



THE UCLG PEACE PRIZE 2016

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
INITIATIVES FOR PEACE



Editors:

Daan Stelder
Tim Poelman

Contributors:

Aisa Kirabo Kacyira
Dion van den Berg
Emilia Sáiz
Janny Vlietstra
Josep Lluís Alay
Lakhdar Brahimi
Parks Tau
Peter Knip
Rafael Grasa
Renske Steenberg
Ricardo Martínez
Tadatoshi Akiba
Tarik Kupusović
Ton Rombouts
Wim Deetman

Coordination and editing:

UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize Secretariat
VNG International
Nassaulaan 12, The Hague (Netherlands)
+31 70 373 84 01
peace.prize@vng.nl
www.peaceprize.uclg.org
UCLG World Secretariat

Designer:

studi-k
January 2017

This project has been made possible with
support from:

United Cities and Local Governments
The Barcelona Region
VNG International
PAX
The City of Bogotá
The National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds)



INDEX

• Forewords	4
• From Arms to Farms: Kauswagan, Winner of the 2016 UCLG Peace Prize	6
• Introduction of the Jury	9
• Reflections on the history of the UCLG Peace Prize	13
• Palmira: music and dance as drivers of peace	18
• Peace Territories: an integrated approach by Canoas	20
• The Potential of local government peace building initiatives	22
• 'Think About Peace': protecting a new generation in Cali	24
• Shabunda: dialogue and reconciliation through Permanent Peace Committees	26
• Peace and human rights, a priority for the region of Barcelona	28
• Account of the first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize	29
• Selection procedure of the Peace Prize	32
• Partners of the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize	34



UCLG - CITY
OF BOGOTÁ
**PEACE
PRIZE**

Foreword

Peace can only be constructed if we lay solid foundations; we need to invest in tolerance, dialogue and the joint pursuit of solutions to our shared challenges. Local communities and governments have the capacity to understand others, to respect diversity, to live and share with neighbors, in short, to develop a strong social fabric. This is what provides us with the foundations we need for long-lasting peace.

United Cities and Local Governments itself is the result of this understanding; of the will and the vision of local leaders from around the world struggling in a conflict-ridden world with day-to-day problems that can't be tackled in isolation.

Of course, when the forerunners of UCLG were set up in 1913, the world had not yet lived through the so-called Great Wars, but it had started to experience some of the global challenges we need to tackle today: scarce natural resources, growing urban populations, changes in production models, people left behind, and inequalities, among others.

The period after the Second World War and the Cold War marked the international municipal movement significantly, with our goal always to cultivate warm relationships among cities and local governments.

Indeed, the global family of local and regional governments has a proud tradition of international cooperation and solidarity, which allows communities from across the world to gain shared understanding of the importance of peace, human dignity and respect for one another.

The first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize in Bogotá represents the consolidation of a longstanding priority in the diplomacy agenda of our world organization. We are convinced, not only of the fact that we can constructively contribute to the peace agendas of states and the international community, but that we can help shape sustainable peace through the promotion of shared values through local policies. This will also be one of our contributions to Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Local and regional government leaders active in UCLG are aware of our great responsibility in contributing to a sustainable world and guaranteeing the wellbeing of our communities; this is why the UCLG Peace Prize is so important to us. It is an acknowledgement of our best work; recognition of the brave and the bold.

It is our hope that the successful initiatives undertaken by local governments presented in this publication will encourage others to follow in their footsteps. Furthermore, we hope that they will spur the international community to acknowledge the key role local and regional governments play in ensuring a sustainable and peaceful world.

The worldwide community gathered in UCLG is therefore proud to present the summary of the first edition of this award, which has a rich history and background.

As I take on the Presidency of the world organization I feel a great responsibility to represent this global movement and I am aware of that many leaders worldwide share my best wishes for a peaceful and shared future. Let the experiences in this publication be an inspiration to us all.



Mpho Parks Tau

President of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

President of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA)



With the realization of the first UCLG Peace Prize in 2016 we have achieved an important milestone, and it is with great pleasure that I present this publication to you. I am delighted to see that the UCLG priority for peace has consolidated in a global platform for the acknowledgement of the crucial role that local governments can play as actors of peace.



Local governments have a central role to play in preventing conflicts, building bridges and dialogue after conflict and promoting a peaceful environment. Through the creation of the triennial UCLG Peace Prize we aim to celebrate successful initiatives of local governments and stimulate other local governments to follow suit, as well as to generate much-needed international public attention for the role of local governments in this field.

As the sphere of government closest to the people, local governments can contribute to shaping a culture of peace in a myriad of ways. For instance, they can bridge gaps between groups through sports and culture. They can provide truly integrated approaches to urban security, or set up inclusive, multi-stakeholder initiatives to promote peace. Through targeted interventions, local governments can provide youth with opportunities and viable alternatives to violence. Furthermore, they can engage in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants. Indeed, the ways in which local governments can contribute to a peaceful world are very much diverse.

This diversity was certainly reflected in the 46 applications from all around the world that we have received for the first UCLG Peace Prize. Our high-level jury has had the difficult task of selecting the finalists for the prize and the final winner, and the presentations by the finalists at the UCLG World Congress in Bogotá have been very inspiring. I was amazed by the creativity and commitment shown by these local governments in ensuring peace in their communities. For instance, how the municipality of Palmira in Colombia employs music as a pathway to peace, and how the municipality of Kauswagan in the Philippines targeted hunger as an underlying cause for a conflict that seemed to be identity-based, have been very inspiring to me personally.

The inspirational value of our finalists should not be reserved to those who were present at the session that we had in Bogotá. Through this publication, we make this wealth of ideas available to a broader audience, with the addition of reflections on the role of local governments in building and restoring peace.

We highlight a limited number of examples here, and I am sure that many more local governments around the world make significant efforts in order to overcome violence and build peace. These efforts deserve a spotlight, and I hope that even more applications will be received in the next edition of the UCLG Peace Prize, which will be awarded in 2019. This way, we can continue to encourage dissemination of best practices, ensure recognition of local governments as actors for peace, and provide the most inspiring actors with the spotlight that they so well deserve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ton Rombouts'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Ton Rombouts

Vice-Chair of the UCLG Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy
Chair of the International Delegation of the Committee on European and International Affairs of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)
Mayor of 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands

The winner

From Arms to Farms: Kauswagan

Winner of the 2016 UCLG Peace Prize

In the midst of a longstanding conflict, the local authorities of Kauswagan, in the Lanao del Norte province of the Philippines, showed courage and innovation by coming up with a comprehensive localized reintegration programme called 'From Arms to Farms'. Even though it was the central government that ultimately convinced the Islamic secessionist rebels into laying down arms, there is no doubt that the programme has been a great peace contributor.



A former MILF commander with a project manager

Background

The Moros are a large Muslim population group from the southern Philippines. They have a long tradition of rebelling against occupants, dating back to the time when Spanish explorers discovered and claimed the archipelago in the 16th century, up to American colonial rule and more recently against the state. At the beginning of the 19th century, Moro resistance was virtually subdued because of American military superiority. However, when the Philippines became a sovereign nation-state in 1946, and territories claimed by the Moros came under de jure control of the Philippine state, a resurgence of resistance was imminent.

From the beginning of the 19th century, tensions between the Moro population and the Christian and Spanish speaking Filipinos had been rising. The dispute concentrated on landownership. The Moro communities claimed a historical right to lands that they had inhabited for centuries, while the absence of a land entitlement system indiscriminately allowed for the purchase of land and settlement. As a result, divisions widened between the Muslim community and the Christian Philippine population as they moved to the south.

In 1972, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was founded and started its violent campaign for independence. In 1987, the MNLF leadership accepted the government's offer for the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, which led to a final peace agreement in 1996. The splinter formation of expelled combatants, established in 1984 as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) refused the deal and continued their armed struggle.



Kauswagan

One of the areas where the MILF was active, was the Lanao del Norte province, which lies just north of a territory part of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Kauswagan is a coastal municipality within Lanao del Norte, of around 25,000 citizens. Since Christian settlers moved to the area, the municipality became increasingly divided and conflict was latent. When the MILF started to extent its activities into the urban areas of Kauswagan, this caused an escalation of violence and largescale displacement of its citizens. In 2001, President Joseph Estrada declared an all-out war against the MILF.

Intensified fighting and the deepening of the division along religious lines followed, doing Kauswagan, and in fact the whole Lanao del Norte province, more harm than good. At the same time, poverty levels rose to an all-time high, reaching nearly 80 percent in 2009. Coercive efforts at ending the violence ignored any relation between the conflict and poverty and inequalities.

Q&A with municipal officer Adelino Rico

What made the programme successful?

"The programme was a success because of the strong political will of mayor Arnado to address the issues of poverty and hunger. Also, the commitment and attitude of our partners and those responsible for the implementation of the programme contributed to the its success. Municipal staff made regular visits to the countryside to monitor implementation and to boost morale."

What were the difficulties faced in the implementation?

"Finding the financial means for the programme was a challenge. In the end, we were able to materialize the programme with a public-private partnership, in which several partners committed themselves to its implementation. Another challenge was proximity. Many of the rebel returnees live in remote areas that can be difficult to reach. In order to make communication with these areas possible, we provided our partners with hand-held radios."

