

DEPARTMENT:	School of International Development & Global Studies (EDIM)
TERM	Fall 2022
PROFESSOR:	Benjamin Zyla
RESEARCH TITLE:	Better Understanding Local Peacebuilding: best practices
NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	2-4
LANGUAGE:	English, French
ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE SUBMITTED IN FRENCH	YES

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION:

Students will be part of an international research team (with students at Harvard, Oxford, NUPI, Konstanz, Reading and UBC) to study Local Peacebuilding interventions in African and Asia (e.g. Mali, Niger, Afghanistan, Myanmar).

Peacebuilding operations formally aim to help mitigate or resolve conflicts in the societies and states in which they are deployed. Detailed knowledge of local actors, histories, cultures, languages, geography and conflict dynamics is vital to successful peacebuilding. But this is often overlooked in international peace interventions.

Yet while there is near universal agreement among scholars and practitioners about the importance of local agency in peacebuilding operations, there is no consensus on what that is, much less how international donors can best access it. In practice, moreover, intervenors not only struggle to integrate local agency in their decision-making but also face incentives not to do so. In short, while local knowledge is vital to the success of international interventions, it is notoriously difficult for international donors to acquire it, and thus intervenors are inconsistent in whether, how and why they seek to access it.

***Goals:** We aim to develop a broader consensus among development practitioners and scholars on a more complete understanding of local agency; and to systematically explore and compare the mechanisms by which international intervenors in these countries seek local agency and the (dis)incentives they face to incorporating this agency in their decision-making.*

Students are welcome to join this vibrant and international research team to study local agency in peacebuilding operations and to work on any aspect of this topic.

If you have questions, pls. don't hesitate to contact me at Benjamin.Zylal@uottawa.ca

KEY LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

This course will allow students to:

- Participate and be a full member of an existing research team
- Expand your research knowledge (methodologies, techniques, analysis, etc.) on peacebuilding

operations

- Learn more about the peacebuilding operations, especially in Africa, Asia and South America
- Gain an understanding of the conflicts in those countries and local initiatives how to solve it
- Increase or validate their interests in graduate studies and gain a first practical experience of social science research;
- Learn how to do a literature review for grad school