

Introduction

When Tommy Africa asked for a meeting,¹ I prepared myself for trouble. It was late 1993, and South Africa was in the throes of its uneasy and often violent transition from apartheid (the policy of racial segregation) to democracy. Tommy was the chairperson of the “civics” of George in the Southern Cape region of South Africa. Civics was the name given to residents’ associations in black and colored townships that were formed in opposition to the local government structures of the apartheid government.² During the 1980s and early 1990s, the civics were in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid. Their tactics ranged from boycotts of all government institutions, consumer boycotts, protest marches, and sit-ins. Many of these events resulted in violence between the police and civic members because it was the police’s duty to break up these events—a duty that they were often accused of performing with excessive force. People were seriously wounded and, in extreme cases, killed. Much damage was done to property, especially buildings and vehicles. The release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the onset of negotiations did not really change the dynamics of these confrontations. If anything, they became more intense and violent as negotiations at the national level dragged on.

Between 1993 and 1994, I was a regional coordinator of the Western Cape Peace Committee, a body established by virtue of the National Peace

1. Not his real name.

2. It is always problematic to use racial categories when discussing South African politics. At the time, though, the official racial categories were “white” for the descendants of European settlers, “black” for indigenous Africans, and “colored” for the descendants of the indigenous Khoi-San and people of mixed race. The fourth official category was “Indian.”

Accord of 1991.³ My responsibilities included establishing and supporting local peace committees. The peace committees' overall task was to prevent violence and promote peace. Whenever the civics were therefore planning a protest march or a boycott action, they had, in terms of the National Peace Accord, to inform me or my colleagues about it. It often meant that we had to spend tense and difficult hours facilitating negotiations to resolve the dispute, monitoring the event, and preventing violence, at times by physically positioning ourselves between the police and the civics.

So when Tommy told me that he wanted to see me, I braced myself inwardly. His request, though, was peculiar: "We want you to organize a meeting between us and the police and to facilitate the meeting. Please make sure that the top commanders of the local police are there." He did not want to say more, which left me in an awkward position. How was I to convince the police to attend a meeting without a known agenda? My gut feeling was that this was serious and important. Fortunately, the police accepted my assessment and agreed to attend.

On the evening of the meeting at our offices, the civics representatives arrived early—which was a surprise. I tried to usher them to where I thought they should sit as a group, but they defied me. They sat down, clearly with deliberate intent, in every second chair, leaving a chair empty in-between. When the police arrived, they had to sit down, rather sheepishly, between the civics members. It was an interesting sight—the police, all white males, in their blue uniforms with the symbols of their rank (colonels, captains, and lieutenants) on their shoulders. Between them sat the civics—men and women, "colored," according to their official racial designation, and dressed in overalls, the uniform of the working class.

I opened the meeting and asked Tommy what he wanted us to discuss. "Reconciliation," he said. "We as the civics, through our engagements with the peace committee, have decided that the time has now arrived for us to make peace with those who were our immediate enemies—the police. This is the reason why we want to sit between the police, not opposite to them."

I don't remember much of the proceedings of that meeting, only that it was rather haphazard and awkward. But at the end of it, they all shook hands with a commitment to work toward a more constructive relationship. After they had left the room, Patrick Davids, my young colleague, himself "colored," with distrust of the police almost bred into his bones, shook his

3. The National Peace Accord was signed in September 1991. For a more detailed discussion of the accord, see chapter 2.

head in disbelief. “I never thought in my life that I would experience anything like this.”

