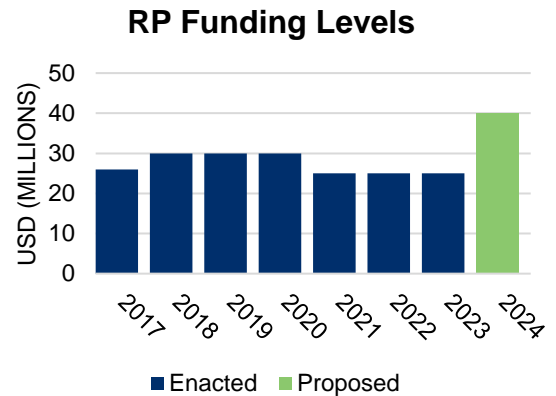


Increase Investment in Reconciliation Programs

Reconciliation Programs funding supports the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) peacebuilding efforts through the facilitation of people-to-people dialogue in countries dealing with and recovering from conflict. USAID's [Center for Conflict and Violence Prevention](#) provides opportunities for different, ethnic, religious, or political groups to come together to engage in non-violent conflict resolution, reconcile differences, and work towards common goals.

BACKGROUND

Congress has allocated dedicated funding to Reconciliation Programs (RP) for almost two decades. From FY 2004 to FY 2018, funding to RP increased from \$8 million to \$30 million. However, funding decreased to \$25 million in FY2021 and has remained stagnant at this level since. From FY2004 to FY2021, funding for RP in the SFOPs appropriations bill directly supported nearly [330 peacebuilding projects](#) in more than 40 countries. In [2019](#), the allocation of \$30 million funded 35 programs in 27 countries.



RECONCILIATION PROGRAMS IN ACTION

Kenya: Beginning in FY20, RP funding has supported a [three-year initiative](#), implemented by Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT), to de-escalate tensions between communities in Northern Kenya by building community-led grassroots networks to navigate ethnic, gender, religious and resource-based conflict. The program recruits and trains small groups of diverse peace ambassadors to lead ongoing negotiations and skills trainings. During just the first year of programming, NRT trained a total of 125 peace ambassadors, 31 of which were women, and reported a marked decrease in conflict, displacement, and banditry in one of the programs primary regional focus areas called Marsabit county.

INCREASE INVESTMENT IN RECONCILIATION PROGRAMS

In its 2022 [Global Peace Index Report](#), The Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) found that overall global peacefulness has continued to deteriorate for the eleventh consecutive year, driven mainly by [ongoing conflict](#). Additionally, the World Food Programme's [2022 Global Report on Food Crises](#) found conflict to be the main driver of food insecurity. [Reconciliation can be an effective tool](#) to address the increase in global conflict, as it seeks to break cycles of violence and trauma that fuel conflict, corruption, and oppression. The people-to-people reconciliation approach directly engages various political, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups to cooperatively address the root causes of conflict, repair social bonds, and work toward shared goals.

A [2019 meta-evaluation](#) of peacebuilding programs focused on reconciliation found that they can have a significant impact on attitudes and behavior of participants, increasing trust and conflict resolution skills, and decreasing violence and feelings of exclusion and isolation. The evaluation also found that reconciliation programs can improve community leaders' confidence and capacity to intervene in and mediate conflicts affecting their communities.

To help break cycles of violent conflict and support resilient societies, which can peacefully confront today's global crises such as pandemic disease and climate shocks, **we urge no less than \$40 million be appropriated to Reconciliation Programs in FY24.**

We request that no less than \$40 million be appropriated to Reconciliation Programs in FY24.

Examples of Reconciliation Programs

Country	Start Year	Amount	Purpose
Kenya	2020	\$1,150,000	This program brings together local faith-based groups, government agencies, conservancy institutions, women, and elders to conduct reconciliation sessions in which groups discuss harms experienced from ethnic and climate-fueled conflict and strategize to resolve common challenges, namely resource and livestock theft. This program utilizes a conservancy model that supports communities to govern their own lands, facilitate regular dialogues, and lead local development projects.
Burundi	2020	\$1,600,000	This program aims to strengthen the engagement of youth in peacebuilding efforts as well as improve economic opportunities for youth who comprise two thirds of the country's population. This program works to reduce political violence and "Us vs. Them" mentalities among youth from different ethnic backgrounds and social statuses by facilitating communication and exchanges between tribal communes.
Yemen	2018	\$3,400,000*	This program aimed to support community-led initiatives to mitigate conflict, promote the peaceful resolution of differences, and support stabilization in the four southern Yemeni governorates of Abyan, Aden, Lahj, and Taiz. The Yemen Communities Stronger Together (YCST) program also managed grants to local NGO's and civil society as well as implemented 31 service delivery projects. Additionally, the program created Community Enhancement Committees (CECs) that sought to uplift the concerns of women and youth as well as develop and implement community projects. <i>*This is a small portion of the total USAID support for the program, which was provided by RP</i>
Nigeria	2019	\$1,480,000	This program supports community-led conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent conflict from escalating into violence. This program also trained community members to increase peacebuilding capacities and facilitated town hall community dialogues to deconstruct ethnic and religious stereotypes. Overall, 67 percent of participants reported a reduction in community violence because of the conflict resolution mechanisms created by the program.