

Pilot Project

Women for peace and dialogue in Burundi: A key role in conflict prevention and peace mediation

Background

In Burundi, recent political and electoral conflicts have led to confrontations between security forces and protesters, displacement of populations and growing tension throughout the country. This is compounded by a lack of reliable information that has had the effect of inflaming tensions.

Burundian women have historically played an important role as agents of peace, using their unique position in society to initiate mediation and reconciliation processes, bring conflicting parties together and re-start peaceful dialogue between various actors.

A nationwide network of women mediators, established by the UN in close partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Civic Education and civil society organizations, has proven effective in preventing violence at the local level, hampering the possibility of spillover into wider tensions, dispelling false rumors, and mitigating the impact of the ongoing political crisis on populations. Through their collaboration with provincial and local authorities, this network of women mediators has prevented and resolved conflicts and encouraged the organization of local consultations to identify strategies to build community security.



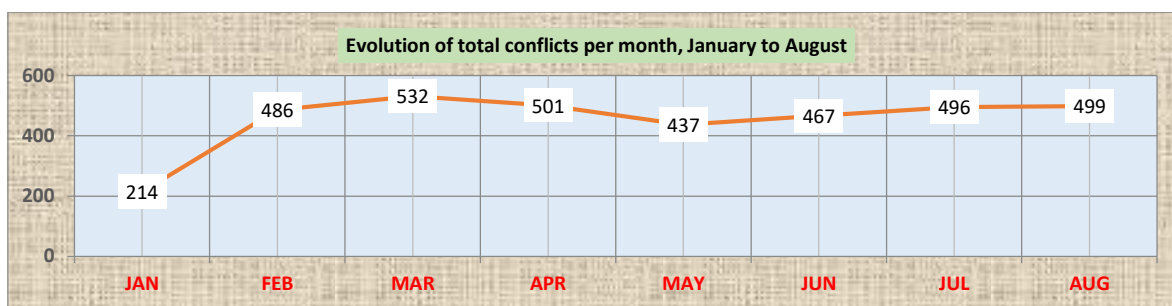
This project has been supported by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) since 2015 and by the Global Acceleration Instrument (GAI) on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action since January 2016.

GAI's support: Key achievements

GAI Outcome area 2: Burundian women participate and lead in effective early warning and conflict prevention

The nation-wide Women Network for Peace and Dialogue composed by 516 women mediators and 18 provincial focal has been involved in the following initiatives:

- **Conflict prevention and resolution** at the local level. The conflicts they deal with on a regular basis are social, familial, land related and political ones. The initiatives they take to solve a conflict include undertaking direct conflict mediation, advising and assisting victims, referring them to appropriate structures, liaising with local authorities, etc.



- **Establishment of local networks of actors involved in conflict prevention and resolution.** Partners include: CSOs, local authorities, women leaders, religious organizations, etc. These networks aim at coordinating their actions, and identifying community concerns to prepare for dialogues at hill, municipality and provincial level.
- **Organization of dialogues at hill, municipality and provincial level.** Dialogues are organized on a quarterly basis at the municipality level and at the hill level when possible. The local networks of actors prepare an agenda and women mediators and provincial focal points oversee the organization of the dialogues, reporting and monitoring of the implementation of recommendations that are made.
- **Training of mediators and provincial focal points.** In June, the 534 mediators and provincial focal points benefited from a two-day training sessions. The training aimed at further building their capacities and supporting them to achieve the new objectives they were given in 2016.
- **Exchange sessions between women mediators and local authorities.** At the end of each session, the participants identified joint initiatives to tackle the main challenges faced by their municipality. Mediators and local authorities have committed to implementing them and evaluating progress at the end of the year. These sessions also allowed the local authorities to better understand the role of the women mediators and to seek their support to prevent and solve conflicts.

Key figures

3604 is the **number of conflicts** dealt with by the network of **women mediators** between January and July.

65% is their average rate of full **success**, 25% the average rate of half success and 13% the average rate of failure.

2600 is the number of **local networks** of actors constituted by women mediators **at the hill level** and 119 at the municipality level.

2505 is the **number of dialogues** that have taken place, including 18 dialogues at the provincial level, 215 at the municipality level, 2231 at the hill level and 41 in Bujumbura neighborhoods.

246 883 is the **total number of community members** who participated to these dialogues.

534 is the number of **women mediators** and provincial focal points that have been further **trained**.

501 522,70 USD is the **budget spent** since January 2016 out of the 700 000 USD invested by the GAI through its initial phase.