INSEPARABLE BUT NOT INTERCHANGEABLE

INCLUSION AND GENDER SENSITIVITY FOR EFFECTIVE PEACE MEDIATION
The author would like to thank the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research for supporting this research and, in particular, Dr David Passarelli, Dr Adam Day, Christina McElwaine, and Anthony Dursi for their help. The author would also like to thank Amanda Waldron and Sophie Buddenhorn for research assistance. Finally, the author is grateful to the interviewees who participated in this study for their time and insights.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two decades since its promulgation, many of the commitments enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security remain unrealized. This report focuses on the dual challenges of ensuring that formal mediation processes are inclusive and gender sensitive. The report disentangles these key objectives, arguing that while inseparable, they are not in fact interchangeable.

Through a review of literature and interviews with seasoned practitioners and subject matter experts, the report focuses on how understanding the difference between women’s inclusion and gender sensitivity is crucial to developing targeted approaches to shape the processes and substantive outcomes of peace mediation. The report examines the role, strategies, tactics, and contributions of UN mediators and mediation advisers. The report also maps the emergence of women mediators networks, highlighting their potential in improving inclusive and gender-sensitive peace mediation as well as key challenges that persist.

The report concludes with a series of targeted recommendations for intergovernmental organizations, policymakers and government officials, donors, peace mediators and mediator networks, civil society organizations, and researchers, touching on areas of future engagement for each type of stakeholder and partnership between them, for example:

- A call to the UN and other multilateral institutions to prioritize inclusion and gender sensitivity in selection criteria for mediators and mediation advisers, and to ensure targeted training for men and women on these concepts and their operationalization.

- A call to high-level mediators to build relationships and collaborate with women mediators networks at regional, national, and local levels.

- A call to donors to diversify access to financing for women’s peace groups alongside investments in agencies facilitating inclusion and gender sensitivity in formal mediation.

This report shows that women’s inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation are inseparable but not interchangeable. Understanding the difference between these two goals is key to developing targeted approaches to ensure that peace mediation processes not only consider a diversity of perspectives and enable the participation of underrepresented groups but also, critically, that the substantive outcome of peace mediation address the gendered legacies of conflict in order to build more equitable societies.
INTRODUCTION

Since the historic adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000, policymakers, practitioners, and scholars are increasingly interested in advancing the participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict transformation efforts worldwide. Indeed, the commitments and aspirations enshrined in Resolution 1325 have arguably never been more important. Armed conflicts are at their highest level in thirty years, the majority of which are intra-State and involve multiple groups.¹ There are more people displaced today than in recorded history, the majority of whom are women and children.² Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to be exacerbating social unrest.³

As the field of peace mediation has evolved, new ideas and challenges have surfaced such as how to draw on, manage, and reconcile a diversity of perspectives representing a range of armed and unarmed actors that are actively invested in shaping the outcome of a conflict. Advancing the inclusion of women, in particular, has been endorsed at the highest levels of UN leadership, including by the Secretary-General, and the UN’s Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) currently identifies increasing the effective participation of women in peacemaking and conflict prevention efforts as one of its key priorities.⁴ At the same time, women activists globally have relentlessly continued to press for increased representation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding, despite facing great personal risks such as harassment, violence, and even death – especially in the Global South.

Yet, women remain marginalized from formal peacemaking, and peace processes and agreements continue to underemphasize or altogether neglect a focus on gender dimensions of conflict and peace. Between 1992 and 2019, women constituted six per cent of mediators, six per cent of signatories, and 13 per cent of mediators in major peace processes globally.⁵ Meanwhile, the proportion of peace agreements with provisions related to gender equality increased from 14 per cent to 22 per cent between 1995 and 2019, but the majority of agreements – especially ceasefires – lacked any focus on gender.⁶

More than 20 years since the adoption of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), an interdisciplinary body of literature spanning the humanities, social sciences, and legal studies has burgeoned, covering many aspects of the WPS agenda. Research demonstrates that women are not a monolithic category in peacebuilding; that they engage in a range of formal and informal ways despite facing barriers to participation; and that the inclusion of women and other marginalized groups in formal peace processes correlates with longer-lasting peace.⁷ Despite these and other important insights, effective approaches to the integration of women and the mainstreaming of gender in peacemaking and peacebuilding remain understudied.

This report contributes to a promising but still budding area of research – the dual challenges of ensuring that formal mediation processes are inclusive and gender sensitive. Specifically, it distinguishes between the inclusion of women and the integration of gender sensitivity in peace mediation, which are often conflated, driven by the underlying assumption that the former leads to the latter. Pushing back against the conflation of the two, the report shows that women's inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation are inseparable but not interchangeable.
Understanding the difference between these two goals is key to developing targeted approaches to ensure that peace mediation processes not only consider a diversity of perspectives and enable the participation of underrepresented groups but also, critically, that the substantive outcome of peace mediation, for example in the form of a comprehensive agreement, address the gendered legacies of conflict in order to build more equitable societies.

The analysis that follows pays particular attention to the role of the mechanisms within the UN, such as the Standby Team (SBT) of Senior Mediation Advisers and complementary non-UN mechanisms such as women mediators networks, that have developed over time in response to calls for greater inclusion and gender sensitivity. It highlights strategies, barriers, and opportunities for addressing both challenges. The report draws on a review of scholarly research, policy briefs, practical toolkits, or other publications of inter- and non-governmental organizations. The extensive literature review is combined with 26 interviews conducted between May and September 2021 with a range of experts such as current diplomats, officials in DPPA and UN missions in conflict-affected countries, current and former members of the SBT, former Special Representatives and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, and scholar-practitioners. The report is intended for a wide audience encompassing policymakers, practitioners, scholars, and students across multilateral organizations, governments and donor agencies, and in civil society who seek to promote peace and are interested in inclusive and gender-sensitive mediation.

The report's findings and analysis are timely for both theoretical and practical reasons. As some scholars have recently noted, inclusion remains “an ill-defined term”, one that is “seemingly benign and consensual” yet in reality “highly political.” At the same time, debates persist whether gender sensitivity – what it is, why it matters – in peacemaking is often confused with the mere presence of a single woman or limited number of women. These misconceptions alongside the overall lack of implementation and follow-through of international commitments persist against the backdrop of democratic backsliding, weakened multilateralism, and a strained rules-based international order.
Although peace mediation generally applied to inter-State disputes during the first 50 years since the UN's creation in 1945, in the last 25 years it has largely applied to intra-State disputes, mainly civil wars, which have come to dominate the landscape of armed conflicts globally. This shift has coincided with “a move towards norm-based interventions, and the professionalization of actors in the field [of peace mediation].” The UN General Assembly acknowledged in 2016 that “effective mediation and mediation support require systematic efforts at all levels”, which as others scholars have noted, marked a “significant evolution in dominant understandings of mediation and peace support in policy and practice that started with the shift from an exclusively State-centric approach.”

