

# OVERCOMING EXCLUSION: HOW TO REALIZE INCLUSIVE PEACEBUILDING

**CONTRIBUTORS:** SIGRID GRUENER (DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD FOUNDATION) AND JOHANNA LARSSON (MA CANDIDATE, UPPSALA UNIVERSITY)

## INTRODUCTION

The parallel resolutions<sup>1</sup> on the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture that passed in the UN Security Council and General Assembly, respectively, both highlighted the importance of inclusivity in the advancement of national peacebuilding processes and recognized the conceptual framework of ‘sustaining peace’.<sup>2</sup> The Stockholm Declaration, issued by the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in April, similarly commits to improving systems to ensure inclusion and accountability and to rebuild trust between states and citizens.<sup>3</sup> With the recognition that peace and sustainable development are inextricably linked and an aim to leave no one behind, the 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity to re-examine the state of inclusivity in peacebuilding.

## FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The international community’s recognition of and recommitment to broadening the number and kind of stakeholders in peacebuilding activities is useful, but they must be coupled with implementation approaches that effectively address the main challenges to realizing inclusivity. The cultivation of authentic national ownership, a condition critical to sustaining peace, poses one such challenge. Often wrongly equated with government ownership, national ownership requires broad-based, multi-layered local participation in a peacebuilding programme’s design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, none of which can be skipped or abbreviated.<sup>4</sup>

Inclusivity, however, does not require that all stakeholders participate in every phase of a peace process. Because peace negotiations are often limited to a select group, it is essential that peace processes follow the peace agreement and engage all segments of society, and that the details of the agreement are widely and transparently communicated. To this end, how and when different stakeholders are entitled or obliged to participate must be expressed clearly to ensure that opposing or competing stakeholders do not confuse inclusion with unfair influence, and that vulnerable and marginalized groups are able to participate meaningfully.

Civil society plays a key role in building and sustaining peace. While the international community has made strides towards supporting civil society’s role in capacity and relationship building, and by increasing the engagement space available to it, systematic and evidence-based research on the role of civil society actors and the circumstances underpinning their participation in peacebuilding is still lacking.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the inclusion of civil society actors is frequently overlooked or restricted to a limited group of capital-based actors.

The number of women holding key positions in peace negotiations is low and, 15 years since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, significant barriers to women’s full partici-

1 United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 2282, 27 Apr. 2016; and United Nations, General Assembly, Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, A/RES/70/262, 27 Apr. 2016,

2 As first introduced in the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture.

3 International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, The Stockholm Declaration, 5 Apr. 2016.

4 For a more on challenges to realizing local ownership see McCann, J., ‘Local ownership—an imperative for inclusive peacebuilding’, *Development Dialogue*, no. 63 (Dec. 2015)

5 Paffenholz, T., ‘Civil society and peacebuilding’, *Development Dialogue*, no. 63 (Dec. 2015).



pation in peacebuilding persist.<sup>6</sup> Women who are included in peace processes are often members of the educated elite and are thus detached from the conflict experiences of a majority of the constituency whom they are meant to represent.

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2250 in December 2016 affirming the importance of the role of young people in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and reconciliation. The resolution acknowledges that in countries affected by armed conflict, youth often represent a majority of the population and a large proportion of those affected by violence and displacement, and are most impacted by the disruption of public services. It also recognizes that youth radicalization and recruitment into violent extremist groups threatens global peace and security. For youth, it is especially important to counter the learned use of violence as a means of conflict resolution in order to reduce the likelihood that violent conflict will recur.

Evidence suggests that the dissemination of information is critical to inclusive peacebuilding. Better use of technology and social media can significantly improve communication about decision-making, peacebuilding implementation and resource allocation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **1. The international community should actively promote open, inclusive and ongoing dialogue at the national and local levels among government, civil society and other stakeholders, including women, youth and religious and traditional leaders.**

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the function of data availability and measurement capacity in identifying where exclusion exists and facilitating evidence-based decision making on how best to address it.
- International actors should consider ways to positively influence legal and social norms to provide the space and practice for inclusive bottom-up deliberation about the priorities and strategies for sustaining peace.
- Particular effort needs to be made to ensure that information about peace processes reaches marginalized groups, including those who are geographically or linguistically marginalized, illiterate or have limited access to print and digital media.
- Actors supporting peacebuilding should consider how different groups of women are included in and excluded from peace processes in order to identify new, more inclusive engagement mechanisms. Both the number of women engaged in peacebuilding and the criteria used to select them need to be evaluated. Consideration should be given to the utility of quotas and women's entry points into various peace processes should be identified.
- Interventions that engage youth should consider generational tensions as well as how the historic and cultural contexts of a country might play out in peacebuilding processes. Educators play a critical role in promoting a culture of peace and in countering messages of hatred and intolerance.

### **2. Donors and national governments should ensure that financial resources are allocated in ways that reflect commitments to inclusive peacebuilding, with adequate funding allocated to support participation and capacity building of civil society, with an emphasis on women and youth.**

- SDG implementation should be seen as an opportunity to reassess and reinforce inclusivity in peacebuilding.
- With support from the international community, national governments should develop and implement inclusive accountability frameworks, engaging diverse stakeholders.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. The Global Study on SCR 1325 points out that in a study on 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 only 9% of negotiators were women. Only 3% of the military in UN missions are women. See p.14

