

The impact of the Peacebuilding Architecture in Burundi

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Along with Sierra Leone, Burundi was one of the first two countries placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). It was also one of the largest recipients of support from the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which provided a total of US\$49 million between 2006 and 2013 in two tranches.¹ The civil war in Burundi had begun in 1993; the transition out of war officially began with the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in August 2000. The main political parties had agreed to peace, but the rebel groups were not included in the peace agreement; they continued to engage in open combat with the Burundian Army.

The involvement of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) in Burundi came just as the country seemed finally to be emerging from war. Even though one rebel group remained outside the country's political institutions, the peaceful election of Burundi's main rebel leader as the new president in 2005 made Burundians feel as if the war might actually end.² The selection of Burundi as one of the first PBC countries signaled the UN's strong commitment to preventing it from backsliding into war, serving as a true success story for international peacebuilding. Indeed, the seven-year relationship between Burundi and the PBA did help to advance Burundi's post-war transition, although not without significant difficulty. Part of the difficulty derived from the lack of guidance and support inherent in pilot initiatives, leading UN staff in Burundi and key Burundian officials to play a key role in determining what the PBA looked like at the country level, and teaching the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) many core lessons as they went along.

Between 2007 and 2010, the PBF allocated its first tranche of funding to Burundi, giving the UN system \$35 million to support core peacebuilding priorities selected by the UN and the Burundian government. These funds made it possible for the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)—which integrated the entire UN Country Team (UNCT) under the political

leadership of the executive representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG)—to carry out innovative peacebuilding projects that fulfilled aspects of its Security Council mandate, which BINUB may not otherwise have been able to achieve.³ However, most of the activities that the PBF supported during this first tranche were ineffective, and in some cases even did harm.

The second tranche of PBF funding to Burundi, \$9.2 million allocated in 2011, supported a more standard UN structure: the Security Council-mandated mission focused on high-level political processes and analyses, interfacing with the PBC, while the UNCT managed and supervised operational activities, implementing the PBF-funded projects. This standard UN structure had a negative effect on the peacebuilding activities supported by the second tranche of PBF funding. Unlike several of the projects supported by the first tranche, projects under the second were not designed to deal with the specific causes of conflict and peace in Burundi. Instead, they focused on apolitical development, and humanitarian and early recovery activities that the UN carried out in non-conflict-affected countries.

We argue that the poor quality of many of the projects funded by the PBF in Burundi was due, in part, to the lack of knowledge among UN staff of how to design or implement high-quality peacebuilding activities. Neither the headquarters of the UN organizations receiving PBF funds (Recipient UN Organizations, or RUNOs) nor the PBSO, which manages the PBF, could ensure that peacebuilding capacity existed within the teams receiving PBF funding. Many UN organizations viewed support from the PBF as simply another funding source for largely apolitical humanitarian, early recovery, or development activities.

This chapter is based on an impact evaluation of PBF and PBC support to Burundi's post-war transition between 2007 and 2013.⁴ Building on the 2010 evaluation of PBF support to Burundi, conducted by the same lead evaluator, the 13-member research team employed an innovative quasi-experimental research design grounded in a household-level survey of over 250 households from randomly sampled *collines*, with and without PBF involvement, over 165 semi-structured interviews, 90 of which are drawn from the randomly sampled *collines*, as well as a detailed document review.⁵

Context of the PBF in Burundi

The broader institutional environment within which the PBF projects operated had an important, if sometimes indirect, influence on the PBF portfolio. In particular, relations between the Burundian government and the UN were strained throughout the period of PBA involvement. Between 2006 and 2013, the Burundian government requested that three actual and interim heads of the UN missions to Burundi quit their positions and leave the country. It required the UN to reduce the size and scale of its mission from a large peacekeeping mission, the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB, 2004–06), to a smaller integrated mission without peacekeepers, BINUB (2007–10), then to a still smaller mission, the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) (2011–14), and then to the final withdrawal of the mission at the end of 2014. These negotiations between the UN and the Burundian government about the future of the various UN missions in the country formed the subtext of the PBF's decision-making process in Burundi.

Period I: deadlock in parliament

One of the first projects funded by the PBF, the Cadre de Dialogue, was a strategic entry point for the PBF and created space for dialogue among key political actors. The Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie—Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD) had been the governing party in Burundi since winning both the presidency and a majority in the National Assembly in the 2005 elections. However, internal divisions within the CNDD-FDD led to a split in 2007, resulting in the party losing its majority in parliament.