The UN Guidance for Effective Mediation describes mediation as a voluntary process “whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements.” Flexible but structured, mediation processes support negotiations throughout the conflict cycle – from initial contact between mediators and conflict parties, to ceasefire negotiations, to the implementation of final peace agreements. Differing from diplomacy, which seeks to advance a country's own foreign policy goals and interests, mediation is intended to be consensus-based and aimed at furthering the interests of all parties to a dispute. In reality, reaching consensus is a complex – often messy – endeavour.

A mediator must be pragmatic, aware of sensitivities and thorny issues in a given context, and prioritize various goals within a process while taking into account the competing needs and interests of conflict parties. In practice, this requires the mediator to strike a delicate balance between facilitating dialogue between conflict parties and their role in imposing a normative framework upon the process. Diplomats, in contrast, must consider their nation's interests. In that regard, diplomats representing particular governments often face restrictions around the kinds of conflict parties with which they can officially cooperate – in particular when it comes to non-State actors or those on proscribed terrorism sanction lists – while mediators are able to address all potential conflict parties. Successful mediation requires consent from engaged parties. Some experts also insist that mediation is rights-based, in that it seeks to achieve at least a minimum standard of well-being for parties and those they represent, without undermining the interests of the vulnerable.

Moreover, while peace mediation is often referred to as “facilitated negotiation” and is indeed anchored around supporting negotiations that aim to solve the central issues of a conflict, it is not limited to the conflict phases involving dialogue. Rather, mediation can encompass a wide range of tools employed throughout an entire conflict cycle, from initial trust-building to agreement implementation. Since the end of the Cold War, mediated settlements have become increasingly common in the field of international conflict resolution. Mirroring the shift in the nature of international conflicts away from inter-State conflicts, mediation has increasingly been used in the context of civil wars – particularly in the Middle East and Africa – and has been marked by the growing involvement of a broad array of international mediation actors, particularly regional organizations.
As with diplomacy, mediation occurs in high-level negotiations led by the UN or other multilateral organizations (Track 1), in national dialogues and informal mediation (Track 1.5), in Track 2 dialogues and problem-solving workshops, and at the local, grassroots, or community level (Track 3).\textsuperscript{16} Often, mediation occurs along multiple tracks simultaneously – for example, official Track 1 negotiations between the Syrian Government and UN leadership are supplemented by unofficial backchanneling and training for conflict parties in Track 1.5 efforts. Track 2 mediation processes are also usually aimed at supplementing Track 1 efforts, but are typically meant to engage influential yet non-official actors with the goal of initiating dialogue or laying the foundation for Track 1 talks. Norway’s role in mediating backchannel negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which eventually resulted in Track 1 negotiations and the Oslo Accords, is one such example. An example of Track 3 diplomacy can be found in Liberia, where a programme known as the Locally Initiated Networks for Community Strengthening (LINCS) helped citizens to form Community Peace Councils (CPCs) that would mediate disputes involving post-conflict issues before they turned violent.\textsuperscript{17}

Within the UN, DPPA’s Mediation Support Unit (MSU) serves as the primary service provider for all mediation activities. Comprised of UN staff and a SBT, who are supported by external experts and consultants, MSU provides mediation support to Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Special Envoys, Resident Coordinators, other high-level mediators, and mediation teams. They also provide mediation support as requested to regional organizations such as the African Union. Much of the MSU’s work is done behind the scenes, discreetly and away from publicity.

The high rates of conflict recidivism over the course of the last 30 years and the failure of peace agreements to guarantee a lasting peace have raised many key questions about how peace is made and who is involved in peacemaking, especially at the highest levels in formal processes, which have historically been exclusionary. Increasingly, mediation support has focused on engagement at the local level and in multitrack initiatives. As a senior DPPA official explained, “The field is really changing as we try to push for greater inclusion, so the days of just Track 1 are going away.”\textsuperscript{18} One key development in both the study and practice of conflict mediation is the emphasis on inclusivity and efforts to ensure that civilians and civil society organizations, not just combatants and armed organizations, are included in negotiations.

Mediators and mediation advisers such as those working under the auspices of the UN have played an important role in advancing inclusion, even if not to the same extent in every context. According to DPPA’s official guidance: “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.”\textsuperscript{19} Most relevant to the focus of this report is the definition’s emphasis on “other stakeholders” – the myriad of social groups who may not constitute parties to a conflict but are affected by its continuation and resolution such as civilians, including children, men, and women. The next section of the report delves into the concept of inclusion in peace mediation, particularly women, and how it relates to gender sensitivity.
UNDERSTANDING AND DISENTANGLING INCLUSION AND GENDER SENSITIVITY

Inclusion has been advanced in mediation to broaden participation and representation of traditionally marginalized or underrepresented groups with an eye towards empowering them and promoting their buy-in over the conflict resolution process and in its aftermath. Although DPPA’s policy on inclusion extends beyond women to encompass social, demographic, religious and regional minorities, youth, and civil society or professional organizations, the guidance places particular emphasis on gender-based inclusion. This is rationalized based on the observation that while women regularly participate in social movements, grassroots conflict resolution initiatives, and peace activism, they “tend to be excluded from peace and transition processes.”

Whereas women had previously entered into mediation processes as protected persons under international human rights law, Resolution 1325 provided an unprecedented impetus for increasing the representation and participation of women in mediation processes. The resolution acknowledged for the first time that armed conflicts impact women and girls differently than men and boys. It called for greater efforts to not only ensure better protection of women and girls from violence and other risks during armed conflicts but also recognized their important roles in preventing and resolving conflicts. Subsequent Security Council resolutions underscored commitments to increasing women's participation in peacemaking and conflict resolution. By one count, the frequency of women as peace mediators doubled in the last two decades – going from 11 to 25 – even though actual numbers remain very low.

