Summary of Panel 27: Peace Mediation and Local Ownership - How can one Reinforce the Other?

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Attitude, Posture and Assumptions required among peace mediators to foster local ownership

- Adopting a humble posture is essential and comes with the premise that solutions and answers to conflict situations faced within a local context can only emerge through the voices, experiences and perspectives of local populations.
- Dichotomous assumptions about "us" and "them" need to give way to inclusive assumptions that foster a collaborative frame of engagement among mediators and local stakeholders.
- Viewing local populations as endowed with capacity, as key protagonists in peace processes and as drivers of their own peace process.
- Given that no society has, as of yet, fully established the necessary conditions, frameworks and structures for attaining positive peace, the assumption is that every culture has the potential to explore, learn about, and develop its own societal framework for fostering and sustaining peace.

What does local ownership entail and how does one nurture it?

- It is important to read the reality of a local context. This involves:
  - Mapping the existing local capacities for peace (e.g. community spaces, traditions, and inclusive mechanisms that can foster social cohesion within and among groups)
  - Identifying the root causes of conflicts and tensions, including structural causes (e.g. grievances) as well as cultural violence (e.g. discriminatory, dichotomous and divisive worldviews, cultural norms, etc.)
  - Inclusive mapping of actors that are potential key protagonists that are representative of diverse populations and specific groups (i.e. youth, women, social service providers, etc.). This would include informal/community and formal actors, civil society, media, etc.
  - Giving particular attention to the role, participation and constructive engagement of youth in the process of peacebuilding and tapping into their powers of imagination and influence as well as their vision of peace and a joint future.

- Reinforcing existing community spaces that can foster social cohesion and constructive engagement.
    - Tapping into any community space, across sectors, that can be reinforced to build cohesion (e.g. water, education, etc.)

- Putting in place, at the grassroots, inclusive consultative processes to ensure an ongoing reading of the local reality and for actions to ensue from within the local populations.
    - Adjusting work plans to reflect the need to initially read the reality of a context with local stakeholders, in the initial preparation phase; and creating ongoing inclusive consultative spaces, at the local level, for decision making, action and reflection (iterative process).
    - Being more closely connected with local populations and remaining agile and flexible to the evolving local reality.
    - These inclusive consultative mechanisms need to provide a space for local stakeholders, representing diverse identity groups, to identify entry points for joint actions to be taken, thereby further transforming relationships and fostering horizontal social cohesion at the community level. At the same time, spaces for consultation involving authorities at various levels and local actors will allow for vertical social cohesion to emerge.