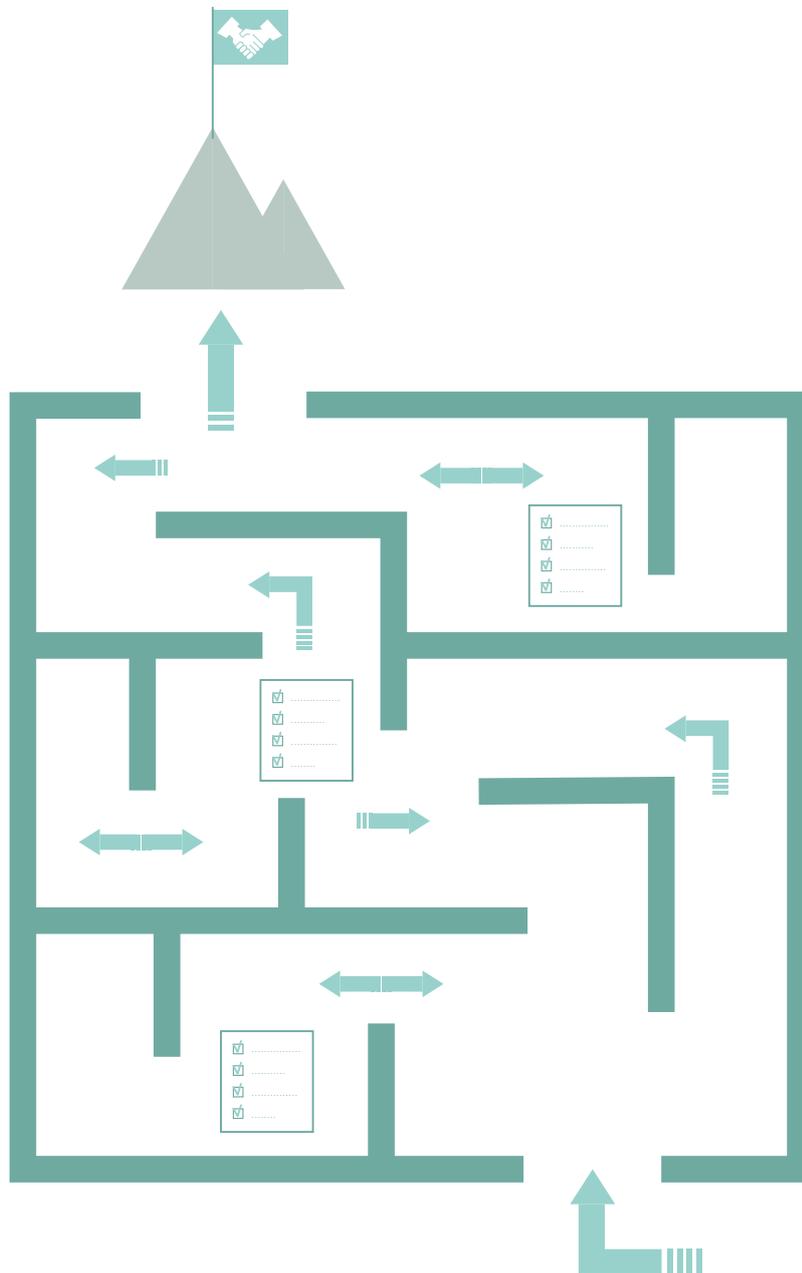


# 5 Steps in the Process

*“The manual is best understood as a flexible tool of options, to help users ask the right questions, and to find inspiration and guidance in examples and methodologies used by others.”*



## Introduction

This section outlines some key steps and phases for deliberately designing and implementing a multi-stakeholder process.<sup>34</sup> In reality, these steps are **never linear**. Even in a planned and deliberate process, participants may need to take a step back to re-strategise or redefine roles—for example, when some participants leave and new ones join. The context itself might change drastically during the course of the process, requiring participants to go back to the drawing board.

Even planned initiatives require **flexibility**, and they can learn a great deal from MSPs that result from spontaneous processes, which “may start with just a few individuals coming together to discuss the problem in the midst of crisis, where there may not be enough time to methodically design and plan the process” (Working Group member). These organic initiatives often have a strong sense of ownership and energy—characteristics that are usually the main challenge for planned MSPs.

### Example 9:

#### The Concerned Citizens for Peace in Kenya

When the results of the 2007 elections were disputed, the violence that erupted among the electorate plunged Kenya into an unprecedented crisis. The Concerned Citizens for Peace (CCP) initiative was launched on December 31, 2007 by a core group of five prominent Kenyan civil society peace workers and mediators. The initial focus was to plead with the political leadership for dialogue, while calling upon Kenyans to stop the violence and wanton destruction of property. The CCP initiators publicly called on Kenyans to join in and to contribute their thoughts, abilities, and connections toward a resolution of the crisis.

As a result of this appeal, the The Open Forum was born, meeting every morning at the Serena Hotel in central Nairobi, where the CCP established its base over the following weeks. The Open Forum became the meeting place for members of the peacebuilding community, leaders of civil society groups, representatives of the private sector, reporters from the media, social analysts, politicians and professionals from a variety of disciplines, all expressing their concerns and seeking to be helpful. When normalcy gradually returned to the country, the morning meetings were reduced to three times weekly and then once weekly.

A sense of organisation quickly emerged, with Working Committees and a Technical Team, and Concern became a brand name used by other affiliates of CCP (Concerned Writers of Kenya, Concerned Women, Concerned Youth for Peace, etc.). The Open Forum reflections formed the basis of the Citizens Agenda for Peace launched on January 9, 2008. This document became a major ingredient to the formal mediation process eventually led by Kofi Annan.

From the beginning it was understood that CCP was not an organisation, but a forum or a movement. Participants who proposed specific initiatives were expected to own their proposals and to serve as implementers as well, with the respective Forum committees assisting with coordination and focus. Results from action suggested and implemented through the Forum were reported in subsequent meetings with alacrity. Following this simple format, CCP stimulated action at grass-root and at diplomatic levels.

Adapted from source George Mukundi Wachira, Thomas Arendshorst and Simon M. Charles, Citizens in Action: Making Peace in the Post-Election Crisis in Kenya-2008 (Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa), 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Adapted from Roloff.

