Katayangi, Mari: Hiroshima University
marikat@hiroshima-u.ac.jp
Authors: Mari Katayanagi, Hiroshima University
Title: Exploring the Potentials of Business as a Peacebuilding Tool

Armed conflicts usually cause significant negative impact on economy of the country and the deteriorated economy in turn threatens people's livelihood. The humanitarian assistance is thus essential to meet the immediate need of people affected by the conflict. For peacebuilding, however, it is essential to create sustainable conditions. Private sector is a new actor in peacebuilding and it cannot only contribute to revive the economy, but also connect people who were divided in the conflict by identity such as religion and ethnicity. To confirm such possibilities, I applied qualitative method and conducted in-depth interviews of entrepreneurs in Japan and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. My study finds that there are entrepreneurs who are keen to engage in peacebuilding, and that business indeed has the potential to connect people and overcome the perceived differences created by conflict. It also shows that by engaging in business, people affected by a conflict may regain a command of life and obtain various options for their life; for instance, a widow to provide a higher education opportunity to her child. Research on peacebuilding had a tendency to focus on security-related activities such as Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) as well as institution building. This study, in contrast, identifies the substantial potential of the private sector to enhance peacebuilding, and therefore expands the scope of peacebuilding activities. The mobilization of private sector in peacebuilding may be in the form of actions under corporate social responsibility. Through such actions, people can be connected inside the country where an armed conflict took place, but a new partnership beyond the border may also be created.