

Unpacking a Network Approach:

The Role of Networks, Movements and Coalitions in Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Informal Learning Session for the Civil Society-UN Dialogue Initiative

12:30pm-2:00pm, 1 December 2023

The UN Secretary-General, in his 2018 Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43), 'recommend[ed] that all UN peace operations and UN country teams develop community-engagement strategies in consultation with national and local stakeholders, particularly youth and women's groups, and that these be shared, monitored and reviewed with local actors' (para. 59). In 2021, the UN System-Wide Community Engagement Guidelines¹ were created to support the UN field actors in the development of such strategies. The Guidelines emphasised the importance of inclusivity in shaping peacebuilding policies, practices and infrastructures.

Ensuring inclusivity is always a complex endeavour in building strong and operational partnerships between the UN and civil society. There is, however, an untapped potential for a network approach when it comes to building strong and operational partnerships between the UN and civil society. In addition to relying on relationships with selected civil society partners, the UN can rely on the support of peacebuilding networks, coalitions and movements in developing a comprehensive understanding of the realities at the field level.

Policymakers increasingly recognise that networks create opportunities to advance impactful peacebuilding policies, practices and infrastructures. The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) found that peacebuilding networks offer an opportunity for diverse stakeholders to access broader groups of decision-makers and provide outreach to wider local audiences for pro-peace messages across countries and regions². According to the Sida Helpdesk's study, network modalities are the most conducive to local leadership in global spaces and may lead to concrete peace-positive outcomes at both the local and global level³.

The benefits of a network approach to peacebuilding are many. Networks, coalitions and movements help local peace actors combine their powers in a collective effort to promote peace and prevent conflict through the principles of local ownership, complementarity, mutual support and joint action. Networks, coalitions and movements engage organisations based in the peripheries and grassroots organisations; they build peace constituencies within communities by supporting newly established and unregistered local actors, and they provide a more comprehensive overview of thematic priorities at the local level from the perspective of diverse groups within these communities.

This does not however mean that networks, coalitions and movements operate without challenges. For instance, in many networks, movements and coalitions, the challenge of gatekeeping is a critical issue. Further, networks and movements need to be nurtured consistently, creating a significant need for donor support, who are less likely to provide the needed sustainable funding to them. And lastly, the decision-making processes can be slow, and finding a consensus may be challenging.

¹ UN (August 2020), 'The UN System-Wide Community Engagement Guidelines' (available in English and French), <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/un-community-engagement-guidelines-peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace-0>.

² Peacebuilding Fund (2022), 'Local Peacebuilding Thematic Review', https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/local_peacebuilding_thematic_review_final_report.pdf.

³ Sida Helpdesk on Human Security and Humanitarian Assistance, (14 March 2022), Portfolio review and analysis: Linking local and global peacebuilding in the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Peace.

The informal learning session will be hosted by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Colombia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations, on the margins of the first Civil Society-UN Dialogue Initiative to unpack a network approach, explore the benefits and challenges of the network approach from the perspectives of local peacebuilders and the UN partners, and identify specific avenues in which the network approach can provide opportunities for sustaining peace and strong and operational partnerships between the UN and civil society.

During the discussion, the participants will be asked to reflect on the following questions:

- What defines a network approach? What role do networks play in peacebuilding and sustaining peace? How can networks, coalitions and movements strengthen peacebuilding policies, practices and infrastructures?
- How can policymakers establish strong and operational partnerships with networks? What good practices provide guidance to policymakers?
- What are challenges peacebuilding networks face in getting access to peacebuilding funding? What are opportunities to overcome these challenges, what are good examples/best practices?

Agenda:

Moderator: Sophia Farion, <i>Program Coordinator for Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)</i>	
12:30pm-12:10pm	<p>Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yoka Brandt, <i>Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations</i> - Arlene Tickner, <i>Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations</i>
12:10pm-12:30pm	<p>Panel Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gus Miclat, <i>Executive Director of the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)</i> - Bridget Usifo, <i>Project Manager WIPNET/WANEP Nigeria</i> - Naiki Guadalupe Olivas Gaspar, <i>Communications Officer and Specialist for Latin America, GNWP</i> - Bushra Hassan, <i>Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Peacebuilding Support Office/DPPA</i> <p>The panelists will be invited to reflect on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What defines a network approach? What role do networks play in peacebuilding and sustaining peace? How can networks, coalitions and movements strengthen peacebuilding policies, practices and infrastructures? - How can policymakers establish strong and operational partnerships with networks? What good practices provide guidance to policymakers? - What are challenges peacebuilding networks face in getting access to peacebuilding funding? What are opportunities to overcome these challenges, what are good examples/best practices?

<p>12:30pm- 1:10pm</p>	<p>Informal discussion over lunch with the report back:</p> <p>All participants will be invited to reflect on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can policymakers establish strong and operational partnerships with networks? What good practices provide guidance to policymakers? - What are challenges peacebuilding networks face in getting access to peacebuilding funding? What are opportunities to overcome these challenges, what are good examples/best practices?
<p>1:10pm- 1:25pm</p>	<p>Report back from the groups</p>
<p>1:25pm- 1:30pm</p>	<p>Concluding Remarks by Marina Kumskova, <i>Senior UN Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)</i></p>