This small bit of history illustrates a concept that is often used in peacebuilding literature—that of consolidating peace by anchoring it at local levels. By the time this unusual meeting occurred, the political elites had made substantial progress in negotiating an interim constitution for South Africa. Though still decidedly shaky and fragile, peace was in the air. Tommy and his comrades felt that they needed to make their own peace. They dealt with their own internal resistance to the very idea of reconciliation with their enemy and engaged in their own difficult, complex internal processes to reach consensus on the step. They made a very brave decision, implemented it, and thereby offered themselves, the police, and all of us an opportunity to break through barriers previously considered impenetrable. When, many years later, I read Elisabeth Wood’s description of *pleasure in agency* as a factor in explaining the behavior of El Salvador’s insurgents, I thought of the civics of George. As she explains, pleasure in agency is “the positive affect associated with self-determination, autonomy, self-esteem, efficacy, and pride that come from the successful assertion of intention” (Wood 2003:8). This positive affect was particularly relevant when accompanied by the sense that one was contributing to positive change in your own destiny. Tommy and his colleagues had a lot of that pleasure in agency. They had made their own peace.

However, the event was not completely serendipitous. By his own admission, the catalyst for Tommy’s initiative was the presence and work of a local peace committee in town. Without diminishing the quality of their pleasure in agency, the behavior of both the civics and police was made possible, first, by the existence of a National Peace Accord, and, second, by the mechanism (a “peace infrastructure”) that had been put in place by the National Peace Accord to facilitate local peacebuilding.

This formula—a national mandate for local peacebuilding plus local mechanisms to facilitate implementation in a manner that values local agency—is intriguing. It is a formula that is finding increasing application. Examples come from across the globe: South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. In Northern Ireland, for example, the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 identified the transformation of policing as a peacebuilding priority. Consequently, in all the districts of Northern Ireland, District Policing Partnerships have been established to facilitate dialogue between local communities and the police. Their task has been to build consensus on local policing priorities in light of the severe distrust of the police that existed particularly in

republican communities. Note the following description of such a meeting in West Belfast:

There is something of a quiet, largely unseen revolution, taking place inside the republican community and the PSNI [Police Service of Northern Ireland], as each comes to terms with the other in their joint task of creating a new policing service for a society emerging from war and conflict. I got an insight into that quiet revolution last Thursday night at a meeting of the West Belfast District Policing Partnership. The first of its kind in nationalist West Belfast, the meeting brought together the protagonists in the conflict. There was a surreal atmosphere in the room in Beechmount's leisure centre. It was another one of those "pinch yourself moments" that have accompanied the peace process. On one side those with a long history in the IRA [Irish Republican Army] and Sinn Fein and their community. On the other those once with the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary]—the armed wing of unionists. . . . There were others representing the SDLP and independents but the fascinating experience was in the occasion itself which brought together those in conflict with each other for decades—representatives of an old enmity and ancient conflict, now firmly on the cusp of change beyond imagination. . . . The meeting was a constructive and critical encounter. The cut and thrust of the exchange reflected clear progress being made in tackling anti-community crime (Gibney 2007).

As is clear from the quote, the progress "in tackling anti-community crime" was surface matter. At the heart of it, progress was made in restoring the confidence of a community in the legitimacy of the state and its institutions that, in the community's experience, only meant it harm in the past.

A last example—for now—comes from a completely different cultural and political context: Sierra Leone. Few countries throughout history have ever experienced the violence of civil war in such devastating manners as Sierra Leone. In 2007 and 2008, Sierra Leone held elections—presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007 and local elections in 2008—their third set of postconflict elections since the end of the ten-year civil war and the 1999 Lome Peace agreement, but this time with only limited support from the United Nations (UN) and no international peacekeepers around. In spite of great concern in the international community that the elections might be a catalyst for returning to war, these elections were not only relatively peaceful but also witnessed a successful transition of power—a still somewhat rare feat in Africa. Many factors contributed to this situation, but according to observers, the district committees put in place to monitor the code of conduct played an important role (European Union Election Observation Mission 2007; Nyathi 2008; Wyrod 2008; Ohman 2010). The code of conduct was a document negotiated between all political parties and monitored through a national committee consisting of the political parties, statutory bodies, and civil society. The national committee was replicated at district level. These local committees took responsibility for peace in their districts.

It occurred in a context where state institutions were almost completely incapable of providing for law and order at the local level. They mediated in at least forty-six cases of disputes with potential for violence (Ohman 2010). They not only prevented violence, but their fragile networks were also the only expression of social cohesion in an environment fraught with distrust and desperate competition.

