



YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH ACTIVE
NONVIOLENCE AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Democratic Republic of
the Congo, Rwanda & Burundi



EMPOWERING NEW GENERATIONS

"To be true followers of Jesus today... includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence."

- Pope Francis, 2017
World Day of Peace
Message

Pax Christi International is a global Catholic peace movement with 120 member organisations worldwide that promotes peace, respect for human rights, justice and reconciliation throughout the world. Our main goal is to create and enhance cultures of peace and reconciliation.

Pax Christi International is committed to the practice of active nonviolence on the road to just peace, and promotes nonviolent practices and strategies among its members as a key common element. Dynamic processes of reflection and action are nurtured by a solid peace spirituality.

Building on the deep experience of local Pax Christi member organisations, active and committed regional networks forge initiatives within frameworks of local wisdom and expertise and from culturally pertinent visions.



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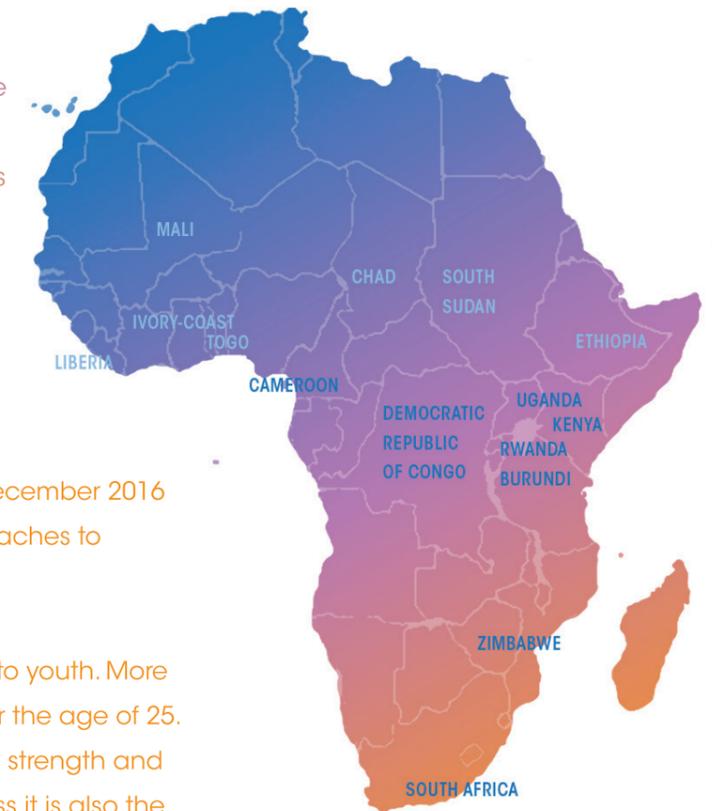


youtube.com/PaxChristiINTL



PAX CHRISTI'S NETWORK IN AFRICA

Pax Christi International has a long presence in Africa and is working with 40 member organisations located in 15 African countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mali, Chad, Cameroon, Togo, Liberia and Ivory Coast).



Many came together in Johannesburg in December 2016 to reflect on the rich history of African approaches to nonviolence and just peace.

Our work in Africa gives particular attention to youth. More than 60% of the population of Africa is under the age of 25. Africa's large youth population is a potential strength and source of hope for the continent. Nonetheless it is also the most vulnerable segment of the population, suffering from systemic poverty and a lack of education.



*Nonviolence in Africa :
Creating a Future of Hope
International Consultation
Johannesburg, South Africa,
December 2016*



THE GREAT LAKES PAX CHRISTI NETWORK

In recent years and in the current context, conflicts across the Africa Great Lakes sub-region are leading to the suffering and displacement of millions of women and youth, often in horrific circumstances. The three countries in the sub-region (DRC, Rwanda, Burundi) are torn apart by internal and external conflicts.



Deep poverty aggravates internal divisions and is often accompanied by violence and conflict that shakes their populations. The need to build cultures of active nonviolence and the peaceful transformation of conflicts is urgent.