That in turn led to a deadlock for much of 2007, preventing the government from passing and enacting crucial legislation. The Cadre de Dialogue contributed to unblocking the deadlock in parliament. Building on the numerous negotiation and mediation efforts led by various states, the UN, individuals, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) since the outbreak of the war in 1996, the Cadre de Dialogue encouraged a culture of dialogue between political actors and civil society.

Several of the security-sector projects were also highly relevant to the overall political and security context. The PBF support to the Burundian Armed Forces (FDN) was based on a clear strategy developed by the latter which included three PBF projects: the Military Barracks Project, the Morale-Building Project, and the Displaced Families Project. All three targeted critical areas of reform for the military. In particular, they helped to reduce incidents of violence and increase intergroup social cohesion in the Burundian military, which had recently integrated former rebels into its ranks. Our survey revealed that the population felt much more secure than it did prior to the PBF interventions.⁶ Among the households surveyed, 62 percent noted that the decrease in the number of active combatants in the communities helped to create a greater sense of security.

Interventions aimed at supporting the reform of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) and the Burundian police were less successful. The project that focused on training of the SNR, a body infamous for torture and other human rights abuses, succeeded in creating temporary openness and accountability, but did not initiate any sustainable reform. The police project sought to increase the capacity, positive visibility, and professionalism of the police, but then distributed poor-quality uniforms to the police, which led to a great deal of negative publicity and public accusations of corruption. The project eventually procured new high-quality uniforms, a point considered important for ongoing efforts to professionalize the police, but much of the equipment provided by the project, such as cars and radios, has since fallen into disrepair. Despite the efforts at professionalization, significant problems have remained. Our survey showed that Burundians view the police as a potential threat to their personal security, rather than a clear guarantor of it.

Period II: deadlock in negotiations with the FNL

The PBF also contributed to the completion of the peace process with the Forces pour la Libération Nationale (FNL) in 2009. This had been the last rebel group to enter negotiations with the government and, until 2009, had failed to implement a 2006 ceasefire agreement. The PBF helped to unblock a 2009 impasse in the negotiations with the FNL by supporting

facilitation efforts and funding the demobilization of 11,000 “adults associated with the movement” who were not included in the official demobilization program. The demobilization of the “associated adults” allowed the FNL to transform into a political party and participate in the 2010 elections.

The PBF also supported several projects in the area of justice and rule of law during this period. In the Transitional Justice project, the PBF funded a countrywide consultation process on Burundi’s transitional justice mechanisms, seeking to maintain attention on them in a context where the government was unwilling to create them. The other justice projects focused on the construction of local tribunals as well as clearing backlogged cases in courts. Both these projects were part of ongoing judicial reform processes, but did not provide ideal entry points for the PBF as they failed to address many legal and political barriers to the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary.

Period III: 2010 election period

The PBF constructively contributed to the period surrounding the 2010 election by providing crucial funding for organizing the elections and promoting national dialogue. PBF election funding made it possible to distribute high-quality ballots to areas that had not received them and to provide ID cards to women, enabling greater participation. It also promoted national dialogue by establishing the Permanent Forum for Political Parties, an offshoot of the Cadre de Dialogue, which sought to facilitate the resolution of conflicts among the political parties. Despite the demobilization of the FNL, political violence between FNL and CNDD-FDD supporters continued.⁷ In particular, youth wings of the parties, like that of the CNDD-FDD, Imbonerakure, contributed to the growing political violence.⁸ Important dialogue efforts were supported by the PBF and others, but our interviews and surveys showed that Burundians considered the behavior of the political class, and its manipulation of susceptible youth, to be one of the greatest threats to their security, and the main potential cause of future violence.

Other governance initiatives that the PBF supported were less well targeted and less timely, and some were poorly implemented. The anti-corruption project failed to deal with the legal barriers to the proper functioning of anti-corruption and judicial institutions because the government was not ready to address these legal issues. The project could not therefore make progress towards its aims, which depended on a legal framework that the government was not willing to put in place. Our survey showed that people saw corruption as a major problem at the *colline* level, and one that may be increasing, especially in those *collines* that received PBF funding.

The youth project, women’s project, and the small business project were plagued by implementation problems and failed to make any obvious contribution to the socioeconomic situation among target groups, often bringing “peace disappointments” rather than peace dividends. Staff and partners implementing the youth and women’s projects argued that the allotted timeframe was far too short for them to spend the large budgets allocated to these projects, and the quality of the programs suffered. Furthermore, the method employed to identify the youth and women who would benefit was not transparent, leading to claims of corruption and favoritism.

