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OUTCOME DOCUMENT FOR THE JOINT REGIONAL ROUND TABLE EVENT ON PEACE EDUCATION AND INSIDE MEDIATION FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION

The Joint Regional Round Table (JRRT) on peace education for the Great Lakes Region was held from 14th - 15th June 2022 in Bujumbura, Burundi. It was organized by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Burundi and several partners. It was financed by the German Cooperation and the European Union. The JRRT was a culmination of a series of National Round Tables on the Peace Education project organized in the four pilot countries notably the Republic of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Uganda; and of series of inside mediation processes conducted in Rwanda and in DRC (North Kivu Province).

The Peace Education project was implemented under the ICGLR Peace and Security Program of Action, following the recommendations of the Regional Peace Education Summit held in Nairobi in March 2016 to include peace education in the curriculum of Member States.

The JRRT brought together National Coordinators or their Representatives, Officials from Ministries of Education from the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Uganda and Republic of Zambia. The event was also attended by the Deputy Executive Secretary, Programme and Centre Directors and Representatives from the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) of the ICGLR, Members of the Diplomatic Corps from ICGLR Member States and Partner States, representatives from Interpeace, the GIZ and the Office of the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.

Participants reviewed the **lessons learned, achievements and challenges** in the implementation of the Peace Education and the Inside mediation projects, and made the following recommendations:

A. Recommendations for peace education project

- Urge for the continuity of the Project and ensure that it is implemented in the other ICGLR Member States and particularly in conflict countries such as South Sudan and the CAR
- Need to target both the formal and informal education sectors
- Need to combine peace education with other methodologies
- There is need to involve the Youth in Peace Education
- Legal framework on Peace Education

- Fund for Peace Education
- Peace education needs to be extended to secondary and university level curricula
- Provide training on conflict analysis
- Ensure the sustainability of Peace Education project
- Sustainability of training at all levels and in all ICGLR states

B. Recommendations for inside mediation

- Capacity building for mediators including training on the mediation code of conduct
- Establish a standard criterion with regards to a minimum educational level for mediators
- Make use of internal mediators trained in other countries instead of training others
- Ensure the strategic involvement of all stakeholders including the religious and local authorities in mediation
- Need of refresher trainings for inside mediators
- Development of a reference guide (document)
- Provide regular reflection platforms
- Sensitization and mobilization on the mediation process to the communities
- Conduct an impact assessment for better mediation
- Enhancing strict selection process for mediators and conduct a counter-check after the selection is done. Ensure that there is a common criteria in all Member States for the selection of Mediators
- Monitoring, evaluation and validation of the mediation process
- Strategic planning
- Need for an Early warning system

Other recommendations for the inside mediation project

- Think on how to identify good mediators. The Project team will develop the indicators to be considered: quality, conduct, etc
- Consider putting in place a committee of Youth Mediators in institutions in the Member States
- Avoid duplications of mediation initiatives
- DRC: consider CENCO as one of the strategic partners
- Continue to involve more women and increase the number of the youth in the mediation process

C. Way Forward

For the future projects the following recommendations were formulated:

i) For the inside mediation project

- a) As far as the content of the mediation process is concerned:

- Extend to more districts (Rwanda) and provinces (DRC) and countries based on specific conflict and profiles (hot zones) such as CAR, Kenya, Uganda & South Sudan;
- Include psychosocial counselling and socioeconomic initiatives (to incentivize and strengthen ties among conflict mediators) in the project components;
- Extend the training package to DDR/RR to allow inside mediators play an active role in the process of reintegration of Ex-Combattants
- In the context of Rwanda, extend mediation initiatives to intra-family conflicts particularly in households where the heads have spent years in the jail for genocide
- Introduce a component on sensitization of community members on the benefits of & mediation process in project countries
- User-friendly curriculum that responds to the needs of communities.
- The programme should be introduced at an early age and should also target young people and women.
- Extend the project to other ICGLR member states, "starting with the most affected areas".
- Pay attention to cases of trauma resulting from different types of conflicts.
- For the socio-economic aspect: The structure must develop a guide to the work and ethics of the mediators.
- Integrate regional mediation for cross-border community conflicts.

b) On the partnership aspect:

- Engage more formally from the start a diversified range of partners
- Encourage collaboration between community mediators and existing state mediation structures;
- Value partnership with states in the implementation of the mediation approach to peacebuilding rather than organisations.

c) Concerning the approaches to be used in the conduct of the inside mediation:

- Extend consultations about the practices, needs and gaps pertaining to mediation to non-mediators to learn from their perspectives;
- Train local conflict mediators on the use of technological tools to ease communication and consultations with mentors;
- Introduce a symbolic award to the best performing mediators to encourage professionalism and promote the culture of peace;
- Establish a space of exchange and mutual learning for "local mediators" from project countries
- Use of community dialogue approach (bottom up) and community-based dialogue
- Benchmarking/Inter-learning from pilot countries
- Target key individuals (political, businessmen, influencers) for mediation and peace education.

- To conduct or carry out a post evaluation project study of the project in the four pilot countries in the spirit of improving what has been done in the project and draw lessons learnt to be applied to the next phase of the project.
- The mediator must be external to the parties in conflict, especially in the case of inter-community conflicts, and accepted by the parties in both inter-community and intra-community conflicts.
- Introduce the theme of mediation in formal and informal training curricula

ii) For the peace education project,

The vision was formulated as follows:

By 2050, the people of the Great Lakes region promote the values of peace, and live the culture of peace at all levels.

Done in Bujumbura, on 15th June, 2022