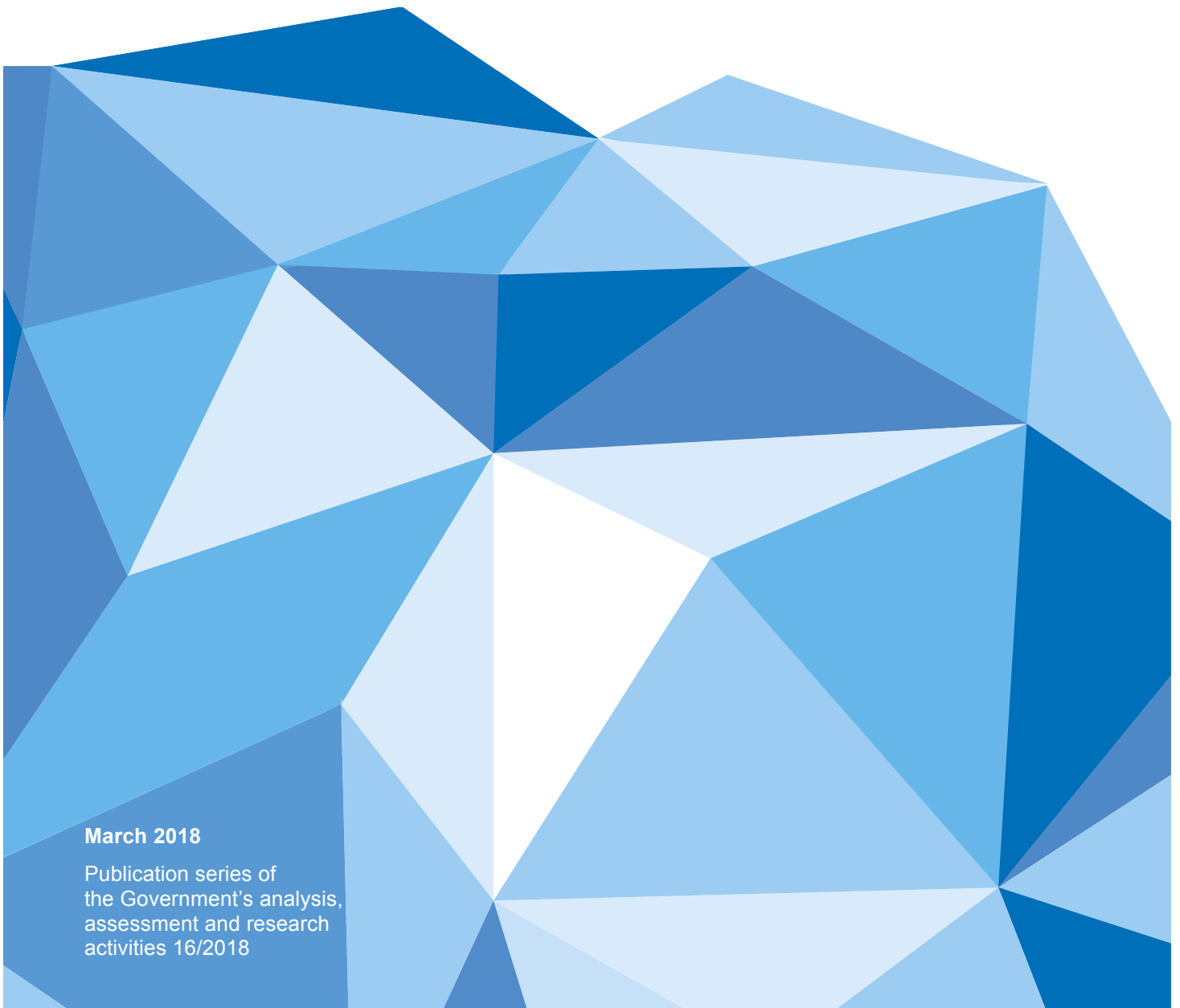GOVERNMENT'S ANALYSIS,
ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

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Inclusive Mediation and Conflict Prevention: The Finnish Model

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Abstract

This research showed how supporting the work of local women peace actors in conflict zones within innovative Finnish collaborative framework enhances Finland's comprehensive crisis management capacity. The study demonstrated that in Finland, there is a productive, trust-based coexistence and cooperation between the strong Finnish NGO actors that focus on mediation and peacemaking and the Finnish state. The project examined inclusive mediation, the role of local women's organizations in conflict resolution, and the work Finnish NGOs that focuses on mediation and peacemaking and that is supported by the Finnish state. It consisted of two complementary case studies, namely Burundi and Colombia, and examined the role of local women's NGOs in different phases of the mediation and conflict resolution continuum, from prevention to post-conflict peace accord implementation and recon-struction. It studied how such organizations contribute to comprehensive, sustainable, inclusive and participatory peace processes. It also identified the ways in which inclusivity and women's participatory engagement is present in the work of the Finnish NGOs and where are the most important entry-points to peace processes. Enhancing the Finnish way in mediation and conflict prevention requires compre-hensive understanding of mediation as well as investment in preventive mediation capacity. Creating preventive mediation capacity necessitates comprehensive funding instruments where peacebuilding is supported by development interventions. The strengths of the Finnish society allow to support train-ing and educating local mediation trainers as well as to provide IT support for local women's groups.

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Tiivistelmä

Suomen ulkoinen ja sisäinen turvallisuus ovat yhteen kietoutuneita ja näin ollen valtion tukemien suomalaisten kansalaisjärjestöjen toimiminen paikallisten kansalaisjärjestöjen kanssa konfliktialueilla edistää Suomen kokonaisturvallisuutta. Suomella on hyvät mahdollisuudet yhteistyöhön, koska sen vahva ja itsenäinen kansalaisjärjestökenttä toimii yhteistyössä Suomen valtion kanssa rauhanvälityksen alalla. Paikalliset konfliktialueiden naisjärjestöt puolestaan edustavat monissa väkivaltaisissa konflikteissa konfliktinratkaisun jatkuvuutta, joustavuutta ja sitkeyttä. Niiden tukeminen tarjoaa vaikuttavan kanavan osallistaa kansalaisyhteiskuntatoimijoita konfliktin kaikissa vaiheissa sekä vahvistaa kansalaisyhteiskunnan omistajuutta rauhanprosesseihin. Tutkimushankkeessa tuotettiin tietoa osallistavista rauhanprosesseista kahden toisiaan täydentävän tapaustutkimuksen eli Kolumbian ja Burundin avulla sekä tutkittiin suomalaisia rauhanvälityksen kansalaisyhteiskuntatoimijoita. Paikallisten kansalaisjärjestöjen toiminta täydentää virallisen ja yksityisen rauhandiplomatian keinoja ja tekee rauhanprosesseista kokonaisvaltaisia ja osallistavia, koska nämä järjestöt toimivat yhteiskunnan eri tasoilla ovat levittäytyneet maantieteellisesti laajoille alueille. Ns. Suomen mallin vahvistaminen edellyttää innovatiivisuutta muun muassa rahoitusinstrumenttien kehittämisen suhteen, koska rauhanrakentamishankkeita ei voi erottaa kehityshankkeista. Suomella on raportissa kuvattujen rauhanvälityksen toimintatapojen takia hyvät mahdollisuudet toimia muun muassa ennakoivan rauhanvälityksen alalla ja tukea konfliktialueiden naisjärjestöjä.

PRESENTATIONSBLAD

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Sammandrag

Denna forskning visar att stödjande av lokala kvinnor som fredsaktörer i konfliktszoner inom den inno-vativa finländska samarbetsramen ökar Finlands omfattande krishanteringskapacitet. Forskningen pe-kar på att i Finland finns det en produktiv, förtroendebaserad samexistens och samarbete mellan den finska staten och de starka finländska icke-statliga aktörerna som fokuserar på medling och fredsskap-ande. Projektet granskade "inkluderande medling", lokala kvinnoorganisationers roll i konfliktlösning och den finska regeringens och finländska frivilligorganisationers medlingsarbete. Studien bestod av två kompletterande fallstudier, nämligen Burundi och Colombia, och undersökte rollen som lokala kvinnors icke-statliga organisationer har i olika faser av medlings- och konfliktupplösnings kontinuum, från före-byggande till fredsöverenskommelse och återuppbyggnad efter fredsöverenskommelse. Den studerade hur sådana organisationer bidrar till omfattande, hållbara, inkluderande och deltagande fredsprocesser. Forskningen identifierade också hur inklusivitet och kvinnors deltagande engagemang är närvarande i de finländska frivilligorganisationernas arbete och var är de viktigaste utgångspunkterna för fredspro-cesser. Förbättrad finsk modell för medling och konfliktförebyggande förutsätter en övergripande förstå-else för medling samt investeringar i förebyggande medlingskapacitet. Att skapa förebyggande med-lingskapacitet kräver omfattande finansieringsinstrument där fredsbyggande stöds av utvecklingsinter-ventioner. Det finländska samhällets styrkor kan stödja utbildningen av lokala medlingsutbildare samt att ge IT-stöd till lokala kvinnogrupper.

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1. INTRODUCTION: IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE

1.1 Expanding Finland's role in conflict prevention and management

The Prime Minister's Office and its Government's analysis, assessment and research activities announced a research call seeking to ensure the creation of a strong and horizontal knowledge base in support of decision-making in society. Under the Government's linchpin projects, a bid titled "Expanding Finland's role in conflict prevention and management" was announced. The relevant ministries in this sub-section were identified to be the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence.

"Expanding Finland's role in conflict prevention and management" sought research proposals that would deal with Finland's effectiveness in conflict prevention and management. The section identified the need for knowledge on Finland's role in conflict management and mediation. In reference to the Finnish government programme, the sub-section focused on the need to coordinate the available military and civilian crisis management tools with the instruments used in development aid, humanitarian assistance and mediation. Their coordination was seen to be of a high priority, as seemingly local violent conflicts and wars often cross-national borders and spill over into regional and international levels. Given such spillover, internal and international security is interlinked, and, hence, effective and comprehensive conflict management and resolution in war-torn societies also improves Finland's security. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security has a high priority in the Finnish government programme, as it is one of the key instruments with which Finland enhances inclusive participation in conflict resolution processes.

"Expanding Finland's role in conflict prevention and management" called for research on comprehensive conflict resolution processes that encompass the entire conflict cycle, namely prevention, management, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction. In all these phases, the inclusion of civil society actors was seen to be important. It was suggested that research should pay attention to how the above-mentioned phases of conflict resolution can be supported in an effective manner. The issue of the inclusiveness and participation of marginalized groups, e.g. women and young people, was seen to be instrumental when Finland seeks to improve its comprehensive conflict resolution capacity.

The Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI) started its research project under the title "Inclusive Mediation and Conflict Prevention: The Finnish Model" in March 2017. The Prime Minister's Office appointed a steering group for the research project that consisted of representatives from the above-mentioned ministries.

1.2 The rationale behind the research

The research conducted at the Tampere Peace Research Institute employs a case study approach to examine the themes indicated in the call. The research explores the role of

local women's NGOs in violent conflicts and the efforts of Finland and Finnish NGOs to support the mediation work of such organizations and women peacemakers. The peace-making activities of women's NGOs are approached through the cases of Burundi and Colombia, which offer highly relevant and topical examples of women's long-term involvement in local conflict prevention, mediation and conflict resolution efforts. These two countries are not Finland's target countries, but some Finnish NGOs in the field of peacebuilding are conducting projects in them. Most importantly, these two conflicts are in different phases of their conflict cycles, Burundi in the phase of escalation and Colombia in the phase of post-peace accord implementation; hence they provide interesting case study material to chart out the entry points for conflict resolution and mediation interventions. In short, the case studies complement each other.

Although the research deals with women's NGOs in the Global South, they are organizations that engage other civil society actors in comprehensive conflict resolution. Their work and activities cut across, for example, social, economic, political, territorial, ethnic and religious lines, as they seek to include all relevant sectors of their societies in their activities.

One of the goals of the "Inclusive Mediation and Conflict Prevention: The Finnish Model" project is also to create an interface between the Finnish NGOs and the NGOs in Burundi and Colombia. The country-specific case studies are complemented with the analysis of the work of three Finnish NGOs – the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), Finn Church Aid (FCA) and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Felm) – to examine the ways Finnish actors can support the mediation work carried out by local women's organizations. As indicated earlier, in terms of women's participation, Finland has been active in promoting the UN Security Council's landmark resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. At the same time, the Finnish NGOs have made inclusivity a cross-cutting theme in their activities, and they support women's peace efforts in various projects globally.

Earlier research findings tentatively suggest that women's NGOs are often one of the most fundamental sources of continuity, flexibility and persistence in the peace efforts by local civil society actors. They cooperate in all tracks of conflict resolution, over long periods of time and throughout different phases of the conflict cycle and conflict resolution continuum. However, this is an under-studied subject, and there is little academic research on the actual activities of women's NGOs in the light of conflict cycle, and particularly on the support they need.

This report offers a theoretically and conceptually informed approach in order to identify the most effective ways *to support the peace efforts of local women actors* and, on the other hand, *contribute to the long-term innovative development of Finnish comprehensive conflict resolution approaches* through cooperation between the national government and civil society organizations.

