



THEMATIC KNOWLEDGE SERIES

Session 3: Women's Full, Equal, and Meaningful Participation and Inclusion of Gender-Related Provisions in Peace Processes

May 3, 2023

The Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact Thematic Knowledge Sessions (TKS) are conducted under Chatham House Rule and give signatories the opportunity to come together to share learnings, highlight gaps, and find potential partnerships with other signatories. Each session explores one of the Compact's five pillars or another thematic area relevant to signatories with the aim of highlighting new ideas and creative approaches, identifying missteps that can be avoided, and ways to replicate and scale up high-impact interventions.

Context overview:

Women in all their diversity – including local women peacebuilders and young women – remain significantly excluded from formal and informal peace processes, their implementation, and broad efforts to build sustainable peace, despite their continued contributions to preventing crises, resolve conflicts, and broker peace informally and formally. Yet, there's overwhelming evidence that inclusive peace processes are more likely to be successful and lead to better and more durable agreements. Women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all efforts to build stable peace is at the heart of more than two decades of global efforts to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, however, we still face regression on both women's participation and all other aspects of WPS.

Advancing sustainable peace requires addressing the root causes of intersecting crises and targeted measures to address the barriers hindering women's full and meaningful participation in peace processes. As the limited number of Signatory actions committed to on the financing of participation efforts suggests, funding is still one of the largest gap's to ensuring women's participation, as are investments in policy.

The community working on the WPS agenda is facing an increasingly complex geopolitical environment as numerous conflicts both erupt and continue. We're seeing a rise in authoritarianism, weaponization of digital technology, power takeovers by extremist groups, and the catastrophic impact of the climate crisis. In addition, there is still a large backlash against the women who dare raise their voices. Given these challenges, there's an urgent need to focus on multitrack strategies in order to not only end conflict, but to prevent it in the first place. More recognition must also be given to the many peacebuilders engaging in





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humanitarian work, not necessarily because it's in their mandate or their funding, but because they have to respond to the needs of their communities.

Compact Framework impact statement:

Peace processes at all levels reflect actions taken by UN, member states, regional organizations, and civil society, as outlined in the Compact Framework, to have women in all their diversity meaningfully and fully participating at all stages of the process, including through leadership roles and in shaping a protective environment and influencing political transitions. These processes lead to the systematic inclusion of gender provisions in peace agreements and peacebuilding policies and programs, including gender-responsive implementation and monitoring.

Stakeholder commitments and investments in this area:

At the time of this session, the thematic pillar on women's full, equal, and meaningful participation and inclusion of gender-related provisions in peace processes was the most subscribed to area of the Compact, and the highest number of all specific Compact actions were on participation. Investments are the highest in advocacy and programmatic actions respectively, in line with the overall Compact trend. Civil society organizations (CSOs) is the stakeholder group that has committed to most actions in this area, followed by Member States.

Principles of transformation:

The Compact has taken an intentional approach through its methodology and six principles of transformation to support signatories to develop and implement effective and comprehensive strategies for promoting durable peace and stability with the greatest positive impact on women and girls and local communities. These include:

1. Humanitarian-development-peace-nexus
2. Intersectional
3. Localized
4. Intergenerational
5. Resourced and sustainable
6. Inclusive and multistakeholder



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Recommendations:

Humanitarian-development-peace-nexus

- **Recognize the complexity of the work of women peacebuilders, including at the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus** and during climate disasters or global health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a need to recognize their work as first-responders in humanitarian situations in order to resource their work and to ensure the inclusion of women peacebuilders in leadership positions.
- **There is a need to focus on people-centered peace that links the WPS agenda with humanitarian action**, and to link political and civil rights with the economic, social and cultural rights needed for populations to thrive.

Intersectional

- **Ensure women in leadership advance gender equality.** Once women get access to high-level positions, it is important to ensure they represent a feminist- or gender equality agenda.
- **Ensure that the criterion for representation is clear, transparent and credible**, including championing targets and inclusive selection measures in peace processes by advancing targets, inclusive selection measures and incentives for parties to include women – in all their diversity – in their delegations.