In the interest of “moving from ideal to real” (Working Group member), the guidance that follows should not be understood as prescriptive but rather as a resource that can be used, in full or in part, as basic guidance and inspiration along the way. **The different steps presented on designing and implementing an MSP can respectively take weeks, months or years, and do not refer to a set number of meetings or events.** Rather, they describe the general progression of a process that can take many shapes.

It should also be noted that the order presented here is only a broad indication. The point is that the process design should consider the sequence of the different steps; but the precise order of the different steps might vary. What is logical to one practitioner group may not be so for another in a different context, and the starting point for a multi-stakeholder initiative must always be guided by the specific conditions and people involved.

### 5.1 Initiating the Process

There are various options for getting an MSP started, depending on the context and opportunities at hand. The first step in initiating a process is getting a core group of committed individuals and organisations involved in considering the process design and feasibility.

- **Process champions:** CSOs can approach their respective networks to get an MSP started, and take advantage of established relationships with other key stakeholders. It helps to identify counterparts in other agencies that can champion the idea of an MSP, for example within a local UN agency or other international/multilateral organisations, a regional organisation, a government department or mechanism, and other key CSOs.
- **Initiator, convener, host:** The convener is the official face of the process, and should be seen as impartial and have enough authority in the context to convince the right parties to get involved (see Section 3.1). Where CSOs do not enjoy such a position, they can instigate the process by convincing a key agency to play this role, and can partner with them as co-initiators, supporting the process through their organisation’s skills and networks. Another way of involving additional partners can be to get them to co-host meetings and to rotate the host function among different agencies, to appeal to different groups.



See Section 8 for examples on CSO positions as initiators in partnership with other agencies as conveners.



Kyrgyzstan case study  
Section 8.2

*You need a small group of like-minded people who believe that conflict prevention and peacebuilding need a systemic approach and systematic, sustained work.*

*Raya Kadyrova*

- **Core group:** Ideally, the core group of initiators is already multi-stakeholder in composition. CSOs and their identified counterparts should start by comparing objectives and expectations, and clarify the level of investment (time, capacities, and other resources) they are prepared to contribute, as well as discussing potential roles. A Memorandum of Understanding between the key partners can help formalise this commitment.
- **Facilitation resources:** The core group should agree on how to identify and choose a facilitator to support the process from the outset, based on some selection criteria and cultural/contextual considerations.

## 5. Steps in the Process

5.1 Initiating the process  
5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process  
5.3 Getting Acquainted

5.4 Agreeing To Go Forward  
5.5 Implementing Action Plans  
5.6 Exit Strategies



Latin America case study  
Section 8.4

*For the TACE process, we put together a facilitation team, in which each member had different roles and functions. It was crucial to rely on the experience brought by the external professional facilitator for the planning and implementation stages, and on the flexibility of the facilitation team to adapt to the changing needs of the group and context developments, over time.*

*Ana Bourse, Working Group member, on the Latin America case study*

- **Reality check:** start calculating the cost of the process and to explore whether sufficient funding, institutional resources and competencies can realistically be secured to see the process through (see Section 4). Make contingency plans for how to proceed should expected resources fall short. The resource considerations can also be explored through consultations with potential participants as described in the steps below.

## 5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process

The process design must rely on sound knowledge about the context and the various stakeholders. Self-awareness and sensitivity to conflict dynamics are also important before taking the steps of approaching process participants. Perhaps the most challenging and most important part of this phase is identifying and approaching the potential participants. This phase focuses on mapping, analysis and consultation that can gradually help build trust in the lead up to the official start of the process.



The GPPAC Conflict Analysis Field Guide includes a number of tools for conflict and stakeholder analysis.

- **Preliminary context analysis:** The initiators should have sufficient knowledge about the context to recognise possible signs or triggers of conflict. Based on this, initiators can formulate their own preliminary objectives of what they are seeking to achieve.

### BOX 14: EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION: CONFLICT ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. What are the deeper, long-term structural and cultural causes of conflict? For example, these may be issues of political, social or economic exclusion based on ethnicity or religion. These issues may already be present in society, but may not have emerged in visible conflicts or violence yet.
2. What issues, if left unaddressed, could eventually lead to violent conflict? Over what time period? Examples: sharp economic disparities; neglect of whole regions or groups/unequal distribution of government support for development; rampant corruption; lack of government services in education, health, transport; problematic governance structures/processes in terms of participation, decision-making, representation.
3. What policies or groups are attempting to address these issues? How? To what effect?

Source GPPAC Conflict Analysis Field Guide

- **Stakeholder mapping:** To start identifying potential participants, initiators should consider power dynamics, interests and relationships of the groups and individuals that play a role in either exacerbating or deterring the conflict. This exercise may require input from a wider group for validation.
  - » **Map** the positions, interests, needs, issues/problems, means of influence/power, and the willingness to negotiate of the main stakeholders groups (see Section 6 on stakeholders).
  - » To **prioritise** and define how best to involve them, it can help to rank the most relevant stakeholders according to their influence and interest in contributing to the MSP, as illustrated in Box 15.  
To be inclusive, consider involving not only those stakeholders that rank high on influence and interest (→Partner). Some stakeholders may be highly relevant but have limited influence, requiring extra support to play a role in the process (→Empower). It is equally

## 5. Steps in the Process

5.1 Initiating the process  
 5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process  
 5.3 Getting Acquainted

5.4 Agreeing To Go Forward  
 5.5 Implementing Action Plans  
 5.6 Exit Strategies

important to take note of those who are influential but opposed to the objectives of the process (→Engage), and those whose support and influence is currently low but whose position could shift due to changing dynamics (→Monitor).



A more detailed guide to this exercise can be found in *Towards New Social Contracts: Using Dialogue Processes to Promote Social Change* by CIVICUS.

BOX 15: PRIORITISING RELEVANT AND INFLUENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS				
Influence on the issue; ability to bring about the desired change ↑	High			
	Medium		Engage	Partner
	Low		Monitor	Empower
		Strongly opposing	Opposing	Supportive
	Position on the issue →			

Adapted from sources Advocacy Capacity Building: A Training Toolkit, The People's Peacemaking Perspective Project (Conciliation Resources and Saferworld, 2011); *Towards New Social Contracts: Using Dialogue Processes to Promote Social Change* p. 36–38.