The research project focuses on three key areas in which Finnish mediation and peace-building can have added value: gender-sensitive mediation, the inclusion of marginalized groups, and local inclusion, participation and ownership in mediation. The objectives of the two case studies are to (1) examine the role of local women's NGOs in the different phases of the mediation and conflict resolution continuum, from prevention to post-conflict peace accord implementation and reconstruction, and (2) to study how such organizations contribute to comprehensive, sustainable, inclusive and participatory peace processes as a whole. The third component of the study looks at the issue from the points of view of the Finnish NGOs. It aims to (3) identify the ways in which inclusivity and women's participatory engagement is present in the NGOs' work and to explore opportunities for developing stronger collaboration between official and non-official actors.

Finland supports mediation, and particularly gender-sensitive mediation and conflict resolution, through a variety of instruments. In Finland's mediation profile, the key project concerns the development of a normative and institutional basis for mediation in international organizations. Furthermore, Finland has supported high-profile and official Finnish mediators and peacemakers such as Martti Ahtisaari, Tarja Halonen, Elisabeth Rehn and Harri Holkeri. Newly appointed Special Representative on Mediation Jutta Urpilainen acts as the Prime Minister's representative in the field of mediation. This is the most visible side of Finland's activities, although a large amount of support is delivered through multilateral mediation tracks, including the Group of Friends of Mediation, whose goal is to promote a culture of mediation in members' national policies, as well as regionally and internationally. The idea of the inclusiveness of mediation is at the core of the work of the Group of Friends of Mediation. The multilateral approach also means that Finland actively supports strengthening the mediation capacity of the UN, the EU and regional organizations. Furthermore, Finland supports regional mediation activities, as well as Finnish and international mediation organizations. Its diplomatic missions act as important contact points for regional expertise when mediation activities are planned and conducted. Recently, Finland has taken part in producing handbooks on gender-sensitive and gender-responsive mediation (see MFA 2017; MFA 2011).

1.3 How the research was conducted

The project generates policy recommendations on ways to effectively support women's civil society organizations throughout the conflict cycle – particularly in terms of local mediation efforts and conflict prevention – and on the development of forms of Finnish cooperation in inclusive and participatory mediation by linking theoretical knowledge to the practical mediation efforts of the Finnish NGOs.

For the purposes of this report, the research group carried out qualitative analysis of interviews, NGO project documents and other material, building on the researchers' earlier work on the issues and cases studied. As always in this type of qualitative research tradition, the researchers interpreted the research material in order to form a coherent picture of the issues examined. Furthermore, as this research aims at policy recommendations beyond the case studies, generalizable conclusions were drawn on the basis of the case studies. It is also important to recognize that the time limit of this research (ten months) was not sufficient to allow an examination of all the points which might be relevant for the research questions, such as the role of diasporas in inclusive mediation, mapping out all the mediation capacities in the Nordic countries and the role of mandates in the work of the Finnish NGOs.

For the case study on Burundi, fieldwork was conducted in the capital city of Burundi, Bujumbura, and in its vicinity in May 2017. Over a period of two weeks, a total of twelve interviews were conducted with representatives from 11 women's organizations, not counting numerous informal discussions with women activists, and other civil society organizations engaged in conflict prevention and mediation at the local level. The interviewees represented a diversity of profiles, from groups claiming to represent all Burundian women and organizations focusing on women's political participation and on the political process to associations representing specific categories of women. In order to provide an accurate overview of the current situation, interviews were conducted both with women's groups commonly associated with the ruling party and with women's groups belonging to the civil society *stricto sensu*. Some women's organizations created in the wake of the 2015 crisis were also included in the sample, together with groups that have existed for ten, twenty or more years.

The interviewees were encouraged to speak about their conflict prevention, early warning and mediation work, about their participation in current peace initiatives, about their organizations' strengths and weaknesses, about their networks and collaborations, and about the difficulties and challenges they face in their everyday work. The duration of interviews varied, between one hour for the shortest and four hours for the longest. All interviews – save one, upon the request of the interviewee – were recorded and stored on an encrypted disk.

The Indicative Interview Grid was used:

- Could you describe your organization's strategy in the field of dialogue, mediation and prevention of the re-emergence of conflict? How would you describe your organization's approach?

- What forms do your mediation/dialogue initiatives take? Can you give me examples of activities your organization implements in that field?

- What kind of activities has your organization implemented in the field of conflict prevention? Of early warning?

- Does your organization seek out a specific section or specific sections of the Burundian population?

- Is your organization present in different Burundian provinces? How is it structured?

- How has your organization's work evolved over the past few years?

- What has worked best? What did not work?

- Can you identify specific junctures at which your organization's work has had the most impact? Have there been specific instances when you have felt completely sidelined or, on the contrary, others when you felt more influential and effective?

- Does your organization implement its projects alone or in cooperation with other CSOs? Do you try to liaise with other women's organizations and/or with other CSOs?

- Would you say that all women's organizations work well together, or that there are divisions between them? If the latter, which ones?

- What is your organization's relation and position vis-à-vis the official, government-led "dialogue" process?

- Has your organization developed strategies to be better heard by official actors or to be associated with official peace initiatives? Or does your organization prefer to stay away from these initiatives?

- What does your organization do differently from the official actors in the process? And from other women's CSOs?

- How do your organization's activities relate to the broader (international/regional) measures to solve the conflict?

- Does your organization currently receive support from international NGOs or IGOs or from foreign governments and donors?

- What type of support would your organization need to better conduct its day-to-day activities or to reach its objectives in the field of mediation and conflict prevention?

Some women's organizations that had been pre-selected during the project's preparation phase, such as Abaniki or Iterambere, could not be reached. Many civil society organizations, among them women's organizations, were dormant or had gone underground since the escalation of tensions in 2015. Most of the women who agreed to be interviewed did not do so immediately, often due to fear of repression by governmental agents. Several emails, WhatsApp messages and phone calls were necessary to organize each interview, and interviewees always chose the place and time of the interview with great care, many avoiding meeting at their workplace and choosing more discrete meeting places instead. Most of them mentioned the deteriorated security situation and the threats they had received. Some of them regularly moved house and changed phone numbers in order to avoid arrest. The current security situation in Burundi therefore weighed heavily on the way the fieldwork was conducted. In order to protect our interviewees, interview data was anonymized. The Burundian case study does not mention the interviewees' names, nor does it associate organizations with specific statements.

The Colombia case study is based on interviews with leaders of 14 women's organizations across Colombia engaged in peace work, conducted in June 2017. Details of these groups and their work are included below. The part also benefitted from deeper discussions with leaders of two of these organizations at a workshop held in Tampere, Finland, in October 2017 and their exchanges with women mediators from Burundi and representatives of Finnish NGOs that support mediation, also at that workshop. Background conversations with a variety of experts in Colombia in June 2017 also nourished the analysis, as did a previous two years of closely following and collecting Colombian and international press coverage of struggles over gender in the peace accords. The organizations interviewed were:

Greater Bogotá region:
- Gempaz, Grupo Ecuménico de Mujeres Constructoras de Paz ("Ecumenical Women Peacebuilders")
- Ruta Pacifica de Mujeres ("Women's Peaceful Way")
- Red Nacional de Mujeres ("National Women's Network")
- ANMUCIC, Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Indigenas, y Negras ("National Association of Small Farmer, Indigenous, and Black Women")
- CIASE, Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica ("Corporation for Social and Economic Research and Action") - as host organization of Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres Paz y Seguridad ("Women, Peace and Security Collective for Reflection and Action")
- Red de Mujeres Mediadoras ("Network of Women Mediators")

Greater Medellín region:
- Red de tejedoras por la memoria y la vida ("Women Crafters Network for Memory and Life")
- Vamos Mujer ("Let's Go Women")
- Madres de la Candelaria, linea fundadora ("Mothers of the Candelaria, Founders Group")

- Confluencia de mujeres para la accion publica ("Convergence of Women for Public Action")
- AMOR, Asociación Regional de Mujeres del Oriente Antioqueño ("Regional Association of Women of Eastern Antioquia")
- Red feminista antimilitarista ("Feminist Antimilitarist Network")

Greater Cartagena region:
- Liga de mujeres desplazadas, ciudad de mujeres ("League of Displaced Women, City of Women")
- Red de empoderamiento de las mujeres ("Network for Women's Empowerment")

The section about the Finnish NGOs' work is based on the approach of three Finnish independent peacemaking organizations to women's role in mediation. It is grounded in a study funded by the MFA that examines the practices of these NGOs. The study, titled "The Era of Private Peacemakers: A New Dialogic Approach to Mediation" (Lehti & Lepomäki 2017), is available online. The earlier study, as well as this report, is based on several interviews with the CMI, Felm, FCA and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers staff. The interviews were conducted between the autumn of 2016 and the spring of 2017. Furthermore, official reports, confidential reports, agenda papers and other documents were used.

This report is also based on discussions held during a workshop in Tampere in October 2017 that brought together leaders of women's groups in Burundi and Colombia, Finnish NGOs, academics and representatives from the relevant Finnish ministries. These discussions centred around opportunities and difficulties experienced by women's groups in their peace-related work, in conflict prevention and in the implementation phases. The workshop also allowed attendees to discuss ways in which Finnish NGOs could support, assist and consolidate the work of local women's groups during the various conflict phases.

The project produced also to policy briefing papers that can be found in Tampere Peace Research Institute's web page (www.uta.fi/tapri)

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual elaborations below derive from both academic literature and policy documents. They complement each other, as often-referred policy documents offer starting points for widening the conceptual basis of this study. The conclusions and recommendations of the report are aimed at providing theoretical and conceptual innovation employable in policy formation as well.

2.1 Conflict cycle

In the study of conflict, conflict is not seen to be a static situation, but a dynamic process in which the intensity level of conflict changes over a conflict's life cycle. The notion of the conflict cycle is essential for an understanding of how, where and when to apply different strategies and measures of conflict prevention, mediation and conflict resolution and where the entry points are at which, for example, civil society organizations can be influential.

As noted, the idea of conflict cycle implies that conflict is dynamic process during which a variety of changes take place. Figure 2 (in section 3.2) shows how a conflict develops through an escalation phase and entrapment to de-escalation and termination. The escalation of conflict is characterized by its widening: the conflict becomes more violent and intensive; new parties become a part of the conflict; new issues are taken up or emerge; intensive polarization occurs; etc. This forms a malign spiral which is difficult to break: it is difficult to create positive feedback loops and processes that contribute to de-escalation and finally to termination. Conflict termination, on the other hand, indicates the termination of violence, whereas the notion of conflict resolution implies tackling the root causes of the conflict (Mitchell 1981).

As Figure 2 indicates, conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution are regarded as applicable at different phases of a conflict. Mediation, on the other hand, can be applied in any of the phases of the conflict cycle. Traditionally, conflict prevention measures are designed for the early phases, before a conflict has become manifest, whereas management measures are applied in later phases, when a conflict is manifest. Conflict resolution can be applied in the de-escalation phase, after a violent conflict has occurred (re this cycle see also Swanström & Weissmann 2005).

2.2 Multi-track mediation

A decades-old conceptual division between various mediation tracks is supported by the observation that the number of non-governmental third-party actors involved in peace processes has increased over the past two decades. At the same time, these unofficial actors have gained more central and diverse roles in the processes. However, the roles of a facilitator, mediator, or an implementer of a peace process are rarely available to non-governmental actors, and in track one level negotiations in particular these roles belong exclusively to governmental actors. Instead, there have been plenty of supporting roles available to non-governmental actors (Kivimäki & Gorman 2008, 181). While the number of non-governmental actors has increased, these organizations have transformed the established and professionalized part of the mediation field. Their role has changed from purely

supportive and somewhat passive actors to complementary and active participation in mediation.

In addition to the conceptual and theoretical distinction between official (governmental) and non-official (non-governmental) actors, a distinction between formal and informal mediation activities is useful. When the division between formal and informal mediation activities, on the one hand, and official and unofficial third-party actors, on the other hand, is combined, it is possible to draw a SWOT diagram (see Figure 1). In the SWOT matrix, classic track one mediation represents formal and mandated mediation by an official third party.

Formal activity by unofficial actors or informal activity by official actors can be regarded primarily as process-oriented and supportive of the formal (mandated) peace processes. Informal, mostly non-mandated activities by unofficial actors (predominantly track two mediation) are steadily increasing. Instead of focusing on a multitude of distinctions between formal and informal mediation activities, a more fruitful way of approaching mediation is through the interplay between different actors who are practicing mediation. It should also be noted that, since the complexity of mediation field in terms of actors and topics has increased, the question of cooperation and coordination emerges.

Figure 1.

	Official actors (states, IO)	Unofficial actors (NGOs, non-profit organizations)
Formal/mandated mediations	Track one mediation	Supporting track one
Informal/non-mandated mediation	Enabling track one	NGO-led tracks two and three mediation or dialogue

2.3 Inclusive, insider, participatory and community mediation

The word "mediation" derives from the medieval Latin *mediationem*, "a division in the middle", and from *mediare* "to halve; to be in the middle". At the policy level, mediation is identified in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations as a means for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is a 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. Also Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 on Women and Peace and Security recognizes mediation. It states that it is women's fundamental right to be included in mediation and peace processes. Participation of women-led civil society groups and the need to address the different needs of women and men in relief, recovery, and post-conflict efforts are key elements of the UN resolution.