Resolution 1325 and related resolutions also gave UN mediation teams a framework for gender mainstreaming in mediation. Gender-sensitive mediation is now widely recognized in international policy frameworks as a means of designing more inclusive – and some would argue effective – peace processes. Gender sensitivity refers to identifying and addressing the gender dimensions of thematic issues in negotiations, including by designing provisions in peace agreements that respond to the specific needs of – and are equally beneficial to – women and girls, and men and boys. This encompasses the need to analyze the conflict through a gender-sensitive lens to understand the impacts of a conflict on men and women as well as boys and girls, and underlying gender dynamics, including as it relates to power and inequality.

Critically, scholars and practitioners increasingly acknowledge that approaches to gender-sensitive conflict mediation must adopt an intersectional lens – one which views and addresses gender alongside other identity markers such as ethnicity and economic status – in order to be inclusive of traditionally marginalized, not just dominant, groups. Importantly, not all analysis that emphasizes inclusion in mediation exclusively focuses on women while not all research concerned with gender in mediation is singularly about the inclusion of women. However, a predominant theme in the literature on gender and mediation is the inclusion of women, covering arguments in favour of women's participation and ways to increase it.
A common argument in favour of women’s participation centres on evidence showing that more inclusive peace processes – including civil society groups and women’s groups – result in a more durable and sustainable peace. For instance, one recent statistical analysis found a robust correlation between peace agreements signed by women and the durability of the agreement, as well as stronger implementation of the agreement’s provisions – compared to those not signed by women.

Another common justification for increasing women’s participation in peacemaking generally is the claim that women are embedded in their communities and therefore able to secure broad ownership of – and public buy-in for – a peace process, which further bolsters the likelihood of a sustainable peace. Research also suggests that peace processes where women are able to exert a strong influence over the negotiating process are more likely to result in peace agreements containing explicit provisions on gender – especially when they are included early in the process and have the opportunity to shape the agenda. These findings are noteworthy for multiple reasons.

First, they point to the importance of timing and sequencing. It is not enough that women are simply included but mediators must also consider when and for how long during a process. One senior gender adviser specialized in conflict with deep experience related to Yemen, where a civil war has raged for several years and a prolonged humanitarian crisis persists, explained: “Given that many dialogues go on for years and engage the parties long before there are formal negotiations, the work of including women and integrating gender perspectives needs to start with this early work.” If these issues are not raised at the outset by mediators for conflict parties to consider and address over the course of negotiations, it often becomes very difficult to later “reshape or reframe” the agenda to make it more inclusive and gender-sensitive once formal talks begin.

Second, they are consistent with a theory of change anchored in a strategic logic of women’s inclusion, in particular that women’s participation in mediation produces better peace outcomes. For example, one recent study of 82 peace agreements in 42 post-Cold War conflicts found a statistically significant correlation between the presence of women signatories and durable peace. It also showed that the content of agreements tended to focus on issues such as political reform and greater representation. The rationale behind this line of thinking is compelling because the ultimate goal of any mediation initiative is to advance a lasting resolution to the conflict, especially where the future stability of a society is at stake and lives and livelihoods are at risk. A former SRSG suggested: “It is very important that to you [the mediator] project the image that peace is for men as well as women, not only for men because for any peace or development to be sustainable, it must benefit all of society.” Relatedly, a conflict resolution and mediation expert experienced in grassroots, regional, and international mediation explained:

“Basically what you're saying is: we're going into a new dispensation as a country and this agreement is what's going to be binding us to the new social contract that we're signing for our future. In this social contract, everyone needs to be represented. So the importance then of making sure women participate and are able to participate meaningfully – that they are fully equipped to do so – is critical.”
Increasingly, scholars and practitioners have called for greater nuance on inclusion and more scrutiny of which women are able to participate as well as how and why. After all, even when women are advisers to and members of negotiating delegations, or women's groups are represented in a mediation process, they are not always able to exert a strong influence on the process let alone its outcome. Nor do they necessarily advance the interests of wider segments of the populations, whether women of varying sociopolitical backgrounds or otherwise. Moreover, some experts contend that instrumentalist arguments for women's inclusion use gender to legitimize peace processes and unfairly characterize women as servants to mediation rather than equal participants and stakeholders in mediation.

Instead of falling into the trap of a tick-box approach to inclusion, some observers have increasingly called for widening beyond simply ensuring participation towards more holistically and substantively integrating a diversity of women's needs and interests into mediation. While recognizing that increasing the number and frequency of women's participation in mediation can be important for advancing gender balance in a given process, discerning voices spanning international organizations, academia, and civil society call for far greater attention to provisions on gender in the substance of negotiations, especially relating to the needs of the affected population. In particular, the transformation of unequal power dynamics between men and women, and their differential needs coming out of the conflict.

This tension highlights a key point at the intersection of inclusivity and gender sensitivity in mediation, which is the tendency to conflate women, as a category of people, and gender, as a social construct. In reality, the mere presence of a limited number of women – whatever their roles, seniority, or level of engagement – cannot guarantee that the interests of a broad section of women is considered and represented, or that the outcome of a process, including provisions in an agreement, will be gender sensitive let alone help transform unequal gender hierarchies. One mediation practitioner specialized in issues of gender and inclusion in conflict resolution suggested: “The expectation should not be that women will only speak for other women or on so-called ‘women’s issues’ but rather on a range of issues affecting all of society so that the perspectives informing the agenda are inclusive.”

Beyond efforts to simply tally women's participation, recent literature has sought to more closely examine the specific roles women play and the extent of their influence on negotiations and post-conflict outcomes. Despite the relatively small number of cases from which to draw conclusions, women mediators most commonly serve as chief mediator of formal (Track 1) negotiations, facilitators of negotiations, formal witnesses and signatories, or engage in shuttle diplomacy. Others have mapped an even broader range of modalities for women's participation – such as engaging in consultations, hosting inclusive commissions, or mobilizing mass action.

