TOWARDS LEADERS’ RECONCILIATION: SUCCESS FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE POST-CONFLICT FACILITATION

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Abstract: How can post-conflict facilitation help move from a fragile armed truce to a sustainable peace of satisfaction? This text examines six essential success factors for action: the buy-in of the facilitation effort by local and international authorities; the designation of key leaders to be involved in this effort as participants, both moderates and radicals; the establishment of a national mediation structure; the facilitation methods during the participants’ meetings and their follow-up; the sequence of national sectors to be covered; and the progressive reinforcement of the impact from individuals to populations. It highlights the need for a new alliance between political mediation (top leaders and diplomats) and post-conflict facilitation (key leaders and professional facilitators) in order to overcome some of the pitfalls of parallel track diplomacy.

Keywords: Facilitation, post-conflict, leaders, international community, facilitation methods, buy-in, empowerment, security sector, democratic transition, impact, double track diplomacy.

An armed conflict involving either the entirety or a partial territory of a nation often leads to one of two post-conflict situations: one of the belligerents prevails on the battlefield, becoming the master of the country, or all parties find themselves without compelling military results, and after a deadlock - which may well be of long duration - they are obliged to agree to participate in a process of rapprochement aiming, de facto, at some sort of power sharing in the country.

In the first case, the winner of the war must also win the peace: he must transform an "armed peace" into a "peace of satisfaction"; such are the situations of Germany and Japan in 1945; or of Iraq in 2003. The hearts of the people and of its leaders must be won. In the second case, at best, the protagonists of any political agreement have silenced the weapons, but they are still in a deadlock, without real trust; they end up, therefore, with the same challenge, to build the conditions of a lasting peace. In both cases, that of military victory or that of an impasse followed by a peace agreement, there will be the same questions to address: about coexistence and reconciliation of communities, about reconstruction of the state and of its security sectors, as well
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as a return to cohesion for its leadership, and finally about sustainable development. This is where post-conflict facilitation takes place, and this is what we will further develop in this text.

Through two recent examples of countries which have been salvaged by civil wars of a rare intensity – Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) –, this document illustrates possible actions to undertake to support such a delicate situation, where there is no longer an outright war, but not yet a real peace. This period of transition is crucial and not to be taken lightly. One must not be impressed by the euphoria of armoured tanks in the capital or by the handshake of former enemies in front of the cameras. Beyond the rapport de force which has been asserted or neutralised, the most difficult steps still lie ahead. The stigmata of war are still there, on the city walls riddled with bullets but also on the general consciousness of the population. The components of a dangerous cocktail for a return to war are still present: the multiplicity of rival armed groups, patrolling the city and not knowing what will become of them in the future, the many arms available to the protagonists, the habits developed in economies of war with warlords, thefts and other frauds, the collapse of the state, the hatred of the vanquished towards the winner, and vice versa. In brief, in these fragile states all the ingredients are summoned for a quick return to some sort of violence: guerrilla warfare if not outright war. The exception to this is if we accompany the armed or forced peace of the moment by using all the post-conflict facilitation methods that are needed. This text will address some of the essential conditions of action:

1. the prerequisite of ownership of the post-conflict facilitation efforts by the top leaders in the country, whether they are local or international authorities;
2. the designation of key national leaders, moderate or radical, to involve in the effort as participants in the initiative and to the workshops convened;
3. the establishment of a local structure of facilitation, to convene workshops and the follow-up tasks;
4. specific facilitation methods during meetings with participants;
5. a sequence of national sectors to cover;
6. a progressive enlargement of the impact's initiative on the population.

We cannot pretend that this list of conditions is absolute or exhaustive, but at least in Burundi and DRC, they stick out as important after a series of promising results in both countries.
Ownership of the post-conflict facilitation efforts by local and international authorities

An armed conflict which breaks out in any country often raises concerns among the members of the international community: for better or for worse, major international or regional power are often tempted to intervene as swiftly as possible. Certain rarely publicised hypotheses suggest that some of these national actors supply arms and ammunition to some or all belligerents to favour and reinforce his influence; sometimes they would even replace the current leader with this actor. In the best of situations and sometimes as an accompaniment to the former action or as a consequence of its failure, the same or other international actors engage in efforts of mediation or conciliation. These are often coordinated by UN special envoys or other representatives of regional integration organisations, like the African Union or the European Union, or by a country like France or the United States.

Conciliation efforts mark the traditional diplomatic efforts aimed at mediating the peace among local warlords. Convincing them to sit at the same table can be quite difficult, and often happens only after relentless efforts of shuttle diplomacy. When they finally sit together, they wonder what they could possibly say to each other and what they could have to agree upon. Often, international pressure is such that these chiefs, although not always persuaded of its soundness, feel obliged to sign a peace accord to which they feel connected by a process in which they have participated. They sometimes consider these agreements more like truces - pauses before the fighting recommences.