For the purposes of this study, the above-mentioned UN definition of mediation is narrow and hence uses a wider definition in which mediation is understood as being in the middle and being able to facilitate structured interactions between a variety of conflicting actors across regional, political, economic, religious, ethnic, age and gender divisions. The report sees mediation as a voluntary endeavour that varies in scope and in terms of actors, sometimes tackling a specific issue in order to contain or manage a conflict and sometimes tack-

ling a broad range of issues. Since the position of being in between can be achieved through a large number of means – many of them low-cost and low-key – it can engage marginalized populations as well. As such, it offers a critical opportunity for states, societies and communities to reshape their social, political, security and socio-economic structures in order to lay the foundation for sustainable peace.

The concept of inclusive mediation as it is defined in the *UN Guidance for Effective Mediation* (2012) defines "inclusivity" as indicating the extent and manner in which the views and needs of conflict parties and other stakeholders are represented and integrated into the peace process. Inclusive mediation rests on the assumption that building sustainable peace requires integrating diverse societal perspectives, those of conflicting parties and other stakeholders, into the peace process. As such, inclusive processes provide multiple entry points during the conflict cycle as well as diverse mechanisms for participation. It is important to note that an inclusive process does not necessarily imply that all stakeholders can participate directly in formal negotiations: rather, it will facilitate a structured interaction between the conflict parties and other stakeholders to include multiple perspectives in the mediation process. The call for inclusion in mediation processes is not limited to women, but applies to social, demographic, religious and regional minority identities, as well as to young people and to organized civil society and professional organizations.

Ultimately, inclusive mediation seeks to engage the participants in conflict in participatory dialogue, and even in community mediation where the local civil society actors take the lead in local mediation attempts which cut across different societal divisions. The aim of community mediation is either to prevent conflict in the early phases of the conflict cycle or to limit the damages of conflict escalation once a violent conflict has emerged. It does not aim at producing formal agreements between the parties, but rather supports peaceful transformation of social relations in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Community mediation is often also insider and participatory mediation, as it, according to one definition, involves credible figures, groups or institutions internal to a conflict who are able to use their influence and credibility to play a role – often largely behind the scenes or in undefined capacities – which directly or indirectly influences the trajectory of conflict in a constructive manner. Unlike external mediation, insider mediation draws upon the abilities of institutions or individuals that are seen as insiders within a given context to broker differences, build consensus, and resolve conflict. It is *track three mediation* in the sense that it engages grassroots actors and involves organizing meetings and conferences, generating media exposure, and including political and legal advocacy for marginalized people and communities. Insider and community mediators have long-standing relationships with individuals and communities in conflict and they are thus able to establish legitimacy and exercise influence in ways that the outside mediators cannot do (for inside mediation, see UNDP 2014).

2.4 Local/everyday peace

The individual experiences, norms and practices of peace that are part of families, religious communities and associational life can be employed to prevent and solve conflicts on multiple levels. These types of practices take often place outside formalized conflict resolution and mediation spaces, as they focus on, for example, questions of identity, customs, equality and culture (MacGinty 2014, 553–554; Nadarajah & Rampton 2015, 59; Richmond & Mitchell 2012, 21–22; Paffenholz 2010; Richmond 2009). Roger Mac Ginty (2014, 553) defines this type of local everyday peace to refer "to the practices and norms deployed by indi-

vidual and groups in deeply divided societies to avoid and minimize conflict and awkward situations at both inter- and intragroup levels".

This understanding of peace relies on bottom-up activities that often lie outside the institutionalized frameworks which are at the core of the international community's attention. These practices are, however, complementary arenas to practices of liberal peace in which the peace is thought best to be created through the state and with democratic development and institutions, the rule of law, human rights and the market economy, which are usually undertaken or established by international organizations or actors, mainly the United Nations and/or others.

It is important to notice that this type of local/everyday peace is not isolated from international and national power hierarchies and political dialogues that overlap on multiple levels. Peace is enacted simultaneously on multiple levels, e.g. local, national and international (Nadarajah & Rampton 2015, 51; Simons & Zanker 2014). The notion, however, shifts the focus to the construction and maintenance of relationships within communities that experience marginalization, thus bringing forth alternative ideas of what peace is, as well as what mediation is and the potential that mediation can have. Research demonstrates that, through local, community interactions, including track three community mediation, new spaces of democracy and everyday peace can be created (Bleiker 2012, 299; de Goede 2012, 147; Chandler 2015, 46–47; Richmond & Mitchell 2012, 25).

3. IMPACT OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MEDIATION AND PEACE PROCESSES

3.1 Summary of earlier academic findings

Academic literature ascribes a strong impact on peace processes by women and supports the inclusion of women and women's topics in conflict resolution attempts and peace processes more generally (Anderson 2000; Arostegui 2013; Bouta et al. 2013; El-Bushra 2007; Gizelis 2009; Pratt & Richter-Devroe 2011; Whitman 2007). Scholars argue for including women in both formal and informal peace processes, since women can be influential throughout the entire conflict cycle and on all conflict resolution tracks. It is noted also that women can contribute both to violence and to peace; hence, their inclusion is important. Research suggests that the inclusion of women in formal peace-building activities and supporting women's actions at informal levels offer new ways to benefit from unused peace-building capacities (El-Bushra 2007). In a similar vein, it is thought that the empowerment of women in relation to mediation and conflict resolution processes can support existing peacebuilding structures (Francis 2004).

The literature points out positive examples that include the work of Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace, the Jerusalem Link platform, the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (Hunt & Posa 2001), the women's project in the Mabedlane community (Moola 2006) and the role of women in the ICD Process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Whitman 2007). In many studies, women are ascribed a great deal of potential in rebuilding society and reconciliation after the end of violence, especially on the grassroots level (see Pratt & Richter-Devroe 2011). According to case study material, women's influence is often most visible in the local community (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf 2002), but the challenge of transferring that influence to the national level remains (Bouta et al. 2013). A reason for challenge is that in many conflict areas, the public sphere is reserved for men, and participation in official conflict resolution and national dialogue processes mirrors the social order as a whole (Hilhorst & van Leeuwen 2005; Pankhurst 2003).

Although the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 from 2000 was a milestone for the inclusion of women and women's rights in peace processes, bringing gender mainstreaming onto the agenda (Quie 2017), women's NGO's peace activities usually take place without being noticed by the most powerful actors in the peace process (El-Bushra 2007). According to a 2010 quantitative analysis of peace agreements following resolution, only 27% mention women (Bell 2013). Furthermore, research suggests that international peacebuilding efforts focus mainly on official negotiations and national dialogues between formerly warring parties. Far less international attention is given to civil society actors and their impact (Gizelis 2009). Obstacles to inclusivity include the fact that organizations such as the United Nations and international NGOs often do not know about the grassroots movements and thus cannot include them in the formal peace process or support them, even if they strive to include a wide range of social society actors (ibid.)

Supporting women's active participation in peace processes is often based on two different lines of argumentation (Hunt & Posa 2001; Paffenholz 2014). On the one hand, gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding tries to support efforts to achieve equality between women and men. The adequate representation of women and women's interests underlies the normative approach of giving women more rights and reducing patriarchal structures within society. Therefore, Western institutions often face the accusation that they are exporting

their own ideals of gender relations to conflict regions. On the other hand, there is evidence that the inclusion of women in formal as well as informal peace processes makes implementation and sustainability of peace more likely (Rodríguez & Natukunda-Togboa 2005). Some scholars even argue that the empowerment of women is a necessary tool in achieving a sustainable peace (King 2005). According to King (2005), the improvement of women's social and economic situation has a tremendous impact on the stability of the development of the whole society. For this reason, support of women's movements within existing peace-building structures is not an end in itself, but it is an important aspect of a peace process.

In sum, research demonstrates that women's participation is central to a peace process because of their long-term influence at the local level (Hunt & Posa 2001). Many women's organizations are rooted in local communities, implying capacity for versatile locally-based action (El-Bushra 2007). Along with their origins at a local level, women's organizations possess deep knowledge of the local socio-economic conditions and the social structures of their communities. This fact makes them highly valuable to international actors and institutions due to their ability to provide access to other organizations, local authorities and even to warring parties (Hunt & Posa 2001). Additionally, women can be highly effective in mobilizing the local population to collectively act for cooperation and consensus and to support peace efforts (Moola 2006). As peace agreements negotiated by international actors and national elites have to struggle for legitimacy in the local community, the inclusion of locals improves the legitimacy of the mediation and negotiation process itself (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf 2002).

3.2 Challenges for participation

The chart below summarizes the findings of academic research on the obstacles to participation by women's civil society organizations in mediation during a conflict cycle.

Figure 2: *Based on Jeong (2010) and Lund (1997)*

Obstacles which prevent women from participation in the peace process
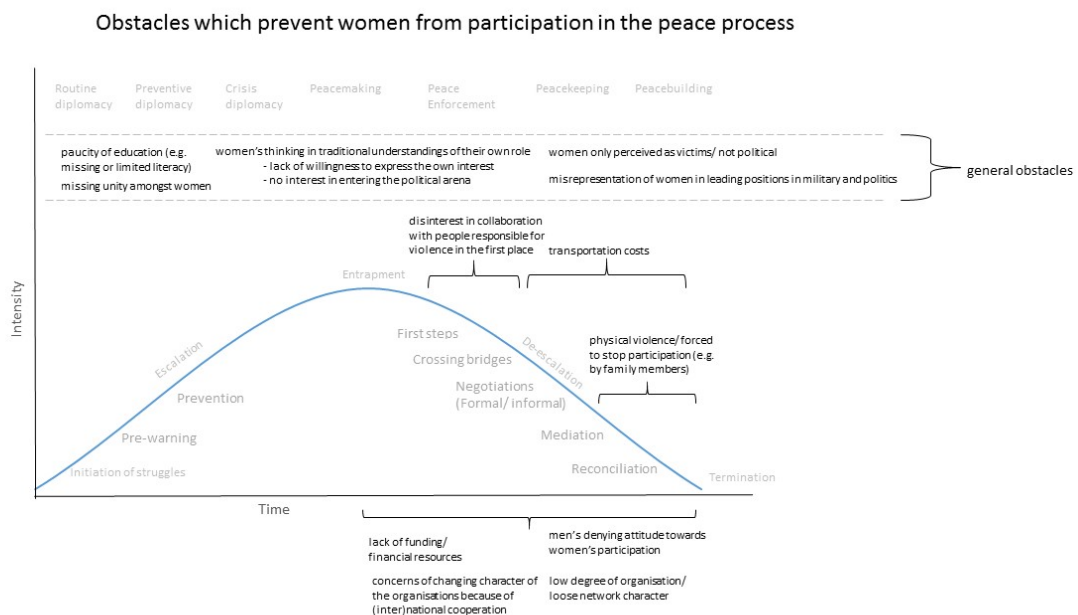
The case studies presented in this report on Burundi and Colombia, as well as on the Finnish NGOs working in the field of mediation, further map out entry points where Finland can support women's civil society organizations in their peace- and mediation-related activities.

4. BURUNDI: VERSATILE STRATEGIES

4.1 Introduction

A small landlocked African country, Burundi has witnessed cycles of extreme violence which have killed more than 300,000 people in the 1990s and 2000s, most of them civilians. Located in a strategic region bordering on Eastern Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania, Burundi has been the focus of numerous conflict resolution attempts since the mid-1990s, culminating in the signature of the multipartite Arusha agreement in 2000 under the auspices of the international community. Despite all its weaknesses and insufficiencies, the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi and successive negotiations influenced the process that led to the adoption of a new constitution in 2005 (Vandeginste 2009). The current constitution requires 40% of the ministers in the government to Tutsi and 60% Hutu. Thirty per cent of the ministers must be women. The same rules apply to the composition of the national assembly, whereas the senate has a 50/50 per cent Hutu-Tutsi allocation. Additionally, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of the National Police must be from different ethnic groups. Furthermore, a majority of one ethnic group in the parliament cannot pass legislation without finding allies from other ethnicities. The power-sharing concept is also applied in the defence and security forces.

After a few years marked by an incomplete disarmament process and lingering violence, Burundi had more or less stabilized by 2009. However, the conflict moved into a new escalation phase when major tensions again arose in 2015 with President Pierre Nkurunziza's contested re-election. In face of contestation, the regime has radicalized, has intensified its repression of opponents and has begun questioning the 2000 Arusha peace agreement. The government is currently pushing for a revision of the constitution, and there are ambitions to get rid of the presidential term limits. The new draft constitution, unveiled in October 2017 and to be submitted to a referendum in 2018, would allow the president to remain in power until 2034, and would extend presidential terms from five to seven years.

The political and economic climate in the country is characterized by fear and rampant violence, as well as by increased poverty and deprivation. Burundi is now amongst the poorest countries in the world, and shortages of food, petrol, electricity and clean water are daily occurrences, both in large cities and in the countryside. According to the International Rescue Committee, 4.2 million of its population of 11 million people are suffering from a hunger crisis, with more than 800,000 in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Reportedly, up to 600 people flee to neighbouring countries each day in search of food and economic opportunities. Between 400,000 and 500,000 Burundians – among them, most of the opposition's leaders, leaders of civil society and the intellectual elite – have fled repression and poverty, mostly to Tanzania, the DRC and Rwanda, but also towards Belgium and other European countries. Numerous others have been killed or have disappeared – official estimates vary between 500 and 2000 people violently killed since the spring of 2015, not counting the thousands who have disappeared.