- **Criteria for selecting participant stakeholders:** The context and stakeholder analysis can help define a set of criteria for selecting the participant institutions and individuals. Whether this is done in a formal process or not, documenting such criteria can strengthen the legitimacy of the process, as it may be questioned or examined by other stakeholders at any stage during the process. In politically sensitive situations, it can be prudent to involve the potential stakeholders in formulating the criteria in a phased process.

### BOX 16: SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

#### Inclusion

- Which constituency groups are indispensable to the process? Why?
- What would motivate those groups to participate or to stay away?
- What are the implications for not engaging certain groups?
- How does the purpose relate to hardliners and potential spoilers? Will their inclusion make it difficult to reach agreements? Are there other ways to engage them outside of the MSP?
- What balance and diversity do you need to consider in the composition of the group, including gender, age, social or geographic considerations?
- How can you build on what is there: which frameworks/strategies/commitments, which forums/umbrella bodies/spontaneous meeting places can you tap into?

#### Capacities

- Whose work, experience and expertise are linked to the purpose of the MSP and who are likely to give maximum input to the process?
- Who is in a position to constructively engage in the process, and who will ultimately be in a position to act on commitments?
- Can the capacity to participate be built into the process (e.g. for disadvantaged or marginalised groups)?

#### Representation

- Even if a group agrees to participate, how will individual participants be selected, to ensure a constructive group? Are there personality traits or individual qualities that can either help or block the process?
- What are the pros and cons of involving participants in their personal or in their institutional capacity?
- If participants are involved as representatives of a broader constituency, how representative are they, and how do you know they are accountable to their constituency?

- **Do No Harm and self-assessment:** Initiators should consider their own capacity to facilitate the intended process, and assess the possibility of the process affecting the participants or the conflict dynamics negatively.

### BOX 17: CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

#### Self-assessment

- How well do you understand the context?
- Where are you in the stakeholder map? To which actors do you relate?
- How do stakeholders perceive your motivations?
- What are you capable of doing to address the key drivers and mitigators of conflict?
- What are your resources, means or sources of power?
- Does your organisation or do your partners have the adequate facilitation capacities?
- Can you respond quickly to windows of vulnerability or opportunity?

#### Do No Harm

- How will your engagement in this context affect relationships and dynamics?
- Would any of the potential participants/ stakeholders be at risk (physically, reputationally) as a result of being involved?
- Could any unintended effects result from this initiative, based on prior experiences and lessons learned?
- Are there any strings attached to the funding you have available?

Source Lisa Schirch, Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security, First Edition (2013)

- **Formulating the idea:** As a basis for future internal and external communications, it can be useful to document the key points of the analyses and the preliminary purpose and objectives of the process in an accessible format, such as a summary sheet or concept note. This document should also make the initiators' intentions and role explicit. This can form part of a process proposal that participants can validate or revise in initial meetings.
- **Approaching potential participants:** preliminary consultations form part of the initial convening process to get a sense of whether there is sufficient interest in the MSP, any concerns potential participants have and initial process proposals. These consultations can help identify opportunities, and risks, as well as gaps in the analysis and other key stakeholders to approach. Proposals of how and when to start the process can be made. Some key roles such as facilitator, recorder, observer, etc, can be assigned during the consultations. It is also a good time to discuss the scope and size of the group. All of this can provide input for a draft charter, or terms of reference (See Box 23). There are several ways to start approaching the potential participants, depending on the type, level and scope of the process:
  - » **Bilateral meetings** with pre-selected stakeholders to discuss preliminary ideas and validate the analysis. These can initially be quiet and off-the-record.
  - » Announcing a call for **expressions of interest** to a broader constituency (note: this public approach can be risky if the decision to move forward with the process has not been taken yet; it is not suitable in politically sensitive contexts).
  - » Identifying useful **entry points** for initiating the discussion, for example research findings, policy momentums.
  - » Using a **concept note** that sums up the ideas and benefits of the approach to convince the identified target groups. Tailor the arguments to the different groups if needed. Consider: what is a unifying framing for the problem/issue to be addressed by the MSP? How can the issue be described in a way that attracts the maximum number of participating groups?



See the suggested interview questions for potential stakeholders in Section 7.3.



See Section 2.3, Section 6 and the Building Blocks in Section 7.4 to ideas for presenting your case for an MSP.

*Negotiating over a convener, venue, facilitators or other process issues presents opportunities for trust- and confidence-building. The negotiation can demonstrate an openness to hear the other side and to put forward options aimed at accommodating both sides.*

*Working Group member*

**Example 10:**

**Selecting and approving participants and agenda in the US-Cuba dialogue**

The TACE process for a US–Cuba dialogue targeted people who had had government experience or who had worked closely with government officials in the past. Their involvement had the tacit approval of key government officials, who were kept informed of the process. National Co-coordinators helped select and invite the participants, following a set of criteria:

1. Capacities
2. Area of expertise and knowledge
3. Political reach and representation among the academic and political community

The list of potential participants from one side had to be approved by the other side, which formed part of the trust-building in the lead up to the first joint meetings. The CRIES facilitation team asked each national coordinator to set up a consensus process with its country members, to draft a list of grievances and issues that they would like to address during the meetings. This served as a preliminary agenda-setting exercise. During the first meeting, the issues on both lists were addressed, and the whole group accepted to work on a list of 24 topics from the bilateral agenda. Finally, 5 were prioritised and developed during the process.

Source Serbin and Bourse.

- **Addressing challenges to engagement:** An important step at this stage is convincing the right people to participate in the initiative—it is a make or break moment in the process. With the core group of organisers, identify the potential barriers to engagement (before and during the engagement process) and develop strategies to address them.

**BOX 18: ADDRESSING OBSTACLES TO ENGAGEMENT**

**APPROACHING PEOPLE WITH THE WRONG PORTFOLIO**

- Carefully determine which tier, body and department (from local to national, from bureaucrats to politicians, from government offices to public bodies) would be the best placed to engage in the process.

