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Inclusive Mediation: A Recipe for Preventing Conflict & Sustaining Peace

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Complexity of Warfare in the 21st Century

- Post Cold War: Combination of ex-colonial states, govt mismanagement/ injustices, competing ideologies & competition for resources
- 80-90% victims are civilian by 2018 → 30% children
- Strategies & tactics of warfare include:
  - Sexual violence
  - Forced displacement /intimidation
  - Killing of men
  - Boys & girls targeted for abduction
  - Ethnic Cleansing
- Homes, villages are the frontlines
- Small arms, light weapons, home made bombs
- Merging of political ideology with crime/drugs/trafficking
- Rise of identity based violent extremism merging with crime
- Terrorist labeling – Authoritarianism shutting dissent/civil society

Implications for Peacemaking and Mediation

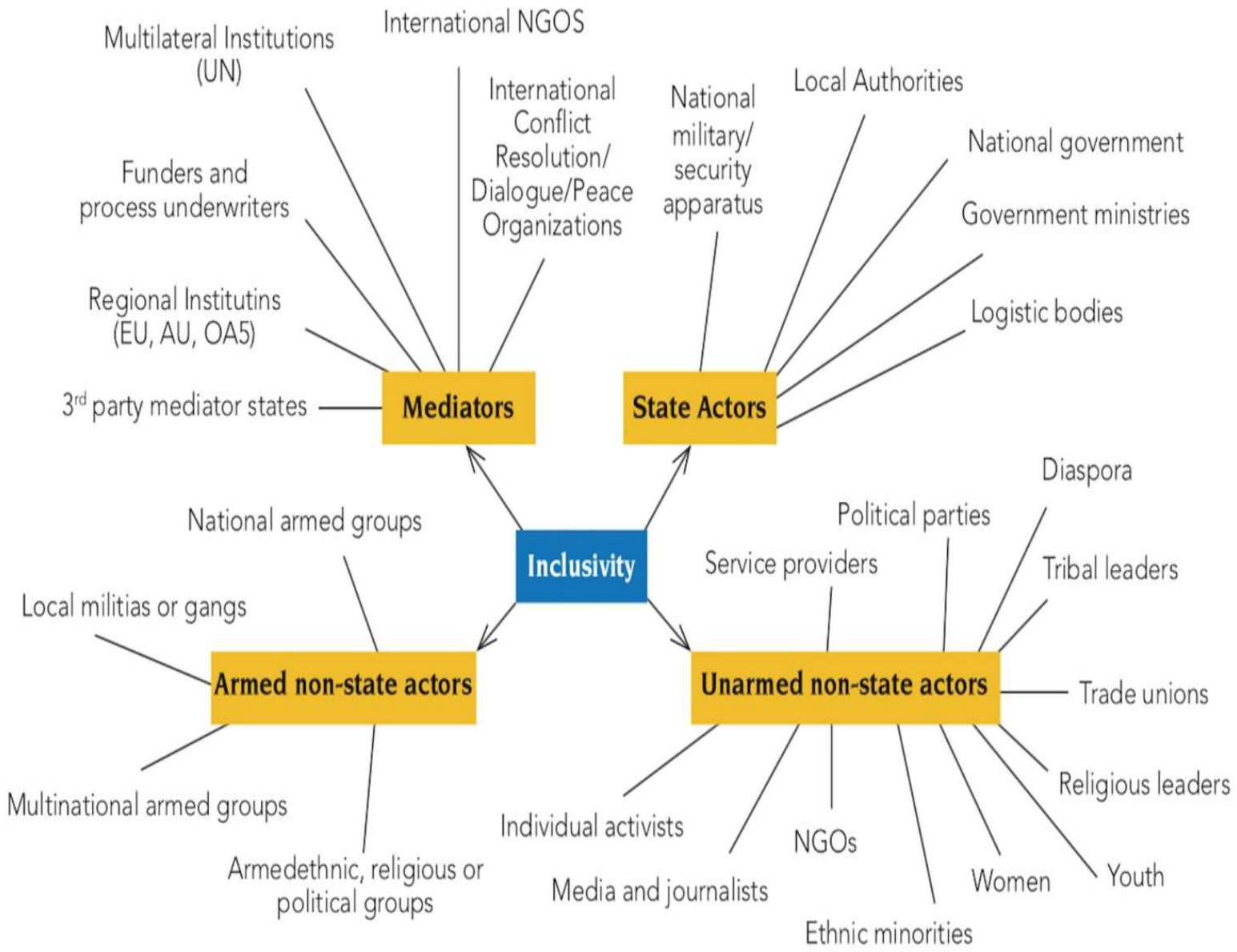
- Proliferation of Actors →War maker & peace makers
- Civil & transnational wars:

