

A large, abstract teal graphic in the top left corner, featuring a thick curved line and several straight diagonal lines of varying thicknesses.

Agency for Peacebuilding

Annual Report

2016

Introduction

Created at the end 2015, the Agency for Peacebuilding (AP) has, with 2016, marked its first full year of life: a period made up of first and small steps, in other words, which has nevertheless brought with it many rewards. Born with high ambitions and a lot of potential, AP has finally started, over the last twelve months, to build the foundations necessary to become a point of reference on issues relating to sustainable peace, conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Italy.


Throughout the year, we have launched three of the five work areas in which, as AP, we've decided to focus on: research and analysis, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation. AP's work has touched upon several important themes, among which the empowerment of women in the Horn of Africa and the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda framed by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000); the fight against terrorism; peace in Colombia; and the conflict in Libya.

The variety of the themes that we have covered is a clear indicator of success for the work we completed in 2016, and so is the nature of the analysis that we've offered: we have, in fact, tried to bring to the fore a fresh and alternative voice, one that reflects not only the geopolitical dynamics behind a given context, but also the perspectives of those actors that are contributing to building peace from the ground up and are, for this reason, all too often ignored.

Looking to 2017, with so many conflict situations around the world appearing to get worse, we remain convinced that peacebuilding, to be successful, has to be based on the values of inclusivity and reciprocity. And we believe this to be true not just for those working on peacebuilding from the side of civil society, as we are, but also for governments and their representatives.

The annual report provides the description of the work that we have done in 2016. It has been approved by AP's General Assembly and it is published together with the financial statements for the same year.

We hope that the report can adequately inform those who are interested in learning more about AP, and about peacebuilding efforts generally.



Bernardo Monzani
President, Agency for Peacebuilding

About us

The Agency for Peacebuilding (AP) is a non-profit organisation whose mission is to promote conditions that can enable the resolution of conflict, reduce violence and contribute to a durable peace across Europe, its neighbourhood and the world.

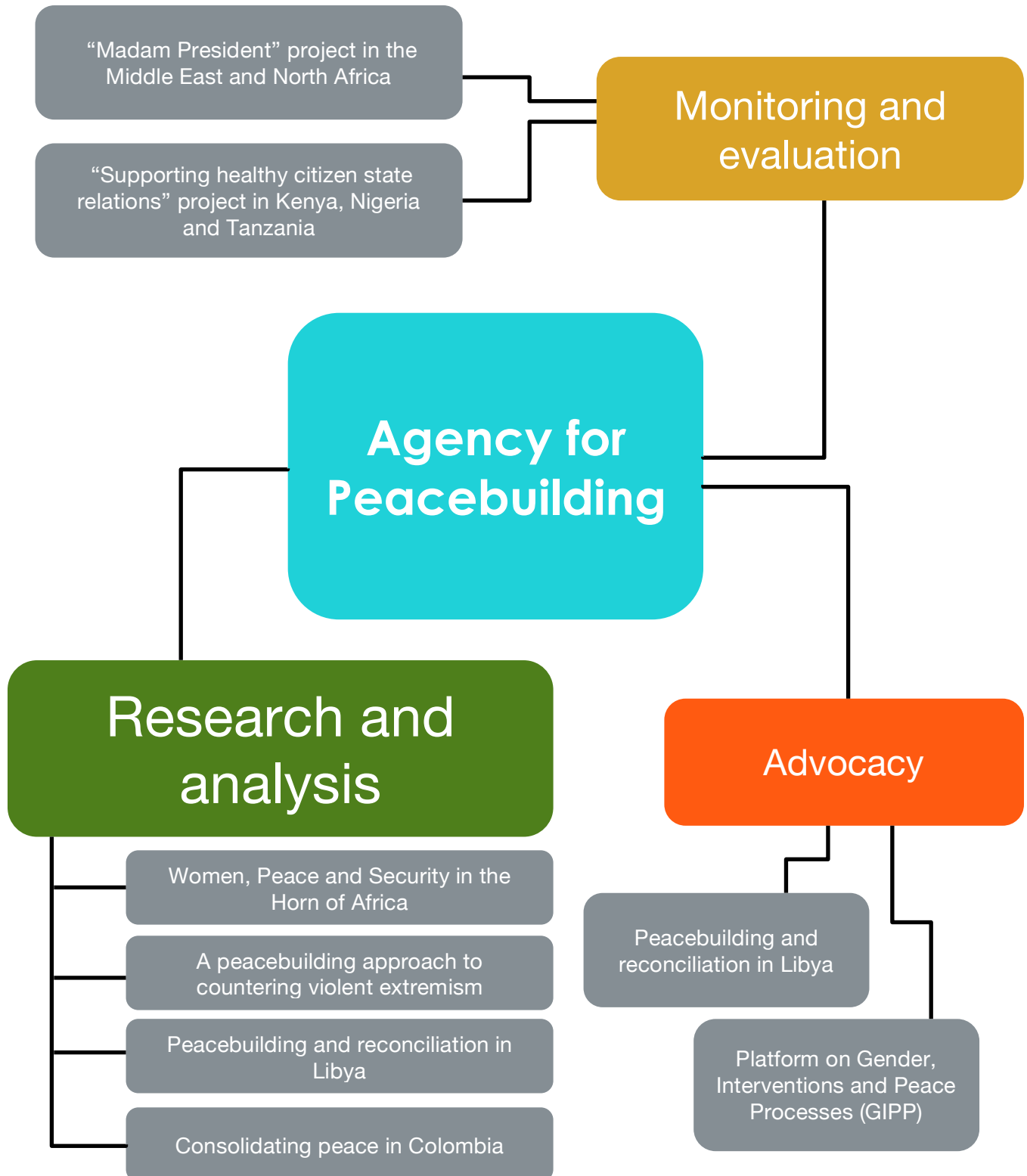
AP's overall vision is of a world where conflicts can be transformed—through the research of solutions that are innovative, non-violent and sustainable—into opportunities to promote cooperation that is based on an open and honest confrontation.