"The Arms to Farms Program gained tremendous positive outcome and glory of the most peaceful and progressive Municipality in the Philippines, besides diversity in culture, religion and the history of painful experience of war and violence. Thus, the ultimate solutions and results showed the advantage of the Program, which is OWNED by the people and sustain through empowerment of the community folks, both Muslims and Christians."

Tarik Kupusović
Former Mayor of Sarajevo

This changed when Rommel C. Arnado was elected mayor in 2010. His administration put new emphasis on the relation between the ongoing conflict and socio-economic problems like poverty, food security and inequalities between population groups, as some of the root causes of the conflict. Specifically, the new administration started looking for ways in which these socio-economic issues among the Moro population could be addressed, because it was believed that as long as such problems persisted, a life of violence and rebellion would continue to appeal.

The project

To do this, a comprehensive approach was devised that would on the one hand lead to de-escalation, through the demobilization of Moro rebels and bridging the division between the Muslim and Christian communities of Kauswagan. On the other hand, it aimed to address problems of poverty and food security. The resulting Sustainable, Integrated Kauswagan Area Development and Peace Agenda, now commonly known as the 'From Arms to Farms' programme, was made up of two primary components.

The winner

The first was meant to recruit returned Moro combatants for agricultural education programmes. These were established in cooperation with several government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and partners in the private sector. With the help of all partners, local authorities in Kauswagan were able to create and implement a comprehensive strategy that contributed to the agricultural and economic development of the municipality, while also facilitating the reintegration of former combatants.

Q&A with rebel returnee

What did you learn from participating in the project?

“Besides technical know-how on organic farming, the project taught me that differences between the Muslim and Christian community are not the real causes of the conflict and that we can actually live together in harmony if we can change our war-orientated mind-set into a more peaceful one. The real problem has been poverty and the need for food, which the government failed to address until Rommel Arnado became mayor of Kauswagan.”

What impact did the Arms to Farms Programme have on your life?

“Thanks to the project, I now have an income from farming and there is no reason left for me to fight the government. We are no longer advocates of war but of peace and instead of firearms we now carry farming tools. Also, as a Muslim, I feel like I am no longer looked at as a stranger by the Christians in the community.”

“This initiative shows what can be achieved by focusing interventions on the root causes of violence. It takes courage to bridge divisions and transcend the symptoms of violence to address deeper and less obvious causes, and in its leadership the municipality of Kauswagan has displayed this courage.”

Aisa Kirabo Kacyira
Deputy Executive Director,
UN-Habitat

The second component's objective was to bridge the division between the Islamic Moro population and the Christian community. To this end, so called peace path workshops were organized, which invited prominent members of the communities to join the room with each other and challenged them to break down walls and eliminate biases and prejudices. Through these workshops, the façade that tensions were the inevitable result of religious differences rather than socio-economic grievances, was dismantled.

The project started to show results quickly and after some years, war-torn Kauswagan was transformed into an area of relative peace and agricultural and economic development. When the Philippine government and the MILF signed a peace agreement in 2014, Kauswagan could therefore make a quick start on its road to recovery, contributing to sustainable peace. As of today, religiously or ethnically motivated crimes rarely occur anymore, while the municipality has seen a strong drop in poverty levels, as a result of a sharp increase in agricultural productivity.

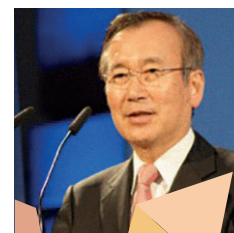
Jury opinion

“The programme presented shows clear commitment from both the local government and the mayor himself, and courageous leadership in the face of inequality. Participation of the population is strong and the initiative is inclusive in its approach. The very specific context of the project makes it replicable on a more abstract level, as a conceptual approach that requires tailoring to different contexts. The municipality used what is perhaps the most important tool that it had available: fair treatment in terms of human rights, jobs and opportunities. What impressed the jury most is that the local government of Kauswagan managed to bridge the relation between peace and socioeconomic development by looking beyond the symptoms of conflict and addressing the root causes of violence. As the mayor of Kauswagan put it: “without food there can be no peace”. By alleviating poverty and increasing food security, the local government worked towards an inclusive peace that is more than the absence of violence but encompasses equality in socioeconomic opportunities. Combined with the strong impact of the project on multiple levels, this approach makes the municipality of Kauswagan the winner of the first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize.”



Tadatoshi Akiba

As the former mayor of Hiroshima Dr. Akiba has considerable experience in communicating the dire realities of atomic bombing and has brought great improvements to municipal policies in the field of fiscal health, transparency, citizen service and youth violence. During his tenure as president of the Mayors for Peace Network Dr. Akiba has contributed greatly to the expansion of the network which presently has 6,991 member cities in 161 countries. Dr. Akiba has held commendable positions as Chairman of the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI), President of AFS Japan, in addition to a post as a Professor by Special Appointment at Hiroshima University. For his commitment to peace building Mr. Akiba has received many international prizes including the prestigious Ramon Magsayay Award, the Buddha International Peace Award and the Otta Hahn Peace Medal.



Former Mayor of Hiroshima

“While I served as President of Mayors for Peace, an organization of cities around the world that work together to abolish nuclear weapons and accomplish world peace, I came to feel that there is a worldwide paradigm shift going on that would make our objective important and possible. To put it simply, we are moving into the Age of Cities after the mentality of the previous era, the Age of Nation-States, has created so many problems without being able to solve them. One such problem is, of course, the existential threat caused by nuclear weapons. Although there is not enough space to explain the paradigm shift in detail, let me just point out that cities do not possess armed forces. In order for us to create a truly peaceful world, we need to work from the local government level and the grass roots level upward to the nation-states, to impose the people’s will and the wisdom born from their everyday struggle for survival upon the “establishment” of the world. The City of Bogota Peace Prize is a symbol that this process is taking root in local governments all over the world.”

Lakhdar Brahimi

Lakhdar Brahimi (1934) is among the most prominent human rights and peace advocates in the world. Building on a commendable array of experiences in international relations, he has spent the later part of his career as the head of many UN missions to countries facing war or conflict.

After serving as Algeria’s ambassador to respectively Egypt and the United Kingdom and Diplomatic Advisor to the Algerian President, he headed an Arab League mission to Lebanon in order to negotiate an end to the civil war, which was realized through the Taif Agreement in 1989.

From 1993 onwards, he headed numerous UN missions to Africa and the Middle East, most notably Afghanistan and Iraq, as UN Special Envoy. As such, he played an important role in establishing the interim government of Iraq in 2004. From 2012 to 2014, Brahimi faced the challenge of negotiating peace in Syria, as UN and Arab League Special Envoy.

Due to his impressive credentials in the name of peace, he became a member of The Elders, a group of prominent world leaders working for global peace in 2007. Of course, these very same credentials also made him an honourable member of the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize Jury.



Former Joint Special Representative of the UN and the Arab League in Syria, former UN Special Envoy in Iraq, former UN Special Representative in Afghanistan

Wim Deetman

As the former mayor of The Hague Mr. Deetman has been instrumental in positioning the city in the international peace and security domain leading to the International Criminal Court being situated in The Hague. Mr. Deetman was a member of the Dutch Lower House and later held his position of Minister of Education during three consecutive cabinets after which he returned to the Lower House to become its president for a period of seven years. He then became Mayor of The Hague from 1996 to 2008. Wim Deetman is currently a distinguished member of the Dutch Council of State and chairperson of the Kloosterkerk church in The Hague. The Wim Deetman Foundation has been established in his name providing students from developing countries the chance to pursue a master's degree in the area of peace and justice in The Hague.



Former Mayor of The Hague,
former chair of the UCLG
Committee on City Diplomacy

"I am pleased to be able to partake in the jury of this important award. This is an initiative that I have supported and witnessed growing since my time as Mayor of The Hague and Chair of the UCLG Committee on City Diplomacy, when we hosted the first World Conference on City Diplomacy in 2008. The theme of peace and justice is close to my heart, and stands rightly so at the core of the agenda of the city of The Hague. In concert with efforts at the national and international level, local governments have a strong responsibility in contributing to peace at the local level, when the safety of their citizens is threatened. The UCLG Peace Prize, advocating this role of local governments and highlighting inspirational examples, has my fullest support."

Rafael Grasa

Rafael Grasa is former President of the International Catalan Institute for Peace. He works as a Professor in International Relations at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Professor Grasa has been Vice-Rector of the University for four years and Secretary General from 2002 to 2009. In addition, he is co-coordinator of the Master in International Relations, Security and Development. In his research, Professor Grasa focuses on the resolution and transformation of conflict, non-military aspects of security and human security, decentralized governance and prevention of violent behaviour. He has published numerous books and articles on these topics. Besides his academic work, Grasa has conducted missions in election observation, conflict resolution and assessment, and peacebuilding, in Central America, Mexico, Latin America, East- and North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe.



Former President of the
International Catalan Institute
for Peace

"In the past 25 years, the world has changed considerably. The agenda, actors and interactions of conflict have been transforming and the classic international system with its rather precise borders and rules of function is subject to change. This strongly affects the areas of security and armed conflict management, and the role of cities and local authorities in this regard is perhaps more important than ever. I am pleased to be able to form part of the jury of this important award, and encourage the collection and exchange of best practices in working for building peace at the local government level."



