3 Key Considerations and Challenges

"To address the risks and enhance the possible benefits, fundamental questions around legitimacy, power and ownership must be acknowledged and addressed."

Introduction

When preparing an MSP for conflict prevention, it is crucial to consider the **sustainability** factors that may help or hinder the process at the given place and time. These factors matter not only in the early stages, but should be considered throughout the process. It is also important to think ahead and put in place strategies that can counter any problems that might come up.

3.1 Legitimacy

Legitimacy is usually linked to the credibility of the convener, the participants and the process itself. One of the most important ingredients in an MSP, from the moment that it is first convened and throughout, is the sense of **trust** that people have in the fairness of the process, and in the intentions of the conveners and participants. This is where the risk of reputational damage is most at play, not only that of the process but also that of the individual participants within their constituencies and the wider society. Lack of trust in the process can lead to disillusionment and a failed process.

Note that the degree of trust between participants and of the participants in the process is not necessarily to be expected from the outset of the MSP, but is rather a result of the process itself. The focus should therefore be on **trust building** and **trustworthiness** emerging from the process and the behaviour of the participants.[12]

> *It is not "we work together because we trust each other," but "we trust each other because we work together"*
>
> *Rob van Tulder, Partnerships Resource Centre*[13]

3.1.1 Credible convener and the facilitator role

A convener is the individual or agency that brings a group of stakeholders together. To get potential participants to the table, it can be decisive that someone who is widely respected and accepted can become the champion of the process. Conveners must have the trust of the participating parties, or at least the ability to earn that trust through the process. This could be an individual or an institution regarded as **impartial and objective**, and with the **political power** or **moral authority** to convene a diverse set of stakeholders. Depending on the situation, foreign conveners or other outsiders can be seen either with suspicion, or can form a key component of the process precisely because they are not a party to the context dynamic (see more on this in Section 3.3.1).

Pacific case study
Section 8.3

> [In the Pacific], *"governments feel comfortable... when it is the UN, because government and military can get very nervous when civil society invites them"*
>
> *Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls*

To convey and bring about the sense of purpose that can convince and bring the stakeholders together, it is crucial to have a **skilled facilitator**. This role is not automatically taken on by the convener. It may be necessary to appoint an experienced professional, or to arrange for a mutually acceptable co-facilitation team among the different parties. The facilitator has to be alert to the different perceptions and expectations right from the start, bearing in mind that these may change over time. He or she must be able to grasp what the different needs are, and how to deal with critical incidents or crises.

12 **Mariette van Huijstee**, *Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives: A Strategic Guide for Civil Society Organizations* (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 12 March 2012).
13 **van Huijstee**, p. 9.

Kenya case study
Section 8.5

You might have people of integrity who are influential, but without the necessary skills to be mediators or facilitators of dialogue processes. Having expertise to accompany these processes is important.

Florence Mpaayei

BOX 4: WHAT MAKES A GOOD FACILITATOR?

Facilitators are **process experts** rather than experts on a subject area. They keep a dialogue focused, help participants consider a variety of views, and summarise group discussions. They do not promote or share their own opinions, but help the group to explore similarities and differences of opinion. Facilitators make sure that all participants get a chance to contribute to the conversation. Key facilitation skills and tasks include:

- Establishing the purpose of the process.
- Fostering dialogue and posing provocative questions.
- Managing the agenda and guiding the process.
- Developing ground rules (see Box 21).
- Active listening—including both verbal and nonverbal listening skills (silence does not equal consent!)
- Monitoring group dynamics.
- Communicating interest in everyone's perspective.
- Helping to deal with difficult participants—for example avoiding one-on-one arguments or managing participants who talk too much, refuse to participate or interrupt.
- Summarising and paraphrasing different views as well as agreements of the group.
- Staying impartial by refraining from sharing their own experiences or beliefs.
- Modelling the behaviour expected from participants.
- Closing with a summary and helping the group to focus on the next steps.

Adapted from Source **Lisa Schirch.** "Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum" Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC and Kroc Institute for Peace Studies, 2015.

3.1.2 Credible participants

See more on how to select participants in Section 5.2

Participants are accepted as representatives and credible **spokespersons** either by function of their organisation, or by personal reputation and experience—or, ideally, a combination of these. Organisers need to look out for **gatekeeping** behaviour, where participating organisations and individuals claim spaces of engagement without proper involvement of their peers. Representative participants also need to have sufficient—or at least the potential for—**authority** and capacity to make decisions and to see through the implementation of what is proposed during the process.

Kenya case study
Section 8.5

Some initiatives had a core group of five to ten professionals, who were credible and represented the face of Kenya—meaning they were from different ethnic groups—and who had the ears of Kenyans [...] Spokespersons for multi-stakeholder processes need to be selected wisely to avoid the messenger blocking the message.

Florence Mpaayei

Most people have several **identities**, affiliations and allegiances: they can be government officials but also church members, mothers or fathers, residents, and so on. In politically sensitive contexts where the interaction between different official agencies might be considered risky, one option can be to involve the participants in a less threatening capacity.

Example 4:

The church as a common identity in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, community members participating in Local Peace Committees (LPCs) range from political party members to security sector representatives and members of the community. However, many of them participate in their capacity as church leaders. The LPCs build peace in their communities through dialogue spaces where people engage each other in search of solutions to their challenges. In some situations, they mediate conflict and act as early warning systems and work towards addressing human security concerns in their areas.

Source **Ambrose Moyo**, 'Community-Based Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe', in Empowerment and Protection – Stories of Human Security, ed. by Jenny Aulin, Kristin Wall, and Gabriella Vogelaar (The Hague: GPPAC, 2014)

Some constituencies may be represented by **NGOs or CSOs**—for example specific communities, faith groups, youth or women. CSOs that through their work engage with contentious or hard to reach groups such as gangs or militias, while not necessarily representing those groups in MSPs, can contribute their knowledge about such groups' grievances, culture and functioning. However, in some contexts, being an NGO in itself can raise questions of legitimacy, since they have usually not been selected as part of a formal process. In some situations, disadvantaged groups may need to be directly involved, beyond their umbrella organisations. In other cases, the political context makes it difficult for internationally backed CSOs to engage their government due to suspicions of external interference. In most cases, it is important for CSOs to address questions of accountability.

Latin America case study
Section 8.4

As the state assumes that it is legitimate (...) there is no space for civil society. The attitude is "Why should we give space to civil society when we are the representatives of the people?"

Andrés Serbin

A key issue [in my country] *today is a growing hostility to any independent civil society group that has or had in the past received support from sources outside the country. This fact may in itself be enough for certain parties (like local government) to disengage themselves from the process.*

Working Group member

3.1.3 Accountability

Whether the participants have been selected to represent a broader **constituency** formally or informally, the expectation is that they are able to speak on behalf of that group and report back to that group in one way or another. This link, and the **feedback loop** of information sharing between the representatives and their constituency, are to encourage accountability. It is important to be clear on expectations and limitations in this regard, especially where there are no formal feedback mechanisms, as is often the case for many CSOs. This can be a major challenge, even in the best conditions, and is therefore best considered from the beginning of the process.

See also the communication strategy guidance in the Tool section 7.8.

BOX 5A: STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORTING ACCOUNTABILITY

- Draft an accountability map: asking "accountable to whom?", and consider how the process and its participants reports back and consults with each other or with their respective institutions and constituencies.
- Emphasise and invest in transparency and communication (see Section 5.5 and Box 27)
- Emphasise and support links between participants and their constituencies, for example by stimulating demand for information and participation, or building the capacities of process participants to communicate externally.
- Develop standards for feedback loops and communication, and regularly reflect on how well they are followed in reflections and evaluations.
- Ensure these efforts are reflected in the budget allocations and fundraising bids.

Adapted from Source **Carmen Malena**, 'Strategic Partnership: Challenges and Best Practices in the Management and Governance of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Involving UN and Civil Society Actors', 2004, pp. 32–63.

