

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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IMPRINT

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OUR FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

Contents and insights into our work at the ACP



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Training Programmes

- Capacity Development for Humanitarian Assistance in West Africa - HAWA
- International Civilian Peacebuilding Training Programme - IPT
- European Union's Civilian Training Initiative - EUCTI
- augMENTOR: Next-Generation Learning with Artificial Intelligence
- SkillDrill: Virtual Reality-Enhanced Training for Field Readiness
- Integrated Training Programme for Civilian, Police and Military Experts – ESDC

Peace Education

- 7 Days for Peace - Conference
- Peace Weeks
- University course Global Peace Education
- Holocaust History Workshop
- School development project "Partner school of Friedensburg Schlaining"

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Developing a Complex Understanding and Engagement with the Conflicts over the Holy Land
- De-escalation of Water Conflicts in Libya
- Communal Peace and Conflict Work in Burgenland
- Promoting Resilience through an HDP Nexus Approach: South Sudan and Uganda
- Dialogue in the Gulf Region
- Expert Dialogue on European Security
- Alternative Remembrance of the "Bleiburg Massacre"
- Georgia: Mediation Training for Women Leaders

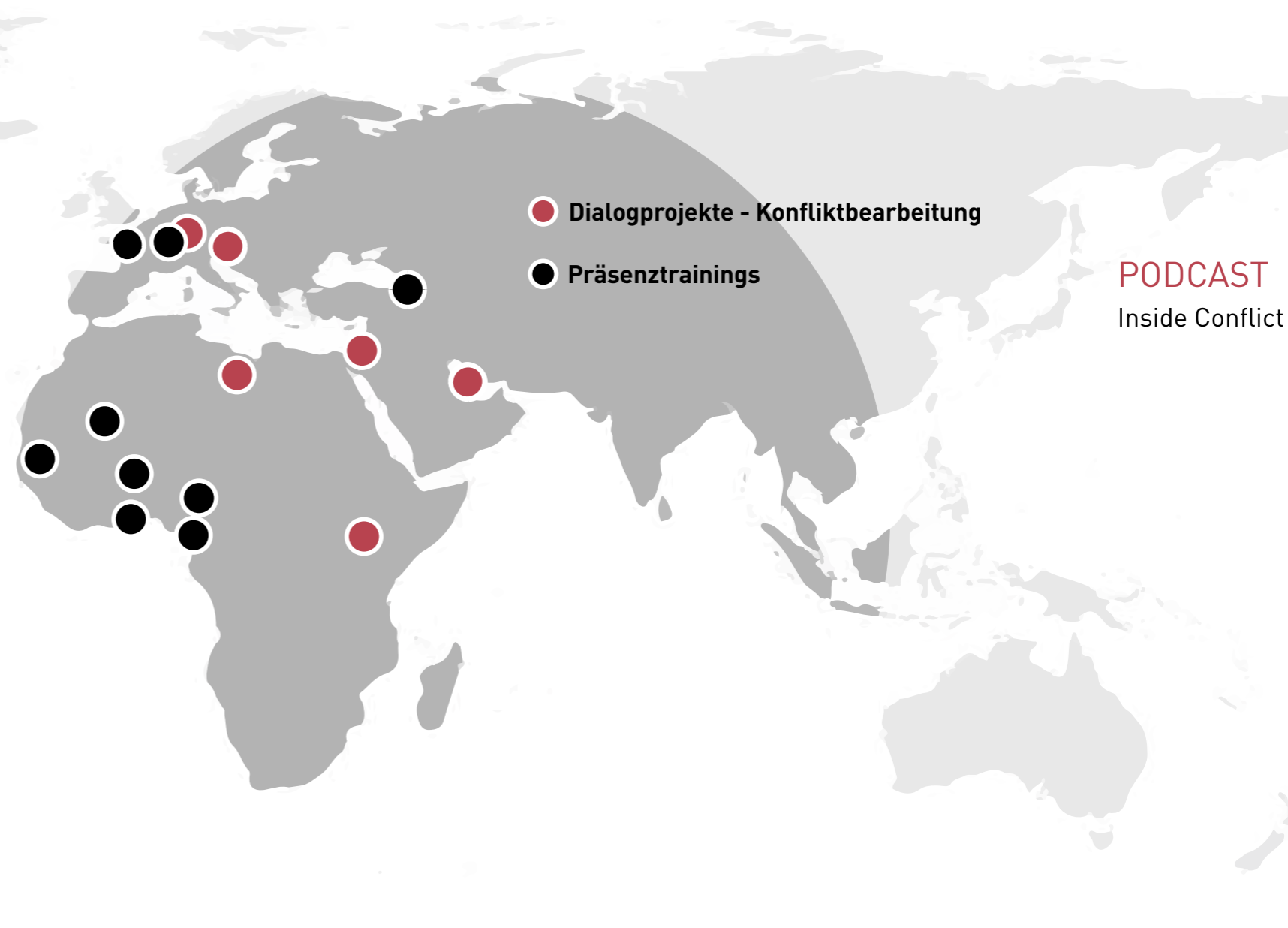
RESEARCH

Research projects

- Dealing with Justice and Peace Issues In Times of War
- Development of a University Concept in Stadtschlaining
- Austrian Forum for Peace Working Papers
- Policy Advice

Events

- Austrian Forum for Peace
- Network Peace and Conflict Research in Austria - NeFKÖ



PODCAST
Inside Conflict

THE VALUE OF A THIRD PARTY IN TIMES OF WAR



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war benefits them more than peace.

The renewed rivalry between major powers, the diminishing credibility of the so-called liberal world order, the ongoing loss of livelihoods due to the climate crisis, and the impact of uncontrolled technological change are having a dramatic impact on security and stability around the world.

The Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas conflict have fostered a black-and-white moral perspective in the „Global West.“ However, reality is often far more complex and nuanced. The gray areas in these situations are increasingly occupied by other actors. Meanwhile, the „Global West,“ including neutral states within this space, is suffering a significant loss of credibility worldwide.

Given the widespread violations of international humanitarian law and human rights standards, the credibility and effectiveness of the international legal system are also under scrutiny. The international community, especially the major powers, should increase pressure on those committing significant breaches of international law.

While many of the countries most affected by the climate crisis also suffer from armed conflict, our research and practical work in these countries increasingly shows that the nexus of conflict and climate change represents both a double burden and an opportunity. Since climate change affects everyone across national and ethno-political boundaries, it can serve as a starting point for building trust between con-

flicting parties and agreeing on common goals.

Austria has historically made significant contributions to international peace policy as a respected mediator in conflicts. In light of the changed security landscape, it is important to revive this potential and adopt a proactive neutrality policy tailored to current challenges.

Since the onset of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which violated international law, the demand for Austrian peace mediation has persisted, as demonstrated by our daily practical work and research at the international level in various contexts.

Those of us fortunate enough to not be directly affected by violence should recognize that every conflict is viewed from subjective perspectives. This underscores the value of a so-called „Third Party,“ ideally provided by neutral states.

Moritz Ehrmann, ACP-Director

ABOUT US

The Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP)

Events in various parts of the world indicate that war is increasingly becoming a routine matter. The revived rivalry between major powers, the ongoing loss of livelihoods due to the environmental and climate crises, a lack of distributive justice and the effects of rapid and often uncontrolled technological change are having a dramatic impact on peace, security and stability around the world. However, statistics show that wars rarely produce winners.

The Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP) has been showing ways to peace for over 40 years. It offers a neutral platform for dialogue and mediation, whether at the Peace Castle in Stadtschlaining, its second location in Vienna, or worldwide. The ACP capacity development programmes prepare experts for conflict-sensitive work in crisis regions. Research at the ACP provides the basis. Peace education sensitises the younger generations of our society. The ACP has i.a. been awarded the United Nations title „Peace Messenger“ and the UNESCO „Peace Education Prize“ for its work.