Aisa Kirabo Kacyira

Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira of the Republic of Rwanda is the Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General for UN-HABITAT providing critical leadership to promote sustainable cities and human settlements globally. Previously, Dr. Kacyira held various government positions including as Governor of the Eastern Province of Rwanda, Mayor of Kigali and an Elected Member of Parliament and has been awarded the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award in 2008 as Mayor of Kigali in recognition of the city's high level of cleanliness, greenness, safety and sustainability and affordable housing initiatives, combined with pro-urban employment opportunities. Dr. Kacyira is also a former President of the Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities, President of the Eastern African Association of Local Government Authorities, and Vice President of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa.



Deputy Executive Director,
UN HABITAT

"I believe that the Peace Prize is important because it recognizes the fact that local governments have an important role to play in ensuring safe and inclusive sustainable urbanization. As the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, where we are mandated to support safe and sustainable inclusive urbanization, and also as former mayor, the Peace Prize Jury is important to me more so because of the role local government leadership plays in ensuring local governance, peace building, prevention and management of conflict, which is key to enabling national and international efforts in conflict prevention and management. I believe the award will motivate leaders to ensure safety in cities and continually implement the SDGs inclusively to ensure specific support to those most in need - children, women and youth in particular ."

Tarik Kupusović

Dr. Kupusović (1952) has been the Lord Mayor of Sarajevo during the second half of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the siege of Sarajevo (1994-96). As President of the country's Association of Towns and Cities he has established close relations with many cities and mayors of the world to restore the workings of local autonomous government in his country's devastated cities. In addition to his political experience, Dr. Kupusović has a strong academic record. Dr. Kupusović is a Professor in Fluid Mechanics, Hydraulics and Water Management at the University of Sarajevo and is Director of the Hydro-Engineering Institute Sarajevo. As team leader and coordinator of many local and international water and environment projects Dr. Kupusović has published around 200 scientific and professional papers.



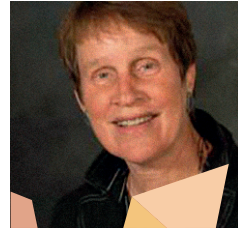
Former Mayor of Sarajevo

"Cities are becoming bigger, more and more people live in them, they are becoming more and more populous. Nowadays cities are coming closer to each other, but this happens more through IT than physically - information as the trigger for any action is practically instantaneous. Cities may be historical and contemporary centers of civilization, culture, tolerance, and economy, but they are also the source of organized crime, conflict of every kind, and of war. Spread of conflicts and their resolution depend on local elites, intellectuals, and leaders. Such are empirical facts of the 1992-96 war in Bosnia, as well as of all recent wars, including the one in Syria. I am therefore convinced that conflicts can be prevented and victims of ongoing ones considerably reduced by means of political wisdom conceived in urban environments. That is how I understand the message of the Peace Prize: promotion of affirmative activities by honest people on the local level, people who set example for others."

Janny Vlietstra

Throughout the years, Ms. Vlietstra has held many positions that make her well-suited as a jury member for the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize. In her long career in local governance in the Netherlands, she has been mayor of several municipalities. Furthermore, she has been member of the Senate of the Netherlands from 2011-2015. As Vice-President of the Platform for Municipal Peace Policy she was instrumental in establishing contacts with Eastern European cities in the early 1990s, and in developing a close relationship with the city of Srebrenica after the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ms. Vlietstra has been a member of the International Advisory Commission of the Committee on European and International Affairs of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. Throughout her career and to this present day, she has been involved in many other political and advisory positions, for example as Deputy Member of the Committee of the Regions and as member of the Supervisory Board of the Talent for Governance programme of the Hague Academy for Local Governance, providing training programmes to talented civil servants from developing countries.

"I feel privileged to be part of the Jury, as I am convinced of the important role that local governments can play as promoters for a more peaceful world. To begin, within one's own municipality, through initiatives that build bridges between opposing population groups. By improving living conditions for all citizens. And by bringing natives and newcomers together and dismantle prejudices. But also internationally, by linking cities, and promote the exchange of experience and citizens. Peace work is not only a task for governments. Citizens and local governments can contribute from the bottom up. As a former mayor, I have worked to achieve this through the Platform for Municipal Peace Policy and by engaging in intensive relationships with cities in Poland, Russia and with Srebrenica."



Former Senator in the Netherlands, former Vice-President of the Platform Municipal Peace Policy



REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF THE UCLG PEACE PRIZE

By Peter Knip, Director of VNG International

The editors of this publication invited me to describe the history of UCLG's Peace Prize for local governments. Taking into account that I have been involved in municipal attention for issues of conflict and peace since 1977 and that I have actively promoted the establishment of the UCLG Peace Prize, I was pleased to be able to give a positive answer to their request. However, this is not a balanced study of the origin and the complex development of the Peace Prize and its context. It is rather a personal note in which I would like to share some reflections on the history of the UCLG Peace Prize with the interested reader. If you don't mind I will follow my personal story from the past 40 years.

Arising Awareness

It was in the '70s of the last century that the idealism of building a better world seized my heart. As a youngster I felt attracted to the movement against apartheid in South Africa, the work for human rights in the world, the resistance against nuclear energy and the aid for developing countries. Amongst all the issues, however, the initiative of the Interchurch Peace Council (IKV – nowadays merged with Pax Christi into PAX for Peace) in the Netherlands in 1977 to resist nuclear weapons and to align with democratic opposition in Eastern Europe had the strongest appeal to me. The view that foreign policy should not be formulated by a small elite but by all citizens and that my own local politicians should feel responsible for international issues like peace and development inspired me. At the age of 21, as chair of a collective of peace organisations in my hometown Delft, I visited our mayor to discuss the question whether Delft should decide to become a nuclear free local authority as token of resistance against the conflict between the East and the West.

Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities

Since the rise of the national states in the 18th century the role of towns in foreign policy, in questions of war and peace, vanished. However, even before the First World War, individual cities called on central governments to protect human civilisation against the atrocities of war. Probably the first example which convincingly underlined that local governments can and should play a role in peace building and conflict resolution in a world dominated by national states was the massive twinning movement, the 'jumelages', after the Second World War. Initiated by citizens in France and Germany municipalities in both countries, soon followed by municipalities all over Europe, linked with each other in order to seek reconciliation and overcome the deep wounds of the war. The second wave of international attention in the '60s and '70s of the last century was clearly focussed on poverty reduction in developing countries; active local solidarity groups knocked on the door of the municipalities and initiated actions to support the development of people in other countries. This was immediately followed by a third wave of concern amongst civilians in many countries about the East-West conflict and the nuclear arms race by the end of the '70s and '80s. Local governments together with citizens initiatives tried to break down the images of the enemy and to reach out to opposition groups by establishing linkages with local governments behind the so-called Iron Curtain. Grassroots activism in the Southern Pacific, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Canada, the United States and Western Europe resulted in decisions by thousands of municipal councils to declare themselves a nuclear free zone. One of the first was the city of Manchester in the UK in 1980; the city took the initiative to start the Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities movement as well. In The Netherlands, the first municipality that decided to call itself 'nuclear free' was Hellevoetsluis in 1981, soon followed by 200 other Dutch cities, including my hometown Delft. In 1982 "Mayors for Peace" was established by the mayor of Hiroshima which strengthened the attention for nuclear disarmament even further.

First National Conference on Municipal Peace Policies in The Netherlands

Although one might argue that nuclear free decisions were just a kind of 'tokenism', it was a period in which the discussions about the role of local governments as actors of peace deepened. The understanding grew that local governments as tier of government closest to the citizens could play an important role in creating a culture of peace. Instruments like awareness raising, peace education, multi-stakeholder dialogue, bridging gaps between groups through sports and culture, reintegration of combatants in society, international cooperation, twinning and political statements can be used to shape this role.

Being still very active in this peace work in my free time, both in my hometown Delft as well as nationally, the Mayor and deputy mayors of the city of Delft asked me to join them during the second international congress of the Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities Movement in Perugia, Italy, 1986.

Together with deputy mayor Arie Pieter Hoogendam and my colleague activist Rens Looij, I participated in this conference where we met with colleagues from other Dutch cities like Rotterdam, The Hague, Deventer, Zaanstad, Wageningen and Enschede. In close cooperation with Dion van den Berg of the IKV we took the initiative to organise the first national congress on municipal peace policies in The Netherlands. With the support of the mayor of Delft at that time, Huib van Walsum, I organised this conference in 1987. To our utter surprise representatives of more than 100 Dutch municipalities attended the conference which resulted in the acceptance by the national Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) to house this initiative if sufficient Dutch local governments would be willing to support such an initiative financially. After a campaign supported by the Dutch 'Perugia cities', the Network for Municipal Peace Policy (PGV) was established with more than 140 municipal paying members in the beginning of 1989, chaired by mayor Huib van Walsum. Employed by the VNG, I became the first secretary of this PGV with the aim to strengthen and deepen the role of local governments as actors of peace and to investigate what the role of national associations of local governments in this field could look like.