Ideally, the participants in an MSP can individually or together work towards a **communication strategy** aimed at a broader audience. This can be in the form of statements, updates, newsletters or media engagements. Other forms of involvement can be built into the process, such as periodic public meetings, participatory forms of research or surveys, or online/social media strategies.

> *New technologies and ICTs provide critical opportunities and tools* [for broader engagement]—*even through basic SMS text messages.*
>
> *Working Group member*

BOX 5B: MODELS FOR BROADENING PARTICIPATION

In addition to communicating outwards, there are a number of ways to include a broader range of groups in the MSP. The following models for broadening participation were identified in an extensive research on official peace processes, and can also be relevant options for an MSP.

1. Direct representation [MSP participant].
2. Observer status.
3. Official consultative forums.
4. Consultations: less formal consultations without official endorsement.
5. Inclusion in follow-up activities or mechanisms.
6. Civil society parallel dialogues.
7. Public participation, e.g. via public hearings, opinion polls, town hall meetings, campaigns.
8. Mass action, street demonstrations, rallies.

Source **Thania Paffenholz**, Broadening Participation in Peace Processes: Dilemmas and Options for Mediators, Mediation Practice Series (HD Centre, June 2014).

The level of **transparency** about the process can be deliberately limited where the process takes place in a politically sensitive environment. However, for the sake of sustainability and broader impact, it is important to plan towards a point when the process may gradually need to open up towards broader ownership and external communications.[14] In many cases, it is precisely the ability to build constituencies and communicate to a wider public that make follow up actions and social change possible.

14 **Thania Paffenholz**, *Broadening Participation in Peace Processes: Dilemmas and Options for Mediators*, Mediation Practice Series (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, June 2014), p. 7.

See Section 5.3 on Rules of Engagement and Chatham House Rule.

Example 5:

From confidential to multi-stakeholder communications in US-Cuba dialogues

In the TACE Process for a Cuba–US dialogue, Chatham House rules were applied during the first phases of the initiative so as not to jeopardise the process. At the outset of the process, core group members, together with the facilitation team, decided to adopt a low profile communication strategy, due to the politically sensitive issues that would be discussed in each workshop. Gradually, there was consensus to change that strategy and raise the profile of the process, as the group consolidated and produced joint publications and recommendations for cooperation on areas of mutual interest that could reach policymakers and decision-making levels.

Source **Andrés Serbin and Ana Bourse**, 'A Challenging Dialogue Process: The Cuban-United States Academic Workshops (TACE)', in Creating Spaces for Dialogue: A Role for Civil Society, ed. by Zahid Movlazadeh, GPPAC Dialogue and Mediation Series, 1 (The Hague: GPPAC, 2014).

Pacific case study Section 8.3

We need to continue these different tracks of dialogue, but we also need to see them played out in the public space, so that the citizens can see that there is diversity of opinion … How do we demonstrate that public dialogue and discussion are taking place, when under the media regulation state officials can say things but there is no right of reply?

Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls

3.1.4 Credible engagement process and proceedings

Section 5 gives guidance on how to navigate these types of questions

The question of **selecting participants** is a delicate one, so it is important that there is a clear rationale and process behind it. The **purpose** of the initiative should also be well defined, and the convener(s) explicit about their intentions. The **role** of the participants should be clear: are they there to give advice, to make recommendations, to take decisions, to reach consensus? Do they have a specific function in the MSP because of their expertise or background? Who is responsible for follow up? The **decisionmaking** process should be explicitly agreed: are decisions made by the group, and how?

Kyrgyzstan case study Section 8.2

…to have all NGOs from a region participate in selecting representatives is not realistic. To bring all the business organisations to select one representative is also just not possible. But it is problematic because there are different voices saying, "Why is this NGO part of this? Why not the other one?" or "Why not me?"

Raya Kadyrova

The point at which participants join the process matters. People inserted in the process after the initiation run a risk of being left out and not having any weight on the discussions or decisions. This can be mitigated if the roles and functions of participants are clear at the point of joining a process.