4.2 Burundian civil society

Despite the new phase in the conflict cycle, Burundian civil society organizations have set up numerous small-scale initiatives in order to foster dialogue and above all to prevent the re-emergence of conflict. Particularly women's groups and organizations build on solid ex-

perience dating back to 1993 with the creation of the "Women for Peace" movement. The progressive structuring of this movement occurred via umbrella organizations and local networks pledging to overcome ethnic divisions, such as the CAFOB (Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines du Burundi). These women's groups, such as Dushirehamwe ("Let's Reconcile in Kirundi") have, for instance, organized training programmes in mediation and peaceful resolution of conflicts with women throughout the country, even in its most remote areas.

Over the past two decades, these women's groups have accumulated crucial experience in promoting inclusive and participatory dialogue and conflict prevention, both at the national and at the local level, and in fostering the participation of vulnerable or underrepresented groups such as young people or religious or ethnic minorities. Most importantly, they have carried on their work even when, as is currently the case, the political process of dialogue stalled. As indicated earlier, for the purposes of this report, twelve representatives from Burundian women's organizations were interviewed in May 2017 on their experiences with regard to the promotion of peace, e.g. on lessons learned, best practices, and past failures.

4.3 Current peace and mediation processes

Four parallel dialogue initiatives have recently been launched in Burundi. First, the government initiated a "National Dialogue" process which includes people the government itself invites and which therefore remains entirely under its control. Second, an international mediation led by Uganda and under the auspices of the African Union has been pushing for an inter-Burundian dialogue, but without much success as yet due to the reluctance of the Burundian government to meet with the leaders of the opposition. Third, the UN has appointed former president of Burkina Faso Michel Kafando as its special envoy in Burundi. Kafando has been supporting the inter-Burundian dialogue and attempting to raise awareness in the UN Security Council on the current situation in Burundi.

Fourth, the Finnish organization Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) has acted as a facilitator between the ruling party and the opposition in exile. Last summer, CMI facilitated discussions in Finland between members of the ruling party CNDD-FDD and members of the Burundian opposition in exile. It was the first time leaders of the CNDD-FDD agreed to discuss with CNARED (Conseil National pour le respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi et de l'État de droit), which leads the opposition movement.

None of these initiatives have produced visible results yet in Burundi, and the international pressure has so far been insufficient to push the Burundian government to negotiate with the opposition or to ease the government-led repression on the opposition and on civil society organizations. Most of these initiatives were based on the idea that the current crisis is a prolongation or replication of previous ones and that is a source of their weakness. Whereas previous cycles of conflict had strong party-political and ethnic dimensions, the current crisis has so far been characterized by the relative absence of the ethnic variable and of deep party-political divisions. The current disagreement focuses on whether the democratic principles enshrined in the 2000 Arusha peace agreement should be revoked or maintained, as well as on what is seen by the opposition as a slide towards a regime of terror.

4.4 Versatile strategies for peace

Women's groups are one of the most stable sources of flexibility and persistence in the peace efforts implemented in Burundi. Some of them have been active for more than 20

years and have witnessed many phases of escalation, de-escalation and stalemate. They have been cooperating both with the first and second track conflict resolution processes and with each other over long periods of time and throughout different phases of the conflict cycle; hence, their involvement cuts across all the conflict resolution tracks. The involvement of women's groups in the peace negotiations in Arusha on the Burundian conflict has, for example, produced important results and considerably enhanced the legitimacy of these groups. Notably, women's groups presented their list of recommendations to the facilitator of the negotiations, Nelson Mandela, and more than half of these recommendations were incorporated into the peace agreement itself (UNIFEM, 2005). Although women's groups may not have been central actors in the recent track one and two mediation initiatives, they have certainly played a key role in the third track by maintaining contact with the grassroots or by bringing together different parts of the population, e.g. through the group Women of Faith, which includes participants from Catholic, Protestant and Muslim churches.

Burundian women's groups have been extremely creative and versatile in their peace-related activities, even at the height of tensions. While a few of them are predominantly active at the national level and specialize in mediation and dialogue activities between national political representatives, the majority complement their national projects with smaller-scale ones implemented at the local level and contribute to the track three mediation. Since Pierre Nkurunziza announced in April 2015 that he would be running for a third term, Burundian women's groups have launched a series of initiatives for peace and dialogue.

Women's organizations have a wide variety of activities that employ many of the recognized conflict prevention, mediation and resolution mechanisms, including setting up and implementing conflict prevention and early warning mechanisms at the national and at the local levels; passing on information about conflicts emerging in the provinces; initiating and participating in multiple mediation initiatives at the local, provincial, national and international levels; organizing peaceful street demonstrations; launching public campaigns promoting peace and dialogue; multiplying the declarations for peace; and lobbying to raise awareness on the ravages that a re-escalation of the conflict would bring.

The strength and resilience of the women's groups derives from their ability to be present at different geographical and social "scales" at the same time. Most of them have their headquarters in the capital city of Bujumbura but are also active in some or all of the 18 Burundian provinces, at the municipal level and even sometimes at the level of the *collines*, the smallest administrative subdivision. With the governmental repression targeting "political" activities at the national level, many women's groups have refocused their efforts towards the local level – towards community and insider mediation activities – which is considered less politically sensitive by the Burundian government. Local projects are less likely to draw the government's attention at this phase of the conflict cycle, even when they belong to the realm of conflict prevention and peace mediation.

The ability of women's groups to move between scales makes them particularly important and relevant with regard to inclusive mediation activities because it allows them to reach different types of audiences (e.g. with different occupational status, from rural and urban areas, from different regions, or more or less educated) and to act as a driving force in collaboration. This allows women's groups also to develop targeted strategies and programmes adapted to the needs of specific groups and to be more creative in their strategies for peace.

Many Burundian women's groups use operational conflict prevention actions at the grassroots. Instead of distinguishing between structural conflict prevention, often associated with

development and socio-economic approaches, and operational conflict prevention, primarily related to politics and diplomacy (Ackermann 2003), many Burundian women's groups focus on operational prevention actions, such as access to micro-credit and employment for people who are likely to become prey to armed groups, as complementary to, or even as part of, the political mediation process.

By acknowledging that "everyone, even at the local level, has to work for peace", as one interviewee put it, women's groups are re-politicizing at the local level and underscoring the importance of conceptualizing mediation and conflict prevention in a more inclusive way. This inclusive approach entails work on the political level without directly focusing on what is usually considered to be political. By trying to ensure access for all to justice, healthcare, education or micro-credit, the main objective of women's groups is not only to improve the population's quality of life, but also to enhance social cohesion and prevent grievances from feeding another cycle of violence. They thus contribute to the long-term prevention of future conflict cycles in the midst of the ongoing conflict escalation phase.

4.5 Obstacles

Burundian women's organizations work in a tense political and security situation, even at the local level. Furthermore, there is a highly significant decrease in funding for Burundian women's organizations, as they suffered from both internal repression and international sanctions. They face a number of obstacles.

Civil society organizations, and women's organizations amongst them, must constantly demonstrate that they rightfully speak in the name of a constituency in facing political parties that claim to have a democratic mandate and thus an undisputable right to participate in dialogue and mediation initiatives. Although most of our interviewees would have liked to be involved in international and national official mediation initiatives, very few of them had actually managed to participate in such discussions. Those who did were often invited on a personal basis, especially when they could claim a specific expertise on gender issues. Those who participate in the first and second track mediation efforts are usually members of political parties and expected to follow their party's line strictly, without much opportunity to speak about inclusivity and gender equality.

The government considers civil society organizations as political opponents that must be tightly controlled. Women's groups that are very close to or have even been directly created by the government or the ruling party claim to speak in the name of all Burundian women and often deny any legitimacy to other groups. When the government wants to hear about "women's opinions", and if it wishes to foreground women's participation, it is therefore these groups that it contacts, not those emanating from the civil society. Women's groups that are not close to the government experience extreme difficulty in obtaining official administrative approval, but also funding and support. These deep and multiple divisions also feed a competition for leadership between women's groups, which hampers the establishment of common strategies and sometimes delays implementation of important decisions such as the preparation of a joint "Women's Agenda".

Women's organizations represent a great diversity of interests and approaches and do not always manage to speak in a united voice. The diversity of strategies do not only pertain to the above-mentioned division between independent civil society organizations and those that are close to the government. Other cleavages are at play, notably between women's organizations that promote a low-key community mediation and approach to mediation and

peace-building and those that think that positive change can only happen if women's groups become more involved at the first and second track level.

The leaders of the opposition, whether they originate from opposition political parties or from the army, often completely overlook women's group initiatives. The case of the 2015 failed military coup was quoted by several interviewees as an example of a clash between different strategies that ended up being counterproductive to civil rights and women's movements. The putsch was indeed planned at a time when women's groups were organizing massive and peaceful street demonstrations that, some interviewees argued, had begun to bear fruit. The failed coup put an end to their peaceful strategy, however, by legitimizing repression and by sending most civil society leaders into exile.

There is a wide rift between women's groups still active in Burundi and women activists in the diaspora, a rift that mostly pertains to the limited freedom of expression that Burundian participants in mediation initiatives enjoy. Many women who were involved in Burundian politics in 2015 and many who were high-profile civil society activists have had to flee abroad during the past two years. While some are tempted to look at these exiled female leaders for guidance, others are keenly aware of the differences in approaches that now set them apart. Even if the meeting is held outside Burundi, it is difficult for people who will have to go back home afterwards to speak openly and face the potential consequences of their honesty. Such constraints do not apply to women in the diaspora, who can more openly condemn the government or make bolder proposals.

There is resistance to women's empowerment and increased political participation. This resistance is particularly strong in rural areas, where women's groups are seen as "associations of women who are trying to rebel against customs and traditions", as one interviewee put it. Also at the national level, women's groups have to fight the influence of patriarchal norms that are particularly strong in the political spheres. While stereotypes picturing women as innocuous and harmless might sometimes play in their favour, they also often mean that women who are invited to participate in mediation or dialogue activities "are not expected to do more than to agree to what male participants decide".

Women's groups do not hesitate to use international documents such as SC Resolution 1325 or international conventions such as the CEDAW to advocate for their inclusion in mediation and conflict resolution initiatives. However, this advocacy work is more likely to be successful when mediation is organized internationally or when they can rely on international partners rather than national dialogue sessions.

In sum, the challenges and difficulties faced by women's groups suggest that their potential is far being fully tapped. Even without significant funding, institutional support or infrastructures, and often without proper training or education, these women's groups have proven that they could make a difference in a number of ways, notably through their mediation work at the local level and through their early warning and monitoring capabilities. Their intersectional, multilevel, inclusive and low-key approach could therefore be considered as a considerable and worth-exploring asset in any conflict resolution initiative.

4.6 Conclusions

In order to summarize Burundian women's group strategies for peace that derive from their versatility and flexibility, the following findings bear relevance to the Finnish model, and even beyond.

The groups empower women in order to bring about a more peaceful and just society. For the groups that are involved in political discussions either at the national or at the international level, this notably means lobbying for the inclusion of more women as negotiators, as mediators or even as "gender experts". For other groups, it entails training women in platforms to help them conduct their own advocacy, encourage women's participation in public life and in politics, and attempt to have more women elected.

The groups engage in capacity-building. The groups do this, for example, through exchanges of experience and good practices between young women and female political leaders, or through training programmes in responsible leadership, democracy, or political ethics. Some women's groups develop specific programmes targeting particularly vulnerable women such as demobilized and repatriated women, but these organizations seek to unite and empower women beyond differences in religions, social class, or ethnic or regional origins.

Their work is intersectional, as they endeavour to bridge unequal access to the political scene across differences in gender, but also in religion, social status or ethnicity. An example of such work is the translation into Kirundi, the local language, of international treaties and conventions in the field of gender equality and of human rights. They sometimes also institute the translation from French into Kirundi of the most important national laws. These initiatives are all the more important because many women living in the countryside do not speak any French and have no knowledge of their own rights.

Burundian women's groups pool and share experience and knowledge to support one another and empower themselves as women's organizations. There is a relatively large number, for such a small country, of networks, platforms, collectives and other umbrella organizations providing links between women's groups. In all of these cases, however, these platforms often act as a sounding board for discourses on peace and gender equality.

Women's groups identify the "local" or even "micro" level as a key entry point for fostering peaceful change in Burundi. They trust that solving the national conflict can only happen if there is peace at the local level, and that preventing the reescalation of the national conflict entails paying attention to the multiple potentially escalating local disputes. As one interviewee put it: "There would not be any conflict at the national level if there were not issues at the local one".

Women's groups believe that national and local conflicts have the same underlying causes (poverty, inequality, poor governance mechanisms, corruption, etc.) They recognize the need to adopt different strategies, e.g. when intervening in first and second track dialogue processes and in local territorial disputes. Some of them admit that in the current context it is less dangerous for them to implement community-based programmes and insider mediation than to be involved in nationwide political initiatives. But it remains that most of these organizations had started focusing on the local level long before 2015.

