

Praise for

A Crucial Link

Local Peace Committees and National Peacebuilding

“Odendaal impressively distills a wide variety of experiences with local peace committees and explains the complex interplay between national and local, formal and informal actors in an environment where conflicting groups can work together to forestall violence and take the first steps in what will be a lengthy peacebuilding process. He rightly stresses the importance of ownership of peace processes at the local level as a key condition for success and provides ample evidence for how this local ownership can be achieved. *A Crucial Link* is a must-read for peacebuilding practitioners and policymakers.”

—Nicole Ball, Center for International Policy

“Odendaal draws on his deep experience as well as broad comparative research to identify lessons about when and how local level peace committees contribute to national level peacebuilding. This book is an important resource for practitioners and researchers alike working to improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding.”

—Diana V. Chigas, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

“Exploring the connection between frameworks for peacebuilding at both the government and local levels, *A Crucial Link* underscores the importance of understanding peace processes as multilayered and complex, cross-cutting all levels of society. A valuable addition to course reading lists, this volume rightly emphasizes the need for grassroots ownership of peacebuilding processes and provides examples of successes where governmental bodies have collaborated with NGOs and local entities for greater overall effectiveness.”

—Landon Hancock, Center for Applied Conflict Management,
Kent State University

“Odendaal’s well-conceived and well-crafted book on global experiences with local peace committees presents cutting-edge comparative knowledge and practitioner lessons on local-level conflict resolution. This balanced and carefully researched book makes the case that international conflict resolvers must focus intently at the local level for conflict prevention in volatile transitions. This book is highly relevant for practitioners, scholars, and students of conflict resolution at a time when so many countries experiencing volatile transitions are in deep need of comparative lessons and international support for local-level processes to prevent violence and build peace.”

—**Timothy D. Sisk**, Center for 21st Century Global Governance,
University of Denver

“A convincing case for the centrality of local peace initiatives in securing the sustainability of national peace agreements. Odendaal provides a lucid practitioner’s perspective on the process of local peacebuilding and critically reflects on the interconnections between the local and national peace processes. He combines personal experiences as a peacemaker with a thorough review of comparable international experience to provide both a conceptual mapping of the challenges of local peacebuilding and nuanced assessment of the practical lessons that can be drawn from these varied experiences.”

—**Hugo van der Merwe**, Centre for the Study of Violence
and Reconciliation

“This comparative study comes at the right moment, as many countries simply lack the capacity, structures, and mechanisms to deal with increased violent conflict. Through experiences from dozens of countries, Odendaal convincingly describes how local peace committees have contributed to preventing violence and promoting peaceful coexistence. An essential lesson is that local peacebuilding should be an integral aspect of a national peacebuilding strategy, and *A Crucial Link* optimizes the linkage between local and national levels and between stakeholders that are prepared to give peace a chance. This book deserves to be read by many, while the described approach deserves a fair chance in many more countries.”

—**Paul van Tongeren**, International Civil Society Network on
Infrastructures for Peace

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*Local Peace Committees and
National Peacebuilding*

Andries Odendaal

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For Martie.

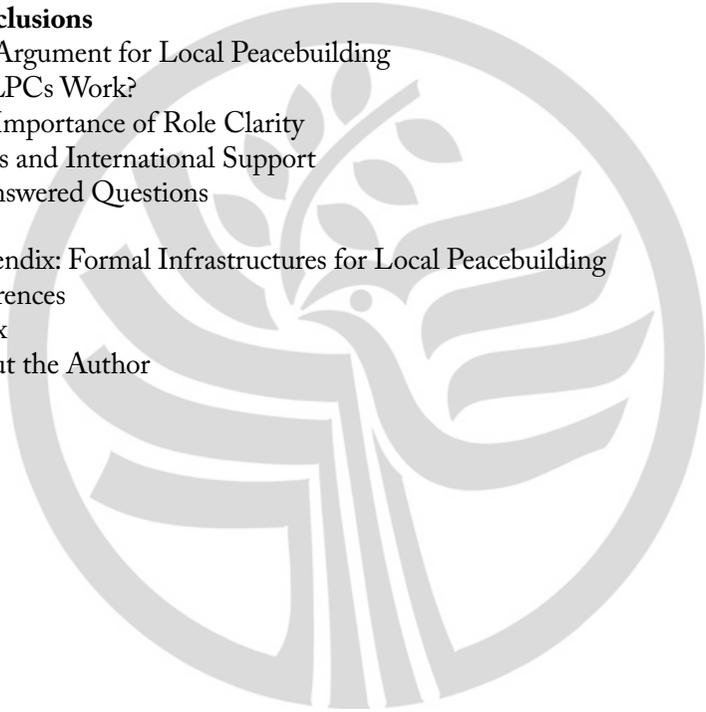
Dankie, liewe vrou, vir die saamreis van baie jare . . .