Where women have yielded strong influence, they have tended to prioritize four main objectives: working to bring parties to – or back to – the table; pressuring groups to sign a peace agreement; pushing for greater inclusion of women in the process or in post-conflict arrangements; or advocating for gender-awareness provisions in peace agreements. The role that women have played in securing confidence-building measures – such as ceasefires or prisoner swaps – also tends to be overlooked. In many instances, women by design operate in less visible spaces outside of Track 1 processes – for example in the case of the Syrian Women's Advisory Board, a diverse group of Syrian women advising the UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria.
Table 1. Examples of Women’s Inclusion in Peace Mediation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Case</th>
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<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Negotiator, signatory</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) was a party of Catholic and Protestant women who came across sectarian lines to run for election and sent a delegation to the Northern Ireland peace process, culminating in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. The NIWC played a critical role in shaping the peace mediation agenda and the substance of the agreement, emphasizing a focus on issues such as transitional justice, reconciliation, reintegation, and disarmament.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Negotiator, signatory, adviser</td>
<td>The peace process between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which culminated in a comprehensive agreement in 2014, is one of very few examples where women led and contributed substantively. This included in various direct roles on behalf of the Government such as signatories, negotiators, and legal advisers. Women were also members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission that consulted and advised the negotiators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>The peace process between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) stands out as a model of women's direct and indirect inclusion, as well as gender sensitive approaches. One form of indirect inclusion was as witnesses from different backgrounds such as victims groups, Afro-Colombian and indigenous groups, and others who frequently provided testimony to inform the peacemaking process. A gender subcommission was also specifically charged with focusing on women's inclusion and ensuring gender sensitivity in the dialogue and their substantive outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>During the protracted, ongoing Syrian civil war, a Women's Advisory Board (WAB) was established during the tenure of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to facilitate interaction and exchange between the WAB and the Office of the Special Envoy parallel to the formal peace talks in Geneva. Though active and engaged, the influence of the WAB has been limited due to a range of factors pertaining to its composition, its structure in relation to the mediation process, the receptivity of conflict parties, and the evolving conflict.</td>
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There has been significant normative development on inclusion – whether of women, civil society, or other traditionally marginalized and underrepresented groups – in the field of mediation and, more generally, in peacebuilding. However, operationalizing normative principles and commitments into action has lagged, along with a clear understanding of the “how to” – tactics, strategies, and approaches for implementation. This gap, in part, emerges from the ways in which UN-led peacemaking has historically been very State-centric and mediation has been primarily focused on inter-State conflicts. One former SRSG and senior diplomat argued:

“Some mediators will tell you that where ‘real’ mediation takes place – where concessions are made and agreements reached – are at places like a bar or a sauna but those spaces are typically inaccessible to women in many cultures. Even if accessible, these locations may not be where a woman mediator is willing to seek out opportunities to engage with other mediators or conflict parties.”

These aspects that are embedded in the history and culture of how mediation has traditionally been done thus serve as barriers to inclusivity. Moreover, the field of mediation has historically been dominated by what some critics have described as a “big man mediation approach” – one that is exclusionary and rewards macho performance focused on achieving the temporary cessation of hostilities over long-lasting structural change targeting root causes of conflict. Beyond the biases and shortcomings of particular individuals or personality types, broader systemic challenges related to training, leadership, commitment, and resources long impeded more inclusive and gender-sensitive peace mediation. However, there are important mechanisms that have developed at the UN in recent decades to advance more effective mediation, as the next section examines.
UN MEDIATION SUPPORT FOR ADVANCING INCLUSION AND GENDER SENSITIVITY: STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

As peace mediation has evolved, DPPA has put in place institutional mechanisms and adopted different strategies at various levels to increase effectiveness of support offered to UN representatives in-country and conflict parties, including the creation of the SBT. The SBT is a strategic asset attached to MSU that can be deployed to provide practical advice, guidance, and support to those within the UN system who are faced with challenging situations in conflict prevention and peace processes.\(^46\) Members of the SBT roster, who are based all over the world, are selected for their skillsets and deep experience in peacemaking. They are typically specialized in thematic areas of support such as process design (i.e. how to design an actual mediation process), security matters (i.e. ceasefires and security arrangements), power and wealth-sharing, transitional justice, constitutional matters, gender and inclusion. The SBT works at multiple levels, including with UN missions in-country as well as staff at UN Headquarters such as those within the Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) unit in DPPA. The GPS unit serves as the focal point on matters pertaining to the WPS agenda in DPPA, at the heart of which is the political participation of women in peace processes.\(^47\)

In the early days of the SBT, knowledge and prioritization of gender and social inclusion was largely limited. To the extent there was any focus on implementation of Resolution 1325, it tended to happen on an \textit{ad hoc} basis, often delegated to women members of the SBT, without adequate political commitment, resources, or mainstreaming. As one early member of the SBT who was designated as a power-sharing and process design expert, and supported mediation processes in Europe, Asia, and Africa recalled:

“I had long discussions with colleagues who were the ‘gender experts’ [on the SBT], taking advice from them and from former members. When I integrated a focus on gender as part of my role in mediation processes, there was some level of activism on my part. I felt it was important and I wanted to highlight those issues that were not being given attention.”\(^48\)

In the last few years, however, the prioritization of gender sensitivity and social inclusion has changed. A senior DPPA official explained: “Even when there is no specific request related to themes of inclusion, we try to integrate those principles and commitments into the support that we provide whether that’s, for example, on constitutional matters or security arrangements but with mixed results depending on the context.”\(^49\) A current SBT member and process design expert asserted: “All [SBT] members are expected to have knowledge and expertise on how to make sure processes are inclusive, to apply a gender lens to ensure fuller participation of women, and to integrate the principles of Resolution 1325 into the agenda.”\(^50\)
Another senior mediation adviser with expertise on gender and inclusion similarly relayed:

“All of us in the SBT are expected to embrace the goal of inclusion in whatever assignment you have or whatever peace process you’re working – be it Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, etc. Then, the designated gender expert works closely with the Gender, Peace, and Security unit within DPPA in New York by discussing, learning, and exchanging through regular meetings. This relationship is important especially when there is a senior mediator or Special Envoy who is maybe less interested and invested in focusing on inclusion of marginalized groups and integrating gender perspectives.”

Indeed, some mediators are very receptive to and eager for MSU support, including from the SBT, while others are much less so, which in turn can shape the level of advice and engagement on women’s inclusion as well as gender sensitivity. Even where mediators are receptive and committed to these issues, one former SRSG suggested: “We have a political tension between the normative agenda – and the flexibility of what a mediator in a situation may want to do – and what is possible given the disposition of the conflict actors.” A former SBT member specialized in power-sharing conceded “the margin of manoeuvre” can be very limited depending on the terms of engagement, given by the SRSG, and the sensitivities of a given process. A current SBT member similarly elaborated on this challenge:

“The reality on the ground is that if the conflict parties on the ground say no to the inclusion of women, the best you can do as a mediation adviser or facilitator is to lobby the mediator. However, sometimes the mediator is not receptive to this kind of lobbying because they are more focused on the fact that they’ve brought the ‘key actors’ to the table and don’t want to risk ruffling any feathers. In these tricky situations, insights from senior gender advisers on the ground combined with guidance and support from New York can be helpful.”

