

## **Women's participation in peace processes: why it matters**

Achieving gender equality is a goal in itself. But it is also crucial for us to reach other goals, such as peace, security and sustainable development.

### **Women's participation benefits peace**

Including women in the work for peace is both smart and right. When women participate in peace processes, opportunities for countering sexual issues, democratization, gender equality and humanitarian efforts are raised during negotiations. The results can promote political change that favors the sustainable development of a society. Thus, women's participation in peace processes is beneficial for peace and constitutes an added value to negotiations and their outcome.

### **Is there a connection between equality and peace?**

Countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women have full and equal rights and opportunities. Furthermore, the denial of women's rights can be an early sign of future conflict and instability. There is thus a connection between gender equality and peace, confirmed by Georgetown University in the USA, which is one of the world's most prominent universities regarding the women, peace and security agenda.

### **Equality can improve other relationships in a society**

It can be stated that a society characterized by equality is based on norms where men and women treat each other with respect and without prejudice. The relationship between men and women is so fundamental in a society that the norms that regulate this relationship can also become a basis for other relationships in society.

## **Research on women's participation**

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A study discussed in the article "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace" has, with the help of statistical analyses, demonstrated a connection between women's participation in peace negotiations and the duration of peace.

The study defines women's participation as women acting as signatories, i.e., those who sign an agreement, to make sure that the women's participation was of importance to the negotiations themselves. The study analyzed 130 agreements signed between 1990-2014, found in Uppsala's conflict database. Out of 130 agreements, only 13 were signed by women. However, despite this low number, the statistical analysis showed a clear connection between women as signatories and the duration of peace.

The analysis also indicated that it is not exclusively the duration of peace which is affected by the inclusion of women in peace processes, but the quality of the negotiated peace is affected as well. Meaning that when peace agreements are signed by women, they contain a higher number of provisions on broad political social reforms. These provisions have been implemented in practice to a greater extent 10 years after the agreement was concluded.

The study states that women who sign agreements during peace negotiations often collaborate with women's organizations who try to push the process forward towards an agreement. Researchers believe that this collaboration between women has a positive impact on the content and on the implementation of an agreement. As both content and implementation are considered the most important factors for whether peace will last, these collaborations are seen as especially essential.

The study suggests that collaborations between women signatories and civil society's women's organizations influence factors that can have a positive impact on sustainable peace.