These three examples of effective peacebuilding initiatives, created by the combination of a national mandate for local peacebuilding and the mechanisms necessary to implement it, demonstrate how peace can be anchored at the local level. The systems or procedures that were created are referred to, in current literature, as “infrastructures” or “architectures” for peace. The implicit assumption underpinning the establishment of such infrastructures is that local peacebuilding matters. A peace agreement between political elites, by implication, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for building peace. Peace needs to be anchored at the local level.

Why This Book?

The value of infrastructures for local peacebuilding is increasingly acknowledged, as demonstrated by the growing rate at which they are established in different arenas of violent conflict. The first example of this peacebuilding model occurred in Nicaragua in the late 1980s. In this book, I refer to eleven examples, with further reference to seven contexts with noteworthy developments that do not (yet) meet the requirements for being considered formal infrastructures (see appendix). In the meantime, many more countries are considering the option, specifically in Africa. The United Nations, for example, in collaboration with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), organized an “experience-sharing seminar” on “building infrastructures for peace” in February 2010 in Kenya that was attended by twelve African countries.⁴

However, as much as the trend in establishing such infrastructures is noteworthy, the absence of scrutiny and comparative assessment is worrying. The UN seminar in Kenya in February 2010 expressed this ambiguity (UNDP 2010). While supporting, in general, the strategy of establishing peace infrastructures, participants called for more research. Why, for example, are infrastructures in some countries more successful than in others?

4. Chetan Kumar (2011) mentioned that the United Nations is currently supporting the establishment or functioning of peace infrastructures in thirty countries. He used a broader category of peace infrastructures than used here.

How does one address the difficult practical dilemma of the role of such infrastructure vis-à-vis the state? What is the link between these infrastructures and development? And what is it that these infrastructures do that cannot be done by normal government and civil society institutions?

These and other questions need answers. At the moment, though, the phenomenon is escaping the attention of researchers. This need became clear when, in 2006 and 2007, I was working as a consultant with the Nepal Transition to Peace Initiative and the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction of Nepal to develop an implementation plan for local peace committees. The ministry was required to implement such committees as an outcome of the peace agreement between the government and the Maoist insurgency. At the time, I was frequently asked whether I could point to some comparative study of local peace structures—a study that had identified best practices. None, however, was available.

My motivation in writing this book is to begin addressing the deficit in attention. It is also primarily pragmatic. With all the energy and resources already spent on infrastructures for peace, and given that this is a growing trend, it is certainly time to step back, assess progress, and identify some of the emerging lessons. I therefore hope to add to the “generic knowledge,” which means “the study of past experience that identifies the uses and limitations of each strategy and the conditions on which its effective deployment depends” (George 1993: xvii). While it may still be too early to lay down definitive guidelines for the implementation of infrastructures of peace, it is not helpful to keep on reinventing the wheel. There are some clear lessons that have emerged from experience thus far, and these need to be identified.

© Endowment of the United States
Institute of Peace

Conceptual Building Blocks

Before turning to the main questions and arguments that are the substance of this book, it is necessary to explain in more detail what is meant by the two key concepts that are used: *local peace committees* and *infrastructures for peace*. In addition, I have to state my basic assumptions regarding *peace* and *peacebuilding*.

A Local Peace Committee (LPC) is an inclusive forum operating at the subnational level (district, municipality, town, or village) that provides a platform for the collective local leadership to accept joint responsibility for building peace in that community.

“Local peace committees” is an umbrella term. In practice, a variety of names are used, such as District Peace Advisory Councils, District Multi-

Party Liaison Committees, Village Peace and Development Committees, Committees for Inter-Community Relations, etc. The word *committee* is widely used to describe these bodies, but it is actually a problematic label. Committee conveys the image of a formal, authoritative decision-making body, which, as I shall explain in detail, is precisely what these bodies should not be. The bodies are actually forums, spaces for dialogue and consensus building. Any action that they take flows from consensus and not from wielding any coercive authority. However, the label most commonly used for these bodies is “peace committees,” and in order not to cause unnecessary confusion, I shall continue to use this label.

