



World Bank Fragility Forum 2018 - IDPS High-Level Session
Implementing Prevention: Operational Response to the Pathways for Peace Report

United Nations/World Bank Pathways for Peace Report - CSPPS Perspectives

1. Introduction

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is the South-North non-governmental coalition of peacebuilding organizations that coordinates and supports civil society participation in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS). The goals of CSPPS are to strengthen the voice and agency of society to effectively engage in, and influence, peacebuilding and statebuilding as a critical contribution to conflict prevention, sustaining peace and development for all.

The new commitment of the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB) to peacebuilding and prevention of conflict now needs to be evidenced in a significant increase in strategic, long-term, local, bilateral and multilateral funding. We call upon both institutions issuing the report to give prominence to financing of initiatives that foster inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict – and – foster and support efforts that strive towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

The context in which these reflections are shared is a session jointly organized by the IDPS partnership. As the CSPPS, we strongly value this partnership and are convinced that it provides an important multi-stakeholder arena where bilateral and multilateral actors indeed can work together on inclusive and impactful approaches to preventing violent conflict and sustaining peace.

These perspectives are shared in **four different segments**. First, we would like to share what we found very positive in the report issued¹.

2. What We Find Positive about the UN/WB Pathways for Peace Report

The Pathways for Peace report is an acknowledgement of what the peacebuilding community (including civil society) has been voicing for decades on the importance of inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict. Key aspects lie in the translation of these frameworks into operational realities – with supportive resources flows in place. On its positive facets, the two institutions acknowledge some of the crucial issues that we as a peacebuilding community have been echoing i.e. viewing prevention as a holistic concept that identifies exclusion, inequality, and power imbalances as principal cause of conflict and violence – it builds on and furthers the vision put forward by the 2030 Agenda. **The report is also fundamentally political and has much greater potential to bridge the gap between policy frameworks and implementation than many previous attempts and most importantly, the concept of inclusion is placed in the forefront.** Furthermore, we like the fact that the Pathways for peace report:

- **Refers to how development approaches can better interact with other tools to prevent conflict.**
- **Refers to prevention holding the potential to avoid the terrible human suffering and destruction that come with wars and armed conflicts, and to maintain the human conditions for achieving greater progress, justice and prosperity.**

¹ These CSPPS perspectives are based on the summary report of Pathways for Peace and the full report might change our assessments.

- **The Report is in line with the 2030 Agenda; politically informed and addresses power imbalances.**
- Refers to economic reforms being an opportunity to distribute resources in an inclusive manner.
- Refers to the need to strengthen the inclusion of women and young people.
- **Refers to the need to build and mobilize inclusive coalitions (civil society – women and youth, private sector, regional organisations and others).**

3. Weaknesses

Next to positive feedback we also feel that the report contains some negative aspects / some room for improvements that should receive proper attention and need to be addressed for the report to have greater and decisive impact:

- **The report lacks a critical review of past prevention efforts and lessons learned, including a critical self-reflection of UN and WB approaches.**
- The report does not adequately address the issues of policy coherence and conflict sensitivity (especially regarding WB policies and approaches in other sectors).
- **Moreover, the report largely ignores how global factors – such as the illegal arms trade, human and drug trafficking, climate change and international investments in land and resources – are influencing local conflict dynamics.**
- **While we welcome the focus on the societal level, the report should have also asked more questions around the qualities and functions of the state and its institutions that help maintain a peaceful country.**
- It remains unanswered in the report how to engage belligerent non-state actors that often fill the vacuum left by weak states, despite the growing influence and reach of these non-state actors in many countries.
- The chapter on inclusive coalitions has a few parts looking at local capacities and resilience and captures quite well the roles of the different actors involved. However, there is nothing on the operationalization – how to strengthen the capacities of different stakeholders by supporting capacities of positive actors and degrading the influence and impact of negative actors to deal with conflict in a peaceful manner? How to convene these partnerships and how to establish strong and sustainable relationships?
- **The report does not emphasize strongly enough early response mechanisms that might aid in preventing conflict from becoming violent. There need to be strategies in place that strengthen what already exists to respond to conflict at the early stages.**
- **Contextualizing and localizing the report in the context of Fragile and Conflict Affected States is needed – and this provides an avenue for IDPS partnership and its constituencies to be actively involved.**
- When addressing issue of collaboration and partnership it is key to develop new approaches, optimize coordination and forge convergence between active initiatives and policy discussions.
- The Report does not elaborate on building and mobilizing inclusive coalitions – how to indeed embark on a real change from business as usual to an approach that is transformative, inclusive and collaborative.

