Agency for peacebuilding

Annual report

2017

Introduction

This last year has been a period of consolidation for the Agency for Peacebuilding (AP): still in start-up mode, we have invested more time and energy on the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different actors and at multiple level (local, national and international). In parallel, we have also matured internally, both in terms of governance and coordination. This has allowed us to make a qualitative leap in our work.

Throughout 2017, we have continued to be active in three of the five areas of work on which we have decided to engage as an organization: research and analysis, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation. AP's work has touched on various important themes, some previously addressed (peacebuilding in Libya and the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda), some new (peacebuilding prospective in Syria and the progress in implementing the Youth, Peace and Security agenda).

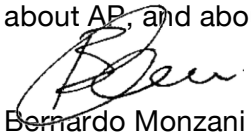
We have built new partnerships and strengthened existing ones. In 2017 we have started to work with the Bologna Municipality on the validation of a new local action plan aimed at improving the services for, and relations with, the city's new citizens using a human rights-based approach. This is a new theme for us, but closely aligned with peacebuilding in terms of principles (inclusivity and dialogue) and objectives (peaceful coexistence). We have also continued to support the efforts of the Italian Platform on Gender and Peace processes (Piattaforma Genere Interventi e Processi di Pace, GIPP) and to collaborate with NGOs, such as CEFA, with whom we have developed an interesting project proposal for Kenya.

Internally, we have made some important changes that have allowed us to grow as an organization. We have welcomed two new members, Stefano Marinelli e Alessandro Totoro, whose experience have made the Agency richer. With Stefano and Alessandro's arrival, we have also adopted a new coordination and communication system that has allowed us to become more visible among peacebuilding agencies and practitioners, in Italy and in Europe. We have also formalized our collaboration with two advisers: Betty Kweyu on monitoring and evaluation and Rashmi Thapa on inclusive peacebuilding processes.

Next year will mark the end of the Agency's first three years of activity. In 2018, our objective will thus be to reinforce the results obtained so far, investing on the creation of new partnerships and on communication in particular. At the same time, we will start to lay the foundations for a new three-year strategy, which will guide AP's growth starting in 2019.

The annual report provides the description of the work that we have done in 2017. It has been approved by AP's General Assembly on April 9, 2018, 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, Agenzia 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.

