



platform 4 dialogue



UN System-wide Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

On 5-7 August 2019, Peace Direct and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs' Peacebuilding Support Office (DPPA/PBSO) (along with the joint UN-CSO Working Group on the UN system-wide Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, consisting of the DPPA/PBSO, UN Department of Peace Operations/ Policy Evaluation and Training Division (DPET), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, International Peace Institute (IPI), Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)) organized a **three-day 'Platform 4 Dialogue' global online consultation** to validate key challenges and recommendations of the **UN system-wide Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace** and discuss ways to implement the recommendations in the field.

Overall, there was a great level of engagement throughout the three days with **over 400 registered participants and 558 comments over 9 discussion threads**. Many participants continued their engagement through email and expressed interest to participate in future consultations. A post-consultation participation feedback survey noted **'strong satisfaction with the global online consultation'** from 93% of participants of which 61% were from (or working with) local civil society.



Jennifer Blackburn Miller

"This was the most informative dialogue and I am very grateful to have been a part of this conference. Thank you PBSO, Peace Direct and everyone!"



Lokwiva Francis

"Many thanks to PBSO/Peace Direct and the entire UN family and fellow participants. It was great sharing and we look forward to the implementation of the suggested outcomes."



Nzie Simon Nti

"This was a wonderful and innovative forum. I enjoyed the contributions from the multidisciplinary team. Special thanks to Peace Direct, UN DPPA/PBSO. May we continue to build a world of peace and love for humanity."



Tobi Dress-Germain

"This consultation was a very wise idea, and perhaps country offices should also engage in similar consultations with their constituencies."

Throughout the three-day global online consultation, participants agreed on a shared understanding of peacebuilding and sustaining peace at the community level. Participants then reviewed key draft recommendations of the *UN system-wide Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace* and provided detailed feedback for each, including good practices and lessons learned, to further improve UN-civil society partnership at the local level with focus on capacity building (including financing for peacebuilding) and inclusive and meaningful participation. Civil society participants also provided valuable suggestions on the role of local civil society in operationalizing the *Community Engagement Guidelines in the field*.



Riya Yuyada

“Before defining peacebuilding, we need to deconstruct the two words; peace and then building. From my experience in peace work, everyone has their own definition for peace. For a young girl, peace could mean not being forced into marriage or beaten, for me, peace is not hearing gunshots, not having war, for another it could be having food on the table every day, etc. Building could mean the act of constructing something because it was not there, or because it was broken. For me, peacebuilding is a big term that encompasses a wide range of collective efforts to address personal, interpersonal, national and international conflict, right from the causes of conflict. To build sustainable peace, we need start by address the root causes of conflict.”

I. A Shared Understanding of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Most participants associated peacebuilding and sustaining peace with **good governance** (transparent, accountable and inclusive government, following clear laws and listening to the concerns of the people) and **lasting culture of peace** through social cohesion, mutual respect, inclusive education and participation (especially women and youth) and **harmonious co-existence** throughout the peace continuum including, but not limited to, in post-conflict situations. Many civil society actors underscored the importance of **civic space** where everyone has equal access to justice and the freedom to enjoy their **economic, social, cultural and political rights** at all levels as a precondition to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Some participants highlighted peacebuilding and sustaining as a **healing process** not only through **psychosocial support** to those affected by conflict and ensuring their well-being but also by **establishing the underlying root causes of conflict, such as social, cultural, religious and structural drivers, and exploring non-violent ways to prevent the outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violence. Agenda 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** were noted as a good entry-point to explore root cause of conflict along with the importance of strengthening the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus.

“In the **Philippines**, more than laws and policies, there has to be a general recognition of human dignity and basic human rights (...) as a culture or norm in society. For example, human rights education must be pursued not only for students but also those in power such as policemen, military, and government officials”

Consensus was made that **people-centered peacebuilding and sustaining peace** was contingent on strong knowledge of the **local history, context, relationships, dynamics and conflict analysis** along with open and active channels of communication and participation of different groups of society, including civil society in rural areas. This was especially true since peacebuilding interventions of longer-lasting impact was only feasible through a bottom-up approach. It was important for community-based peacebuilding actors to strengthen capacity, knowledge and skills to facilitate inclusive bottom-up communication, coordination, and information-sharing in efforts to build collective willpower towards peacebuilding. Furthermore, in conflict-affected situations, it was important for local actors to have the capacity to facilitate inclusive peacebuilding interventions with equal participation and diverse representation of all groups. The role of diasporas was also highlighted in peacebuilding initiatives in this regard.