When confronted with political or societal leaders, for example interfaith leaders, who have an influential role in stemming intercommunal violence and supporting conflict resolution, referencing UN principles and directives on inclusive mediation may have limited effect. Instead of telling local religious leaders they needed to include women because of the commitments enshrined in Resolution 1325, which risks giving the impression that inclusion is an external, Western agenda, SBT members have sometimes taken a different tack with these actors, highlighting how women were already making specific contributions to peace beyond traditional roles as mothers and caregivers – for instance, as information hubs on the needs of displaced groups, as liaisons to service providers, and as organizers of limited resources – in order to encourage traditional male leaders to see women’s partnership and collaboration as constructive not just because of the principles of inclusion in a mediation process, but also because of their contributions to humanitarian, social, and political outcomes.

UN mediators and mediation advisers supporting a process, whether for example in South Sudan in the long-running civil war between the Government and rebels, or in Libya where the transition remains tenuous after the fall of the Gaddafi regime, have a critical role to play in leading by example. This starts with the diversity of UN experts and gender balance in the teams deployed but, in addition, via their tone and tack, and the seriousness with which they seek to facilitate a process that is both inclusive of women and sensitive to context-relevant gender dimensions. One senior mediation adviser specialized in security arrangements suggested that rather than being prescriptive or dictating to conflict parties, asking the right questions to probe deeper and “taking the longer road”, may yield better results.
As this interviewee explained: “There are many ways to adopt a gender lens, and as someone deployed by the UN you have to be smart, consistent and creative when looking for different entry points” to see results.\textsuperscript{56}

Other effective techniques relayed by former and current SBT members include reframing sensitive topics, clarifying perceptions and opinions, following up on sticky issues, and advancing the influence of women alongside other traditionally excluded groups.\textsuperscript{57} For example, in Cyprus, there are bicommunal committees that have been established, including along thematic lines, that bring people together from the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides, to discuss issues of common concern, which are facilitated by the UN Mission in Cyprus. In a deployment to that context, one SBT member, in trying to support facilitators of the committees, included specific elements in a training programme that looked at the gender dimensions of process facilitation.\textsuperscript{58} The strategy for introducing these elements made use of a set of key questions: How do you make space in a process to make sure women's voice are being heard? How do you make sure that men understand the value of including women's voices on a wide range of issues? How do you carve out opportunities that do not make women feel like they are being asked to contribute only because they are women but rather an environment that is gender conscious about including women's perspectives – whatever they may be – and how to ensure sensitivity to the need for a gender analysis that considers the issues causing tensions and driving conflict, and their effects on both men and women? These questions are applicable and relevant beyond this case and can serve as a compass for how to engage in other contexts.

In recent years, thanks to the promulgation of the historic 2016 Havana Accords that brought the long-running civil war between the Government of Colombia and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - The People's Army (i.e. the FARC) to an end, Colombia has been highly regarded as a gold standard for inclusion and gender sensitivity. The praise, in many respects, is well-earned as demonstrated by several factors. These include the inclusion of women in both the Government's and FARC's negotiation delegations; the extensive efforts to provide direct avenues for formal consultation by a panoply of historically marginalized groups (e.g. women from different backgrounds, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, and victims of the conflict) in the Track 1 process; and the creation of a subcommission on gender.\textsuperscript{59} The impact of these systematic efforts to enable women's direct and indirect participation alongside the construction of a substantive agenda during the negotiations that addressed the gendered legacies of conflict such as sexual violence and economic marginalization are reflected in the resulting accords, which placed an unprecedented emphasis on advancing gender equality in pursuit of a lasting peace. However, the case of Colombia is neither a perfect model nor emblematic of most peace processes.\textsuperscript{60} As is increasingly clear, even in well-designed and well-intentioned peace mediation efforts, marginalization may persist during the process and implementation can lag after the accords are signed, which in turn leave a mixed legacy. Still, one noteworthy and growing development since the peace process in Havana is the emergence of women mediators networks as explored further in the next section.
WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORKS: UNTAPPED TOOLS FOR INCLUSIVITY AND GENDER SENSITIVITY?

Over the course of the last couple of decades, but especially in the last few years, women mediators networks have proliferated across the world. These networks operate at the national, regional, and global levels. One member of a regional women mediators network noted: “The concept of women mediators networks is quite a broad one with different functional roles...that deploy to support mediation advisers to high-level Special Envoys working under the auspices of the UN or other organization such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).” For example, in December 2021, the OSCE Secretary General launched a Networking Platform on Women Leaders including Peacebuilders and Mediators.

They serve as a conduit for bringing together diverse, sometimes divergent perspectives. One African mediator with extensive UN and regional experience noted that regional networks provided structured opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, knowledge-sharing, joint advocacy, and mutual support, especially during times of crisis. Proponents of women mediators networks argue that they not only contribute to formal processes to resolve ongoing and protracted conflicts but also the prevention of new and emergent conflicts. Leveraged effectively, women mediators networks may also serve as a platform to collectively advocate for a range of issues, including but not limited to women’s participation and what women’s civil society groups want addressed via the mediation process to bring a conflict to its end in the aftermath of a potential agreement. However, they are not a panacea and without adequate funding, access to formal processes, international recognition, and internal cohesion, they are unlikely to be effective at informing, let alone influencing, official mediation processes.