As indicated under the previous point, we feel that the key role of civil society as an actor in conflict prevention is not sufficiently recognized and built upon. Hence, we feel the following points need to be raised:

4. Role of Civil Society

Where the report could have done more is in highlighting the role of civil society in conflict situations. Civil society is playing vital roles for the prevention of violence and in sustaining peace processes:

- **Civil society has direct contact with the community and subsequently plays a very important role in research at the community level; collecting evidence-based stories; providing space for dialogue and healing; rehabilitation and reintegration of victims and perpetrators reporting early-warning signals of conflicts and all other relevant community level issues that are likely to trigger conflicts.**
- Community level issues have latent causes and civil society has the capacity to upscale these issues and even act as a mediator between community and decision makers.
- **Civil society can monitor conflict prevention funding so that governments do not divert it into buying arms.**

- Civil society are 'ears and eyes' on the ground i.e. in the context of identifying possible issues (early warning signals) that might have potential to escalate and turn into conflict.
- **However, these important functions of civil society are undermined by the global trend of shrinking and closing civic spaces. We regret that the report does not elaborate on the shrinking civil society space which is taking place in more and more countries.**
- Civil society should be considered on a level playing ground in peacebuilding and statebuilding as well as conflict prevention.
- **Civil society is not recognized as an actor but more as an implementer – whereas a multi-stakeholder approach should also be embarked upon in the conception phase of policies and strategies.**
- There is a need to protect and support civil society inclusion. The inclusion of civil society, including youth and women's groups, is critical to promoting peace and preventing conflicts everywhere, at all levels. We witness that around the world, governments are moving in the opposite direction, imposing onerous restrictions on the ability of civil society groups to be effective, speak out and participate in key local and global policy processes.
- **Civil society actors are well placed – and in close connection to the reality on the ground to identify, record and respond to first instances of conflicts flaring up.** Supporting transitions out of fragility requires political and not just technical responses. It is crucial for these processes to be locally driven and owned, anchored on a multi-stakeholder footing, building on collectively developed analysis of both challenges contributing to fragility and conflict, and the drivers of resilience.
- **Civil society also has a proven track-record on engagement in early-warning efforts and develop inclusive prevention approaches.**

Finally, please allow us to share some reflections on how we envision the role of the IDPS partnership in translating policy directions into concrete and impactful action.

5. IDPS Role in Implementation

- **The IDPS multi-stakeholder approach, involving civil society next to other stakeholders at both national (using country level dialogue partnership as entry point) and international level is a tangible example of an inclusive coalition.**
- To date the IDPS partnership and the New Deal agreement has served as the practical dialogue framework already in place in Fragile and Conflict Affected States; a partnership working on efforts to prevent conflicts and address root causes of conflict and instability.
- **Strengthening this existing tri-partite dialogue structure of the IDPS at Country Level can be a key building block to establishing strong inclusive coalitions, that have an influence on the political leadership and society and can thus play an important role in the prevention of violent conflict – and support efforts to sustain peace.**
- **Turning renewed global commitments on preventing conflicts and sustaining peace into reality will demand leadership on the global stage. But it will also require political courage at home to garnish support for patient, long-term, preventive approaches.**

For more information on the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), please contact:

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