Example 6:

Function and gradual addition of participants in The Istanbul Process

In the Istanbul Process, a dialogue process involving stakeholders from Russia and Georgia following conflict in 2008, participants included political experts, NGO activists and civil society. The gradual addition of participants by the convener—the International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN)—was considered a great success of the project. Key participants from both sides remained involved to grant continuity to the dialogue, but new people from different backgrounds were added over time. This had several advantages. For one, it affected the dialogue, allowing it to move from discussions of the past, to more practical matters of how to proceed. Secondly, the personal connections participants made across the two sides allowed them to engage outside the dialogue process. Thirdly, eventually coming to include key media figures, and not just political experts, led to more frequent media engagement. The Istanbul Process led to joint recommendations being made to the political leadership, and in 2010 a joint collection of articles by Russian and Georgian authors was published as a book: Russia and Georgia: the ways out of the Crisis.

Source **George Khutsishvili** and **Andrey Ryabov**, 'The Istanbul Process and the Problem of Rebuilding Georgia–Russia Relations', in Creating Spaces for Dialogue: A Role for Civil Society, ed. by Zahid Movlazadeh, GPPAC Dialogue and Mediation Series (The Hague: GPPAC, 2015), i, 44–57.

3.2 Power

No matter the context, power dynamics will always be at play between different stakeholders with diverse interests. There will also be both positive and negative interpersonal dynamics in these processes, with personal or personalised challenges affecting participants and group dynamics. In this context, instead of thinking of power as a quality of an individual or group, it is more useful to consider it as a dynamic that defines all relationships.[15] Different groups derive their power and 'place at the table' from different places. Sources of power can range from moral authority, legal authority, mass public support, financial resources and technical expertise. Hence, how power is expressed and exercised takes many different shapes:

- **Visible:** official procedures, positions, setting, actors' control over resources, resource interdependencies and interests.
- **Hidden:** when agendas are manipulated or voices of less powerful groups are marginalised; how communication is done (or not).
- **Invisible:** when those in power are able to influence the belief system of others. Issues are kept away, not only from the decision table, but also from the knowledge of others.[16]

> *In a process you discover that what seems to be unified may actually be divided. Hardliners can grow stronger or be weakened throughout the process. It can be a transformative process for some of these groups.*
>
> *Training participant*

Power relations can **change over time**, and it is important to recognise the ability of participants to change these dynamics during the course of a process. For example, frequently excluded interest groups may come to realise how much other actors depend on their position at the grassroots level for conflict early warning or early response. Less powerful stakeholders can in some cases gain from participation in MSPs, so long as the facilitators are able to identify and address the power dynamics at work, and create favourable conditions.[17]

15 **Lisa Schirch**, *'Comparing Mainstream DoD Terminology and Concepts with Conflict Analysis & Transformation Approaches'* (presented at the Civil and Military Perspectives on Dutch Missions, The Hague, 2015), p. 5.
16 **Hiemstra, Brouwer and van Vugt**, p. 33.
17 **Hiemstra, Brouwer and van Vugt**, p. 33.

BOX 6: TYPES OF POWER:

- Power **over** – the ability of the powerful to affect the actions and thought of the powerless.
- Power **to** – the capacity to act; agency.
- Power **with** – the synergy of collective action, social mobilisation and alliance building.
- Power **within** – a sense of self-dignity and self-awareness that enables agency.

Source **Hiemstra, Brouwer and van Vugt.**

3.2.1 Gendered and cultural power dynamics

One important aspect of understanding power dynamics at large is to pay attention to the perceptions of gender roles and responsibilities within a given context. A **gender analysis** or at least a **gender-sensitive** analysis is crucial to grasping the dynamics and impact of conflict in the bigger picture. Gender refers to socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society associates with male or female identities.