In the case of the Nordic Women Mediators Network, for example, the impetus for its creation coincided with Sweden running for and then becoming a rotating member of the Security Council (2017-2018). A few years later, when Norway was similarly running for and became a rotating member of the Security Council (2021-2022), there was another push to energize and expand the work of the Nordic network and its partnership with other regional women’s networks. These types of milestone events are important for garnering political attention and mobilizing resources for women’s mediation. As a former Scandinavian diplomat explained: “This was a useful initiative as an expression of evidence that there are many women with mediation experience and served as an example for other regions to identify their own networks. That demonstration effect has been perhaps the greatest value of the Nordic Network.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab Women Mediators Network</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Bring together Arab women from all member States with mediation expertise. Promote inclusion of women in peacebuilding and mediation efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FemWise-Africa (Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation)</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts by providing a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity-building and networking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>A collective of voices demanding policy and decision-makers to implement the Resolution 1325 and related resolutions and create meaningful spaces for women to influence global peace and security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libyan Women's Platform for Peace</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Ensure that women are a vital part of post-Gaddafi Libya, with a particular emphasis on inclusive transitions, women's rights, youth leadership, advancement and security as related to women's political and economic participation and constitutional reform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mano River Women's Peace Network</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Promote peace and development in the Mano River region across Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean Women Mediators Network</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Increase the number of women involved in peacemaking efforts. Facilitate the appointment of high-level women mediators at local and international level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network of Women Mediators of South Caucasus</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Involve and strengthen women as national mediators in peace processes before, during and after conflicts in order to contribute to sustaining peace in the region. Increase women's involvement in multi-channel diplomacy processes, including high-level diplomacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Women Mediators – Denmark</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Support local women in conflict areas’ participation in peacebuilding processes, including peace negotiations. Support Danish women's participation in international conflict resolution, peace mediation and peacebuilding. Strengthen the capabilities of the members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Women Mediators – Finland</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Promote the inclusive and meaningful participation of women in all phases of peace processes. Advance the engagement of Finnish professionals in support for peace globally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Women Mediators – Iceland</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Support women's organizations whose focus is on the empowerment of women in conflict and post-conflict situations to participate in peace processes. Advocate for inclusive peace processes, including gender equality among Icelandic experts working for international organizations, as well as among those participating in international conflict mediations and peace negotiations. Aim to enhance knowledge and understanding of the importance of full inclusion of women in peacebuilding and peace negotiations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Women Mediators – Norway</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Strengthen women's participation in peace processes at all levels. Strengthen the capabilities of Nordic women involved in international peacemaking efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Women Mediators Network</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Strengthen women's participation in peace processes at all levels. Strengthen the role of Nordic women actively involved in international peacemaking efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Facilitate involvement of its members in regional peace processes. Advance inclusion and meaningful participation of women as mediators and negotiators in all phases of conflict resolution and peace processes. Promote sharing of experiences and strengthen knowledge among members. Expand reach and visibility of women mediators and negotiators in South-East Asia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Women's Mediation Network</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Strengthen the capacity of women leaders in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries within the area of dialogue, mediation and peacebuilding through trainings and advisory support. Support ongoing peace processes in order to improve the conditions for women's participation, and to enhance the quality of peace agreements. Promote the inclusion of women in dialogue and peace processes, and make women's competence in this area more visible, through advocacy and outreach. Enhance the knowledge and understanding about the role of women in peace processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Mediators across the Commonwealth</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Connect women with mediation expertise across Commonwealth countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indeed, today, no peace and conflict practitioner can claim that mediation networks led and primarily filled by women around the world do not exist. As a mediation expert based in Latin America, where no regional network yet exists, remarked: “More and more, networks of women mediators are helping change the perception among the UN, donors, and other stakeholders, that there aren’t qualified women mediators. This is important but it is not enough to necessarily change the mindset of sceptical conflict parties.” A chasm persists between knowing a network exists and harnessing it – or its members – to make a mediation process more inclusive. While press and publicity around these networks has helped put them on the map of peace mediation, the hype must be matched with rigour in practice, a clearly articulated central purpose, and regular evaluation of impact across various relevant metrics. According to one former SRSG and former mediator, relevant questions in this regard include, for example: “How does a women's mediation network work? How does it add value, and is it as a collective or through individual members? How does impact vary depending on the service or support offered, for example through training and capacity-building or some other form of engagement?” These questions should be integrated into future policies and programmes that create, support, and sustain women mediators networks.

Related to but distinct from women mediators networks is the emergence of women's advisory boards, which represent another similar type of initiative to expand women's participation – albeit indirectly – into mediation processes and increase a focus on gender dimensions of the conflict. These boards, such as the one created for the Syria process, are mechanisms for consultation, allowing high-level UN representatives such as SRSGs and Special Envoys to meet and hear directly from women with a vested interest in a given process. However, the boards are not direct participants in the mediation and, depending on the context, may or may not be able to engage with conflict parties at the negotiating table. Those in favour of women's advisory boards see them as promising, even if imperfect, tool while those who are sceptical doubt both the efficacy and motivation behind them. For example, as one UN official suggested:

“Women’s advisory boards are being asked to do too much. The assumption oftentimes is that women’s advisory boards will provide advice and guidance on gender equality and women’s rights but the women who comprise these boards may not have the capacity to fulfil those expectations.”

There's increasing attention to making these boards diverse and drawing participants from different communities. However, all too often they are expected to speak with a singular voice when they provide advice and if unable to do so they may be subject to undue criticism, including not only from their constituencies but also from other stakeholders involved in the process such as mediators and negotiating delegations. A former SRSG argued:

“We cannot assume that different civil society groups – or representatives of groups – will necessarily get along with each other or be willing to engage with each other. The reality in some very polarized contexts is that there is a lot of division within civil society, including between women’s groups, and even consultations by mediators and negotiation delegations have to be done individually with each group.”
To assume that women – just as men – who are able to participate in some shape or form in a mediation process will necessarily represent wider interests, particularly of oppressed or sidelined segments of a population, is misguided. Often the pragmatics of power mean that some who consult with mediators or have a seat at the negotiating table use their position to represent the needs of constituent groups such as women when it suits their political goals and other times not. The former SRSG added: “It’s important to have women around the table and, in fact, the right women around the table – namely those who represent the whole of society and who can inform the peace to be for everyone, not just some powerful groups.” Moreover, in processes that are inclusive of traditionally marginalized groups, such as women’s organizations, and where women advisers are present, requiring or expecting women to speak with a single voice is one of many ways in which they are held to a double standard vis-a-vis their male counterparts. Building on these findings, the next and concluding section distills key takeaways and opportunities for future engagement on inclusive and gender-sensitive mediation.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and analysis of this report contribute to greater understanding of key concepts and dynamics in peace mediation, namely inclusion and gender sensitivity. As the research presented here underscores, the presence of women in formal processes does not guarantee their meaningful and effective participation. Relatedly, the inclusion of women – whether as mediators, advisers, consulting parties, or otherwise – does not guarantee gender-sensitive approaches to the agenda and outcome of peace mediation. Inclusion and gender sensitivity, while interrelated, are not interchangeable and must therefore be addressed in nuanced and targeted ways.

