

Roundtable Talks & Other Modalities for Inclusivity

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Inclusivity in Peace Processes

- Look at inclusivity at and beyond the negotiating table through a variety of mechanisms, with a special focus on round tables.
- Consider opportunities for multiplying inclusivity by linking roundtable talks to informal and formal mechanisms for civil society inclusion.
- Explore ways of expanding inclusivity throughout the peace process as a means of advancing a sustainable outcome.

Who to Include?

Who to Include: Relevance of actors in multi-stakeholders processes depends on context. Different levels of decision-making may require different participants.

- Government
- Armed groups
- Opposition figures
- Political parties
- Faith based community
- Traditional community
- Women
- Youth
- Trade union and business community
- Victims of conflict
- Advocacy groups
- Media
- Service delivery providers
- Diaspora
- Academics
- Eminent personalities
- Human rights activists
- Community leaders

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Roundtable Talks

- Precedents
 - Most commonly used in Eastern Europe in late 80s as part of transition from authoritarian regimes (Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia).
 - Similar arrangements used in other processes (Latin America, Spain).
 - Most recent case is the Ukraine National Roundtable Talks.

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Common Elements

- **Patterns in Roundtable Talks**
 - No one size fits all.
 - Government and opposition engage in establishing structures for roundtable talks (determining number of representatives, agenda setting, establishment of working groups).
 - Structures and criteria for public participation, agenda setting and decision-making vary considerably.
 - Work is often conducted in committees and informal consultations.
 - Often includes open and closed sessions.
 - Characterized by high degree of flexibility.

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Modalities for Inclusivity at and Beyond the Roundtable

- **Direct**
 - Representation at the table
 - Observer Status
 - Technical Experts
- **Indirect**
 - Roundtable leadership or members develop outreach and consultation strategy
 - Establishing consultative advisory bodies to mediator (Liberia, Kenya)
 - Establishing a broader consultative forum that provides input into official track (Guatemala)
 - Soliciting input from broader society through media (call-in shows, social media)

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Broadening Inclusivity

- To broaden space for the inclusion of a greater number of actors and strengthen legitimacy of the peace process, links may be established to existing civil society processes, including informal civil society efforts.
 - Pre-negotiation efforts (Basque, Kashmir, Abkhazia)
 - Local reconciliation and dialogue (Northern Uganda)
- Envisioning inclusion opportunities during and post interim arrangements.
 - monitoring bodies
 - commissions
 - consultative groups
 - watchdog groups
 - service delivery providers

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National Dialogue Processes

- A further consideration is identifying if/when roundtable talks can be expanded to broader national processes, such as national dialogue initiatives.
- Examples of National Dialogue Processes: (West Africa, South Africa, Nepal, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Libya, Tunisia, South Yemen)
- Characteristics of National Dialogue Initiatives:
 - Variable References: National Dialogue, National Conference, Jirgas
 - Vary considerably in scope and application
 - Size (from hundreds to thousands)
 - Duration (few days to multiple years ie South Africa (two years))
 - Legal Status
 - Mandate

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Critical Issues in National Dialogues

- Mechanism for selection process
- Determining participation: Key people or most people?
- Determining relationship of roundtable to broader political processes
- Clarifying mandate and relationship to existing institutional structures
- Dealing with spoilers
- Preparing for inclusivity
- Managing expectations

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Lessons Learned: Advantages to Inclusion

- Provides framework for opposition and government to engage constructively.
- Engenders greater legitimacy by enabling greater inclusivity.
- Offers opportunity to capture complexity of process and broader issues that need to be addressed to achieve sustainable peace.
- Can foster cooperation among various stakeholders.
- Offers forum to facilitate common vision about priorities in interim administration.
- Broadens avenues for discussing difficult issues.
- May accommodate actors left out of official track.
- Can lead to greater local ownership.
- Can create constituencies for peace.
- Can facilitate relationship and trust-building between

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Lessons Learned: Dilemmas to Inclusion

- Increases complexity.
- Official parties may oppose greater inclusivity.
- May generate unrealistic expectations about peace process.
- Requires more resources and time.
- Challenge of determining who is “representative.”

Impact

- Degree to which process lead to stable outcome dependent on its inclusivity and extent to which it has a meaningful relationship to existing peace process.
- Inclusion should be part of broader peace process and institutional strategy.
- Should include follow-up throughout all stages of peace process, including implementation.
- Policy Impact:
 - Strengthening of institutions.
 - Broader framework for agreeing on a country’s political institutions
 - Strengthening mechanisms for dialogue mediation and conflict prevention.
 - Formulation of shared principles and national vision.

Impact

Process Impact:

- Social cohesion and confidence building between the government, political parties and the civil society.
- New channels for communication within society and between civil society and state.
- Better understanding of issues, priorities and challenges.
- Recognition of common needs and positions.
- Transformed perceptions, attitudes.

Process impact is as important as policy impact