



Photo by Anadolu Agency / Getty Images.

Annual Report 2020:
**Coordinated Civil Society Action
Towards Building Forward Better
from COVID-19**



**CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM**
FOR PEACEBUILDING
AND STATEBUILDING



CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM
FOR PEACEBUILDING
AND STATEBUILDING

Annual Report 2020:

**Coordinated Civil Society Action Towards Building
Forward Better from COVID-19**

CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	7
1. About CSPPS	9
Who We Are, What We Do, and Our Strategy	9
Why We Stand out	10
How the Platform Works	11
2. CSPPS in the World in 2020	12
3. Introduction	14
4. Network	16
Networking in 2020	16
CSPPS Annual Conference 2020	17
Close Up: CSPPS Networking in 2020	18
Member Case Story – Sierra Leone	19
5. Amplify	23
Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace	23
Member Case Story - Cameroon	26
Member Case Story - Yemen	29
6. Lobby	32
Lobbying in 2020	32
CSPPS Coordinated Response to Support Local Action during COVID-19	32
IDPS Joint Statement on Safeguarding Peace during the COVID-19 Pandemic	33
Member Case Story - Global	34
7. 2020 Main Outreach Activities	36
8. Overview of CSPPS Project Support in 2020	37
9. Strategic Outlook 2021	39

You can find **Member Case Stories** at the following pages: 19-21, 26-28, 29-30, 34-35.

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2020 Annual Report of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS).

The year 2020 posed unprecedented challenges beyond the Platform's expectations; The fundamental pillars of its lobby and advocacy work, the cornerstones of our efforts to strengthen the voice and capacity of civil society through coordinated action, were entirely shifted to an online and virtual format. The work of our Country Teams on the ground was affected, with both new and exacerbated pre-existing issues brought to the fore. In the face of these challenges, the culmination of the entire Platform's continued hard work and efforts have been gathered in this report, which we hope is able to showcase their key learnings, experiences, and achievements. In the publication of this report, we thank our members and partners for their valuable contributions, and for their continued hard work and resilience.

2020 also marked a special moment for CSPPS, as it was the last year of the 2-year operational grant awarded by the European Commission, EU/DEVCO. The work of the Platform in 2020 was made possible thanks to the kind support and funding provided by EU/DEVCO, which has been of immense support in navigating the turbulent months of the pandemic and in achieving the milestones and successes of the Platform and its members presented in this report. With their assistance, CSPPS was able to identify new ways of working in a time of shrinking civic space, travel restrictions, and

heightened insecurity, and their support enabled CSPPS to effectively respond to the newly identified challenges faced by its members and to optimise meaningful civil society engagement in various policy processes, such as SDG16+.

2020 has brought into even sharper focus the importance of collaborative efforts towards the realisation of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. It is with this in mind that the Platform remains committed to our core mission to strengthen the voice and capacity of civil society in peacebuilding and statebuilding processes, and of working in polyilateral partnerships towards crisis prevention and truly sustainable peace and development across the globe. We would like to again express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the generous support received, and for the continued collaboration with all CSPPS partners in context of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) and beyond.

On behalf of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding,



Peter van Sluijs

Coordinator of the CSPPS Secretariat and member of the CSPPS Executive Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2020 was a pivotal and unprecedented year for CSPPS. Not only did it mark the end of the 3-year long operational grant kindly provided by EU DEVCO, but the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic forced the Platform's work almost entirely online, and saw the emergence of new and exacerbated inequalities and increased threats to peace and security.

As such, at the Platform level, a large part of 2020 was dedicated to recalibrating and refocusing our efforts towards navigating a new way of working and to see how to respond to the newly emerging obstacles threatening the work of civil society. This was done to a large extent through intensified consultations with our members, conducting a series of interviews, and writing of articles, culminating in our report "Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace – What Local Peacebuilders say about COVID-19, Civic Space, Fragility and Drivers of Conflict". It also required adopting flexible and novel approaches to our work, taking our lobby and advocacy work outside of face-to-face meetings and conference rooms, and onto Teams, Zoom, and Webex.

Beyond finding new ways of conducting the work of CSPPS, the funding provided by the EU/DEVCO grant was also allocated towards several COVID-19 response projects in our member countries. In total, the Platform supported the implementation of 12 projects across 11 of our member countries, supporting their work in addressing the varied impacts of COVID-19 in their contexts.

As such, the focus of 2020 emphasised more on the consolidation of our network and ensuring our Country Teams were able to conduct their peacebuilding and statebuilding activities in spite of the COVID-19 restrictive measures.

In order to raise the voice of civil society, the Platform spearheaded, co-hosted, and participated in key sessions, round table meetings, and side-event debates in events such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the SDG16+ Forum, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, the Rome SDG16 Conference, the SIPRI Forum on Peace and Development, and many other crucial events within the field of peacebuilding.

Furthermore, CSPPS initiated meaningful and inclusive participation of civil society in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) in 2020 as follow-up to the work conducted in 2019, as well as the process leading up to the 2020 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The 'Ready for Review' project, which was co-funded by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, enabled the contribution of national and local CSOs, especially those youth- and women-led, to the consultation and validation stages of the VNR process in countries such as Burundi, CAR, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Libya, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste through awareness-raising and capacity-strengthening workshops, and the publication of spotlight reports. 2020 saw many of these countries continue their work in this regard, through their participation in their countries' regional consultations on the VNR.

The year 2020 culminated in our Annual CSPPS Conference, which – as opposed to previous years, where CSPPS members would travel from across the world to convene and reflect on the past year – was held over Zoom. Over 100 participants joined this call, with members of our CSPPS country teams, focal points from our network of international and Global North-based organisations, representatives from the EU, and other key partners and stakeholders joining the discussion.

Throughout this Annual Report, Platform members deliver engaging testimonies of the kind of work they do in the context of CSPPS and the IDPS. Based on practical examples and initiatives, these 'Member Case Stories' shed light on how the mission of the Platform materialises in the local, national, and international realms of peacebuilding.