AP works on the basis of five guiding principles:

- 1) The use of civil capacities and tools;
- 2) The primacy and leadership of individuals and groups who are directly affected by violent conflict;
- 3) Reciprocity as a precondition for establishing relationships that are truly equal between the individuals, communities and agencies that are engaged in finding solutions to conflict;
- 4) An appreciation of the diversity that exists among people, communities and institutions; and
- 5) A peacebuilding approach that is concrete, results-oriented and open to confrontation, innovation and creativity.

AP is the first Italian organisation specialising on peacebuilding. This allows us to occupy a unique role in the European landscape: on the one hand, we interpret and synthesize relevant topics for the benefit of Italian agencies and institutions working on peace and security; on the other, we highlight the experiences, capacities and resources specific to the Italian system, which can contribute to the resolution of violent conflict.

Map of activities 2016



Research and analysis



In 2016 we have completed several activities under research and analysis.

Throughout the whole year we have continued to focus on the theme of **Women, Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa** as part of an initiative started at the end of 2015.

In the Horn of Africa, women's rights are routinely violated and their political participation is systemically limited. The worst situations are to be found in those countries where there is armed conflict, in particular South Sudan where the civil war rages on. Dynamics of marginalization also exist, however, in more stable countries, where legal systems based on customary or Sharia law pose serious restrictions on women's rights. Building sustainable peace in the Horn of Africa will require the commitment of all citizens—men as well as women—and constructive engagement between them and the civil and political institutions of their countries.

Under this initiative, in 2016 we have completed an important research project on the rights and political participation of women in eight countries in the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda). This broad study was conducted in partnership with the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, which used it as a guide for developing programmatic options to start working the region.

AP published two articles to raise awareness on the challenges and the opportunities that women face in the Horn of Africa, including several recommendations for more effectively promoting their rights and empowerment. To this end, AP also published the synthesis report of the research conducted with Kvinna till Kvinna, making it available as a programmatic guide for other organisations or agencies interested in working on these issues in the Horn of Africa.



In 2016 we also started to produce analysis on two new themes.

The first new theme is **the fight against terrorism and violent radicalisation**. Terrorism is one of the main problems of our age, in Europe and globally, and a cause of insecurity both within and outside of the European Union's borders. To this day, the fight against terrorism has generated responses that are almost exclusively military in nature; these, necessary as they may be, have however ignored the structural causes that stoke social marginalisation and radicalisation. As a consequence, these responses have at times further eroded social cohesion. AP believes that in order to defeat the threat of terrorism, we need a stronger commitment to understanding the wider social picture—or, in other words, the social malaise of which the recent attacks are the symptom. During 2016, we have thus published two articles where we have analysed current approaches to countering violent extremism (CVE) and proposed alternative perspectives aimed at making policies more effective, all in the context of peacebuilding logic—that is, one that prioritises dialogue and inclusivity.

The second theme is **sustainable peace in Colombia**. This year we have witnessed the signature of the peace accords between the Colombian government and *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP), ending a conflict that has lasted over half a century and caused more than 220.000 deaths and over 7 million internally displaced people. The signing of the accords represents an historical moment and the result of a mediation process lasted several years. Positive peace has, however, yet to arrive in Colombia, and many continue to oppose the deal, including many grassroots associations and movements that have worked for decades to support and protect the conflict's victims. In 2016, we have therefore published a first article on this topic, in order to bring attention to these voices from below, which are often excluded from official negotiations and ignored by the media.

Advocacy



In 2016 we have officially started our work in the area of advocacy, launching the initiative on **peacebuilding and reconciliation in Libya**.