The path to security, stability, and ultimately to peace, is long, extensive and complex. The ACP is seeking to achieve it through various partnerships in the political and security policy context as well as with civil society in Austria and worldwide.

The Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP) was founded in 1982 and is organised as a non-profit, independent, non-partisan association. It consists of the following bodies: General Assembly, Board, Management, Scientific Advisory Board, Auditors and Court of Arbitration. The rights and duties of the members of the respective bodies are set forth in the ACP constitution.

Capacity Development

In terms of capacity development, the ACP focuses on two core areas: the training of peacebuilding experts who are or will be deployed in crisis regions and peace education for schools in Austria. Hundreds of civilian, military or police experts are trained as part of the various training programmes worldwide or in Austria. In this area, the ACP cooperates with the EU, UN and OSCE. The effects of environmental degradation and the climate crisis are an integral part of many training programmes. The use of new technology as a tool

for peacebuilding, known as „PeaceTech“, is also playing an increasingly important role. ACP's training work in West Africa focusses in particular on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

The ACP develops and offers customised training courses on request.

Peace Education

Every year, more than 1 000 pupils take part in the ACP's peace education programmes on conflict and peace skills, non-violent communication, bullying and violence prevention, respectful behaviour, integration and diversity, as well as team building and solidarity. In parallel, systemic skills training is offered for teachers. Moreover, the ACP cooperated with the University College of Teacher Education and the Burgenland Children's and Youth Ombuds Office in developing the „Global Peace Education“ university course.

Conflict Resolution

In the past, Austrian stakeholders have made important contributions to international peace policy as valued mediators in conflicts. Against the backdrop of an increasingly conflict-ridden world, this potential needs to be fully utilised again. For mediation to actually contribute to peace, recognised principles such as impartiality, consent of the relevant parties, inclusivity and the principle of doing no harm through one's own actions must be upheld. Peace can only be made with enemies. A peace process must therefore include the parties who exert influence on the conflict.

The ACP supports official negotiations and informal dialogue processes, mediating directly between the parties to a conflict. Initiatives take place at the local, regional and national levels and in a dialogue with formal and informal armed actors, political interest groups and civil society. These activities form the core mission of the ACP.

At international level, the ACP's peacebuilding activities have focussed on the Middle East, Africa and the OSCE region for many years.

Many conflict-ridden countries in Europe's immediate neighbourhood are exceptionally hard hit by the climate crisis, but also particularly ill-equipped to deal with its effects.

ABOUT US

The Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP)

This further exacerbates or creates new conflict dynamics. The ACP is therefore vigorously pursuing climate change adaptation programmes combined with conflict prevention approaches, particularly in the form of environmental peacebuilding.

In Austria, we specialise in the design and management of conflict resolution within communities, which is intended to contribute to peaceful coexistence

Research

The ACP contributes to the dialogue on current peace policy issues through research, specialist conferences and publications. Such research also forms the basis for policy advice from the ACP. Likewise, research is an important companion to conflict management. On the one hand, it enables to identify significant trends, and on the other, it helps to better understand complicated dynamics in specific conflict areas and thus to propose more realistic solutions to the conflict parties. ACP publications include policy briefs and reports.

MANAGEMENT

Moritz Ehrmann

TEAM

Shadi Babanejad (February - July 2023)

Samuel Bahlsen (until September 2023)

Bettina Beiglböck

Mercedes Corrales

Nathan Coyle (since December 2023)

Ilse Divosch

Ursula Gamauf-Eberhardt

Susanne J. Györög

Adham Hamed (since July 2023)

Fatma Haron (since October 2023)

Jakob Herowitsch (compulsory civilian service, until August 2023)

Anna Hess (until November 2023)

Claudia Hofer

Walter Hofer

Astrid Holzinger

Elisabeth Horvath

Eva Huber

Marylia Hushcha (October - December 2023)

Alba Losert (since November 2023)

Tina Madl

Fatou Ndour (since October 2023)

Melanie Nemeth-Konrad (since May 2023)

Augustin Nicolescu

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Silvia Polster (until March 2023)

Yerivan Pruscha

Monika Psenner

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Helena Speidel (since November 2023)

Sophia Stanger (since October 2023)

Martina Tader

Rebecca Trixa (until May 2023)

Lukas Wank (until March 2023)

Wolfgang Weilharter

BOARD

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Christine Teuschler (1st Vice President until September 2023,

Board Member since October 2023)

Irene Giner-Reichl (1st Vice President since October 2023)

Johann Pucher (2nd Vice President)

Markus Szelinger (3rd Vice President until September 2023,

Board Member since October 2023)

Rudolf Luipersbeck (Cashier)

Peter Steyrer (Board Member until September 2023)

Markus Brunner (Board Member since October 2023)

Marijana Grandits (Board Member since October 2023)

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Olivia Lazard (Member)

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Cindy Wittke (Member)

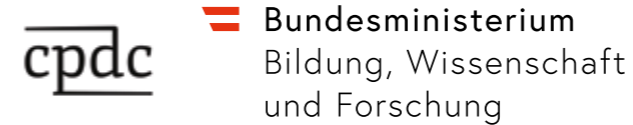
Hossam Zaki (Member)

CORE FUNDING



State of Burgenland

Education, Culture and Research



COOPERATION PARTNER



OUR DONORS, CLIENTS, AND INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Austrian Development Agency
Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence
Bank Austria
Bank Burgenland
BDO
Chamber of Labour Burgenland
City of Graz
City of Linz
Community of Stadtschläining
Diocese Eisenstadt
Eidgenössisches Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten
Energie Burgenland
European Commission
Generali Versicherung
Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
KPMG
Landsimmobilien Burgenland
National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism
Porr
Republic of Finland, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Raiffeisen Landesbank Burgenland
OSCE Delegations and Representations of Austria
Siemens
Ströck
Travel Agency Taxi Sodl
Royal Marechaussee Netherlands
Unger Steel
UN Women
Wiener Städtische Versicherung
Wirtschaftsagentur Burgenland
Wirtschaftskammer Burgenland

ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ACP	Austrian Centre for Peace
AU	African Union
BD	Burgenland Department of Education
BMEIA	Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs
BMLV	Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence
CPD, CPDC	Conflict-Peace-Democracy-Cluster
CPOC	Comprehensive Protection of Civilians
EAPTC	European Association of Peace Operations Training Centres
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENTRI	Europe's New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management
ESDC	European Security and Defence College
EU	European Union
EUAV	European Union Aid Volunteers Initiative
EUCTG	European Union Civilian Training Group
EUCTI	European Union Civilian Training Initiative
EUPCST	European Union Police and Civilian Service Training
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HAWA	Humanitarian Assistance in West Africa
HDP Nexus	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
ICEUR-Vienna	The International Center for Advanced and Comparative EU-Russia (NIS) Research, Vienna
IIP	International Institute for Peace
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPT	International Civilian Peacebuilding and Peacekeeping Training Programme
IQCM	Iraqi Center for Negotiation Skills and Conflict Management
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
KIJA	Ombudsoffice for Children and Youth Burgenland
LVAk	Landesverteidigungsakademie (National Defence Academy)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ÖAD	Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation
OSZE, OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PH	Pädagogische Hochschule (Pedagogic Academy)
POC	Protection of Civilians
PSRP	Political Settlements Research Programme
SFU	Sigmund Freud University
SSR	Security Sector Reform
StoP	State of Peacebuilding-Conference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMISS	UN-Peacemission
UN RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolutions
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VIC	Vienna International Centre
VN, UN	United Nations
WPS	Woman Peace Security
ZBG	Bilingual Federal Grammar School

OUR PARTNERS

Konflikt-Frieden-Demokratie-Cluster (CPDC)
Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz
Institut für Konfliktforschung
Demokratiezentrum Wien

Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt
Aktionsbündnis Frieden, Aktive Neutralität und Gewaltfreiheit
Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung
ARGUMENTO Kultur- und Kunstvermittlung
Association for Historical Dialogue and Research
Association of Researchers of EU Values in Educaton (AREVE)
Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy
B3 Bildung Beratung Begegnung – ÖAGG PD
BAOBAB Globales Lernen
Bildung2030
Bildungsdirektion Burgenland
BITrum - Research Group for the Interdisciplinary Study of Information
British Academy
Bruno Kreisky Forum für internationalen Dialog
Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft
CARE Österreich
CARE Uganda
Caritas Wien
Centre for European Perspective
Center for International Peace Operations
Center for Science, Technology, and Society, Chulalongkorn University
Challenge
Club of Vienna
Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability
Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
Clingendael – Netherlands Institute for Internationale Relations
Crisis Management Centre Finland
Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), South Sudan
CONCENTRUM
Conciliation Resources
Department of System Analysis, Prague University of Economics and Business
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
DETCRO Research and Advisory
Die Werkstatt
Diplomatische Akademie Wien
Ecole Nationale d'Administration
École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS)
Egmont
Economic Community of West African States
Europahaus
European External Action Service
European Security and Defence College
Europäische Union
European Union Civilian Training Initiative – EUCTI
FAS Research
FH Burgenland - Department of Social Affairs
Folke Bernadotte Academy
Forum Computer Professionals for Peace and Social Responsibility (Fiff)
Freuraum
Fridays for Future Österreich
Friedensbüro Salzburg
Friedensbüro Linz
Führungsakademie der deutschen Bundeswehr
Geneva Academy

Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces
Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Gesellschaft für Organisation, Planung und Ausbildung
Gesellschaft für psychoanalytische Sozialpsychologie
Ground Truth Solutions
GOPA, Worldwide Consultants
Global Campaign for Peace Education
Global Citizenship Alliance
Global Youth Climate Pact & Center Edgar Morin, EHSS / CNRS, Paris, France
Globale Verantwortung, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklung und Humanitäre Hilfe
Globart
HABAQ for Human Rights Training and Development, Jordanien
Herbert C. Kelman-Institut für Interaktive Konflikttransformation (HKI)
Hilfswerk
HSE University; Russia
Humanitas Unisinos Institute (IHU)
ICF Consulting
Information Ethics for Africa
Institute of Advanced Studies, Köszeg
Institute of Higher Education of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
Institute of Social Cohesion Development
Istituto Humanitas Unisinos
Internationaler Versöhnungsbund
International Committee of the Red Cross
International Convivialist Association (ICA)
International Crisis Group
IIP International Institute for Peace
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)
International Institute of Social Studies
International Security Sector Advisory Team
Iraqi Center for Negotiation Skills and Conflict Management (IQCM)
Jugend eine Welt
Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)
Karl-Renner-Institut
Kiev National Shevchenko University, Philosophy and Methodology of Science
Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft Burgenland
Kommando für Internationale Einsätze Götzendorf
Kreativ für Menschen e.V.
Landesjugendreferat Burgenland
Landesverband Bibliotheken Burgenland
London School of Economics and Political Science
Macau Ricci Institute at the University of St. Joseph, Macau
MDF Training & Consultancy
Menschen für Menschen
National Governance Institute of Huazhong, University of Science and Technology
National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, Faculty of Management of Education and Science
National Research University-Higher School of Economics, School of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities
National Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv
NGO Committee on Peace Vienna
North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Oberwarter Siedlungsgenossenschaft (OSG)
OHO Oberwart
Open Land Lab
Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa
OSZE Akademie Bishkek
Österreichischer Auslandsdienst
Österreichische Frauenföderation für Weltfrieden

Österreichische Gesellschaft für Umwelt und Technik
Österreichisches Institut für Internationale Politik
Österreichisches Jüdisches Museum
Österreichisches Rotes Kreuz
Österreichische UNESCO Kommission
Ottawa Dialogue
Pädagogische Hochschule Burgenland
Peace Appeal Foundation
PeaceRep - The Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform
PEN Austria & France
REFORM
R.E.F.U.G.I.U.S.
Rothlin International CSR Consulting firm Ltd., Hong Kong and Beijing
Royal Institute for International Relations
Sarvodaya
Saferworld
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, Washington DC
Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna
SFU Berlin / Wien
Shabka - The Strategic Think & Do Tank
Sir Peter Ustinov Institut
SOL – Menschen für Solidarität, Ökologie und Lebensstil
SOS Kinderdorf Pinkafeld
Sumy National Agrarian University
Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding
Swisspeace
Terre des Hommes
The Institute for a Global Sustainable Information Society
GSIS
The International Center for Advanced and Comparative EU-Russia (NIS) Research, Vienna
Uganda Red Cross Society
Ukrainian Synergetic Society
UNESCO Chair on Global Citizenship Education, Uni Klagenfurt
UNHCR
UNICEF
Universität Edinburgh
Universität Koblenz-Landau
Universität Wien – Institut für Politikwissenschaften
University of Aberdeen
University of Economics and Business, Prague
University of Edinburgh, School of Law
University of St Andrews
United Nations Department of Peace Operations
United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
United Nations Standing Police Capacity
United States Institute of Peace
Verein OpenLandLab
Verein Zukunft Schläining
Volkshilfe Wien
Volkshochschule Burgenland
Volkshochschule der Burgenländischen Roma
Weinidylle
Welthaus Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz
West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
Zentralverband der Kärntner Slowenen (ZSO)
Zentrum für Friedensforschung und Friedensbildung
Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze
Zentrum für soziale Kompetenz

FOCUS TOPICS AT THE ACP

Environmental Peacebuilding - How the Environment, Climate and Peace are Connected

The environmental and climate crisis is not only a problem of the future – droughts, extreme weather conditions and rising sea levels are already threatening millions of people. People in conflict regions in particular, such as the Sahel, North Africa or the Middle East, are especially exposed to climate change. Environmental and climate crises are also leading to new conflicts there, e.g. over dwindling water resources. Conversely, conflicts have a negative impact on the environment: important infrastructure is wiped out, rivers are polluted and forests are destroyed. Resources and financial means are often used for acts of war instead of investments into a green future. Climate, environment, security, and peace are therefore closely linked and require joint solutions.

A New Focus

In light of this, the ACP has been focussing its work on environmental peacebuilding since 2022. Environmental peacebuilding examines how climate, environment and conflicts are linked, not only looking at causes and problems, but also at possible solutions. Environmental and climate issues can be a starting point for dialogue between conflicting parties. This is not just about the mere management of resources, but also about developing strategies intended to have a long-term and sustainable effect – such as projects relating to shared water resources which also offer job opportunities in the field of organic farming, initiate the regeneration of natural resources and focus on cooperation between the various parties to a conflict.

Environmental Peacebuilding in Practice

Following the introduction of the environment-climate-security nexus in capacity development in 2022 during the EAPTC in Stadtschläining, and as part of cooperation initiated by the ACP which involved several European training institutes, further events centering on this topic were held onsite over the course of 2023. These included a network meeting in January 2023 of European peace training institutes to create a common training approach for CSDP mis-

sions and a two-day workshop in July 2023 as part of the Austrian Forum for Peace. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen the dialogue between state and civil-society actors from the Global South and North as well as international organisations, to identify commonalities and to derive recommendations for dealing with the topic.

Finally, the Environmental Peacebuilding specialisation course was successfully held at the Peace Castle in November (see page 16).

However, Stadtschläining was not the only place to address the matter. Together with its partner institute, the Kofi Annan International Peacebuilding Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, Ghana, the ACP organised a course dedicated to issues at the intersection of gender, climate and humanitarian assistance - a particularly relevant training course for participants from the region due to the increasing number and scale of humanitarian disasters in West Africa as a result of climate effects (see page 14 and 15).