The groups create local spaces where small groups of people can articulate and convey their grievances, support one another, and hopefully find solutions together; women's groups actively work in favour of peaceful change. Local programmes range from microprojects that are designed to enable financial autonomization and exchanges between women of different ethnic origins, religions, genders or generations to small training classes in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and mediation, or to the use of street theatre or drama to allow people to express their grief, anger or anguish.

They identify a need to raise awareness for peace in all sections of the population, hence their inclusiveness and creativity. They make extensive use of various media for that purpose, especially of the radio, which is the most-used media in Burundi. Some women's

groups have set up their own radio stations, while some others have their own radio programmes in which they advocate for peace. Some of these programmes focus on specific issues such as sexual and gender-based violence or on the need to have more women participating in elections and in public life. Other groups use national radio channels to broadcast messages for positive change and for peaceful orientation.

Women's groups express their inclusiveness by actively seeking out men and boys and by collaborating with men's organizations such as CHOVIF (Coalition des hommes pour la lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes). Young people are also specifically targeted, for example through the use of WhatsApp and other social networks or through the organization of intergenerational meetings in order to sensitize young people to peace and mobilize them in conflict prevention and conflict resolution activities. While the presence of Burundian women's groups on the Internet is not yet highly developed, especially because many of them do not have the expertise to develop and maintain their own website, they have developed means of communication that are well adapted to the national context.

Women's groups have the greatest impact during the conflict cycle in the phases in which conflict prevention and early warning activities can be implemented. All interviewees notably identified the pre-escalation and escalation periods as the ones during which track three mediation initiatives were most likely to make a difference, by convincing people to avoid using violence and to turn to dialogue and peaceful means of protest instead. Once violence spreads, they feel that women's voices are dimmed because it becomes too dangerous for women to be active in the public sphere and because their underrepresentation in the security sector impedes their capacity to influence the turn of events.

Women's groups see the time preceding elections as a major entry point for their work that they can use in order to mediate local conflicts, train the population in civic education, or raise awareness about democracy. Most of our interviewees' organizations had thus already started developing conflict prevention strategies for the 2020 elections and are highly active in the field of early warning and monitoring. Many were using their local antennas for early warning purposes, helping them to identify destabilizing rumours, increasing unrest, and local conflicts and issues. Some of them exchange with security agents on a regular basis and relay the information gathered from the grassroots to the leadership. Others systematically monitor, on a monthly basis, different types of violence happening in the country, including political, social, economic and gender-based violence. This information helps women's groups in the peace advocacy work they conduct at the national level. It is also crucial for early intervention and mediation work, as it documents pressing issues and often helps identify avenues for effective conflict prevention strategies.

5. COLOMBIA: SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Introduction

Colombia has suffered one of the world's longest wars, and it has had a deep impact. The armed conflict with FARC officially lasted 52 years, but had roots in earlier violence. The official statistics are that 267,162 deaths were caused by the conflict up to the day that the first peace accord was signed in 2016, with about 80% of these deaths civilians. Yet authors of the official *Basta Ya!* government report recognize that this is an extreme undercount because, by their own account, most of these deaths were caused by the state or para-state actors, meaning that people were generally afraid to report deaths to the state. The number of the disappeared has also been contentious. In 2015, the government's Victim's Unit put it at 45,515 since 1985 (Cosoy 2015). A recent report from the National Centre for Historical Memory put the number at 60,630 over the last 45 years (CNMH 2016).

More than one in ten Colombians had to flee their homes. At 7.2 million (UNHCR 2016), they are one of the largest groups of internally displaced people in the world (trading the category of worst back and forth with Syria in recent years). It has been mostly *campesinos*, small farmers, who have been displaced. This violent counter-land reform, largely caused by violence from the state and paramilitaries, has deeply concentrated land holdings.

The war in Colombia was based on and further entrenched by power hierarchy systems that will not be easily dismantled. Struggles over land have been at the heart of the Colombian conflict since the 1940s. Displacement is not a side effect of the conflict: it has instead been used as a "development" strategy. LeGrand (1989) argues that there have been repeated cycles of small farmers being pushed further and further out to new frontiers and then pushed out yet again after they have opened new areas. In recent years, small farmers have been run off in particular to bring in major mining and agribusiness companies, especially in palm oil for biodiesel. These business interests have repeatedly tried to disassociate themselves from the paramilitary violence that clears the land before they move in.

The Colombian conflict has caused tremendous trauma for many, but its impact varies by gender, age, ethnicity, region, and other factors. Men have been more likely to be "kidnapped, tortured, arbitrarily detained, and forcibly recruited" (Bouvier 2016, 7). Women have more often suffered "massive displacement, sexual violence, rape, forced labor, forced prostitution, forced abortions, and enslavement" (ibid.) As survivors, women more often have to take on the role of single heads of households and to offer care to those disabled by war (ibid.) The war intensified gender discrimination and gender-based violence, which in turn shaped the war. Physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women was often used by armed groups for social control, often forcing displacement as a way ultimately to control territory (Afonso et al. 2013, 16). This all happened in a context of profound impunity in which sexual violence was rarely even officially registered (CNMH 2017).

5.2 Peace process

There has been a wide and deep grassroots movement pushing for peace in Colombia for many years, and the women's movement has played a leading role in that organizing. Some women's groups in Colombia are explicitly pacifist, and many others prioritize peace as a women's issue. These movements have spent years pushing for negotiated solutions and

pressuring the state to the table.

There have been multiple guerrilla groups in Colombia, and the government has negotiated agreements with several of them over the years. FARC was always far and away the largest and strongest guerrilla group. The government made several failed attempts to negotiate with them before the recent successful negotiations, which began with two years of secret talks in Norway, before moving to Cuba for four years of formal negotiations (Cuba and Norway were the two guarantor countries).

Although women make up half of the population of Colombia, and a high percentage of FARC (35–40%), there were no women on the government team when negotiations began, and only one woman on the FARC side: Tanja Nijmeijer, a Dutch woman who was not taken seriously as real member of the negotiating team by the media. Because of pressure from Colombian women's groups in November 2013, two women were finally named to the government negotiating team. But they did not have any experience in gender analysis, nor did they consider themselves feminists.

After more than two years of negotiations, a gender commission was appointed in September 2014. They recommended both a gender-sensitive approach and what they called a "differential approach", arguing that women, children, indigenous people, small farmers, LGBT people, and other groups experienced different forms and levels of violence during the conflict and as such needed different forms of reparation. The commission added this differential approach to all areas of the accord: land restitution, demobilization, victims' rights, the safety to engage in politics without threat, and more (Cinco Claves 2017).

The two parties finished their negotiations at the end of August and formally signed a full agreement on 27 September 2016, just two months after the differential approach was incorporated. The agreement was then put to a popular vote on 2 October 2016. This left very little time to educate the public about a long and complicated agreement which included a differential approach that was not immediately understandable to most.

The gender-sensitive and differential approaches played a key role in the failure of the referendum. The Christian right achieved a heavy turnout through their dense and growing networks and claimed that one in three No voters were evangelicals voting to protect so-called "family values" and against a so-called "gender ideology" (Cosoy 2016). There are no exit polls to back up this claim, but anti-gay prejudice does seem to have played a leading role. This was reflected in the fact that the first people that President Santos met with after the vote were evangelical church leaders.

The parties returned to the negotiating table in Havana and met there with a series of representatives from the No side and eventually met again with women's groups and victim's groups. It seemed that perhaps these innovative approaches would be dropped. Although there has been a slowly growing use of a gender perspective in other national peace accords, the Colombian accords are the first in the world to explicitly say throughout that they take a gender-sensitive approach (Bell 2015).

Strong grassroots movements were organizing to save the peace accords and push for a fast renegotiation, and the women's movement and LGBT movement played an important role in that work. The renegotiated accords maintained the differential approach. What the new accords did was clarify, in the introduction, what the approach meant. It was framed as a means of respecting everyone's constitutional rights, including the right to equality and non-discrimination. In clarifying the approach and its rationale, if anything the new accords strengthened it. The new accords make many more references throughout to taking "affirmative measures" to ensure equality with regard to various aspects of implementation.

The revised accords were signed on 24 November 2016. They were not put up for a vote but were instead unanimously approved by Congress on 30 November 2016. Implementation began immediately on 1 December 2016, but there have been numerous difficulties with implementation. Congress is far behind in passing the many laws required, for example to establish the transitional justice system and numerous other new agencies. One of the complexities and challenges of the Colombian situation is that, as implementation of the peace accord with the FARC rebels is underway, the state has begun negotiating with the smaller ELN rebel group. There is currently a process underway for determining exactly how, but civil society will be incorporated more fully into these negotiations, both as a reflection of the different makeup and history of the ELN and taking into account lessons learned from the last negotiation process.

5.3 Supporting implementation

Women's organizations in Colombia have been deeply engaged in supporting the formal peace process both before it began (as they pressured for such talks and helped to create the context for them), during the four years of talks and now in the implementation phase. Now women's groups are fostering forms of mediation and dialogue that support implementation of peace accords in various ways and at different scales. These women's groups see implementation as a particularly crucial time in the conflict cycle at which their participatory mediation can have a large impact. They stress that it is essential for them to discuss aspects of the accords and the recent laws and decrees relating to implementation, and to understand what they mean on the ground for them, so that they can be involved in shaping the implementation and what it becomes. In that process, women's organizations face disagreements on what to focus on and what to push for that they are mediating amongst themselves. In different groupings, they are building points of consensus that then make their advocacy for implementation stronger. This does not mean that the particular needs of different sorts of women (by age, rurality, etc.) are blurred into some sort of common denominator, but rather that spaces are being created for different concerns to be shared and collectively supported.

Women's groups in Colombia open spaces of facilitated dialogue or participatory mediation in which they set up dynamics to be able to speak and hear each other well and work out positions regarding aspects of implementation and peacebuilding in the Colombian post-accord period (1) in their own organizations at local, regional, and national levels. They then go on to do similar work (2) in various alliances with other women's groups and mixed gender groups at regional and national levels. This is important movement-building work that then allows them to better do so (3) in dialogue with various formations of the state at local, regional, and national levels. Working across above-mentioned differences and on different scales is seen to make specific aspects of implementation more effective and also works to rebuild the social fabric more generally.

New state agencies can draw on the work of women's organizations, as the organizations are creating their own dialogue spaces that reweave broken connections across differences in society that have been aggravated by the armed conflict. There are 35 new Colombian government agencies being established as part of the peace accords, and thousands of new laws. One of the longstanding challenges in Colombia and in many other conflict countries is to have a fully functional state in all areas. Armed conflict occurred largely in areas where there was not a strong state presence. Many national programmes are not implemented in certain regions or localities. Historically, it has also been difficult for various govenrment agencies to coordinate their work. It would be a challenge for the new agencies established as part of the peace accord to function well, and in particular to carry out the

differential approach mandated in the accords, without the work carried out by women's organizations.

In order to work across differences, women's organizations use innovative means to create connection in ways that can also reach more marginalized populations. These means include the use of forms of ritual to create safer spaces for telling what can be difficult truths and for performing this dialogue work. Many groups use the ritual of creating a temporary mandala as a material manifestation of the different perspectives coming together. Others use crafts to create a safer space for dialogue. This can range from embroidering the names of lost loved ones on handkerchiefs that are then hung up to working as a group on a large piece of fabric and using patchwork techniques to collectively tell a story about the conflict.

5.4 Obstacles

One of the major differences that some women's organizations are working to bridge through dialogue is the vastly different realities of urban and rural women, who experienced the war very differently and now have different peacebuilding needs, but often do not even know each other's realities. Rural women are often severely disadvantaged, and it is much harder for them to participate in these dialogues. To use the terminology of the Colombian peace accords, these women need stronger "affirmative measures" to help them even reach the table in order to speak. Several said that what they most needed was financial aid for transport to events so that they could come and take part in the dialogue. Several women's groups are also focusing on involving more young women. It has been easier for them to involve younger urban women than younger rural women.

The implementation work is a continuation of the work many of the women's groups did to push for the peace negotiations to happen, and then to provide input for the negotiations themselves. This included specific crafted proposals, a good number of which were incorporated into the accords. Despite the recognized importance of the implementation phase, the support that the groups received for earlier stages in the conflict cycle, such as funds for facilitated dialogue from the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), has largely ended.

The Colombian Network of Women Mediators, established with the help of funding and training from the USIP, has continued as a loose-knit unfunded group that supports this sort of work, although far from all the women's organizations who do the work are involved. The Women, Peace and Security Collective for Reflection and Action also brings together various groups to exchange experiences and develop practices for this work. Financial and technical support for this kind of knowledge exchange and for reflecting on what has and has not worked could have a major impact on supporting women's dialogue and mediation work in this implementation phase.

