

GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE (GLPI)

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I. MESSAGE FROM GLPI MANAGEMENT

Dear members, administrative authorities, and partners,



It is a great pleasure for the GLPI Management to share with you this report of our achievements during the year 2024. In a year marked by unprecedented challenges in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, our commitment to peace and reconciliation has never been more crucial. Every initiative we have undertaken demonstrates our dedication to building a harmonious future for the communities we serve.

We have achieved significant successes, but we also face obstacles that require our collective attention. Thanks to your hard work, we have succeeded in creating spaces for dialogue between chapters and members of state institutions, promoting peace education, and building local capacities through the Regional Peacebuilding Institute.

However, the escalating war in eastern DRC, which exacerbated tensions throughout the region, posed a major challenge to GLPI's work. Some activities were canceled due to the inaccessibility of the area of operation.

This report is structured to provide an overview of the activities carried out during 2024, analyze their impact on beneficiary communities, and reflect on best practices or lessons learned that emerged from this process.

We take this opportunity to thank:

all of GLPI's founding member organizations, including MCC, MI-PAREC, COPARE, and Friends Peace House; the administrative authorities of Burundi; the staff of MCC Burundi; various organizations that sent us participants, facilitators, special speakers, and translators; the participants at the Institute, the GLPI volunteer team, and staff; and the members of the Regional Network of Alumni (RCAP-RGL), to name a few.

We thank you for your passion, your resilience, and your unwavering commitment to working for lasting peace.

Together, let us continue to build bridges, listen to the voices of those often left behind, and turn our challenges into opportunities.

Let us continue to move forward with determination toward our common goal.

KIBINAKANWA Dieudonné

Regional Directeur of

Great Lakes Peacebuilding Initiative

II. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF GLPI

The Great Lakes Peacebuilding Initiative (GLPI) is an organization working in the Great Lakes region. It was founded in 2004 by four organizations:

- Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross (MIPAREC) from Burundi,
- Friends Peace House (FPH) from Rwanda,
- Conseil pour la Paix et la Reconciliation (COPARE) from Democratic Republic of Congo , and
- Mennonite Central Committee (MCC USA/CANADA).

VISION

GLPI aims to make the African Great Lakes region a space where a culture of peace and sustainable development reigns.

MISSION

⇒ In order to realize this vision, GLPI is committed to a mission of bringing together peacemakers in the region by strengthening their capacities, sharing and exchanging their experiences through theoretical and practical courses in the spirit of building a supportive and active network of agents of change.

More specifically, GLPI aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Promote high-quality training for peacebuilders in the African Great Lakes region;
- Create platforms for the exchange and sharing of experiences and ideas on peacebuilding in the region; and
- Build a network of peacebuilders in the region.

Core values

- **Learning Culture** : We encourage a willingness to learn from one another.
- **Nonviolence**: We are committed to promoting a culture of peace in our region using nonviolent methods, tools, and techniques.
- **Mutual Respect**: As GLPI brings together people from different backgrounds and cultures, we advocate for the acceptance of others as God's creation.
- **Solidarity**: Faced with common problems and challenges, we encourage mutual assistance and collaboration to establish lasting peace in our region.



Ms. Melody Musser



Ms. Christine Sumog-oy



Ms. Lyse MARINAT NIKOYAGIZE



KIBINAKANWA Dieudonné
Actuel Directeur Régional

HISTORY

Originally known as GLPS "Great Lakes Peacebuilding Seminar", GLPI is a capacity building initiative for peacebuilders in the Great Lakes sub-region, initiated in 2004 by 4 organizations (MIPAREC, FPH, COPARE and MCC), in the form of an institution that offers high quality seminars and training for peacebuilding in the Great Lakes region of Africa and elsewhere. The longest training lasts 4 weeks and is known as the October Institute.

In 2013, representatives of the initiating organizations, meeting at the Ordinary General Assembly, decided to change the name GLPS to the "Great Lakes Peacebuilding Institute," abbreviated as GLPI, and redefined its vision, mission, and objectives. Since then, GLPI's coordination has been entrusted to MCC volunteers named Ms. Melody Musser, who led the institution from 2013 to May 2017, and to Ms. Christine Sumog-oy from 2017 to 2020. Both were assisted by Ms. Lyse Marinat NIKOYAGIZE.

Since 2015, to address identified needs in the field of peacebuilding, particularly the relationship between peace and development, GLPI has organized specific short-term modular training sessions and, since 2018, has introduced modules on development. At the same time, its doors have been opened to other participants from other African countries and beyond.

In June 2020, GLPI was registered, by ministerial decision, in Burundi under the name "Great Lakes Peacebuilding Initiative," and since then, the Peacebuilding Institute has become one of the organization's main programs, which now has an annual plan and other initiatives.

Among many other initiatives, GLPI supports structures called "Chapters," which are groups of graduates from the same city who have completed training courses organized by GLPS/GLPI on peacebuilding and community development since 2004.