Some belligerent parties are reluctant to entertain discussions on inclusion, others to gender provisions, others still to both. There is therefore a need to discern which and also discern why in order to get to the heart of the motivation or source of the reluctance. In some instances, conflict parties appoint a woman to their delegation or in a visible supporting role simply to appease international external mediators and facilitators, and to side-step more difficult topics relevant to conflict transformation such as systemic gender inequality or gender-based violence. But this does not constitute meaningful participation of women, nor does it facilitate the integration of gender sensitivity into discussions and agreements. In contexts where conflict parties are especially resistant or even hostile towards integrating gender sensitivity into the agenda of negotiations, taking an intersectional approach can be particularly strategic because it offers an opportunity to focus on gender alongside other issues such as protection of minorities or economic reconstruction.

For example, security arrangements such as ceasefires, demobilization, or security sector reform are highly male-dominated spaces. As such, not only are women typically underrepresented in security institutions but also the barriers to effectively integrating gender analysis into security arrangements tend to be higher than in comparison to others such as protection of civilians or transitional justice. While ceasefires tend to be narrower in scope than comprehensive peace agreements, they are nevertheless critical in mediation because they are typically a first step in achieving a cessation of hostility which, in turn, can create the opening for more robust peace settlement. Yet, data suggests the integration of gender provisions in ceasefire agreements is approximately half as often compared to other peace agreements such as partial, comprehensive, or implementation agreements.\(^{76}\) Closing this gap is where the role of UN mediators and mediation advisers can be particularly important to ensuring substantive outcomes of peace mediation efforts, whether in the form of a ceasefire or other type of agreement, is gender sensitive by addressing hesitations in negotiating delegations of the conflict parties. Similarly, their role can be salient to bring attention to gender dimensions that may be overlooked, and to draw the link between inputs for an inclusive process and its desired peace outcomes.

In some situations, members of negotiating delegations do in fact care about inclusion of marginalized voices, including of women, and are open to integration of gender sensitivity in mediation, but they may not emphasize these aspects. Once external mediators and mediation advisers broach the subject, it can create an opening for further dialogue and action. Still, in protracted conflict settings, the overall process may be so stymied and resistant to resolution that efforts to advance inclusion fall by the wayside or are insufficient to securing a mediated settlement.
One UN official focused on mediation in Yemen, where the UN has played a central role in facilitating dialogue between warring parties and supported the inclusion of civil society groups such as women’s groups in talks, noted with exasperation: “How do you advance inclusion in a stalled process?” This represents a central challenge in many contexts beyond Yemen. The fact of the matter remains that in protracted conflict settings where conflict parties are resistant to UN-facilitated mediation or where an existing peace process is stuck, the ability of external mediators to encourage the inclusion of women in formal peacemaking positions is severely limited. This is especially true in patriarchal societies where women have limited opportunities to hold public-facing roles.

Nevertheless, the UN can and should be more ambitious in how it engages with conflict parties to facilitate more inclusive mediation initiatives. This starts with appointing special representatives and envoys who exercise political leadership, who not only understand the importance of inclusion but also place it at the heart of achieving an enduring – and therefore effective – peace. Regardless of their gender, external mediators and mediation advisers, including those working on behalf of the UN or regional organizations, have an important role to play in facilitating the inclusion of women and integrating gender sensitivity into the agenda of the process. The consistency and efficacy of their efforts will vary greatly depending on the mediator’s capacity and will as well as the specificities of the context.

As such, the selection criteria of mediators as well as mediation advisers and technical or thematic experts is salient. Criteria should be set with clear objectives in order not to perpetuate pre-existing dominant power structures that contribute to a continuation of conflict. In this regard, the Secretary-General has a very important role to play by signaling commitment to inclusive and gender-sensitive mediation. This commitment should be relayed not only through consistent rhetoric but also through clear policy directives and accountability measures for the UN system to follow, from SRSGs to mission staff to gender advisers. This, in turn, can signal to conflict parties that inclusion and gender sensitivity in mediation processes are institutional priorities.

To build on some of the tools and approaches discussed in this report will require better cross-sectoral coordination between international organizations, including the UN and regional bodies, national governments engaged in peace processes, local governments, and civil society organizations. For example, one key area of future engagement for DPPA is identifying opportunities for greater collaboration and partnership with women mediators networks such as those mapped earlier in this report. This can help to break down silos and contribute to sharing of expertise and best practices, including indigenous and local knowledge.

Indeed, the dearth of women in mediator roles in formal conflict resolution processes cannot be changed without greater investments in, recognition of, and support to local women’s peacebuilding organizations, which commonly serve as a pipeline for skilled mediators and can act as a glue between formal and informal mediation process. A senior mediation adviser of the SBT suggested: “We need to invest in the local level, targeted training not just for women but also men and women with focus on key skills like negotiation, mediation, etc. and combined with subjects like security sector reform, integrating 1325 principles throughout.”
For example, training women in security arrangements to fill specific experience deficits and skills gaps is crucial across the composition of national and regional women mediators networks. Moreover, as a mediation expert specialized in security arrangements noted: “It's not enough to just give training, you have to ask who do you give training to – maybe it's men and women...and knowing why are you giving them this training, and how you expect things to change.”

One of the emerging challenges is how the COVID-19 pandemic will shape women's inclusion and participation in peace processes, including not only while the virus persists but also the legacy of social distancing, remote work, and other changes beyond the pandemic. In some communities, women may not have consistent access to the internet or mobile phones, or the skills and training to adapt their peace activism or their community-level mediation and conciliation work to the digital space. This is made all the more challenging by the vitriolic harassment and threats that women engaged in political causes face online that can sometimes mutate to in-person violence. It is therefore crucial that donors and multilateral institutions invest in guidance and training to equip women in mediation to deal with defamation and online harassment. This is also key to enabling women in mediation to engage with constituencies constructively online in order to inform and influence the mediation process effectively.

