

Case Studies on Women and Young Women of Faith Mediators

Women and Young Women of Faith Mediators

The Peace and Security Working Group together with the Gender Working Group of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC) strongly affirm the role of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution as envisioned in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSC 1325). On the 25th anniversary of the UNSC 1325, the two working groups held the event, “A Common Pledge: Advancing the Unique Role of Women and Young Women of Faith Mediators,” showcasing examples and good practice from women and young women of faith who have been engaged in mediation in different contexts across the world.

The main objective of this initiative is to share good practices, challenges and to profile women and young women of faith directly involved in conflict mediation at different levels. The case studies have been compiled into a publication to inform advocacy within the two working groups, the wider MFAC and beyond.

Faith-based networks, organizations and individuals from all regions of the world are invited to submit case studies of women and young women of faith mediators.

Key Takeaways from Case Studies

Challenges:

Main challenges women and young women of faith mediators face in peace mediation processes:

- Prejudices, mistrust and preconceived ideas regarding other faith traditions;
- Bias against women as leaders for mediations, dialogue, and in the community. Entrenched patriarchal ideals further women’s discrimination;
- Lack of resources (financial, time, recognition, transportation);
- Age and adult centrism for young women;
- Re-escalation of violence in certain areas; and
- Pushback to women’s rights.

Needs:

In order to further women and young women of faith as mediators in the peace mediation processes, the following needs are addressed:

- Financial resources;
- Capacity-sharing and training;
- Better data collection; and
- Access to women and young women of faith peace mediator networks.

Lessons Learned:

- Women's inclusion strengthens peace outcomes: having women involved in peace mediation leads to greater success and empathy and brings life-centered solutions. Success has also been found in the creation of women's peace networks. Women-led mediation must continue to be supported in order for peace avenues to thrive.
- Find allies and partnerships: partnering with male allies, government and civil society, as well as buy-in from religious and faith leaders and institutions is crucial to the success of women in interventions.
- Grassroots actors and local solutions are key to successful, sustained interventions in peace processes.
- Recommitment to long-term and flexible resources is needed to be able to continue to support interventions and peace processes.
- Addressing psychosocial needs is necessary and improves impact and results of mediation.
- Economic empowerment is effective and essential as an entry point for peacebuilding and to give a voice to women.

Recommendations:

- Advance and recognize women and young women of faith's leadership and inclusion in peace and security processes.
- Contribute more robust and sustained resources (financial, research, infrastructure) to support women and young women of faith peace mediators.
- Commit to supporting grassroots efforts among women and young women of faith mediators in peace processes.
- Recognize and work to combat the pushback to women's rights, entrenched patriarchal norms and ideas, and biases against women which negatively impact women and young women of faith's roles in the peace processes and society at large.
- Strengthen women's rights and roles in society and forge allieships and partnerships, especially among male faith allies, to support women and young women of faith's entry and outreach as peace mediators.
- Educate and build trust to dismantle prejudices, biases and mistrust against external religious communities to strengthen intercommunal relationships and recommit to interfaith dialogue and intercultural understanding.

The Peace & Security Working Group (P&S WG) is a thematic group within the Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC) to the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (IATF-Religion). It aims to harness the expertise of faith-based actors to address the evolving global challenges related to peace, security, and human dignity.

The P&S WG is mandated to analyze and prioritize current peace and security challenges from a multi-faith perspective; develop and recommend collaborative responses to these challenges in consultation with UN partners and other MFAC working groups; and support advocacy efforts and policy engagement with UN bodies and other key actors to integrate faith perspectives into peace and security frameworks.

The Gender Working Group (Gender WG) focuses on the empowerment and intersectionality of women and girls and is currently composed of 16 organizations. The main objective of the Gender WG is to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond, ensuring that advancements in human rights are viewed through the lens of gender justice. This group also plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between the UN and faith-based organizations (FBOs), helping the UN understand how religion and religious beliefs influence its pillars, especially Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). You can learn more about the MFAC Gender WG and the intersection of faith and gender [here](#).