Currently, chapters exist in the cities of Gitega and Bujumbura in Burundi, Kigali in Rwanda, Goma, Bukavu and Uvira in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Together, these Chapters constitute a regional network called the Réseau de Concertation des Artisans de Paix dans la Région des Grands Lacs (RCAP-RGL), which is a peace infrastructure consisting of a dynamic regional network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills held by GLPI Alumni, state institutions, civil society and community institutions that promote dialogue and consultation, prevent conflicts and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs.

GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE

IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF GLPI

The Great Lakes Peacebuilding Institute has received contributions from several influential figures who have played a vital role in promoting peace and reconciliation in the Great Lakes region. Here are some notable figures who have contributed their expertise and commitment:



- **Dr. Jimmy Juma Mulanda, current MCC Representative in Rwanda and Burundi**, is a recognized activist and leader in the field of peace and development, particularly active in the Great Lakes region, especially in East Africa. Mulanda has played an active role in guiding, developing the approaches, modules and curriculum used within GLPI. He has been the trainer for several years within GLPI. Mulanda has collaborated with various non-governmental organizations to mobilize participants and trainers. His commitment to peace, development and strengthening of GLPI makes him a respected figure within this organization.



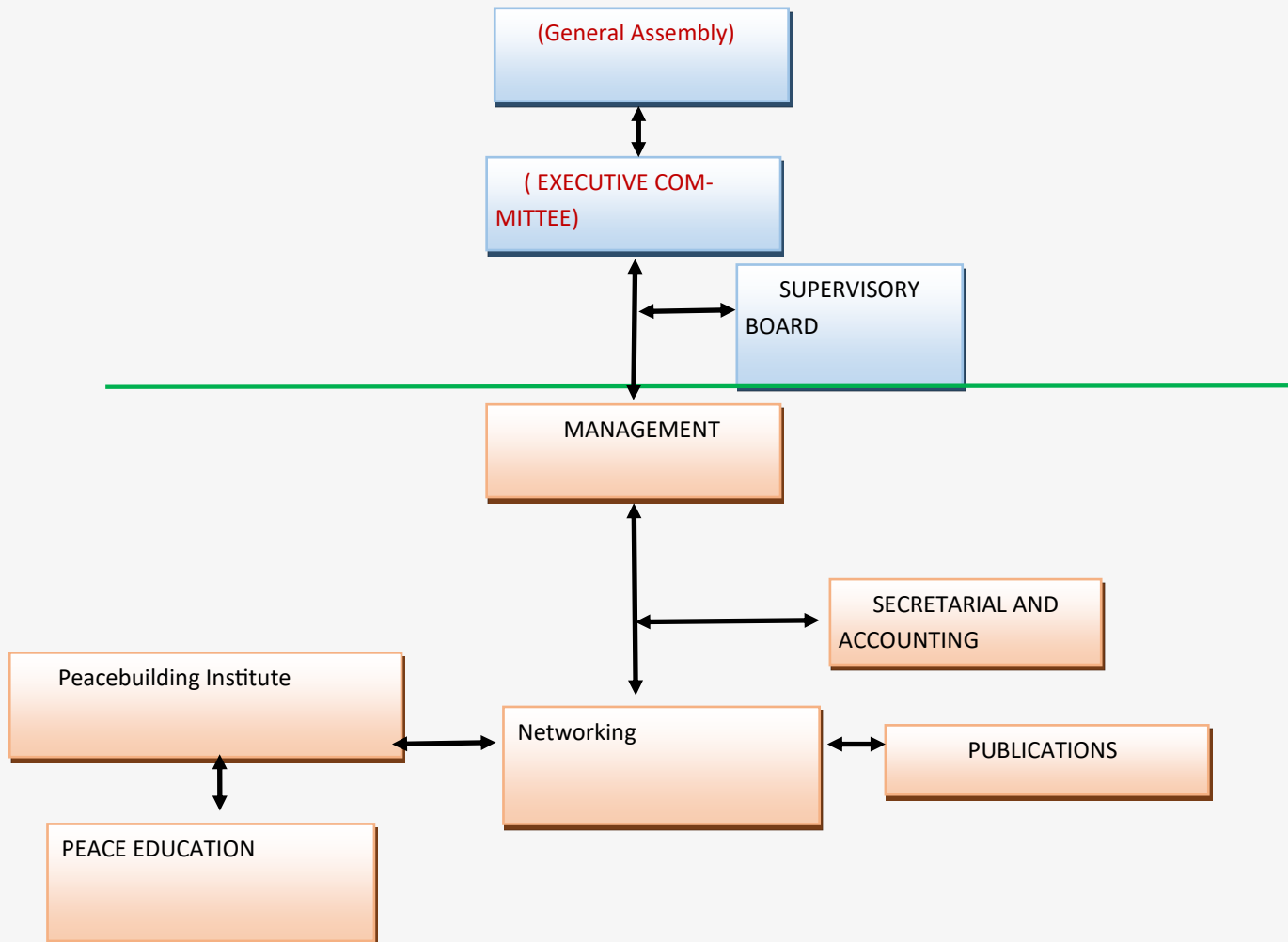
- **Briget Butt** who worked for MCC in Rwanda and Burundi for over a decade starting in 1994: Briget Butt's impact on the Great Lakes Peacebuilding Institute lies in her ability to bring together people from different backgrounds, strengthen the organization's leadership skills, and promote a culture of lasting peace in a region often marked by conflict. She also contributed to the development of GLPI's training program and was a facilitator for several years. Her main focus was on strengthening the capacity of the organization's leaders, equipping them with the skills needed to promote peace and justice in the Great Lakes Region.

