

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

# **Agency for Peacebuilding**

# ABOUT THE AGENCY FOR PEACEBUILDING

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. Founded in 2015, 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.

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

Conflict is, in fact, the manifestation of existing differences between people, institutions and nations, as well as the reciprocity that binds their actions. If effectively managed, conflict can represent an opportunity to resolve common challenges and support human development. However, insufficient efforts can risk generating further violence.

Because of this, AP works to manage conflicts non-violently, promoting diversity and reciprocity and collaborating with other actors engaged in building peace.

AP works on the basis of five guiding principles:

- The use of civil capacities and tools;
- The primacy and leadership of individuals and groups who are directly affected by violent conflict;
- 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;
- An appreciation of the diversity that exists among people, communities and institutions; and
- A peacebuilding approach that is concrete, results-oriented and open to confrontation, innovation and creativity.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 has been a difficult one. The Covid-19 pandemic hit every nation on the planet, creating huge challenges that have been not only about health, but also about cooperation. The pandemic disrupted our everyday lives, creating stress and insecurity that has affected how we relate with each other, how we work, and how we have steered AP.

Nevertheless, we tried to adapt. We needed to adapt. And we were able to adapt.

We successfully held the second edition of the Bologna Peacebuilding Forum, entirely online and focusing on the effects of the pandemic on peacebuilding efforts in Europe and around the world. We were able to complete several research initiatives, and also launch new ones, with new partners. And we designed an innovative and original online training programme for experts working on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda from countries in North Africa and the Balkans. Importantly, this year we also joined the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), the main network of non-governmental organisations working on peacebuilding in Europe.

The pandemic did not stop us, in the end, but allowed us to evolve and grow, not as we had expected perhaps, but in ways that have been necessary to continue supporting peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Overall, we mastered new technology and made ours new formats, while our work remained rigorous and inclusive. In doing so, our partnerships, old and new, have been a factor of resilience. In particular, our supporters have been flexible in allowing us to adapt our initiatives to the pandemic context, which was fundamental to our success.

The way we responded to the challenges created by the pandemic makes us hopeful for what we can do in the future. It also makes us eager to continue growing and consolidating our work, as the challenges of cooperation – among communities and between nations alike – remain vast.

Bernardo Monzani, President

# **BOLOGNA PEACEBUILDING FORUM 2020**

The Bologna Peacebuilding Forum (BPF) is AP's flagship event and framework for dialogue and exchange between scholars and practitioners working on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and development.

On May 19, 2020, AP organized the second edition of the Forum, which took place online, due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The topic of this year's BPF was "Peacebuilding after the pandemic: Challenges and opportunities of the next decade". The Forum served as an opportunity to reflect on issues impacting the future of peace and conflict resolution, also trying to look beyond the Covid-19 emergency.



Source: Bologna Peacebuilding Forum 2020 logo, Cristiano Proia

The Forum was organized in three sessions. The first one dealt with what are seen as the next decade's main crises, exploring in particular the relation between peacebuilding and climate change. The second explored how human mobility can impact, both positively and negatively, peace processes. Finally, the third session featured an exchange on the future of peacebuilding after the pandemic, exploring the possible outcomes of the pandemic in light of new and unexpected emergencies, but also with lessons to be learnt and with the introduction of new priorities in the world's political agendas.

Forum's speakers included climate activist Vanessa Nakate, World Bank's Special Envoy on Fragility Bert Koenders, EPLO's Executive Director Sonya Reines-Djivanides, journalist and author Annalisa Camilli, Roberta Dirosa of the European External Action Service, academics Nina Hall (Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies), Caterina Guidi (University of Siena), Stefano Ruzza (University of Turin), and Francesco Strazzari (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies).

Each session of the Forum was followed by over 100 people. The audience was composed of NGO representatives, academics, members of local institutions, members of international organisations, students and other interested auditors.

A final report for the event is available on our website.