It is our vision that young people have a key role to play in breaking these vicious cycles of violence through creative actions of active nonviolence and peacebuilding.



The Great Lakes Pax Christi network





believe

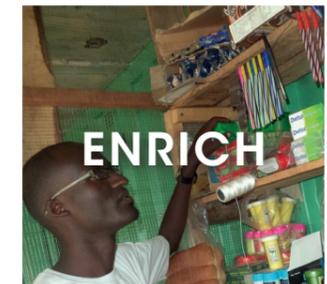
BRINGING POSITIVE CHANGE

Pax Christi members strongly believe that young people trained in active nonviolence and imbued with positive values can bring positive change. In 2017, the Pax Christi Great Lakes network composed of 20 member organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, launched a joint multi-year program working with youth directly affected by violent conflict, focusing on 3 pillars:

- to educate young people about the culture of peace and active nonviolence
- to empower them to become nonviolent change makers in their own community
- to enrich them with opportunities to earn a living through small joint income generating activities

"The change I aspire to is that the people I help will become peacemakers. In this way we will be people who inspire and promote a life, a spirit, a strength, a fortitude."

- Sr Apollonie Kavira

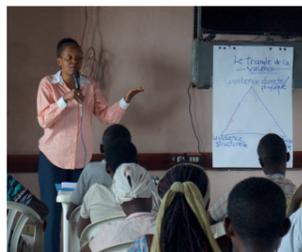




TRAINING ON ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE



Graduates of training of trainers in active nonviolence



Training students in local schools



Workshop on the methods of nonviolence

In 2018 and 2019, Pax Christi International trained 80 trainers in the Great Lakes (45 men and 35 women) in active nonviolence and entrepreneurship. These trainers are currently active in their local communities, parishes and educational institutions (universities and secondary schools).

Trainings are structured around different modules focusing on conflict prevention, nonviolent communication, active nonviolence and trauma healing, closely related to the participants' own contexts and experiences in their local communities. In addition to learning about effective methods of nonviolent action, participants looked at the inner, liberating and transformative life force of nonviolence to tackle injustices and violence in their societies.

The trainers are also currently supporting and guiding 20 groups of young people, spread over the three countries, who are carrying out small scale income generating activities.

An additional focus of the training is giving support to religious sisters for skills improvement for the care of women and girls across the country who are victims of violence, particularly in conflict zones. The sisters are trained in the methods of nonviolence - as a life, a force and a spirit - in trauma healing, for inner healing in the light of the scriptures and accompaniment of victims.





ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING

Considering the precarious situation of young people living in poverty and the danger of being manipulated by violent actors into committing acts of violence and intolerance with a promise of food and money, Pax Christi International included a training module on micro-credits.

Small financial support was granted to some 20 groups of 10 to 15 people maximum to execute together a small scale income generating activity. These micro businesses are launched in the presence of parents and local community leaders and accompanied by the nonviolence trainers.

Examples:

- a) making clothes
- b) a bakery
- c) a motorcycle taxi
- d) pig breeding



peace



TRAINING IMPACT

- Young people discover within themselves an inner life force to become peacemakers and pledge to deepen their belief in the power of nonviolence that liberates and transforms injustices.
- They apply the meditation skills they have learned during training to help resolve ethnic conflicts in villages and gain the trust of their peers and local leaders.
- Young people adopt a peaceful way of earning a living and set up income generating activities.
- Young people act as peacebuilders, influence and transform behaviours of family, friends and village leaders.



Impact



Share

CAMPAIGN: #THISISNONVIOLENCE

To deepen the impact and effectiveness of achieving peace and justice, the Great Lakes Pax Christi network launched a campaign highlighting the centrality of “active nonviolence,” to share the story of the young people in the Great Lakes more broadly and to show the full weight of their experience of active nonviolence and work for peace.

The “This is what **nonviolence** looks like” campaign highlighted two of our member organisations in the region, Pax Christi Uvira and Africa Reconciled.



More than 2000 bracelets with words “a life - a spirit - a force” have been distributed which will mark the commitment of youth to active nonviolence.



Thank
you