- **The members of the GLPI General Assembly** play a crucial role from its conception and in the organization's consolidation by fulfilling the following functions:
 - * Structuring and developing the organization's policies
 - * Outlining the organization's major strategic directions
 - * Promoting cooperation and collaboration with various stakeholders
 - * Monitoring and evaluating the organization.
 - * .



GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE

STRUCTURE OF GLPI



GLPI is an organization with a well-knit structure. It is represented at the top by a General Assembly, which is the supreme decision-making body and which meets once a year in ordinary session or whenever necessary in extraordinary session. It also has a Board of Directors that meets once a quarter. GLPI also has a technical or supervisory committee that monitors the proper execution of activities by the Management.

III. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND STATE OF PLAY

SHORT ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

The socio-political context of the Great Lakes region of Africa is complex, marked by the legacy of historical conflicts, ethnic tensions, power struggles, and unstable political dynamics. Although efforts are being made to resolve conflicts and strengthen governance, the challenges remain numerous and complex, requiring inclusive and sustainable approaches.

1. Legacy of Conflicts

The Tragedies of Cyclical Warfare: Since the independence years, the countries of the Great Lakes Region, including Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, have experienced tragedies of war, massacres, and violence of all kinds, leaving wounds and conflicts that have unfortunately gone unaddressed or have been poorly managed. The tragedy of the genocide in Rwanda left deep scars throughout the region. The consequences extended to Burundi and the DRC, where armed conflicts intensified in the following decades and continue to this day.

Currently, wars in the Great Lakes Region, especially in eastern DRC, involve several countries and armed groups, exacerbating tensions and generating lasting instability throughout the region.

2. Ethnic Tensions

Ethnic identities, particularly between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi, continue to play a central role in regional politics. Policies of exclusion and discrimination have often been rooted in ethnic tensions, fueling recurring conflicts.

3. Involvement of Armed Groups

The region is home to numerous armed groups, often battling for control of natural resources, further complicating socio-political dynamics. These groups, such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Congo River Alliance, and the M23, are the main ones, often operating outside state control, escalating local and inter-state conflicts in the region.

4. Migration and Refugees

Conflict and instability have led to massive population displacement. Millions of refugees circulate between countries in the region, creating additional tensions and affecting asylum and integration policies.

5. Governance and Human Rights.

Due to the chronic instability in the region, human rights violations are frequent. There are cases of gender-based violence, political intolerance, social injustice due to corruption and fanaticism, economic malfeasance, political and identity manipulation, trauma, and even mental illness, as well as customary power exploited by politicians. Freedom of expression and political rights are often repressed.

6. Regional Cooperation

Despite the challenges, cooperation efforts are underway, particularly through organizations such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the East African Community, which aim to promote peace and security. However, results remain inconsistent.

7. Informal Economy and Social Factors

The region's economy is largely informal, and many citizens rely on subsistence agriculture and local trade. This creates a rich social dynamic, but also challenges for development and public services.

STATE OF PLAY IN PEACEBUILDING AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

Despite numerous challenges, the Great Lakes region of Africa is showing encouraging signs of progress in peacebuilding. Aligned efforts at the local, national, and regional levels demonstrate the importance of a holistic approach to achieving sustainable peace. The gains made, however, require continued vigilance and commitment from all stakeholders to address residual threats and persistent tensions.

1. Local and National Level

Strengthening Social Cohesion: Several non-governmental organizations, including GLPI members (MIPAREC, FPH, COPARE, and MCC), work at the local and national levels to improve the social fabric. For example, peace education and awareness-raising programs are developed to ease tensions. Community projects are implemented to promote reconciliation between ethnic groups. These initiatives engage local stakeholders, including women and youth, in dialogue to build peace. These organizations contribute to the holding of peaceful elections, the strengthening of institutions, and encourage inclusive dialogue.

2 . At the Regional level:

Regional Security Initiatives: Organizations such as the East African Community and the ICGLR play a crucial role in facilitating dialogue between member states. They work to implement security protocols, economic cooperation, and multilateral peace agreements.

Regional peace initiatives such as the Regional Peacebuilding Institute and RCAP-RGL, which are initiatives of GLPI, contribute to stabilizing certain regions and protecting civilians in situations of danger, and demonstrate a willingness to resolve problems peacefully.

IV. Main activities and Achievements in 2024



REALISATION 1.

Promoting high-quality training for peacebuilders in the Great Lakes region of Africa and elsewhere.

ACTIVITY 1

THE 20TH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL PEACE-BUILDING INSTITUTE

The Great Lakes Region of Africa, a strategically significant region both geopolitically and economically, has long been marked by recurring conflicts and stability challenges. Since 2004, the GLPI Regional Peacebuilding Institute has been committed to analyzing, preventing, and resolving tensions in this complex region and to serving as a breeding ground for peacebuilders in the region and throughout Africa.