Participants in the ACP's dialogue project in the Persian Gulf – a region affected by extreme water shortages – are facing equally great challenges. The consequences which water scarcity has for security and potential sustainable solutions to the problem were therefore an important part of the dialogue discussions taking place (see page 23).

What the examples illustrate is this: Environmental peacebuilding is a matter of crucial importance for peace work. The ACP took its first steps in 2022 and 2023, and intends to expand its commitment further in the coming years.

FOCUS TOPICS AT THE ACP

PeaceTech is Reflected in all Areas of ACP Activities

Modern conflicts are increasingly shaped by new and emerging technologies. The discourse revolves around weighing the security threats posed by these technologies against their potential for preventing and resolving conflicts through peacebuilding.

“PeaceTech” describes the various tools and processes, such as social media, geographic information systems, data analytics, virtual reality frameworks and other digital technologies which can provide value-added in different areas to improve analytical support. This includes a better understanding and monitoring of conflicts, enhanced situational awareness, boosting innovation in capacity building and training, as well as scaling up peacebuilding efforts.

The ACP has started integrating PeaceTech into its capacity development programme. This includes developing mixed reality training frameworks for training of skills for civilian experts in crisis situations.



A PeaceTech Marketplace was held as part of the first Austrian Forum for Peace.

PeaceTech is also highly relevant in our conflict resolution work. This is especially urgent since research has shown a severe lack of technology-conflict-peace interfaces geo-referenced and dynamically visualised peace and conflict

data that allow predicting various types of conflicts before they arise. The work of the ACP includes a contribution to the development of an early warning tool that dynamically visualises conflicts before they arise by using algorithms and geospatial data.

These first steps allow us to develop PeaceTech based approaches as a core competence to offer integrated solutions to prevent conflicts before they become violent and contribute to sustainable development. In this regard, cross-sectoral coordination with other Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus partners enables us to coordinate for more impact on the ground.



WEBSITE

www.ac4p.at

22.479 users
in 125 countries

AUSTRIAN FORUM FOR PEACE 2023

A Future for Peace in an Unpredictable Global Landscape

Between 3 and 6 July 2023, the ACP team welcomed around 400 guests from 30 nations and five continents to Schläining Castle as part of the first Austrian Forum for Peace. The aim of the conference sponsored by the provincial government of Burgenland was to find new answers for peace work in times of the Ukraine war, revived rivalry between major powers, the increasing threat posed by the climate crisis and rapid technological change. Burgenland Tourism offered a wide range of cultural and sporting activities to introduce the international guests to the region.



Norbert Darabos, Hans Peter Doskozil, Robert Mardini, Moritz Ehrmann (f.l.)
© Foto Andi Bruckner

With more than 150 representatives from diplomacy, science, business and civil society, the opening ceremony on 3 July 2023 was a brilliant start to the four-day conference. Speakers included Burgenland's Governor Hans Peter Doskozil, the Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Robert Mardini, the Deputy Secretary General of the Arab League, Hossam Zaki, and the representative of North Macedonia to the OSCE, Igor Djundev. The opening panel saw ACP Director Moritz Ehrmann discussing the difficulty of keeping the dialogue open in times of war with personalities such as Peter Neumann from King's College London, Christina Kokkinakis from the European External Action Service and Hanna Shelest from Ukraine Prism.

On the panel on 4 July 2023, MEP Lukas Mandl and political science professor Séverine Autesserre from Columbia University met with other experts to discuss the influence of major power rivalries on local conflicts in different parts of the world. In this exchange hosted

by Walter Kemp, Director of the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime, climate-related conflicts were identified as having the greatest potential for resolution.



Opening Panel
© Foto Andi Bruckner

This approach was explored in greater depth on 5 July 2023. In the afternoon, bestselling author Marc Elsberg was able to attract 150 guests from the interested public to the Peace Castle. He engaged in a debate about how the climate controls conflicts with Teresa Tausch, climate activist from Fridays for Future Vienna, and the CEO and Chairman of the Board of Burgenland Energie, Stephan Sharma.



Panel, 4 July 2023

On 6 July 2024, the first Austrian Forum for Peace in Stadtschläining, supported by the province of Burgenland, ended with an inno-

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ACP

Capacity Development for Humanitarian Assistance in West Africa – Phase IV



Moritz Ehrmann, Eva Huber, Adham Hamed (f.l.)
Austrian Forum for Peace Presentation, 31 July 2023

vative PeaceTech Marketplace. Initiatives on the use of social media, geographical information systems, data analysis and artificial intelligence for peace work and conflict resolution were presented at this event.



Public Panel Discussion, 5 July 2023
© Foto Andi Bruckner

Immediately after the forum, the ACP published recommendations for the revision of the Austrian Security Strategy (see page 27). On 31 July 2023, concrete conclusions from the conference were also presented; these should influence the work of the ACP in the areas of conflict resolution, research, capacity development and peace education. They include the interaction of mediation at local and international level as well as the identification of selective entry points for cooperation between conflict parties. One example is the

impact of climate change, which affects all people equally. Therefore, it is a dynamic situation which can be an ideal starting point to build trust between conflict parties and - in the best case - not only establish peace but also achieve cooperation. Training for UN, EU or OSCE staff should integrate climate sensitivity into all aspects of peacebuilding.



Panel, 5 July 2023

Another important conclusion from the conference is that, properly analysed and used, data and technology can provide an important basis for peace work. There is also an urgent need to provide more resources and space for peace and conflict research. Traditional mediators, often small neutral countries such as Austria, are still in demand as they are more likely to be recognised as honest brokers.

West African Humanitarians are Facing the World's Most Complex Challenges

The "Capacity Building for Humanitarian Assistance in West Africa" (HAWA) project aims at ensuring that mid- and long-term humanitarian capacity-development goals are met at the local level. In 2023, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its "Humanitarian Needs and Requirements Overview" indicated that the number of Persons in Need (PiN) in the Sahel region amounted to 35.2 million, among them 45 percent are women, 57 percent are children and 12 percent are persons living with disabilities. The West African region has seen a significant increase in substantial humanitarian challenges, with numerous countries grappling with prolonged crises marked by frequent natural disasters and/or conflicts, prolonged food crises, the collapse of livelihoods, and inadequate institutional capacity to respond to these crises. The crises are further characterised by serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, along with massive displacement. It is crucial for the HAWA Project to ensure that its capacity-development efforts adequately respond to the unprecedented humanitarian challenges and rapidly changing context in the West African Region.

More Courses Offered at the KAIPTC

Combined with climate and environmental crises, gender inequality represents the most significant sustainable development challenge of our time, as stated by the UN Secretary-General. Climate change is a global issue with local impact as it exacerbates existing gender inequalities and affects women and girls disproportionately. Gender roles and relations play pivotal roles in shaping unequal capacities to adapt to and mitigate risks. The HAWA Specialisation Course on Gender-Responsive Climate Action in Humanitarian Assistance developed by the HAWA Project seeks to contribute towards addressing the existing gap by shaping a gender-

responsive, rights-based approach to climate action. The course concept underwent a formal validation process in May 2023. Subsequently, the Pilot Course was conducted at the KAIPTC from 5 to 9 June 2023, drawing participation from a diverse cohort of 21 individuals including humanitarian workers, advocates, policymakers, researchers, representatives from regional bodies such as the African Union, as well as professionals from police and military backgrounds. The other HAWA Courses were also successfully executed at the KAIPTC.