Targeted technical support is also needed. As indicated, new government agencies, development plans, and laws are being established to implement the peace accords. Various women's groups pointed out that, to truly have a voice in this process and for their participation in the implementation process to be meaningful, they needed support for understanding the many new and rapidly evolving implementation laws, decrees, plans, and agencies and their impact (in Colombia this is often described as *orientacion sociojuridica*, or "sociolegal orientation"). As it is, international agencies widely agree that Colombian laws are conflicting, overlapping, and often hard to understand. Colombia also has a recent history of some laws not being fully implemented or even translated into the appropriate regulations. Many women's groups have the capacity to train each other on how to understand these ongoing implementation dynamics, if supported with the resources to do so. Outside technical sup-

port for this could be helpful for some groups of women who are more marginalized and have less formal education, such as rural women.

The entry points to the state level are considered also important. Various women's organizations indicated that they wanted more spaces for participation in the implementation process that were not simply for civil society to present proposals or comments to the state, but which allowed more engaged dialogue and discussion about implementation dynamics on the ground with various levels of the state, and where actual decisions about implementation specifics could be made. They argued that such spaces would make implementation more effective. The groups do not want to participate in spaces where they seem to be speaking into a black hole and where their voices have little impact and are not as effective in making implementation work as well as they could be.

Relatedly, women's organizations would like to see more women named to official positions in committees and agencies involved in implementation, and many are concerned about the dismally low percentages of women appointed so far at both national and regional levels (although the new transitional justice court is a notable exception). They argue that women often need extra support and training to be able to take up these positions, particularly rural women, who are even less represented in implementation spaces. Women's groups also insist that it is not only important to count how many women are on implementation boards and agencies, but that these women must be people who know about and will support women's rights.

5.5 Conclusions

Only a few of the Colombian women's groups studied for this report frame their work as mediation, insider mediation, participatory mediation, facilitation, dialogue, or the like (much less track two or track three mediation); yet this research shows how their work on implementation of the accords involved brokering differences and building consensus through facilitating dialogues at various scales. Indeed, in Colombia the word mediation can be a difficult and loaded word for some groups, and it seems this is also true elsewhere and is something to be wary of (Lehti & Lepomäki 2017). This work is often performed by women's groups under other names and should be looked for more widely, also at local, regional, and national scales which are not so much nested as in ongoing conversation.

When the head of the Colombian negotiation team, Humberto De la Calle, announced the inclusion of the differential approach at the suggestion of the gender commission, he emphasized that if these peace accords worked, it would be because of the grassroots reconciliation work done by women. A great deal is asked of women, and too often their resiliency is taken for granted – and even abused. Although women can often do a great deal with very little, they need more support.

Support is particularly key but perhaps more easily forgotten in the implementation phase. The growing literature on ways to include women in peace negotiation processes says little on how to incorporate them in making those processes stick. Supporting their mediation and dialogue work in the implementation phase is an effective and innovative way to do just that. Colombian women's organizations will continue to require ongoing financial and political support in order to have the capacity to engage in dialogue to ensure full and equitable implementation. They could particularly use support for knowledge exchanges to strengthen and broaden their own skills at these mediation processes. They could also use logistical support for getting women with fewer resources literally to the table for these discussions, as well as technical support for understanding new implementation laws, decrees and agen-

cies. All women's groups could use grassroots fundraising training so that they could expand their base of support and be able to maintain their work once international support ends.

One half of all negotiated peace accords fail according to Kroc institute, which has developed a peace accords matrix that tracks the implementation status of 34 recent comprehensive peace accords by assessing 51 distinct provisions year-by-year for ten years in quantitative and qualitative form. But, also according to the Kroc institute, the Colombian accord addresses root causes more comprehensively than any other negotiated settlement has and the institute is itself involved in monitoring the implementation of the Colombian accord. All peace accords require special attention and support in the implementation phase, but, as the most inclusive accord to date, the Colombian accord is particularly worth supporting through its rocky implementation phase.

6. INCLUSIVE AND GENDER-SENSITIVE MEDIATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INDEPENDENT PEACEMAKERS

6.1 Introduction: The Finnish Way

A Finnish particularity in the peace sector is the existence of strong NGO actors that focus on mediation and peacemaking. Finland is a home of three internationally well-known independent mediation and peacebuilding organizations: the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Felm) and Finn Church Aid (FCA), which is closely associated with the New York based Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (Network).

In Finland, peacemaking means intensive interaction between the official state sector and the NGO sector. The existence of mutual trust between the state, the civil society actors and academia is grounded on "the Nordic model", namely a strong civil society and trust between these actors, but the symbiotic relationship between the official and NGO sectors in mediation is unique in Finland. As such, it offers an interesting example that may also have wider applicability and significance. The close relationship between the state and NGOs is characteristic also for Norway, but in a different way. Norway lacks strong NGO actors who could actively contribute to mediation practices, and, hence, in Norway NGOs function more as support to state activities. In Finland, on the other hand, the state has limited its activity primarily to mediation support (good offices, networking, coordinating, promoting, funding etc.), and NGOs have taken active roles in various conflicts.

In this way, the Finnish state's funding and support enables these NGOs to engage in peace processes. Finland-based independent peacemaking organizations (CMI, Felm and FCA will be discussed below) receive a significant amount of their funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as this funding is a crucial prerequisite for their active presence in several conflict zones and for their innovative agenda setting. Both official and nonofficial parties benefit from this trust-based arrangement. NGOs are not expected – nor do they consider themselves obligated – to work as an extension of Finnish foreign policy, but rather in close collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Collaboration between official and unofficial sectors is common in the current, complex peacemaking architecture, but unlike in many other countries, the Finnish MFA does not have a specific interest in influencing the agenda of these organizations, except to promote the general principle of women's inclusion in peace processes (see Lehti & Lepomäki 2017).

The three above-mentioned NGOs have different organizational histories, and their profiles and achievements in peacemaking, mediation and conflict prevention are different. CMI has focused more on supporting first and second track mediation, whereas FCA and Felm often support large-scale and civil-society-based inclusive dialogue processes. Neither of these organizations is directly involved in track one mediation (official peace negotiations) as such, but they seek to build a complementary role to official processes as well as aim at supporting peace processes as a whole, often by trying to engage marginalized groups in order to increase the inclusivity and legitimacy of the process. In this way, they open new horizons for peaceful transformation. Inclusivity and engagement of women actors as mediators as well as active participants in peace processes more generally are a core part of the

organizations' agenda, but there are variations in how the idea of inclusivity – and particularly women's participation – is operationalized.

CMI is a private organization founded in 2000 by former President of Finland and Nobel laureate Martti Ahtisaari, whose long-term vision is that "all conflicts can be resolved". CMI cooperates with local, regional and international actors, providing direct support to international organizations such as the EU, the AU and the OSCE, and operational support to the UN. It also works between the official and unofficial levels. CMI operates in the Middle East and North Africa (e.g. Libya and Iraq), Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. South Sudan and Central African Republic), and Eurasia (e.g. Moldova and Ukraine). Besides its regional focus, CMI's work has a cross-cutting focus on gender and inclusivity (CMI 2017).

As indicated, inclusivity is a core principle and a cross-cutting theme in CMI's work. CMI's initiatives from the past few years include facilitating women's participation in political processes in countries such as South Sudan and Yemen. In the former, the inclusion of women and young people has been advanced through cooperation with the parliamentary women's caucus. The goal is to strengthen women's participation in the political processes and their capacity to provide input to them. Gender-sensitive mediation is promoted through mediation support, for example in the Central African Republic (CAR). This work aims at strengthening the role of women in peace processes and advancing awareness of how to take women and gender into account in conflict analysis and conflict resolution process design. Training on inclusive mediation processes and gender-sensitive peace agreements is also offered to diplomats, officials in the UN and regional organizations, private diplomatic actors and other practitioners (CMI 2014, 12–15).

The FCA is the largest Finnish non-governmental development cooperation organization and the second-largest provider of humanitarian assistance. Over the past ten years, the FCA has set up offices in other countries, not necessarily for mediation purposes, but to be closer to the local population and partner organizations (interview with Mahdi Abdile and Aaro Rytkönen, 14 November 2016). During the past decade, there has been a shift in the FCA's work. The organization previously focused on development and humanitarian work, but in the past decade it has begun to engage more in peacebuilding and peacemaking. Gender and inclusivity is a part of the FCA's holistic approach, and the inclusion of women, youth and marginalized groups and efforts to address gender disparities cut across all their work. Countries in which the role of women in peacebuilding has been their particular focus include Nepal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FCA 2015; Jäppinen & Sams 2015).

The shift in the FCA's own approach, the changing nature of international mediation, and the evolution of contemporary conflicts – particularly in relation to the growing role of religion and identity-based issues – created a ripe moment for the establishment of the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers in 2013 in cooperation with the UN Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs (UN MSU – DPA), the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Religions for Peace (RfP) (Jäppinen & Sams 2015). It was supported by Finland's official promotion of mediation at the UN through the Group of Friends of Mediation, leading to the adoption of three General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions and the writing of the Secretary-General's report A/66/811, which calls for better inclusion of religious and traditional leaders in peacemaking.

The FCA serves as the secretariat and legal entity for the Network, which is comprised of close to 50 actors, including inter- and intra-governmental agencies, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and religious and traditional peacemakers. The Finnish MFA and FCA are also the two main sources of funding for the Network (Network 2017). The Network

operates in the Middle East and North Africa (e.g. Libya), Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. CAR, Somalia, and Kenya), and South and Southeast Asia (e.g. Afghanistan Myanmar and Southern Thailand). The Network aims at streamlining inclusivity into all of its projects. The goal is to advance women's inclusion in religiously framed mediation, peacemaking and peacebuilding processes.

The Network's gender and inclusivity work acknowledges the fact that religious and traditional structures can be patriarchal by nature. There are, therefore, both challenges and opportunities in strengthening women's role in these structures. According to the Network's approach, the challenges should not discourage one from engaging with local religious and traditional actors, but rather engagement creates opportunities to advance inclusive transformation from the inside and through local ownership (Network 2016; Rytkönen 2014, 105). The Network's recent experiences in Libya, which were partly inspired by the FCA's earlier work in Somalia, indicate that connecting women, young people and minorities with religious and traditional actors is a particular niche within which the Network can exert influence.

Felm is a mission organization belonging to the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is one of the largest Finnish civil society organizations working in global development; it works in development cooperation, emergency relief, church work, and advocacy. Like the FCA, Felm has expanded its work from development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and emergency relief to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It promotes a comprehensive view of the interrelated nature of development, peace, and security. It also works with secular organizations and emphasizes the holistic nature of its approach, which emerges from the needs of local communities (Laisi & Rintakoski 2015, 108).

Women, persons with disabilities and minorities are a central focus of Felm's development cooperation, peace and reconciliation work, and the organization aims to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. The role of women in peace and dialogue processes is supported, for example, in Myanmar, Syria, Nepal and Pakistan. In Syria, for example, the aim of Felm's and the Lebanese-based Common Space Initiative's (CSI) joint project "Syria Initiative" (SI) is to guarantee that gender aspects are considered throughout the process and that all activities are gender-sensitive. Felm has cooperated with the European Institute of Peace (EIP) and CSI in order to prepare a special track for women in the political process. The SI supports the Women's Advisory Board (WAB) to the Office of the Special Envoy to Syria, which enables women's views to be acknowledged in the official Geneva talks. One of the central activities of the SI is to identify and support local peacemakers, who are called "peace assets". Approximately 40% of peace assets are women, and efforts are made to engage more women in peacemaking activities. Felm also supports various dialogue platforms and conferences by documenting and facilitating meetings (Felm 2016b; Felm 2016c).

6.2 Ways of working

The Finnish NGOs acknowledge that the challenges of an inclusive peace process are different in the formal first track mediation than in informal mediation and dialogue processes initiated by civil society actors. Increasing women's participation is often openly resisted by conflicting parties at the track one level, and thus, it is easier to achieve long-term benefits by investing in inclusivity and women's participation in the informal dialogue processes. At the level of official peace negotiations, women's participation is often seen as a question of the number of women delegates, whereas in the civil-society-based dialogues, transformation towards a more inclusive society in general is emphasized. It is also recognized that

it is important to pay attention to how the bottom-up dialogue processes can support the official peace process and vice versa.

Efforts to increase inclusivity at the track one level must be smooth, smart and gradual, as there often exists strong normative resistance for international intervention. The organizations acknowledge that, within this kind of sensitive setting, it is challenging to push too openly and too single-mindedly for women's participation. It is recognized that international peacemakers cannot and should not aim at radical and fast change in terms of the existing gender roles. Rather, they should provide opportunities for gradual change in order to achieve more permanent results in the field of gender equality, participation and inclusiveness. Even if peace processes manage to change women's roles, it is challenging to preserve the new roles in the long run. Peace processes in Syria, South Sudan and Myanmar in which Felm and CMI have been involved offer examples of the incremental efforts to increase the inclusion of women at the track one level during the violent and early post-conflict phases of the conflict cycle.

There is an understanding that inclusivity and women's participation in peace processes contribute to the sustainability of peace in a complex manner. Women's involvement in peacemaking is seen to be vital in all phases of the conflict cycle. When this is thought to be a question of participation and representation in the track one process, the relationship between the gender of the mediator and mediation success is not seen to be straightforward. In short, the belief in the causality between women's participation in official negotiations and more sustainable peace is seen to be based on a limited understanding of complex and often very long peacebuilding processes. It is recognized that just adding more women to the track one negotiations and mediation do not automatically contribute to a more sustainable peace.

The ability of the international community and international NGOs to change the attitudes of political and military leaders is often limited, but investing in civil society actors is seen be useful, as it prepares society for the de-escalation and peacebuilding phases in the conflict cycle. Local civil society actors are often successful in dealing with the issues related to education and healthcare and, furthermore, their work on dialogue within civil society can have a long-term impact on the inclusivity of the peace process. In this sense, the difference between the social sector, development and peacebuilding does not hold in many conflict zones in which local civil society actors work.

For example, the Syrian Initiative project starts from the presupposition that one of the main challenges of the Syrian fragmented peace process is how to link track two and three processes to track one and how information can be exchanged between the tracks. Supporting Women's Advisory Board has brought Felm close to the track one process. The SI has been active in organizing dialogue forums that allow thinking about the peaceful future beyond the ongoing war and in this way open new future horizons and establish capacities that are considered vital for entering to the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation phases in the conflict cycle. The SI has organized several dialogue platforms that bring together a variety of conflicting actors. It has also activated local women's organizations. Despite its male-dominated political culture, Syria has a strong women's NGO sector that is identified as requiring support. According to Felm, the challenge is – as it in many other contexts – to convince the ultraconservative forces of the need for women's participation.

Examining peace processes from a long-term perspective, e.g. decades long, it is possible to note how certain forms of support for inclusive dialogue within civil society may have a more profound impact on conflict transformation than investment in the security sector or even in traditional mediation interventions that are, however, often prioritized by the parties

during the war. For example, during the civil war in Colombia, the USA invested and supported the Columbian government's security operations to eliminate FARC leaders, whereas the EU was investing simultaneously in less visible civil society projects that seemed at that time to have no influence. Funding was given to organizations that were promoting peace and women's participation. There was also a great asymmetry of funding coming from the USA and the EU. For the EU it was a question of small-scale activity, but for years this limited funding was crucial for civil society actors to continue their work. From the current post-agreement phase, there is an indication that the USA's investment in the security sector has played no role in supporting peace. The civil society projects funded by the EU, on the other hand, seem to be more important for the existence of a vivid civil society, which is, in turn, a prerequisite for sustainable peace. The example demonstrates also how the impact and significance of interventions can be evaluated using complex evaluation tools. Results-based management and evaluation tools are seldom sufficient for evaluating a civil society's local peace processes and their long-term impact.

The Finnish NGOs recognize that women's role is central yet diverse during the re-escalation and conflict prevention phases in the conflict cycle. Women are seen to have a key role in developing early warning and prevention mechanisms and in contributing to the de-escalation of inter- and intra-community tensions. Similarly, it is thought that the reconciliation and post-conflict state-building phases require the involvement of women. During these phases, women often act as mediators between and inside communities, and it has been noted that local women actors can mediate – go between – across religious and ethnic divisions at the local level and that they can in many settings more easily gain permission to take that role than men can. This type of preventive mediation efforts may be less visible to the international community, but they can have a huge impact on peace processes. In some contexts, it may be easier for women than for men to cross community boundaries and encourage dialogue between conflicting groups. In other words, it is easier for women to promote inclusivity. One example of such an activity is the Network's support for women's interfaith groups that seek to create early warning mechanisms and encourage dialogue between the Buddhist and Muslim communities in South Thailand (interview with Martine Miller, 31 May 2017).

The organizations stress that development projects can create entry points for peace interventions. Although the projects do not always include explicit peace support dimensions, they can have a project design that supports the de-escalation of violence. For example, Felm has experience with preventive interventions that link a development project to preventive mediation efforts. Development projects do invest in empowering women, but this is rarely seen in the project design as a preventive action.

From the perspective of preventive mediation, measures softening organizational and operational distinctions between development, humanitarian and peace projects can be constructive, as they would enable more creative and innovative engagement designs for the early phases of the conflict cycle. Through this merger, early warning mechanisms can be developed as well. Working through the development frame can offer more flexibility for mediators, since the potential conflict is not seen in terms of an emergency situation. If the transparency and local ownership of projects is emphasized and seen to be essential, then a question arises as to who can be an active agent in preventive mediation and be in charge of the preventive aspect of mediation. There is no simple answer to this. In short, preventive mediation can be used as a theoretical concept to describe certain preventive activities, but it can be employed also as an operational concept within an organization's project planning.

In sum, sensitivity and flexibility are emphasized by the Finnish NGOs. They argue that they are better able to act in an early phase of the conflict cycle because states and international

organizations such as the UN, EU or AU lack this flexibility. Their intervention thus has a more profound impact on conflict dynamics, as they have an early warning capacity embedded in their activities.

6.3 Challenges

Building inclusivity into a peace process and into societal structures is a long and often slow process. Genuine transformation of exclusive and oppressive societal structures is a complex, unpredictable and non-linear process that requires persistence and innovative approaches.

Due to the complexity and slow pace of an inclusive and sustainable peaceful transformation of violent conflicts, the impact of peace intervention tends to be difficult to measure. Women's participation is often measured by employing quantitative measures such as numbers and percentages of women participating in negotiations and meetings. While this is seen as an important way to monitor and ensure women's inclusion, it is by no means unproblematic. Sometimes quotas are filled with women to make processes seem inclusive at the expense of involving the most knowledgeable women experts. Yet, in the absence of more comprehensive and reliable ways of measuring the quality of inclusion, such measures may provide the only method of evaluating inclusivity in the short term, but the result should not be interpreted uncritically.

The right partnerships guarantee access and generate entry points to the conflict cycle, as they offer networks and platforms to work in all relevant sectors of society and with all the tracks. Even if the local actors are regarded as important partners, working with actors who have national reach in their activities and with other international actors is considered to be important. For example, in Syria, Felm is balancing between cooperation with organizations acting within the framework of UN Women and between the local actors. Working with the smaller local NGOs is regarded as easier and more useful than dealing with the larger ones. In order to guarantee linkages between the tracks, Felm works with the leading national NGOs as well as with the local ones.

Finnish organizations are actively seeking to recognize possible entry points and to identify the local partners whose invitation is seen as essential for their engagement. The identification of and engaging with local women actors and NGOs is a highly context-sensitive activity. Furthermore, intervening actors use their power to select which partners can increase inclusivity and play an important role in the peace process. All this requires a context-specific understanding of conflict dynamics, but also a holistic analysis of the peace process.

All the organizations work with a variety of women actors ranging from politicians and parliamentarians (e.g. CMI in South Sudan) to lawyers (e.g. the FCA in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Furthermore, as in Felm's approach, the partners can also be teachers, doctors or representatives from other professions. They acknowledge that sometimes it is easier to advance a dialogue through such professional groups, as they include women from both sides of the conflict. Working with women's NGOs is seen to guarantee the best access and entry points to the conflict cycle, since they have legitimacy at the local level. Cooperation with local organizations also enables work in geographical areas that are difficult to reach and allows dealing with themes that otherwise would be excluded.

Mapping the uniqueness of each context requires careful analysis of the local setting as well as consultation with local women actors before cooperation. The social, political, cultural,

religious and other structures within which local women operate are different in each situation and set the framework, in the form of opportunities and limits, for women's participation. Treating women as one united, homogeneous front whose only goal is to increase gender equality can undermine processes aimed at building an inclusive peace. The Finnish organizations point out that women peacemakers and women's organizations are diverse and heterogeneous – and sometimes even internally fragmented, with different views, goals and interests. It is important to recognize that their involvement in peace processes can sometimes be used solely to satisfy the political ambitions of local organizations and individuals. Moreover, the agendas of the nationwide elite-led women's organizations and local grass root organizations can differ greatly.

Finnish organizations recognize that they do not necessarily bring any added value to the peace process by concentrating on working with the most internationally acknowledged and high-profile groups of women. A more effective channel of advancing inclusivity and women's participation in peace processes can be found in smaller, but not necessary always local, actors that benefit most from the external support and collaboration. A balanced combination of cooperation with nationwide organization and local organizations is seen to be preferable. Strengthening the networks and collaboration among national and local women actors and establishing platforms through which they can more effectively get their voices heard are also an integral part of supporting the work of local women.

For example, the Network's guidelines require that the (local) women should be consulted first to identify how they can be supported. International support is often welcomed and it is seen to support the perceived legitimacy of the work of the local actors but, at other times, international actors may end up "hijacking" the agenda and activities of the local NGOs and thereby end up hindering the effectiveness of the work of the local organizations and damaging their reputation in the eyes of local stakeholders (Interview with Martine Miller, 31 May 2017.). Whether this is done knowingly or by accident with good intentions the damage may prove to be fatal to the local peace efforts and to the work carried out by local women actors. Therefore, engaging with local partners and setting the agenda for the third party intervention is highly sensitive and context specific exercise.

While capacity building can have an important part to play in empowering women locally, it is also crucial to know when it is not needed. There can be a huge amount of capacity among the local actors, but it is the entry point for the local women actors that is missing. In short, local women do not always have a shortage of capacity, experience, expertise and willingness to engage in peacebuilding, but they themselves lack the entry point to the process. The core task of the external actors then becomes creating this entry point and facilitating and supporting the involvement of local women. This is one way of increasing the inclusivity, legitimacy and ownership of the peace process.

The partners can sometimes be found in unexpected places. For example, in the Network's activities in Libya, women peacemakers cooperate with the tribal movement established by tribal leaders (Network 2016). In the example of Libya, women's involvement was not a question of capacity but rather of missing an entry point into the peace process. By creating the entry point, the Network has taken a significant transformative step toward increasing the inclusivity and legitimacy of tribal dialogue within the civil society. In sum, by creating entry points for the local actors that are excluded, the international actors can make a significant contribution to peace processes.

6.4 Conclusions

The Finnish NGOs – CMI, the FCA and Felm – are not uniform in their approaches to mediation and peacebuilding, but there are similarities in their practices. They all focus on dialogue, long-term change and sustainability, and local ownership. They emphasize context specificity, localized approaches, and the fluidity and flexibility of their interventions. They focus more on identifying entry points with the local actors than on official mandates. The starting point for their approach is trust building and the reduction of dichotomous attitudes. They do not seek compromises in interests and power-related issues, but create alternative communication channels between the parties in conflict. They see the inclusion of women peacemakers and organizations as a vital part of their long-term work that builds foundations for well-functioning state structures.

Yet, the challenge is to know how to recognize early warning signs and utilize them in mediation in soft and less visible ways. The reading of early warning signals requires a profound knowledge of the society that can often be found in long-term development projects, but not so much in short-term peace support projects. Utilizing the development sector in (preventive) mediation requires the revision of funding instruments, as the current funding model does not allow the inclusion of potential peace mediation elements in development projects.

7. CONCLUSIONS: LESSONS LEARNED

7.1 Introduction

Finland exercises a multi-actor, multi-level and multi-functional approach to conflict resolution, mediation and conflict prevention founded on the recognition that crisis management requires multiple actors and instruments. It works through different organizations and supports a variety of networks and projects, as well as actors. There is a productive trust-based coexistence and cooperation between the strong Finnish NGO actors that focus on mediation and peacemaking and the Finnish state. This is a specific Finnish approach to mediation, in which the state supports the NGO sector in their peacemaking work, yet does not intervene in their actions. Despite the financial support from the state, the NGO sector remains highly independent.

This part of the report draws together the experiences of the Finnish NGOs and the Burundian and Colombian women's organizations to support the above-mentioned Finnish way of conflict resolution, mediation and conflict prevention. The conclusions discuss the ways in which inclusivity and women's participatory engagement is present in the work of the Finnish NGOs. In addition to that, it draws conclusions from role of local Burundian and Colombian women's organizations in the different phases of the mediation, conflict resolution and conflict prevention cycle. Conclusions are drawn in the light of the impact of women's organizations on comprehensive, sustainable, inclusive and participatory peace processes as a whole, and they cover the continuum from prevention to post-conflict peace accord implementation and reconstruction.

Many of the women's groups in Burundi and Colombia studied for this report carry out their work during different phases in the conflict cycle. They continue working even when the political process of dialogue has been stalled. Hence, their work represents continuity, persistence, long-term presence and resilience. The strength and resilience of the women's groups derives from their ability to be present at different geographical scales (from local to international) and population sectors at the same time and to vary their strategies accordingly. In other words, they work intersectionally and across a variety of differences.

Often this work is performed at the level of third track mediation, where the groups engage in community, participatory and insider mediation. However, they cooperate both with the first and second track conflict resolution processes and with each other over long periods of time and throughout different phases of the conflict cycle; hence, their involvement cuts across all the conflict resolution tracks.

They foster participation of vulnerable or underrepresented groups such as young people or religious or ethnic minorities and thereby enhance the inclusivity of the peace processes. In this way, they open spaces for otherwise marginalized groups to engage in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. They provide entry points for conflict resolution processes for groups in society who would not otherwise have been included. Given the goal of inclusion, they seek innovative and unconventional methods (e.g. theatre and mandala building) to engage marginalized groups whose reality is very different from those occupying privileged positions in society.