In a context where social inequalities, ethnic rivalries, and resource struggles exacerbate tensions, GLPI strives to promote lasting solutions.

From October 7 to November 1, 2024, GLPI organized the 20th monthly session of the Regional Peacebuilding Institute. In this report, we provide a brief overview of the Institute's progress. A detailed report is available here: www.greatlakespeacebuildinginstitute.org

The road to peace is fraught with challenges, but with collective commitment and renewed determination, significant results can be achieved.

GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE

Objectives of the INSTITUTE:

- ⇒ International participants benefit from comprehensive, high-quality training in peacebuilding and development through theory-based learning and practical experience in the areas of conflict transformation and development.
- ⇒ Participants acquire analytical and application skills, as well as comprehensive nonviolent conflict transformation methods.
- ⇒ Participants reflect on their own roles and behaviors and gain awareness of working in and on conflict in their own communities.

OCTOBER 2024 INSTITUTE THEME:

Understanding and Responding to African and Global Challenges: Concept and Strategies for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding

Targeted outcome

The capacities of peacebuilders in the Great Lakes Region are strengthened in peacebuilding and community

MODULES, CALENDAR AND FACILITATORS

Week	Peacebuilding Courses	Facilitator	Community and organizational Development Courses	Facilitator
1 7– 11 Oct	Peace and Conflict Theory: Understanding African and Global Challenges.	ISSA SADI EBOM-BOLO (ZAMBIE)	Project design, mobilization and fundraising.	Cyprien Nkoma (BURKINA FASO)
2 14-18 Oct	Concept and strategies of peacebuilding and conflict transformation	ISSA SADI EBOM-BORO (ZAMBIE)	Design and implementation of an effective monitoring and evaluation plan.	Jean Berchimans NTAMAHANGARIZO (BURUNDI)
3 21-25 Oct	Trauma Healing and Reconciliation	Alexis NIMUBONA (BURUNDI)	Conflict Sensitivity and the Do No Harm Approach	William KIPTOO (KENYA)
4 28 Oct- 01 Nov	Disasters Management conflicts related to the environment and natural resources	Karoline Caesar (Allemagne)	Organizational and Community Leadership	JACOB Yoder DRC MCC representative (ETATS UNIS D'AMERIQUE)



GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW OF THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE INSTITUTE'S PROGRESS

OPENING CEREMONY: Generates enthusiasm and interest, thereby engaging participants to fully invest themselves.

OUR GLPI TRAINING METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH: The training approach and methodology at the Great Lakes Peacebuilding Institute (GLPI) generally focuses on building the capacity of individuals and communities active in peacebuilding and development in the Great Lakes region of Africa and elsewhere. It uses participatory learning methods, such as group work, case studies and simulations, and personal stories to encourage participant engagement.

FACILITATION: GLPI mobilizes international experts with practical experience in conflict management, peacebuilding, and development.

LINKS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: Courses combine theory and practical case studies so that participants can immediately apply what they have learned. During the training GLPI organized field trips to enrich learning and help establish links between theory and practice, which is crucial for the success of peace and development initiatives.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: During its training sessions, GLPI has fostered team spirit through tree planting. This year, classes planted trees at the Stadium Primary School.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY: This creates a positive dynamic that enriches the learning experience, making the training not only educational but also memorable and rewarding.

MORNING DEVOTION: This allows students to begin the day by focusing on spiritual values, thus fostering a positive mindset. This time is conducive to reflection, meditation, and prayer, allowing them to better understand themselves and clarify their thoughts and intentions for the day.

VISITS TO DIFFERENT CHURCHES: Churches offer a peaceful environment, conducive to personal reflection, meditation, or simply a moment of tranquility away from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

ORGANIZING SIGHTSEEING AND RECREATIONAL TOURS: Peace training can address sensitive and sometimes weighty topics. Incorporating recreational activities can help participants decompress, manage stress, and maintain emotional balance.

CERTIFICATE AWARD: This is a moment of collective celebration, reinforcing a sense of belonging to a group and a shared experience.

CLOSING CEREMONY: Enables to review the main lessons and activities, thus reinforcing the knowledge acquired.

APERCU SUR LES COURS OCTROYES A L' INSTITUT D' OCTOBRE 2024



Peace and Conflict Theory: Understanding African and Global Challenges **by ISSA SADI EBOMBOLO from ZAMBIA**

This module is designed as a general introduction to the field of peace and conflict studies and to understanding Africa and global challenges. The course consists of two sections: The first section provides explanations of different sets of peace and conflict theories. This section identifies the underlying causes and sources of conflict in human beings, as well as conflict in the way humans interact with each other in society or in the conditions of the social structure. The second section presents the origins and nature of conflict in Africa, multicultural perspectives on conflict, and how emerging patterns and trends in conflict in Africa form the basis for reflection.