Climate Action in Humanitarian Assistance Course

The HAWA Project Impact in Target Countries

In Niger, the HAWA team conducted a Multiplier Module Workshop in May 2023. The country, along with its neighbouring nations, is grappling with escalating insecurity, with the government reporting the presence of 377 000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 251 000 refugees as of April 2023. The workshop drew the participation of 54 individuals and aimed to enhance capacities for preparedness and response to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, employing a gender-sensitive cross-border conflict management approach.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ACP

Capacity Development for Humanitarian Assistance in West Africa – Phase IV



Multiplier Module Workshop in Niamey Niger

Other Important Events in 2023

On 2 May 2023, Karl Nehammer became the first Austrian Chancellor to visit Ghana and the KAIPTC. His visit marked the culmination of nearly a decade of fruitful relations between Austria and the KAIPTC, which began in 2014 with the inception of the first HAWA Project. During Mr. Nehammer's visit, the Commandant of the KAIPTC underscored the Austrian government's contributions to the successful execution of the HAWA Core Course and highlighted the potential for further collaborations and support, particularly as the Centre embarks on a new strategic phase.



Karl Nehammer visiting the KAIPTC

With the technical support of the ACP, the Training, Evaluation, and Development (TED) department at the KAIPTC conducted its very first impact assessment of the HAWA course offerings at the KAIPTC in the autumn of 2023. The results of this assessment are slated for publication in 2024.



Karl Nehammer visiting the KAIPTC

PODCAST

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CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ACP

International Civilian Peacebuilding Training Programme (IPT)

30 years of IPT: As Relevant Today as Ever

It all began in 1992 when the then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduced his Agenda for Peace, acknowledging the pivotal role of civilian components in peace operations and calling for targeted capacity-development measures. A year later, the ACP established the IPT Programme as Europe's first training initiative for civilian experts in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. At that time, the demand for civilian expertise in peace operations was rapidly growing while training programmes for civilian experts working in crisis regions hardly existed. Now, thirty years after its inception in 1993, the IPT programme has trained more than 2600 peacebuilding practitioners from 135 countries. Given the resurgence of conflicts across the globe and the growing complexities of conflict environments, the IPT programme is as pertinent today as it was thirty years ago.

Developing Capacities to Address Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

To quickly react to emerging challenges, opportunities and capacity-development needs of civilian experts working in crisis regions, new topics have frequently been picked up and further developed within the IPT Programme. In this spirit, the ACP developed a new IPT Specialisation Course on Environmental Peacebuilding funded by the provincial government of Burgenland, which was piloted in Stadtschlaining in November 2023. While recognising that climate change, environmental degradation, and competition over natural resources can act as a driver and threat multiplier of conflict, the training also focused on how cooperation on environmental and climate issues can offer entry points for peacebuilding. During the seven-day training, participants learned about the complex interlinkages between the environment, climate, peace, and security and they acquired the skills necessary to apply a climate and environmental lens to different aspects of their work - from conflict analysis to early warning, mediation, and project development.



Field trip to Burgenland Energie's hybrid solar and wind park in Schattendorf as part of the IPT specialisation course for Environmental Peacebuilding

Furthermore, the IPT Core Course for Peacebuilders returned to the halls of Peace Castle Schlaining in March and July 2023, following a temporary focus on online trainings during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, in April 2023, in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the ACP trained ten Swiss citizens on long-term election observation in preparation of their deployment in international election observation missions. Throughout 2023, a total of 54 individuals from 31 countries spanning five continents participated in the IPT Programme. These participants are actively engaged in fostering peace and stability in regions such as the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ukraine.



Participants in the IPT core course during a complex simulation exercise on dealing with crisis situations

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ACP

PeaceTech

augMENTOR: Next-Generation Learning with Artificial Intelligence

Funded by the EU Horizon Europe Program, augMENTOR stands as an innovative project in education and training. With a focus on harnessing artificial intelligence (AI), this project aims to revolutionise learning methodologies. Trainees gain the unprecedented ability to swiftly and accurately gauge learners' skillsets. Through the fusion of AI, big data, and learning analytics, augMENTOR provides stakeholders with actionable insights, enabling intelligent resource allocation and personalised learning pathways.

Embedded within the wider augMENTOR project, initiatives like Ethical Hacking for Peace play a crucial role in contributing valuable data and insights. By mastering Industry 4.0 technologies such as AI and machine learning, Ethical Hacking for Peace enhances the AI machinery powering augMENTOR. This collaboration ensures that augMENTOR remains at the forefront of educational innovation, continually evolving to meet the needs of learners and educators alike.

At its core, augMENTOR embodies a commitment to empowerment and progress. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies and collaborative initiatives, it equips individuals and organisations with the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly digital world. Together with projects like Ethical Hacking for Peace, augMENTOR represents the Austrian Centre for Peace's dedication to driving positive change through education and technology.

SkillDrill: Virtual Reality-Enhanced Training for Field Readiness

Funded in collaboration with the Austrian Ministry of Finance and Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), Skill Drill stands as a groundbreaking initiative in crisis management training. It was developed by the ACP in partnership

with esteemed organisations such as the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT), Mindconsole GmbH, the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Johanniter Österreich Ausbildung und Forschung gem. GmbH (JOAFG), and the Austrian Ministry of Defense.

Drawing upon the partners' collective expertise and specialisation in crisis management, Skill Drill covers essential areas such as strategic and deployment planning, security protocols, intercultural competence, and medical care. These comprehensive training modules ensure readiness in all phases of crisis management, equipping participants with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate real-life scenarios effectively.

Embedded within the ACP's collaborative efforts with partners, Skill Drill is another testament to its commitment to innovative training solutions. By integrating cutting-edge VR (Virtual Reality) and MR (Mixed Reality) technologies, Skill Drill provides participants with immersive and realistic simulations of crisis scenarios. These simulations offer a dynamic learning environment where crisis responders can practise and refine their skills, preparing them effectively for the challenges they may encounter in the field.

Skill Drill embodies a commitment to empowerment and progress in crisis management. By leveraging state-of-the-art technologies and collaborative efforts with our partners, it equips individuals and organisations with the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Together with its partners, Skill Drill exemplifies the ACP's dedication to driving positive change through innovative training solutions.

SOCIAL MEDIA

f Reach: 37.986
t Impressions: 33.365
in Followers: 3.884

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ACP

EU-Trainings

European Union Civilian Training Initiative (EUCTI)

Since its inception in 2021, the ACP has been part of the EU Civilian Training Initiative (EUCTI), an EU funded project which is organised in a consortium of eight partner organisations and led by the Slovenian Centre for European Perspective (CEP). The aim of EUCTI is to enhance the capacities of civilian crisis management and stabilisation missions through training and the development of qualified personnel.

In the third year of implementation, the ACP continued chairing the consortium's working group on evaluation, which is part of a solid broader quality assurance and enhancement framework. The evaluation framework incorporates a diverse array of methods to assess learning needs and outcomes and leverages the feedback from all stakeholders and participants. This comprehensive framework ensures the consistent evaluation of all EUCTI activities and contributes to the ongoing harmonisation of training measures. In 2023, utilising this approach, the ACP supported the evaluation of 14 training activities by consortium partners, seven of which were conducted in residential format. The evaluations revealed a very high level of participant satisfaction across the various training events.



SSR-Training in Mali

The ACP also organised and held a one-week training event on the topic of security sector reform (SSR) in Mali, targeting the civilian crisis management mission EUCAP Sahel Mali, headquartered in Bamako. Established in January 2015, the mission's mandate is to support national SSR strategies and strengthen governance and accountability within Mali's internal security forces. In response to a request by the mission, ACP conducted a SSR training tailored to the specific mission mandate, context, and needs. Over the course of five days, national and international staff shared diverse perspectives and engaged in facilitated discussions deepening their theoretical understanding of the complexities of SSR in fragile contexts. They engaged critically with the challenges specific to Mali, and developed practical skills for supporting or implementing SSR processes. In doing so, they enhanced their team spirit, created a sense of shared responsibility, as well as an improved understanding of each other's roles within the mission.



