

THE AFRICA PEACEBUILDING INSTITUTE’S (API) ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

The development of API began in 1996 when an MCC Service Worker was charged with creating and conducting a peace curriculum at the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF) in Kitwe, Zambia. At the same time, interest in developing a short-term certificate program on the African continent, similar to Eastern Mennonite University’s Summer Peacebuilding Institute, led to the first Africa Peacebuilding Institute in 2001.

The Africa Peacebuilding Institute offers an intensive study of Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation rooted in and responding to challenges emerging from the African context. Practitioners from across the continent come together to study and reflect on conflict transformation theory and practice, and to interact with others involved with peacebuilding work.

I. INTRODUCTION

API Vision: an alliance of people equipped to build peace throughout the African continent.

API Mission: to bring peace to the African continent by raising up people equipped in conflict prevention and resolution, community building and reconciliation based on Christian principles of non-violence, justice, dignity of the human person and right relationships.

API has the following pan-African objectives:

- 1) Promote a high-quality training for peacebuilders
- 2) Create a platform for exchanging and sharing experiences and ideas about peacebuilding
- 3) Build a network of peacebuilders across Africa

The main goal of the Advisory Committee is to provide a forum where individuals experienced in peacebuilding and training provide counsel and advice to the API Coordinator. The following guidelines provide a framework for this committee. The API Coordinator, working with the appointed representative of the MCC Africa Area Directors (herein called the “appointed Africa AD”), will need to adapt these guidelines to respond to the evolving needs of API.

The Advisory Committee structure formalizes this counsel-seeking process and creates a mechanism to help it to happen on a regular and scheduled basis. Advisory Committees also make the process more communal in the sense that a group of people join for engagement of issues related to the API program and how it can help support peace work on the continent.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

The API Advisory Committee commits to provide counsel and advice regarding the following matters, which ultimately promotes API’s objectives:

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- API directions, priorities, and areas of emphasis, including the study and appraisal of API’s mission, vision, values and strategic direction.
- API’s curriculum, particularly as it needs to respond to emerging conflict
- Choice and compensation of API Coordinator, facilitators and other service providers, e.g. interpreters and volunteers
- Provide feedback on API planning processes, delivery and evaluation.
- Promotion and marketing strategies for API across the continent and beyond.
- Provide advice as to how MCC’s investment in API can be maximized, e.g. advice could be directed at the delivery of API, its alumni, as it might pertain to MCC peace programming in general, or through liaisons or synergies with other peace actors.
- Other matters that may be raised by the API Coordinator

The Advisory Committee’s role is not one of governance, insofar as it will not be involved in issues such as budget approval, though the committee does provide counsel and advice regarding program direction and thus can indirectly influence resource allocation.

The Advisory Committee will generally meet through Skype, Zoom or another electronic medium. Where a member is unable to participate in a meeting, he or she can provide input in writing.

III. SIZE & COMPOSITION

The committee should be large enough to provide a range of representation, but not so large as to be cumbersome. The recommended size is five persons, in addition to the API Coordinator, who may serve as the Chair of this committee. An appointee of the MCC Africa ADs will participate in the meetings as well, equaling seven people in total. At least one member of the committee will have been an API participant within three years of accepting the position. Deliberate attempts will be made to keep the group diverse in terms of gender and geographical location.

IV. SELECTION PROCESS

When first establishing an Advisory Committee, the API Coordinator, in consultation with the appointed Africa AD, will invite persons to join the committee. Thereafter, as replacements are needed, the API Coordinator will invite new members following consultation with the appointed Africa AD and the Advisory Committee. Advisory Committee members should believe in the importance of the work of MCC, API, and understand that service to the committee is voluntary; there is no compensation for this work.

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V. TERM LENGTH

A committee member's term will run for three years. The API Coordinator, in consultation with the Africa AD, will be responsible for inviting and renewing the term of a committee member. In addition, terms will be staggered to maintain continuity on the committee. Members serving two consecutive terms should remain off the committee for at least one year before being eligible to be reappointed to serve another term.

VI. METHOD OF OPERATION

The committee will meet at least twice a year, one of which will ordinarily be held as a part of the annual API program planning process:

- Approximately 9 months before API: to review the API report from the prior year, and provide input for the selection of courses and facilitators for the following year; and,
- Approximately 3 months before API: This meeting will be where more long-term discussion will be entertained. At the same meeting, the committee is to be informed as to current planning.

Additional meetings may be held on an ad hoc basis, as determined by the API Coordinator, in consultation with the appointed Africa AD. If three members wish to hold a meeting, they can consult with the appointed Africa AD and request the calling of a meeting.

VII. ORGANIZATION

The API Coordinator and appointed Africa AD will prepare the agenda. Notes will be taken and distributed to committee members within one month after the meeting.

The Terms of Reference will be ratified by the appointed Africa AD and confirmed at the first meeting of the invited members.

VIII. REMUNERATION OF MEMBERS

API Advisory Committee members will serve without any payment. Any exception to this standard should be approved by all the Africa Area Directors.