Finally, the final section of this report provides a glimpse of what awaits CSPPS in 2021 and beyond, such as engagement in the [2021 High-level Political Forum](#), participation in the [Just Future Strategic Partnership](#), and continued advocacy for the inclusion of SDG16+ in the global COVID-19 response towards building forward better after the pandemic.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAR	-	Central African Republic
CAP	-	Civil Alliance for Peace
CG	-	CSPPS Core Group
CNOSC	-	Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for the New Deal
CSDEA	-	Sustainable Development and Education in Africa
CSP	-	Conducive Space for Peace
CSW	-	Commission on the Status of Women
Cordaid	-	Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Assistance
CS	-	Civil Society
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
CSPPS	-	Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
CT	-	(CSPPS) Country Team
DAC	-	Development Assistance Committee
DEVCO	-	The European Commission's DG International Cooperation & Development
DIHR	-	The Danish Institute for Human Rights
DRC	-	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	-	(CSPPS) Executive Committee
EU	-	European Union
FCAS	-	Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
FOCUS	-	FOCUS Principles : Country led pathways out of fragility
FPO	-	(CSPPS) Focal Point Organisation
HE	-	His/Her Excellency
(S)GBV	-	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
GPPAC	-	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
g7+	-	Governments from fragile and conflict-affected countries
HLPF	-	High-Level Political Forum
IDPS	-	International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
INCAF	-	OECD International Network on Conflict and Fragility
INGO	-	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPI	-	International Peace Institute
ND	-	New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States
ODDI	-	Organisation pour le Développement Durable et Intégrée de la Guinée
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSG	-	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
QUONO	-	Quaker United Nations Office
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
SDG16+	-	Sustainable Development Goal 16+
SIPRI	-	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SFCG	-	Search for Common Ground
TAP	-	Transparency, Accountability and Participation Network
TWM	-	Tamazight Women's Movement
TRUST	-	TRUST Principles : Commitment for results
UN	-	United Nations
UNSCR1325	-	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNOY	-	United Network of Young Peacebuilders
UNSC	-	United Nations Security Council

VNR - Voluntary National Review
WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASH-Net The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Network of Sierra Leone
WFUNA World Federation of United Nations Associations
YPS - Youth, Peace and Security
YWBOD- Youth Without Borders Organisation for Development WASH-Net The Water,

About CSPPS



WHO WE ARE

- **OUR IDENTITY:** The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is a member-led international network composed of civil society actors, practitioners, experts, and academics from the Global South and Global North who work together on conflict and crisis prevention, peacebuilding, and statebuilding in over 27 fragile and conflict-affected States (FCAS).
- **OUR VISION:** At CSPPS, we strive for international collaboration that brings sustainable peace and inclusive development for all.

WHAT WE DO

- **OUR MISSION:** Our mission is to strengthen the voice and capacity of society to effectively engage in, and influence, peacebuilding and statebuilding as a critical contribution to crisis prevention and sustainable peace and development for all.
- **OUR THEORY OF CHANGE:** If we shape and influence global and national structures and processes to address sources of destructive conflict and to build resilience, then countries and their citizens will be less likely to resort to violent conflict because they will have the means to manage their

grievances and build the quality of their lives.

- **OUR OBJECTIVES:**
 - Strengthening and broadening civil society engagement and inclusion in peacebuilding, statebuilding, and crisis prevention.
 - Influencing prevention, peacebuilding, statebuilding, and development policies at all levels.
 - Shaping and infusing the IDPS, the SDGs, and humanitarian processes with peacebuilding values.

OUR STRATEGY

- **NETWORK:** Direct engagement, monitoring, and advocacy towards New Deal implementation and policy in line with the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals, FOCUS, and TRUST principles. Enlargement of the CSPPS Network by engaging potential new civil society partners and provision of support to establish vibrant civil society focal points and country teams in g7+ countries.
- **AMPLIFY:** Consolidation and strengthening of civil society coalitions through ongoing capacity development and technical support to achieve this. Funding activities and projects that meet the critical needs of the Platform's diverse and vibrant constituency and ensuring civil society engagement at all levels of the IDPS process and the 2030 Agenda.
- **LOBBY:** Continued advocacy at the global IDPS level for the respect and acknowledgement of peacebuilding values and principles, notably inclusive processes at all levels. Focus on addressing the root drivers of conflict, fragility, and resilience in the development of fragility assessments

and indicators, and in the inclusive and integrated design and implementation of New Deal Compacts.

WHY WE STAND OUT

- **A FOCUS ON CIVIL SOCIETY:** Over the last few years, peacebuilding and statebuilding initiatives and programmes have increasingly given support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), thus echoing the growing importance of these groups in development cooperation, as well as recognising their role in both the domestic and international arenas. This is a trend particularly present in societies transitioning from warring to peaceful, just, and inclusive societies which we fully support and of which we are a part.
- **LINKING THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH:** CSPPS is a global network of civil society organisations, as well as individual practitioners, experts, and academics from both the Global South and the Global North. We strive to foster ongoing dialogue, joint learning, and cross-fertilization between the two spheres on emerging trends and key policy issues.
- **PART OF THE UNIQUE IDPS STRUCTURE:** CSPPS is part of a larger architecture called the [International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding \(IDPS\)](#). What is unique about the International Dialogue in today's peacebuilding environment is its tripartite structure which gathers

around the table government representatives from fragile states, international donors and civil society. The International Dialogue provides a formalised space within which civil society can voice its concerns on crucial aspects and topical issues of the peacebuilding agenda.

- **TAKING ACTION ON SDG16+ WORKING WITH NEW DEAL PRINCIPLES:** CSPPS tackles the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the prism of SDG16+](#). Specifically, on grounding the SDG16+ into local context through meaningful consultations with civil society and authorities to determine priority areas for action, and localising SDG16+ with governments to catalyse more inclusive, national development processes and programming aligned with SDG16+ targets and enable continuous multi-stakeholder dialogues. The [New Deal principles](#) (Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals, FOCUS and TRUST)¹ guide the actions of CSPPS members on SDG16+. It is worth noting that a number of European Ministries of Foreign Affairs have referred to the New Deal principles in their guiding national policy documents (e.g. France) or have incorporated the principles into their international development aid policy approaches (e.g. Germany and Switzerland).

¹ The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States is a landmark global policy agreement. Through the New Deal, development partners committed to supporting nationally-owned and led development plans and greater aid effectiveness in fragile situations (the TRUST principles), and g7+

governments committed to inclusive planning processes, grounded in context (the FOCUS principles). Both parties committed to pursuing the five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs): legitimate politics, justice, security, revenue and services and economic foundations.

HOW THE PLATFORM WORKS

WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS – or “the Platform”) coordinates and supports civil society participation in **the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS)**. The IDPS is an inclusive partnership that facilitates joint learning, action, and mutual accountability for inclusive and effective peacebuilding between donors, governments from fragile and conflict-affected countries (g7+), and civil society (CSPPS). The International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) is a network of OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and key multilateral agencies working in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The g7+ is a voluntary association of countries that are, or have been, affected by conflict and are now transitioning to the next stage of development.