→Impact is political, economic, societal, cultural

- Military solutions even if possible, are never enough
- Political/negotiations processes necessary
- Unrealistic to assume 2-party negotiations can work when such diversity of actors.

So we need a paradigm shit…

From seeing peacemaking (mediation) as a military-political process of power sharing to a societal process of responsibility


Multilateral Institutions (UN)
International NGOS
International Conflict Resolution/ Dialogue/Peace Organizations
Funders and process underwriters
Regional Institutins (EU, AU, OA5)
3rd party mediator states
Mediators
National military/ security apparatus
Local Authorities
National government
Government ministries
Logistic bodies
State Actors
Inclusivity
National armed groups
Local militias or gangs
Armed non-state actors
Multinational armed groups
Armedethnic, religious or political groups
Diaspora
Political parties
Service providers
Tribal leaders
Unarmed non-state actors
Trade unions
Religious leaders
Youth
Women
Ethnic minorities
NGOs
Individual activists
Media and journalists

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Data

50% of peace agreements fail within **five years**

90% of civil wars occur in countries already affected by conflict

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But we also know…

Peace agreements are over **50% less likely to fail** when civil society is involved

When women have effective (not token) presence – they have positive impacts

Women came in to the picture…

- Unarmed → not recognized
- Exclusion of 50%+ of population.. (i.e. women) is denial of their agency and potential solutions
- Demanding recognition
- In 2000 → UNSC Resolution 1325
- First time SC recognized the different impact of armed conflict on women and men

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Who are the *women peacebuilders*?

Individuals and women-led organizations committed to non-violence; they are pro-peace talks and support human rights and women's rights. Some advocate for justice, others work to address the impacts of conflict and/or to promote peace and a gender perspective. They are often the first to call for peace talks in their countries yet still remain marginalized from official peace processes.

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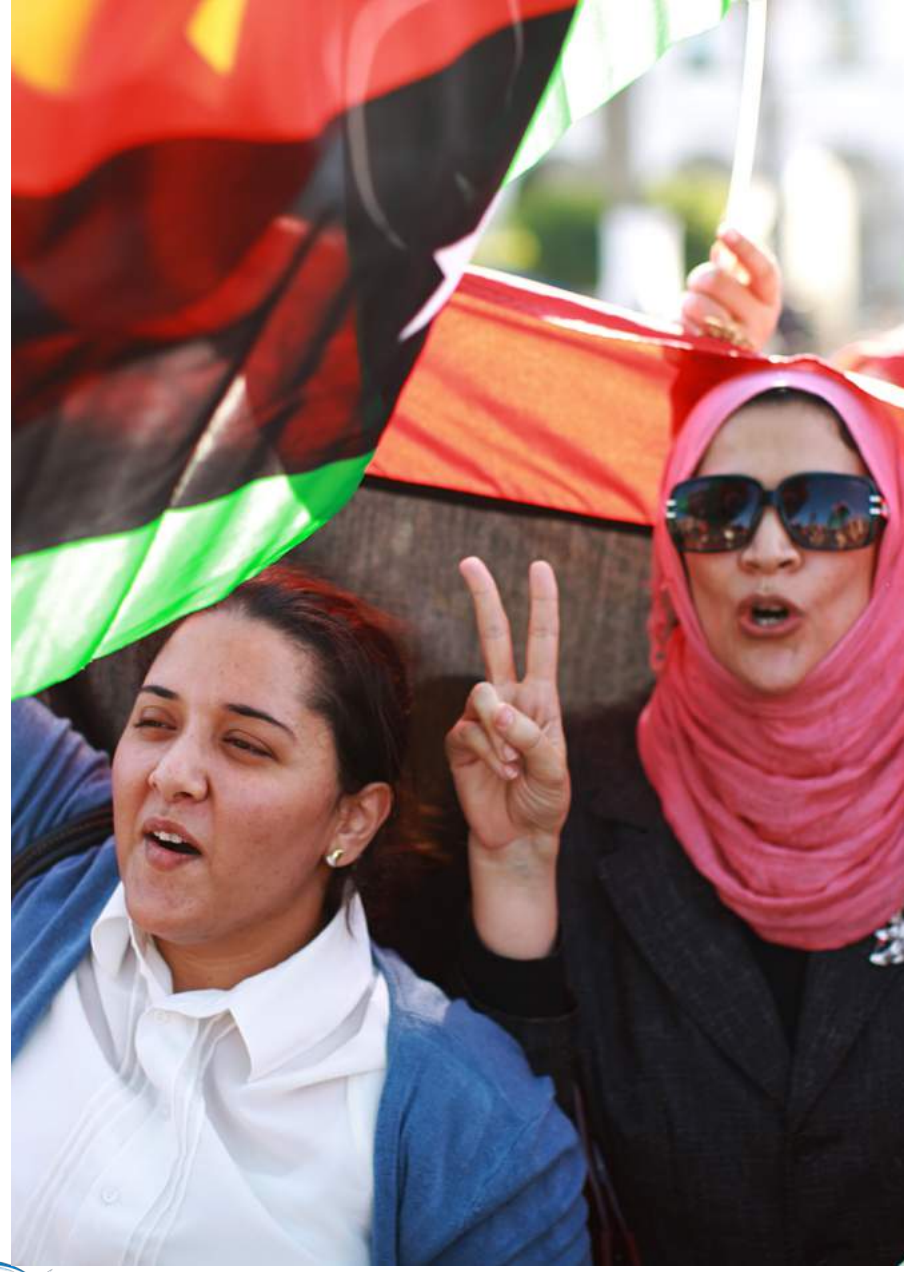
Benefits of inclusion

1. Sustainability
2. Promote accountability of belligerent actors to constituencies
3. Address root causes & introduce concerns of wider public
4. Introduce expertise & local knowledge
5. Pragmatic problem solving
6. Build trust & reduce tensions
7. Rights based: 'Nothing about us without us'
8. FUTURE & solution oriented
9. Inclusivity in peace process foundations for democracy



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- Good news is….
  - International community recognizing that early inclusion of civil society, especially women, in peace negotiations – including high level talks – is necessary for achieving and sustaining peace, and thus preventing further conflict

BUT

- Bad new is..
  - Inertia & obstacles – people say 'we don't know how'
  - Mediation practices haven't changed to keep up with reality of wars and they are not working well

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Better Peace Initiative

- The Better Peace Tool is an open source guide to help improve mediation with emphasis on the systematic and structured inclusion of:
- Non-violent and pro-peace and equality civil society organizations - especially women peacebuilders;
- Gendered perspectives in substantive issues of peace talks.

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Why are they absent?
Barriers to Women's Participation

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1. We represent everyone.
"Conflict parties won't accept women at the table.

2. The mediator cannot do everything. Or does not consider women a priority

3. Who are these women anyway? Questioning legitimacy of women peacebuilders

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4. This doesn't concern women." Military and security issues are 'technical' and 'not relevant' to women peacebuilders

5. "I'm here because of my own credentials." When women delegates say, "We don't represent other women."