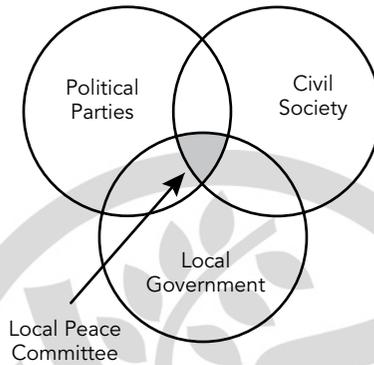
Chapter 2 will describe the contexts wherein LPCs have been used in more detail and will provide concrete examples and a rough typology. But, in short, an LPC typically consists of representatives from all political parties, especially those that have been involved in conflict; representatives of civil society, such as religious institutions or business networks; and relevant local government officials, including the police. It is therefore a forum that typically brings the political sector, government, and civil society together with a joint peacebuilding mandate (see figure 1).

LPCs have various tasks, depending on the context, which fall into two broad categories: establishing a sufficient level of social cohesion or reconciliation to enable collaboration on urgent tasks, and preventing violence. They are therefore not alternative local government structures but forums that build consensus by facilitating dialogue and by mediating in specific disputes.

An *infrastructure for peace* (also at times referred to as a *peace architecture*) is a system for coordinating and supporting a peace process. LPC’s are an aspect of a peace infrastructure; the infrastructure, however, is the complete national system that has been established to assist the peacebuilding process. It consciously links the local and national spheres, as well as the formal and informal sectors of society. The infrastructure entails structures and procedures to enable the task of building peace, as well as the capacity to access and leverage relevant networks and resources both within that society and externally.

Chapter 2 also describes infrastructures for peace in more detail with reference to practical examples. What is important is that these infrastructures have all been officially mandated through an inclusive national agreement, such as a peace accord, and often ratified by law. Typically an infrastructure will consist of: (1) a national multistakeholder body that exercises oversight of the infrastructure, facilitates communication with and between peace committees, and provides political support to peace committees; (2) an ad-

Figure 1. Local Peace Committee



ministrative department that provides logistic and financial support to peace committees (which, in some cases, have been formalized into a dedicated government ministry); and (3) peace committees at various levels: national, provincial, and local. The existence of an infrastructure further facilitates the flow of reliable information between these levels.

The focus of the book is on LPCs as an aspect of a formal infrastructure for peace. There are many examples of LPCs that operate informally and without linkage to each other or to national processes. Here the focus will be on those LPCs that form part of an official infrastructure for peace.

Regarding the assumptions underpinning the use of peace and peacebuilding in this study, the following brief notes are in place. Without engaging the debate in any depth, my understanding of peace is, for the most part, influenced by scholar-practitioners, such as Adam Curle, Johan Galtung, and John Paul Lederach, which puts me squarely in the “sustainable peacebuilding” camp (Paffenholz 2010; see also Kleiboer 1996:378–85). Galtung (1996:9) has described peace as the context for conflicts to unfold nonviolently and creatively. Peace is therefore not the absence of conflict; conflict is necessary for the ongoing transformation of society. Peace, however, is the absence of violence, whether physical or structural. In the ideal world, peace means the collective ability to find constructive solutions to serious problems in a manner that is respectful of the rights and needs of all concerned.

As much as peace is a philosophical and ideological question, it is a complex practical matter. I was in Uganda in 2007 when mediation between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the government of Uganda was in full process. The indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) of the

LRA leader, Joseph Kony, and three other senior LRA leaders was a hotly debated issue, veering between the need to stop impunity and make the entrepreneurs of violent conflict accountable for their deeds and the desperate need for peace in Acholiland, the northern region of Uganda that had been brutalized by the war. Which voice was more important: the one clamoring for justice (put Kony in jail), or the one begging for peace (grant Kony amnesty so that the violence may stop)?