“In **South Sudan**, the greatest obstacle to peacebuilding and sustaining peace is illiteracy. More than 85% of the population are illiterate which makes it difficult to effectively communicate the importance of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.”

“Religion has been used as a divisive tool in **Nigeria**. No matter what the religious tenets are, any religion that attempts to destroy peaceful existence and mutual cohabitation is anti-humanity. The goal of religion should be to promote love, peace and brotherliness. This should be a key message of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Nigeria.”

“In order to build and sustain peace in **DRC**, we need to think about equality and equity when sharing our natural resources. Such process should involve the participation of women and youth leaders at the table, together with other non-conventional leaders (the private sector etc).”

“Americans seem to believe that the **United States** is a peaceful country and we only provide support peacebuilding in other conflict-affected countries. But this comes from not knowing or unwilling to come to terms with our own problems including the deep political divide, racial/economic inequality and gun violence etc.”

II. Review of draft key recommendations to improve the UN’s engagement with civil society at the local level

Overall, participants expressed appreciation and wide agreement on all seven draft recommendations. Equal importance was given to the execution of these recommendations on the ground through the UN’s country presence as it was not enough to simply produce guidelines without implementation. Many participants also highlighted the UN’s important role as an **enabler** (rather than a direct agent) for community peacebuilders to actively engage in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Establishing such agreed understanding was underlined as a fundamental step not only to successfully manage expectations of civil society but also to ensure and strengthen local ownership.

Following are key points discussed under each draft recommendation of the *UN system-wide Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*:

1. Respect for community context and promotion of local ownership

1. Respect for local actors/communities:

- The UN should step out of its “comfort zone” of working only with well-established international/national civil society. There should be more liaison with local actors.
- UN-civil society relationship at the local level requires more mutual respect with the acknowledgement that local actors have more expertise in their local context and trust among community members to mobilize support. Many local civil society actors noted from their previous experiences with UN staff in the field that they often felt disrespected by dismissive behavior or treatment (“*feel used for ‘check-off the list via project planning’ or publicity material*”)

2. **Mutual trust:** Building trust is key. Communities in the past had been mobilized/organized into groups for various peacebuilding projects but did not receive the required support to sustain.

3. **Understanding of local actors and communities:** There needs to be a deeper understanding of local communities including their demographic, intercommunal dynamic/relationship, culture and way of working (e.g., communal calendar) etc.

- This could be done by preliminary on-ground research on context-specific conflict analysis, challenges, and peacebuilding priorities and needs before engaging with a community.
- The UN could also conduct and update mapping of local civil society (including community-context, conflict analysis, capacity (women/youth-led), existing engagement with the UN, peacebuilding challenges/priorities and existing local resources etc).
- UN staff should be **sensitized** through training/workshop etc before engaging with target communities and community peacebuilding groups and actors as part of a protocol.
- In the context of integration of migrants/refugees in a host community, it is also important to conduct thorough research on dynamic between host communities and refugees and underlying cause of conflict before engaging with peacebuilding interventions.

4. **Strengthened local ownership:** Peace processes need to be decentralized to address local contexts through appropriate engagement of local peacebuilding groups (e.g., consultation, outreach, project implementation etc) to foster local ownership.

“The UN needs to understand the needs and challenges of **host communities** when working on integration of refugees. They should pay respect to the host community by understanding their situation and needs and providing adequate consultation and basic services. Many intra-communal conflict and violence have been noted between host communities and refugees due to lack of respect host communities feel throughout the integration process, leading to host communities refusing to accept refugees. Host community actors commented that they felt like refugees were thrown upon them by the UN as their responsibility instead of host community actors being invited to be part of the solution.