Localized

- **Use The Compact to help facilitate partnerships** between international organizations engaging in peace processes and national and local women-led organizations that have the trust of local communities and context-specific knowledge.
- **Support an advocate for multi-track efforts** that increase the inclusion and participation of women at all levels of political processes, including track one, two and three processes.
- **Ensure that the most affected communities that women-led organizations respond to are meaningfully included** so that the allocation of resources and assets are guided by their needs.
- **Ensure that any efforts and UN-led peace processes are truly led by local women** and establishing a two-way channel of communication between local women peacebuilders and the UN, to ensure the latter is receptive to their priorities and to adjusting plans when needed.
- **Engage women in the design of the interventions** that are meant to address the barriers they face to participation, for example through workshops where the women can voice the needs in their context.





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- **Ground women's political participation in local traditional structures** and not view them as a Western policy intervention or assume that local societies and women lack initiative. It is also important to use existing platforms for engaging with local women, instead of setting up new platforms.
- **Ensure civil society organizations advocate for their governments to adopt and implement National Action Plans on WPS**, and for them to push governments to deliver on resolution 1325.

Intergenerational

- **Women and young people must play a key role** at every single stage of the peace process, for example, by having peacebuilding organizations establish youth divisions.

Resourced and sustainable

- **Improve the documentation of the work that women peacebuilders do** and the difficult circumstances they face to make sure their impact isn't lost. More work needs to be done to communicate that peace processes are more durable and sustainable when they meaningfully engage women, and make sure donors and decision makers can see the impact that women are having on the ground.
- **Ensure that local women-led organizations have access to hands-on learning and coaching.** There's also a need to dedicate funding for first-time grantees and develop their capacity to handle larger grants.
- **Set up rapid response funding mechanisms to help ensure that funding is flexible**, in addition to keeping approaches flexible in order to adjust interventions in real time to the situation and needs on the ground. This can include donors adding new funding streams of flexible funding that can easily and quickly be disbursed during an emergency, even for core support.
- **More efforts and investments in participation are needed from UN agencies and Member States** in the Compact, as well as reporting on progress.

Inclusive and multistakeholder

- **Increase the collection of and access to information on women's engagement** and all aspects of their peace work as a vital component of advocacy efforts, policy and programming. Organizations should share research and information, including policy papers or information about a particular peace process or work they're doing with the UN Women WPS team and Compact secretariat so that it can be disseminated and shared.



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- **Recognize that efforts to support women’s meaningful participation don't exist in a vacuum** and that their success hinges on the success and status of broader political processes.
- **Explore new tools for women’s participation, including using digital technology** which can offer platforms for marginalized voices to be heard and amplified, while also addressing the risk that online violence such as hate speech pose to women peacebuilders.
- **Organizations and especially UN agencies need to lead by example** by ensuring delegations and teams are also taking measure to increase the number of women in leadership positions within their organizations.
- **Make sure women peacebuilders don’t just have a voice in peace processes, but that they have a significant voice** and meaningfully participate in transitions, which should be inclusive and democratic.
- **Security Council members must bring in more women into the Council**, both from the UN and from civil society. More Member States should also be supporting the Joint Commitment on Women’s Participation in the Security Council.

Speakers:

The TKS brought together a wide range of speakers, including several signatories as well as speakers from UN Women and the WPS-HA Compact Secretariat:

- **Natasha Lea Lamoreux**, Coordination Specialist, UN Women
- **Harriette Williams Bright**, WPS-HA Compact Lead, UN Women
- **Roya Murphy**, WPS-HA Compact Monitoring and Reporting Consultant, UN Women
- **Sarah Taylor**, Policy Specialist, UN Women
- **Zahra'a Langhi**, co-founder and CEO, Libyan Women's Platform for Peace
- **Helena Gronberg**, Program Director, Better Peace Initiative, International Civil Society Action Network
- **Shatha Hussein**, Political Affairs Officer in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Policy and Mediation Division, Gender, Peace, and Security Unit, United Nations
- **Hend Nafea**, Senior Officer, Global Programs, Search for Common Ground
- **Signe Gilen**, Special Envoy, Women, Peace and Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- **Pravina Makan-Lakha**, Advisor on Women, Peace and Security, ACCORD