Finally, the findings of this report reiterate the importance of multi-track, multi-pronged approaches that increase women's leadership, support women's rights, and facilitate gender-sensitive peacemaking. Though not the same, these goals are complementary and, with leadership and targeted effort, can be mutually reinforcing. As such, understanding their distinctions alongside linkages is key to developing effective strategies for advancing each. Moreover, it must be said that even if women's participation cannot be demonstrated in a given context to have unique and measurable impacts on overall success of mediation process and durability of the peace that follows, their inclusion is important for equity and diversity. After all, as a former SRSG and long-serving diplomat noted: “We must keep our eyes on the ball” when it comes to the fundamental purpose of any peace mediation effort which is, “to facilitate a process so that a country can manage itself peacefully and to create conditions for both boys and girls of that country to have a sustainable future free from violence.”
Table 3. Recommendations for Advancing Inclusive and Gender-Sensitive Peace Mediation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental organizations</td>
<td>• Distinguish between inclusion and gender sensitivity, and develop targeted strategies for both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prioritize inclusion and gender sensitivity in selection criteria for mediators and mediation advisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide and require training on inclusion and gender sensitivity for mediators and mediation advisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set context-relevant benchmarks and hold relevant stakeholders accountable for advancing inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Forge partnerships with women mediators networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policymakers and government officials</td>
<td>• Distinguish between inclusion and gender sensitivity, and develop targeted strategies for both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prioritize inclusion and gender sensitivity in selection criteria for mediators and mediation advisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide and require training on inclusion and gender sensitivity for mediators and mediation advisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set context-relevant benchmarks and hold relevant stakeholders accountable for advancing inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build relationships and partner with women mediators networks at the regional, national, and local levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-level mediators</td>
<td>• Distinguish between inclusion and gender sensitivity and engage earnestly with conflict parties to prioritize both as relevant throughout the life cycle of peace mediation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create pathways for meaningful, direct and indirect participation of women from diverse backgrounds to inform and influence peace mediation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluate the extent to which draft agreements are inclusive and gender sensitive, and facilitate provisions on both in context-sensitive and robust ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build relationships and partner with women mediators networks at the regional, national, and local levels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Public and private donors** | • Invest in training on inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation for men and women at multiple levels along multiple tracks.  
• Support existing mechanisms and structures through continued funding.  
• Diversify access to immediate, flexible, and long-term financing for women mediators networks and local women’s peace mediation groups.  
• Continually expand investments in agencies and structures supporting inclusive and gender-sensitive peace mediation and conflict resolution at the UN and other regional organizations.  
• Invest in research, including comparative and longitudinal data collection and analysis. |
|---|---|
| **Women mediators networks** | • Establish clear objectives to guide work, measure progress against those objectives, and adapt approaches as needed.  
• Expand access and membership to build a growing roster of qualified women mediators.  
• Forge partnerships with relevant UN agencies and other multilateral organizations.  
• Forge partnerships with local women’s peace organizations. |
| **Civil society organizations** | • Facilitate train-the-trainer programmes to spread knowledge and skills.  
• Support skills-building amongst youth in inclusive and gender-sensitive mediation.  
• Collaborate across regional, economic, and cultural lines to exchange insights and build networks relevant to inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation. |
| **Researchers** | • Collect and disseminate sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data on inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation.  
• Conduct mixed methods research to investigate dynamics of correlation and causation relating to inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation.  
• Document and analyze both processes and outcomes, and develop and test theories of change relating to inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation.  
• Collaborate across disciplines (e.g. history, political science, anthropology) and regions (e.g. Global North and Global South) to build evidence base and literature, and exchange insights relating to inclusion and gender sensitivity in peace mediation. |
REFERENCES


8. These data are anonymized to protect the identity and privacy of individuals although brief descriptions of those interviewed and consulted are included in the analysis. All participants provided verbal consent at the start of the meeting and consent for the author to take notes during the conversation. All meetings were held remotely using video conferencing technology in accordance with social distancing measures and travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. While video conferencing technology cannot replicate the full interpersonal experience of meetings conducted in-person, it does allow the researcher to hear, see, and engage with research participants face-to-face digitally and, also, to engage with a diversity of relevant stakeholders who may be located in physically distant locations.


11. Ibid.: 2.


18. Author interview, online, 26 May 2021.
21. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined gender mainstreaming as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.” In this sense, gender mainstreaming is “a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres.” Ideally gender mainstreaming should help to ensure that “women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated,” but, as ECOSOC clarified, gender mainstreaming is neither a substitute for “targeted women-specific policies and programs” nor for specific mechanisms such as gender focal points. United Nations General Assembly, “Gender Mainstreaming: Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997, United Nations, 18 September 1997 A/52/3, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF.
22. These include Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015), which are the foundational blocks of the UN's Women, Peace and Security Agenda.
30. Author interview, online, 27 May 2021.
31. Author interview, online, 18 June 2021.
32. Author interview with UN official, online, 4 March 2021; author interview with UN official, online, 26 May 2021.


36. Author interview, online, 18 June 2021.


40. This table provides examples of varieties of direct and indirect inclusion. It is not an exhaustive list of all types, roles, and cases. Different types and roles are not mutually exclusive – in some contexts such as the Philippines and Colombia referenced in the table, women’s inclusion took the form of both direct and indirect inclusion in numerous roles.


42. Ibid.


45. Author interview, online, 18 June 2021.


47. Author interview with SBT member, online, 18 June 2021.

48. Author interview, online, 24 June 2021.

49. Author interview, online, 26 May 2021.

50. Author interview, online, 25 June 2021.

51. Author interview, online, 11 June 2021.
Author interview, online, 27 May 2021.
Author interview, online, 24 June 2021.
Author interview, online, 18 June 2021.
Author interview, online, 25 June 2021.
Author interview, online, 24 May 2021.
Author interview, online, 27 May 2021.
Author interview, online, 24 May 2021; Author interview, online, 6 July 2021; Author interview, online, 16 July 2021; Author interview, online, 19 July 2021; Author interview, online, 14 September 2021.
Author interview, online, 6 July 2021.
Author interview with UN official, online, 2 July 2021.
Author interview with UN official, online, 16 July 2021; Author interview with former diplomat and member of regional women mediator network, online, 18 June 2021.
Author interview, online, 11 June 2021.
Author interview with Scandinavian diplomat, online, 8 April 2021.
Author interview, online, 18 June 2021.
This is not an exhaustive list but rather a mapping of some of the most active women mediators networks around the world.
Author interview, online, 18 June 2021.
Author interview with UN official, online, 4 March 2021.
Author interview, online, 2 July 2021.
Author interview, online, 18 June 2021; author interview, online, 24 June 2021; Author interview, online, 2 July 2021.
Author interview, online, 27 May 2021.
Author interview, online, 27 May 2021.
Author interview, online, 16 July 2021.
Author interview, online, 24 May 2021.
Author interview, online, 24 May 2021.
Author interview, online, 27 May 2021.