



Lessons from conflict resolution interventions

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Question

Based on the available literature, what are the lessons learned from interventions on strengthening conflict resolution systems?

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The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.

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1. Summary

The following report is a rapid review of a broad literature on conflict resolution systems and peacebuilding. Section 2 discusses the concept of Infrastructure for Peace (I4P), setting up of functional structures for successful and sustainable peace. I4P can be either bottom-up or top-down and take many different forms. Areas of support suggested for these structures includes: executive leadership; rule of law and law enforcement; fiduciary management; public administration; security; and natural resource management (Giessmann, 2016). Mediation is recommended for addressing the root cause of violence with the use of both insider and external mediators.

Despite conflict resolution being a broad topic, reviews find that high-quality evidence on ‘what works’ for conflict resolution and peacebuilding is lacking, particularly with regards to local small-scale initiatives (Vernon, 2019). Improvement in conflict related situations can be very subtle and hard to measure.

Section 3 reports evidence from reviews on local peace committees (LPCs), which can be formal or informal. Informality has the benefit of allowing creativity, but can be insufficient in reaching powerful political leaders. Formal local peace committees are linked to national agendas. This ensures information flows and removes political blockages, but can be restrictive and corrupted by local power-plays. Local buy-in is particularly important in more formal committees, and must be supported by a functioning peace architecture.

Successful local peace initiatives tend to: have cumulative impact, be cost-effective, apply practical (rather than theoretical) approaches, apply knowledge through local people, and use individuals with energy and passion for structural change. Problems that local efforts encounter include: undermining by local leaders, exclusion of those that don’t have time to be involved, and the danger that local structures end up weakening government mechanisms.

A United Nations Development Programme discussion paper (Odendaal, 2010) recommends successful local committees to have: a significant number of members holding the middle ground, alternative perspectives from a range of representatives, civil society members alongside formal sectors, and inclusion of marginalised groups (particularly women).

Recommendations for successful peacebuilding are drawn from the country case studies (section 4), approaches in Europe (section 5), and learning from Christian Aid programmes (section 6). These reiterate lessons from the reviews. They suggest: involvement of local leaders, Local Councils, and community members; factoring in time for results and accepting the continuous nature of a peace process; providing sufficient resources; encouraging the role of women; focus on long-term objectives for sustainability; pacts need to continue with dialogue; understanding and using mediators; building trust with outside actors, and connection between different levels (local, national, regional) and between state and non-state.

Potentially relevant lessons from a review on reducing armed violence are described in Section 7. Section 8 touches on the role of police institutions with an example of community policing in Bougainville. And Section 9 begins to explore the involvement of women in conflict resolution. All of these sections require deeper analysis outside the scope of the helpdesk.

2. Infrastructures for Peace

Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) refers broadly to “a dynamic network of skills, capacities, resources, tools and institutions that help build constructive relationships and enhance sustainable resilience of societies against the risks of relapse into violence” (Giessmann, 2016:4). Their aim is to put in place functional structures for effective and sustainable outcomes. Peacebuilding requires political will, but also structural capacity in practice. A report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gathers experiences from expert practitioners on I4P (Giessmann, 2016). The report discusses dispute settlements in salient democracies, as well as dealing with crisis situations.

Peace infrastructures take different forms and names, as they are shaped by different cultures and traditions. Types of infrastructures¹ include:

- Local peace councils/committees.
- Regional, district peace committees/councils.
- National peace councils/committees.
- Peace secretariats.
- Government bureaux, departments or Peace ministries.
- Policy and legislative measures creating I4P.
- National Dialogues/ conferences and multi-party negotiations.
- Non-governmental and civil society platforms for peace and dialogue; interreligious networks, trade-unionist forums, women’s movements, councils of the elderly, wise men etc.
- Transitional justice mechanisms such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), vetting councils, lustration mechanisms.
- Insider mediation.
- Early-warning and response.
- Inter-state governmental or non-governmental forums and networks.
- UN affiliated peace and mediation support structures.
- Intergovernmental organisations/civil society organisation based support organizations networks.