The UN does not seem to understand the impoverished conditions of living of host communities that also need to be improved first, before proper integration of refugees. Host communities are often under the impression that the government and the UN are looking after the refugees more than their own citizens, causing grievances and resentment of host communities against the refugees. Such tension also appears to be overlooked by the UN as they are not very receptive to our complaints.”

– Kikuube District, Western Uganda

2. **Managing expectations through effective communications and outreach (including the innovative application of ICT)**

1. **Understand what the community perceives as effective means of communication and outreach**
 - In order to manage expectations through effective communications and outreach, the UN must first know what the target population perceives as effective communications and outreach.
 - Either directly or through trusted implementers, the UN should conduct **social media analysis, stakeholder and influencer mapping**, along with other qualitative and quantitative research to identify where communities get their daily information, which platforms and messengers they trust the most and what messages would best resonate (*“the most effective communication channels can be unexpected at times in communities”*)

“With UN Support, we were able to utilize all kinds of communication channels for advocacy campaigns: from children-led radio shows and reality TV series to supporting communications campaigns via sports coaches, tuk tuk drivers, and town criers. Once the appropriate messenger and platform is identified, it was easier to root the messages locally root in efforts to foster dialogue.”

– Search for Common Ground

2. **Be clear about what the UN can and cannot do** (UN’s peacebuilding work in the country-specific context, relevant UN agencies and their key activities, limitations etc).
3. **The key role of ICT** in the context of peacebuilding.
 - The UN should support community media in strengthening peace programming and preventing hate speech.
 - The UN should work alongside both local and international professionals in ICT to develop new platforms that can facilitate peacebuilding and even decrease conflict risks.
 - ICT can also be utilized to build feedback mechanisms with communities, create a sense of inclusion for people to participate in programme development and circulate vital information. In conflict-affected contexts, the UN could ensure communities have access to these channels.
 - Many local civil society groups and actors already have ICT capacity (*“peace-tech”* prototypes) which the UN could easily identify and build on (no need to reinvent the wheel).
 - For women and youth-related peacebuilding intervention, arts and culture have been used as an important peacebuilding instrument for community engagement. ICT can be used to further promote these peacebuilding arts projects.
 - Establish cyber cafes/centers in rural areas and involve youth groups and actors to actively manage and coordinate (with the support of UNV).
 - Civil society could regularly share snippets, short stories (challenges, opportunities, successes, and failures) from around the world that could stimulate learning in the local context - stories can be anonymous but based on real experience.

- Various SNS platforms (including Facebook/WhatsApp/Twitter/Instagram) should be regularized for timely and clear advocacy/communication between UN-civil society.
4. **UN coordination is key** in outreach and communication. UN entities and agencies need to come together on a regular and frequent basis for outreach and communication. It will enable them to share their insights with civil society as well as learn and reflect from local partners to enhance their programs.
 5. **User-friendly communication:** UN communication materials disseminated to the local level need to be more user-friendly by translating into local languages with simpler diagrams/pictures for easier communication.

3. Conflict-sensitive approach to ensure safety and protection in restricted environments

1. The UN should prioritize **“Do No Harm” principles** when working with local civil society.
2. The UN’s responsibility in ensuring safety and protection of local civil society in peacebuilding and sustaining peace is twofold:
 - Protecting the partners against **reprisals**
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Reprisals/CSOsGuide_EN.pdf; and
 - Strengthening the UN response to threats to **civic space**.
3. Mainstream human rights, conflict-sensitivity approach and women/youth-specific contexts in peacebuilding into UN sensitization training, coaching, mentoring and financing of police and military to further promote protection and safety.
4. The UN should develop **conflict-sensitive safety and protection protocols** for affected communities.
5. Put in place **early warning system** (by regularly updating conflict analysis for effective interventions) and train UN staff on conflict-sensitive community engagement and programming.

4. Inclusive and meaningful participation

1. The UN needs **effective, transparent and open collaboration and partnership**.
2. Need more **participatory and inclusive approaches** to community engagement – not only focus on women and youth but also on **ethnic diversity, indigenous groups, elders, faith-based organizations and people with disabilities** etc.