Italy is one of the countries most engaged in Libya, where it supports the ongoing transitional process under the leadership of the Government of National Unity and Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj. International efforts vis-à-vis the country, however, remain limited to promoting dialogue at the national level and addressing security issues. This approach has failed to prevent a return to armed conflict and Libya now stands (again) on the verge of civil war. AP is therefore working to promote a peacebuilding approach in Libya, as only by supporting a process of inclusive dialogue, where grassroots voices can be heard, will Libyans have a genuine opportunity to build sustainable peace.

Throughout 2016, we have therefore published two articles to highlight the limitations and potential opportunities of international and Italian policies on Libya. We have also offered several recommendations on how to better integrate approaches focusing on peacebuilding, reconciliation and support to Libyan civil society.

On November 25, 2016, AP also held a roundtable on peacebuilding in Libya, at the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies in Bologna. The event brought together representatives of Italian agencies and organisations working in Libya (from both the government and civil society sides) in order to share experiences and analyse how best to support those local actors that continue to work for reconciliation and peace in spite of growing insecurity and political instability.



In 2016, AP also took part to the **Platform on Gender, Interventions and Peace Processes (GIPP)** in order to influence the development of Italy's National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security 2016-2019.

Violence against women and gender inequality continue to represent enormous challenges across the globe, and particularly in regions or countries affected by fragility or armed conflict. In these contexts, women are routinely marginalised and their voices ignored at all decision-making levels. It is for this reason that in 2000 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security—a resolution that immediately became a key instrument for advocating changes nationally and internationally. AP works on this theme in order to promote the role of women in peace processes and to increase the support of the Italian system to a more effective implementation of Resolution 1325.

Within this initiative, AP has joined the GIPP Platform, which brings together several Italian NGOs—including Centro Studi Difesa Civile, Pangea ONLUS, WILPF Italia, Movimento Nonviolento, Punti di Vista, Differenza Donna, Un Ponte per, A Sud—and individual experts. Throughout 2016, GIPP members sought to influence the development of the NAP, taking part to consultations held by the Italian government.

The 2016-2019 NAP was finally approved in December 2016 and welcomed by civil society. Several positive aspects were highlighted, including the engagement of NGOs in its development and the fact that the NAP, for the first time, will have a dedicated budget to support its implementation—this was the result of an amendment to the government's 2017 budget law, which was proposed by Pia Locatelli, a member of the House of Representatives for the Italian Socialist Party. The NAP also features some negative aspects, including for example an excessive attention to the role of military operations. On this, as well as other points, the GIPP Platform will continue to focus its advocacy efforts.

Monitoring and evaluation



In 2016 AP has completed two project evaluations, both in collaboration with the international NGO Search for Common Ground (SFCG).

Overall, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of peacebuilding initiatives offers an opportunity for reflection and learning. Evaluations in particular allow to identify best practices and therefore to increase the impact of individual projects and the sector in general. AP works on M&E to increase the body of knowledge in relation to peacebuilding theory and practice and thus contribute to the sector's growth.

The first evaluation completed by AP focused on a project entitled “**Supporting healthy citizen-state relations**”, which was implemented by SFCG in Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania. Through this three-year initiative, SFCG supported more than 40 civil society leaders across the three countries, strengthening their capacities for advocacy, providing them with opportunities for networking, and promoting the use of new technologies, including social media, in their work. The evaluation successfully identified several positive outcomes, in all three countries, and also some weaknesses.

On the basis of the evaluation, AP thus developed several recommendations for SFCG, which aimed at improving the effectiveness of its initiatives in the future. In particular, AP invited SFCG to develop a clearer theory of change for its work, specifically on the relationship between the use of new technologies and advocacy activities; to increase the financial resources given to local partners; and to involve a greater number of government representatives in its activities.



The second evaluation that AP completed in 2016 focused on a project that SFCG implemented in Lebanon and Tunisia. Through this initiative, entitled “**Madam President**”, SFCG produced and broadcast a TV series aimed at promoting the role of women in politics and the civic participation of young people. The series was entitled “*Madam President*”; it aired on several satellite channels throughout the Middle East and North Africa; and it was accompanied by awareness raising activities in Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia. As with the previous project, this evaluation also identified several positive outcomes as well as a few weaknesses.

On the basis of the evaluation, AP thus developed several recommendations for SFCG, which aimed at improving the effectiveness of its initiatives in the future. In particular, AP has invited SFCG to improve how the broadcast of the TV series is coordinated with awareness-raising activities in individual countries; and to design activities in a way that can better reflect the needs and perspectives of the project’s different target groups (young people, women, refugees, etc.) in each country. Finally, the evaluation by AP also identified the added value of a dissemination strategy based on social media, which was a key feature of the project, but highlighted the need to have strategies and resources specifically dedicated to this end.

Partners and supporters

AP wishes to express its gratitude to its partners and supporters in 2016:

CEFA

Centro Studi di Difesa Civile (CSDC)

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

The Foundation for Worldwide Cooperation

GVC Italia

Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS Europe)

Peaceful Change Initiative (PCI)

Search for Common Ground (SFCG)

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