



Peace Direct

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Chapeau

Greater engagement with local peacebuilders and implementing locally-led peacebuilding interventions Chapter

Chapter II. International peace and security

The 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on 'Peacebuilding and sustaining peace' (A/74/976 S/2020/773) affirms that "Civil society engagement and participation is indispensable to peacebuilding." As the UN faces new, complex conflict challenges, there is growing recognition that local actors and actions are a critical part of impactful, sustainable peacebuilding. Local approaches are more effective because of local communities' knowledge and expertise of context, legitimacy, accountability, and their adherence to principles of inclusion, local agency, and rebalancing of power structures and decisionmaking toward those most impacted by conflict.

Recommendations:

- (1) Commit UN development, peacekeeping and peacebuilding entities to:
 - x deep, sustained, consistent and ongoing, committed, ~~two~~, local level community engagement through trust-based and equitable [partnership](#) and,
 - x shift operations toward truly locally led approaches to peacebuilding and development, normalizing localization as the primary form of engagement.
- (2) Commit Member States, as per the December 2020 donor statement¹ on localization to:
 - x shift and share power to ensure local actors have ownership over and can meaningfully and equitably engage in development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding programs

¹ Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development, Effective Development Cooperation Summit, Dec 2022 <https://www.usaid.gov/localization/donor-statement-on-supporting-locally-led-development>

- x work to channel high quality funding as directly as possible to local actors and,
- x publicly advocate for locally led development

Researcher and practitioner literature now state that community engagement is no longer a nicety or option when time or energy permits, but rather the 'sine qua non' of any effective and successful peacebuilding.

How to implement?

- (1) address attitudes and policies; develop a robust protocol and practice to listen and be responsive to the needs articulated by local actors; build mutual trust and develop deeper relationships; be willing to share power and co-create solutions
- (2) transform practices; be transparent, reliable and accountable with clear communication and regular access plus conscientious effort to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of local people in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and sustaining peace work which has often been done unilaterally by the UN in host communities