# Main Results of 'Broader Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation' Project 2011-2015

**In cooperation with** Bilkent University

Exclusion is one of the principal reasons groups resort to violence and protest. Research has found that the inclusion of additional actors/groups next to the main conflict/negotiation parties (such as civil society or political parties), is crucial in making war-to-peace and political transitions more sustainable.[1] However, policy makers and international donors continue to struggle to respond adequately to calls for greater inclusion.

The Broader Participation Project has focused on better understanding how inclusion works and what the impact of broader inclusion is on the quality and sustainability of peace and transition agreements and their implementation. Quality is understood as how well the causes and effects of conflicts are addressed in the agreement. Sustainability is understood as how well the provisions addressing these quality factors are implemented, and to what extent violence is reduced.

The first phase of the project (2011-2013) found that inclusion takes place not only at the negotiation table. Paffenholz's (2014) research describes the broad variety of possible inclusion modalities identified both at the table and alongside of it (see inclusion models in box below). Inclusion/participation, is therefore defined empirically as taking part in an inclusion model, as opposed to a normative value only applicable to certain kinds of actors. This allowed the project to shift the focus of debate away from the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy that has characterized research and policy debates, and address instead *when, how and under what conditions* inclusion can work effectively. The second phase of the project (2013/2014) applied a comparative case study approach to the negotiation and implementation of 40 peace and political transition case studies (see cases in annex) analysing the functioning of the inclusion models identified in phase I of the project in more detail and in more cases. The third phase of the project (2014/2015) analysed the data, applying qualitative and quantitative research (frequency and correlation analyses) methodologies.

Under the lead of Dr Thania Paffenholz, the project was conducted at the Centre on Conflict, Peacebuilding and Development at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID). Phase II of the project was conducted in cooperation with Dr Esra Cuhadar at Bilkent University in Ankara; case study research additionally benefitted from a cooperation with Tufts University in Boston.

## Main results

**Inclusion does not only take place at the negotiation table:** There remains an excessive focus on the negotiation table as the locus of the peace and transition process. However, inclusion can take place during all phases of the process and at varying distances from the table. Seven inclusion models have been identified, with modalities occurring either in parallel or at different times of the process. Success cases always featured a combination of different inclusion modalities.

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### 7 Models of Inclusion

1. **Direct representation at the negotiation table**
   a. Inclusion within negotiation delegations
   b. Enlarging the number of negotiation delegations
   c. National Dialogue (peacemaking, constitution making, reforms)
2. **Observer status:** Selected groups or public via media
3. **Consultations:** official/unofficial; elite/broader/ public
4. **Inclusive commissions**
   a. Post-agreement commissions
   b. Commissions preparing/conducting peace
   c. process
   d. Permanent bodies
5. **High-level problem solving workshops** (Track 1.5)
6. **Public decision-making** (i.e. referendum)
7. **Mass action**

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**Quality of influence matters:** Contrary to earlier research, the project found that the involvement of more groups alongside the main parties to negotiations does not automatically lead to increased quality and sustainability of agreements. However, when included actors were able to influence a) the quality of agreements (as defined above), and/or b) the

implementation of those issues, and/or c) push for starting negotiations or signing agreements, this influence was correlated with a higher rate of sustained agreements. Thus, what matters is not merely the quantity or diversity of actors included, but the quality and influence of their contributions.

**Included actors**: Organised civil society was the most frequently included category of actor, followed by women's groups, the general electorate (through referenda), and political parties. Armed groups that were previously excluded from track 1 negotiations were included to a lesser extent.

**Broader inclusion is mostly motivated by strategic, rather than normative considerations**: The inclusion of additional groups or actors next to the main conflict parties was most often initiated by the main conflict parties themselves, with mediators being the second most likely to initiate inclusion. Conflict parties mostly opted for inclusion to increase their legitimacy (e.g. Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkish/Kurdish, Mexico, Bougainville), secure public buy-in (e.g. Colombia, Kurdish case) or achieve support from major constituencies including hardliners (Northern Ireland, El Salvador, Somaliland). In 24 percent of cases inclusion was initiated from below, while also 24 percent of all cases saw inclusion initiated from the top (conflict parties/mediators) and the bottom at the same time. Mediators pushed for inclusion to gain momentum for negotiations (Darfur, Kyrgyzstan, Northern Ireland, Kenya Tajikistan, Burundi), to add new perspectives or test new ideas (Macedonia, Georgia/Abkhazia, Tajikistan, Moldova), or due to past positive experiences with inclusion in other context.

**The involvement of women's groups** was strongly correlated with successful negotiation and implementation outcomes. Nevertheless, the inclusion of women was much harder to achieve, as it was often successful only after massive lobbying. Though women's groups often pushed for gender provisions, the most consistent achievement of women's groups was to push for the commencement or finalization of negotiations when momentum was flagging (See the related briefing paper on Women and Gender).

**Supporting and hindering factors for quality inclusion:** Overall, we found a number of process design and contextual factors that were key in supporting or hindering quality inclusion. These factors are essential in explaining why included actors were able to contribute to the sustainability of agreements or not.

PROCESS DESIGN

**Exclusive inclusion:** An inclusive process cannot be evaluated without knowing who was excluded from participation. For example, the National Assembly in Guatemala has long been presented as one of the most representative inclusion bodies. It consisted of political parties and civil society groups, including many women and indigenous groups. However, one of the most influential civil society organizations in the country, the landowners association, was not included. Together with the political establishment they were able to lobby against the implementation of many proposed changes that the National Assembly successfully brought into the peace agreement. Moreover, in reaching a sustainable agreement it is not simply enough that all relevant groups be included. The actors within these groups also need to be perceived as representative and legitimate. For example, in the Burundi peace negotiations, the Hutu negotiators rejected the participation of women's groups at the table because many of them were perceived as representing only the Tutsi community.