Peter Knip at the congress in Perugia, 1986

Fall of the Berlin Wall

In the autumn of 1989 the Berlin Wall, for many people unexpectedly, collapsed which brought an end to the period of Cold War between East and West. An impressive number of local governments in former Eastern European countries twinned with local governments in Western Europe. On behalf of the Network for Municipal Peace Policy I could initiate with -initially lukewarm- support from the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) the first East-West town twinning congress hosted by the city of Rotterdam in 1990. The congress was an expression of wide-spread interest of municipalities and active citizens groups in Western European countries to contribute to a peaceful Europe and to support the building up of democracy in the former communist countries. In many countries, including The Netherlands, active town twinning platforms of cities having linkages in the same countries were organised in order to exchange experiences and to discuss the best approaches. From my position as secretary of the Municipal Peace Platform I could actively contribute to this development and succeeded to get access to financial support from the Dutch government and later on from the European Commission to offer professional assistance to the reform in Easter Europe.



The Association of Netherlands Municipalities came quickly to the conclusion that they had to play a role in issues like development cooperation and promotion of peace and democracy and decided already in 1991 that such issues should be part of the regular attention of the VNG. They asked me to take on this role as coordinator of international work of the VNG. From this position, enabled by the global developments and with the support of an increasing number of young colleagues and colleagues in Dutch municipalities, we were able to intensify our work with a growing amount of financial support for international projects. In order to cut a long story short, this was the beginning of what is nowadays VNG International, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities which is involved in projects and programmes of strengthening democratic local government in more than 40 countries in the world.

No End of History

The hope that peace and cooperation would be the future of the world after the end of the Cold War, clearly expressed by the famous article of Francis Fukuyama 'The End of History?', vanished already soon with the awful war that broke out in former Yugoslavia in the early nineties, the failure of the peace process between Israel and Palestine, and other ongoing regional wars in other parts of the world. Again many local governments in Europe embarked on activities to support local governments in various former Yugoslavian countries. Other municipalities increased their cooperation in support of a peaceful solution between Israel and Palestine often in the framework of larger networks like the Municipal Alliance for Peace in the Middle East (MAP) in which my VNG actively participated and the European Network of Local Authorities for Peace in the Middle East (ELPME) in which the Italian Co-ordination of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights as well as the United Towns Organisation in France played a major role.

Against this background of ongoing concern about violence and war in the world it was logical that municipal attention for peace and conflict resolution became a priority on the agenda of the new world organisation of local governments, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), after the merger between the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the World Federation of United Towns and Cities (FMCU-UTO) and Metropolis in 2004. UCLG decided to establish a special political Committee on City Diplomacy, Peace Building and Human Rights in 2005 which should: 'Advise the world organisation on issues of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction in order to contribute to the creation of a stable environment in which the citizens can live together in peace, democracy and prosperity'. Wim Deetman, mayor of The Hague and chair of VNG, became the first president and inspiring leader of this Committee.

First World Conference on City Diplomacy of UCLG

The new world organisation brought various strong networks promoting local governments as actors for peace together. The Italian Co-ordination of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights, the Province and City of Barcelona, United Towns Organisation France, the Canadian Association of Municipalities (FCM) and my VNG joined hands to raise the attention for this city diplomacy role of local governments. It led to preparatory conferences in Perugia and Barcelona in 2006 and 2007. With strong support of VNG and in cooperation with IKV/Pax Christi and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict we succeeded to organise the first World Conference on City Diplomacy of UCLG in The Hague, June 2008. This successful and impressive congress with several representatives of local governments from war-torn countries like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Liberia, Rwanda, Israel and Palestine resulted in 'The Hague Agenda on City Diplomacy', a document with concrete suggestions for further action. Amongst the different suggestions for further action in The Hague Agenda the idea of a World Peace Prize for local governments was mentioned.



World Conference on City Diplomacy, the Hague, 2008

History of the Peace Prize

A long way to go

From my perspective the intensity of municipal attention for the specific role of local governments in building peace decreased in the past decade, despite the process which led to the City Diplomacy Congress in The Hague. At the same time we can observe a more general trend of inward looking local government in Western countries in those years. Although it is difficult to judge as a contemporary, I am inclined to say that the economic crisis, budget cuts in local government, growing security problems and the rise of more populist politics mark a slow but steady shift in municipal orientation from solidarity to economic self-interest and mutual gain.

As a consequence some of the founding fathers of the World Conference on City Diplomacy are no longer able to field the strength that they showed in the past, building on the commitment of their members, like the Italian Co-ordination of Local Authorities for Peace. Although I felt very much attracted by the idea of launching a Peace Prize for local governments that invest in conflict resolution and peace building, I had to admit that also my organisation VNG International did not have the funds to realize such an ambitious plan. Within UCLG, where we merged the Committee on City Diplomacy, Peace Building and Human Rights with the Committee on Development Cooperation chaired by the Canadian Association of Municipalities (FCM), our VNG politicians, in particular Mayor Ton Rombouts of 's-Hertogenbosch, and myself continued to keep the idea of a Peace Prize alive. With the support of FCM and the Barcelona Region we worked on the political acceptance of a formal Peace Prize by the World Council of UCLG over the years. The good cooperation with the UCLG World Secretariat and in particular Emilia Sáiz has been instrumental in achieving this institutional anchoring. It was, furthermore, thanks to the perseverance, networking capacity and creativity of my young colleague Renske Steenbergen, with support from other colleagues like Arthur Wiggers, and more recently with the positive energy of Daan Stelder that we succeeded to materialize the Peace Prize.

Both PAX, with the energetic support of Dion van den Berg, and the Barcelona Region, through the very constructive backing of Arnau Gutiérrez, continued to be crucial partners in the preparation towards the first Peace Prize edition; both in the elaboration of the first terms of reference and in making available funds for the implementation. I also need to mention Jeremy Smith, former Secretary General of CEMR, who developed the first action plan for the Prize.

A decisive factor, however, for the Peace Prize was the moment when in 2015 the City of Bogotá committed at the political level to the realisation of the first edition of the Peace Prize. This ensured that within the UCLG World Congress in 2016, the Peace Prize had an important podium and sufficient visibility. The National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds) in The Netherlands decided to make available the actual amount of the Prize, which has been awarded to the municipality of Kauswagan (Philippines) of which you can find more information in this publication.

Further to the success of this first edition, it has become clear to me that there is still both a lot of interest in and a need for this Prize. An increasing number of people understand that local governments can play a crucial role in prevention of conflicts and peace building. The Prize helps us to put the role of local governments in peacebuilding more clearly on the agenda. I am proud that what I have been working on for almost forty years has resulted in this first international Peace Prize. The next edition will hopefully take place back to back with the UCLG World Congress in 2019; we will continue to work towards securing the financial means as well as committing the World Organisation and its members to maintain the issue of city diplomacy towards creating a culture of peace at the local level high on the agenda.

Peter Knip

Director VNG International



INTERNATIONAL MUNICIPAL COOPERATION FOR PEACE: an account by Janny Vlietstra

When I was the mayor of the Dutch town of Winschoten, I received a delegation of the municipality of Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on the request of Dutch peace NGO PAX (formerly IKV) in June 2002. It was their first visit to the Netherlands since the enclave fell in 1995 in the presence of a Dutch UN force (Dutchbat), during the civil war in Bosnia. That same year, in November, I visited Srebrenica. Most of its population had fled to Sarajevo and Tuzla.

It was a desolate city where no house was undamaged and water and electricity facilities were ill-functioning. Only a handful of mostly elders had come back because they wanted to live out their lives in their hometown. Other than that it was mostly inhabited by Bosnian Serbs, most of whom were refugees themselves. The city was 'run' by international aid organizations who all announced their upcoming departure to crises elsewhere in the world.

Recently, a new mayor had returned from Sarajevo, who tried to improve the lives of the population of Srebrenica. Most of the aid organizations barely took him serious and strengthening the local government was largely absent on their agendas. The aid organizations seemed unaware that for the sake of continuity a strong local government would be necessary once they had left.

At the end of the visit, the mayor urged us not to abandon the city. Naturally, I promised him to commit our knowledge and expertise for the revival of municipal governance of Srebrenica. This has led to a long period of intensive collaboration, through which many activities have been developed aimed at strengthening the local government. Civil servants, councillors, youth workers, firemen, teachers and many other experts travelled to Srebrenica to share their knowledge and experience. People from Srebrenica were trained both in their own city and in the Netherlands.

Other organizations joined in with their own activities. For example, the Watercompany Groningen committed itself for a number of years to improve water facilities. Another example with which our municipality connected is the so called Flower Project. This was a project for and by surviving relatives, that combined psychosocial care, education and economic development. From the 'Rose City' of Winschoten, hundreds of rosebushes and thousands of tulip bulbs were sent to Potocari, a village within the Srebrenica municipality. Women were educated and instructed by municipal gardeners so that they could create a livelihood from flowers.

Crucial in our cooperation was the role of PAX, as they supported the many exchanges. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs also played an important role and facilitating this link.

We were always looking to link up with other initiatives like that of the Memorial Centre of the former WWII concentration camp of Westerbork, which organized meetings between Dutchbat veterans and survivors from the war, and develops teaching material regarding this topic, and uses its expertise to develop a Memorial Centre in Potocari.

I experienced that by sharing knowledge, experience and networks, municipalities can be of high added value as promoters of peace in post-conflict situations elsewhere in the world.