These chiefs are often less sure than their faithful troops, to whom the "other" has been designated as the sworn enemy; they will not recognise themselves in signed clauses, making equilibrium even more fragile. This increases the risk of implosion of different war-worn moderate groups or of radicals still hoping to pursue armed warfare. Any rapprochement with the former enemy can be experienced as treason or a sign of weakness in one’s own camp, the winners in the field or the negotiators at the table are aware of this; they also measure the personal risk of keeping the power. As we can see, the signature of an accord proves so precarious that convincing a population of its saliency is fundamental in order to reach a positive point of no-return. This is as important for the possible battle winner on a national theatre, who has to win the hearts of former enemies at the same time that he must not disappoint his troops. This will be the core content of our text, to do everything possible in order not to come to the war situation quo ante and to convince all the leaders of the country of the viability of a peace solution.

In the absence of a definite military victory for one camp and in order to have some guarantee of a secure stabilization on the terrain, efforts of political mediation at the highest level, once having
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achieved some level of success – the Arusha accord for Burundi in August 2000 and the Sun City agreement for DRC in April 2002 – are often accompanied by the establishment of neutral military peace keeping forces, often sent by international organisations. In Burundi, the African Union followed by the United Nations with UNOB; and in DRC, MONUC of the United Nations helped for some months by Artemis and EUFOR forces of the European Union.

The structure of victory or political facilitation, also dubbed military stabilization, establishes the basis for post-conflict facilitation; which requires working on a comprehensive dialogue with all they key actors of the country who were not part to the victory or the political accords, but whose support (or in any case, benevolent neutrality) is essential for the effectiveness of the agreement and in governing in general. In the rest of our text, we will use "key leaders" to designate all those aforementioned actors in order to differentiate them from their leaders, who we will call "top leaders". It is fundamental to bring these key leaders to peaceful cooperation; indeed, they play an essential role in strengthening the return to peace as an irreversible reality; this is the main objective of post-conflict facilitation which completes "trickle-down" political mediation, concerning only top leaders.

In order to succeed in involving this cohort of key leaders in a post-conflict facilitation process, the discussion must be continued with top leaders of the state, with the signatories of the agreement (and if possible with those who were not part of it for diverse reasons) and international guarantors. It is indeed essential not to engage in this work without the support of these key leaders. Their ownership, if not their blessing, of this initiative is crucial; essential at the very least is their non-opposition. This approach aims at engaging the "second level" with the help of the "first level". It is close to what has been called national dialogue; in DRC, it was called the inter-Congolese dialogue, and reminds us of the reconciliation and truth commission approaches.

It is not simply a matter of convincing key leaders that these workshops or conferences that unite key leaders of the country are necessary. These workshops must take place with their complete willingness; a nationalisation of this project – a Burundisation or Congolisation of the initiative – had to take place, before even it started. While technical help for facilitation is granted to a foreign team, only Burundian or Congolese nationals are orienting the initiative and giving it content. Key leaders, who sometimes had the feeling they were forced by the outside to sign peace accords, are relieved at the idea that the dialogue with which they will be engaged is unmistakably national and is conducted without any second thoughts from the outside. There must be a guarantee that the facilitation will be limited to providing helpful methods, allowing for a progression from theory to practice, and that it will constantly seek advice from top leaders during the entire process, in order to adapt it to the reality, but also to changing circumstances. The top leaders’ blessing is also
important because they are essential to bringing the right people into the room, as we will show in the next section.

A post-conflict facilitation initiative must be realised in conjunction with top leaders, but also with the benevolence of the international community. Let us be honest and realistic. Foreign actors involved in the context of war and mediation in another country exert an important influence during this period of transition. Their knowledge of the terrain, but also their role and influence on top leaders, including security forces, make them crucial actors in the process. Whether they are neutral or not, whether they privilege a peaceful or an armed approach, their presence is a fact. They will be able to convince certain key leaders to participate in these post-conflict facilitations. Their ownership of the process is therefore essential. This is more an issue of pragmatism rather than international law, even if this stains the concept of national sovereignty.

Bearing in mind that post-conflict facilitation initiatives are financially burdensome, we know that it cannot be managed without some source of financing. It is quite impossible to raise enough private or national funds and therefore necessary to convince multilateral or bilateral aid organisations to support this kind of project. To take the example of Burundi, the post-conflict facilitation project was initiated thanks to post-conflict funds of the World Bank and then continued thanks to the European Commission, as well as the British Department for International Development (DFID) and the US Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI) of USAID. As for the DRC initiative, a trust fund of the United Nations Development Program (PNUD) received the contributions of the European Commission and of the American, English, Canadian, Norwegian and Swedish development agencies. These projects cost between one and two million dollars per year. These sums are substantial, but moderate compared to the cost of the presence of the 17,000 soldiers of the MONUC, whose budget is $1.1 billion per year.