**CONFLICTING AGENDAS, ESPECIALLY OF HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES**

- If it is not possible to have decision-makers at the meeting, work your way downwards to what may be possible. For example, can their representatives be delegated to make decisions? Try to brief these delegates before the dialogue clarifying what would be expected from their institution.

**CHANGE OF FOCAL POINTS, RESTRUCTURING OF ORGANISATIONS**

- Engage institutions as ‘an organisation’ rather than ‘with individuals’.
- Make sure you have multiple contacts and points of entry even if only one person is participating in the meetings.

**LACK OF MOTIVATION OF FEAR OF EXPECTATIONS**

- Explain clearly the expectations of other actors regarding their participation, and make transparent how the process, and its results, will be used.
- Understand what they may want out of a dialogue process, and what they find justifiable in terms of time and resources.
- Try to identify who would understand and share your interest in a dialogue process, and seek to engage these individuals. Find out what they need to enable them to participate, and respect their contributions.

**WEAK LEVERAGE ON THEM**

- Draw on your network. Consider who in the core group would be best placed to approach each stakeholder. If you and the core group lack the relevant connections, consider mobilising the communities represented by target politicians or other people that may approach key representatives on your behalf.

Source Towards New Social Contracts: Using Dialogue Processes to Promote Social Change, p. 27.



Latin America case study  
Section 8.4

*You have to recognise that not all [stakeholders] are going to respond favourably, and eventually there will be a need to smooth out the differences between some of the different agendas.*

Andrés Serbin

- **Observing protocol:** In cases where the process aims to involve high-level state or intergovernmental participation, it may be necessary to seek official endorsement in this phase of the process. The role of officials or government in the process will vary, depending on the political dynamics and the degree to which government is enmeshed in conflict dynamics. However, even if the government is involved in conflict dynamics, it may be possible (and advisable) to work with them, especially if they can be persuaded to support efforts at preventing violent conflict, as they will often see this as in their interest.

### Example 11:

#### Involving state authorities in the preparation of the Jos Experience, Nigeria

When the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) initiated a multi-stakeholder dialogue process in Jos in the Plateau State of Nigeria, the organisers ensured that there was high-level support for the initiative at several levels before proceeding with the actual dialogue.

**Step 1:** a request to the President to use his good offices to entreat 3 elderly statesmen to call for cease-fire; **Step 2:** the State government to provide support to multi-level dialogue processes in Jos communities to mediate the underlying issues; **Step 3:** the federal government provides platform for state and non-state actors to promote peace and reconciliation and **Step 4:** that the organisers convene the wider stakeholders to raise awareness on the issues identified in the consultation meeting.

The participatory nature of the dialogue planning process paved the way for a successful dialogue.

Source Dialogue and Mediation – A Practitioner’s Guide. Processes and Lessons for Participatory Dialogue and Mediation. (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, 2012), p. 24.

- **Go or No-Go?** Based on the preceding steps, identify a clear decision-making moment with the core group of organisers, where you weigh up whether to proceed with the process or not.
- **Administrative and practical preparations:** organisers must have dedicated people in charge of preparing the practicalities for launching the process. This can include outlining the programme, sending out invitations, securing an appropriate venue and time for the first meetings and handling all other logistics relevant to start the MSP. Note that the administrative functions and timely communications will be important and recurring tasks throughout the process, which has implications for funding/budget considerations.

## 5.3 Getting Acquainted

The first group meetings and the acquaintance phase must be considered carefully, as they can set the tone for the rest of the process. The acquaintance phase can involve a degree of **disagreement and contestation** about the issues at stake. This is a natural part of the process, and should be allowed to play out, where the facilitator helps to unpack the key issues and barriers present in the group to start building confidence. For this reason, it is useful for the group to agree on **how to work together** from the outset.



See Section 4 and 7.1 for  
decision-making factors  
and tools.

- **Facilitating interaction:** Pay attention to practical arrangements, facilitation and space that can encourage interaction among the participants. For example, seating arrangements, ice-breakers and allowing time for social spaces, learning and networking can make for more productive and open group discussions. Note that MSPs involving high-level officials from formal institutions will need to take into account official protocol, which may be a pre-condition for meeting. In this case, breaks, outings and other activities for social interaction in between official proceedings can be important to make space for relationship building.

### BOX 19: LOGISTICS MATTER

The space and location may have symbolic meaning or association for some or all participants. Hospitality such as meals, refreshments and the degree of comfort or even inspiration offered by the choice of venue can help participants to relax and encourage informal interaction. Timing and accessibility must be considered in relation to participants' schedules, transportation options or other issues such as child care.

Sitting arrangements can facilitate participation, as it can encourage participants to relate to each other. When not seated with the group to which they belong, they will begin to build relationships and bonds with a neighbour they do not know. Sitting in a circle re-affirms the principle of respect. It suggests no one is higher in rank, or more important than the other.

Adapted from sources Lisa Schirch, Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum (Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC and Kroc Institute for Peace Studies, forthcoming 2015).  
WANEP Dialogue and Mediation – A Practitioner's Guide. p. 9.

- **Stating expectations:** It is the role of the convener to present the anticipated intentions and purpose of the initiative in the first meeting. Introductions are made to acknowledge those present while taking note of who is not present and whose absence may affect the process. Once the agenda of the meeting has been presented and accepted, it is important that participants get the opportunity to express their expectations to start identifying commonalities or areas of contention.

### BOX 20: KEY QUESTIONS ON EXPECTATIONS:

- Why are we here? (Ask participants to relate this question to the convener's presentation of preliminary purpose and intentions of the process)
- What are our concerns?
- What can we contribute?
- What constraints or barriers do we expect to face as a participating group or institution?
- What do we expect to achieve by being here?
- What do we expect from others in the room?

*One way that worked was to first research on the (true) interests of the parties, and then to start the discussion by presenting and reflecting on the findings to each other and consult on getting to hear each other's issues and positions.*

*Working Group member*

- **Ground Rules:** Having collective agreement on how to interact and participate in the process gives a clear mandate to the facilitator to intervene when the group dynamics are not respectful or productive. This can be done in several ways, for example:
  - » Presenting a draft text for discussion, amendment and approval.
  - » As part of, or in follow up to, preparatory bilateral meetings.
  - » Engaging the participants in formulating ground rules from scratch in the first meetings.
  - » Organising a joint training session on dialogue and listening skills, where the participants can at the same time learn about each other's ways of working, values, and constraints.

