggle to engage in constructive dialogue with political authorities, and women's engagement in peacebuilding is a challenge as their participation has not brought about an efficient response to the persistent sexual and gender-based violence that still occurs today. The issues of CSOs base related to the local population, political authorities, and international bodies as well as the trust and trust deficit within and external to civil society, were revealed in the function of socialisation. These factors constituted the hindrance to these peacebuilding functions.

In addition, concerning the social cohesion, the high degree of politicisation in civil society, not only indicated by the problematic relationship between its members and those in power but also by localised conflicts dynamics, is an obstacle to peace building functions. It is worth to note that CSOs as facilitators have seen their involvement in various peace discussions and accords being unsuccessful, where the exclusion of grassroots representatives has been detrimental and has of their inclusion that led to peace processes failure in the Kivu provinces. This is illustrated by the CSOs being considered as the branches of patron-client networks and the influx of international aid and humanitarian intervention with local NGOs being dominated by the international actors imposing their priorities instead of considering those of the people in the fields. This has led to a conflict between up-down and bottom-up approaches in the conflict resolution carried out by CSOs in the Kivu provinces. Furthermore, some factors have been revealed in the service delivery function regarding the CSOs' dependency on foreign donors' funds, where their desperation for financial support has led to the reliance on the international donors and submission to their priorities. Furthermore, a CSO professionalisation by international actors has led to the weakening of their ties with communities due to the imposition of applying international donors' priorities in the course of the peacebuilding process.

All the above-mentioned identified factors confirm this chapter' argument that the civil society, despite its slight development, is still weak in building peace due to various factors that hinder the fulfilment of the key peacebuilding functions. These identified factors have contributed to the hindrance of the seven-key peacebuilding functions, varying substantially from function to function in weakening the CSOs' various actions in peacebuilding processes despite a few positive initiatives being detected in each function and their impact in the Kivu provinces.

These identified factors constitute the challenges to the functions of peacebuilding process for the conflict resolutions carried out by the CSOs. Therefore, it is imperative and worthy to address these challenges first by making mechanisms that can impact positively on the CSOs' actions to stop and eradicate the recurrent conflict and move toward a sustainable peace in the Kivu provinces in DRC. Unless, these identified peacebuilding factors are addressed or eradicated as a pre-condition, sustainable peace cannot be attained with the consequence being a resurgence of conflict for the population of the Kivu provinces in the eastern parts of DRC.

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