Period IV: the consolidation of political power in the post-2010 phase

Rather than deepening liberal democracy, the CNDD-FDD victory in the 2010 elections led to three developments that undermined the consolidation of democracy. First, most of the opposition was absent from government, and several opposition leaders fled the country in order to avoid arrest.⁹ Second, political violence continued, including an egregious act with possible political origins—the September 2011 attack on a bar in Gatumba, with over 30 people killed. Finally, a new draft constitution bill submitted by the CNDD-FDD in late 2013 threatened to revise the power-sharing provisions of the constitution that had helped to secure peace.¹⁰

During this period, the last project funded by PBF I—the first tranche of PBF support to Burundi—was finally implemented. The PBF supported the creation of the National Independent Commission for Human Rights (CNIDH), but rather than simply providing the physical infrastructure and cars that the CNIDH needed, it withheld funding from the government until it passed a law that would allow the commission to function in a truly independent fashion. It was set up in 2011 and carries out human rights investigations (including of extrajudicial executions) throughout the country, and has been seen as an important protector of human rights in a context where these rights are repeatedly violated.

The CNDD-FDD's consolidation of power and the increase in political violence coincided with the disbursement of the second tranche of PBF funding to Burundi in 2011. Unlike the first, which focused primarily on political, security, legal, and human rights institutions based in Bujumbura, the second tranche sought to integrate former combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons at the community level in Cibitoke, Bubanza, and Bujumbura Rurale, supporting the Burundian government's national reintegration plan.

The reintegration efforts have had mixed results. On the one hand, in combination with projects supported by other donors, they seem to have contributed to building positive intergroup social cohesion in communities that had been torn apart by the war. Our survey shows that 96 percent of all respondents perceive improvements in social cohesion, especially due to local associations, which the project supported, and the involvement of local authorities. The project also gave individuals who were able to form productive local associations new economic opportunities and useful training that helped some to advance in their professions (such as welding, tailoring, farming, cooking).

In other places, however, and despite the increased involvement of local administrators, PBF II activities—those involving the second tranche of PBF support to Burundi—did not alter how social services were delivered, nor did they make a clearly sustainable improvement in the financial situation of many beneficiaries. Many of those whom we interviewed complained that the project was too short to achieve its intended aims. They argued that sustainable social cohesion, much less real trust, could not be built in only three to six months. They also reported that even though they were now members of associations and had new job skills, there was no funding to ensure that these associations would continue to be profitable or that they could sustain the social cohesion created within their associations.

A major problem with PBF II was that funding went to fairly standard early recovery or humanitarian activities on the part of the six implementing UN agencies. They lacked

sensitivity to the unique nature of peacebuilding projects, which requires implementing agencies to be highly attuned to the power dynamics of the contexts in which they operate, questioning their influence on those contexts, and adjusting their approach and overall “theory of change” as the context and its dynamics change.¹¹ Also lacking was a clear plan for sustaining the effect of their projects, threatening again to turn peace dividends into disappointments. In two out of the 13 *collines* where we conducted interviews, activities that the PBF II supported even had clearly negative effects on the intended beneficiaries because of local-level corruption and poor oversight and implementation by the UN.

Analysis of PBF oversight, guidance, support, and implementation mechanisms and instruments

There have been important innovations and professionalization of the mechanisms that oversee, guide, and support the implementation of the PBF portfolio in Burundi. Innovations that made a particular contribution to peace consolidation were: 1 the creation of joint project units in BINUB that integrated political, peacebuilding programmatic, and local knowledge; 2 the involvement of high-level officials in BINUB and BNUB in several innovative dialogue- and security-focused projects, effectively linking the political and the operational; 3 the creation of Technical Follow-up Committees (TFCs) for PBF I projects that included a broad range of stakeholders (for example, government, civil society, and donors); and 4 the establishment of innovative accountability mechanisms in several projects that enabled participants and observers to assess regularly whether the project was progressing as planned and to propose alterations to project aims and implementation.