## 5. Steps in the Process

- 5.1 Initiating the process
- 5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process
- 5.3 Getting Acquainted

- 5.4 Agreeing To Go Forward
- 5.5 Implementing Action Plans
- 5.6 Exit Strategies

### BOX 21: SOME INGREDIENTS FOR GROUND RULES:

- Listen to each other.
- Stay open to learning and new perspectives.
- Respectful behaviour.
- Avoid cynicism.
- Avoid disruptions or distractions (e.g. mobile phones, laptops, side-talk, interrupting each other).
- Ask questions whenever something is not clear or unresolved.
- Commit to staying involved in the process.
- Find common ground, while respecting and understanding differences.

Adapted from source Schirch, Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum

*Using the words 'ground rules' when conducting dialogue in Northern Uganda is very problematic. Instead, we use words like 'guidelines' or something similar and more appealing. You have to give consideration to the context when proposing these 'rules'.*

*Training participant*

- **Rules of engagement and procedures:** Protocol helps the participants to assess and state their level of commitment, roles and responsibilities. Involving the participants in setting out and agreeing to the proceedings is necessary to avoid or minimise misunderstandings once the process is underway. They help the facilitator to ensure a fair and appropriate process. In particular:
  - » **Accountability and grievance resolution** mechanisms need to be in place and clear to all participants, where expectations within and outside the group are clearly agreed, and where there is a procedure that spells out how disagreements or complaints are handled in the group. It can also be useful to have an agreed procedure for dealing with inactive participants or those whose behaviour (whether in the meeting or externally) can undermine the process.

### BOX 22: EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA FOR GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

- **Legitimate:** enabling trust in the process and fair conduct of grievance processes.
- **Accessible:** being known to all stakeholders and providing adequate assistance for those who may face barriers to access.
- **Predictable:** clear and known procedure with an indicative timeframe for each stage, and clarity on the types of process and outcome available and means of monitoring implementation.
- **Equitable:** aggrieved parties have reasonable access to sources of information, advice and expertise necessary to engage in a fair grievance process.
- **Transparent:** keeping parties to grievance informed about its progress and all parties informed of its implementation/performance.
- **A source of continuous learning:** identify lessons for improving the mechanism and preventing future grievances and harm.
- **Based on engagement and dialogue:** consulting the stakeholder groups involved on the design and performance, using dialogue as a means to address and resolve grievances.

Source UN Business and Human Rights Guiding Principle 31, Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, 'United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights - Implementing the United Nations' (Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework, 2011) p. 33-34.

- » **Agreement on internal and external communication and confidentiality** in relation to what can or cannot be disclosed outside the meeting is key to maintaining a level of trust between the participants and in the process (see Section 3.1). Depending on the nature of the MSP, it may be useful to agree to apply the Chatham House Rule, which allows participants to disclose the content of discussions but not to attribute that content to anyone. In cases where the Chatham House Rule is not considered sufficiently strict, an event can also be held entirely off the record.



Chatham House Rule, Glossary, Section 9



*There was a lot of concern that information got out of the room after a dialogue session, and that almost meant that we didn't have a subsequent one.*

Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls

- » The degree of **formality** required ultimately depends on the culture and the stakeholders involved, and on the conditions of where and how the dialogue is conducted. Some cultures (including sub-cultures within a specific context) function more through spoken word rather than through documents. Where formal institutions are part of the process, formal charters and reports may be necessary for institutional endorsement.

### BOX 23: DEVELOPING TERMS OF REFERENCE

The written terms of reference for the convening process are sometimes called a charter. The charter names the stakeholder groups and their representatives and outlines how they will work together and what they will discuss. The facilitator can create the draft in collaboration with the stakeholders during the preparatory/bilateral meetings and submit it to the group for discussion and approval.

The charter can include some or all of the following components:

- Statement of purpose and the group's mandate (relationship to other groups, initiatives or decision-makers, as relevant).
- Stakeholder groups and their representatives (can include organisational or individual representation; alternates; gender balance; geographic or thematic spread).
- Roles and responsibilities for MSP participants.
- Role of the third party facilitator.
- Role and mandate of coordinator/organiser/secretariat.
- Procedure for changing or selecting new participants.
- Schedule of meetings and proposed tasks.
- Guidelines for communicating with the press/media.
- Observer guidelines.
- Expectations for stakeholders to communicate with and report feedback from their constituencies.
- Decision-making procedures for the dialogue and within stakeholder groups (consensus, straw polls, voting, etc.)
- Dispute/grievance resolution mechanism.
- Conflict of interest.
- Procedures for documenting meetings and process for tracking agreements.
- Moments or timeline for reviewing and (where necessary) adapting the charter/Terms of Reference.

Note: while these roles may be discussed at the initiation and acquaintance stage, the formalised charter, or Terms of Reference, can also be adopted at a later phase in the process when a group commitment has emerged.

Adapted from sources [Convening: Organizing Multiparty Stakeholder Negotiations](#); Protocol for Developing Multi-Stakeholder Group Terms of Reference and Internal Governance Rules and Procedures (Institute for Multi-Stakeholder Initiative Integrity, February 2015).

## 5.4 Agreeing To Go Forward

To be able to function together, the group eventually needs to find a degree of consensus on several levels: the purpose of the process; the problem definition; a shared vision; and a shared plan of what the group will do together. This is not likely to be achieved in one sitting, but is usually the result of a longer process and regular interactions. The sequence of the steps described may take different forms depending on what suits the group dynamics.



*One pre-condition is the investment in the preparation of all the key parties, so that we all understand what has happened or where we're coming from; that we can agree to disagree, but we also agree that we must be in this space for dialogue. Quite often you don't find that, and some of that baggage then comes into the room as well.*

Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls

## 5. Steps in the Process

5.1 Initiating the process  
5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process  
5.3 Getting Acquainted

5.4 Agreeing To Go Forward  
5.5 Implementing Action Plans  
5.6 Exit Strategies

- **Framing the issue(s):** By jointly defining and exploring the scope of the problem to be addressed, the group can reach a shared problem formulation. As different components of a conflict analysis might be contentious, this process may also bring out the parameters of what is or is not negotiable for the different participants.<sup>35</sup> This exercise should be well prepared and can be informed by the preliminary engagement with participants.