Gender relations and roles often determine **access to positions of power**, and power is usually distributed unequally depending on people's gender. People's needs, vulnerabilities and priorities, as well as their **experience** of conflict, differ for men and women, boys and girls. How these play out are also linked to other social and cultural factors such as class, rural-urban divides or age. The combination of these factors with a gender analysis can have different and sometimes surprising results for power dynamics and strategies for multi-stakeholder engagement.

Pacific case study
Section 8.3

> *Having a military coup (...) exacerbate[d] the already patriarchal or traditional power structures in our country and in the Pacific context, where male leadership is seen to be where the power decisions are made. The move for gender equality, for engaging with young people and ensuring equity in that process, is still part of the struggle... I've been quite lucky because of the peacebuilding approach to how to engage, how to communicate... But for a lot of people, sometimes they would just sit there and wouldn't say anything.*
>
> *Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls*

Because of their gender, women often have less access to power.[18] However, it is important to note that a gender-sensitive approach does not merely see women as victims, but recognises the **multiple identities** of both women and men. Most cultures have certain expectations of both male and female behaviour and roles, which affect how they may interact and respond to a peacebuilding process. Both women and men can benefit from a gender-sensitive approach.

18 **'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325'**; *Global Burden of Armed Violence.* (Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008), p. 109; **Women and War** (ICRC, 2015); *From Resolution to Reality* (CARE, 2010).

Example 7:

The effects of gender analysis on conflict mitigation projects in Yemen

See Box 27 in Section 5 for tips on addressing information gaps.

Partners for Democratic Change have highlighted the importance of understanding gender within the context of a given situation. By conducting gender analyses to explore the unique and context-specific impact of the organisation's activities on men and women, Partners is able to "create opportunities for women in their communities without exposing them to unintended backlash". In their community-based Conflict Mitigation project in Yemen, the gender analysis uncovered the role women have played in both perpetuating and ending tribal conflicts, showing women's direct influence on revenge or reconciliation with their male relatives. This insight "enabled Partners to coach female participants on how they could utilize mediation skills to reduce violent conflict in their communities".

Source **Oriana Lavilla**, 'Don't Just Count Women In, Make Their Voices Count!', *Partners for Democratic Change Blog*, 2015.

The Conflict Analysis Field Guide has a dedicated bibliography section on gender sensitive approaches.

Since gender identities are constructed by society, they are **not static** but change along with perceptions in society. Violent conflict can transform gender roles and relations as both women and men often take up new roles in a conflict situation. These new roles are often in contrast with traditional perceptions of gender roles and this can create additional tension. In a process of dialogue and interaction, gendered roles can be exposed, unpacked and challenged in a way that can address power imbalances and make the overall process more effective.

> *Hegemony and power are always multidimensional. Strategies of change must address these multi-layered hierarchies. It is not a matter of choosing between gender and class, for instance, but to combine them in order to challenge how our own participation in the social processes sometimes reinforces the status quo. Otherwise we will keep missing the point.*
>
> *Atila Roque in BRIDGE e-discussion*[19]

3.2.2 Dealing with power dynamics

The cultural and socio-political **context** must determine the manner of addressing and acknowledging power issues in a way that is **conducive** to the process. The facilitator's role and impartiality is therefore all the more important, and dialogue and mediation skills—applied both in and outside the meeting room—will be required.

An **upfront discussion** on power dynamics can begin to tackle these issues from the start, though the ability to do so depends on the facilitator, the context and types of participants. In some cultures, it would not be suitable to discuss such issues openly. The level of openness could also present a dilemma; "if you are not explicit you might be blamed for having a secret agenda, and if explicit you may be endangered for having identified yourself in a specific way not favoured by those holding divergent views and interests" (Working Group participant).

See Box 27 in Section 5 for tips on addressing information gaps.

A critical factor to power dynamics is how **knowledge and expertise** are defined and perceived, and how **information** is communicated within the process. For instance, addressing technical issues such as governance or security sector reform could reinforce existing power relations if not facilitated in such a way that all participants can relate to the topic. On the other hand, some types of knowledge such as cultural insights or minority group issues may not carry the same status as technical expertise, unless explicitly acknowledged on an equal level.