6."The exclusion of women is cultural," and "the peace table isn't the place to deal with gender equality."

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So how do we advocate so policy makers can overcome these barriers and know how to be inclusive?

We tell them…

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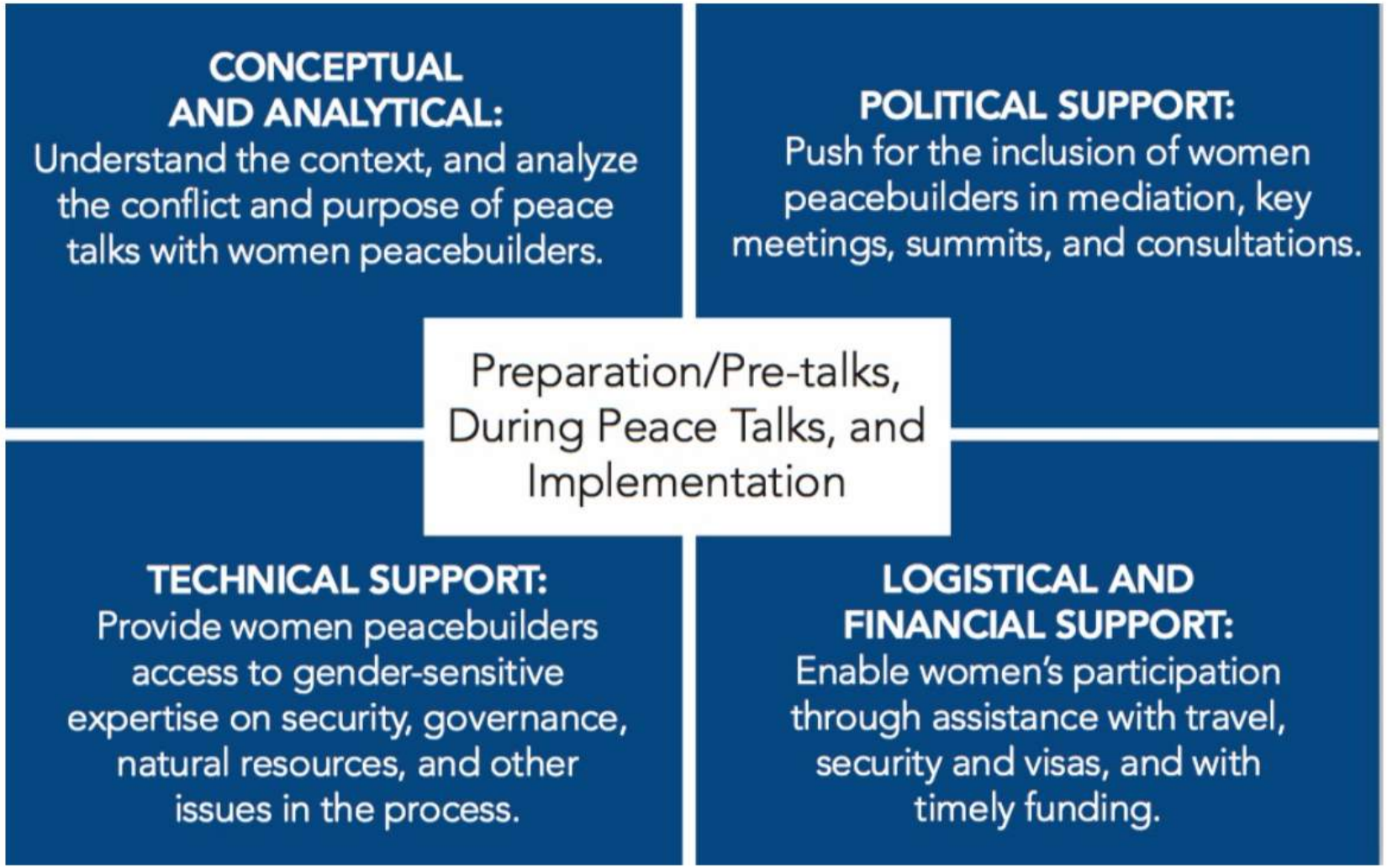
Four Guidance Areas for a Better Peace