In addition, this section provides an understanding of recent African history, which has had a significant impact on the breakdown of African institutions and, consequently, on the incidence and intensity of conflict on the continent and globally. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that what is happening in the current economic, political and social life in Africa in general and in the Great Lakes region in particular has much to do with the advent of three traumatic events (slavery, colonization and the modernization process). The three traumatic episodes will provide an in-depth insight into the current global and African situation using the ABC (attitude, behavior and context) triangular tool of conflict analysis.





Project design, mobilization and fundraising by Mr NKOMA KAMENGWA Cyprien from Burkina Faso

1. The "Project Development, Fundraising, and Mobilization" course covers the essential steps for designing successful projects and securing the necessary funding.

2. This course module provides an introduction to the various concepts and skills needed to effectively design, implement, and manage peacebuilding and development projects, leading to organizational suc-

cess and positive, sustainable change. Participants explored the project design process, from initiation, conceptualization, and planning to development, implementation, and monitoring. Participants also learned about theories of change, logical frameworks, success indicators, and project design using the integrated peacebuilding framework. The main objective of this module is to enable participants to develop effective approaches and improve their skills in designing, implementing, and managing projects within their own organizations or communities.

By the end of the week, participants were able to:

1. Identify ways to implement high-quality project processes for their own organization or community.
2. Develop a theory of change, a logical framework, and success indicators.

Equip themselves with the skills and competencies necessary for effective organizational leadership.



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Concept and strategies of peacebuilding and conflict transformation by ISSA SADI EBOMBOLO (ZAMBIE)

This course provides an overview of the key concepts, strategies, and challenges shaping work in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The module introduces participants to the various concepts, tools, approaches, and types of peacebuilding and conflict transformation interventions. It defines the importance of peacebuilding and conflict transformation through concrete examples that demonstrate the complex nature of this field. These concrete examples motivate and require participants to reflect on their prior knowledge. The course is designed to encourage participants to explore the concepts, tools, and approaches learned in this course and to discuss how their work integrates with them to contribute to their peacebuilding and conflict transformation efforts. It offers a case study that encourages participants to deepen their analysis and continue to reflect on how they might integrate peacebuilding and conflict transformation objectives into their own work or in other conflicts. Finally, this course provides participants with a safe space for self-reflection and test retention at the end of the course.

Course Goals and Objectives

1. To provide participants with an understanding of the concepts, tools, approaches, and strategies of conflict transformation and peacebuilding using concrete examples.
2. To help participants identify conceptual approaches and strategies relevant to their context and integrate them into efforts to build peace and transform conflicts affecting their regions of origin.





Conflict Sensitivity and the Do No Harm Approach, by WILLIAM KIPTOO from KENYA

The course on "Conflict Sensitivity and the Do No Harm Approach" deals with ways to analyze and manage conflicts in a way that minimizes harm and promotes peace. This course is designed to equip participants with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to analyze, develop, and apply strategies to address the complexities of assistance, development, and peacebuilding with better results for the societies where assistance is provided. Participants were introduced to analytical frameworks for reducing complexity and managing uncertainty; conflict-sensitive approaches; and strategies for integrating these approaches into their programming. The main objective of this module is to introduce participants to the ideas, concepts, and approaches of conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm in order to improve and strengthen their values and principles for understanding, implementing, and monitoring conflict-sensitive programs. The course emphasizes the need to adopt a proactive and thoughtful approach in developing interventions to avoid exacerbating conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence. He calls for the importance of collaboration and ethical responsibility in conflict management.



Design and implementation of an effective monitoring and evaluation plan, by Jean Berchimans NTAMAHANGARIZO from Burundi.

The course on "Designing and Implementing an Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Plan" covers the principles and practices needed to establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that ensures project quality and impact.

This course module enables participants to plan, design, and implement effective monitoring and evaluation strategies for their respective organizations. Participants learned about various monitoring and evaluation objectives, mechanisms, and frameworks, including the development of baselines and indicators and the implementation of learning methods to improve the quality and impact of their work. Participants also explored best practices and lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation experiences of various peacebuilding and development programs in different contexts.

The course emphasizes the importance of careful design and rigorous implementation of a monitoring and evaluation plan to improve project effectiveness, promote transparency, and strengthen accountability to stakeholders.



Understanding Trauma and Reconciliation by Alexis NIMUBONA From BURUNDI

This course aims to provide participants with a thorough understanding of trauma, its effects, and strategies for reconciliation and healing, thus enabling an environment conducive to individual and community recovery. The course explores the understanding of trauma, the types of trauma, whether individual (personal experiences) or collective (wars, genocides); the impact of trauma on individuals, groups or communities, healing processes (recognition of trauma, expression of emotions and therapeutic approaches). The course also explores reconciliation, the importance of forgiveness, the restoration of trust as well as the construction of collective memory. Participants learn about different resources and support, whether psychological

support or community resources.

Finally, participants understand how to prevent trauma through education and awareness and through mental health promotion.