SSR-Training in Mali

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ACP

Networking for the purpose of forging new insights on developing capacities for the environment-climate-peace-security nexus, fostering common understanding, coordination and complementarity among peace actors and training institutes.

Motivated by a commitment to advance the organisation's integrated approach to climate, environment, and peace issues, and recognizing the imperative for collaborative efforts, the ACP Capacity Development Team embarked on an initiative to establish an informal network aimed at convening peace training providers from across Europe, fostering dialogue and collaboration towards the development of coordinated, complementary, intersectional modular training programs on environment, climate, peace, and security matters. The Peace Castle in Schlaining served as the venue for the first in-person gathering of this endeavour in January 2023, hosting representatives from five different countries and eight different organisations who attended in person or virtually. Over the course of three days, the group engaged in robust discussions, exploring the complexities of raising awareness and enhancing competences on environmental degradation, the impacts of climate change, and their ramifications for peace and security in the context of CSDP missions. During the quarterly meeting of the Executive Academic Board (EAB) of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) in September 2023, the ACP presented the group's ideas for the integration of the topic under the ESDC umbrella in the form of a new configuration, in line with the EU Joint Communication on the Climate-Security Nexus published in June.

The workshop „Sharing Experience at the Intersection of Policy, Practice, and Capacity Development“ held in July 2023 as part of the Austrian Forum for Peace, was another milestone event in the ACP's efforts to bring together experts and forge new insights on leveraging the environment for peacebuilding. Participants from the Global South and Global



Dialogue meeting for the coordinated development of training programmes on environmental, climate, peace and security issues in January 2023 at Schlaining Castle

North, from diverse sectors including civil society, academia, national governments, and multilateral organizations shared their experiences and perspectives. The discussions identified common patterns and explored enablers and barriers for environmental peacebuilding, supported by capacity development initiatives. The workshop also reviewed global policy discourses to pinpoint potential gaps. Based on these insights, recommendations and key messages were formulated, highlighting good practices and lessons learned to better address climate and environment-related peace and security risks. The inclusive, bottom-up approach of the workshop ensured that the experiences and perspectives of practitioners and affected nations were central to the discussions, acknowledging the multifaceted and intersecting threats posed by environmental degradation and climate change to human security.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ACP

ESDC Courses

As part of its cooperation programme with the Federal Ministry of Defence, which has been in place since 2009, the ACP organised and conducted four specialisation courses in 2023 as a contribution to the European Security and Defence College (ESDC).



As a trend over the year, it has become apparent that after the travel restrictions caused by the Corona pandemic in previous years, more participants from third countries have now come to Stadtschlaining for the courses again and make up a good half of all participants.



The ESDC courses have thus regained the desired international character, which, in combination with international trainers and a very interactive teaching methodology, ensures the high quality of the courses.



The topics of the two ESDC flagship courses on Security Sector Reform and Protection of Civilians are still in great demand and the courses at Schlaining Castle have a unique attraction in Europe: in the remoteness of the location, the learning experience and networking becomes a special experience for our course participants, who appreciate their time out from the often hectic everyday work in peace operations or in ministries while they benefit from professional exchange with other participants and experts, contributing to the building networks lasting for a lifetime.

Also as part of the cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Defence, an interministerial workshop with civil society participation on the Humanitarian-Peace-Development-Nexus (HDP Nexus) was held in Schlaining Castle in 2023. A draft of guidelines for the operationalization of the HDP nexus by Austrian actors was presented and some aspects of it were discussed in more detail in small groups. In 2024, these theoretical considerations will be discussed using a concrete case study with a view to their operationalization.

PEACE EDUCATION AT THE ACP

7 Days for Peace: Does Democracy Create Peace?

„Democracy is not a particularly good form of government. But it is the best I know.“

This famous Winston Churchill quote shows that, despite its imperfections, democracy is still the most suitable form of government for bringing about change in peace and freedom. However, more and more people around the world are living in incomplete democracies, hybrid regimes or even dictatorships while trust in political institutions and processes is also declining in this country. Current challenges such as climate change, new wars in the immediate vicinity, the aftermath of the pandemic, rising extremism and manipulative information pose a real threat to democracy and peace in Europe.



Klaus Novak, Daniela Winkler, Verena Dunst, Ursula Gamauf-Eberhardt and Christian Reumann (f.l.)

Democracy does not just happen at the ballot box, however; participation in democracy also means standing up for values and standards, and actively helping to shape society – locally, nationally and globally.

Co-operation for Peace Building in Burgenland

The peace symposium „7 Days for Peace“, which is traditionally organised in the form of a Burgenland-wide cooperation between the University College of Teacher Education,



Institute Director Klaus Novak from the University College of Teacher Education Burgenland

the Directorate of Education, the Children’s and Youth Ombuds Office and the ACP, explored the question „Does democracy create peace?“ through a variety of events in 2023. In the peace conference with former President of the Burgenland Parliament Verena Dunst and communications researcher Ingrid Brodnig, as well as in workshops, training sessions and cultural side events, the theme of the year was given space. The focus was on many facets showing that education plays an important role in maintaining and strengthening democracy and promoting peace.



Erich Samer, Heinz Janisch, Ingrid Brodnig, Klaus Novak, Ursula Gamauf-Eberhardt, Birgit Lukitsch-Stiassny, Martin Ganster and Christian Reumann (f.l.)

PEACE EDUCATION AT THE ACP

Peace Weeks

Peace Education = Education for / about / through Peace

The central goal of peace education is to empower people to resolve conflicts constructively and non-violently - not only in education, but in society as a whole. Peace education measures should enable individuals, social groups and systems to recognise conflict dynamics, deal with conflict potential using peaceful means and thus avoid conflict escalation. Knowledge and skills, attitudes and values are oriented towards a process-based, positive concept of peace and - as recommended by UNESCO in 1999 - towards a „culture of peace“ as the guiding principle of peace education efforts.

A Contribution to Social Cohesion



Not only does preventing violence and dealing with conflicts constructively require knowledge and skills, it also needs an internalisation of peace-promoting standards, values and attitudes. All of this has been taught in the Peace Weeks project since 2007. The content includes conflict and peace skills, non-violent communication, bullying and violence prevention, elements from global citizenship education and the „Homeland Earth“ concept, as well as team building. Apart from „small peace“ in our social environment, the focus is also on „big peace“ with all its global contexts. The impressive number of participants not only shows how much interest there is in peace education and how much it is needed, it also reflects the growing openness in society for this matter.

Learning to live Peace: From I to You to We

Successful teaching and positive interaction at school include the promotion of social skills and the strengthening of a positive self-image as a prerequisite for developing constructive group competence. Fundamental areas of social behaviour are contact, cooperation and conflict behaviour, self-control and awareness of rules.

A good classroom climate does a lot to support learning processes. Accordingly, the Peace Weeks focus on appreciative language, a courageous, constructive and creative approach to conflicts, a departure from violence and aggression towards socially competent behaviour. „I and you“ - everyone plays a relevant role in arriving at a successful „we“ in the classroom. Using interactive and innovative methods, the relevant skills are experienced and practised during the Peace Weeks and, in the spirit of education for sustainable development, they are also practised and internalised in the long run through successful cooperation with teachers.

Facts & Figures 2023

- Peace Weeks: 2 291 pupils
- Systemic skills training for accompanying teachers: 50 teachers
- Holocaust History Project: 709 pupils
- 7 Days for Peace incl. peace conference: around 350 educators from the education and social sectors
- „Global Peace Education“ university programme: 15 new students
- Peace education workshop as part of the Austrian Forum for Peace: 34 participating experts

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT THE ACP

Our Work and Projects in the Field of Dialogue, Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Sudan: Supporting the Transition Process

Since the outbreak of civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan in April 2023, there have been a number of competing negotiation initiatives. In the shadow of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, Sudan is facing an enormous humanitarian catastrophe and the „world’s largest displacement crisis“, according to the UN.