**Success Factor 1:** Post-conflict facilitation requires *a priori* national ownership of the initiative by national top leaders and the tangible support of personalities who are involved from the national and international communities.

**Designation of key national leaders, moderate or radical, to involve in the effort**

The success of post-conflict facilitation is increased if the most influential people of a country are present in the room. When we evoke influence, we do not distinguish between positive or negative impacts; rather, we have both in mind. The idea is not to gather men and women of peace, and to make them work together. This approach, though laudable, would have little effect
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on the situation of a country, which has been confronted with a war and strong antagonisms. On the contrary, we need to bring together the hawks - the hardliners - those who will, for better or worse, determine the future of the country for twenty years to come. If you only bring moderates to the table they may come to an agreement, but then war will start again because of the extremists who were not included at the beginning of the process. Conversely, gather both moderates and radicals in the same room, and everything becomes possible.

Here again, pragmatism must prevail. People dedicated to peace must of course be present if they exert influence on the society in question, but their very presence is mostly justified in the room because they may positively influence the other actors in attendance.

As to the people who are known to be hardliners, their presence will give some credibility to the initiative. Everyone in the room will take it more seriously. Of course, the atmosphere will be colder at the beginning of the meeting, but at least, nobody will have the impression that this is simply a "peace and love" reunion of converts. If the tough guys are there and if the meeting works well - i.e. if the "conversion" goes through - the help of the so-called hawks will be even more precious for the follow-up of the post-conflict facilitation.

Now, how do we designate these influential key leaders? This is also where we need the intervention of national and international sponsors, i.e. those top leaders who know both those in favor of peace and the potential spoilers, who could make the entire peace process fall apart. Let us take the hypothesis that fifty top leaders have been consulted. The idea was to ask half of them to write a list of about thirty people who are key for the future of the country, some "high po" (high potentials) as they call them in HR. These thirty people must be representative of all aspects of life in the specific country. Six criteria, for example, could be suggested to these top leaders to constitute their list and increase the representativeness of the people who will attend the training sessions:

1. There should be a representation of gender diversity. Our team of conveners, each time, has tried to ensure that at least 30% of workshop participants are women. Such a representation is sometimes difficult if not impossible to guarantee for some workshops such as the ones organised for the security sector.

2. There should be a representation of professional diversity: political and administrative officials, commanders of the army and armed movements (the recognised rebels or not), judges and lawyers, journalists, university professors, trade union leaders, entrepreneurs, church leaders, association representatives, etc.
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3. There should be a representation of geographical diversity, with people from the capital, but also from the provinces and possibly the Diaspora.

4. There should be a representation of ethnic diversity ensuring a balance between all the different communities of the country, in particular those at the epicenter of the conflict.

5. There should be a representation of historical diversity, building a balance of the different periods of the country's history. We do not simply have in mind intergenerational diversity, but also a representation of the people who at different times were powerful. For example, in DRC, it was indispensable that there would be Lumumbist, Mobutist and Kabilist leaders.

6. Also, as we indicated, there should be a representation of a spectrum of opinions, including both moderates and radicals from each camp.

These six criteria will assure an increased inclusiveness if properly followed. By crossing and comparing the different lists from top leaders, we see that certain names appear again and again. This shows that they are seen as influential leaders by several of the highest authorities in the country.

Who are these top leaders who are asked to write these lists of personalities? They could be current or past heads of state, leaders of the opposition, prime ministers, presidents of the assembly or the senate, archbishops, university deans, etc. Early consultations with the highest authorities of the country are discrete and of course each person’s list remains confidential. Another reason for top leaders to designate who should be present at these workshops is to increase the legitimacy of both the people included and the process itself. When these key leaders are finally contacted to take part in the training workshops, they are told that they were chosen after consultation with the highest moral and political authorities of the country. This approach increases the chance that the identified key leaders will come, when they are convened. For example, if the number two of an opposition party has been listed by many top leaders including his own party chief, if he receives a letter of invitation, it is likely he will speak about it with his party chief. The latter will be pleased that he has been included on the definitive list of final guests and will probably encourage him to come. As he is invited as an individual and not as the representative per se of his party, this participant will be at ease with the invitation and will probably accept it.

We can see that the designation of participants is to a large extent determined by the authorities of the country, reinforcing the local character of the initiative, the national buy-in. The presence of high level personalities guarantees that these trainings will actually operate between people who will "recognise" each other. Even though they may not know exactly who will come, the first
moments they spend together in the room will assure them that they are with the relevant people, those who count, for better or worse.

As an example, during the same workshop, present were two vice-presidents, the president of the National Assembly, a former prime minister, former governors of provinces, the child of a former President of the Republic, advisers of the president, a bishop, etc.