These questions were certainly relevant for the thousands of Acholi that have been living as internally displaced persons in refugee camps for more than twenty years. But for them, peace also evoked other questions: Will we get back the piece of land that we had to evacuate twenty years ago? How will we respond to those who now claim that the land is theirs? How will we survive when we return to our land? How will our children respond to the life of subsistence farming after having lived on handouts in a dense refugee camp all their life? How will women and the youth revert to a life under male patriarchy following their exposure to different roles in the refugee camp? How will we reintegrate the returned child soldiers into our families and communities? How will we deal with our community members who had denounced us to either the army or the LRA? And, ultimately, how will we trust a government that, in our understanding, has been complicit in our suffering and neglect?

Peace, for local communities, invariably means more than the settlement of the major national issues. It does not mean that local communities are disinterested in national issues; rather, it means that local, concrete issues coupled with day-to-day survival and coexistence are more immediate. Peace is therefore inextricably linked to the absence of violence, economic survival, the healing of family and community, the settlement of local disputes, and the reliability of government institutions.⁵

As far as LPCs are concerned, the peace that they can realistically contribute to relates to an end to the violence suffered in the past, a prevention of the occurrence or recurrence of violence, an acknowledgment that local patterns of exclusion and discrimination have to be transformed, a commitment to collaborate in that transformation, and joint action in dealing with the most threatening and urgent problems facing the community.

5. In an interview with the author on February 3, 2010, Dr. Shirley DeWolf, veteran pastor and peace activist in Zimbabwe, described, the expectations of local communities in Zimbabwe: "People at local level have lost confidence in political processes as such. They may link up to each other and create local initiatives, but they fear that politics will once again destroy these processes. Peace for them means the possibility to go and hoe their plots without interference."

Put differently: Peace can be built by LPCs if, in a specific context, incidents of violence are reduced or stopped, and if former protagonists collaborate in local initiatives to stabilize, rebuild, and transform their communities. Peace will also be achieved when governance and development can take place free from the debilitation of excessive social or political polarization.

The concept of *peacebuilding* was first used by Johan Galtung (1975) but popularized by the former secretary-general of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992). Boutros-Ghali distinguished peacebuilding from preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping—four activities that had a distinctly chronological sequence in his thinking. Peacebuilding followed peace agreements and the cessation of violence. It has to “consolidate” or “solidify” peace and “advance a sense of confidence and well-being among the people” (1992:32). Peacebuilding has subsequently been understood as having two key objectives that are distinguishable but interdependent. The first is to prevent a relapse into violence, and the second is to foster and support sustainable structures and processes that strengthen the prospects for peaceful coexistence (Boutros-Ghali 1992; Bush 2004:25; Smith 2004; OECD-DAC 2008:8; Paffenholz 2010).

As with all concepts, there are a number of theoretical difficulties with peacebuilding,⁶ including its association with “liberal peace” and top-down or externally imposed “state building” (see Richmond 2011). The assumption that underpins the use of peacebuilding in this study is that sustainable peace requires sufficient ownership at the local level. LPCs are important building blocks for peacebuilding because, in theory, they provide a platform at the local level for engagement, dialogue, and a local determination of the need for and nature of peace. Lederach (2005) has emphasized that a peace accord did not represent the end of conflict but rather created a social and political space where negotiations continued. The accord has to usher in a period of constructive social change that “must build responsive processes that address the deep challenges rooted in the relational context” (2005:48). These processes cannot be determined by external ideological constructs such as “liberal democracy” but have to be guided by the concrete needs and aspirations of a society.

The recognition of the long-term need for peacebuilding has informed the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission by the United Nations. The rationale for the commission, as explained by Secretary-General Ban

6. For some of the theoretical considerations, see Paffenholz (2010).

Table 1. Convergence/Divergence between National and Local Aspirations for Peace

	National elites agree to peace	National elites do not agree to peace
Local communities agree to peace	(1) National peace accord sufficient	(2) Local peacebuilding disconnected from national strategies
Local communities do not agree to peace	(3) Local conflicts destabilize national peace process	(4) Civil war

Note: The author is indebted to Christopher Mitchell, who made these distinctions in a personal communication to the author on June 14, 2010.