The *Conflict Analysis Field Guide* has several relevant tools for this step; see for example the Problem Tree and scenario mapping.

- » The emphasis here should be on conflict analysis as a process, where the documentation of the outcomes/findings is most useful if short and concise—this makes it more accessible and easy to update over time.
- » The analysis can be informed in various ways, for instance through storytelling by those affected, experts' opinions and political statements.<sup>36</sup>
- » Consider leading the analysis and discussion towards the peacebuilding potential and peace drivers to avoid blockages and disagreements on the conflict per se.

- **Finding common ground for a vision:** While a vision for what the group would ideally like to achieve should be inspiring and ambitious, it is useful to prepare a visioning exercise that can get as detailed as possible. Participants will have different starting points, assumptions, and institutional interests, so a vision may need to be unpacked and described in concrete terms from different perspectives to avoid different interpretations of the ideal scenario.



See the *Conflict Analysis Field Guide* for more guidance and an example on scenario building.

- » Outcome mapping is a technique that focuses on monitoring the change of behaviour in targeted actors, by asking: which actors need to change and what would they ideally do? What type of change are you seeking by targeting these actors—individual, group or societal (see Section 2.2)? It can support the process from the stage of visioning through to monitoring implementation and evaluation.<sup>37</sup> See the example in Box 26.
- » Scenario building is another alternative to reach a common vision, which can be useful when there are significant differences in how the participants envision a feasible way forward.

*Agreeing a shared vision and purpose sounds too idealistic; you may have to speak of a better understanding of the various visions and agree to take action towards those objectives where common ground may be found.*

*Working Group member*

<sup>35</sup> *Convening: Organizing Multiparty Stakeholder Negotiations*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Roloff*, p. 317.

<sup>37</sup> See more on Outcome Mapping on [www.outcomemapping.ca](http://www.outcomemapping.ca)

## 5. Steps in the Process

- 5.1 Initiating the process
- 5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process
- 5.3 Getting Acquainted

- 5.4 **Agreeing To Go Forward**
- 5.5 Implementing Action Plans
- 5.6 Exit Strategies



See also **Dialogue & Mediation – A Practitioner's Guide** by WANEP for tips on dealing with consensus challenges

### BOX 24: ADDRESSING BLOCKAGES IN CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

#### What happens when everyone does not agree?

Consensus does not mean unanimity. It does not mean that everyone agrees with every single point of a proposal or feels equally good about the decision. It does mean that the agreement is the best one for the group as a whole, if not for each individual group member. Consensus should be blocked only for reasons of principle, never for trivial reasons. The objection or concern should be stated briefly and clearly so that the group knows what the point of disagreement is and why meeting participants must find another solution. Both the person with the concern and the group should attempt to avoid being defensive regarding the disagreement. The group should hear different opinions, but it also has a right to disagree. All participants have the right to state dissenting opinions, but have an obligation to present them in a constructive manner.

#### Guidelines for facilitators when a strong disagreement has been voiced:

- Identify whether the disagreement is between individuals or a small group.
- Identify whether it is an objection that the whole group should consider, or whether it is one that could be worked out by a subcommittee group and then presented to the whole group for approval.
- Ask the objecting participant or small group if they have any alternative proposals that the whole group might consider, to overcome the objections.
- Ask the group to break into smaller groups to discuss the question and to work to develop new proposals.
- Suggest a process in which each person speaks his or her views on the question without response by other group members. Then test for consensus on the old proposal or a newly modified one.
- Suggest a break or postpone the discussion to a later date, allowing people time to consider the objection and alternatives.

#### Guidelines for facilitators when the different viewpoints cannot be reconciled:

- Consider making the result non-precedent setting, temporary or trial.
- Ask the individual or sub-group to allow the group to record the disagreement, but proceed with the majority view.
- Ask the individual or sub-group to stand aside and not block consensus, thus allowing the group to proceed. Standing aside can release those who object from involvement in implementation of the group's agreement. (The individual or sub-group also may initiate standing aside.)
- Ask the people who disagree to prepare a minority report that describes their concerns. This report may be submitted to a decision-maker outside the group, or to a person with formal authority within the group, for a final decision.
- Return to earlier steps of problem solving to determine if any new, mutually-acceptable options can be developed.
- In extreme cases, the individual who disagrees may decide to leave the group, releasing the group to move ahead.

Source Convening: *Organizing Multiparty Stakeholder Negotiations*, pp. 11–12.



See Conflict Assessment, Peacebuilding Planning and Self-Assessment overview in Section 7.5

- **Action Plans:** Planning should address key who, what, how and when questions about follow up actions the participants will take, whether individually or together. When articulating what the group can act on, the why should also be explicit and based on the conflict analysis.
  - » The plans should have a clear **theory of change**, explaining in what way the planned actions are expected to address the problem.
  - » Action plans can be enhanced by individual self-assessments and mapping of the participants' different roles and potential in the bigger picture, as this can make for **complementary** actions.
  - » Bear in mind how the plans relate to **existing policy frameworks or mechanisms** related to local peace and security issues, for example the Sustainable Development Goals, statebuilding and peacebuilding goals or national development strategies.
  - » **Avoid 'shopping lists'** of desirable actions and prioritise actions that are within reach of the participants (see self-assessment); identify which actions can be done by the group,

## 5. Steps in the Process

5.1 Initiating the process  
5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process  
5.3 Getting Acquainted

5.4 Agreeing To Go Forward  
5.5 Implementing Action Plans  
5.6 Exit Strategies



Some tools that can support this process include the Choice Matrix in Section 7.6, the Action Planning templates in 7.7 and the Level of Potential Change Exercise in the GPPAC Conflict Analysis Field Guide. The Building Blocks in Section 7.4 may also be of use here.

as well as those the group can encourage/lobby other actors to do; ensure the right actors are targeted (see stakeholder analysis).