In total, since 2003 in Burundi around 8,000 people participated in the BLTP workshops and in DRC since January 2006 around 700 people have participated in the ILCCE workshops.

Success Factor 2: Post-conflict facilitation sessions work better if key leaders representative of the diversity of the country, designated through lists provided by top leaders, are present in the room.

Establishment of a local mediation structure, to convene the workshop

Regardless of what can be done from a distance through computer technology, the efficacy of any post-conflict facilitation worthy of that name rests upon on the creation of a local antenna. In this case, it was two NGO’s: the Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP) and the Initiative for a Collaborative Leadership and the Cohesion of the State in DRC (ILCCE), supported through partnerships with the Africa Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS) in Washington.

One crucial question is to know who will be directing this antenna in the country. Here again, nothing is worth more than the effects of a positive reputation. The early interviews with top leaders in Burundi and DRC have also permitted to identify key people, who have, despite the difficult history of the country, maintained the confidence of local and international actors. These people are not legions of course, but the patient time spent on the early phase helped spot these rare birds.

In Burundi, two names often came back in conversations with national interlocutors: Fabien Nsengimana, former adviser to the president, and Eugène Nindorera, former minister of human rights. These two local figures emerged by the impartiality and the dignity that were unanimously recognised, including in the eyes of the diplomatic community of Bujumbura. The Burundian ethnic duality also dictated that there would be both a Hutu and Tutsi representation through the
two personalities. These experienced Burundians have become the two local champions, who, by their close association to this initiative and through their names, were sufficient to reassure potential participants and to encourage them to come to the workshops. Eugène Nindorera, a consultant for many months, and Fabien Nsengimana, the BLTP director up to now, have helped to decipher difficult situations, prevent the facilitation team from making mistakes; they have oriented not only the debates but the entire process, reinforcing a Burundian management of the BLTP.

In DRC, ILLCE has turned towards the former coordinator in DRC of OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid of the United Nations), Michel Noureddine Kassa, who, from 1994 to 2002 in Congo has embodied the spirit of impartial action in service to the populations. It is thanks to him and his entourage that the river Congo was reopened to navigation; he also ensured that students’ exams could cross the frontlines. The Congolese accept and acknowledge him as one of theirs and everyone regards him with respect. As an example, a letter from ILCCE, signed by him, is a useful and necessary passport for many Congolese.

In DRC, we must also note the great contribution of father Martin Ekwa, who was responsible for the organisation of Catholic schools in DRC after the independence, and who opened many doors as a consultant. He embodied the wise man that succeeded in orienting ILLCE strategy with subtlety and charisma.

As the initiative developed, whether it was BLTP or ILCCE, the local offices have naturally grown; have managed a huge number of workshops, and of diverse programs. A resource centre has also been created in Bujumbura with the help of the ESSEC library. An institutionalisation of this type is necessary to ensure the continuation of the initiatives and to make sure that these organisations could fly by themselves as soon as possible, without any external pressure.

**Success Factor 3:** Post-conflict facilitation will be helped by the establishment of a local office, which must be headed by a personality of irreproachable local reputation and who must be institutionalised to progressively win more autonomy.

**Facilitation Methods during and between Meetings**
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With Elizabeth McClintock, colleague and facilitator with whom I have been participating to missions in Africa for ten years, namely for WHO, we have built a curriculum, in particular for the basic workshops of 5 days, which are divided in two parts:

- a first relational and methodological part (three days): key leaders learn to know each other better, with growing mutual respect and understanding, and they reinforce their competencies of decision-making, of negotiation, of dialogue and problem solving, interdependence of general and individual interests. This first part, where the hot topics of the day are not yet dealt with, constitutes the platform from which the last part can be deployed; it builds in some ways its conditions of possibility;

- a substantive and practical part (two days): participants identify the most important and urgent topics for their country, keep those on which they can exert an influence, look for solutions together, and come up with commitments, for which follow-up mechanisms are put in place with the help of the local antenna.

The pedagogy of these workshops is based on an approach which are:

- inductive, first, which supposes a progressive discovery of concepts and tools by case studies and simulations that participants experience, and where facilitators organise work teams among participants to provoke unlikely meetings;

- participative, which supposes role playing to which workshop participants are actively involved with, and also discussions which they provide the content of, with trainers as facilitators;

- informative, because in the first part, after the simulations and discussions, facilitators introduce to participants structured methods for better decision-making and problem-solving; and, if necessary, in the second part, experts may come and testify of their experience in a particular field, like the organisation of the elections, the DDR (disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion), etc.;

- and deliberative, which requires, in the second part, from the participants to choose and examine major issues and search for solutions about which they deliberate on possible actions. Thus during a workshop of security sectors, the themes that the participants had chosen to address were the definition of the combatant, the harmonization of grades in the army and the allocation of posts among the regular army and rebel fighters, in the new forces of national defence.