Janny Vlietstra with the Mayors
of Srebrenica and Heusden

Palmira: music and dance as drivers of peace

Palmira is a city in western Colombia, known for its sugarcane cultivation. Unfortunately, it is also known as one of the most dangerous cities in the country, due to poverty, high crime rates and much violence. While better policing is meant to fight crime, targeted community interventions are necessary to prevent the city's youth from getting trapped into a life of crime and violence in the first place. A young project called *Palmira tu Voz es Paz* ('Palmira your Voice is Peace), uses the power of music to achieve this.



A dance performance for the *Palmira tu Voz es Paz* project

Background

Palmira is a fast growing city at the heart of the country's sugar industry. After 2010, when the municipality's population passed 300,000, the situation in the city deteriorated.. High poverty levels fed criminal activity and within a few years the city's marginalized had formed hubs of drug trafficking and addiction. In this context, violence and homicide rates went through the roof, as local gangs started to crowd the streets and fight each other over territory.

Semana, one of the country's most influential magazines, classified Palmira as the eighth most dangerous city in the world and the most dangerous in Colombia per number of inhabitants, above Bogota, Medellin and Cali. Although gang violence affects the lives of many of the city's citizens, the primary group of victims has been children and adolescents, as they get drawn into violent lifestyles centred around drug trafficking, and their already fragile futures are put at risk.

The project

The *Palmira tu Voz es Paz* project was initiated at the beginning of 2016. It aims to use urban music as a way to raise young people's awareness of the importance of living together peacefully and promoting friendly relations. Furthermore, it aims to show them that this can make a valuable contribution to their personal development and to encourage them to turn their backs on drugs, hate and violence. The project is centred around a music competition that aims to promote self-expression through song and dance, among the children and young adults in the most marginalized areas of the city. The competition puts a strong emphasis on positivity and the participants are stimulated to let themes such as peace, family and a life free of crime into their music. It has separate competitions for children, young people and adults, in various urban music categories.

"Palmira, tu Voz es Paz is a promising project that encourages the younger population to develop their talent for music and sports, for the benefit of a peaceful society."

Janny Vlietstra
Former VP of the Platform
Municipal Peace Policy



The competition lasts for six months. During the first few months, the project organizes all kinds of social activities for children and young adults to participate in, such as sports activities or the donation of school equipment. The project uses psychologists to improve family relations, which are crucial for community social life. There are prizes and presents for participating children and youth. During the second phase, qualification rounds are accompanied by cultural activities, such as painting sessions by graffiti-artists. In this stage, the project was also able to enroll some 50 children and young adults into the local culture institute, for free training in self-expression through music and dance.

Although the project initially had trouble to find support and acquire the necessary resources, good management and resilience allowed the project to continue. Fortunately, the initiative was received with much enthusiasm within the target communities, and the project could increasingly count on the support of the Municipal Council. Over time, more and more departments of the local authorities started to contribute to the project, allowing it to grow into an indispensable part of the city's effort at improving its living conditions.

Now, the competition is supported by the police force and the army for security and a team of psychologists and the city's social service, that contribute to the social aspects of the project, such as improving the familial relationships of children and reintegration. Due to its large success, the project has also been able to attract famous Colombian artists to perform, and act as a source of inspiration.

Although not the sole work of the project, the number of violent deaths and robberies is decreasing significantly. Action taken by Mayor Jairo Ortega Samboní and his working group achieved a 40% reduction in murders during his term in office and a 25% reduction in robberies and extortion. Approximately 400 young people have been rescued from drug addiction through participation in sporting, artistic or recreational activities, accompanied by psychological treatment and monitoring to achieve a genuine change. There is no doubt that *Palmira tu Voz es Paz* contributed to a great extent to making Palmira a more peaceful city.

"Palmira's success stems not only from their understanding of the power of music that generates peaceful motivations in all of us but also from involving all walks of life at the level of their daily lives in the project. Palmira has woven a peaceful and beautiful piece of cloth with music as warp and everyday lives of citizens as woof."

Tadatoshi Akiba
Former Mayor of Hiroshima

Jury opinion

"Palmira municipality has sent a strongly motivated delegation that radiated enthusiasm for their initiative. The music competition embodies a positive approach, preemptively focusing on the potential of youth and encouraging them to discover their talents, because, finally, competition is a tool for empowerment and particularly cooperation and solidarity. It is a strong showcase of the way in which music and sports can be drivers for peace. The way in which the project is executed and promoted is very attractive. As the mayor put it, 'changing the chip in young people' by appealing to their talents to encourage them to contribute to a culture of peace, is very worthwhile. Participation of the community is strong, and so is the commitment of the municipality and its leadership. The impact of the project looks high, however the project is still rather young. As the project has started in 2016, it is difficult to already draw conclusions on its impact. The municipality is encouraged to apply again for future editions of the prize."

Peace Territories: an integrated approach by Canoas

Due to its very high crime rates – 70 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants – the Guajuviras district in the city of Canoas had become known as the ‘Brazilian Baghdad’. In 2009, public authorities and the police forces launched an extensive initiative in order to achieve a permanent reduction of violence. With the creation of a so-called ‘Peace Territory’ the programme achieved a 34% reduction in the number of violent deaths in the Guajuviras district during the first year. The participatory and social nature of the initiative as well as its replicability, contributed to the selection of Canoas as a finalist for the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize.



The Peace Territory sign in Guajuviras

Background

The town of Canoas is located in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil. The population is more than 320,000. The city's Guajuviras district came into being when the Canoas government gave permission for the construction of a residential area. However, before the apartment buildings were officially opened to inhabitants, squatters occupied the still uninhabited buildings. It became a neighbourhood with much poverty and where criminal activity could flourish, even after inhabitants were allowed in.

Implementation of the Municipal Public and Citizen Safety Policy in Canoas started in 2009 at the same time as the National Public and Citizen Safety Programme (PRONASCI). With this programme, the concept of ‘citizen security’ gained acceptance at the national level and was used to underpin municipal initiatives. Canoas created a Cabinet for Integrated Municipal Planning (GGI-M), the Municipal Security Council and the Public Security Observatory. They developed an initiative in order to bring down crime rates, which were at an extreme high at that point.

The project

In October 2009, the first Peace Territory was established in the Guajuviras district. The main objective of the project was prevention, by focusing on the causes of violence and crime. Additionally, public order and security strategies were implemented.

“The Culture of Peace is manifested as the self-esteem of the people. Education, employment and sociocultural activities are pathways to prevent violence and promote social integration. Canoas is on this path.”

Tarik Kupusović
Former Mayor of Sarajevo



In order to address the root causes of violence and crime, the project sought to promote social inclusion and participation, with a focus on women and young people, through social projects and by providing employment opportunities. Through projects like 'Women for Peace', Youth Homes and Community Justice Groups, the municipality aims to prevent violence using a differentiated approach. Also, community policing was introduced, which on the one hand strengthened the sense of community, and on the other helped in active fight against crime. This social component of the project aimed to increase the self-esteem of citizens and create positive relation between them and the community. As a consequence, they would be less likely to engage in criminal activity and violent behaviour.

A second component of the programme concerned the the clever use of intelligence and technology. The intelligence component relies on applied studies and territorial assessments produced by the Public Security Observatory to help guide the municipality's public policies on security. The police force's capacity was greatly enhanced with the help of applied studies and territorial assessments done by the Observatory, and the introduction of high-tech monitoring systems, such as closed circuit security cameras, an audio-monitoring system called the ShotSpotter which detects gunfire, alarm systems and software management.

Thirdly, the municipality of Canoas created an Integrated Municipal Planning Cabinet. Linking the work of public security agencies and the criminal justice system with other municipal policies, this joint development of the programme acknowledged that crime occurs due to a wide range of causes, and should not be seen as part of the penal system in isolation. For instance, the community patrols conducted by municipal police brings the policy into closer contact with residents.

The combined use of technology, intelligence and community policing also adhered to the citizens' call for transparency and so contributed to restoring trust between citizens and the judicial system and the local government.

The combination of fighting the root causes and increasing crime fighting capacities proved very successful, with a 34% decrease in the number of violent deaths in the first year already. In 2011, the second peace territory was established in the Mathias Velho neighbourhood. In the seven years that the Peace Territory project has been implemented, it has achieved remarkable results. Citizens have recovered their self-esteem, and the project has been successful in integrating security forces and making a connection between them and the residents. Between 2009 and 2016, there has been a 41.2% reduction in the number of violent deaths. The Peace Territories are currently being extended into other neighbourhoods as well.

"The establishment of the Peace Territory in Canoas shows very well the potential success that can come from an integrated and inclusive initiative. This commendable approach combining of community policing, technology and social work truly made Canoas a safer place."

Wim Deetman
Former Mayor of The Hague

Jury opinion

"The jury is impressed by the commitment displayed by the local government in Canoas and by the presenter himself. The context in which the approach has been developed was difficult. The city of Canoas indeed faced considerable challenges and followed up really well. The project is highly sustainable and the local government managed to make strong connections with civil society in its implementation. The impact of the initiative is very strong, though displayed more in quantitative than in qualitative terms. Diverse as it is, the project provides an integrated approach to urban peace and security. The approach is relatively a classic one, and thus limited in terms of innovation, however this makes the project highly replicable. This approach to peace and security can be applied in cities all over the world. We recommend a systematization and wide diffusion of the experience."