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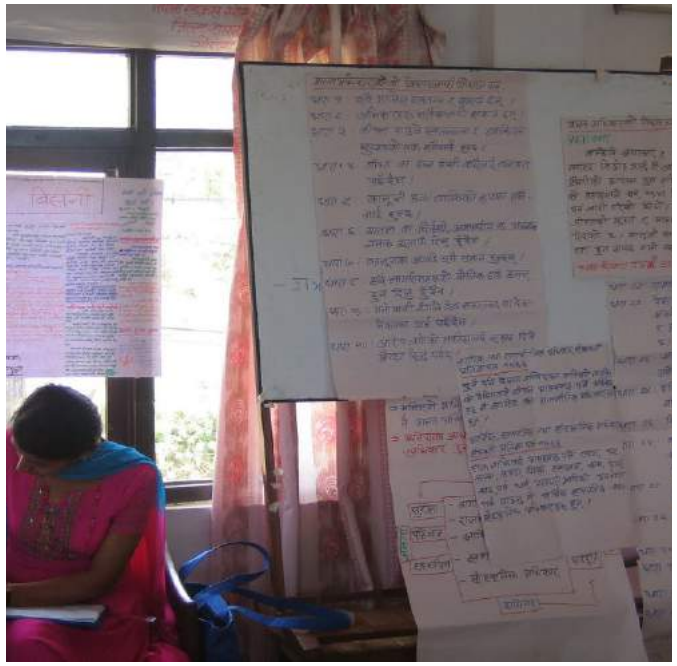
1. Understand the Mediation Context



1. Ask all parties about the differential impact of conflict on men and women & their reactions.
2. Map actors, incl existing or new civil society peace actors. Ask about women peacebuilders (WPBs).
3. Ask all stakeholders incl. WPBs and other civil society about their expectations the peace process.
4. Meet WPBs - Ask about priorities for peacemaking & vision for future? How can the peace process set the path forward. Don't limit to 'women's issues'.
5. Commission analysis of the gendered aspects of agenda topics
6. If scope for broadening formal talks is limited, engage WPBs on a systematic, structured basis from outset–so that they're not isolated from Track I processes.

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2. Match Political Rhetoric with Action

"If Norway is bringing Afghans together at the peace table, a precondition is that women are there." Amb. Aas

1. Include implementation of UNSCR 1325 & regular reporting in the Envoy's mandate.
2. Call for joint male-female co-mediators (Annan/Machal Kenya)
3. Reference privately/ publicly your institution's commitment to WPBs inclusion.
4. Commit to gender parity & expertise in own team & encourage quotas in negotiating teams.
5. Share inclusivity models with stakeholders & mediator. Explain why they matter.
6. Invite WPBs to international prep, strategy or implementation meetings/summits.
7. Encourage inclusion of WPBs as signatories to peace agreements e.g. Liberia, Somalia, N. Ireland.

3. Provide Technical Support

1. Ensure mediation technical advisors have gendered understanding of issue areas & interact with WPBs to seek their input.
2. Ensure senior gender/inc advisor in political team w/ direct reporting to envoy.
3. Recommend neutral gender advisor to peace talks to inform all parties.
4. Provide WPBs with capacity building on technical issues (e.g. governance structures, cessation of hostilities etc).
5. Facilitate coalition building among civil society.

4. Provide Logistical and Financial Support

1. Provide timely/ flexible financial support to local organizations for proactive/preventive peacemaking.
2. Expedite visas, logistics and security support and security passes for WPBS.
3. Provide stipends for WPBs attending peace talks to cover domestic costs.
4. Provide interpretation at all meetings and translation of related materials
5. Assign liaison officer in mediation team to inform/ respond to CSOs/WPBs
6. Allocate funds WPBS networks–esp. at implementation phase.

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