At the beginning, our team of facilitators are trainers, whose objectives are, first, to bring some modicum of trust among the former belligerents (people first) and, second, to structure the methods which will apply to the meetings (process second). During the second part, where problems are finally addressed, participants are looking for solutions together. During the whole
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process, trainers act as mediators-facilitators who have chosen to restrain from making remarks about the substance.

The distinction⁶ between mediator-facilitator (focus on process) and mediator-advisor (proposals of solutions) appears fundamental to us and it is certainly the first term that describes the most the methodological approach which we use during the workshops. Participants are in charge of content. In no way the facilitators intervene to tell participants: “Here are the problems, causes and solutions; please accept our recommendations and make the commitments we find appropriate for you.”

Participants’ empowerment is an imperative for us as facilitators and obliges never to be advisers, except in rare exceptions. Burundians and Congolese have to elaborate the substance themselves. This approach, far from weakening the facilitators, evidences the credibility of our approach. It makes participants more responsible and increases their confidence in the facilitation process, which is no more suspected to be a subtle instrument of neo-colonialism. At the beginning, this method is surprising for participants, as they think we are there to lecture them, as before, and to tell them what to do. The idea on the contrary is that participants now learn from each other, in a real community of learning. Our insisting on delocalizing the speech la parole towards them is, according to us, the only viable post-conflict facilitation model, as facilitators never substitute themselves to nationals who are recognised as the experts of content.

I have used this approach with Elizabeth McClintock in the Burundian workshops. We were reinforced by the use of the very same method by Howard Wolpe, Africanist, President Clinton’s former special envoy in the Great Lake Region and project director. In this context, participants have owned even more this initiative and its numerous ramifications in the country. This approach that puts participants at the heart of facilitation is also the one that about twenty Burundian facilitators, who were trained by the BLTP, implemented at the communal level in the provinces of Gitega and Ruyegi. Elisabeth Mc Clintock continues up to this day to favour this approach as a senior facilitator in Burundi; she was also supported by ESSEC IRÉNÉ trainers for this endeavor.

In a different context, which remains as complex, I have continued the same approach in DRC and it also guided the twenty ESSEC IRÉNÉ facilitators who helped deliver dozens of workshops in both Burundi and DRC.⁷

Success Factor 4: A post-conflict facilitation gains at having facilitators adopt methods which focus on the (re)establishment of a relationship between participants, on their acquisition of
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process skills and, on simply accompanying them on substance, refusing as mediators to propose specific content.

Sequence of national sectors to involve

The first workshops in Burundi – Ngozi process – and in DRC – Nganda process – have gathered participants who were as representative as possible of the national leadership. Groups were heterogeneous, including personalities of the political world and of the civil society. This melting-pot was the best way to take the pulse of a society which had been divided and weakened by war, but also to prove to participants that these seminars, through these unlikely meetings, they could recognise each other and work together. They discovered facilitators who had only one idea in mind, to give them the means to take back the reins of their destiny.

Participants themselves at the end of these first national workshops oriented the next events at the BLTP and ILLCE. These key leaders’ intuitions on the next steps of the process proved to be precious and were then confirmed by the top leaders and by the representative of the international community. In Burundi, participants, since the beginning of 2003, deemed it necessary to extend this type of initiative to the security forces of both sides – the regular army and armed groups. For reasons of security, which were invoked by Burundians, this first workshop which was to gather military commanders – FAB (Forces armées burundaises) and “rebels” – was held in Nairobi. This was the first of a series, because afterwards the Mixed Cease-Fire Commission attended a similar seminar, as well as the Commissions for Integrated Command of the new Burundian Army (FDN – Forces de défense nationale) and Police. The importance of this type of approach was judged important enough that the Burundian Military Academy integrated similar workshops in the officers’ curriculum, with the help of Burundian facilitators who had acquired these methods.

In order to increase the chance that decisions of integration, which have been made at the top of the Executive branch, and relayed by the minister of Defence and the Joint Chief of Staff, are followed and become concrete, we see the interest in the Burundian sequence to take care, in these workshops, of accompanying psychologically the leaders who had been submitted to “brassage” (mixing) and to the DDR process. A similar approach had merits in DRC, but the chain of events forced us to adopt a slightly different strategy.

The security sector is therefore an ideal candidate for a second phase of the post-conflict facilitation process. According to the countries’ agenda, a third step may be devoted to the themes which are associated with the organisation of free and fair elections. Participation to the elaboration of a code of electoral conduct, as well as the sensitization of heads of parties to

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responsible leadership during the electoral process has led to workshop activities in Burundi. Once the results of the elections were known, with the support and participation of president elect Pierre Nkurunziza, Elizabeth McClintock and I have facilitated a government retreat, gathering among others two vice-presidents and the ministers. This « team building » seminar at the highest level was aimed at supporting the work of the cabinet staff, i.e. at allowing future colleagues to better know each other and to reflect on action methods for the Executive. Very early on, it looked that a follow-up of this important seminar should have been attempted, though it was delicate to achieve.