# ADVANCING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

#### The WEEPS Project

This was a particularly important year for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, as it marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Passed in 2000, this resolution seeks to promote the role of women in decision-making processes, and in shaping peace and security processes in particular. It is a landmark resolution, which effectively established the global WPS agenda.

AP sought to contribute to this occurrence by implementing the project "Enhancing Women's Participation in Peace and Security" (WEPPS), which was led by the Sant'Anna School for Advanced Studies and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The project's goal was to contribute to the full implementation of the WPS agenda in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Morocco and Tunisia, through the development and strengthening of actions and efforts undertaken in the framework of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Women, Peace and Security.

Under the WEEPS project, AP implemented two main activities: a high-level online training and dialogue programme, and the publication of a series of articles analysing twenty years of implementation of the WPS Agenda.

Entitled "The Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Pandemic", the online dialogue and training programme provided professionals and activists working on the WPS agenda with the necessary tools to adapt their initiatives and work to the COVID-19 pandemic, and thus to prevent significant setbacks in the implementation of the agenda. Two groups of participants—16 from North Africa (Morocco and Tunisia), 23 from the Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Republic of Northern Macedonia and Serbia)—took part in the programme, which took place online between July and November. Participants gathered for five meetings, each lasting 75 minutes and allowing a sharing of experiences and a critical discussion of the challenges and opportunities created by the pandemic. All participants (92% of whom were women) were WPS experts in their respective countries, and they came from civil society, government and multilateral organisations.

"We were really engaged in the [programme] and deeply appreciated both the way it was structured and the topics it touched upon. It also triggered some internal reflections on ALDA's work on peacebuilding."

Giulia Sostero, programme participant and Middle East and Africa Coordinator at the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)

Under the WEPPS project, AP also launched a call for articles that critically discussed the implementation of the WPS agenda across the Middle East and North Africa and the Balkans. A total of 10 articles were published as part of this call, from a very diverse array of authors. The articles provided a rich appraisal of efforts to support the implementation of the WPS agenda from a number of different geographical settings.

#### Italy's Fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

During the year, AP was also engaged in advocacy efforts around the adoption of Italy's new national action plan on WPS. National action plans (NAP) are policy documents adopted by governments around the world to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Italy has been an early adopter of this tool, approving its first NAP in 2010. This year, the government had therefore to design and approve its fourth plan, which was going to be valid from 2020 to 2024. During this process, which occurred entirely online because of the pandemic, AP coordinated with other Italian civil society organisations and provided inputs on how the new NAP could be improved and made more effective. Importantly, some of these suggestions have been included in the final document, which was adopted in December 2020. As several limitation remain, AP's future work will focus on monitoring the implementation of the new plan and on strengthening networking efforts with other organisations in Italy.

### SUPPORTING PEACEBUILDING PROCESSES

#### **Conflict Assessment in the Central African Republic**

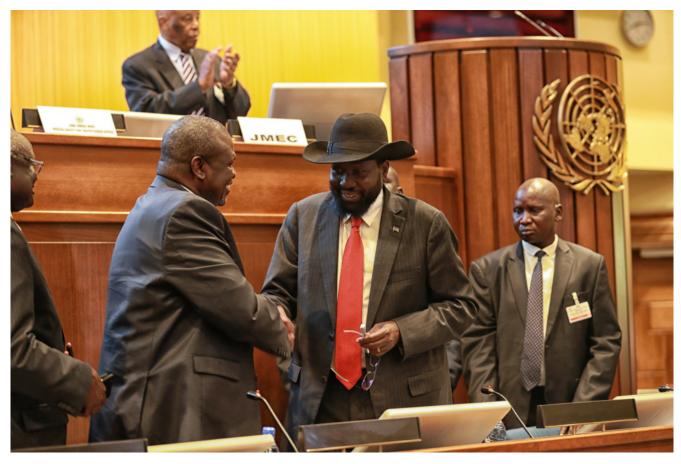
This year, AP has conducted a conflict assessment in the Bamingui-Bangoran region of the Central African Republic (CAR) for the international NGO Search for Common Ground (Search). CAR has been in the throes of internal violent conflict since 2013. The conflict, which has pitted government forces against a multitude of rebel groups, had had huge costs for the country, and created deep divisions and grievances between communities. The warring parties have, over the years, signed several peace agreements, but violence has not abated, and NGOs like Search continue to promote dialogue and reconciliation as a way to build sustainable peace.

In the context of its efforts, Search had identified Bamingui-Bangoran as a target region of crucial importance for the success of the most recent peace agreement signed by the parties in conflict. As such, it determined to conduct a conflict assessment in this area, which AP completed. Data collection was carried out between November and December 2019.

The most important dynamics identified include: conflicts between farmers and herders, armed groups and village youth; violence against women; and conflicts related to the lack of water points and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The region is characterised by trans-boundary transhumance with Chad. Therefore, field devastation is common and affects a large part of the resident population. The immediate consequences are mistrust between farmers and herders, but also food insecurity, displacement of populations and cases of murder. The presence of armed groups remains one of the structural threats to peacebuilding. The assessment also found that the lack of water points is another source of tension, as it leads to misunderstandings and grievances between individuals in a community, and regularly also to violence.

Finally, the assessment found that the principle of "Do No Harm" does not always seem to be applied in this region, and many humanitarian NGOs indirectly create divisions and fall short of the expectations of the local population through actions that are not conflict sensitive.



Source: South Sudan's President, Salva Kiir, shaking hands with leader of opposition armed forces, Riek Machar. United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

#### Analysis of the Peace Process in South Sudan

South Sudan is currently transitioning from civil war to peace following the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) in 2015, which had been mediated by the Intergovernmental Authorities on Development (IGAD). The process has, however, not been easy, with factions returning to war in 2016-17 before recommitting to the peace treaty in 2018 (R-ARCSS), thanks again to IGAD's intervention.

In this context, AP partnered with IGAD to conduct an analysis of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM). CTSAMVM is the institution established to support the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement reached between the South Sudanese government and the opposition. The CTSAMVM works in an impartial, professional and thorough manner to investigate complaints, such as military incidents and human rights violations,

submitted by the parties to the agreement as well as other actors, and alleged breaches of the Agreement on the basis of credible information.

The analysis by AP was rigorous and wide, covering approximately 180 documents plus the CTSAMVM's daily and weekly monitoring reports. Forty interviews and six focus groups were also conducted between October and November 2020, with a diversified group of stakeholders. As such, AP's final report represented the most up-to-date and comprehensive external analysis of CTSAMVM conducted so far.

The report presented to CTSAMVM officials, IGAD representatives and to the EU contains detailed findings related to five criteria: effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability and coordination. It also provided evidence-based recommendations for future actions, as the situation in South Sudan remains tense, with one-third of the population forcibly displaced and currently living as either refugees or internally displaced people. In the face of this, the analysis provided by AP provided CTSAMVM and IGAD with key information and lesson learned to properly plan CTSAMVM's future.

# PROMOTING MIGRANTS' PARTICIPATION IN BOLOGNA

Throughout the last two years, AP has been working with the Municipality of Bologna in Italy to support the civic and political participation of migrants and new citizens at the local level, and to tackle different forms of discrimination.

Discrimination and marginalisation of migrants and new citizens are indeed very much still present in Italy in general and in Bologna specifically, and tailor-made strategies and responses must be adopted at the local level.

As part of its work with the Municipality of Bologna, this year AP concluded a training course for civil society organisations on anti-discrimination and conflict transformation. Started in December 2019 and completed in January 2020, the course allowed participants, who came from migrants' associations active in Bologna, to discover how conflict transformation techniques can help them overcome daily discrimination.

The training course was conducted in the context of a project entitled "Places, Rights and Cultures". The project, which has been funded by the Emilia-Romagna Region, aimed at reinforcing a culture of human rights, peace and intercultural dialogue as drivers of cohesion and development. The project was led by the Municipality of Bologna and involved several local civil society organisations. AP was the lead on the project's training component.

The training focused on building participants' competencies on anti-discrimination as well as conflict management. The different modules thus focused on human rights awareness, active listening and intercultural mediation.

# ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

#### Advocacy through the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

This year AP reached an important milestone: we joined the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). EPLO Is the premier European network of non-governmental organisations working on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. EPLO has 45 member organisations from 17 European countries. Its secretariat is based in Brussels and serves as the hub to monitor European policies on peace and security, and coordinate joint advocacy efforts.

Within EPLO, AP is actively involved in the following working groups: EU Institutions and Policies; Funding for Peace; Gender, Peace and Security; and Peacebuilding, Development and Security. Over the year, AP's representatives have thus taken part to these groups' activities, including monthly meetings. AP's President also took part to EPLO's annual General Assembly; and to policy meetings organized under the auspices of the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN), a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on peace and conflict resolution.

#### **Engaging Italian Institutions on Peacebuilding**

AP contributes to developing the specific identity of Italy's peacebuilding sector. To achieve this, AP works with several partners—from specialized agencies within the government to think tanks and NGOs—in order to promote a concrete and honest dialogue on how to improve Italy's contribution to peacebuilding and security processes, in Europe and the world. In this framework, this year AP has, in cooperation with other NGOs and universities, dialogued with several members of the Italian Parliament (MPs) working on Italy's contributions to peacebuilding policies. In particular, interactions took place around the Decree Authorizing and Financing Italy's Missions Abroad, which was discussed in Parliament in July 2020.

Positively, AP and its partners presented a document to several key MPs, which successfully inspired some amendments to the law. The attention to peacebuilding is still rather limited among Italian policy-makers. Yet the target actions by AP and our partners are helping to create more awareness and nuanced understanding of civilian instruments for conflict resolution.

# MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

#### **Evaluation of Two Countering Violent Extremism Projects in Kenya**

The first evaluation had started in 2019 and was completed in 2020. This looked at two projects implemented by the international NGO Search for Common Ground in Kenya: "Justice for Peace", whose overall goal was to increase constructive engagement between criminal justice sector actors and communities at risk of violent extremism in Coastal Kenya; and "Inuka! Supporting vulnerable youth to participate in community peace and security efforts in Coastal Kenya project", whose overall objective was to increase the effectiveness and inclusiveness of community peace and security efforts involving vulnerable and marginalized youth in Coastal Kenya.

The evaluation found that both projects have been very effective at increasing collaboration and promoting dialogue between local institutions and at-risk and marginalized communities. And while they also faced challenges, their contributions to impact are noteworthy.



Source: Inuka! project participants, Search For Common Ground

#### **Evaluation of the "MedFilm for All" Project**

The second evaluation AP completed in 2020, which had also started in 2019 assessed the "MedFilm For All" project. The project sought to contribute to human development and gender equality through the diffusion of audio-visual content about social issues in the Southern Mediterranean region. Implemented by the Italian NGO WeWorld-GVC Italy, project activities took place in in five countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories and Tunisia. AP had organized a first evaluation workshop in 2019, which brought together partner representatives from each country of intervention (for a total of over 20 participants) to reflect on outcomes achieved through the project, using a framework based on theory of change.

Data collection activities took place between October 2019 and May 2020, and led to the identification of several notable positive results achieved by the project and to various recommendations to improve similar efforts in the future.

#### **Evaluation of a Transitional Justice Project in Guinea**

The third evaluation completed during the year assessed a project on transitional justice in Guinea. The project, entitled "Building Community Capacity to Address Fault Lines for Violence: Violence Prevention, Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Guinea", was launched in 2018 by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), a US-based NGO.

The project's main goal has been to contribute to Guinea's transitional justice process, which was initiated in 2011 with the establishment of the Provisional Commission on National Reconciliation. In so doing, the project aimed to build the capacity of civil society organisations and to support local communities in working on transitional justice.

Under the project, ICSC has worked with six Guinean civil society organisations, all of which support victims of massacres and human rights violations perpetrated by governmental forces over the years.

The evaluation was generally positive for all assessed criteria, finding the project particularly relevant because of how it expanded transitional justice efforts well beyond the most recent violations; and sustainable through on account of how it created a national network, the National Coalition in Support of Reconciliation in Guinea (Coalition Nationale d'Appui à la Réconciliation en Guinée).



Source: MedFilm for All project workshop, WeWorld-GVC

#### **Webinars**

Throughout the year, AP has organized a series of online webinars on issues relevant to the organisation's work. AP's members, senior advisors and external collaborators were invited to the webinars, which had the objective of sharing experiences of AP's peacebuilding initiatives and of those involved in these.

Three webinars have been organized in 2020:

- "A multi-stakeholder approach to conflict assessment: insights from the Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA) in Burkina Faso"
  - Speaker: Alessandro Totoro (AP)
- "Lessons learnt from the evaluation of a transitional justice project in Guinea"
  - Speaker: Stefano Marinelli (AP)
- "EU gender policies in Tunisia: what has changed after the 2011 uprising?"
  - Speaker: Clara Della Valle (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna a Pisa)

### AWARENESS-RAISING AND COMMUNICATION

Awareness-raising, through communication, is at the heart of AP's mission, and it has two objectives.

The first is to help raise the visibility of peacebuilding among public opinion, as well as relevant stakeholders; and the second is to foster greater understanding of peacebuilding processes and their importance. Lastly, through communication we provide information on our activities in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

In 2020, AP's communication efforts included the following types of publications: a monthly newsletter; analytical articles on topical issues (through our website); opinion editorials (through *HuffPost Italia*); project and research reports; articles on external journals; and press releases. Members and advisors of AP also took part to various events during the year. Lastly, we continue to invest in our social media presence.

#### **Insights**

In 2020 we published 11 analytical articles on our website, most of which were collected, edited and published under the aegis of the WEPPS Project.

- "Youth-friendly safe havens: enablers of youth peace work"
  Author: Celina Del Felice (Senior advisor at AP and Youth, Peace and Security expert)
- "Women's participation in peace processes: the case of the Women for Peace Initiative in Turkey"
  Author: Ina Merdjanova (Senior Researcher and Adjunct Assistant Professor at Trinity College Dublin)
- "Challenges and opportunities to advance the women, peace and security agenda after Lebanon's protest movement"
  - Author: Aseel Naamani (Programmes Manager at International Alert in Lebanon)
- "Implementing UNSCR 1325 in Serbia: state-building, instrumental equality and international image"
  - Author: Beatriz Pimenta Klein (MA candidate at Scuola Superiore di Sant'Anna in Pisa)
- "Gender activism: a vibrant narrative for post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina"
  Authors: Vildana Dzekman (Project Coordinator at CURE Foundation) and Esmera Kanalstein (Freelance writer and avid supporter of gender activism)
- "Women, peace and security in Kosovo: empowerment through the tangles of tradition"
  Author: Giona Michele Scilla (MA candidate at Università Cattolica)

• "A case study of north Macedonia's national action plan on women, peace and security"

Author: Daniela Antonovska (Gender equality expert and consultant)

"Political participation, decentralization and gender mainstreaming: the parfait project in Tunisia"

Author: Shadi Rouhshahbaz (UNAOC Fellow and founder of PeaceMentors)

• "The European Union mediation and the women, peace and security agenda in the Libyan peace process"

Author: Federica Tronci (Recent graduate from the London School of Economics and Political Science)

"Gender mainstreaming and state-building in Kosovo: international and local pitfalls"

Author: Nicasia Picciano (Freelance consultant and researcher)

"Western Sahara women's contribution to peace and security"

Author: Minetu Larabas (President of the National Union of Saharawi Women)

#### Op-eds

In 2020 we started a fruitful rapport with the editorial board of Huffington Post Italia, and we were able to publish 8 op-eds (all in Italian only):

 "L'Onu, Covid-19 e l'iniziativa per fermare tutte le guerre" ("The UN, Covid-19 and the initiative to end all wars")

Author: Bernardo Monzani (AP)