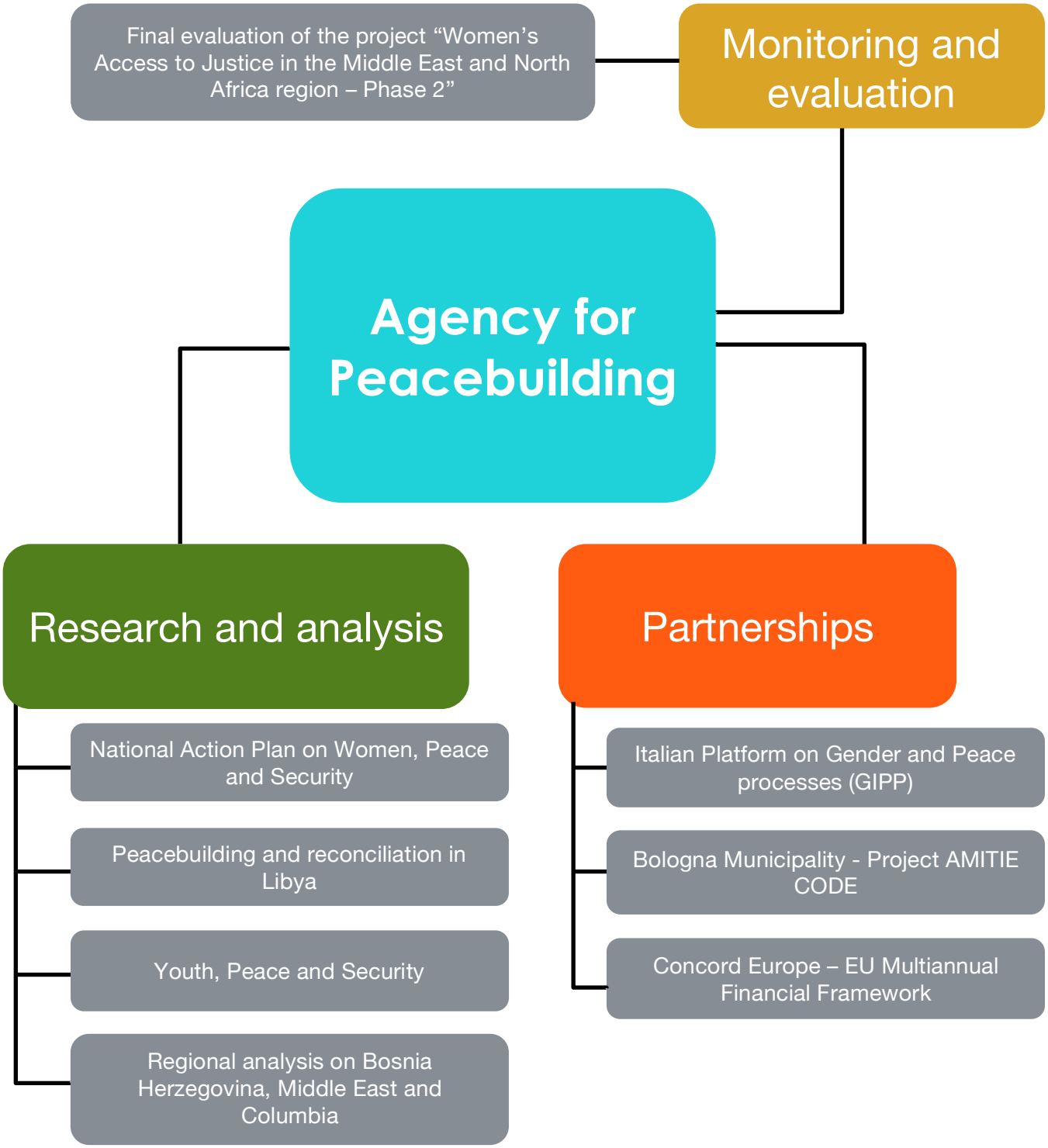
AP's overall vision is of a world where conflicts can be transformed—through the research of solutions that are innovative, non-violent and sustainable—into opportunities to promote cooperation that is based on an open and honest confrontation.

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 2017



Research and analysis

In 2017, AP has published analytical articles monthly, on themes related to peacebuilding and also for disseminating information about its activities. The articles were written by different authors, including members of the Agency, advisers and also external collaborators.

On peacebuilding, analysis has looked at Italy's foreign policy, with articles on the national action plan on Women, Peace and Security, and on the change in priorities in Italy's support to conflict resolution in Libya. On the Libyan peace process more generally, we have also discussed the relevance of the role played by civil society in achieving reconciliation between the different warring parties. The same theme of civil society as an engine of stability and development has been the focus of an analytical article that looked at the African continent. In relation to the Middle East, one of our articles looked at the role played by women in ISIS, while two different ones focused on Syria: one discussed the legality of armed retaliation against the use of chemical weapons, the other talked about Rojava and its experimenting with confederal democracy as a model that could inform peacebuilding in the rest of the country.

Other articles have looked at the EU enlargement process in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the need to develop research on youth-led organizations on peacebuilding (as part of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda), and relevant developments around the peace process in Colombia following the signing of the 2016 accords.

Finally, in relation to AP's work, two articles spoke about specific activities completed the previous year. One focused on the achievements and challenges of 2016. The other presented the evaluation we did of a project aimed at promoting women's political participation through media, looking at the impact of Madame President, a TV series, in Tunisia specifically.

Partnerships

Throughout 2017, AP has built partnerships at the local, national and international levels, and with both government and non-governmental actors.

At **the local level**, AP has started an innovative partnership with the Bologna Municipality in the context of AMITIE CODE (*Capitalizing On Development*), a project on development education that has been coordinated by the Municipality in collaboration with partners in six different European countries. One of the project's objectives was the creation of a local action plan to improve the services to, and relations with, the city's new citizens, using a human rights-based approach. The plan articulates a series of specific objectives and related actions, around three axes: welfare, non-discrimination and participation.