THE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES

Dion van den Berg, Senior Policy Advisor at PAX for Peace

Why does PAX, as a peace organization active in many conflict and post-conflict countries, support a peace prize for local governments? Well, we have been working with local governments for more than 35 years now, and to us it is clear that local governments have a huge potential for peacebuilding. That is largely due to the fact that they are closest to the citizens and have good opportunities to co-operate with citizens and civil society initiatives.



A Community Peace Dialogue supported by PAX for Peace

We can distinguish three dimensions or clusters of activities with regard to local government peace initiatives:

- The promotion of social cohesion, i.e. the improvement of the relationships between and among the various (ethnic, tribal or religious) communities in the local context
- The organization of a democratic social contract, i.e. the improvement of the interaction between the local government and the citizens. Transparency, inclusiveness, equality are some of the key principles in that respect.
- The dimension of the lobby at the level of the national government(s) and international bodies. This component can easily be overlooked, but if we really want to ensure that peace work of local governments has an impact, we should also facilitate the process that these best practices are seen and listened to, by the higher strata of government and by the various bodies and agencies of the international community.

Even amidst of violence and insecurity, we see that local governments can be what has been called 'islands of civility and peace', which can help pave the way out of conflict, towards sustainable peace, democracy and human rights.



Local governments logically have a central focus on the well-being of citizens, or in other words: a focus on human security. The principle of the human security is officially adopted by the United Nations, and it builds upon the fundamental human right that we call the 'freedom from fear'. It relates to the principles of the responsibility to protect (R2P) and the protection of civilians (PoC). Local governments embarking in peace initiatives in times of war and violence do nothing less than uphold the principles of fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law, that we have internationally agreed upon.



Community Peace Dialogue in Lotome, Uganda

In many cases though, we see that state security becomes more and more the dominant trend, and human or citizens security is side-lined. Clearly, citizens pay the price for this, and the price is high, extremely high. Look at countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, where state security has become more important than citizens security – in many of these cases also due to the focus on anti-terrorism. Yet, particularly in countries in the midst of war or widespread violence, a focus on human security and human dignity is crucial.

We see in our daily practice, how individual cities or groups of local governments, in cooperation with citizens and civil society, work for peace, democracy and human rights. Such bottom-up initiatives have a direct positive impact for the citizens, but they also serve a long-term interest. They constitute and help strengthen the potential for endogenous institutional change. Values of democracy and rule of law cannot be imposed from the outside, that is clearly what we must have learned from many of the past international interventions (either military or non-military). Such values must grow from within. It is not difficult to predict that if we fail to support the struggle for human dignity, human rights and democracy by citizens' movements and local councils in Syria, the process of reconstruction or revitalisation of the country will be sustainable nor democratic. No way can we build secure, peaceful, democratic countries without active involvement of local governments and its citizens. They have a great potential for peace and we need to acknowledge that and support that.

Sub-national governments have convincingly demonstrated that many global problems cannot be solved without their active involvement. That is clear from the role cities and local governments now play in the HABITAT process and the role attributed to them in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We see how cities take that responsibility, supported by UCLG and others, in the fields of among others poverty alleviation, sustainable economic development, gender equality and health-care.

We, as a peace movement, have a focus on SDG 16: to promote peaceful and inclusive societies and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. So much more can be done and should be done to support local governments in conflict and post-conflict countries who try to embark in peace work. We sincerely hope that the UCLG Peace Prize will help to make the potential of local government peace building initiatives more visible and will also spark more international solidarity and support for such initiatives, by cities worldwide and by the UCLG itself.

Dion van den Berg

Senior Policy Advisor at PAX for Peace

‘Think About Peace’: protecting a new generation in Cali

As the third largest city of Colombia, Cali receives many internally displaced persons (IDPs) that flee the countryside as a result of ongoing violent conflict. These victims of war consist of both civilians and demobilized combatants. Regardless of their role, however, they are likely to have suffered traumatic experiences, which can cause them to have difficulty in integrating in a new environment. A special peace advisory body of the Cali government aims to prevent this through three integrated projects.



War toys are traded for the ‘Disarm and Think About this Story’ booklet

Background

Ever since the start of violent conflict between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the military and several other armed groups, a steadily increasing number of IDPs have become part of Colombia’s reality. Cali is one of the largest cities in the country and as such attracts many of these IDPs. Once arrived in the city, building a new life can prove difficult due to poverty, high crime rates, because of traumatization or a combination of them. The large influx of IDPs into the cities also puts much pressure on the host communities. Often, socio-economic conditions are already troublesome in the parts of the city the IDPs end up in, and problems become aggravated.

Of the three largest cities in Colombia, Cali has had the highest homicide rate for a long time. Therefore, the government has since 2014 embarked on a comprehensive campaign to promote peace and reconciliation in the midst of gang violence. The specially installed *Asesoría de Paz*, a peace advisory body, presented three initiatives that were to contribute to the reduction of violence in the city of Cali.

The project

‘Disarm and Think About this Story’, is a publication in which children use creative writing to tell their stories about war. Children in vulnerable neighbourhoods of Cali were then asked to turn in their war toys in return for a copy of this publication. Writing and reading about experiences of violence was aimed at helping children to process traumatic experiences and raise awareness, while the ‘disarmament’, the handing in of war toys, would help them to leave images of violence behind. The publication reached many children and has been reprinted seven times, with the support of several other organizations.

“One thing that I like in particular about the Cali approach is that it has a strong gender component. Furthermore, by differentiating in age groups, this project contributes to peace by engaging young people of various ages with tailor-made programs, helping them evade violent and dangerous lifestyles and contribute to society.”

Aisa Kirabo Kacyira
Deputy Executive Director,
UN-Habitat



The second initiative, called 'I Was Not Born to Die', is a programme in which parents and other caregivers receive workshops that strengthen parenting skills, with a focus on peaceful solutions to inter-relational conflicts, from a gender-based and conciliatory perspective. This project identifies the ill-treatment of children by their parents, as an important cause for their engagement in a lifestyle of violence. Helping the parents means helping the children, reducing the chance of these children growing up to engage in violent behaviour.

Finally, the *Asesoria de Paz* organized 'Peace Facilitator' workshops. These workshops were aimed at training civilians to act as social workers within the vulnerable communities in the city and at schools, equipped with the skills to promote coexistence and conflict resolution, in order to relieve tensions within these communities.

The approach has had a significant impact and reach. In addition to the activities described above, the Cali government engaged in a media and social network campaign targeting the entire community. It approached the most vulnerable communities by handing out educational materials, including 3000 booklets, 5000 baseball gloves and 15,000 stickers with messages referring to peace. The 'Disarm and Think About This Story' booklets were distributed to families and schools in the most vulnerable areas (a total of 14,000 families), who have replicated what they have learned, linking up with the Colombian Agency for Reintegration, the Armed Forces and news outlets. The I Was Not Born to Die project reached 600 households, the members of which are now using their experience to build peace in vulnerable areas of the city. With the Peace Facilitators programme approximately 600 citizens were trained in the city's vulnerable neighbourhoods, empowering them to resolve conflicts, raise issues relevant to building peace and strengthen the peace territories.

Fortunately, all three projects are now integrated within the city's new development plan, for the 2016-2019 period. Because the project has a very long reach, with the ability to affect many households in the city of Cali, and with the recent historic peace deal with the FARC, projects like 'Think about Peace' can play a key role in reaching sustainable peace.

"Shabunda: The courage and commitment that carry this project are impressive. I feel a lot of sympathy for those implementing this project in such a challenging context."

Rafael Grasa
Former President of the
International Catalan
Institute for Peace

Jury opinion

"The initiative of the City of Cali displayed an inclusive approach to fostering peace. The presenter demonstrated true leadership and strong commitment, although there is some concern that the mayor was absent at the session. One aspect of the approach of Cali that the jury was particularly impressed by is that it has a specific angle on gender and youth empowerment. The project also differentiates for various age groups in its approach with children, which contributes to its quality. There is a strong human aspect to the initiative; the local government is capable of capturing the human process of building back peace. The impact is of the project is great, and clear more at the level of the people and children involved than in structural terms. The way in which training and the capturing of stories is set up has strong innovative qualities. It is a strong but rather young initiative, and would benefit from a more clear analytical and conceptual framework; this way it could grow further to be an excellent initiative. The project is replicable and can be of value to other cities as well."

Shabunda: dialogue and reconciliation through Permanent Peace Committees

The province of South Kivu, which borders Rwanda and Burundi, has been the stage of armed conflict for many years. In the absence of the DRC armed forces (FARDC), parts of the population mobilized to form a self-defense force called Raia Mutomboki, after remnants of the Interahamwe forces, who were involved in the genocide in Rwanda, moved into the region. However, one problem was substituted by the other, since no one could now control the self-defense force. In 2013, the Shabunda Territory established 'permanent peace committees', in an effort to return peace to the community.



The FARDC and local Raia Mutomboki forces reconcile

Background

Shabunda is a large Territory located in the remote rainforest of Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. After the genocide in Rwanda, remnants of Interahamwe forces fled into bordering DRC, gathering under the name Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). In the remoteness of the South Kivu province, the FDLR committed many atrocities against the local population, while the FARDC were largely absent. In order to protect itself, parts of the local population established a self-defense force, Raia Mutomboki, that successfully forced the armed group out of South Kivu. Once the military started to become more present in the region, a new conflict started between the FARDC and Raia Mutomboki, which had returned to the forest and began to commit abuses: killing, theft, rape, burning of the villages.