“In many fragile contexts, traditional civil society actors, such as religious and traditional peacemakers (of which many are also women and youth), continue to receive lack of recognition and support for their efforts in peacebuilding at all levels of society (both state and non-state actors). A greater understanding of the diverse roles and contributions of these local peacemakers by national and international duty bearers is needed, as well as capacities/structures to engage them meaningfully in the peace process and peacebuilding. This entails a thorough contextual analysis of the country/region to map out who has the legitimacy and the support at the local level and ensuring that the peace architecture design reflects that reality. In faith-based and tradition-oriented peacebuilding, it is essential to also look beyond the formal leadership structures to ensure the leadership of women and youth of faith is leveraged.

This could be done by enabling partnerships through advocacy support to amplify their voices. Former Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon once said that ‘religious and faith-based leaders play an important mediating role in many conflict situations.’ These leaders have unique connections to local communities and frequently enjoy the trust of the conflicting parties. Yet, these actors are often not fully acknowledged, and their potential contribution remains underutilized.”

– *Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers*

3. **Regularize joint UN-civil society activities** in efforts to sensitize both groups via peacebuilding activities such as community volunteering, distribution of relief items, road patrol and M&E etc.
4. **Reinforce the ‘whole-of-society’ approach:** meaningful engagement with civil society, especially women and youth in **all stages** of decision making and intervention: preliminary consultations, design, planning, designing, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

5. **Customize flexible timelines:** working with local civil society may mean a different methodology from what has been envisioned at HQ/UN country office. Usually more time is required to implement peacebuilding interventions and there should be at minimum some expectation that inclusion of various representatives (along with unpredictable risks and challenges) may disrupt the timeline.
 - In this regard, the UN should thoroughly consult with the wide spectrum of local actors (including target communities) and be aware of all possible risks and challenges.
 - The UN should also stand accessible to local civil society implementing partners who face challenges along the way.
6. The UN also needs to **strengthen the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus framework** for the UN at the country-level for implementing civil society partners at the local level can support and replicate at the community level with local resources. The peace and security pillar/UNDS reform, along with the new RCO, could help mobilize relevant UN entities towards this approach.

“For community violence reduction projects, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) involved community members, especially women and youths-at-risk, during the entire project cycle, including preliminary consultations, design, planning, implementation and M&E. Together they identified and strengthened local judiciary mechanisms for conflict resolution which enabled an atmosphere of forgiveness between ex-combatants and the community.”

– *Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)*

5. Localized capacity building, including smaller and flexible funding mechanisms

1. The UN should invest more on **conflict-sensitivity capacity building** (e.g., training/workshop) and networking (e.g., consortiums and networks (local and global)).
2. The UN should support local civil society groups and actors and help them build sustainable capacity in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, not only with various training opportunities but also through **institutional support and small grant/funding**.

“One particular challenge that I see for newly established organizations is that many applications require audited financial records for more than two years. I think funding needs to be made available specifically to new organizations as a way for them to grow and help establish themselves.”

– *India*

3. For the UN funds to be come available to local actors, **transparency and accountability** need to be ensured. In terms of process, it is important that the application process is not overwhelming such that only already-established national or international organizations can apply. The level of reporting also needs to be proportional to the level of funding received

“Applications, required documents, reporting etc are new and complicated for local peacebuilding groups and actors, especially for those that are recently coming out of a conflict/violence or base their activities on informal, traditional practices that do not require the norms and standards requested by the UN. What local peacebuilders need are urgent seed money and high-risk taking small grants (sometimes even less than \$5,000) but these needs are not incorporated in the UN’s financing for peacebuilding”

– *Colombia*

4. **Be flexible in setting limits for peacebuilding funds.** Most local civil society implement small-scale activities that require as little as \$10,000 and this could still have significant impact on peacebuilding at the local level.
5. **Look beyond what is in the application:** Local civil society do not stand a chance against more professional organizations with better grant writing language and skills. The proposal readers need to have in-depth knowledge and expertise of the local communities in order to realize the quality of the idea itself, beyond the formalities. There needs to be more lenient standards for the application process for many ideas from the local civil society to get through.
6. There must be **increased funding for informal and non-registered civil society groups** particularly led by and including women and youth. Funding mechanisms can be smaller and more flexible according

to the experience and capacity of the group and provided over long periods of time to maximize capacity building and sustainable impact.