An example of a national approach to I4P comes from Ghana, where the first National Peace Architecture was developed. A National Peace Council was set up for responding to challenges, and mediating or facilitating dialogues. It is connected horizontally and vertically with peace advisory councils at district, regional, and national levels. Peace promotion officers exist at regional and district level. A Peace Building Support Unit exists within the Ministry of Interior.

Other international examples include:

- A national platform for political dialogue was established in **Togo** in 2010. This enabled civic actors to conduct non-violent campaigns. Major political parties signed an agreement on code of conduct for post-election government. This informed a national architecture for conflict management.

¹ See Giessmann (2016) pp 19-21 of the UNDP report for a list of country examples for each structure type: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Conflict%20Prevention/Berghof-UNDP_EmbeddedPeacel4P_2016.pdf

- A Ministry of Justice and Peace was established in **Costa Rica** to implement a National Peace Plan.
- A Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation was established in **Nepal** following the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006.
- **Kenya** has a National Commission on Integration and Cohesion following the 2008 Peace Agreement.

There are advantages and challenges associated with “top-down” I4P. Advantages include: having an authorised mandate, political and legal accountability structure, interest and support of the government to make the I4P successful, access to funding, professional dissemination of information, and media coverage. Challenges include: political influence of the government, risk of bureaucratic procedures, dependence on government-support, detracting resources from CSO initiatives, information could be biased, and lack of independent public oversight.

Bottom-up approaches exist where national bodies, formulated outside of the government, have had influence in their country. Examples include: Inter-Religious Council in Uganda; the Public Affairs Committee in Malawi, and the Tunisian Quartet (led by the labour union). They are membership-based organisations and gain legitimacy by gaining large numbers of members. They organise key actors and mediation and become part of national peace infrastructures. Bottom-up I4P have greater legitimacy, but may be confined by local power structures alongside other challenges.

The UNDP report goes on to describe in-depth case studies of I4P in South Africa, Ghana, Tunisia, Nepal, and Thailand.

Mediation as part of I4P

Mediation is recommended for addressing the root causes of structural violence (Geissman, 2016). Insider mediators are defined as:

“Individual(s), groups, entities or institutions possessing high levels of legitimacy and trust with the individuals and institutions involved in a specific conflict setting by virtue of their relationships and reputation with the parties and who/which possess a unique ability to directly and indirectly influence the conflict parties’ behaviour and thinking.” (UNDP, 2014: 9).

Insider mediators can make a more constructive contribution because they have in-depth knowledge of the situation and a close relationship with the parties. They can identify entry points, build consensus, advocate with the wider public and provide early warning. There should, however, be awareness of the possibility that mediators may share societies blind spots and may be too close to a situation to be objective. It is recommended to combine insider mediator efforts with external third-party mediators (Geissman, 2016).

3. Local resolution, mediation and dialogue: lessons from reviews

Local resolution

Vernon (2019: 3) defines local peacebuilding as “initiatives owned and led by people in their own context. It includes small-scale grassroots initiatives, as well as activities undertaken on a wider scale.”

The examples described in this review were objectively assessed by external evaluators or researchers. Vernon concludes that local small-scale initiatives tend to be limited in producing published and publicly recognised demonstrable evidence, which makes it difficult to justify supporting and resourcing them (Vernon, 2019). Improvements in conflict resolution and peacebuilding may be subtle and not show high-level impact but be important in the local context.

Peace committees

Grassroots initiatives based on local community structures are often known as peace committees, although different names are also used, as well as different structural forms (Vernon, 2019). Alternative names include: 'district peace advisory councils', 'district multiparty liaison committees', 'village peace and development committees', and 'committees for intercommunity relations' (Odendaal, 2010). They bring to together a representative selection of voices to resolve problems, and focus on dialogue, promoting mutual understanding, building trust. They often work with existing local power structures (Vernon, 2019). They establish rules for objectivity and fairness. They should involve both men and women, different ethnicities and economic interest groups, as well as local leaders.

Committees can be formal or informal in nature (Odendaal, 2010). Some have formal state recognition through a national peace accord or legislation. Some are established by citizens and not formally recognised by the state. Informality has both strengths and weaknesses (as described in relation to I4P in section 2). Positives include ability to be creative and negatives include reduced ability to engage with powerful political leaders. It is difficult to obtain evidence on informal initiatives, therefore the evidence base is mainly on formal initiatives.