Ki-moon (Secretary-General 2009), is that when large-scale violence ends, the challenges facing the leadership and people of the country are enormous. The situation is fluid, and peace is often very fragile. “We have learned that continued fragility and considerable volatility often accompany evolving peace processes. . . . The end of conflict does not necessarily mean the arrival of peace: a lack of political consensus and trust often remains and the root causes of the conflict may persist” (Secretary-General 2009 par.8). Sustaining or consolidating the peace therefore requires as much attention as making peace. These efforts require, in fact, much attention at the local level where peace has to be rooted

The Organization of the Book

The purpose of this section is to provide a rough guide for the following chapters, explain the logic of the book’s structure, and provide a brief summary of the main arguments that are being pursued.

There is a significant difference between preagreement and postagreement local peacebuilding. The difference has much to do with whether local communities and national actors agree on the conditions for peace (see table 1). The second window portrays the situation where national actors still pursue military options. In this context, local peacebuilding is left to civil society organizations (CSOs), and often active facing the mistrust, and often active opposition from, armed groups. Local peacebuilding under these circumstances is an extraordinarily difficult and, at times, heroic task. The third window describes the situation that will be the focus of the book, when a national peace agreement is in place but is still resisted by some actors at the local level or ineffectively implemented at the local level.

The objective in chapter 1 is to provide an explanation for the disconnect that often exists between peace at the national and local levels. The assumption that once national actors have agreed to peace it will smoothly descend onto the rural districts is too often not correct. Much as the production of violence requires alliances between national and local actors, the making of peace requires similar alliances. Put differently, preexisting conflicts at the local level acquire enhanced meaning and intensity when plugged into the national conflict and its violence. When the unplugging commences once an agreement has been signed at the national level, the situation at the local level does not automatically return to normal. Local conflict systems are not merely neat replicas of the “master cleavage”—that is, the dominant source of conflict at the national level. While they are indeed expressions of national tensions and structural causes, local conflict systems exhibit their own complexities and ambiguities due to their specific conditions, histories, personalities, and interests. Local conflict systems have sufficiently demonstrated the capacity to disrupt or disturb national peacebuilding processes. Furthermore, where violent conflict has taken place, three conditions often characterize the situation at the local level: (1) the persistence of violence at the local level in the context of weak state control; (2) the deficit in social cohesion, which blocks constructive collaboration in urgent tasks of reconstruction; and (3) the high emotional and personal quality of local conflicts, which complicates efforts to achieve reconciliation and collaboration in polarized communities. These conditions call for an approach that respects the specific and peculiar dynamics of local conflicts and that sees local peacebuilding as an integral and necessary aspect of a national peacebuilding strategy.

An LPC is a specific mechanism to facilitate local peacebuilding that is being used across the world in quite divergent contexts. Chapter 2 makes a basic distinction between informal and formal LPCs. Informal LPCs are usually established by CSOs. They do not enjoy official recognition by the state. Formal LPCs, however, are part of an infrastructure for peace that has been established through some form of national consensus (e.g., a peace agreement or legislation with bipartisan support). The focus of the book is on formal LPCs. The chapter contains two case studies. The first describes a bottom-up process of building a peace infrastructure, referencing the manner in which the Wajir LPC in Kenya stimulated nationwide developments. The second case study focuses on South Africa’s infrastructure for peace (1991–94) as an example of a top-down approach, where the peace infrastructure was the result of a national-level peace agreement. The appendix

provides an overview and summary description of the formal infrastructures for peace that have informed this study.