This inclusive tripartite partnership brokered the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The New Deal (ND) aims to end piecemeal solutions by promoting a comprehensive framework for coherent action to help countries transition out of fragility and conflict. At the heart of the New Deal lie the New Deal principles (PSGs, FOCUS, and TRUST), which guide the actions of the three IDPS constituencies to tackle the challenges and deliver on the goals related to SDG16+.

In 2019, the IDPS mandate was translated into a revised and recalibrated strategy: the IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision. CSPPS has actively contributed to the finalisation of this IDPS Peace Vision, which articulates how the partnership and its constituencies will strengthen collective action on international, regional, and local peacebuilding.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE

At its core, our network hosts coalitions of CSOs within g7+ countries and beyond that are impacted by manifested fragility, conflict, and violence. At the country level, these coalitions are coordinated by a **Focal Point Organisation (FPO)**. As part of CSPPS, FPOs convene local civil society coalitions into CSPPS **Country Teams (CTs)**, and thereby provide analysis, conduct advocacy work, coordinate activities (e.g. capacity building, awareness-raising, and media outreach) in their home countries, and help civil society actors participate in meetings with both governmental as well as donor stakeholders.

The **Core Group (CG)** is the main membership forum within the CSPPS where engagement and leadership in peacebuilding processes are discussed and decided. The CG is made up of designated representatives from FPOs, CSPPS members, and international experts. Functioning as a subset of the membership, the elected **Executive Committee (EC)**, among other responsibilities, assists the Secretariat in day-to-day decision-making and provides guidance and advice on the Platform’s issues and priorities, as well as reviews the use of the CSPPS budget.

The **Secretariat** facilitates the functioning of the Core Group and the Executive Committee and the participation of civil society participation in IDPS events. It furthermore generates and disseminates information about our members’ activities.

Together, the Core Group, the Executive Committee, and the Secretariat work to amplify the voice of civil society (CS), to strengthen the network of CS working on peacebuilding, and to ensure that CSOs are included and participate as principal agents of change – rather than merely as recipients or evaluators – within the IDPS and related peacebuilding policy-making arenas. Our goal is to ensure that civil society is broadly and meaningfully represented in nationally owned processes.

CSPPS IN THE WORLD IN 2020

By the end of 2020, CSPPS had consolidated its presence in 19 out of 20 g7+ countries either in the form of Country Teams, Focal Point Organisations, or contact persons. These countries are Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Yemen.

In addition, CSPPS consolidated its presence in eight non-g7+ countries which present similar dimensions of fragility: Cameroon, Ghana, Libya, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Zimbabwe, and India.

Finally, the Platform comprises INGO members based in eight Northern countries, namely Australia (Peacifica), Belgium (SFCG), Denmark (RIKO, Conductive Space for Peace), Germany (FriEnt and World Vision Intl), the United Kingdom (Integrity Action, Conciliation Resources, Saferworld, International Alert), the United States (Alliance for Peacebuilding, CDA, International Budget Partnership, SFCG, Interpeace), Switzerland (Swisspeace), and the Netherlands (Cordaid, GPPAC, Oxfam Novib, UNOY, SEMA). The CSPPS entire membership to date has over 800 civil society organizations under its structure.