Local peace committees (LPCs)

The UNDP I4P report (Geissman, 2016) identifies the following as important areas of support for these structures: **executive leadership; rule of law and law enforcement; fiduciary management; public administration; security, and natural resource management**. Some positive results from these structures are reported from Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya. The author describes "the potential for LPCs to have a positive impact" as "nearly undisputed" (Geissman, 2016: 41). However, expectations for LPCs should be realistic. A formal mandate is useful to define agendas and responsibilities, but formality is not a necessity. Interaction between LPCs is useful, and linking to upper levels can help to produce positive results.

Issifu (2016) reviews secondary data which identifies LPCs as playing a key role in maintaining, managing a resolving drawn-out conflicts in Africa. The article describes case studies of successful initiatives from South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, and Burundi. Qualities identified from the Vernon (2019) review include:

- Cumulative impact: Growth and expansion over time.
- Being cost effective, i.e. low-cost and technically appropriate.
- Apply practical approaches rather than theoretical concepts for tangible results.
- Initiatives must be relevant to local stakeholders.
- Apply local knowledge through local people and their networks.
- Make the most of individuals who have the energy and passion for behavioural and structural change.

- Successful initiatives are able to restore trust within and between communities.

Challenges include:

- With success at the community-level, there may still be difficulties at the individual level where feelings and memories are stirred-up and not addressed.
- Undermining by local leaders who fear losing power and status.
- Sabotage from locals who gain from instability.
- Reliance on volunteers may exclude those who don't have the time to be involved.
- When initiatives result in new structures there is a risk of taking over existing government mechanism, which weakens the government itself to perform its security functions.
- It is not always possible to convert changes in knowledge and attitude into practical behaviour change, or new structural norms.

The review suggests supporting initiatives with scale-up, sustainability and evaluation feedback mechanisms (Vernon, 2019). Support models combining local and international input are recommended. This allows blending of local knowledge with experience gained from other countries. Cases of local voices being lost in planning and reporting were identified, and should be avoided.

A UNDP discussion paper (Odendaal, 2010) presents case studies demonstrating the success of local peacebuilding initiatives but also limitations. Case studies are from Nicaragua, South Africa, Kenya, Northern Ireland, FYR Macedonia, Ghana, Nepal and Sierra Leone. Impact varies from context to context, even within the same country. Formal LPCs are linked to national agendas and must operate within national agreements. National mandates ensure information and resource flows between national and local levels and remove political blockages to peace processes on the one hand. On the other, they can be restrictive and be subject to interference associated with national power-plays. To improve functioning in relation to this issue there must be sound processes for local buy-in, a functioning peace architecture, and appropriate external support. Success is also determined by political will at the local level. Committees should be formed by facilitation of information sharing; discussions of roles and composition; and addressing of local questions and concerns. Participants should then discuss matters with their own wider groups.

A functional peace architecture should be driven by multiparty political oversight and leadership which is crucially supported by technical and administrative support. Technical support for peace committees includes access to experts on peace process principles to advise and guide implementation. Administrative help includes logistical and financial support.

As highlighted in the Vernon (2019) review there may be tension around relationships between local committees and local government structures. Often committees operate where local government is insufficient. Role clarity must be established to avoid tension. Committees should not be seen as hostile or in competition with local government. The UNDP discussion paper (Odendaal, 2010) makes the following suggestions for successful local peace committees:

- Have a core body of members who can occupy the middle ground.
- Benefit from alternative perspectives from civil society representatives.
- Inclusion of civil society members to coordinate between formal and informal sectors.
- Ideally led by insider partials rather than political party members.
- Include marginalised sections of the community, particularly women.

Peace building networks

An International Peace Institute paper discusses case studies from Burundi, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Kenya, Liberia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe (Connolly & Powers, 2018). The authors highlight the advantages and disadvantages of **community-led peacebuilding networks** (CLPNs) with respect to organisation, politics, and finances. The benefits from an organisational perspective are the extended geographic reach of civil society organisations allowing them to access more diverse knowledge and expertise. They are able to expand relationships both horizontally (between each other) and vertically (with national and international networks).