**Decision-making** procedures are essential as they can negate the benefits of inclusion by side-lining included actors or marginalizing their contributions (non-binding inputs). For example, in almost all National Dialogues (direct representation at the negotiation table), despite widespread consultation with all groups, ultimate decision-making power rested with a small group of already-powerful actors.

**Selection procedures and criteria** determine whether actors will effectively represent their constituencies. The following selection procedures were identified: invitation, nomination, election, the advertisement of positions, and open participation. Additional actors to a process are often selected on the basis of common demographic features, the most common of which are ethnicity, gender and geographical location.

**Transfer strategies** are essential in ensuring that the inputs of included actors make their way into agreements. This is particularly relevant for inclusion modalities further from the negotiation table such as consultations, high level workshops, or commissions. Success cases have all had a combination of transfer strategies such as: handing over of reports to negotiators or mediators; direct exchange with mediators, advisors, or negotiators; participation of mediators in consultations or problem-solving workshops; public statements; press releases; visible peace messages; and lobbying for the international or regional community's attention.

**Mediators** that have a good understanding of the relevance, functioning and impact of inclusion have been powerful supporters when they have used their role strategically, displayed flexibility, and found alternative ways to involve the voices of included actors into a process they would otherwise be excluded from.

**Support structures for included actors** during negotiations can substantially enhance their influence on the negotiations. For example, when included actors had access to expert support during negotiations, such as assistance in drafting contributions to agreements, they were more effective in making differentiated and quality contributions.

## CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

**Power politics and elite resistance/support:** inclusive processes challenge established power structures. Hence, resistance of power holders is to be expected. When main negotiating parties or political elites in a country are not committed to the process including more actors at the table reduced the chance of success, especially when these groups are not given decision-making power. In most case studies, even successful ones, established power holders have employed resistance, both open and tacit, towards the reaching or implementation of agreements. When resistance was very strong during negotiations, it was sometimes more effective for additional actors to remain outside of official talks as this allowed them to achieve greater leverage and pressure from as external parties via the media or mass action.

**Regional and geopolitical context**: overall, the case studies showed that the political influence of regional actors is decisive for peace and transition processes and has often been more important than the one of international actors. For example, the role of the European Union in the Cyprus conflict was more important than the UN peace plan, or the role of India in the Nepali conflict, where the withdrawal of its support for the Nepalese government was a decisive factor that enabled the civil society movement to have greater impact.

**Public buy-in** for an agreement or constitution is essential and is influenced by the general political climate in the country and how powerful actors support the peace process. For example, in Cyprus the main negotiator for the Greek Cypriots publically stated that he did not support the 2004 Annan Peace Plan, thus contributing to a failed referendum on the Greek Cypriot side. However, public buy-in can also be created. In Northern Ireland, in the run up to the referendum over the Good Friday Peace Agreement, a massive civil society campaign managed to push for a positive outcome of the referendum.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

These results provide policy makers and practitioners with evidenced-based justification that broader inclusion leads to a much higher rate of sustaining peace and transition agreements.

However, the results demonstrate that broader inclusion in itself is not sufficient to achieve positive outcomes. Rather, it is only quality inclusion, i.e. the influence and ability of included actors to make meaningful contributions, which is strongly correlated with positive outcomes. This finding highlights the need to change the way advocacy for inclusion is currently being practiced. In particular, critical attention needs to be focused on the quality of participation, not just on the number of additional included actors. Furthermore, the results show that it is not only women and civil society who are potential candidates for inclusion, but also side-lined armed groups, political parties, and hardliners, among others.

The supporting and hindering factors identified by the project can translate directly into policy and operational action in support of on-going peace and transition processes during all phases (pre-negotiations; negotiations, implementation). They can serve as a planning or assessment frame to analyse whether a process has:

- The right design in terms of negotiation and implementation architecture and the correct inclusion modalities to create preconditions for impact;
- The relevant actors involved that can affect change;
- The adequate procedures (decision making, selection, transfer) and support structures for all included actors in place;
- A mediation team that has the adequate set up and expertise to support the process;
- Public support, or the means to generate it;
- Strategies to deal with the most important national, regional and international actors.
- Strategies to combine political and operational support to civil society, women, as well as other potential or existing included actors.

## IMPACT ON POLICY AND PRACTICE

The Broader Participation project has already provided expertise to a number of ongoing processes such as those in Colombia, South Sudan, Mali, Myanmar, Ukraine, and Syria. Additionally the project has been requested to contribute to several UN processes, including the High-Level panel for the review of the UN Peacebuilding architecture, and the Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325 for UN Women

## NOTES

[1] Nilsson, D. 2012 "Anchoring the Peace: Civil Society Actors in Peace Accords and Durable Peace," in International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations.

[2] Paffenholz, T. 2014, Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Beyond the Inclusion–Exclusion Dichotomy. *Negotiation Journal*, *30*(1), 69-91, see also: Broader Participation in Peace Processes:  Guide to Mediators, hd centre June 2014 by Thania Paffenholz: http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/MPS4-Broadening-participation-in-peace-processes.pdf

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1. **Aceh** (Peace Negotiation 1999-2003)
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15. **Israel-Palestine** (Geneva Initiative 2003-2013)
16. **Israel-Palestine** (Oslo I 1991-1995)
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18. **Kyrgyzstan** (Political reforms 2013 – present)
19. **Liberia** (Peace Agreement and Implementation 2003-2011)
20. **Macedonia** (Ohrid FA Peace Process 2001-2013)
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26. **Northern Ireland** (Good Friday 2001 2013)
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39. **Turkish-Kurdish** (Peace Process 2009-2014)
40. **Yemen** (National Dialogue 2011-2014)