19 **Jessica Horn**, *Gender and Social Movements – Overview Report* (Institute of Development Studies and BRIDGE Development, 2013), p. 28.

You have to create a level playing field between what participants know about, so that they can have a meaningful discussion. Otherwise, some stakeholders will be sidelined. You can bring in academic institutions and use a research approach to build this symmetry of knowledge, it can decrease the chance of there being a monopoly of knowledge on one side.

Training participant

BOX 7: DEALING WITH POWER DYNAMICS

Here is an overview of different ways of addressing the power dynamics you might encounter when starting an MSP.

- Power analysis (as part of stakeholder analysis).
- Mapping/awareness of existing relationships between participants.
- Appropriate information and communication (see Box 27 in Section 5).
- Capacity building and horizontal/mutual learning.
- Collective action/organisation by disadvantaged groups/ minorities.
- Inter-personal mediation (personalised power dynamics) such as bilateral, informal or indirect discussions via a trusted third party.
- Funding/resources to enable full and equal participation.
- Sharing mandates (joint facilitation, coordination).
- Addressing conflict of interest fairly.
- Gender/masculinities or consciousness workshops.
- Facilitation based on impartiality or multi-partiality (see Box 4 section 3.1).
- Built-in procedures such as ground rules, decision-making, grievance procedures.

Many of these strategies are explained further in Section 5.

In some cases, it may be necessary for civil society or disadvantaged groups to demonstrate their **collective** power through activism and advocacy—for example through shadow events, petitions, marches, or other symbolic actions—to strengthen their position outside the process.[20]

Example 8:

Functions of the ASEAN People's Forum

The ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC)/ASEAN People's Forum (APF) is an annual forum of CSOs in member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The forum is held as a parallel meeting to the ASEAN Summit, and is hosted by civil society.

Participants of this forum come from civil society organisations, NGOs, people's organisations, and people's movements. In this meeting, CSOs bring up broad issues on different subjects, such as human rights, development, trade, environment, youth, and culture, affecting many countries in the region, which inform a joint statement and recommendations for the ASEAN leaders. A feature of the ACSC/APF is to open spaces for dialogue with ASEAN leaders. Whether CSO representatives are able to meet face-to-face with ASEAN heads of state during the ACSC/APF, depends on the attitude of the government hosting the Summit and ACSC/APF. Nevertheless, the joint statements and recommendations are submitted to the ASEAN Secretariat and the government representatives.

Source **"ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum."** http://aseanpeople.org/about/background/.

As for addressing gender issues, this often requires a **personal commitment**. Gender power dynamics are echoed in people's personal relationships, making the personal political. Reflecting on this personal level in a non-threatening group of peers can affect changes in

20 **Lisa Schirch**, Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC and Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2015

power dynamics of a group as a whole.[21] One starting point can be for people to analyse violence or oppression in their own lives, and use this reflection to develop methods to challenge violence in broader contexts.

> *We go along in the fights against violence but do not check how much violence there is in our personal relationships. We ourselves do not recognise the power we have.*
>
> *Interview with Nicaraguan activists; Ardón 2012*[22]

BOX 8: CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

Consciousness raising involves exploring personal experiences of violation or empowerment through group processes. It also enables participants to develop a critical understanding of the root causes of oppression, deepening knowledge of history (including activist and alternative perspectives on mainstream history) and building solidarity and a shared political commitment to changing the status quo. Consciousness raising is commonly facilitated in non-hierarchical ways, with the experiences and knowledge of all participants considered valuable and relevant for learning and reflection. The move to encourage individual self-reflection within social movements stems from a political embrace of personal experience as a legitimate, relevant domain of movement politics and action. Support for this idea cannot be assumed, particularly in movements with a more collective vision of activism, and as such needs to be cultivated.