"An inspiring case that shows that strong and passionate leadership can contribute to peace and stability, even in the most difficult circumstances."

Janny Vlietstra
Former VP of the Platform
Municipal Peace Policy

The project

In order to stop the violence and restore state authority in the area, the local authorities in Shabunda established 'permanent peace committees'. Their aim was the demobilization of Raia Mutomboki and the reintegration of its fighters into society. Then, when this was achieved, the state could begin to restore its authority in the region. Ultimately, it was hoped that bringing back peace would, in the long term, contribute to ending the isolation of Shabunda and the surrounding area, and stimulate development.



To facilitate the demobilization of combatants, an awareness-raising campaign was initiated by the committees in the various levels of local government in the area. The committees, which actively encouraged combatants to lay down arms, were composed of representatives of the local administration, the government, civil society, and prominent local individuals and family members of Raia Mutomboki warlords. The awareness raising campaign was supported by the army and police, who used the local radio station to encourage disarmament as well. Especially the family-based awareness campaign proved to be successful as combatants were more sensitive to their message.

Because of the local context, the committees faced quite some challenges in their efforts to restore peace. However, the United Nations' mission to the DRC (MONUSCO) helped with the safe transportation of combatants who surrendered, and with the provision of food supplies. Another problem was the common practice that regardless of peace having returned, victims of atrocities would 'settle accounts' on their own terms, with the risk of a re-escalation of violence. To address this problem, the permanent peace committees actively encouraged peaceful reconciliation.

The initiative of the Territory of Shabunda was very successful. Despite difficulties, peace has been largely restored in most of the Shabunda area and many combatants have surrendered, including the leader of the Raia Mutomboki militia. Some applied to the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program. The awareness raising through the programme contributed to preventing the public from settling accounts with combatants who had surrendered. Although Raia Mutomboki has not been disbanded altogether, and fighting continues in some places, peace is certainly one step closer.

"What appeals to me most about this project is how the human aspect of building peace is captured. The focus on youth is very important, protecting future generations from a lifetime of violence."

Rafael Grasa
Former President of the
International Catalan
Institute for Peace

Jury opinion

"What made the territoire of Shabunda stand out for the jury was the extremely difficult context in which the local authorities had to operate. The part of Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is uniquely vulnerable, and the project has to deal with issues that are far greater than the powers that the local government has available. The presentation showed passionate and courageous leadership in bringing peace and stability to the region. The presenter managed to turn an emotional concept into a tangible action agenda. The project lead to very tangible results in terms of peace and security in the region. Participation in the project and the diagnostics of the problem are strong. The jury commends the good work done so far in the face of extreme challenges. The project would benefit from a more clear general framework and methodology which may require strengthening of the local government across the board. As a leader, the presenter has a lot of potential, while it is important that the project is also anchored strongly institutionally in the local government of Shabunda. Finally, the project makes a good connection between establishing peace and development."

Peace and Human Rights

PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS, A PRIORITY FOR THE REGION OF BARCELONA

By Josep Lluís Alay , Commissioner for International Relations of the Barcelona Region Council

Cities and municipalities play a crucial role in the prevention of conflicts and the construction of peace, since they are responsible for designing territorial policies and strategies which have a direct impact on their citizens. All over the world, wars and armed conflicts are unfortunately part of the everyday landscape. This is a situation which becomes routine, but has terrible consequences for the citizens and communities that are affected. Wars and violence are nothing new in our world, but that does not mean we will succumb to despondency at our inability to banish them from the planet once and for all. If violent conflicts are unfortunately an inherent part of humanity's history, it is no less true that trying to avoid them is fortunately also a part of the human condition.

Local governments play a crucial role in situations of generalised violence, because they not only facilitate and promote the cessation of conflict and the establishment of peace as a cohesive and socially sustainable element, but also because they must ensure the provision of basic services to citizens during the conflict. In situations of violent conflict and war, the frequent absence of state authority in a territory means that a large proportion of governmental responsibility falls directly on municipalities and territories.

For our part, in the Region of Barcelona, we firmly believe that human rights, and consequently peace, must be unceasingly protected. We are not satisfied with isolated initiatives, but instead we have made human rights the drive force of our territorial government's policies and international relations. There can be no truce in the struggle for the dignity of human beings. For this reason, one of the current strategic objectives of Barcelona Region Council is the promotion of human rights and the construction of peace on a global scale, and for this to be a distinguishing feature within its international action as a governmental institution. Indeed, this year we have established a new line of funding, to support projects related to the defence of human rights on a global scale.

It is essential that the local public agendas incorporate human rights at the centre of its public political sphere, since for too many people, it is still necessary to risk physical integrity and suffer from violence and humiliation to defend political freedoms, freedom of speech and expression, and freedom of conscience. In addition to those freedoms, we have more recently added other basic human rights, such as economic, social and cultural rights. All these rights must be taken into account to work for the eradication of violence from our world.

The promotion of peace on local public agendas must therefore be a priority in order to encourage and promote a society that is free of conflicts on a long-lasting basis. That is the spirit of this UCLG Peace Prize and the institutions promoting it, in the hope that it is the aim of the global society in which we live today.

Josep Lluís Alay

*Commissioner for International Relations
Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Region Council)*



ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE UCLG PEACE PRIZE

The 5th UCLG Congress and World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders took place in Bogotá, Colombia, from 12 to 15 October 2016. With over 3,500 delegates from local, regional and national governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and the international community, the event held the largest global gathering of local and regional leaders and their partners. This year's edition of the triennial event was titled 'Local Voices for a Better World'. The UCLG World Congress was the perfect stage for the award ceremony of the first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize. Jury members and finalists traveled from all over the world to Bogotá for this event, showcasing inspiring initiatives and rewarding the top contender.

This first edition of the award, titled the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize, was launched in Bogotá in November 2015. applications received displayed an exceptional diversity both in geographic and in thematic scope. Covering all continents, initiatives submitted ranged from cultural contests to awareness raising or disarmament and reintegration. The applications comprised projects that are being implemented in the context of near all-out war as well as projects that aim to preserve peace and prevent escalation of smaller scale violence. This sheer diversity reflects the broad range of responsibilities and opportunities that local governments have in this field, and the creativity that is being displayed around the world by those local governments that are making a real difference. Out of all initiatives that were submitted, the high-level jury of the Peace Prize was tasked with selecting the top contenders, which were subsequently invited to present their cases during the finals at the UCLG World Congress.

The finals: five top contenders

A special session during the UCLG World Congress was dedicated to the finals of the Peace Prize. The session was chaired by dr. Ton Rombouts as Vice-Chair of the UCLG Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy. Speakers representing the organizing partners of the award gave opening statements, highlighting the important role that local governments play in preventing conflicts, building bridges and dialogue after conflict and promoting a peaceful environment.¹

The selected finalists were given the opportunity to present their initiatives to the jury and audience. Ethnic Affairs Advisor Alberto Kopittke presented how the municipality of Canoas in Brazil combines initiatives in **technology, social inclusion and community policing** to address causes of violence in target areas. Next, Peace Advisor Rocio Gutierrez Cely outlined how the city government of Cali in Colombia organises **workshops for children and parents while training community mediators** and social workers to promote peace in the community. Mayor Rommel Arnado of Kauswagan municipality in the Philippines elaborated on his municipality's programme on **demobilization and reintegration of former rebel fighters**, engaging them in organic farming. Subsequently, Mayor Jairo Ortega Samboni showed how an **urban music competition** in Palmira, also in Colombia, helps raise young people's awareness of the importance of living together peacefully. Finally, Territorial Administrator Daniel Eloko described the efforts undertaken



Mayor Ton Rombouts opens the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize finals

¹ Mr. Josep Lluís Alay, Commissioner of International Relations at the Barcelona Provincial Council, outlined the crucial role that local governments play in situations of generalized violence, and why the Barcelona Region has decided to commit to this initiative. Dion van den Berg, Senior Policy Advisor at Dutch peace NGO PAX, described the great potential that he sees for local governments in this field of work. Subsequently, the commitment of the City of Bogotá to the prize and the relevance of its scope in relation to the peace process in Colombia was outlined by Angela Anzola, High Commissioner for Peace and Victims' Rights at the City of Bogotá.

Awarding the Prize

by the territory of Shabunda in the Democratic Republic of Congo, **creating permanent committees to establish peace**, restore government authority, reintegrate members of a local militia into the community and end the area's isolation. This publication features articles that provide further elaboration of these initiatives. After each presentation, the jury members present asked questions about these projects to the presenters. The inspiring speeches were accompanied by videos and images from project implementation, giving an impression of the strength and impact of these initiatives.

Jury meeting

The morning following the finalists' presentations, the jury representatives convened in a meeting chaired by Ton Rombouts. In Bogotá, the jury was represented by Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Prof. Rafael Grasa and Ms. Janny Vlietstra.² As delegation of the jury, they received the full mandate of the other jury members to choose the winner on their behalf.