AP has contributed to the validation of the plan on the territory of Bologna, leading a process of inclusive dialogue between local authorities and civil society, which reinforced and amplified the values in the plan and the AMITIE CODE project more in general. The validation process included a questionnaire for professionals working in the social services sector, five focus groups and one *world café*-style event, through which the main stakeholders were successfully engaged.

At the end of this process, AP was then able to renew the partnership with the Bologna municipality in order to conduct research on the different forms in which migrants and new citizens participate to the social and civic life of the city. This research, which will focus on defining different tools and frameworks that local authorities can use to support increased participation of migrants to public life, will be completed in the early months of 2018.

At **the national level**, AP has continued to take part in the Platform on Gender and Peace Processes (*Piattaforma Genere Interventi e Processi di Pace*, or GIPP) in order to influence the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security 2016-2019. The NAP, which was approved by the Italian government in December 2016, was generally well received from civil society, which highlighted several positive developments, including the fact that the plan was developed with civil society's input. Additionally, the NAP has for the first time a dedicated budget. In 2017, GIPP has thus developed several activities on awareness raising and capacity building, which it will implement in 2018.

Furthermore, AP has also met various times with officials from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (*Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo*, or AICS) in order to discuss, on the one hand, the possible spaces that exist to promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding across AICS's policies; and, on the other, to promote information-sharing and exchanges specifically on peacebuilding and reconciliation in Libya, and Italy's role in these processes.

Finally, at **the international level**, among various partnerships pursued, we want to highlight the work done for CONCORD Europe—the main European platform that brings together NGOs working on development across the continent—on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (post-2020), which is the main tool for the EU to manage its finances. AP analysed the most updated information on the process, including the possible scenarios linked to the main issues being discussed, in order to better understand what role development cooperation policies will have within the EU's financial planning. We therefore completed an internal report for CONCORD and presented is to the platform's members during a workshop that took place on October 26, 2017, in Brussels.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In 2017, AP started to collaborate with Oxfam Great Britain (Oxfam GB) on the final evaluation of the project ““**Women's Access to Justice in the Middle East and North Africa region (Phase 2)"**, which the organization has implemented in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen.

Through this three-year initiative, Oxfam GB has been providing legal aid to vulnerable women, conducting awareness raising trainings on women's rights, and supported local partners in the development of advocacy campaigns aimed at improving women's access to justice in each of the four countries. The evaluation, which started at the end of 2017, will allow the identification of positive results achieved through the project, as well as a reflection on the validity of the project's theory of change.

As the project has taken place in countries that are affected by conflict or crises, the evaluation will provide an opportunity to generate lessons learned not only on the promotion of women's rights, but also on how similar initiatives can support dialogue between different communities, between women and men, and citizens and institutions. This will help to expand the knowledge base in regards to peacebuilding and thus contribute to the sector's growth.

Communications

Throughout 2017, AP's communication efforts have focused on expanding our online presence, with the aim of creating more linkages with networks of organizations and professionals working on peacebuilding, in Italy and abroad.

The chosen channels specifically included professional social networks.

The Agency's profile on LinkedIn has mainly contributed to disseminate the contents of AP's website among groups and individuals interested in peacebuilding and conflict-related themes. The Agency's followers on this platform are 8, while our updates are consistently seen by hundreds of users. For example, our article on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, published in October 2017, was seen by almost 750 people.

Our presence on Twitter has instead allowed us to disseminate more widely the articles we published, while also maintaining a more direct line of contact with the Agency's peers, both in the academic world and among practitioners, and with leading peacebuilding networks, through updates about the work we have completed. Our followers on this platform are 678.

For 2018, we plan to strengthen our presence on those platforms where we are already active, while also developing the website and investing resources in the organization of events in Bologna.

Partners and supporters

In the context of the activities completed in 2017, we would like to thank our partners and supporters. These include:

Comune di Bologna

CEFA

Centro Studi di Difesa Civile (CSDC)

CONCORD Europe

Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

Foundation for Worldwide Cooperation

GVC

Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS Europe)

Oxfam Great Britain

Peaceful Change Initiative (PCI)

Search for Common Ground (SFCG)

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