

Acknowledgements

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Thank you! The manual has been several years in the making and is the result of a slow, participatory process and an accumulation of existing resources in the fields of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and organisational development. Consequently, there is a long list of people and organisations to be acknowledged and to credit for this final product.

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Vision and initial ideas: The concept of the manual was proposed by original Preventive Action Core Group members Peter Woodrow of CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (USA), Emmanuel Bombande then-Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding/WANEP (Ghana), Andrés Serbin of Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales/ CRIES (Argentina) and William Tsuma, former Programme Manager Action Learning at GPPAC. The group also had input from Arne Sæverås of Norwegian Church Aid as part of a brainstorm meeting in 2011.

Content input and deliberations: As reflected in the many quotes and examples throughout the manual, the content is an accumulated effort of practitioner deliberations, most notably:

- The Preventive Action Working Group (see Annex) dedicated a full day to deliberating on a draft outline of the manual at their meeting in Istanbul in May 2013, in addition to commenting and adding content to several subsequent feedback rounds.
- Four GPPAC members put in time for in-depth interviews and reviewing drafts: Raya Kadyrova of Foundation for Tolerance International (Kyrgyzstan), Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls of FemLINK PACIFIC (Fiji), Andrés Serbin of CRIES and Florence Mpaayei, formerly of NPI-Africa.
- Lisa Schirch of the Alliance for Peacebuilding contributed to and incorporated parts of the manual into the Handbook on Human Security, and twenty-nine practitioners took part in a global Training of Trainers pilot in June 2015.

List of Abbreviations

ASF	African Standby Force
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBO	Community-based organisation
CCP	Concerned Citizens for Peace
CEWS	the Continental Early Warning System
CIMIC	Civil-Military Interaction and Cooperation
CPAD	Strengthening Capacities for Peace and Development in the Pacific
CRIES	Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales
CSDN	Civil Society Dialogue Network
CSOs	Civil society organisations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
ICCN	International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LPC	Local Peace Committees
MSP	Multi-stakeholder process
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPI-Africa	Nairobi Peace Initiative
OAS	The Organization of American States
OSCE	The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
TACE	Taller Académico Cuba-EEUU, or in English the Cuban United States Academic Workshop
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPA	United Nations Political Affairs

1 About this Manual

“the guidance is practice-oriented, looking beyond the textbook approach and considering the imperfect realities within which conflict prevention efforts take place.”



1.1 Introduction

Conflict prevention is one of the most important and most difficult challenges of our time. It is a challenge that can only be addressed through the combined effort of many different groups, agencies and sectors, with a multitude of strategies at different levels. Taking this idea a step further, the multi-stakeholder approach proposes that these divergent groups can work together, or at least in synergy, towards a common objective.

This manual explores the viability, options and experiences of multi-stakeholder processes from the perspective of civil society organisations (CSOs) working to prevent conflict and build peace. There are many roles that CSOs can play in this regard, from instigating and (co-)hosting a multi-stakeholder process, to supporting the process design, organisation and implementation. In most cases, this requires a partnership with other key actors, which individually or together have enough convening power to involve the right people in the process.



Latin America case study
Section 8.4

What we are trying to show is that civil society organisations are able and well prepared to deal with some issues, and governments should have some kind of partnership with those CSOs. My impression is that in the books this works marvellously. In reality, it's sometimes very difficult to develop this approach.

Andrés Serbin

Practitioners in the peacebuilding field often express the need for coordination and collaboration, but this need is not easily addressed. While it is difficult to disagree with the multi-stakeholder approach in principle, it is not always clear what it means in practice, and what the implications are for project planning and implementation. Many initiatives may be multi-stakeholder in composition, but often without adapting their design and procedures to this form of engagement.¹ In other words, “putting the right people in one room does not automatically [...] produce more effective or sustainable solutions.”²

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) was founded on the principle that preventing violent conflict requires joint action by different kinds of actors—hence the use of ‘partnership’ in its name. The GPPAC network is a strong promoter of multi-stakeholder collaboration. However, what we have lacked until now has been an experience-based critical assessment of the multi-stakeholder approach that takes us beyond the broad principles and popular buzzwords and seeks to answer a number of key questions. What practical considerations do CSOs need to bear in mind when they initiate or participate in such processes? How can we make these processes more efficient and productive? When is it better not to engage in such a process? This manual is a result of these types of questions.

1.2 Objectives

Over recent years, GPPAC’s Preventive Action programme has worked to share knowledge, and to identify and develop tools that can support CSOs to move from conflict analysis to preventive action, by engaging with key stakeholders in a conflict situation.³ As part of this, GPPAC developed a Conflict Analysis Field Guide, which provides practical guidance on the different uses of and tools for conflict analysis. It was the need for additional examples and guidance on how to practically use the analysis—to feed into proactive conflict prevention strategies and mobilise key stakeholders—which led to the work on this manual.

To complement the Conflict Analysis Field Guide, this manual aims to:

- Harness the knowledge on multi-stakeholder processes of CSOs and peacebuilding practitioners in different regions in the context of conflict prevention.

¹ ‘Multipart - Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Role of the European Union’ www.multi-part.eu.

² Wim Hiemstra, Herman Brouwer and Simone van Vugt, *Power Dynamics in Multi-Stakeholder Processes: A Balancing Act* (PSO, 2012).

³ See Annex.

- Provide practical guidance for CSOs and their partners to initiate or engage in multi-stakeholder processes as a part of conflict prevention strategies.
- Enable CSOs to use their conflict analysis strategically and as part of a preventive action process.

The manual is intended as a practical tool, developed for GPPAC members and other CSOs that seek to initiate, instigate or participate in multi-stakeholder processes for conflict prevention within their own contexts, or those that are already involved in such processes. Secondly, it also provides guidance on good practice, which can inform other actors, such as International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), governments, donors and regional or global intergovernmental organisations, which seek to engage civil society in processes that they convene.

1.3 Methodology

The steps that led to the manual included:

- **Desk review** of existing literature on multi-stakeholder processes, tapping into dialogue and mediation materials as well as looking beyond the conflict prevention and peacebuilding fields. Materials studied have related to diverse sectors, such as information and communication technology, medicine, community involvement, natural resource management and business.
- **Case studies** based on in-depth interviews with GPPAC members from four different regions, as well as examples from other documented processes, which have been referenced throughout. The presentation of the Reflections in Section 8 was left in the interview format, to reflect the personal opinions and insights, which are specific to the case and to the individual interviewed at a given time. The cases were selected based on the following criteria:
 - » Processes that convened multiple stakeholders around conflict prevention objectives.
 - » Processes that aimed at increased coordination or collaboration of those actors in the pursuit of conflict prevention objectives—whether successful or not.
 - » A geographical spread of cases from the perspective of local civil society groups.
- **Peer review** and working group deliberations: The contents of the manual have been informed by deliberations of practitioners in the GPPAC Preventive Action Working Group,⁴ as well as additional subject matter experts. The draft manual went through several consultation rounds.
- **Training of Trainers:** The core concepts and steps elaborated in this manual were presented and discussed, as well as tested in a scenario exercise, at a Training of Trainers event with GPPAC members and partners from across the globe.⁵

Most of the quotes used throughout this manual have been collected through the case study interviews, working group meetings, the Training of Trainers or via the consultation rounds on the draft versions. A smaller number of quotes are cited from existing materials covered in the desk review.

We have aimed to ensure that the guidance is practice-oriented, by looking beyond the textbook approach of what a multi-stakeholder process *should* look like, and by considering the imperfect realities within which conflict prevention efforts take place. We welcome all feedback and suggestions to enable us to continuously improve our guidance and knowledge on real-world processes for conflict prevention.

⁴ On 7–9 May 2013, sixteen members of the Preventive Action Working Group met in Istanbul, Turkey to discuss a draft manual and relevant case studies. See also Annex.

⁵ On 8–12 June 2015, twenty-nine practitioners took part in the Human Security Training of Trainers as part of the Civil Society and Security Sector Engagement for Human Security project by the Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

1.4 How to Use this Manual

The guidance in this manual is structured around the following main parts:

Section 2 is an **introduction** to the idea, background and rationale of the multi-stakeholder approach. It describes the theory of change of this approach as related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding objectives, outlining in brief the benefits and risks, as well as possible alternatives.

Section 3 unpacks and responds to these benefits and risks by discussing the underlying issues that can make or break a multi-stakeholder process. Fundamental questions around **legitimacy, power, and ownership** are continuous considerations that need to be addressed from the outset.

Section 4 guides the practitioner in deciding **when and whether to initiate or participate** in a multi-stakeholder process. It discusses **conditions** and timing in the context, as well as the **competencies** and **skills** required of the organisers and the participants.

Section 5 outlines key **steps in the process** of initiating, preparing and designing, implementing, and concluding the process. This section also refers to a number of tools that can aid some of the steps and stages of the process.

Section 6 gives a basic overview of some of the **stakeholder groups** that can be considered for the process, exploring their potential roles in conflict prevention, the risks involved and what type of preparation or entry point might be useful for getting them on board.

Section 7 provides **practical tools** to help plan and implement an MSP, to give the reader some optional support to take the practical steps of moving from theory to practice.

Section 8 presents reflections on four diverse **case studies**—the Pacific, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya and Latin America—based on interviews with practitioners having been involved in multi-stakeholder initiatives in those regions on either national or regional levels.

Finally, Sections 9 and 10 provide a **glossary and sources** to help the reader delve deeper into the rich materials reviewed for this project.

A **note of caution** is necessary to emphasise that each context and situation is specific and different from another. The manual is therefore best understood as a **flexible tool of options**, to help practitioners ask the right questions, and to find inspiration and guidance in examples and methodologies used by others. It will also help practitioners to look out for common pitfalls and benchmarks as they create or contribute to their own variation of a multi-stakeholder process for conflict prevention.

Find your way through the manual

Look out for these icons throughout the manual to find out more on a particular topic or tool.



Find this quote in the Reflections section of the manual.



More on this topic can be found in the Conflict Analysis Field Guide or another key resource.



There are relevant tools and guidance boxes available for this topic.



Additional resources on this topic, listed in full in the Bibliography.



More on this topic can be found in a different section of this manual.