In DRC, in 2006, because of the proximity of elections, the security sector could not receive immediate attention and issues pertaining to elections came first. Following the advice of participants in the Nganda process, it was decided, that due to the risks of renewed violence in the Eastern provinces of North and South Kivus, it was better to hold the workshops in Goma and Bukavu, and even in hard cities like Butembo, Minembwe and Uvira, zones where confidence had been low for twelve years. These workshops have helped in demystifying the fears of elections, before they took place, and then of their results, once the new elected assemblies were in place. These “volcanic” zones, in all the senses of the word volcanic, remained the cradle of violence which could be reignited at any time, and we saw it later, but nucleus of good will have been constituted and fight the best they can against these risks.

The post-conflict facilitation initiative in DRC had to adapt to the circumstances of the moment. During the events which surrounded the announcement of the results, after the first round of the presidential elections on August 20, 2006, the agenda of a follow-up workshop had to be totally changed. All attention turned not to the losers but to the two winners, running for the second round of these elections: president Kabila and vice-president Bemba. At a time when there were clashed between their respective troops, we were holding in Kinshasa, a workshop gathering participants from all the corners of DRC, from East and West. It might well have been one of the rare places in the middle of the heat where Congolese were striving so much to keep the peace alive. Participants then participated in discrete meetings with top leaders. Participants – close to one camp or the other, or to none – saw the urgent need for national cohesion at this time of peril, which could just fall apart and lead to full escalation. They have drafted all together a call to peace – the Appel de Nguma – and then broadcasted it in the four national languages on many Congolese TV and radio channels during several days. The follow-up workshop transformed itself in a melting-pot to help prevent the devils of civil war from rising again from their ashes.

“When everything is urgent, what is the most urgent?” asked some cooperation experts at a DFid meeting. Post-conflict facilitation initiatives in Burundi and DRC have not escaped this ongoing questioning, and from devoting, as a consequence, much of the resources to the questions of
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political transition and security. There seems to be a sequence of workshops which makes sense: gathering heterogeneous groups of national key leaders first, and then, focus on the security sectors and then on leaders in charge of the democratic transition. There are however two domains which must be dealt with in a post-conflict setting, however due to lack of resources or sometimes sufficient stability, have not yet been addressed, neither in Burundi, nor in DRC. The first concerns the question of impunity and the role of justice; if such a question is left unresolved, it haunts the minds of many participants and beyond. The South African approach in this field, through the method of *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* is very attractive, but there are other options. A second missing domain is sustainable economic development, which requires the reinforcement of leaders’ competencies in project management and resource mobilisation for a quick implementation of priorities of social and economic recovery, the only real means to help the leaders’ reputation within the population.

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<th>Sequence of post-conflict facilitation</th>
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<td>National cohesion → Security → Democratisation → Justice → Sustainable Development</td>
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**Success Factor 5:** Post-conflict facilitation requires a methodical development of workshops in a direction that is determined by participants for the reconstruction of the State, with a special focus, on the stabilisation of the security sectors and for a responsible action of political leaders, in the perspective of a broader reconciliation, which includes justice and sustainable development.

**Progressive enlargement of the initiative impact towards the populations**

In which way are these programs helpful in post-conflict situations? What is their impact? This question is permanent in the heads of everyone: the facilitation team, the participants, but also the donors who finance this kind of initiative, and who need to account for the use of the money. Special attention must be granted to track down the different levels of impact that might be notices, from the more modest one to the most ambitious:

1. **Personal immediate impact.** The generalised use of first names, of French “tutoiement” (informal address) and the proscription of titles in the workshops quickly make many inhibitions and prejudices fall among participants. They feel more confident as individuals, through simulations, exercises and discussions, as well as capacity building.
and permanent recognition by the facilitators that they are the key people for the success of the process and this creates a strong awareness that the future situation can be positive and different from today’s, and that they can contribute to it. Participants learn to take risks in the workshop, to confide and to commit, which tends to lead to behaviours which are more constructive, as the workshop unfolds. Participants, who often come to these meetings with the secret hope to change the other, are the first to change. They communicate differently, and they are better equipped to act better in the future too.