19

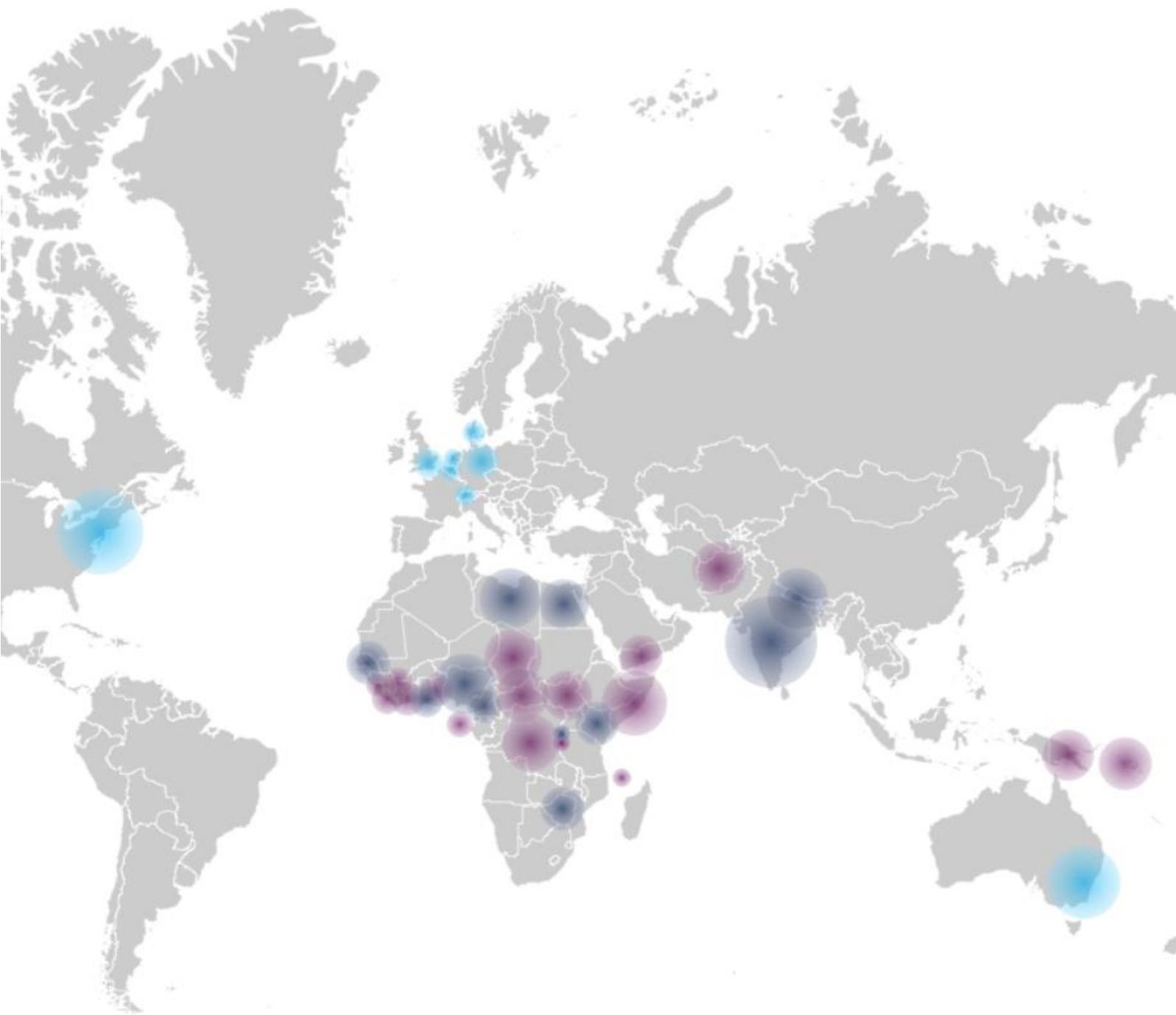
g7+ CSO Country
Teams

9

Non-g7+ CSO
Country Teams
and Individual
Contacts

8

20 INGO
members based in
8 partner
countries



INTRODUCTION

In 2020, CSPPS has steadily consolidated and professionalised its network. The support given by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (EU/DEVCO) has enabled it to grow, creating greater inclusiveness and scale to achieve the Platform's goals. This report details information about and analysis of the implementation of CSPPS' activities in 2020, and serves as a baseline for the activities planned for 2021.

The COVID-19 crisis has generated a complex system of measures and restrictions in many – if not all – of the countries where the Platform is active. COVID-19 had direct implications for our 2020 work plan, and other activities that were foreseen in relation to in-country support activities. This prompted us to consider alternative options in order to pursue this line of work and to bring the network and our members together. The European Commission's support allowed the Platform to finance and support the implementation of a series of projects in response to COVID-19, responding to the most crucial needs identified by our member's in-country such as rises in gender-based violence (GBV), access to water, sanitation, and health (WASH), and combating the spread of misinformation.

The European Commission's support has also enabled CSPPS to sustain and expand upon its work, ensuring that civil society contributes meaningfully to relevant national and international peacebuilding and statebuilding policy processes, to partner with the EU globally and with EU delegations in fragile states to drive implementation of the EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society and to liaise and work with EU delegations to safeguard and solidify the role of civil society in conflict prevention and sustaining peace at country level.

Our activities were implemented flexibly, responding to new challenges, opportunities, and ideas as they emerged, while still striving to advance our initial plans and objectives.

NETWORK

Coordination of Concerted Civil Society Action in the Context of the IDPS and related Policy Domains

Over the course of 2020, CSPPS has continued its work to fulfil our Network Objective. This gets at the heart of what the Platform is about in a variety of ways, from renovating internal mechanisms to enabling Country Teams to carry out targeted projects.

These disparate activities are linked by our commitment to strengthen civil societies at the national and international levels in two ways. Firstly, by enhancing in-country capacity and coordination through our Focal Points and Country Teams. Secondly, by jointly advocating for an inclusive, whole-of-society approach to peacebuilding at international fora, from the IDPS to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

Among our main activities under this branch of our work, we have facilitated 12 projects in 11 countries aimed at building peace in accordance with IDPS/New Deal principles and SDG16+, all in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, while enhancing the capacities, experience, and convening power of our Country Teams. We have enabled numerous country Focal Points and their colleagues to participate in international trainings and debates, and we have served as a mechanism for the exchange of expertise and best practices amongst civil society activists from different countries who would otherwise operate in parallel rather than in concert.

We have, moreover, established a presence in several new countries, namely Cameroon, Papua New Guinea, Libya, and Uganda, and have intensified our presence in Togo and in Yemen. Lastly, aspects of our internal administration to improve communication and coordination across the Platform have also been revamped.

Networking in 2020

We are a proud member-led South-North non-governmental coalition of peacebuilding organizations. Our Platform comprises representatives from around the globe and engages with grassroots civil society organisations affected by manifestations of fragility, conflict, and violence, and 8 international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) based in the global North. As a first step towards developing and strengthening the voice and capacity of our local partners, the Platform's key focus is to invest in further consolidating and expanding its membership.

The unique and heightened challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic called for concerted action at the country level to respond to the direct and indirect impacts of coronavirus, culminating in the implementation of 12 projects in 11 countries by our partners.

These projects aimed at building peace while simultaneously mitigating the spread and the impact of COVID-19 - in accordance with IDPS/New Deal principles, SDG16+, and the three areas of the IDPS Peace Vision (national cohesion, gender equality, and peace-promoting private sector engagement). While doing so, the projects also served to enhance the capacities, experience, and convening power of our Country Teams.

As the world shifted to an online working environment, we enabled numerous country Focal Points and their colleagues to participate in international (virtual) trainings and debates. A key pillar of CSPPS' work involves amplifying the capacities of civil society to influence peacebuilding processes at all levels, from local governments to international fora. Over the course of 2020, we have sought to mainstream the aims of this objective throughout all our activities, in order to ensure that in all we do with our CSO members we provide tools, know-how, and entry points to strengthen their hand in ensuring that peace is built on an inclusive basis. CSPPS strengthened its network and strategic alliances through consolidating its partnerships through the Global SDG16+ community.

Worth highlighting in our networking activities in 2020 are the twelve projects we have facilitated in eleven countries and the Institutional Supports Grants we distributed to thirteen Country Teams, as well as a new comprehensive report on the lived experiences of local peacebuilders as they face COVID-19 and its consequences. CSPPS also ensured the involvement and meaningful participation of its membership in meetings organised in the context of the IDPS. These IDPS informal country-level discussions organised in response to COVID-19 allowed for cross-constituency dialogues between members at the country level.

This drive to strengthen relationships and facilitate cross-learning between our members and stakeholders culminated in the CSPPS annual conference, which was held virtually this year and took the thematic focus "COVID-19: Civic Space in Crisis - Polyilateral Partnerships in times of a Pandemic".

CSPPS Annual Conference 2020 - "COVID-19: Civic Space in Crisis - Polyilateral Partnerships in times of a Pandemic"

The 2020 Annual Conference aimed to allow for in-depth discussion, reflection, and knowledge-sharing amongst EU, g7+, and INCAF (IDPS partnership) representatives, as well as the wider CSPPS membership. The conference featured eminent speakers such as Mrs. Marlene Holzner, EU/DEVCO Head of Unit Civil Society and Foundations; HE Abdul Habib Zadran, Deputy Minister for Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Deputy Chair of the g7+; and Mrs. Gwyneth Kutz, Director General, Peace and Stabilization of Global Affairs Canada, representing INCAF and Canada as co-chair of the IDPS, among many others.