The jury members expressed their strong appreciation of all finalists' projects and presentations. All five shortlisted local governments showcased inspiring examples of the diverse range of ways in which local governments can contribute to peacebuilding and peacemaking at the local level. Every single one of these local governments is therefore considered to be of the quality of a winner, and deemed worthy of recognition and support. The jury commended the local government staff involved for their resolve and creativity in contributing to the prevention and resolution of conflict, and fostering a culture of peace at the local government level. While all finalists displayed a quality that deserves the spotlight, the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize ultimately can only have one winning candidate. The jury selected the municipality of Kauswagan from the Philippines as the winner of this first edition of the prize. Courageous leadership and the ability to connect peacebuilding to socio-economic development are among the merits that motivated the jury decision to award the prize to Kauswagan.

Award ceremony

The UCLG General Assembly, the broadest Governing Body of UCLG, set the stage for the award ceremony of this first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize. Mayor of Istanbul and then UCLG President Kadir Topbaş introduced the ceremony, which was chaired by mayor Ton Rombouts. Rombouts emphasized the high quality of all shortlisted initiatives and the importance of recognizing the role that local governments have in building and preserving peace. Subsequently, he was joined on stage by Enrique Peñalosa, Mayor of Bogotá, to award the prize to Mayor Rommel Arnado of Kauswagan. The municipality of Kauswagan receives an award of €20.000 to strengthen their From Arms to Farms initiative. This financial award has been made possible due to a generous contribution of the Dutch National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds). Mayor Arnado will be invited to share this best practice in the Netherlands in 2017.



Josep Lluís Alay, Commissioner for International Relations for the Province of Barcelona, speaks at the finals

² Dr. Kacyira holds the position of Deputy Director at UN-Habitat and former mayor of Kigali. Ms. Vlietstra joined the jury as former Vice-Chair of the Network for Municipal Peace Policy. Prof. Rafael Grasa is the former President of the International Catalan Institute for Peace and an expert on, among other, the resolution and transformation of conflict and human security.





Mayor Enrique Peñalosa of Bogotá awards the prize to Mayor Rommel Arnado of Kauswagan

Looking forward

Although the winner of the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize has been selected and the prize has been awarded, the UCLG Peace Prize process is set to continue. This publication is intended to provide a well-deserved spotlight for the excellent finalists of this first edition, to highlight the important role that local governments have in this field, and to encourage the exchange of best practices and mutual learning. Furthermore, this will be a triennial award, connected to the UCLG World Congress. Inspiring as this first edition has been, the project will continue and work to collect even more good practices from around the world in the years to come.

Selection procedure

SELECTION PROCEDURE OF THE PEACE PRIZE

With the municipality of Kauswagan from the Philippines, the first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize has a strong winner. The process of determining the winner of this award has followed a number of pre-defined steps and evaluation criteria. Throughout the process, key decisions have been made by the high-level jury of the award. Supporting groundwork has been performed by the Evaluation Committee.

Step 1: applications

The UCLG Peace Prize works with a system of open applications using an application form. Local governments could either themselves apply to participate, or they could be nominated by others. Through an outreach campaign and support by its partners the Peace Prize secretariat attempted to reach as many local governments around the world as possible. This resulted in 46 applications spread across all continents.

Step 2: eligibility check

Once applications were closed, the Evaluation Committee first performed an eligibility check. In order to be eligible, an application had to fulfill the following criteria:

- The applicant is a subnational government that falls within UCLG constitutional definition of "local government"
- The initiative took place, at least partly, during the past 3 years
- The initiative is related to peace conflict prevention, peace building, or post-conflict reconstruction
- The initiative is free of political partisanship

Step 3: technical scoring

The applications that were eligible for the prize based on the criteria above, then received a technical scoring by the evaluation committee. This scoring took place based on the following pre-defined evaluation criteria, allowing for a maximum total score of 55 points:

- The impact and effectiveness of the initiative related to peace - 10 points
- The degree of difficulty, complexity or danger of the situation faced on the ground by those involved in the initiative - 10 points
- The broad replicability or learning potential of the initiative for other local governments in other conflict situations - 10 points
- The degree of demonstrated innovation or creativity shown in planning and implementing the initiative - 5 points
- The sustainability for the future of the initiative - 5 points
- The organisational commitment of the nominated local government to its work for peace - 5 points
- The contribution of the initiative to an ethic of, and practical steps for, human security as well as the promotion of the values of democracy, human rights and peace - 10 points



Step 4: jury verdict on shortlisted candidates

The scorings given by the evaluation committee served as supporting input for the jury. Taking the criteria and corresponding scorings into account, the jury was free to select any of the applicants for the shortlist based on their application forms. The five shortlisted candidates were invited to present their initiatives in the finals.

Step 5: presentations and Q&A during finals in Bogotá

At the UCLG World Congress in Bogotá, the five finalists presented their initiatives to the jury and audience, and answered questions posed by the jury. This gave them the opportunity to share more information about their initiative than they had already given in their application, and bring the initiative to life through video or photo material.

Step 6: jury meeting in Bogotá

The day after the presentations by the finalists, the jury members present at the Congress in Bogotá convened in a meeting behind closed doors to determine the winner of the award. Jury members who were not present in Bogotá had given the full mandate to the rest of the jury to make this decision. The meeting was chaired by Mayor Ton Rombouts as Vice-Chair of the UCLG Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy, and further support was provided by the UCLG Peace Prize secretariat. In deciding upon the winner, the jury took the evaluation criteria into account, as well as the initial applications and the presentations of the finalists.

Partners

PARTNERS OF THE UCLG CITY OF BOGOTÁ PEACE PRIZE

World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the world organization of local and regional governments and their associations, representing and defending their interests on the world stage. UCLG's network of members represents over 70% of the world's total population and is present in all world regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, the Middle East and West Asia, and North America; organized into 7 regional sections, it also has two specialized sections: Metropolis serving as metropolitan section and 1 Forum of Regions. UCLG's key priorities are the promotion of decentralization, good governance, sustainable development policies and innovation through city-to-city and association-to-association learning.



City of Bogotá

Bogotá, capital of Colombia, has an altitude of 2,625 meters above sea level. The Colombian capital is in constant change and progress, positioning itself as one of the most important cities in the region and an economic and cultural reference for Latin America. In 2015 the City of Bogotá decided to support this first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize. The city hosted the 2016 UCLG World Congress, which was the setting for the finals and award ceremony of the prize. From the second to the fifth of February 2017, Bogotá will also be hosting the Nobel Peace Laureates Summit. The recent and historic peace agreement that ends over three decades of violent conflict in Colombia made the City of Bogotá an even more fitting location for the award to take place.



Barcelona Region

The Barcelona Region Council is an intermediate local authority, which operates in the region of Barcelona, promoting the progress and welfare of its citizens. Its territory covers 24% of the total area of Catalonia and includes 311 municipalities, comprising over 5.5 million people. This institution offers technical, economic and technological support to municipalities, providing quality local services in a more homogeneous way throughout the territory. Following the idea of multilevel governance, it coordinates the municipal services and organizes public services beyond the municipal level. The working model is based on respect for local autonomy and networking between local governments and the Diputació de Barcelona, to build a joint action program in accordance with the principle of effective and efficient public action. Its aim is to share objectives, improve the level of well-being throughout the territory and improve the quality of services. The Regional Council is firmly committed to the internationalisation of local governments. For this reason, the International Relations Directorate works in the fields of development cooperation, at the European sphere and at international level, by means of the participation in international networks and initiatives, transnational projects and development cooperation and giving support to the municipalities to elaborate actions and internationalisation plans.



PAX

PAX brings together people who have the courage to stand for peace. It works together with people in conflict areas, meets with politicians and coordinates efforts with committed citizens. For more than 35 years now, PAX is actively involving local governments in its peace work. Special programs are developed and implemented to support local governments in conflict and post-conflict countries. Peace belongs to everyone. Everyone who believes in peace can contribute. PAX sets peace in motion. It calls on committed citizens to take part, for the sake of peace. PAX is a partnership between IKV (Interchurch Peace Council) and Pax Christi. In 2006, the two organisations merged under the name IKV Pax Christi. As of 29 January 2014, the new name of the organisation is PAX. PAX operates independently of political interests and is supported by a wide group of involved citizens, social organisations and churches.



VNG International

As the international co-operation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), VNG International houses the UCLG Peace Prize secretariat. The organization is committed to democratic local governance worldwide. It supports decentralization processes and facilitates decentralized cooperation. Building on existing experience, with high quality services such as benchmarks, taxation tools and handbooks, VNG International provides capacity building services to strengthen local governments, their associations, training institutes and decentralization task forces both in developing countries and countries in transition.



National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds)

The National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds) is a foundation from the Netherlands working on the theme of peace. Vfonds seeks recognition and appreciation for those who wear a uniform and serve under the Dutch flag anywhere in the world. Through awareness raising, education and publicity vfonds tries to win the respect and appreciation for everybody that is involved in international peace operations. In addition, to keep the memory of war alive, the foundation supports museums about the resistance movement in the Netherlands and memorial centres. The prizemoney for the UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize is provided by vfonds, and the foundation has provided funding to bring a representative of the winning local government to the Netherlands in 2017, to enable the sharing of best practices and inspire other local governments.





Supported by the:   European Commission