How do LPCs actually function? What methods and approaches do they use that are effective? And how important is the infrastructure for the functioning of these committees? These questions are discussed in chapter 3. From the evidence currently available, formal peace infrastructures support LPCs in four ways: (1) by *legitimizing* the pursuit of peace at all levels, including the local level; (2) by allocating *responsibility* for violence prevention and peacebuilding to a specific collection of people, including individuals trusted across a broad spectrum of society; (3) by ensuring that LPCs have access to *specialist support* in facilitating dialogue and violence prevention; and (4) by ensuring that sufficient *linkage* takes place between relevant stakeholders (government, political parties, and civil society) and resources at the different levels.

Furthermore, LPCs have been most effective when they rely on a consensus-seeking approach to respond to tension and conflict. For a variety of reasons, LPCs should not rely on coercive measures to enforce peace. Their primary role is to facilitate and mediate—not to arbitrate or compel.

Peacebuilding is, of course, a deeply political activity. Local peacebuilding depends on and is vulnerable to political conditions at the national level, yet its success depends on a high level of local ownership. The question is how best to safeguard enough independence for LPCs to perform their task. Chapter 4 addresses this issue by analyzing experiences from a number of countries. It discusses the three factors that have had the most direct impact on the political legroom that is available to LPCs. First, there is a real danger of “political capture” whereby one of the political actors seeks to gain control of the infrastructure. A precondition for the effective operation of a peace infrastructure is sufficient political will at the national level to pursue the peacebuilding objectives that have been agreed to in a collaborative manner. The best expression for such shared political will is the existence of a multistakeholder forum at the national level, where political oversight of and bureaucratic support to the infrastructure is exercised jointly.

Second, there has to be clarity on the manner in which the infrastructure for peace fits into the framework of public institutions as well as its role and functions. LPCs have been criticized for hindering the long-term goals of statebuilding by encroaching onto the terrain of statutory bodies, such as the justice system or the local government. From the case studies, three distinct models of the relationship between LPCs and the state have emerged. There are contexts where LPCs clearly performed a transitional role with no intention to inhibit statebuilding. A much more complex situation develops when

state institutions are so weak or dysfunctional that LPCs have no choice but to get involved in governance and enforcement matters. It raises valid concerns, yet there are no easy answers. In a number of countries, though, LPCs have been permanently institutionalized with their role well defined through legislation. In all these cases, LPCs have no executive authority but are required to facilitate dialogue, advise, and mediate in community conflicts. This latter arrangement is a strong pointer in the direction of the most acceptable role for LPCs within the larger framework of the state.

Third, in most contexts, LPCs relied on some form of international support. While indispensable, international support may have a negative impact on the quality of local ownership. International actors invariably exert influence on the design and operation of a peace infrastructure through their funding priorities and the substance of their technical support. International actors often contribute largely to the efficiency of a peace infrastructure, but potentially at the cost of damaging local ownership—the most indispensable condition for local peacebuilding. The success of international support is therefore ultimately determined by the manner in which it galvanizes and enhances local ownership.

The next two chapters discuss the impact of LPCs. Experience with LPCs thus far indicates that they contribute to the two main objectives of peacebuilding: promoting peaceful coexistence and preventing violence. Chapter 5 considers the first of these objectives. It analyzes the success of LPCs in promoting social reconstruction; focuses on the ability of LPCs to facilitate dialogue and the impact it has on social cohesion; and discusses LPCs' role in promoting reconciliation, with specific attention to the complex interdependence of justice and reconciliation. Chapter 6 looks at the contribution of LPCs to violence prevention. LPCs do not enforce peace and are therefore limited in their capacity to prevent all forms of violence. However, by relying on their ability to build consensus and mobilize the collective ability of a community in pursuing peace and by mandating and supporting mediation in cases of local conflicts that have violence potential, they contribute to violence prevention. The role of LPCs to prevent elections-related violence receives particular attention.

Chapter 7 contains the conclusions. The overall conclusion is that local peacebuilding has to be an integral part of a national peacebuilding strategy and that infrastructures for peace contribute substantially to the effectiveness of local peacebuilding. However, the nature of my investigation of this matter is preliminary, meaning that a range of questions remain unanswered and require further research.