The two-day conference nurtured rich discussions that touched upon many different issues around the threat of COVID-19 to peace and conflict contexts, global multilateralism and polyilateralism, as well as to peacebuilding work and the progress on the SDGs. Representatives from CSPPS member organisations reported inspiring accounts on how they had been able to carve out space for civil society in their respective contexts and to work with government, using evidence-based advocacy and making themselves relevant partners among other things, although civil society clearly continues to face difficult challenges.

This meeting illustrated the power of polyilateral partnerships in pursuing a resilient recovery from COVID-19 and building forward better. As a Platform, CSPPS sees a role in contributing to the implementation and monitoring of work that is ongoing in different frameworks that contribute to harmonizing different approaches, such as the Triple Nexus, and in general in advancing the potential and catalytic effect of polyilateral partnerships.



Close Up: CSPPS Networking in 2020 – Some Main Takeaways

- CSPPS ensured the meaningful participation of its membership in meetings organized in context of the IDPS, allowing for cross-constituency dialogues between members at the country-level in response to COVID-19.
- We ensured regular interactions between our EC and CG members through meetings, cross-border collaboration, and workshops regarding our involvement in the TAP Network.
- Throughout 2020, the CSPPS Coordinator functioned as the Co-chair of the TAP Steering Committee (Transparency, Accountability, and Participation Network). TAP is a broad international coalition of civil society organisations working together to advance SDG16+ and to enhance accountability for the 2030 Agenda. In joining the TAP Network Steering Committee, CSPPS aims to support efforts to bring about greater interaction between individual TAP Network members and proactively seek new strategic coalitions to be built at regional and international levels, in order to enhance policy influencing impact and to catalyse new innovative programming ideas.
- On the 14th of July, the CSPPS Secretariat co-hosted the side-event “Accelerating SDG16+ action to restore human well-being and build back better” at the 2020 HLPF. During this event, a joint statement from CSPPS, TAP Network, Pathfinders, WFUNA, and Global Alliance was launched. This demands that the international community and leaders everywhere increase global support of peace, justice, inclusion, and strong institutions in the midst of the pandemic, reinforcing the commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development goals – with SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) as the keystone. Over 100 organisations across 42 countries endorsed this call for accelerated action, investment, and resources to make peace, justice, and inclusion the foundation for reset and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a global and diverse group, we have come together in solidarity to offer a platform for building more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies for all.



MEMBER CASE STORY



Project “Enhancing Community-Based Strategies to Roll Back the Spread and Effects of COVID-19”

31 December 2020

By Musa Ansumana Soko (WASH-Net), Sierra Leone

Project Description

In 2020, the project “Enhancing Community-Based Strategies to Roll Back the Spread and effects of COVID-19” was implemented across three regions in Sierra Leone. Implemented and facilitated by WASH-Net, the project was jointly delivered with key members of the Sierra Leone CSPPS Country Team as well as other institutions that are directly responding and with clear experiences working across the targeted areas of conflict prevention, community education, and stakeholder engagements. This project aimed to advance a clear vision, strategic priorities and policies, and practical recommendations for deepening citizens’ voices, strengthening awareness around the COVID-19 emergency, and spotlighting critical conflict-sensitivities affecting the wider response efforts around national cohesion, as well as state-society relationships. Taking place in the context of the New Deal for engagement in fragile states, the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, and the Sustainable Development Goals, the project was designed on the basis of creating a nexus between the current COVID-19 pandemic and the SDGs, primarily SDG16+.

Testimony

The project served as a unique and bold opportunity to build the local response capacity of security personnel (Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, the Sierra Leone Police - Operational Support Division (OSD), and respective security structures at the district level). It provided the tools and knowledge required to implement a more conflict-sensitive COVID-19 enforcement on the one hand, as well as deepening a conflict prevention and security dimension in the current COVID-19 response from a CSO-led intervention. It did so by raising awareness of the key issues; monitoring and tracking conflict sensitivities and reporting them with concrete recommendations for action. The project deepened civil engagement by ensuring that communities are at the heart of the response drive while using key monitoring outcomes to inform and shape national CSO advocacy with the government. This contributed to making the in-country CSO response even more effective, sharing the learning that emanates from the implementation and related national response processes.

The aim of the project was to build on some of the most critical realities that remained unaddressed in the response by the government and other partners, such as conflict sensitivity, panic management, and improved community-level coordination.

The project's target of vulnerable populations underpinned the IDPS strategy on the one hand, while also addressing CSPPS' coherent approach to deepening inclusivity and voices of civil society for emboldened actions at the country level in response to COVID-19.

While other critical social needs were hard to access by the majority of the population, security and peacebuilding needs were areas that the project was able to closely address, in turn addressing the equally detrimental impacts. During the pandemic, the so-called 'pile-on effect' of interruptions to peaceful and conflict-sensitive responses held the risk of long-term implications — especially for the most vulnerable — if not for the interventions and timely support that the CSPPS provided to the Sierra Leone Country Team.

As part of the key lessons learned, the pandemic presents a unique opportunity for CSOs to strongly advance advocacy on policies and very critical

issues of governance, fragility and peacebuilding which had received less attention prior to the outbreak. The project interventions enhanced and solidified the relationships between civil society and government, in cases where the government had not concentrated its energy to support the COVID-19 response. There, CSOs could mobilize, provide the right skill set, highlight the key issues, and demand for commitments that place people and their communities first. Evidence of the stronger relationship between civil society and government was seen in the inaugural CSO-Government Dialogue Series in October 2020, a Forum well attended by over 30 government Ministries, Departments, Agencies and, most importantly, officially launched by the President and Vice President of Sierra Leone. This dialogue provided CSOs an opportunity to identify the most critical issues and design very concrete questions directed to the government for answers.

“Priority should be placed on building resilience, while addressing the major issues of fragility and breakdown in governance and state-society relationships.”

Musa Ansumana Soko,
CSPPS focal point
Sierra Leone



A workshop on conflict-sensitive security response to COVID-19 in Makeni, Sierra Leone. Credit: WASH-Net Sierra Leone.

AMPLIFY

Build capacity to amplify the voice of civil society in fragile and conflict-affected contexts

In 2020, CSPPS's second strategic objective "Amplify" has revolved around amplifying the capacities of civil societies to influence peacebuilding processes at all levels, and to ensure a conflict-sensitive response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the course of 2020, the main body of this work was to amplify the impacts of COVID-19 on the Platform's and its members' work, which we did through a series of interviews and consultative surveys with our membership. This, in combination with the publication of our Joint Statement and COVID-19 report, served to raise our digital voices to the global community and amplify our civil society member voices. Also worth highlighting under this objective are the 12 projects we have facilitated in 11 countries, which aimed to respond to the most pressing challenges as identified by our Country Teams.

Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace - What Local Peacebuilders say about COVID-19, Civic Space, Fragility and Drivers of Conflict

Over 2020, CSPPS has monitored the effects of COVID-19 on fragility, peace, and conflict, as well as the inclusion of civil society in the response to the pandemic and its side effects. In response to an in-depth survey across our membership, CSPPS supported the implementation of COVID-19-related response and recovery projects on the local level, which simultaneously worked towards peacebuilding and capacity strengthening in the long term. The focus of these projects ranged from awareness-raising and adequate communication regarding COVID-19 to facilitating civic space in political processes. The following 12 projects were supported in Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Guinea, Nigeria, Togo, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, Sierra Leone:

- In **Burundi**, the project "Special Campaign to stop COVID-19 in Burundi" was implemented. The campaign had two main objectives: (1) disseminating information, education, and communication on the COVID-19 pandemic; to this end, the Réseau

Femmes et Paix, supported by the Ministry of Health, provided experienced agents who helped with training community focal points to transmit accurate information on the pandemic. (2) Strengthening social cohesion and fighting against stigmatisation. The focal points adopted two approaches to these issues; informing community leaders both of the existence of national legal instruments relating to gender-based violence and the structures set up for the protection, and medical, psychological, and economic follow-up of victims.

- The project "Contributing to the combat against the spread of COVID-19 in the Central African Republic" was implemented in **CAR**. To combat the spread of the pandemic and to promote social peace, the National Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for the New Deal (CNOSC/New Deal) joined forces with the government and other national and international organisations. Led by member organisations with proven experience in these types of interventions, several awareness raising sessions were held in the project intervention zones. Awareness was raised through

campaign messages adapted to the specificities of each area and its population.

- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the project “Workshop to strengthen the capacity of the Country Team members on the New Deal process in DRC” was implemented. This three-day workshop strengthened the operational capacities of 30 DRC Country Team members on the New Deal (ND) principles, and on gender and youth inclusion in this process. The workshop focused on the efficient collection and processing of data related to the ND process, and on the importance of making state-society relationships a priority in the implementation of the ND and SDG16+.
- The project “National dialogue of civil society on the security situation in Cameroon and set up of the Country Team” was implemented in **Cameroon**. Association Rayons de Soleil organised a national civil society consultation on the impact of conflict and COVID-19 on vulnerable groups, with the participation of around 100 organisations. The consultation ended with a national workshop bringing together 25 civil society organisations. This project aimed to identify and develop strategies to strengthen civil society in the peace and security process in Cameroon, to popularise important texts relating to peace (particularly the New Deal, SDG 16+ and IDPS) among civil society organisations, to identify civil society organisations engaged in peacebuilding, and to develop a national civil society action plan to achieve the thematic priorities of the vision for peace in strengthening national cohesion.
- ODDI-GUINEE developed and implemented a project called “Support for Peaceful Coexistence and COVID-19 Prevention for Vulnerable Households in the Mining Prefectures of Boké, Boffa, Téliélé and Fria” in **Guinea Conakry**, aiming to prevent the spread of the pandemic in these prefectures. This project focused on outreach to households affected by domestic conflicts linked to lack of employment and the impossibility of coping with family burdens. Awareness-raising activities and support in the form of health kits and basic necessities enabled households to better understand the context of the pandemic.
- Two projects were implemented in **Nigeria**. The first project “Multi-Stakeholder Engagement to Implement the IDPS/New Deal/SDGs in Nigeria (Part 2)” engaged youth groups, members of the CSPPS CT, Civil Society, National and Local Government Officials, and International Organisations and Donors in two regional consultations to discuss the draft National Action Plan (NAP) on Youth Peace and Security (YPS). It facilitated contributions to strengthen the draft document, which led to a final draft that was subjected to a validation exercise in Abuja. The second national project “COVID-19: Preventing Conflict by Equipping Nigerian Communities with the Right Messages and Prevention Measures” educated and created awareness on COVID-19 and the linkages with the localisation of SDG16+ using mass media (six radio stations) talk shows. The project also published prevention and appropriate information on COVID-19 and linkages with SDG16+ in four national newspapers, targeting over 20 million Nigerians. After the project, online

meetings with CT members were conducted to reflect on the project and to plan joint advocacy to the Nigerian government to ensure that civil society is engaged in a holistic manner.

- The “Project for the appropriation of the concepts of the New Deal and the CSPPS principles by the member organisations of CSPPS-TOGO” was implemented in **Togo**. The main activity of this project was to hold a workshop to enable CSPPS-Togo member organisations to take ownership of the New Deal concept and the principles of CSPPS, organised by the CSPPS-Togo Coordination Committee. The workshop paved the way for future actions of the Country Team as it found allies among state actors.
- In **Yemen**, the project “Yemen Peace Voice II” enabled a CSO-coalition (CAP) to facilitate and implement advocacy campaigns to influence local, national, and international actors to implement the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and the IDPS Vision 2019-2021. The project built the capacities of CAP and its member CSOs on advocacy and then developed project proposals based on data collected from CAP and its members. It contributed to raising awareness among young men and women, community members and local authorities on SDG16+ through the advocacy campaign implemented by the CAP and its members through debates and media coverage.
- In **Libya**, the project “Civil Society Coalition to Supporting the Voluntary National Review in Libya” was implemented. This project aimed to ensure the inclusive involvement of civil society actors in the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Voluntary National Review process. It ensured the involvement and participation of 13 CSOs in understanding and participating in the process of writing VNR.

- The project “Enhancing the capacity of the Social Contract Secretariat to effectively amplify Somali CSOs’ efforts in peace-building, conflict resolution and state-building in line with SDG16+” was implemented in **Somalia**. The project sought to enhance local Somali CSOs’ engagement in peacebuilding and statebuilding processes with the aim to rebuild the social contract in Somalia.
- The project “Enhancing Community-Based Strategies to Roll Back the Spread and effects of COVID-19” was implemented across three regions in **Sierra Leone**. The project focused on advancing a clear vision, strategic priorities and policy, and practical recommendations for deepening citizens’ voices, strengthening awareness around the COVID-19 emergency, and spotlighting critical conflict-sensitivities affecting the wider response efforts around national cohesion.



Distribution of face masks by the CSPPS Country Team in Sierra Leone. Credit: WASH-Net Sierra Leone.