### BOX 25: LOOKING AHEAD, STRATEGICALLY

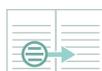
- Where are we now? (baseline)
- Where do we want to be? (vision)
- How do we get there? (action plan)
- How do we know what has been achieved? (monitoring and evaluation)
- How do we learn and adapt? (learning)

- **Goals and milestones:** An important part of the action plan is the formulation of what changes and achievements are expected as a result of the actions. It supports motivation and credibility of the process to have some milestones or progress indicators already spelled out from the beginning, and to include some intermediary achievements and quick wins along the way.

### BOX 26: USING OUTCOME MAPPING TO DEVELOP PROGRESS INDICATORS

	WHO	WHAT	WHEN
<b>Short term (quick win)</b>	E.g. The National Defence Council	Participates in regional discussion on minority rights	Within the coming 6 months
<b>Medium term (progress)</b>		Agrees to protect minority rights as part of the Country Development Strategy	Adoption of Strategy scheduled for October 2016
<b>Long term (goal)</b>		Implements the Country Development Strategy in collaboration with local peace committees	2017 onwards; Evaluation of Strategy due in 2020

- **Costing the plan:** Once there are clear ideas about follow up actions, it will be necessary to revisit what resources are needed to implement the plans, and to agree on how they will be secured. Fundraising or pooling of resources may be necessary as part of the follow up steps; this may also be the moment to mobilise any donors or donor connections involved in the process (see Section 6.8).



See Section 6.8 on how to engage donors

## 5.5 Implementing Action Plans

To achieve results beyond the individual level, a crucial part of the process is in the follow up outside the meeting room. Flexibility is needed to be able to go back to re-assert and adjust the process as it moves along and where the need to change plans arises. Internal and external communication throughout this phase is crucial, both for the sake of keeping up momentum and for the purpose of accountability and trust in the process.

- **Getting organised:** With plans of action and definition of roles, the group considers how to work together in the follow up phase, for example by forming working groups, delegations, advisory groups, contact persons/liaisons or action-oriented task forces. The tasks can include activities to support and strengthen the platform itself, such as mobilisation of

extra resources as well as public and political support. Constant or emerging issues in this phase may lead to new ways of getting things done. This stage is an opportunity to broaden the engagement in the process, by involving additional groups in the proposed actions.

### Example 12:

#### Working Committees and roles in the Concerned Citizens for Peace, Kenya

The participants in the Forum that gathered to address the electoral violence crisis in Kenya grouped around five working committees: Humanitarian Response; Media; Community Mobilisation; Resource Mobilisation; Technical; and High– Level Dialogue. Committee members assumed responsibility to harvest ideas and suggestions from the people gathered daily at the Forum, helping to translate discussions into action. As the committees developed, the CCP Core Team, functioning as the High–level Dialogue Committee and in concert with the Technical Team, could concentrate on analysis, strategy building, personal contacts with pivotal actors, and coordination.

Source: Wachira, Arendshorst and Charles, p. 12.

- **Feedback loops:** Make a point of scheduling regular report back sessions of participants to the group and of the group to broader constituencies. There are many ways of doing this, either using existing channels, or using media, online tools, or arranging for workshops or conferences for a broader range of participants to validate or respond to the activities of the group. Feedback loops are relevant both for the sake of accountability and in order to manage expectations..



See the guidance for communication strategies Section 7.7

#### BOX 27: ACCESSIBLE AND FAIR COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

- It is essential that participants have a common base of information.
- Sources must be credible.
- Allow time to exchange information.
- Share information openly.
- Make technical information easy to understand; add training if needed.
- Beware of information overload.
- Ensure that the information is well-organised.
- Avoid jargon and keep documentation short and concise.
- Use alternative means of communication—for example social media, radio, videos, illustrations.
- Where needed ensure that the documentation of meetings and decisions has been agreed/ confirmed by participants before sharing externally.

Many dialogue processes gloss over the role of a recorder and yet an inefficient recorder or an inappropriate record of proceedings could undermine the ability to keep track of proceedings based on which consensus or agreement is reached.

Sources Mayer and others, p. 67, Dialogue and Mediation – A Practitioner’s Guide. Processes and Lessons for Participatory Dialogue and Mediation, p. 16.

*It’s not like setting railway tracks, but more as if you’re sailing a boat.*

*Working Group member*

- **Keeping up the momentum:** It is important that the process inspires and motivates participants to follow their ideas and plans through. Extra support, capacity building, buddying schemes or coaching may be needed for a stakeholder to achieve some results. The level of trust within the group becomes important where different resources within the group can be shared to prevent the process from stalling.

### BOX 28: MAINTAINING STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT AND MOTIVATION

- Find out how people like to be rewarded/acknowledged and thus become more effective.
- Give feedback and ask for feedback then make the necessary modifications—do not ignore it.
- Keep people informed as to how the decisions are being made and what progress is being made (e.g. open days, radio, media releases)—also continue to provide opportunities for their involvement.
- Celebrate the achievements, small and big.
- Remember that no one has a monopoly on bright ideas; develop a team feeling, encourage camaraderie among members.
- Combine training and personal/professional development with acknowledgment and fun.
- For example: organise inter-regional and interstate tours, hold a training session with partners in one of the region's holiday spots, or have a barbecue at the end of the meeting.
- Ensure there is adequate support and acknowledgment for honorary contributors. Ensure that being part of the initiative has personal and professional development spin-offs. For example, share tools, tips and resources with participants that might assist them in their life outside the initiative.

Adapted from source 'Wageningen UR Knowledge Co-Creation Portal Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Process Model - Collaborative Action', Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Wageningen UR.

*These processes can be very tiring, so they need to encompass the personal needs of the individuals involved. For example personal capacities, skill development, support and encouragement, and so on, of those directly involved. Frustration and fatigue are in part a result of the design of the process, so the design is really important.*

*Working Group member*

- **Reflecting and sense-making:** Take time throughout the process to review what works, what does not, and why. Conducting regular feedback sessions can help the group to make necessary adjustments.<sup>38</sup>
  - » A light-touch approach to monitoring and evaluation through short collective learning sessions can be more productive and meaningful than conventional evaluation methods, which often use external evaluators.<sup>39</sup>
  - » Remember to look out for unintended consequences of the actions taken, and monitor changing perceptions and expectations of participants over time.
  - » Each stakeholder can also do a self-assessment on their progress and delivery of results, to confirm their continued interest and participation in the MSP.
  - » It is important to communicate the results of the evaluation wherever possible (see 'Feedback loops' above).