• <u>"Dalla pandemia possono nascere soluzioni win-win ai conflitti"</u> ("Win-win solutions can come from the pandemic")

Author: Bernardo Venturi (AP)

• <u>"La crisi del multilateralismo e le nuove risposte ai conflitti dopo la pandemia"</u> ("The crisis of multilateralism and the post-pandemic responses to conflict")

Author: Stefano Marinelli (AP)

• "Un reset italiano in Libia" ("An Italian rest in Libya")

Author: Bernardo Monzani (AP)

• "Le transizioni sospese in Bielorussia e Mali" ("Suspended transitions in Belarus and Mali")

Author: Bernardo Venturi (AP)

 "Crisi ambientali, cronaca di una guerra annunciata" ("Environmental crises, reports of a foretold war")

Author: Silvia Meiattini (AP)

 "Donne, pace e sicurezza ai tempi del Covid-19" ("Women, Peace and Security in times of Covid-19")

Author: Giulia Pasquinelli (Advocacy Adviser, Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation)

• <u>"Riconciliazione e giustizia in Guinea: il ruolo delle autorità e della società civile"</u> ("Reconciliation and justice in Guinea: the roles of authorities and civil society")

Author: Stefano Marinelli (AP)



Source: Generation Change programme participants, USIP

#### **Reports and Scientific Articles**

This year, we also contributed to a special issue of the Italian magazine "Human Security" with the oped "Il future del peacebuilding e il ruolo dell'Italia" ("The future of peacebuilding and the role of Italy") and coordinating this monographic number dedicated to the peacebuilding sector in Italy.

At the same time, two additional reports were published by our partners, which featured work we completed with them.

"Conflict assessment in the Bamingui-Bangoran region" is a report released by Search for Common Ground, which was authored by Bernardo Venturi and Alessandro Tortoro. The report presents the findings from an assessment of conflict dynamics in one of the Central African Republican's regions.

"What Works in Youth projects?" is summary research report published by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The report describes the key findings from the research that AP conducted of USIP's youth and peacebuilding portfolio, in 2018-2019.

# **FINANCIAL OUTLOOK**

AP's total income for fiscal year 2020 was €77.396. The total expenditure was €102.436—the difference is due to projects that had started in 2019 and were completed during 2020.

The following graphs provide a snapshot of the finances for this year. Public sources of funding included the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Municipality of Bologna and the Scuola Superiore di Sant'Anna a Pisa.

Further information can be found in AP's annual financial statements, available upon request.

Figure 1: Expenditure by type

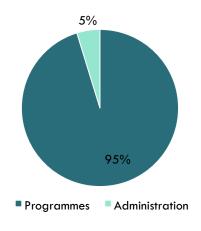


Figure 2: Income by source

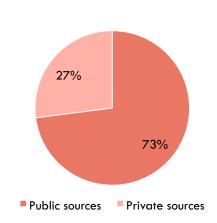
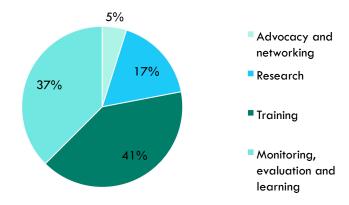


Figure 3: Expenditure by area of work



# **PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS**

For all the activities completed in 2020, AP wants to acknowledge and thank all of its partners and supporters:

- Agenzia italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (AICS)
- CEFA Onlus
- Centro Studi di Difesa Civile (CSDC)
- Council of Europe
- Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD)
- Emilia-Romagna Region
- Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario (FOCSIV)
- HuffPost Italia
- IBO Italia
- Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)
- International Nuremberg Principles Academy
- Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS Europe)
- The Kofi Annan Foundation
- Municipality of Bologna
- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Peaceful Change Initiative (PCI)
- Prometeia
- Rotary Club Bologna Ovest
- Search for Common Ground (SFCG)
- Scuola Superiore di Sant'Anna
- Torino World Affairs Institute
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United States Institute of Peace (USIP)
- University of Bologna
- War Child Canada
- WeWorld-GVC Italy Onlus



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