MEMBER CASE STORY



Policy Paper 'Gender-Based (Sexual) Violence in Cameroon: An unfolding crisis'

29 July 2020

By Fidèle Djebba (Rayons de Soleil), Cameroon

Policy Paper Description

In July 2020, a policy paper on Gender-Based Violence in Cameroon was published, in light of further implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, SDG16+, and the IDPS 2019-21 Peace Vision. The policy paper, titled "**Gender-Based (Sexual) Violence in Cameroon: An unfolding crisis**", brought this harrowing yet neglected situation to the fore. The paper was produced by CSPPS in partnership with its member in Cameroon, Association Rayons de Soleil. It urges the international community to proactively support and engage in dialogue, and to explore ways in which local organisations can be assisted in their fight against the rise of (S)GBV in Cameroon. The policy paper emphasises that women and girls in Cameroon need the wider international community's engagement to share best practices, to promote the topic of gender-based violence on the global political agenda, and to provide funds for the implementation of resulting - as well as existing - policies.

Testimony

Cameroon is confronted with enormous security challenges. The consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency since 2014 and the Anglophone Crisis in 2016 have seen increasing violence and the death of thousands of innocent people. Despite being heavily affected, Cameroon has been receiving little media coverage and does not hold the attention of the international community. For the second year, Cameroon tops the list of the most neglected crisis on the planet. Ineffective conflict resolution, global news silence, and a massive aid shortfall contributed to the country topping the list.

With this policy paper, the aim was to increase awareness of the growing crisis, to urge international actors to put Cameroon on their agenda and to contribute to ending the crisis. It was also necessary to draw attention to the rise of sexual violence and to call for particular interest in the condition of girls and women. As is often the case in conflicts, sexual violence is used as a tool of war, leaving women and girls vulnerable and with inadequate support. In addition to this, the lack of political and societal will to implement existing policies is a major concern. As a result, few resources are made available for the fight against sexual violence.

To develop this document, we carried out consultations with women's organizations in order to collect their opinions on the various conflicts, on the

impact of conflict on the lives of girls and women, and to gather their recommendations for national and international actors.

In addition to calling on the international community to take interest in the security situation and sexual violence in Cameroon, the document also notes the efforts made by Cameroon in the implementation of UNSCR1325, in particular the adoption of a national action plan in 2017, reaffirms its commitment to improve the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and the necessary measures taken for the protection of women and girls before, during, and after conflicts. Lastly, the document came out with some strong recommendations addressed to various actors, including the international community, INGOs, and donors.

One of the key lessons from this policy paper is the importance of the international community being aware of ongoing conflict. For this, civil society actors play an important role not only in information and denunciations but also in advocacy to call on the international community to help innocent populations.

As an organization, the collaboration with the Secretariat of the CSPPS in the drafting of this document was beneficial

to us in the sense that we learned how to write an advocacy document thanks to the expertise of the CSPPS. For example, we are now preparing the National Convention of Women for Peace in Cameroon, and we intend to produce an advocacy document for the creation of psychosocial support and trauma management centres in conflict-affected regions.

Thanks to this document, we have seen the need to continue to advocate for assistance to girls and women victims of violence during conflicts, enabling us to organize a training workshop last March for female peacebuilders on psychosocial support and trauma healing. As a next step, we think that a debate could be organized online with some women leaders in Cameroon, as well as with women from other countries to discuss the initiatives set up there. Potential donors can take part to realize the gravity of the situation and the urgency to act. We must continue to attract the attention of decision-makers so that the issue of sexual violence during conflict is addressed.

"As long as women remain excluded from the processes, no significant progress can be made. They must not be associated simply as beneficiaries of the actions, but they must be equipped to be able to make their contribution for a lasting return to peace in communities."

Fidèle Djebba,
CSPPS focal point
Cameroon

As long as women remain excluded from the processes, no significant progress can be made. They must not be associated simply as beneficiaries of the actions, but they must be equipped to be able to make their contribution for a lasting return to peace in communities.



You can read the policy paper '[Gender-Based \(Sexual\) Violence in Cameroon: An Unfolding Crisis](#)' published on our website. You can read more on the situation in Cameroon in our interview with our partner, Association Rayons de Soleil, [here](#).

MEMBER CASE STORY



Project “Yemen Peace Voice II”

31 December 2020

By Maged Sultan (YWBOD / CAP), Yemen

Project Description

In 2020, the project “Yemen Peace Voice II” was implemented in Yemen. This project enabled a CSO-coalition (the CAP Network) to facilitate and implement advocacy campaigns to influence local, national, and international actors to implement the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and the IDPS Vision 2019-2021. The project built the capacities of CAP and its member CSOs on advocacy, and then developed project proposals based on data collected from CAP and its members. An advocacy campaign proposal was developed and implemented by YWBOD, CAP, and its members. This advocacy campaign was implemented in 6 governorates by CAP's members. It included activities of seminars and workshops on SDG16+ to raise public awareness on how to enhance and implement SDG16+, as well as a three-day capacity building workshop on debating skills for twenty young men and women. The project thus, in addition to strengthening CSPPS-CAP partnership, built the capacities of CAP and its members to play effective roles in localisation of SDG16+, as well as contributing to raising awareness among young men and women, community members, and local authorities on SDG16+.

Testimony

A violent war has been taking place in Yemen since March 2015. It is devastating the already existing and protracted humanitarian crisis characterized by years of widespread poverty, economic stagnation, poor governance, weak rule of law, widely reported human rights violations, female illiteracy, and ongoing instability. As a CSO, Youth without Borders Organization for Development (YWBOD) felt the responsibility to have a role in reducing the impacts of the war and enhancing the peace process at national and local levels.

In line with the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and the IDPS Vision 2019-2021, YWBOD developed and implemented the project "Yemen Peace Voice". This had the overall objective of enabling a CSO-coalition (the Civil Alliance of Peace) to work on advocacy for the advancement of SDG16+.

The project strengthened the CSPPS-CAP partnership and built the capacities of the CAP and its members to play effective roles in localization of SDG16+. It raised the awareness of young men and women, community members, and local authorities on the SDG16+ through an advocacy campaign implemented by the CAP and its

members. Young men and women were also engaged in this advocacy campaign.

A central lesson learned from the project lies in the significance and effectiveness of working as a network or consortium of CSOs, in the way it makes their collective voice louder. Moreover, another key learning was the impact of targeting and engaging young men and women who could express their advocacy in effective and innovative ways. CSPPS was a real source of support in the implementation of the project, not only in terms of providing funding but also in the technical support provided by the CSPPS Secretariat.