ACP’s involvement in Sudan dates back to 2015, with the support of the Austrian Development Agency working to end the recruitment of child soldiers. After the fall of the Bashir regime in 2019, the ACP supported the political transition process by working with rebel groups from Darfur. This led to the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by a significant rebel group in 2021. Even after the military coup in October 2021, this engagement continued through involvement of civilian and political opposition groups with the support of the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

After the outbreak of the civil war in April 2023, various mediation initiatives failed. Following the termination of the UN transition mission UNITAMS and the freezing of the ceasefire talks conducted by the USA and Saudi Arabia, the central negotiating mandate was transferred to the African Union and the regional organisation IGAD.

During this phase, the ACP supported the creation of an opposition alliance which would include political parties and actors, civil society actors such as the so-called „Resistance Committees“, as well as armed rebel groups from Darfur. Towards the end of 2023, such an alliance called „Taqqadum“ was initially forged around former Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok. A specific request was made to the ACP to include the two strongest armed rebel groups in the process.

Libya: Conflicts over Water Resources

The complex conflict situation in Libya and the resulting fragmented governance of the country since 2011 have diverted attention away from the development and maintenance of key public infrastructure. This is particularly true of the water sector, which is poorly managed, lacks a strategy and is unable to adequately meet increasing future demand – contributing to the exacerbation of social conflict. The effects of climate change further exacerbate these dynamics. Since 2020, the ACP’s work has aimed to exchange perspectives between key stakeholders in Western Libya, leading to more sustainable management of the severely degraded water infrastructure, with a particular focus on the Great Man-Made River (GMMR). Work was supported by the Austrian Development Agency and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

In 2023, the dialogue project was relaunched, involving Libyan actors from the political, academic and civil society sectors, as well as experts from the water sector and on climate change. The aim was to incorporate relevant dynamics such as the ever-increasing impact of the climate crisis and the changing political and military balance of power in Libya into the efforts. Particular attention was paid to integrating the environmental peacebuilding approach.

As a first step, the ACP conducted research to strengthen the state of knowledge on issues of distributional conflict, water management and climate change around the GMMR. Several research experts from the fields of climate, water management and conflict research were involved. With regard to the planned thematic reorientation, focusing on the area of environmental peacebuilding, the aim was to clarify the extent to which the distribution conflict over water resources observed in western Libya and the associated latent intra-Libyan North-South divide could be conceptually embedded in the logic of an Environmental Peacebuilding

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT THE ACP

Our Work and Projects in the Field of Dialogue, Mediation and Conflict Resolution

approach. Interviews were conducted with Libyan actors and international experts on this question.

Building on this, the ACP held a series of consultations and virtual workshops with Libyan stakeholders from academic research and civil society. A presentation of the results took place at the Austrian Forum for Peace on 4 July 2023. Based on the insights and knowledge generated, the ACP initiative is to be continued in 2024.

Persian Gulf Inclusive Regional Dialogue

The Gulf Region is subject to constant change, fragility, and vulnerability. It is also the centre of the global energy market, and a major trade node. In recent years, countries in the region have sought to move from confrontation to dialogue. Launched in early 2022, the ACP Gulf Inclusive Regional Dialogue, supported by the Austrian Federal Minister of European and International Affairs, is designed to foster the development of a regional constituency to reinforce this emerging dialogue dynamic in the region through confidential and constructive dialogue, and the collaborative development and dissemination of policy recommendations.

The format brings together experts from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Iran, Iraq, and Yemen for informal discussions on two parallel and intertwined tracks: Security Discussions and Environmental Peacebuilding. The first one tackles ongoing challenges such as the conflict in Yemen, arms control, and maritime security. The second engages the shared regional challenge of water security within the context of climate change, and the potential for states in the region to address this shared critical challenge through collaborative regional complex environmental regeneration.

As such, the initiative has organised in-person meetings at the Peace Castle in Stadtschlaining, as well as a series of

online Workgroup Dialogues on Security and Environmental Peacebuilding. In relation to the issue of water security, research was developed on water scarcity as an entry point for Environmental Peacebuilding in the Persian Gulf.

Georgia: Mediation Training for Women Leaders

The initiative was developed at request with UN Women Georgia, and grounded in UN Women’s broader mission to empower women and ensure their active participation in peace and security processes. This initiative, implemented by the Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP) and under the funding auspices of the UK Conflict Stability and Security Fund (UK CSSF), embodies a critical approach towards fostering sustainable peace and community resilience within the Georgian context, specifically focusing on engaging young women from ethnic Abkhaz, Georgian, and Ossetian backgrounds. Responding to the enduring challenges of protracted conflicts in Georgia and the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the project centred on enhancing the capacities of young women affected by these conflicts, enabling their meaningful engagement in peacebuilding and confidence-building measures as a pathway to durable peace.

The project comprised four modules addressing peacebuilding, power relations, feminist peacebuilding, and dialogue, implemented over the course of eight months. Three of the sessions were conducted virtually, and one module was held in person. This format facilitated the involvement of high-profile international experts, who brought extensive practical experience and shared valuable insights into women’s peace activism and gender leadership from diverse contexts beyond the participants’ immediate locations.

Relationship-fostering activities were incorporated throughout the programme, notably through the in-person meeting held in Yerevan, Armenia. This meeting emphasised a dee-

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT THE ACP

Our Work and Projects in the Field of Dialogue, Mediation and Conflict Resolution

pening understanding of conflict and peace, gender-sensitive conflict analysis, and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) framework. Sixteen participants, equally representing Georgian, South Ossetian, and Abkhaz regions, attended this key session.

Through these endeavours, the project not only aimed to amplify the voices of young women in peace and security processes but also to achieve transformative change in terms of supporting mutual exchange between young ethnic Abkhaz, Georgian and Ossetian women.

Neighbourhood Mediation in Burgenland

A survey conducted among municipal politicians and other local stakeholders revealed that neighbourhood conflicts are playing a growing role in the life of communities. These conflicts are not only a problem for those affected and their immediate surroundings, but often have an impact on local and regional politics, the police, judiciary and social work. As a result, there was great interest in support in this area, so starting in 2022, the first experiments with neighbourhood mediation were undertaken in cooperation with Oberwarter Siedlungsgenossenschaft (OSG), a housing association known for its innovative approaches.

The research project “Conflicts and Conflict Management in the Housing and Tenancy Context with a Focus on Multi-Party Residential Buildings in Burgenland” was launched in 2023 with ERDF funding from the Burgenland state additionality programme.

The project sponsor, Burgenland University of Applied Sciences, provides scientific support to this process, while the ACP organises the mediations referred to it by OSG.

The project seeks to explore the following issues:

- Opportunities and limitations of mediation under the existing local conditions in Burgenland
- Identification and establishment of networks for training, prevention, networking, generation of ideas and implementation of mediation.
- Survey of the financial and social costs of unresolved conflicts as well as cost avoidance through structured conflict resolution measures.
- Possibilities of digitalisation in the area of conflict management and mediation.

The offer has been successfully accepted. The mediators have to deal with a comparatively wide range of conflict constellations, from classic neighbourhood conflicts to complex conflicts with external actors. One thing can already be mentioned at this point: The research interviews and other networking activities have further increased interest on the part of housing associations, municipal politics, social work, the judiciary and the police in initiating constructive forms of



Raffaella Deutsch (OSG) – Wolfgang Weilharter (ACP - coordinator) – Lisa Wolf-Telek (mediator) – Armin Kulovits (OSG) – Karin Schmid (University of Applied Sciences Burgenland) – Manfred Tauchner (University of Applied Sciences Burgenland) – Patricia Velikay (mediator) – Lisa Maj Pertl (mediator) – Mathias Schuster (mediator) (f.l.)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT THE ACP

Our Work and Projects in the Field of Dialogue, Mediation and Conflict Resolution

conflict resolution in this area, which has a significant influence on the conflict behaviour of society.