Once PBF II was underway, these innovations were largely forgotten or dismantled. A new TFC and Coordination Cell was established, which helped to monitor activities and created linkages among the six UN organizations that were implementing the various PBF II activities. These mechanisms lacked peacebuilding or monitoring techniques and did not seem to encourage RUNOs to reflect regularly on whether their activities were achieving the desired outcomes at the community level. Yet field-level implementation, accountability, and monitoring mechanisms are crucial components of peacebuilding projects and help to determine whether the peacebuilding activity remains relevant to the evolving context that it is intended to influence.

One problem is that the PBF is based on the assumption that the RUNOs have the capacity for high-quality peacebuilding projects and monitoring, and that the Joint Steering Committee (JSC, which monitors implementation of the peacebuilding priority plan for the country) has the time and resources to oversee their projects, ensure that they are in line with the peacebuilding priority plan, and provide additional assurance that implementation is on track. Our assessment indicates significant ruptures in this accountability and capacity chain, with negative impacts on PBF-funded activities. The innovative mechanisms mentioned above helped to fill some of these gaps, but a more systemic and sustainable solution is needed. We now examine each of the oversight and guidance mechanisms, assessing their strengths and weaknesses in the Burundian context.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission

The UN PBA was established to “help countries build sustainable peace and prevent relapse into violent conflict.”¹² Our research in Burundi showed that the PBC played an important role in sustaining the attention of the international donor community on Burundi and serving as a key interlocutor between interested Western states and the Burundian government. The influence of the PBC in Burundi seemed to rely primarily on the work of the chair of its Country-Specific Configuration (CSC), and the support that he received from the PBSO, his government, and key partnerships with other members of the CSC—which is the body in the PBC that is charged with closely following the situation in Burundi.¹³

In several cases, the CSC chair worked very closely with the UN mission in the country and implemented a complementary strategy that influenced how and what peacebuilding priorities were selected. The chair also helped to dismantle key roadblocks in Burundi’s peacebuilding process, raised key political concerns of the international community directly with the government, discussed major concerns of the government directly with the international community, held regular exchanges with civil society, and helped to encourage donors to continue to contribute funds to Burundi. Within the design of the PBA, one of the major advantages of a CSC chair is that this person is a representative of a member state and is therefore able to speak with other governments, donors, and other actors with different authority from an international bureaucrat. In addition, if the CSC chair is declared *persona non grata* (PNG) by the host government and banned from serving as chair, he or she does not lose their “day job.” This makes it possible for the chair to take more political risks in relations with the host government, perhaps applying more direct political pressure than the special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) or other UN staff member whose career would probably suffer if the chair were declared PNG by the host government.

In Burundi, in part because of the frequency with which top UN staff have been declared PNG, the role of the CSC chair seems to have been particularly important. The chair seems to operate largely as an individual, backed by the support team in the UN and the government. The frequency of PBC CSC meetings for Burundi gradually declined, and sources report that over time meetings rarely took place at the ambassadorial level.¹⁴ Countries on the PBC’s agenda are often not politically important for many PBC members; as a result, it seems that the original idea of the PBC being an intergovernmental body that can prevent post-conflict countries from falling back into war has been whittled down to one important and potentially powerful position. This position is held by one international diplomat and relies on this individual’s skills and commitment, and the guidance and support received from the PBSO and from his or her government. The broader PBC served as a venue for various actors to voice their concerns, but the major leverage of the PBC in Burundi came in the form of the CSC chair and that person’s willingness and ability to play a key diplomatic and fundraising role. CSC chairs also often mobilized funding from their own governments (for example, Japan, Norway, and Sweden) even if these had not been traditional aid partners of Burundi.

The UN Peacebuilding Support Office

One of the primary functions of the PBSO is to “administer the Peacebuilding Fund and help to raise funds for it.”¹⁵ It works in close collaboration with the UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O), which “serves as the Administrative Agent of the PBF and is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, transfer of funds to Recipient UN Organizations, consolidation of narrative and financial reports and their submission to PBSO and PBF donors.”¹⁶

The PBSO and the MPTF-O are the primary accountability agents for the PBF at UN Headquarters. The PBSO has a small team responsible for administering the PBF and supporting RUNOs and JSCs for all 23 countries that receive PBF funding. Having such a relatively small team, the PBSO relies on the staff skills, accountability procedures, and procurement mechanisms of the RUNOs to design, implement, and monitor high-quality peacebuilding projects, and on the capacity of the JSC to monitor the contribution of these projects to the Peacebuilding Priority Plan. That has proven a major flaw in the design of the PBF.