Source **Jessica Horn**, Gender and Social Movements – Overview Report (Institute of Development Studies and BRIDGE Development, 2013), p. 67

3.3 Ownership

While the principle of ownership is broadly supported in conflict prevention theory, it is notoriously difficult to define and deliberately establish in practice. Collective ownership results from visible and invisible negotiations of power, and is demonstrated when those taking part in a process are empowered to act, to **hold each other to account** and to take mutual **responsibility** for the process moving forward. The ownership question must be unpacked in each specific context and situation, and it usually involves several layers as illustrated in Box 9 below.

See also the indicators for process ownership in Box 11.

BOX 9: KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT OWNERSHIP

Ownership of **what**? What will the process be about? Is there a sense of ownership over the entire process, or only over certain parts?	• Purpose, Content: All participants have been involved in formulating the purpose and goals of the MSP. • Outputs, outcomes: a sense of responsibility for the results of the process.
Who is involved and who drives the process?	• Roles: Insider/outsider leadership • Inclusivity: breadth of involvement
How is the ownership being exercised, or claimed?	• Process: Participants make use of procedures for holding each other to account and addressing conflict of interest and power imbalances • Funding: the effect of the funding and influence of donors • Results: decisions about how results (outputs) of the process are to be used, and who takes credit for outcomes.

21 Nadine Jubb, BRIDGE e-discussion March 13, in **Horn**, p. 68.
22 **Horn**, p.67.

3.3.1 Local ownership

Probably the most decisive factor for long-term results is whether the process is locally driven or not. When this is not the case, for example when international actors play a disproportionately active role in funding and driving the process forward, the **unintended negative impacts** may be greater than the intended benefits. For instance, it can affect how the process and the groups involved are perceived locally, undermining their legitimacy and shifting accountability from local communities to donors.[23]
Ultimately, processes that do not have local leadership behind them have also been shown to not be sustainable, and may lead to superficial results.[24]

Kyrgyzstan case study Section 8.2

> [An international organisation was] *putting big money into Oblast* [regional] *Advisory Committees, and appointing particular NGOs to run the committees' secretariats and establishing the protocols for those NGOs' work.*
> *This created jealousy and a lack of support from the NGOs that weren't chosen. It also actually created a barrier between communities where signals of tension were apparent, which government officials should have been responding to. Officials could say, "Let the NGOs do it, they have the money", instead of assuming their responsibilities.*
>
> *Raya Kadyrova*

Nevertheless, many case studies and practitioners emphasise that **outsiders** can play an important role, especially where they are more likely to be considered impartial. For instance, the case studies in this manual showed the value of international organisations in helping to convene local processes. Relative outsiders can also be well placed to lend their technical expertise and respond to support needs. However, their manner of involvement needs to be considered carefully, and local stakeholders need to be on board from the beginning. If outsiders are heavily involved in convening a process, their **exit strategy** should be considered from the beginning, for example by building in a gradual hand-over process.[25]

See Box 17 on Self-Assessment in Section 5.2

The role of outsiders should be stated explicitly, and those actors need to have a self-awareness of where they fit in the dynamics. Context knowledge is key, including the understanding of who commands respect and how authority (which is not always formalised) works within different groups, as well as awareness of those that fall outside mainstream arrangements. Conveners should explicitly pay attention to how a process builds on **existing structures, forums and initiatives** before starting something new.

BOX 10: THE TREND OF DONOR-LED MSPS

A study on MSPs in post-conflict contexts indicated that many MSPs tend to be initiated and dominated by international actors such as international agencies (UN, multilateral/bilateral donors, INGOs), where the format tends to follow paths like this:

- The MSP model is imported from a location where it has already worked.
- International donors (unintentionally) re-organise existing local organisations.
- The MSP is a follow-up to other projects that have been implemented by international donors.
- Pressure (from donors) for short-term results can inhibit long-term planning and undermine the process.

Source Executive summary, "**Multipart** – Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Role of the European Union," www.multi-part.eu.

