

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR INCLUSIVE MEDIATION PROCESS DESIGN

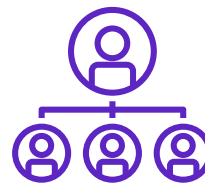
Mediation process design is the formulation of a plan or a strategy on the approach and organization of the mediation, in order to facilitate a successful prevention, resolution or management of conflict.

Inclusivity refers to the extent and manner in which the views and needs of conflict parties and other stakeholders are represented and integrated into the process and outcome of a mediation effort.

An inclusive process is more likely to:

- Identify and address the root causes of conflict
- Include more representative voices with different constituencies
- Ensure that the needs of the affected sectors of the population are addressed
- Increase the legitimacy and national ownership of the peace process, and eventual agreement and its implementation
- Increase support for the mediation effort and thus reduce the likelihood of spoilers undermining the process
- Address the increased fragmentation of modern conflicts

It is important to take a multi-track approach to designing inclusive mediation processes that includes multiple entry points for participation at each stage of the effort, in order to integrate perspectives of broader stakeholder groups, particularly women leaders and women CSOs. At the most basic level, inclusion should consider:



NUMBER AND CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPATION



TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

ENTRY-POINTS FOR INCLUSION IN DIFFERENT PHASES OF MEDIATION:



PREPARATORY PHASE:

- Conduct a comprehensive and gender-sensitive conflict and stakeholder analysis
- Identify concrete challenges and opportunities to promote inclusion in the mediation process (via a gender-sensitive mediation assessment, looking at gender norms in the society, cultural, religious, legislative antecedents, policy frameworks, etc.)
- Lead by example: Build an inclusive mediation team, aiming for gender parity and ensuring that all team members have a good understanding of gender dimensions in the areas of their expertise
- Appoint women as actors and lead mediators; identify women leaders and their supporters as relevant actors
- Assess potential “hidden” power asymmetries that may limit women’s participation (gender norms, cultural attitudes, logistical obstacles) and secure support to address these. A culturally informed approach is of particular importance when promoting the effective participation of women in a peace process, as gender relations are perceived differently in different cultures.

ENTRY-POINTS FOR INCLUSION IN DIFFERENT PHASES OF MEDIATION (CONTINUED):



MEDIATION PHASE:

- Design a multi-track approach, including broad consultations with women and civil society to take their needs and concerns into account. Ensure clear coordination between tracks.
- Promote inclusivity in identification and formation of delegations
- Identify and address security, travel and financial constraints that may restrict women from participating in a mediation process
- Provide technical support, capacity building and security to parties to facilitate participation of women; e.g. invite women to talks, provide physical protection to women delegates, provide childcare, etc.
- Develop two-way communication strategy with the wider public, including dissemination of information and collection of citizen inputs
- Ensure the use of gender-relevant language in the process and its outcome documents



POST-AGREEMENT PHASE:

- Ensure women's representation in implementation mechanisms and institutions
- Address challenges to implementation of special provisions for inclusion and protection of women's rights
- Plan for inclusion of women in the implementation arrangement of the peace agreement and consider their role when designing oversight and dispute resolution mechanisms
- Promote ongoing dialogue and other consultations to keep women engaged and to broaden local ownership
- Design inclusive monitoring mechanisms, including on conflict-related sexual violence violations
- Secure adequate resources to support the above

EXAMPLES FOR DIFFERENT OPTIONS FOR WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION:

- Identifying women early in the mediation process to engage across each track and participate as negotiators, advisors, civil society interlocutors, and members of transition and implementation bodies of the future peace agreement
- Creating structures for dialogue to allow women civil society groups to communicate with the mediator and traditional conflict parties and to shape discussions and priorities
- Convening a technical or women's advisory board to the mediator that is transparent, has influence, and effectively engages women's rights and women peacebuilding constituencies to shape the peace process and outcome
- Initiating civil society forums with representatives from trade unions, business sector, human rights groups, religious institutions, indigenous groups etc. to give the general public opportunities to voice their views
- Linking up with national/local peace initiatives that are commonly called upon to resolve disputes and to promote dialogue, trust and peace within communities

HOW TO ENCOURAGE CONFLICT PARTIES TO INCLUDE WOMEN INTO THEIR DELEGATIONS?

- Encourage the conflict parties to include at least one-third senior women representatives in their negotiating delegations
- Consider different design options, such as extra seats for women as well as women's parties, delegations, and forums
- Assist the conflict parties in regularly convening consultations with their constituencies, including women representatives