The PBSO is aware of the implications of its structure and accountability mechanisms, and the link to the overall performance of the fund. For a better success rate of global PBF projects at the local level, the PBSO recognizes that its institutional arrangement requires “a solid capacity at the level of the Joint Steering Committee, Fund users and implementers.”¹⁷ The problem is that it is the recipients of funding, and some external parties in-country, that are largely responsible for determining whether they have the capacity to implement their proposed projects and to monitor compliance with the stated objectives.

Unlike many other donors, after the initial approval process of a Peacebuilding Priority Plan and the corresponding projects, the PBSO appears to have relatively little influence on the quality of the projects that they support.¹⁸ Instead, the JSC and the RUNOs are responsible for monitoring the quality and impact of the PBF projects. Prior to the allocation of PBF funds, there is no assessment of the capacity of the JSC or RUNO to oversee or implement peacebuilding projects. During the entire period under study in Burundi, there were very few staff members on the JSC or within a RUNO who had training or expertise in peacebuilding project design, implementation, or monitoring. Those projects that did have staff with this skillset were of significantly higher quality than those that did not.

There is also a problem with the information that the PBSO receives about the implementation of the PBF projects and how this information is dealt with. Many difficulties experienced by RUNOs during implementation of PBF activities in Burundi were not mentioned in the reports submitted to the PBSO. Such issues were too politically sensitive in relation to the government, or staff were wary of reporting them. In addition, the successes or contributions presented in reports to the JSC and PBSO were often not supported by clear evidence. Staff monitored the project inputs and outputs and the overall amount of money spent, but not the contribution to consolidating the peace.

Furthermore, the PBSO did not systematically provide operational guidance to the PBF Secretariat in Burundi, the JSC, or the RUNOs based on the contents of the reports it received. We did not find any examples where the PBSO had requested alterations in ongoing PBF-funded projects in Burundi in response to information in the reports. The situation for the

MPTF-O was not significantly different. It received reports showing how money was spent in relation to six general categories. This information was sent directly to the MPTF-O and was not included in the reports sent to the JSC, although it is available on the MPTF-O website. Moreover, RUNOs did not submit financial reports that link actual expenditures to planned activities, making it very difficult for the MPTF-O, the JSC, or the PBSO to assess whether the PBF money was spent as intended or whether the project achieved the intended value for the funding provided.

The PBSO's support to the RUNOs and JSC in Burundi has focused on conflict analysis, the development of the priority plan, helping to ensure the initial buy-in of the Burundian government and some reflection on project design. However, it has largely stayed out of the implementation process. While this is an understandable stance from the perspective of a New York-based office with very few staff, it means that the PBSO has no real assurance that the projects it funds will be relevant, efficient, or effective. The PBSO argues that it is up to the RUNOs to ensure that they have the capacity to implement PBF-funded projects, and that the existence of specific capacity or monitoring mechanisms is not a required condition for receiving PBF funds.

In sum, the complexities of the post-conflict context demand greater political awareness, more feedback and accountability mechanisms, more accompaniment (requiring more staff and often more skilled staff), a greater focus on capacity building and the transfer of capacity to national actors, and generally more focus on the program and project implementation process. The PBF should help to ensure that its reporting and support structures, the RUNOs, and the other country-based mechanisms are designed and implemented to deal directly with this context. Because this type of project is more complex and requires more staff attention, there will most likely be a higher staff cost for higher-quality peacebuilding projects, and both the PBF and its donors should be prepared to support this.

Country-based mechanisms

The PBSO works with several key organizations in fund-receiving countries: the JSC and support structures, the RUNOs, and the host government. The JSC is “co-chaired by the Senior UN Representative and a senior government representative ... The JSC monitors the implementation of the Priority Plan, while also approving projects (including project amendments) and assessing programme-wide achievements before the end of each calendar year.”¹⁹ The RUNOs implement PBF-funded projects, sometimes in collaboration with international or national NGOs. For both PBF tranches provided to Burundi, the UN established TFCs and a PBF Secretariat to support the JSC.²⁰

The mechanisms accompanying the PBF in Burundi served an important consultation and feedback function. With both tranches of PBF support, the JSC served as an important venue for discussing and resolving issues between the UN and the government. However, it was not able to monitor the quality of the projects, instead largely addressing higher-level issues of strategy, priorities, and resource sharing between the government and the UN.