23 **Rowan Popplewell**, *Civil Society Under Fire: Three Big Questions for Peacebuilders Working with Local Civil Society*, INTRAC Briefing Paper (INTRAC, March 2015).
24 Executive summary '**Multipart**'.
25 **Chigas.**

The meaning of 'local' will often need to be carefully defined, as there can be a tension between **national and local ownership** of an MSP. Processes referred to as 'nationally owned' are often those led by the government. Certain groups may not see the government as legitimate, or a community may not feel represented in broader, national processes.[26] Hence, the idea of 'insiders and outsiders' can also apply within a country or region, for instance where there is a rural-urban divide. In these situations, 'local ownership' can become a problematic term. It is therefore important that it is defined within its own context and local dynamics.

Pacific case study
Section 8.3

> *While it's not trickling down to inviting grassroots people,* [the multi-stakeholder process in the Pacific] *does focus on those organisations that are working at national level, but that clearly have rural connections.*
>
> *Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls*

3.3.2 Process ownership

Beyond the insider-outsider dynamic, a sustainable MSP is one where the participants feel they own the process in the sense of **influencing decision-making and strategic direction**, and where participants share a sense of **responsibility** in the process and outcome. For a process to be sustainable, it may be necessary to ensure that there is a sense of ownership not only among the individual participants, but also within their respective organisations.

> *Ownership falls on both the individual and the institutions, where there can be a gap; the latter is not always how they are portrayed, it depends on who is in office.*
>
> *Working Group member*

Process ownership has to be developed from the beginning and continuously monitored, through meaningful participation at each stage.
In this sense, it is important to note the difference between *access* to process and *participation* within the process.[27] Participation can be promoted by encouraging a **'voices not votes'** approach, where every position is considered legitimate in its own right.[28] All parties are heard and recognised for what they bring to the table, and respective roles are complementary to each other. Process ownership can be strengthened through procedures, feedback loops and continuous internal consultation and learning processes.

BOX 11: INDICATORS FOR PROCESS OWNERSHIP

Are participants...
- Taking the initiative to bring in ideas and proposals?
- Coming prepared and coming to the meetings?
- Offering resources?
- Following through on commitments outside the meeting room?
- Suggesting process improvement?
- Holding each other or the conveners to account?

Source Preventive Action Working Group discussion.

26 **Sigrid Gruener and Matilda Hald**, *Local Perspectives On Inclusive Peacebuilding: A Four-Country Study*, Development Dialogue Paper (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, May 2015).
27 **Bart Cammaerts**, 'Civil Society Participation in Multistakeholder Processes: In between Realism and Utopia', in *Making Our Media: Global Initiatives Toward a Democratic Public Sphere*, ed. by Clemencia Rodríguez, Laura Stein, and Dorothy Kidd (New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2009), pp. 83-102.
28 **Rob van Tulder**, From *Platform to Partnership* (The Partnerships Resource Centre, 27 January 2011), p. 28.

Often, those who have more **resources and funding** have the most influence in the process. This can disadvantage CSOs where there is a trend of donors investing mainly in governments, and it can affect the power balance where both civil society and government are part of an MSP. The role and participation of donors can also affect the ownership, unless there is a clearly designated role or rule of non-interference.

See **Example 10** on the Concerned Citizens for Peace in Kenya, where those who proposed an action were also responsible for making it happen.

One indicator of **ownership** is when all participants **take responsibility for follow up** actions and **contribute** resources (whether funding, time or political influence) to the process. External funding—in particular if only from one source—can run the risk of undermining an MSP, causing dependency and a disproportionate role for donors.[29] On the other hand, funding can also be used to address unequal starting points of the different participants, supporting capacity building or forms of participation.

Finally, an often forgotten ownership question is **who claims the results** of the process. Participants should have the right to own the outputs and decide how they are used.[30] Another issue is when organisers, donors or other prominent and more powerful participants promote the achievements of a process as theirs. It is crucial to acknowledge all contributions and participants of a process, and to jointly reflect on and disseminate results.

29 **Popplewell.**
30 **Tom Midgley and Michelle Garred**, *Bridging the Participation Gap: Developing Macro Level Conflict Analysis Through Local Perspectives*, Policy and Practice (London: World Vision, September 2013), p. 25.