2. *Personal lasting impact.* Once participants finish a workshop, they go back to their original group, milieu, or profession. The risk to go back to the old habits is huge. In order to mitigate this kind of natural phenomena, our role, as a facilitation team, is first to try to address this re-entry problem in the workshop itself, and then to ensure that there is a serious follow-up of participants, to encourage them afterwards and between the workshops, through contacts with the local NGO, by phone or by holding regular meetings at the office or otherwise, and by all means of socialisation (the “Fanta” or “Primus” approach). We try to make participants more aware of the daily opportunities that these new approaches can bring to them. In the follow-up workshops that are part of the process, the first moments are often spent on exchanging on the changes which they could observe in themselves and with others. For example, a professor explains that he started listening to students to give them more say in his courses. Moreover, a political official from Ituri in DRC accounted for the way he resolved, through negotiation tools, a problem which could have degenerated between two communities. A Burundian female senator, finally recognised by her peers for her leadership qualities, became a minister. It matters that the results which are accomplished during a workshop be more than a straw fire; but become part of participants’ being thus second nature. The heavy financing of follow-up mechanisms, which exist in these post-conflict initiatives, made a difference with respect to the prior workshops, where there was no way of reinforcing or checking the long-term impact on behaviours.

3. *Relational impact internal to the group of participants or network.* The very cold beginnings of workshops, which gather people from opposite camps, politically, ethnically, professionally, etc., often paradoxically create a convivial atmosphere among participants. Through discussions, but also through coffee-breaks, lunches and possibly dinners, especially if it is retreat (which we strongly recommend), day after day, many interpersonal barriers fall. Suddenly participants are surprised not to see the others as enemies, but as adversaries, and later as possible partners. The reflection on the constitution and the reinforcement of this network happens at the end of the basic workshop. Keeping this network alive is essential, as it can lead to positive consequences on the chain of events. As an illustration, three participants to the ILCCE workshops were
successively presidents of the Congolese National Assembly. In each of these changes, there were risks of institutional deadlocks, and even of violence. But these political figures, who had learnt to know each other better, partly thanks to the workshops and their methods, had also been able to measure the advantages of a cooperative bipartisan approach for the sake of the country, compared to the use of constraint or violence; therefore they could find the mechanisms for “soft landing” as they called it, the second one replacing the first one, and similarly between the second and third one. The transfers of power took place without clashes during that transition. A lasting working relationship between such or such had allowed a peaceful resolution of a problem with heavy consequences, had it not gone well.

4. **Relational impact on team members.** If participants are carefully chosen, there is a good chance that they will be able to share with their own team members the methods they have learnt and the solutions they have found during the workshop. Some participants have even organised internal workshops of **restitution**, where they give a structured debriefing and even a course on these new approaches in their own organisation.

5. **Relational impact on top leaders.** In general, it is easier to convince our agents than our principals. Even though participants come to workshops as individuals, through their own relationship network, they are often asked to account for the results of the workshops with their own **principals**, the so-called top leaders. Their positive influence is crucial. Getting some key interviews with such top leaders for both ILLCE and BLTP is often facilitated by former participants, who are aware of the need to get their support to continue and enlarge the impact of this post-conflict process. Many new workshops would not have been possible if such or such participant to an earlier workshop had not put all his or her weight to make it happen with the help of their respective principal. They become the best and the most convincing spokespeople for the facilitation team to reach out to this superior level of impact, which remains nonetheless difficult.

6. **Limited institutional impact.** When there is a **critical mass** of representatives from the same institution who have worked together in a workshop, even though they do not belong to the same political group for example, they might find themselves working differently in their own institution, in a less partisan way or dealing with some issues with less tension. The President of the Congolese National Assembly has supported the organisation of a workshop for all the head of political groups; these leaders having develop a sense of common belonging to the cause of Congolese cohesion, have been able to deal more easily with some items on the legislative agenda that had been pending. Following their immediate participation to a workshop, Burundian military commanders from all sides have been able to unblock three questions which were evoked earlier.
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(definition of the combatant, etc.), whereas they had failed to overcome these points for more than three months.

7. *Inter-institutional enlarged impact.* Whatever country, inertia of institutions is always well-known, but it is even more difficult to have a positive impact on inter-institutional relationships. A crisis in Burundi in 2007 made this point clear. The parliament was in a deadlock for more than seven months, and it did not participate any more, as it should, to the checks-and-balances of democratic institutions. The Government was also affected in its functioning. Thus it was the whole state that was paralyzed. To be successful in a post-conflict facilitation, we are sometimes obliged to move back from a sector-specific approach to a *more general, holistic approach.* In the sub-region, that is also why, when the time comes, there will be recognition for the need for an inter-institutional workshop which will summon all the highest political and military officials of the four countries of the quadripartite commission (Burundi, DRC, Uganda, and Rwanda). A provincial approach for instance in the Kivus quickly shows its limits; it behaves like a fireman, whereas the decision-makers are elsewhere and whereas the local actors do not have at their disposal enough power of influence. Thus, the quest for an inevitable inter-institutional impact is necessary.