South Sudan and Northern Uganda: Empowering Local Peacemakers

South Sudan's displacement crisis is one of Africa's most significant in recent times, with 2.3 million refugees spread across neighbouring countries and another 2.2 million internally displaced within South Sudan. In 2023, Uganda hosted 41 per cent of the South Sudanese refugees in the region, more than 50% of which are women and girls. Conflicts between host and refugee communities arise frequently over resources such as food, land, water, or firewood. Domestic, sexual, and gender-based forms of violence are widespread within both groups, often linked to insufficient food ratios, toxic gender roles, trauma, and substance abuse. In one of the refugees' places of origin, Kajo-Keji County in South Sudan, inter-communal violence occurs periodically between local farmers and nomadic cattle herding communities, leading to further displacement, destruction of livelihoods, and trauma.

With funding from the Austrian Development Agency, ACP and project partners in Austria, South Sudan, and Uganda have been supporting refugee and host communities through the provision of livelihoods support, skills training, and psychosocial support activities since late 2021. The project aims to strengthen the resilience of communities affected by violence in both countries by applying the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus (HDP nexus) approach and providing multidimensional support to achieve a common goal. In 2023, ACP with its local peacebuilding partner Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) in South Sudan as well as partners in Uganda focused on building the capacities of community peace monitors. These are selected individuals from host and refugee commu-

nities – women, men, youth, and church leaders – who receive training on communication skills, conflict analysis and conflict resolution. They serve their communities as third parties when domestic and inter-community conflict occurs. ACP conducted a field mission to two refugee settlements in Northern Uganda to identify peacebuilding needs and then delivered two hands-on trainings for local peacemakers in the presence of representatives of the Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister, responsible for peace and security in the settlements.

As a result of the successful trainings, local project partners requested ACP to develop additional capacity development measures for community peace monitors also in South Sudan as well as a cross-border, advanced level training programme for selected participants from both countries. These will be delivered in 2024 with the aim of integrating local approaches to peacebuilding for maximum impact and sustainability.

RESEARCH AT THE ACP

Start of the Austrian Forum for Peace Working Papers Series



As a result of the Austrian Forum for Peace 2023, a new publication series was created under the name „Austrian Forum for Peace Working Papers“. The first issue, „Emerging Approaches to International Mediation in a Fragmented World. Shifting Dynamics and Austria’s Response“ was developed in 2023 following the conference and presented to the public in early 2024. The paper starts with the observation that a growing number of conflicts - Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan, etc. - is accompanied by a weakening of the international system and a stalemate in important peace processes. The increasing fragmentation and polarisation of the international system has led to the loss of credibility of traditional third-party mediators in some contexts. Instead, these mediators have been replaced by emerging actors

whose approach to foreign policy in general and to international peacebuilding in particular can be subsumed under the umbrella of illiberal peace. This reality poses questions for countries such as Austria about how they can continue to remain effective in their international mediation efforts. First, joining forces with the emerging actors in mediation would strengthen Austria’s credibility as a neutral third party. Second, cooperation with these actors may be contradictory to some of Austria’s key values in international relations. The choice therefore appears to be between sticking to one’s ideology, deprioritising one’s own values, or attempting to reconcile these conflicting interests on a case-by-case basis. Third, the last option would certainly be the most challenging and time-consuming to realise, as it would imply confronting oneself with difficult questions, answering them with practical steps, and continually monitoring their implementation. It does, however, appear the most prudent course of action if Austria wants to remain a relevant and effective actor on the stage of international peace and mediation. It would thus be advisable for the Federal Government as well as relevant non-governmental agencies working in mediation and peacebuilding to explore potential venues of cooperation with non-like-minded states. These investigations should be accompanied by serious consideration about the ethical dimensions that such joint ventures would inevitably raise.

MEDIA REVIEW

68 Mentions

55 Online & Print
10 Video & TV
3 Radio & Podcast

RESEARCH AT THE ACP

Exploratory Trip to Ethiopia to Re-Establish University Capacities in Stadtschlaining



The future plan of the Burgenland state government for the XXII legislative period provides for a policy of smart growth in the field of science and research. In this context, the idea arose to re-establish a university presence in the field of peace and conflict research in Stadtschlaining. As an initial contribution, the ACP outlined a multi-stage process that would significantly build on the earlier university traditions of the European Peace University in Stadtschlaining. At the same time, the focus would be on internationality and partnerships, particularly with actors in the global South and in crisis and conflict areas, and an international research profile with mobility solutions would be established. This should create the necessary conditions to attract an international student body for future degree courses and to attract suitably qualified academics. This could make a further contribution to the goal of smart growth in the field of science and research at the Stadtschlaining site.

From 19 to 26 November 2023, an ACP delegation went on an exploratory mission to Ethiopia. In meetings with representatives and students of Jimma University, Haramaya University and Addis Ababa University, concrete opportunities for cooperation in the areas of university development, research, training & capacity building and peace mediation were discussed. Talks were also held with the heads of the universities, institutes and faculties as well as with diplomatic representatives.



The delegation obtained information about current civil society developments in Ethiopia in a collegial exchange with the Civil Peace Service (CPS) of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ). Talks were also held with several diplomatic missions. Moreover, potential further project partnerships were explored with Ethiopian partners, in areas including curriculum development and academic capacity building as well as community-based peace building and environmental peace building. The results of the trip were incorporated into a feasibility study, which was implemented by World University Service Austria on behalf of the Austrian Centre for Peace. Subsequently, a potential vision for the process of developing university capacities in Stadtschlaining going forward was worded. Subsequently, a comprehensive and viable proposal with several options for action to implement a multi-year capacity development process was submitted to the state of Burgenland.

RESEARCH AT THE ACP

Seven Points on Austrian Security: A Peacebuilding Perspective

Together with the International Institute for Peace (IIP), the ACP developed content-related elements for the development of a new Austrian security strategy. The work of both institutes, which is defined by a multi-layered and complex reality and focussed on practical impact, served as a perspective. The points developed were subsequently discussed in the media and formed the basis for targeted dialogue with relevant ministries.



ACP Director Moritz Ehrmann and IIP Director Stephanie Fenkart

The core approach was based on the assumption that an Austrian security strategy should strengthen an active commitment to peace. Against the backdrop of a changed security architecture in Europe, this potential must again be fully tapped into and Austria must position itself through proactive neutrality policy adapted to current challenges. As an important part of this, the historically underutilised potential of peace mediation, supported by proactive neutrality policy, should be brought to bear. Firstly, such an approach contributes to sustainable stabilisation, including of regions relevant to Austria's security. Secondly, such an approach strengthens a positive perception of Austria in the world and, as a result, weakens the willingness of other states to harm Austria's security.



The threat posed by the climate crisis will surpass many other security risks in terms of relevance and requires responses at home and abroad. Many conflict-affected regions in Europe's immediate neighbourhood are particularly hard hit by the climate crisis, but are also particularly ill-equipped to deal with its effects. Austria should therefore vigorously promote climate change adaptation programmes combined with conflict prevention approaches (Environmental Peacebuilding).

The demand for Austrian peace mediation continues to exist, this is clearly reflected in the experience of our daily practical work and research at international level in various contexts – the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus, the Middle East, East and West Africa, or states such as Sudan or Libya.

The experience of comparable European countries which have successfully acted as peace mediators shows that serious work in this area requires sustainable resources, enabling on the one hand the development of the research and practical capacities required, and the continuous monitoring and support of mediation processes on the other. These experiences also show that relevant capacities must be available among both state and civil society actors and that a successful and effective approach is achieved through partnerships and synergies between these actors.



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