During PBF I, the JSC included the active participation of many members of civil society and donors. It met more frequently and was charged with monitoring the implementation of the

PBF projects. JSC membership stayed the same for the PBF II, but attendance and the active inclusion of non-UN and non-government perspectives was much weaker.²¹ The community focus of PBF II projects did not seem to be of equal interest to people as the PBF I projects, which had focused on multiple sectors and on higher-level political issues and processes. As a result, during PBF II fewer people in Burundi were aware of its activities, and the JSC members generally seemed much less engaged in the PBF process.

The most powerful mechanisms that the PBF created were the TFCs and innovative monitoring structures within several projects. When they worked well, the TFCs and several of the monitoring mechanisms served the crucial role of creating regular external accountability for the intermediary outcomes of the PBF interventions and providing information about project progress, with opportunities for reflection on the purpose and effectiveness of the PBF project or activity. This type of information, based on assessments from multiple stakeholders about the contribution to the stated aims, and the space for reflection and critical analysis, are crucial for organizational learning and mid-course correction.²²

There was an important difference between the TFCs that supported PBF I projects and the TFC that supported those under PBF II. The former were organized around various sectors (like security, human rights, and rule of law) and some included the active participation of civil society members, national NGOs, international donors, and key government officials. These individuals spent their own time and energy in critically assessing the quality of PBF projects and proposing adjustments and alterations to their design and implementation. In several cases, these persons had knowledge and understanding of peacebuilding projects and monitoring which they applied to help improve the design of the PBF projects, setting up innovative monitoring mechanisms within several security and dialogue projects, and helping important mid-course corrections to be made.

While the TFC for PBF II projects had some very active members, it was much smaller and applied less direct pressure on the RUNOs to alter their approach or make mid-course corrections. Furthermore, most of its members did not have significant experience with peacebuilding projects or monitoring and evaluation, and those that did seemed unable to encourage RUNOs to integrate this more effectively into their work. This meant that the TFC and the Coordination and Programme Design Cell monitored activity-level outputs rather than peacebuilding outcomes or contribution.

In sum, during PBF II, the TFC, the RUNOs, and the Coordination and Programme Design Cell helped to gather some important data about the implementation of activities. However, this did not lead to the necessary mid-course corrections when PBF II activities were not achieving the intended goals. These monitoring efforts did not infuse a political or peacebuilding approach into PBF II activities, nor did they address some of the lingering concerns felt by some recipients about the sustainability and catalytic effect of the support provided to local associations.

Conclusions and recommendations

The PBF was a powerful tool that helped the UN implement innovative peacebuilding projects and, on the whole, made a positive contribution to Burundi's peacebuilding process. Despite

the successes, however, our research has shown that systemic problems contributed to low-quality projects which made poor use of PBF funds and sometimes even had negative effects on potential drivers of peace in Burundi. The quality and contribution of PBF-funded projects depended on whether they were implemented by staff with capabilities in peacebuilding project design and monitoring; whether they were supported by innovative feedback mechanisms from a representative group of stakeholders; and whether they had national partners involved in both the concept and the implementation of the activity.

The mechanisms and procedures that the PBSO has established to support PBF projects have focused on the identification of peacebuilding priorities and the selection of projects to achieve these priorities. However, the success of peacebuilding projects is determined by how they interact and engage with the specific context that they are intended to influence. How PBF projects are implemented, and how the original project designs are adapted to fit the context, are at least as important as the selection of the project. Unfortunately, the current mechanisms and capacities available to the UN are not sufficient to support consistently high-quality peacebuilding projects.

To improve the overall quality of PBF projects and programs, we recommend that the core actors involved in the PBF address three systemic problems: the insufficient capacity within RUNOs to design, implement, and monitor high-quality peacebuilding projects; the insufficient support capacity of the PBSO and RUNOs; and that lessons about processes, practices, and mechanisms that support high-quality peacebuilding projects are not transferred from one recipient country to the other, or between country teams in one country. These factors should determine when the PBF decides to stop funding projects in a country (its exit strategy).

Below are recommendations for the PBF's new application guidelines, the next round of PBF support to Burundi, and other countries that receive PBF funding:

Ensure that RUNOs have the capacity to design, implement and monitor high-quality peacebuilding projects. The PBSO should assess whether the RUNOs have project teams with the proper skillsets, including technical knowledge related to the peacebuilding activity, knowledge of the broader political context, local knowledge related to the focus of the project, and expertise in designing, implementing, and monitoring reflective peacebuilding. In turn, RUNOs should ensure they have the capacity to engage high-quality peacebuilding projects before requesting funds. The PBSO should also ensure that procedures and procurement practices enable the organization to hire the necessary staff or consultants, and to procure any necessary goods, without delaying the project. Reporting practices should identify the intermediary outcomes of activities, not simply the outputs and the amount of money spent. Crucially, the country-level leadership of the RUNO should be involved in direct oversight of PBF activities, including by visiting the projects and supporting constructive problem solving when difficulties are encountered.

Ensure that both headquarters and country-based mechanisms accompany the implementation of PBF activities and support critical reflection. To enable reflective peacebuilding, PBSO should help to create spaces for reflection during the design and implementation process for each PBF project, its contributions and its challenges. The PBSO can do this by accompanying the project's implementation process through regular field

missions—attending key JSC meetings, meeting with project staff, visiting project sites, and talking with partners and observers. The PBSO should also inform the senior UN leadership in the country, senior leadership of the RUNOs in the country, the JSC, and the government of their key role in supporting high-quality peacebuilding projects. This will require the PBSO to spend time with each key actor to explain the specific requirements of a peacebuilding project and their role in ensuring its quality.

Collect and transfer lessons learned about the practices, mechanisms, and processes that support high-quality projects. The PBSO should collect the lessons learned from RUNO staff, partners, the JSC, and governments about the practices, mechanisms, and processes that seemed to contribute to high-quality projects. It should provide descriptions and explanations of the various options to the RUNOs, JSC, and governments involved in PBF activities. The PBSO should also investigate the lessons learned by the broader humanitarian community about short-term socioeconomic support at the community level. PBF projects can easily turn from peace dividends to “peace disappointments” if they are not well implemented and there is no follow-up.

Link the exit strategy to the country context and to the capacity of the UN and the host government to deliver high-quality projects. The PBSO should determine the PBF’s exit strategy based on the following considerations: whether there is a clear need in the country for high-quality peacebuilding in the short term; whether the senior UN leadership has a clear vision for peacebuilding in the country and the will to implement it; whether the host government leadership has the vision and will to implement peacebuilding; and whether the RUNOs have the capacity, will, and vision to conduct high-quality peacebuilding projects. If these standards are not met in a given country, then the PBF should stop providing it with funding.

Notes

In early 2007, the PBF allocated US\$35 million to fund Burundi’s first Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PBF I), which ran from 2007 to early 2010 and covered four key areas: governance; rule of law and the security sector; protection of human rights; and land issues, with a focus on the reintegration of returning refugees and resolution of land disputes. Six RUNOs—the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, later part of UN Women)—implemented the 18 projects funded by the first tranche. See United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, “Burundi Overview,” www.unpbf.org/countries/burundi. In 2011, the PBF allocated a second tranche of funds totaling \$9.2 million (PBF II) toward community-based socioeconomic reintegration of ex-combatants and displaced persons in the three Burundian provinces most affected by conflict: Bujumbura Rural, Cibitoke, and Bubanza. The second tranche was implemented by four of the same UN entities that had implemented the PBF I projects—UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, and UN Women—as well as two new ones: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

¹ Peter Uvin, *Life After Violence: A People’s Story of Burundi* (London: Zed Books, 2009).

² Headed by the resident coordinator, the UNCTs exist in 136 countries; their members include representatives of the UN organizations working in-country. The UN Integrated Office in Burundi ran from 2006 to 2011, ending because its mandate was not extended.

³ For the full impact evaluation, see Susanna Campbell, Tracy Dexter, Michael Findley, Stephanie Hofmann, Josiah Marineau, and Daniel Walker, *Independent External Evaluation UN Peacebuilding Fund Project Portfolio in Burundi 2007–2013* (Geneva: Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, The Graduate Institute, 1 February 2014).

⁴ Susanna P. Campbell with Leonard Kayobera and Justine Nkurunziza, “Independent External Evaluation: Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi,” BINUB, March 2010, www.unpbf.org/wp-content/uploads/Independent-Evaluation-Burundi.pdf. *Colline* (hill) refers to the units of rural settlement in Burundi and Rwanda. A group of *collines* form a commune. In Burundi, there are

117 communes and 2,639 *collines*.

This increased sense of security cannot of course be attributed solely to reforms in the Burundian Armed Forces.

Human Rights Watch, “Pursuit of Power: Political Violence and Repression in Burundi,” doc. no. 1-56432-479-6, New York, May 2009, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/burundi0509web.pdf.