8. *Social impact.* Determining whether these initiatives of post-conflict facilitation even marginally change a society highly depends on the capacity of diffusion to a large scale of the methods and contents by key leaders. Participants to the workshops are invited to contribute to this *diffusion.* This larger penetration supposes a wise use of television and radio to get the messages across, as the *Appel de Nguma* did in DRC, but also through national or local newspapers. On other occasions, participants held press conferences or provoked interviews with journalists; they even made sure that workshops would be organised for journalists themselves. There are other means available to go “public” or social. Once in Gitega, with all the military commanders, from Hutu and Tutsi origins, from governmental forces or from the rebels, we went to the big pub of the town so that everyone would see them drinking beers together. At another time, there were public conferences in front of big amphitheatres with students and professors, as at the Catholic University of Bukavu in May 2006. This major level of impact requires the broadest integration – at school from the earliest age, at the university, in continuing education, and in the press – of overwhelming and compelling messages of peace, reconciliation and national cohesion, as well as negotiation and mediation methods to be widespread in order to provide substance in daily practice. In any case, only one inhabitant out of a 1,000 have participated in BLTP workshops in Burundi (a country of 6 million), and not more than one out of 100,000 in DRC (a country of 60 million). Even though the key leaders’ voices bear more extensively than others, we are still far from pretending to have reached the
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needed social impact. This kind of initiative for broad reconciliation can only work over a long time period.

The situation remains volatile in post-conflict countries and it is delusional to deny the risks of a return to violence. Sometimes, it takes one accident or one crime, followed by a rumor, to start an escalation of tragic events. Knowing this risk, it would be however cynical not to ensure mediation efforts where it is the most needed, in order to reconcile the most influential leaders. We must concede the fact that the impact of such initiatives remains too often limited, also because of lack of sufficient resources in a timely manner.

Success Factor 6: A post-conflict facilitation must pay permanent attention to the reconciliation impact of these workshops on people and institutions, with a search for the broadest impact in the society as a whole.

Conclusion: towards a broad alliance for inter-track diplomacy
(leaders, political officials, diplomats, facilitators)

These post-conflict facilitation initiatives that have been conducted among leaders through the partnership of international NGO’s (WWICS, ESSEC and CMPartners) and local NGO’s (BLTP, ILLCE) show a new form of possible alliance for peace between the political and academic worlds. They require from the local and international political officials, as well as the professional diplomats, to reflect on the way their task of political mediation can be pursued with the help of facilitators, who come from research and education institutes. The latter involvement at a second level, with the key leaders of a country, can make a difference, as these key leaders, who are in direct contact with the population, can also rebuild confidence, namely through their careful participation in the reconstruction of a Democratic State, and of truly national security forces. We already knew about “Track 1 Diplomacy”, which involved the top leaders with both politicians and diplomats, and “Track 2 Diplomacy”, which seems to be detached from political commitments, and which can sometimes look like exercises of good academic conscience. Rather than going for multi-track diplomacy, where the parallel tracks never meet, we need to look for more inter-track diplomacy, or at least complementary track diplomacy. In the multi-track approaches, diplomats sometimes despair of the lack of implementation of signed agreements by the key leaders; professional facilitators lament for not having access to the top or key leaders.

Let us go for a bridge⁸ between these two universes, some “Track 1.5 Diplomacy” where the professionals of political mediation help the facilitators come to play a more meaningful role in
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post-conflict contexts. The latter can therefore work towards the ownership of agreements by key leaders, if diplomats, with the help of political officials, give them access to them. When these key leaders know how to practice negotiation and mediation tools, they can serve as relay, namely through the press, to reach the society as such. It is the whole social pyramid that is now in place to reconstruct social cohesion through broad reconciliation from the bottom up as well the top down.

Impact of the successive mediations in post-conflict contexts

Post-conflict mediation, in a broad sense, combines the efforts of four types of actors towards the reconciliation and the cohesion of a nation: first, top leaders and diplomats of the international community, and second, professional facilitators, and key leaders of a country. As we hopefully demonstrated, the system is complex to build, but it reveals some guidelines and success factors. It requires strong lasting partnerships from all the actors involved in the process. Even though the facilitation (political or academic) is exterior, the real actors are national. The methodology combines networking, awareness exercises, concepts, tools, analyses, commitments and follow-up on them; it builds a logical sequence which does not preclude effective adaptation to circumstances. This methodology starts delivering helpful results, compared to improvisation strategies in these post-conflict places, where the national leadership was fragmented, neglected, and often abandoned without any training support.
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The next time a state or an international organisation gives itself the mission to act as a mediator in a nation at war or between nations at war, the strategy for the post-conflict period should not be simply about sending interposition troops to prevent a new war and monitor the peace conditions, but also about sending professional facilitation teams who will work to really win the peace with the key leaders. This is the only way not to simply freeze the situation, but to truly reverse it to an irreversible state of reconciliation, which reminds us of Aron’s peace of satisfaction.

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

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