7. **Private sector and international financial institutions (IFIs) are a missing link.** The UN could utilize the peace-development nexus to connect the private sector, IFIs and local civil society to explore innovative ideas for funding modalities in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

“As a donor myself, I often find myself in conversations around lack of evaluation capacity within local peacebuilding actors/organizations. That is one reason why organizations like the UN gravitate to big INGOs with resources available to monitor evaluate. However, (1) big INGOs do not necessarily evaluate in a way that contributes to the larger field and/or don't bring along local partners to develop these skills (monopoly); and (2) as a field, it seems we are constantly creating new frameworks rather than focusing on the contribution of evidence to the greater field. Meta-analysis very often has problems analyzing across programs or contexts because common frameworks are not employed. This is not to say that I don't think new frameworks might be needed, but I haven't seen a good use of existing frameworks to date.

Overall, existing modalities need to be aware that part of funding may need to be for improved M&E capacity of local peacebuilding organizations but also that time frames for grants need to be clearer on possible outcomes that can be considered.”

–Alliance for Peacebuilding

6. Women and Peacebuilding

1. Women-led organizations in communities must have **equal or more opportunities** (gender equity) and access to local resources in order to ensure their growth and sustainability.
2. **Empower women** in communities through training, coaching and financing their peacebuilding initiatives and strengthen their institutional capacity.
3. The inclusion of **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** is of a great importance as one of the key aspects to be explored in conflict-sensitive peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
4. The UN could encourage **trade unions and the private sector to include women's equal participation** in collective bargaining and negotiation and to hire women mediators and arbitrators to ensure that women's interests are equally represented and considered.
5. Provide **community -based conflict resolution and prevention training for rural women** to support an understanding of legal rights (including land and financial rights). This must be conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the personal, cultural, religious, and/or racial differences of the training recipients.
6. **Identify, recruit and promote women mediators at the local level** in efforts to achieve gender parity during the mediation process, and to improve the quality of analysis of gender inclusion during the formulation of process, consultation, and implementation of peace agreement recommendations.
7. **Women's meaningful participation in peace processes** should be a precondition and women from different backgrounds are fairly represented.
8. A **joint UN-civil society mechanism should monitor and hold governments accountable** to include women in formal and informal mechanisms created for the implementation of peace agreements.
9. The UN should work more with local authorities, local women, civil society and other local actors to **ensure that local plans and policies are conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive.**
10. The UN should support local civil society to **develop community plans (with dedicated budgets) to adapt international laws and resolutions to the local context** (GNWP's Localization strategy provides the tools to do that: <https://gnwp.org/publications/localization-toolkit>)
11. There should be a **separate funding mechanism for local women's organizations** and the UN should consolidate and disseminate the list of all gender-sensitive funding mechanisms to communities for awareness (e.g., Peacebuilding Fund's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative; Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund etc)

7. Youth and Peacebuilding

1. The UN can help **build institutional capacity of youth-led organizations at the local level** in their endeavors to promote peace.
2. The UN can also work with youth organizations to advocate for the **domestication of UNSCR 2250** in their respective countries.
3. **UNSCR2250 and the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security has been a very important part** in recognizing a critical population for peacebuilding and sustaining peace as well as the younger generation's more active involvement with the UN.
 - In order to successfully operationalize this well-crafted agenda, the UN needs to create more funding opportunities for youth-focused work and reduce barriers so youth can directly apply for grants/funding, consult, plan, design and implement peacebuilding initiatives.
4. The UN must recognize **the need to map youth groups or actors labeled as "bad" or "troublemakers" in communities to foster positive relationships with their communities.** Move beyond primarily supporting youth who are accustomed to leading community initiatives to **increasing support to local groups helping youth who are more vulnerable to participating in violence to make a positive impact on their communities via youth empowerment.**

"In **Haiti**, a community-based organization composed of teachers and parents has been building relationships with a "baz" (or "base" in Haitian Creole, similar to a gang) by meeting with them in the place where they hang out over the past year. In these meetings they listen to "baz" members' primary challenges and goals. In response they have already supported the "baz" to carry out a community cleaning project in order to improve their reputation in the community and establish a rotating savings strategy in order to send some members to school. The "baz" members in turn took this attention by adults as a sign of societal acceptance and decided to meet its members' needs without turning to bribes from politicians to 'create disorder.'"