Networks can help organisations be more flexible and responsive. However, the disadvantage of CLPNs for organisations is the challenge of managing diverse opinions, expectations and capacities.

The challenges politically come with determining when and how to partner with governments, avoiding capture by the state, staying impartial, and working in constrained political spaces. However, working in a network can be beneficial in increasing resilience when political violence is present. Securing financing can be a challenge and can create competition among or between members. Networks may align themselves with donor priorities in order to get funding.

An International Peace Institute report looked at examples of innovative peacebuilding at a local level in Egypt, Burundi, Mali, Zimbabwe, and Kenya (Ó Súilleabháin, 2015). Lessons and recommendations emerging from this paper include:

- It is important to negotiate **the meaning of “local ownership”** within each individual context and community. Continuous examination of community-level approaches is important for inclusion.
- Increased **bridging of local communities with national governments** will improve the impact of community initiatives.
- **Accept that peace takes time**, and this should be factored in to plans.
- **Measure impact of local knowledge** to help demonstrate to others what approaches are successful.

4. Local resolution interventions: country case studies

Central African Republic (CAR)

The International Peace Institute looked at past mediation efforts in the CAR where peace agreements didn't last (Zahar & Mechoulam, 2017). Regional and international efforts were not taken seriously by political and military elites. Three recurring problems were identified looking at mediation before the rebel coalition conflict arose in 2012:

- 1) The nature of the elites involved in pact making. Prioritising private gain rather than public interests. This can partly be attributed to lack of national identity.
- 2) The nature of agreements made. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) deals often included privileged security arrangements which increases socioeconomic marginalisation. Rebel leaders and state officials use DDR as a tool for their own purposes.
- 3) The involvement of external actors. Involvement of leaders from Mali, Libya, the Republic of Congo, and Chad has had mixed results. Each leader had their own agenda. French

and Libyan interventions that have had some stabilising impact only lasted short-term, and were drawn into political games. UN interventions were also unsuccessful likely due to: short deployments with limited mandates; insufficient capacity, and the absence of political will to sustain resolutions.

The main lesson drawn from analysis of the past is that attempts have failed because they focused on **short-term objectives**. Gains made were quickly subjected to political manipulation and regional developments which reduced sustainability. Mediation has been disjointed since 2012. Mediators were brought together in 2017 to develop a road map together. Armed group leaders play on various sides. Gaining political responsibilities introduces internal group tensions. Control and command within groups is poor which exacerbates the volatility of the situation. Mediation efforts in the future must involve a broad range of civil society actors to account for local subtleties.

Local mediation initiatives are less visible. These can involve Local Mediation Committees, Local Peace and Reconciliation Committees, Religious Actors, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), and the UN. Interviews with local community members suggest these bottom-up initiatives do make a difference, although they question the sustainability of improvements. Serious security incidents immediately after the signing of an agreement is common. Follow-up on implementation requires active engagement of community-based peace structures. Pacts need to continue with dialogue with armed groups and communities.

A challenge that must be considered is the potential for competition funding among different local peace structures, potentially causing rivalries where resources are scarce. Broader economic issues must be considered to sustain peace, particularly the employment of youths who would otherwise join armed groups.

The Zahar & Mechoulan (2017) report concludes that local mediation can help to relieve violence but the duration of this may be short and capacity to withstand challenges is often insufficient. Changes in the security context, leadership struggles and financing remain issues. Risks associated with local mediation are that the violence may be displaced, there is a risk of legitimising illegitimate actors, and heightening competition between local actors.

However, local initiatives can contribute to the creation and institutionalisation of a network of actors. They often start as an ad hoc response to local dynamics and with increased capacity and resources can become an instrument of broader national reconciliation. Insufficient information hamper local mediation efforts as they do not contribute to broader effort or strategy.

The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) has been introduced as a reaction to events as they occur. In future the report recommends:

- Making mediation support a priority and developing a mission-wide strategy.
- Improve leveraging of mission assets.
- Build up human resources and skill sets.
- Ask the government to take the lead in mediation and reconciliation.
- Compel armed groups to bear responsibility.

