

The Fourth Conference on National Dialogues, 11—12 June 2019

The House of the Estates, Helsinki

Inside or outside of the room – And does it matter? Re-thinking strategies and spaces for youth to mobilise for peace

Objective of the session

The objective of the session is to expand the concept of national dialogues by interrogating the different formal and informal spaces in which dialogue happens, and how these spaces can be bridged. The session will explore examples where civil society has been able to create interlinkages between national, local and regional stakeholders

Furthermore, the session aims at exploring the concrete ways in which different societal groups, in particular young people, mobilise for peace around national dialogues, and drawing out the lessons learned on the successes and failures regarding objectives these objectives, through examples of different cases

Background

National dialogues are often described as ecosystems where a multitude of actors and stakeholders seek to engage and influence the outcome of the process, both formally and informally. A failure to navigate this complexity inherent to the process in an inclusive and strategic manner will likely produce unsustainable results. Indeed, there exists a consensus among practitioners that the more meaningfully inclusive a national dialogue is, whether in terms of its design or implementation, the more sustainable the outcome. New technologies and social media provide a new arena for broader inclusion, and a vehicle for mobilizing different groups in society for peace. The potential of these new tools and dialogue platforms to better coordinate, mobilize and involve different societal groups into national dialogue is not limited to physical time or place. While organic initiatives utilizing these tools that often stem from civil society can enhance inclusivity, they can also pose a challenge by way of adding to complexity. This highlights a need to explore how social movements and mobilization for peace can contribute to formal dialogue processes, and how to better coordinate the dialogues for peace outside of the room to ensure inclusive engagement with the formal processes. In this session, we explore junctions and organic coordination mechanisms that have connected different stakeholders' efforts and provided feedback mechanisms between spaces of formal and informal dialogue, and the various stakeholders involved.

In particular, the session will explore the strategies for mobilization for peace utilized particularly by young women and men who lead diverse societal movements for change. In religious and traditional settings, as well as in political processes in general, leadership tends to be elder men. Young people are greatly impacted by conflicts, and play critical, if mostly unrecognized, roles in their resolution. While there has been an increased recognition of the critical roles women and youth play in conflict situations, particularly in light of Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2250, their participation in peacebuilding

remains insufficient and under-supported, and the religious context and faith motivations of women and youth peacebuilders are not fully understood nor engaged.

During this session we will highlight via different cases those mechanisms and peace structures or processes leading to them, including state-led (official) and non-state-led, that facilitate inclusivity and participation in dialogue processes and transform ecosystems/or allow different roles to be transcendent when bringing together young people from various social movements.

Key questions

- How have young leaders, religious actors and women bridged or brought together formal and informal dialogue spaces? What are the spaces for modern national dialogues?
- What strategies, methods and tools have they utilised to mobilise and engage with their peers and other societal groups?
- How have these strategies, social movements and instances of mass mobilisation contributed to the content and outcomes of national dialogue processes?

Composition of the session

Moderator: Ms Lumi Young

Speakers:

- Ms Fatima Askira, Executive Director, Borno Women's Development Initiative
- Mr Suchith Abeyewickreme, Interfaith Colombo & United Religions Initiative
- Mr Ahmed Hadji, Team Leader and Co-Founder, Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum