

Peacebuilding and Civil Society

29 June 2009

Speakers' Biographies

Colette Samoya Kirura

Colette Samoya Kirura, born 1952, works for Bangwe and Dialogue, a peace organization. She is a pioneer. Politically active even in her student days, she was elected to parliament between 1982 and 1987, one of only two women. From 1992 to 1994 she served as Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, where she dedicated herself to the defence of human rights. She headed the Union des Femmes Burundaises, and in 1998 she founded the peace organization Bangwe and Dialogue. It unites women of Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, strengthening their power in the reconciliation process and providing education, especially for displaced people. Colette does not like to mention her ethnic affiliation.

Colette travelled several times back to her country, often at considerable risk, from 1987 to 1991 when she headed the Union des Femmes Burundaises. In 1998 she founded the Peace Organization BANGWE, which means 'Stop fighting!' in Kirundi. It is developed on the women's traditional mediation tasks when men fight. The organisation, uniting women from all social and ethnic backgrounds, meets alternatively in one of the three war-stricken countries of the Great Lakes Region to establish dialogue and cooperation.

It strengthens women's power in the peace process, using cultural tools such as poetry, song, theatre performances and works of art. The organization helps displaced people not only with material assistance, but education for women, young people and children.

Widowed in 1992 and mother of three children, Colette does all this work on a voluntary basis, including the difficult task of securing the funds for the organization. She says, 'I cannot stand violence, so I have to do something against it. Even as a child I could not tolerate injustice'. This is also the subject of her book, 'La Femme au regard triste'. (Read all on [1000peacewomen 2005](#)).

Eugenia Piza Lopez

Senior Advisor, Conflict Prevention and Recovery Team, UNDP - Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

Eugenia Piza Lopez is Eugenia has worked in post-conflict reconstruction; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); small arms; conflict prevention and gender issues for more than 20 years in Africa (Mozambique, Kenya, South Africa and Burundi), Central America (Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala), South East Asia (Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines) and in the UK (with a focus on EU policy). Previous to her

arrival in Geneva, Eugenia was the Team Leader for the Crisis Prevention and Disaster Preparedness Programme of the UNDP Pacific Sub-Regional Centre working on disaster preparedness, risk reduction, conflict prevention and recovery issues. Earlier on, she was the Senior Conflict Prevention Adviser for UNDP Indonesia (2002-2006) where she helped support the Peace Processes in Maluku, North Maluku, central Sulawesi and Aceh. Between 1997 and 2002, she was the Head of Policy and Advocacy for the non-governmental organization (NGO) International Alert where she developed a policy research and capacity building programme for NGOs and multi-lateral agencies on conflict and development, security sector reform and small arms. Eugenia also worked for Oxfam GB for nine years as Social Development Adviser for Asia, Head of the Gender and Development Unit and as Senior Policy Adviser in charge of policy advocacy towards the United Nations. Eugenia has an MPhil in Social Communication Research from The University of Leicester, a Masters degree in Sociology and Mass Communication from the University of Costa Rica, and a Diploma in the History of Art from the Royal School of Art at London University.

Roland Salvisberg, Deputy Head, Peace Policy, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Directorate of Political Affairs DP IV

Prior to his position: Programme Officer for Southeastern Europe, Political Affairs Division IV (Human Security)

Thania Paffenholz is a lecturer on the subject of peace, conflict and development at the Graduate Institute of International Relations and Development (HEID) in Geneva. She is a political scientist by training and received her Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Frankfurt, Germany (1996), focusing on the theory and practice of mediation and peacebuilding in armed conflict, using Mozambique as a case study. After working as a research fellow at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (1992-1996) she held a position as peacebuilding officer within the Delegation of the European Commission in Kenya (1996-2000). She joined the think tank Swisspeace in Berne, Switzerland from 2000-2003, holding the position of Director of the Center for Peacebuilding (KOFF).

Her main fields of research are: conflict analysis and peacebuilding; the conflict-development nexus and the role of development actors in peacebuilding; critical analysis of the role of the aid system in peacebuilding/conflict; international peacemaking strategies; and the role of civil society in peacebuilding.

Thania Paffenholz has edited and authored various articles and books on peacebuilding as well as on the role of development in conflict and peacebuilding. Her more recent book publications include *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide* (Lynne Rienner Publishers) and *Aid for Peace* (Nomos). Thania Paffenholz is also a trained mediator and facilitator, and has participated in several missions of the United Nations, as well as being an advisor to different national and international organizations. She was also member of the Board of the UN Lessons Learned Unit, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (1996-2002), Council Member of the International Peace Research

Association (1994-2000) and Member of the Executive Committee of the Peace Studies Section of the International Studies Association (ISA) (2004-2006).

Fields of Interest:

- Research Activities within the Centre for Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP): Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Project Director of a three year international research project: a cooperation of 12 universities and academic institutions
- International Cooperation in fragile, conflict countries: Project Director of three year applied research project
- The nexus between conflict, peacebuilding and development: ongoing research
- Evaluation in Peacebuilding: Finalised project, continuous application and advisory work

Selected Publications:

- *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide* (2001), Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder/Colorado (reviewed teaching book), with Luc Reyhler (French: *Construire la paix sur le terrain* (2000); *Mode d'emploi*, Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité (GRIP), Brussels.)
- "Understanding the development-conflict nexus and the contribution of development cooperation to peacebuilding" (forthcoming 2008), in: Sandole, Dennis et al: *Conflict Resolution : A Multidisciplinary Approach*, Routledge Taylor and Francis, London.
- "Towards Better Working in Conflict Zones: Introducing the Aid for Peace Approach" *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* (2005), Vol.2, No.2 (US-review journal) 2005, with Luc Reyhler, p. 4-22.
- *Promotion de la paix et coopération internationale: histoire, concepts et pratique* (2006), in: *Annuaire suisse de politique de développement*, Vol. 25, No.2, p. 19-45 (German version also published in: *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Entwicklungspolitik*, Vol. 25, Nr. 2, 2006), p.21-48.
- "13 Factors of Successful Mediation in Mozambique" (2001), in: Reyhler, Luc/Paffenholz, Thania, *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder/Colorado, p. 121.