Since their range of activities is wide, their work might not to outsiders seem to fall under the category of mediation. Furthermore, they do not themselves always conceptualize their work

in terms of mediation or conflict resolution, although they do work in ways that place them in between the parties, where they are in the middle (*mediare*). As such, their work offers an opportunity for society, and for the state too, to reshape its social, political, security and socio-economic structures in the long run.

7.2 Burundi: Working across scales, actors and issues

Burundian women's groups organize and participate in mediation at all levels, including the grassroots, and thereby promote an understanding of mediation that goes beyond its traditional definitions. They notably promote mediation at the local level in order to resolve local conflicts that might be happening between different groups, such as between internally displaced people and the rest of the population. This broad understanding of mediation is crucial in supporting peacebuilding from the bottom up.

The impact of Burundian women's groups is the highest during the pre-escalation and escalation phases, and particularly before elections are held. Their capacity to influence the course of events significantly decreases once violence flares up, because women's representation and power in the political and military sectors is still weak. When the conflict de-escalates, women's groups regain part of their influence and implement crucial initiatives dedicated to preventing the re-emergence of conflict.

Burundian women's groups identify two main entry points for their work. On the one hand, the local and in particular community-based programmes allow them to build peace from the bottom up without being seen as implementing overtly political activities in a situation where the government monitors the work of independent NGOs. This bottom-up community mediation and conflict prevention work strengthens their legitimacy and influence, and incrementally builds up positive change at the national level. On the other hand, women's groups rely on international actors to increase their influence on the mediation process, notably through international mediators and diaspora organizations. These actors can relay at the international level the actions and initiatives put in place by women's groups.

Burundian women's groups have implemented highly creative strategies in the phases of conflict prevention and early warning in the conflict cycle, and these strategies can be described as their main strengths. They have put in place various mechanisms for operational conflict prevention at the local level – a striking feature, since operational conflict prevention is usually implemented at the national level only. Their capacity to collect information on emerging and ongoing conflicts at the local and provincial levels is also of crucial importance in terms of early warning.

7.3 Colombia

Colombia's experience is particularly useful in thinking about how women's organizations can support implementation, not only because they are currently engaged in the implementation of a recent peace accord, but also because that accord is the most inclusive peace accord in the world to date. Colombia has a strong women's movement which played a key role in pushing for the gender-sensitive and differential approaches in the accord.

Thus the Colombian case is interesting, as it demonstrates the role of grassroots women's mediation efforts in the implementation phase of the peace accord. In this crucial phase, their work involves not only implementation of the formal accord, but broader processes of reconciliation and rebuilding the social fabric. That work is often more "behind the scenes"

and receives less recognition, but is a key part of the broader transformation that is required for peace accords to be sustainable and for the creation of a broader positive peace and development. In other words, their work is often unseen and also widely unrecognized as mediation because it tends to be track three, insider mediation and forms of facilitated dialogue rather than third-party track two mediation.

One of the most innovative ways of supporting peace accord implementation is to support the grassroots reconciliation work being done by women's groups. In Colombia, women's organizations, by creating spaces to meet and connect across all sorts of differences, are producing conditions for a new kind of civility and new ways of relating – and, in doing so, are reweaving the social fabric that was ripped by war. Some are specifically building the conditions and support for people to move towards acceptance and forgiveness, and sometimes even to meet with different armed actors and victimizers and humanize each other.

More urgently, many women's groups are engaged in discussions about how various aspects of the peace accord should be implemented. Through this work, they are also reweaving social relations, as they open and nurture spaces for discussion amongst women but across various forms of difference about what peace implementation looks like day to day and at various scales.

Many of these groups have a history of providing civic education about the accord. Many have read it by sections together, and prepared and shared workshops and materials about it to inform their discussions about implementation. Coalitions of women's groups such as the Women's Summit and GPaz issue regular implementation status reports for this work. Even as various women's groups learn about and focus on what is not working in the implementation and share those fears and concerns, part of their work is to maintain hope and to keep each other inspired and committed to making the peace accord work, through mutual emotional and even spiritual support.

7.4 Finnish NGOs and long-term change

The Finnish NGOs studied in this report – CMI, the FCA and Felm – are not uniform in their approaches to mediation and peacebuilding. However, there are similarities in their practices. They all focus on dialogue, long-term change and sustainability as well as local ownership. They emphasize context-specificity, localized approaches, and the fluidity and flexibility of their interventions. They focus more on identifying entry points with the local actors than on the official mandates. The starting point for their approaches is trust building and the reduction of dichotomous attitudes. They do not seek compromises in terms of interests and power-related issues, but seek to create alternative communication channels between the parties in conflict. They see the inclusion of women peacemakers and organizations as a vital part of their long-term work that ultimately builds foundations for well-functioning state structures.

There is an understanding in Finnish NGOs that inclusivity and women's participation in a peace process contributes to the sustainability of the peace. The organizations emphasize that the issue of participation and inclusiveness is not just a matter of track one mediation and conflict resolution or of national dialogue, but involves also track two and three mediation and conflict resolution. Women's involvement in conflict resolution and prevention is seen to be vital in all phases of the conflict cycle. The relationship between women's participation and peace is, however, thought to be complex. The role of women is central, particularly during the re-escalation and conflict prevention phases in the conflict cycle. Further-

more, women have a key role in developing early warning and prevention mechanisms and in contributing to the de-escalation of inter- and intra-community tensions.

Context specificity is highlighted by the organizations and is seen to be a vital element that should always be taken into account when planning an intervention. Analysing the conflict at hand, mapping out the support needed, and providing adequate context-specific input are important steps that must be taken in each project. Local ownership can be established only through context specificity and careful analysis and planning.

Given the cyclical nature of conflicts, identifying the right entry points is crucial for any successful mediation intervention. While capacity building may have an important role to play in empowering women locally, it is also crucial to know when it is not needed. Local women's organizations do not always have a shortage of capacity, experience, expertise and willingness to engage in peacebuilding, but they may be missing the entry points. The question of entry points is hence dual: how to support local actors in finding entry points, and what is the right entry point for collaboration with local actors. The Finnish NGOs rely on the principle of invitation, i.e. they intervene by invitation only. The selection of local partners – and not just kidnapping their agenda – is important, as the local actors expand the work through their own networks.

The Finnish NGOs recognize the fact that long-term change happens mainly through track three. This long-term change at the societal level is neither easily visible nor measurable. An evaluation of the success of mediation at this level is extremely difficult and would require an understanding of the larger conflict context and the conflict cycle, as well as long-term evaluation tools.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS: THE FINNISH MODEL

Finland exercises a multi-level, multi-actor and multi-functional approach to conflict resolution, mediation and conflict prevention that is founded on the recognition that crisis management requires multiple actors and instruments and that they form a continuum. Finland works through different organizations, supports a variety of networks and projects, as well as actors.

There is a productive coexistence and collaboration between the strong Finnish NGO actors that focus on mediation and peacemaking and the Finnish state, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is a specific Finnish trust-based approach to mediation in which the state supports the NGO sector in its global peacemaking, yet does not intervene in its actions. Despite financial support from the state, the NGO sector remains highly independent.

The recommendations below identify some of the most effective ways *to support the peace efforts of local women actors*. They arise from the case studies but have a wider applicability as well. In this way, the recommendations are meant to *contribute to the long-term innovative development of Finnish comprehensive conflict resolution approaches* through the co-operation between the state and the civil society organizations, at both the national and global levels.

In short, the recommendations below are designed to help the international community, and the Finnish government in particular, to find ways of supporting the work of local women's groups during the conflict prevention and post-agreement stages. They seek to provide both conceptual innovation and practical tools to support the Finnish government, the local actors both in Finland and in conflict zones and the collaboration the state and these actors. They also contribute to conflict prevention in the long run. The recommendations are founded on the strengths of Finnish society and are aimed at further strengthening Finnish crisis management capacity and security as a whole.

1. Promote the concept of preventive mediation as a key concept in the Finnish multi-level, multi-actor and multi–instrument approach to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Preventive mediation refers to voluntary action taken to prevent disputes from escalating into violent conflicts and to limit the spread of violence in the different phases of the conflict cycle. Hence, mediation not limited solely to the violent phases of the conflict cycle, but is also considered a preventive instrument. While preventive mediation is conducted in different forms and forums, the most common expression of preventive mediation is found in track three mediation, in which local actors enhance long-term peaceful change and conflict transformation. Preventive mediation is, at its best, intersectional and inclusive, as it engages actors from different ethnic, religious, age, socio-economic and gender sectors of society. It brings together different parts of the population, thus promoting both *vertical and horizontal inclusiveness*, namely inclusivity in terms of both issues and actors.

Preventive mediation is often invisible, as it seeks to prevent violence occurring at the phases when conflicts are still incipient (i.e. incompatible goals and values exist, but the parties do not recognize them), supressed (i.e. coercion prevents manifest conflict action in a situation of goal and value incompatibility) and/or latent (i.e. there is a conflict situation without manifest conflict action).

In order to be successful, preventive mediation requires versatile and "smart" non-official actors, as well as innovative forms of funding instruments (see recommendation 3 below) to support their preventive activities.

2. Support a comprehensive understanding of mediation. When mediation is seen to include a large sector of informal and non-official actors, mediators can be understood as being in the middle and able to facilitate structured interaction between a variety of conflicting actors across regional, political, economic, religious, ethnic, age and gender divisions. Mediation in this wide sense is a voluntary endeavour that varies in scope and in terms of actors, sometimes tackling a specific issue in order to contain or manage a conflict and sometimes tackling a broad range of issues in order to contribute to long-term conflict transformation, societal change, development and conflict prevention. So-called national dialogues are part of this wider scheme, with an acknowledgement that reaching out to local organizations is often highly productive, as they engage in insider mediation and have the capacity to produce local peace.

3. Recognize the complexity and overlapping nature of development and peace interventions and create comprehensive funding instruments. Complex interventions are interventions that contain several interacting components, but they have other characteristics that evaluators should also take into account. There is no sharp boundary between simple and complex interventions, nor is there between development and peace, given the long time frame of the measurable effects of conflict resolution and mediation interventions. Sustainable peace is not easily measured, as it contains elements of structured social, political and economic change and development. The Finnish NGOs and the local women's groups interviewed for this report recognized this complexity, as well as the overlapping nature of development and peace that are mutually reinforcing (see also *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace*) These actors would benefit from long-term project funding in which peace and development are understood to be co-constitutive, as well as project evaluation measures and impact assessment that recognize the connection between peace and development and facilitate mediation interventions during different conflict cycle phases.

Pilot funding schemes between relevant ministries should be developed to create conditions for a more comprehensive approach to peace, security and development.

4. Recognize the support needed in the peace accord implementation phase. The implementation phase is a particularly fragile moment in peacebuilding, as international support often ceases and the local groups are left to continue their work. Financial and technical support for knowledge exchange and for evaluating what has and has not worked can have an impact in supporting the inclusive and participatory dialogue and mediation work of local women's organizations. The implementation phase can also form an entry point for local women's NGOs to the national-level peace process if it is supported adequately. Peace accord implementation will be more successful when women's groups are involved, and implementation is a key stage of the conflict cycle during which women's groups should be supported. Finland has a great deal of legal, technical and other forms of expertise that can be employed to support the implementation phase, and it has a strong tradition of civilian crisis management in which expertise is employed earlier on in post-conflict settings.

5. Support training and educating trainers during the entire conflict cycle. Local women's groups have often educational and capacity-building needs largely due to the still-unequal access of girls to educational systems in the Global South. As a consequence, members of women's groups need training in the field of leadership, entrepreneurship and autonomization. Ensuring better access to knowledge is also crucial to strengthening the

capacity of women's groups. Since many women's groups are already familiar with "training trainer" techniques, whereby trainees become trainers at the end of the programme, this would not necessarily require a massive educational investment, but rather a focused intervention that could build on the strengths of the Finnish educational model, in which civic and adult education are part of a long and well-functioning tradition.

6. Provide IT support for women's groups. The effectiveness of women's groups also depends on their capacity to share and pool the information they collect, as well as their best practices. One of their main weaknesses in that respect is that they often lack the resources and/or training to disseminate this information, notably because most of them do not have their own website and/or do not know how best to use social media for these purposes. Providing IT support to women's groups would help them not only to disseminate information on their best practices and results, but also to enhance their early warning activities. This type of support could build on and further enhance Finland's high profile in the IT field.

7. Create an expert cluster of Finnish conflict resolution and mediation. Mapping the specific demands of each conflict context requires careful analysis of the local setting and consultation with local women actors. The local women actors should always be allowed to define their needs to ensure that the third-party activities are based on genuine local ownership and the long-term expertise and knowledge of local actors. To provide this, Finland requires a four-way dialogue between the relevant Finnish ministries, Finnish NGOs, academia and local actors. Currently, the expertise located in academia is under-utilized. For example, conflict analysis, and mapping out and verifying relevant partners require long-term area expertise as well as a holistic understanding of the conflict region.

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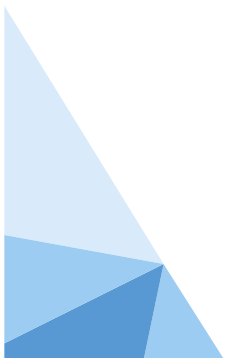UNHCR (2016). Colombia Situation Update, December 2016. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. http://www.refworld.org/docid/58627cd24.html

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