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DISASTERS MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES BY Karoline Caesar from Germany

- The course on "Disaster Management and Conflict related to Environment and Natural Resources " explores how environmental disasters and natural resource management can amplify tensions and provoke conflicts, while examining management strategies to mitigate these risks. The course was structured as follows:

1. Introduction to Environmental Disasters

- **Types of Disasters:** Floods, droughts, earthquakes, and their socioeconomic impact.
- **Climate Change:** Influence on the Frequency and Intensity of Disasters.

2. Relationships Between Environment and Conflict

- **Natural Resources:** The importance of resources such as water, oil, and agricultural land in triggering conflicts.
- **Competition for Resources:** Case studies of crisis-affected regions where scarce resources have exacerbated tensions.



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Organizational and community leadership by JACOB Yoder From United States of America

The "Organizational and Community Leadership" course explores the styles, skills, and practices necessary for effective leadership within organizations and communities.

The goal of this course was to raise awareness of how leadership skills can be implemented in families, organizations, and communities. Participants learned that leadership is not based solely on position, as dictated by the structure or hierarchy of the organization or community; but rather on the principle that leadership inspires and empowers others, regardless of one's position in the organization or community.

The course emphasizes the importance of inclusive, ethical, and adaptive leadership to inspire meaningful change at both the organizational and community levels. The continued development of leadership skills is essential to meet current and future challenges.



GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS, FACILITATORS AND PARTNERS

Country of origin of participants



Burkina Faso



Burundi



Rwanda



Kenya



RDC



Tchad

⇒ Countries of origin of Experts & facilitators



Burkina faso



Burundi



Kenya



RDC



Allemagne



USA



Zambie

⇒ Countries of origin of the Translators



Cameroun



Burundi

⇒ PARTNERS WHO SENT PARTICIPANTS:



United Nations
for refugees Burundi



Peace Direct



Fondation Chirezi



Rwanda Burundi, DRC,



FPH / Rwanda



WFD/MIPAREC Burundi

Number of participants :

Men /Women ratio :

Levels of study: General humanities, bachelor's and master's degrees

ACHIEVEMENT 2

Collaboration with ecclesiastical, public and private institutions involved in capacity building in peacebuilding

Result: The regional platform for exchange and sharing of experiences RCAP-RGL, state institutions, and local leaders strengthen collaboration in the management of electoral conflicts and the promotion of advocacy for good governance.

According to GLPI's approach, the Chapter is a collection of Alumni from the same city who have attended the trainings organized by GLPS/GLPI on peacebuilding and community development at the October Institutes and the Special Modules since 2004. Thus, the Alumni of the cities of Gitega and Bujumbura in Burundi, Kigali in Rwanda, Goma, Bukavu and Uvira in the Democratic Republic of Congo, came together to put into practice what they learned during the trainings offered by GLPI in the field of peacebuilding and community development as agents of change. All of those Chapters constitute a regional network called the **Concertation Network for Peacebuilders in the Great Lakes Region (RCAP-RGL)** which is a regional platform.



1. SPECIAL MODULE

training on monitoring and observation of democratic elections on the management of pre- and post-election conflicts.

Peace structures such as chapters, political actors, civil society representatives, and members of state institutions play a key role in voters information and education activities, particularly by encouraging broader participation and engagement. Voters education initiatives are particularly important in countries with limited democratic traditions and/or low literacy levels. The aforementioned structures also participate in electoral processes through non-partisan domestic observation and election security, thus improving the transparency of the electoral process and public confidence in the credibility and legitimacy of an election.

From August 18 to 22, 2024, GLPI organized a training session in GITEGA at the MIPAREC Center, featuring a special module on conflict management related to electoral cycles, monitoring, and election observation.

The facilitator: Dr. Silas Sayumwe, Rector of the Polytechnic University of GITEGA. He is one of GLPI's key facilitators.

The training session on conflict management related to electoral cycles brought together participants from various fields, including political actors, chapter representatives, members of state institutions such as territorial authorities, police officers, and magistrates, as well as representatives of the member organization MIPAREC. The main objective was to increase participants' capacity to identify, manage, and resolve conflicts that may arise before, during, and after elections.

Context and Objectives of the Training

Context:

Burundi is preparing to experience a significant electoral cycle in 2025, with legislative and local elections taking place on various dates:

Deputy and municipal councilor elections: June 5, 2025

Senators elections: July 23, 2025

Villages and quarters councilor elections: August 25, 2025

In this context, civic education plays a vital role in encouraging citizen participation in the upcoming elections and promoting democratic values, including tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for human rights despite political competition. Collaboration between state and non-state institutions is crucial to ensuring successful elections in Burundi. Each party plays a complementary role that, if exercised effectively, can lead to more transparent and democratic elections. To contribute to the smooth running of the electoral process, a collaboration agreement was signed between the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and the Great Lakes Peacebuilding Initiative (GLPI).

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2. Topics Covered

- Understanding the concepts, values, and democratic principles
- **Common causes of conflict during electoral periods:** Understanding the different types of conflict (political, social, community) and their root causes.
- **Role of state institutions in the proper management of electoral periods:** Practical approaches to defusing tensions, including mediation and dialogue.
- **Role of civil society** in the proper management of electoral periods
- **Observation of the electoral process:** Principles and practices of election observation, including data collection, assessment of transparency, and integrity of electoral processes.
- **Monitoring:** The role of monitoring in conflict prevention, with an emphasis on proactive engagement.