### BOX 29: REFLECTION AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The following questions can be discussed in the multi-stakeholder group itself, as well as being used in the evaluation of different actors targeted by the action plan (see Box 26)

- What do you consider the most significant changes over the last [period], and why?
- What has caused these changes?
- Were there any changes that were unexpected, or negative?
- Are the changes sustainable?
- Are we working with the right people, at the right level, in the most resourceful way?
- How can we improve the way we work together?

Source Will Bennett, Community Security Handbook (Saferworld, 2014). See also Rick Davies and Jess Dart, The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique, 2005.

38 For useful M&E tools see John Paul Lederach, Reina Neufeldt and Hal Culbertson, *Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Tool Kit* (Mindanao: Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2007); and *Reflecting on Peace Practice*.

39 'Monitoring and Evaluation: New Developments and Challenges' (Soesterberg, the Netherlands: International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), 2011).

- **Adapting:** New issues that emerge may require the inclusion of new stakeholders. The procedures and rules of engagement for the MSP will have been tried and tested, and may need to be reviewed to be more suitable for the group. Feedback from constituencies, as well as changes in the context or the outcome of some of the activities may show that some of the group's Theories of Change were incorrect or outdated. Some participants may have dropped out causing a gap in the composition of the group. These are all potential developments that the process will need to adapt to in order to stay relevant and effective.

### Example 13:

#### From Track 2 dialogue process to Track 1.5 in The Istanbul Process

The Istanbul Process (see Example 6) started out as typical track 2 diplomacy between Russians and Georgians. Participants originally included political experts, NGO activists, civil society and academics, and they contributed by publishing analyses and sharing their perspectives through the media with their respective countries. Following the 2012 elections in Georgia the political environment changed, and some of the core participants obtained position in the government, allowing the Istanbul Process to move from track 2, to track 1.5. The informal participation of government and political figures became possible. Because the project had made an effort to continuously add new participants, the political figures could organically be included in the process.

Source Khutsishvili and Ryabov, I.

## 5.6 Exit Strategies

Conflict prevention is a continuous effort and there is not necessarily an end to such processes. Nevertheless, the time may come when the MSP will either wind down or move to the next level of institutionalisation. In this phase, the process should not simply fade out without notice, explicit agreement or exit strategy, as this can cause disillusionment that can discourage future initiatives.

- **Closure:** The participants may reach consensus about closure for various reasons. Key outputs/objectives may have been reached, or the agreed time period for the initiative is coming to a close. If the process is not sustainable due to lack of resources or motivation, or when reflection showed that the investments did not justify the results for the participants and target groups, that can bring an end to the MSP. External factors or risks in the context can also directly affect this decision.
- **Exit strategy:** An exit strategy can range from gradually winding down a process, to handing it over to continuous, institutionalised mechanisms. Either way, it is important to communicate the next steps not only to participants but also to key partners, target groups and broader constituencies. It may also involve ensuring that some of the collaboration achieved and relationships built are safeguarded through some other form of engagement or contact.
- **Lessons learned:** For future reference and broader learning, it is useful to document and share not only the outcomes of the process, but also the learning points about the process itself. Some conventional ways of doing this might include reports or presentations (workshops, conferences), but other means can include videos, interviews or blogs. The different stakeholders can tap into their respective networks to disseminate such information.
- **Institutionalisation:** in the best-case scenario, the process evolves into permanent structures, so-called standing mechanisms that can support conflict prevention and peacebuilding through the collaboration of different local stakeholders. This is exemplified

## 5. Steps in the Process

- 5.1 Initiating the process
- 5.2 Designing and Preparing the Process
- 5.3 Getting Acquainted

- 5.4 Agreeing To Go Forward
- 5.5 Implementing Action Plans
- 5.6 **Exit Strategies**



See more on regional infrastructures for peace in Example 15, Section 6.3 and in the case studies on Kyrgyzstan and Kenya in Section 8.

by dedicated resources allocated by local authorities/government, or institutional or policy frameworks underpinning the multi-stakeholder collaboration as well as capacity building.

### Example 14:

#### Institutionalising conflict prevention: Infrastructures for Peace

In Ghana, the **National Peace Architecture** was consolidated through the National Peace Council Act 2011, which encompasses all national government levels. It includes a National Peace Council, peace advisory councils at district, regional and national levels, government-affiliated peace promotion officers at regional and district levels, and a coordinating Peacebuilding Support Unit within the Ministry of Interior. The various units are mandated to collaborate with various stakeholders in Ghanaian society, including diverse civil society groups, the security sector and the media.

In Costa Rica, a law for the Alternative Resolution of Conflicts and Promotion of Peace was passed in 1997, requiring **peace education** in every school. The Ministry of Justice and Peace, established since 2009, is mandated to implement a **National Peace Plan** and support peacebuilding efforts undertaken by CSOs. There is a National Council for Security and Social Peace, in which all the highest authorities of the government work towards promoting security and peace as a national policy.

Local peace activists have set up **local peace committees** independently from the state in many different countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Colombia and Sudan. They deal with tensions and specific, localised challenges at the community level. For instance, the local peace committees in North Kivu, DRC, contributed to community-led disarmament and reintegration efforts to enable rebel fighters to return to their communities. In other places, local peace committees are connected to or part of the national, state-led infrastructures—for instance in South Africa, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Ghana.

**Sources** 'Infrastructures for Peace' [www.i4pinternational.org](http://www.i4pinternational.org); Hans J. Giessmann, Embedded Peace – Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned (Berghof Foundation, UNDP, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2016).



Kyrgyzstan case study  
Section 8.2

*We want our government to invest funds from the national budget in Oblast [regional] Advisory Committees, and for this national unit to be responsible for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.*

*Raya Kadyrova*