International Crisis Group, “Burundi: Ensuring Credible Elections,” Africa Report No. 155, Nairobi/Brussels, 2010, 17–18; Human Rights Watch, “‘We’ll Tie You Up and Shoot You’: Lack of Accountability for Political Violence in Burundi,” doc. no. 1-56432-634-9, New York, May 2010, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/burundi0510webwcover_2.pdf; United Nations Security Council, “Seventh Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi,” UN doc. S/2010/608, 2010, 1–2.

International Crisis Group, “Burundi: From Electoral Boycott to Political Impasse,” Africa Report No. 169, Nairobi/Brussels, 2011, 3.

sdras Ndikumana, “Burundi Constitution Change Risks Opening Ethnic Wounds,” *Agence France-Presse*, 1 December 2013.

Theory of change” refers to the project’s theory about how it will influence the likely drivers of conflict and peace that it has identified. See Susanna P. Campbell, “When Process Matters: The Potential Implications of Organizational Learning for Peacebuilding Success,” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 4, no. 2 (2008): 20–32; and Susanna P. Campbell, “Organizational Barriers to Peace: Agency and Structure in International Peacebuilding,” PhD Dissertation, Tufts University, 2012.

United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, “United Nations Peacebuilding Fund: Who We Are,” www.unpbf.org/who-we-are.

The PBSO synthesizes the key features of the PBC as follows: The PBC “helps identify clear peacebuilding priorities for the countries on its agenda—Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; encourages national ownership, partnerships, and mutual accountability; networks closely with the UN system at headquarters and in the field, with the Secretary-General’s senior representatives and UN country teams; and raises funds for peacebuilding through donor conferences and public advocacy—particularly for countries that attract less donor interest.” United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, “The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture,” 2010, 2, www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/pbso_architecture_flyer.pdf.

According to an analysis of meetings of the PBC configuration for Burundi, the group met formally 19 times and informally 34 times between 2006 and 2011. For the informal meetings, the ambassador was listed as chairing only 17 meetings, while records do not indicate the chair at all six times. The frequency of meetings declined from 10 in 2007 to one for 2011 for formal meetings, and from nine to two informal meetings over the same period. UN Peacebuilding Commission, “Country-Specific Configurations: Burundi,” www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/doc_burundi.shtml.

United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, *The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture* (New York: United Nations, 2010), 4.

As the Administrative Agent of the PBF, the MPTF-Office transfers funds to RUNOs on the basis of previously signed MoUs [memoranda of understanding] between each RUNO and the MPTF Office.” United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, “The Peacebuilding Fund: What is the PBF?” www.unpbf.org/application-guidelines/the-peacebuilding-fund-pbf.

United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, “Monitoring and Evaluation: Reflective Peacebuilding,” www.unpbf.org/application-guidelines/7-monitoring-and-evaluation-me-reflective-peacebuilding.

The PBC requires the countries on its agenda to prepare a Peacebuilding Priority Plan. Over the entire period studied (2007–13), the three Peacebuilding Priority Plans (or equivalent documents) were developed, largely by key UN staff and Burundian government officials, based on consultations with a broader group of Burundian and international stakeholders in the country.

BC, “The Peacebuilding Fund: What is the PBF?”

In addition, for the second PBF tranche, the UN established a Coordination and Programme Direction Cell that reported directly to the UN resident coordinator or deputy representative of the Secretary-General. The Coordination and Programme Direction Cell also worked with the RUNOs implementing PBF activities to help create linkages among them, and monitor their activities, and, together with the PBF Secretariat, consolidate their activity reports for submission to the JSC and PBSO. The cells worked with the TFCs to provide monitoring, but tended to focus on activity-level outputs rather than the contribution to peacekeeping.

The JSC met every six months during PBF II and focused on monitoring the project’s overall contribution to the Priority Plan and reviewing the reports that were synthesized by the Coordination and Programme Direction Cell.

Susanna P. Campbell, “When Process Matters: The Potential Implications of Organizational Learning for Peacebuilding Success,” *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 4, no. 2 (2008) 20–32; Campbell, “Independent External Evaluation: Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi”; and Susanna P. Campbell, “Routine Learning? How Peacebuilding Organizations Prevent Liberal Peace,” in *A Liberal Peace? The Problems and Practices of Peacebuilding*, ed. Susanna P. Campbell, David Chandler, and Meera Sabaratnam (London: Zed Books, 2011), 89–105.