Nepal

Research from the Secure Livelihoods Consortium on Local Peace Committees in Bardiya, Nepal found their impact to be limited (Tandukar et al., 2016). There was success in district level

committees helping conflict-affected people access funds, but not actively in planning or programming. Committees were poorly set-up, so that the committee was not even aware of their own terms of reference; they believed conflict resolution was the responsibility of local administration. Resources, training and capacity building all need to be in place. Village-level committees were more successful than district level committees running awareness programmes and providing locals with a platform to put messages to political parties. The connection between village-level and district-level committees was insufficient. Lack of incentive was suggested as more of a problem than capacity or awareness. The nature of political institutions in Nepal needs to change for incentives to work.

Papua New Guinea

A training programme in Melanasia, Papua New Guinea, uses local cultural beliefs and encouraging community discussion (Johnstone, 2013). Principles of gender equality, power-sharing and human rights were integrated into discussions as a home-grown solution rather than an outside perspective. Previous customary prescriptions were unregulated and lacked accountability and consistency. Systems were under elite control, and marginalised people could be coerced into discriminatory decisions. The local community training was seen as a successful approach towards successful inclusion and policy practices.

Sri Lanka

The UN and the Sri Lankan Government are partnering projects to support a Secretariat for coordination of reconciliation mechanisms, and to provide technical assistance to promote national unity and reconciliation (UN, 2018). A Peacebuilding Priority Plan was drawn up between these partners and in consultation with civil society. It was informed by a Peacebuilding Context Assessment. Support from the grassroots level is essential for legitimacy.

A UNDP commissioned evaluation (undertaken by the Centre for Poverty Analysis) found the Plan to be well-positioned as an anchoring framework for donors, development partners, and the UN - but not for local partners who want an approach that is less linear and more 'home-grown'. Progress was often with 'quick win' initiatives rather than long-term. Economic development often came above meeting rights-based challenges to reduce polarisation.

Relationship management and communication between UN staff and staff of the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM) and the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) is important and requires improvement. Trust needs to be built, therefore relationship building is an important part of projects.

Local capacity requires stewardship, and gender is a contentious issue and programming must ensure the participation of women. The review suggests that theory of change and standard logical analysis approaches may not be suitable. When working in a politically sensitive context, it is not possible to make logical predictions. Proactive monitoring and risk management is important in dynamic contexts. Adaptive management is also recommended in an unstable environment.

Yemen

A *Search for Common Ground*² project in Yemen aimed to increase local-level cohesion promoting a culture of dialogue and diversity (Al-Nabhani, 2018). The project was supported by the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). Inter-communal violence was reduced with dialogue processes focused on gender and masculinity. And conflict management mechanisms were developed to mitigate future disputes. Activities included: Insider Mediator Training, Conflict Scans, Validation Meetings, Project Design and Management Training, and Local Level Dialogue Processes. Beneficiaries reported the intervention to be relevant and supportive of their needs. Evaluation showed that social cohesion was effectively promoted.

It was deemed essential to involve local leaders, Local Councils, and community members. Further recommendations include: factor in sufficient time for achieving expected outcomes; provide Conflict Resolution Committees with operational expenses, supplies, and advanced training courses; capacity building should be a continuous process and include local community support officers, local authorities, and local leaders; giving women the opportunity to implement initiatives after gender awareness-raising on the positive role of women in peacebuilding, and involve local authorities in conflict resolution to ensure sustainability.

5. Approaches in Europe

A conference on approaches to conflict resolution in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe area produced the following conclusions and recommendations (OSCE, 2013):

- Conflict resolution is a long-term process. Progress can seem slow at times between actual shifts in position.
- Each conflict has to be seen in its particular environment. There is no single or normative framework due to highly context sensitive nature of conflict.
- Conflict resolution tools should integrate state and non-state actors through multi-track approaches at different levels (local, regional, national).
- Conflict is solved by reciprocal concessions, compensation or construction/reframing.
- Facilitate resolution of deadlock by identifying ripe moments of mutually hurting stalemates.
- Inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders is crucial.
- Be mindful of the principle of local ownership and pay particular attention to the participation of women.
- Account for areas where non-violent stakeholders can contribute to solutions.
- Mediation is one of the most efficient instruments. It is a specialised activity which requires specific training and expertise.
- The establishment and promotion of I4P is recommended for sustainable peacebuilding. Local ownership of these is essential. They must provide space for entry-points for civil-society groups and make connections with the state.