This training represents a crucial step in strengthening democracy and good governance. By equipping these key actors with the necessary skills to manage conflict, it is possible to reduce electoral tensions and ensure peaceful and inclusive electoral processes.

As a result, the training enabled the strengthening of the network among participants to share experiences and best practices.



2. Capacity building training for chapter leaders and members of State Institutions on advocacy, good governance and networking.



Civil society and state institutions have the capacity to fulfill several key functions in the service of democracy and good governance in peacebuilding scenarios. For example, civil society and state institutions are considered one of the pillars of any democratic structure and are therefore essential institutions for restoring and consolidating democracy. Civil society and state institutions can also facilitate participatory local governance mechanisms.

From June 17 to 19, 2024, GLPI organized a training session in Bujumbura (Pacifique Hotel) on "advocacy and good governance."

The facilitator was Pastor Acher Niyonizigiye, PhD. He is one of GLPI's key facilitators.

Participants included: Leaders from the Gitega and Bujumbura chapters, local authorities, magistrates, and police officers.

This training, which was part of the project's overall objective: "Strengthen and support the regional network's peacebuilding initiatives in the Great Lakes Region of Africa," also aimed to establish joint teams capable of implementing initiatives aimed at mitigating or preventing conflict.



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Training Objectives :

1. **Strengthening advocacy skills:** Training participants on effective advocacy strategies to influence political decisions and promote public policies that support human rights.
2. **Promoting good governance:** Raising awareness of the importance of transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in the management of public affairs.

Results:

- Improved participants' capacity to conduct advocacy activities.
- Strengthened collaboration between civil society and state institutions.
- Increased awareness of good governance issues within communities.

This initiative helped create a framework for dialogue between various civil society actors and state institutions, thereby strengthening the skills needed to promote good governance practices and effective advocacy.



SETTING UP JOINT CONFLICT PREVENTION TEAMS

Joint conflict prevention teams are essential to foster peace and stability in often fragile contexts, by adopting a proactive and collaborative approach. These teams already have been set up in Burundi (GITEGA and BUJUMBURA) and in the DRC (UVIRA).

they play a crucial role in managing and resolving tensions before they escalate into open conflict. Here are some key aspects of its role:

1. **Mediation:** The team facilitates dialogue between conflicting parties, helping to clarify issues and encourage open communication.
2. **Conflict Analysis:** It assesses the underlying causes of tensions, allowing for a better understanding of the dynamics at play and the development of appropriate strategies.
3. **Awareness-Raising Program Design:** The team can organize workshops and training sessions to raise awareness among stakeholders about conflict resolution methods and the importance of collaboration.
4. **Building Trust:** By establishing trusting relationships between the groups involved, the team can contribute to a climate of security and cooperation.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** After implementing prevention measures, it is essential to evaluate their effectiveness and make adjustments if necessary.
6. **Community Engagement:** Work with local leaders and community stakeholders to strengthen local capacities to prevent and manage conflict.
7. **Rapid response:** In the event of escalating tensions, the team can intervene quickly to defuse the situation.



GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE

SETTING UP JOINT CONFLICT PREVENTION TEAMS

From January 22 to 23, 2025, in Uvira, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Great Lakes Peacebuilding Initiative (GLPI), in collaboration with the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation (COPARE), organized a workshop themed "Conflict Prevention." This event brought together participants from various backgrounds, including representatives from state institutions such as the police, local authorities, and members of the judiciary, as well as representatives from the Uvira Chapter, who are GLPI laureates. The main objective was to "develop essential skills to identify and manage conflicts constructively." The workshop also aimed to "explore conflict resolution strategies based on dialogue and cooperation." Through interactive discussions and practical exercises, we addressed effective strategies to anticipate and resolve conflicts before they escalate.

The GLPI delegation was welcomed by the mayor of Uvira, who is also an ambassador for peace. In summary, conflict prevention refers to the set of strategies, actions, and policies implemented to avoid the emergence or escalation of tensions that could lead to violent conflicts, whether within a country or between nations. It involves responding to risky situations before they escalate into open conflicts.

Participants learned the different steps to take for conflict prevention, namely:

- **Identifying root causes:** Understanding the economic, political, social, and cultural factors that can catalyze conflicts.
- **Building resilience:** Helping communities develop capacities to manage tensions peacefully.
- **Promoting communication:** Encouraging dialogue among concerned parties to reduce misunderstandings and mistrust.
- **Early interventions:** Implementing immediate measures to respond to risky situations before they escalate into open conflicts.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- **Monitoring tensions:** Establishing early warning systems to detect signs of rising tensions.
- **Evaluating prevention efforts:** Analyzing the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and adjusting them if necessary.

Rapid response:

- **Preventive intervention:** Being ready to act quickly if tensions become too strong to manage through dialogue.
- **Humanitarian assistance:** Providing aid in crisis situations to alleviate suffering and reduce tensions.