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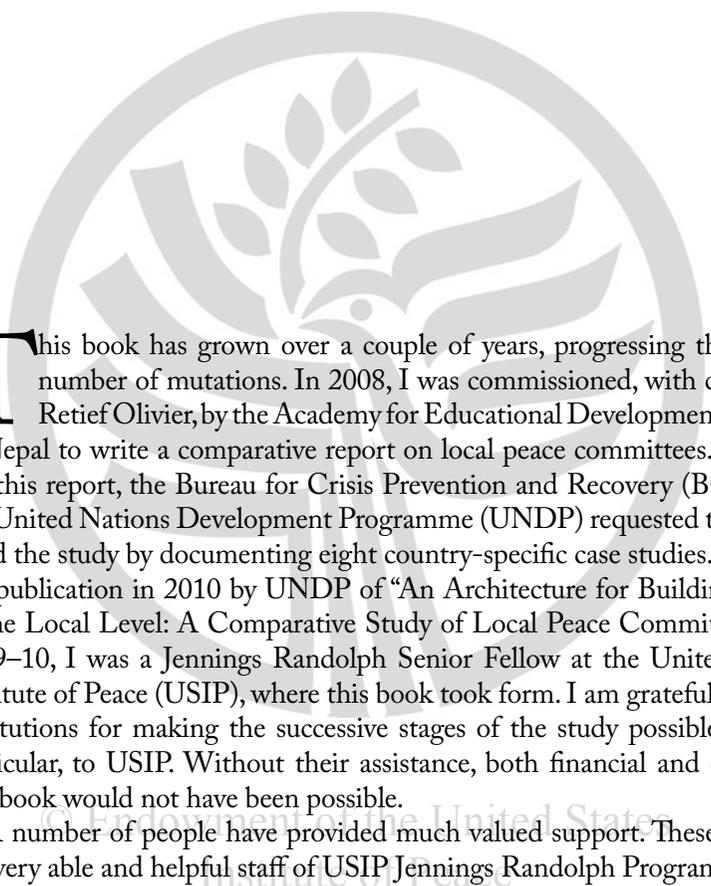
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Acknowledgments



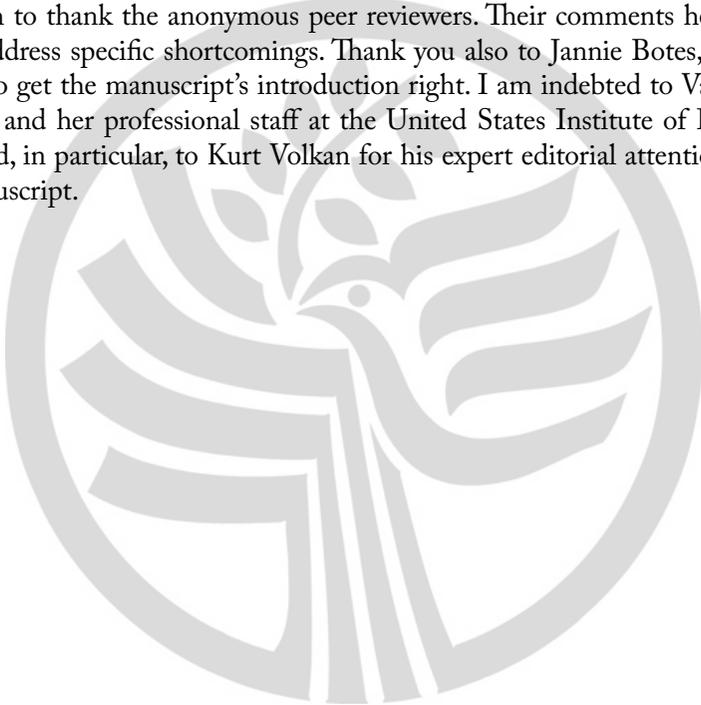
This book has grown over a couple of years, progressing through a number of mutations. In 2008, I was commissioned, with colleague Retief Olivier, by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) in Nepal to write a comparative report on local peace committees. Following this report, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) requested that I expand the study by documenting eight country-specific case studies. It led to the publication in 2010 by UNDP of “An Architecture for Building Peace at the Local Level: A Comparative Study of Local Peace Committees.” In 2009–10, I was a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), where this book took form. I am grateful to these institutions for making the successive stages of the study possible and, in particular, to USIP. Without their assistance, both financial and editorial, this book would not have been possible.

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