² <https://www.sfcg.org/>

6. Conflict transformation lessons from Christian Aid programme experience

Christian Aid reviewed their country programmes on conflict transformation to identify lessons learned for Christian Aid country programmes (Witt & Balfe, 2016).

Key lessons which emerged:

- Empowering civil society should be central to programme theories of change.
- It is important to consider the many different roles that men and women play in conflict. The role of youth is also a key consideration.
- Dialogue is not enough to transform conflict, groups need to be empowered to engage in a meaningful way.
- Understand the incentives for different actors, what makes them engage?
- Approaches need to be embedded in local political understanding.
- Power and conflict analysis is important.
- Programmes should undertake ongoing evaluation and adaptation, paying particular attention to ensure the marginalised are represented.

Protection strategies must be developed.

7. Reducing armed Violence

A review of the literature on reducing armed violence finds a small amount of literature (published between 2010 and 2015) described specific factors for success or advice for strategies to avoid (Cramer et al., 2016). No consensus could be made in the absence of a body of literature. However, examples of interventions to successfully reduce armed violence identified were:

- A conditional cash transfer programme in the Philippines (Crost et al., 2014).
- Public security platforms championed by city mayors in Colombia and Brazil reduced gang-related violence (Hoelscher & Nussio, 2015).
- Employment creation in Iraq (Berman et al., 2011).

Interventions found to aggravate armed violence include: reproduction of structural obstacles to conflict resolution rather than transformation; increased attacks due to a public works programme, and an international intervention distorting local economic incentives.

Cramer et al (2016) note that the limited findings do highlight primacy of local actors in addressing armed violence and the role of third-party, if any, should be supplementary for successful mediation. External mediators can add new layers of complexity to conflict situations. “The search identified no high quality research that examines the impact of governance interventions funded by donors on conflict prevention and mitigation” and “There was no high or moderate quality evidence that justice and reconciliation interventions were effective in preventing or mitigating armed violence” (Cramer et al., 2016: 27).

8. Police

Exploration of police institutions is an area that warrants more exploration than is possible in this review. One case study is touched upon here as suggested by an external expert. Community policing in Bougainville in the region of Papua New Guinea has shown promising results (Dinnen

& Peake, 2013). Success is attributed to its innovative and locally grounded character. Members of the Community Auxiliary Police are sworn police officers whose role extends to mediation, working with traditional leaders, and supporting community government. Accountability is a meshing of oversight from different sources including the Councils of Elders system, Bougainville Community Policing Project, and a Non-Commissioned Officer component. Lessons identified by Dinnen and Peake (2013) include:

- Focus on local strengths rather than local deficiencies.
- Be aware of out-dated institutional forms that are embedded but no longer working.
- Do what fits best in that particular situation rather than what may be 'best practice' from elsewhere.
- Where there is strong local vision, support should be light-touch and facilitative.

9. Women

The role of women in conflict resolution also warrants much more attention than is possible within the scope of this report. One report that emerged through the rapid search by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security looked at women's peacebuilding strategies in Myanmar and Ukraine (Warren, et al., 2018). The study interviewed civil society and government leaders, and reviews the literature to find women using a variety of strategies to improve peace. These included informal relationships to overcome traditional exclusion. Women in Myanmar have used 'back-channel discussions' and personal relationships to get their voices heard in formal peace processes, and efforts also go beyond the formal processes. Women in the Ukraine have hosted and participated in local, national, and international dialogues despite lack of access to formal processes. The Regional Women's Dialogue Platform³ helps to build bridges between the cultural east/west divide and exchange peacebuilding practices.

Broader findings which emerge from the two case studies include:

- Women can leverage standards and norms to advocate for women's rights.
- Formal inclusion of women in peace processes enable the voices of women's civil society organisations to be heard.
- Advancing gender equality should be associated with decentralisation of government.

³ <https://ungreatlakes.unmissions.org/womens-platform-1>

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