Such teams have also been established in Gitega and Bujumbura in Burundi.



V. MAJOR CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Organizing a Peace Institute in the context of the Great Lakes region of Africa poses several significant challenges, including:

1. Persistent Conflict and Instability: We organized the Institute at a time when the region is marked by conflicts related to ethnic, political, and economic rivalries. This means that humanitarian assistance has become the priority for most NGOs. As a challenge, the number of participants is limited.

3. Lack of Resources: Securing the necessary financial resources to establish and operate a peace institute remains a major challenge, especially in unstable contexts.

Educational Levels: The low educational level of some participants remains a challenge, as we often welcome participants with the same qualifications but without the same skills.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

The Great Lakes region, with its cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic diversities, offers a rich ground for analyzing power, gender, and environmental dynamics. We have learned a great deal from this context. The lessons drawn highlight the importance of a holistic approach that considers diversity, inclusivity, and environmental respect. This involves not only managing power relationships but also promoting sustainable development that enhances community resilience. Here are some key lessons learned:

INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION: GLPI sessions provide participants with a safe space to discuss experiences that have never been addressed or heard before. Thus, the opportunity to come together, share stories, and be listened to has greatly contributed to uncovering hidden truths and exploring paths of forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation.

INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS: Conflicts in the region are often exacerbated by ethnic differences. Well-structured local and regional peace structures that possess expertise in conflict analysis and transformation, while collaborating with both state and private institutions, form a successful model of peacebuilding. They are able to capitalize on a process of self-learning and expand their actions towards conflict transformation at local, national, and regional levels. They contribute to maximizing local mechanisms and positive cultural values to strengthen social cohesion.

CONFLICT PREVENTION: Civil society organizations, international NGOs, churches, state institutions, and individuals at the local, national, and regional levels who are well-equipped and capable of addressing conflicts with effective intervention strategies can provoke positive changes at the individual, community, national, and regional levels, thus contributing to the prevention of conflicts and violence between communities.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES: Peace activities that integrate environmental conservation and sustainability are crucial in an area often struck by deforestation and resource degradation. Educating participants on sustainable practices is essential for strengthening their resilience.

VII. Future prospects:

A future perspective for GLPI is emerging in several strategic and operational dimensions. These perspectives will not only contribute to a more peaceful environment in the region, but also strengthen inter-community links and promote development:

A) Technology and Innovation:

Use of Technology: Implement digital solutions to collect conflict data, raise awareness of peace issues, and promote community engagement.

Awareness Campaigns: Use social media to raise awareness and mobilize more participants at the Institute.

B) Local Capacity Building

Ongoing Training: GLPI aims to offer tailored training to community leaders, youth, and women to prepare them for mediation and leadership roles in peacebuilding.

C) Collaborative Networks

Regional Partnerships: Build alliances with other regional and international organizations to share best practices and resources.

Creating Dialogue Platforms: Facilitate spaces for dialogue between neighboring nations to resolve tensions in a timely manner.

D) Holistic Approaches

Interdisciplinarity: GLPI aims to combine economic, social, and environmental development approaches to address the root causes of conflict.

E) Peace Education:

Integrate peace education into school curricula to promote values of tolerance and respect from an early age.

F) Knowledge Sharing:

Publish case studies and experience reports to fuel debates and research on peace.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this report highlights the complex challenges facing the Great Lakes Region of Africa, while underscoring the significant potential for building lasting peace. Armed conflicts, ethnic rivalries, and social inequalities remain major obstacles, but the collective commitment of stakeholders, including governments, community organizations, and civil society, offers a glimmer of hope.

We noticed that building local capacity, including marginalized actors in peace processes, and leveraging innovative technologies are essential to advancing dialogue and reconciliation. Promoting transitional justice and peace education are emerging as effective measures to address the root causes of conflict.

It is crucial that the recommendations made in this report be heard and implemented on the ground. Continued support from the international community, combined with genuine local efforts, is essential to fostering a climate of trust and cooperation.

Looking ahead, the Peace Institute commits to continuing to play a catalytic role in promoting peace and stability in the region and calls on all stakeholders to join forces to build a peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous future for all.

GREAT LAKES PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE

Participants	numbers	
	# females	# Males
Capacity building training for chapter leaders and members of State Institutions on advocacy, good governance and networking.	7	11
training on monitoring and observation of democratic elections on the management of pre- and post-election conflicts.	9	12
Peace and Conflict Theory: Understanding African and Global Challenges.	8	14
Concept and strategies of peacebuilding and conflict transformation	6	13
Trauma Healing and Reconciliation	8	12
Disasters Management conflicts related to the environment and natural resources	7	14
Project design, mobilization and fundraising.	4	11
Design and implementation of an effective monitoring and evaluation plan.	6	11
Conflict Sensitivity and the Do No Harm Approach	7	12
Organizational and Community Leadership	4	13
Capacity building in conflict prevention in UVIRA, DRC	4	11
SETTING UP JOINT CONFLICT PREVENTION TEAMS	20	34
Nombre cumulatif total	90	168