5. **Increase funding to formal and informal youth-led groups in communities** that provide mentorship opportunities to sustain peacebuilding initiatives through home-grown networks.
6. The UN, along with national and local stakeholders, must **respect the youth's most urgent priority: successful transition to adulthood.** This involves heavy emphasis on securing education, professional skills and stable employment, critical factors required to fulfill adult responsibilities.
 - Peacebuilding initiatives to address this particular issue should focus on both the demand and supply sides of the market for youth labor, facilitating the creation of jobs rather than focusing solely on equipping youth with education and skills. Funded internship programs that allow national/local employers to experience youth employment is one market-facilitation strategy.



Dishani Senaratne

"Applying for funding opportunities is a rigorous process. I do understand that providing certain documents is necessary to gauge one's suitability. But, at the initial stage, supporting pilot projects is far more valuable than large-scale projects."



George Marrash

"There are limits concerning languages and experience when writing proposals. Unfortunately, many of the organizations who are experts in their context and field have limited resources when it comes to writing proposals especially when it is in English. For instance, organizations in Syria. Most of the UN and international funding are competitive and will be awarded to the organization that knows how to write the most. And the calls are mostly in English, but none were in Arabic."

III. How local civil society could support and partner with the UN to improve community engagement in the spirit of building local ownership

1. Local civil society actors should use their local knowledge, experience, relevant peacebuilding networks, community-specific contexts, tradition and cultural insights. In this regard, local academic partners could also provide significant inputs to community-context conflict analysis.
2. Civil society should not look at the UN only as a donor or funder, but as an equal partner. This would also help to better manage expectations of the UN by target communities.
3. While the UN should be more sensitized to the community context including language-friendly materials, civil society also has a role to play by supporting the translation of advocacy and communication materials and interpretation during community consultations.
4. Local civil society could lead on hosting regular community gatherings to develop and share an agreed understanding of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, share information and training on conflict-sensitive peacebuilding, reflect on previous or existing UN engagements and identify community needs and gap areas which could be supported by local resources or other funding/project opportunities.
5. Local civil society should also be held accountable for open communication, trust, mutual respect and with other civil society actors and the UN.

“In the **Cambodia** context, there had not been much practical engagement between civil society and the UN related to peacebuilding in the past. We recently just participated in Cambodia’s first annual dialogue workshop on 30-31 July 2019 on ‘Sustaining Peace between Civil Society and the United Nations in Cambodia (2019)’ which came out of the UN Community Engagement Guidelines consultations. It is great to see that the guidelines are already helping to make some positive change in Cambodia-UN’s relationship with local civil society, but this is only the first step. During our workshop, we came up with a few commitments, including to make this an annual dialogue. But we still need to discuss the bigger challenges of small-scale funding and transporting community peacebuilders to Phnom Penh every year. Still, it is very good and hopeful to have an opportunity or mechanism to communicate. We are all excited for this opportunity.”

– **Cambodia**

Jane Waithitu



“Conflict root causes contribute to people’s grievances and can only be best understood by those on the ground. Some are structural and others are proximate. In my country Kenya, UN needs to work closely with CSOs that are based in the community and live in the community and to have the buy-in of the communities. Let us engage the community-based actors in discussion surrounding what needs to be addressed rather than UN telling them to write a proposal on a particular theme without understanding the context. Peace triggers in the communities need to be addressed using homegrown methods and solutions that we all are familiar with. In case of procurement of any goods or services, the community members dealing with such need to be given first priority in terms of needs and preferences.”

Maame Adwoa Birago



“For the UN to operationalize a system-wide approach for engaging the communities, first of all, there should be strong involvement of the CSOs who reside in the local communities. Small and flexible funding should be disbursed to support CSOs to continue to serve as agents of peace to enforce the ideas of the UN and CSOs together. Another thing is that the activities of UN should be centered at the local level through a bottom-up approach, also meaning both the educated *and* non-educated should participate in community engagement.”