A key step in follow-up to this project would be further collaboration between YWBOD, CAP, CSPPS, and other relevant stakeholders in order to plan for a wider-reaching and more effective advocacy campaign for supporting the ceasefire and the peace process in Yemen. The voice can be louder and more effective when CSOs work together in networks or consortiums, and this is what we learned from CSPPS".

"The voice can be louder and more effective when CSOs work together in networks or consortiums, and this is what we learnt from the CSPPS."

Maged Sultan,
CSPPS focal point
Yemen



A debate taking place in the project 'Yemen Peace Voice II'. Credit: YWBOD.



You can read more about the work of CAP and YWBOD in the interview with Maged '[Facing Two Fronts: COVID-19 amidst the Yemeni Civil War](#)'. You can watch the video produced by one of the CAP CSO members on SDG16+ [here](#).

LOBBY

Influence policy to consolidate civil society inclusion in dialogues at all levels

Lobbying and policy outreach are the third essential aspect of CSPPS' work. In addition to networking, capacity-building, and peer-to-peer learning support, CSPPS also provides its members with formidable lobbying and advocacy platforms, both within and outside of the IDPS policy realm.

Indeed, within the context of the International Dialogue, CSPPS is in regular contact with and invited to meetings, events, and conferences by the g7+, INCAF, and the IDPS Secretariat. CSPPS engages with its IDPS partners and supports when required its civil society members to attend key strategic events to make sure the voice and perspective of local CSOs are always heard and represented in IDPS and related policy processes.

Outside of the IDPS realm, CSPPS is often brought to explore and foster new partnerships with civil society platforms, INGOs, governments, and technical and financial partners. Platform members are often solicited, encouraged, and given the opportunity to participate and engage in discussions to influence policy arenas through coordinated advocacy.

Lobbying in 2020

Over the course of 2020, we have leveraged every opportunity at our disposal to advocate for more inclusive peacebuilding in line with New Deal principles and SDG16+. We have engaged in a wide range of international fora and discussions, representing the views of our membership and enabling the participation of CSO representatives from our network. We have striven to enhance the participation, presence, and visibility of CSPPS in context of the IDPS through a campaign to turn the IDPS into a tripartite governance structure and to ensure CSPPS to be more directly involved in the agenda-setting of the IDPS. Another principal area of activity has been, and continues to be, our active encouragement of civil societies to contribute to their respective governments' VNR presented at the annual High-level Political Forum on Agenda 2030. Through these and other advocacy activities - like the organisation of a side-event at the 2020 HLPF - we aimed to ensure that an inclusive approach to achieving transnational peace and security retains and acquires further still the buy-in of pertinent actors at all levels.

CSPPS Coordinated Response to Support Local Action during COVID-19

In order to develop a coordinated CSPPS response and to support local action, the CSPPS Secretariat created, collected, and analysed in-depth survey feedback from its members on their countries' situation to inform contextualised follow-up action. The aim was to collect information from across the CSPPS membership on how the pandemic intersects with conflict contexts and peacebuilding efforts, whether there are lessons to be applied from earlier crisis situations (e.g. the Ebola crisis), what members' expectations from their governments and international actors are, or how to prevent worst-case scenarios, with specific mention of how the COVID-19 crisis is having a different impact on youth and women.

Based on both the responses to this survey as well as on country-focused interviews, we developed a coordinated CSPPS COVID-19 outreach campaign, highlighting country-

specific situations to raise our digital voices to the global community and to share best practices.

As a result of these in-depth survey responses, CSPPS released the statement “A Whole-of-Society, Conflict-Sensitive Response to COVID-19”, calling attention to the predicament of the world’s most vulnerable. Most importantly, CSPPS called for action on all levels of society, locally as well as globally, in continuing peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts at a time of increased global insecurity, highlighting the need for a joint and inclusive approach. CSPPS aimed to highlight the long-term effects of the pandemic on the fragility of our countries, as issues related to a lack of national cohesion or adherence to the global call for ceasefire, gender inequality, and climate change always affect our membership far more intensely, and so does COVID-19. Our efforts in advocacy have gained a significant amount of traction and helped ensure direct funding in some cases as well as broad political support.

IDPS Joint Statement on Safeguarding Peace during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Within the IDPS tripartite structure, CSPPS spurred the release of an IDPS joint statement calling upon all relevant stakeholders (both state and non-state actors) worldwide to abide by the motto of the 2030 Agenda: leaving no one behind. Drawing from our experience with the Ebola outbreak, CSPPS recognised the importance of a holistic, cross-sectoral and whole-of-government response, supported by partners across the humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus, in tackling COVID-19 not only in fragile and conflict-affected settings, but in countries worldwide that may become more prone to violence due to the ongoing pandemic.



Distribution of face masks by the CSPPS Country Team in Sierra Leone to the West End Police Station in Freetown. Credit: WASH-Net Sierra Leone.

MEMBER CASE STORY



“Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace – What Local Peacebuilders say about COVID-19, Civic Space, Fragility and Drivers of Conflict”

31 July 2020

By Charlotte de Harder (CSPPS Secretariat), Global

Report Description

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSPPS has kept in close contact with the members of our network to learn about their individual circumstances, activities, challenges and accomplishments. The result is the report "Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace – a Civil Society Perspective: What Local Peacebuilders say about COVID-19, Civic Space, Fragility and Drivers of Conflict". The CSPPS report is divided into four sections. The first explores how the pandemic has affected civil society's capacity to operate. It covers both practical matters, like the inability to visit communities in person, as well as the issue of shrinking civic space. The second section describes and analyses how local peacebuilders view the pandemic as occasioning violence and stimulating drivers of conflict. The third discusses the dearth of coordination between government and civil society, as the latter remains excluded from shaping most strategies, plans and measures deployed against COVID-19. The final section provides a short overview of the kinds of activities that CSOs have been undertaking during this period. The report concludes with reflections and recommendations to help our partners and other stakeholders of peace tackle the issues identified in the report.

Testimony

When the world first went into lockdown at the beginning of 2020, we at the CSPPS Secretariat quickly realised that (1) COVID-19 was going to increase dire situations across the globe, especially in the fragile and conflict-affected settings of our membership and (2) that we had to quickly rethink the way we work as a Platform in our lobby and advocacy efforts, as traveling for these purposes was no longer an option. I came up with the idea to interview our members and to launch an article series on the wider effects of the pandemic on peace and conflict. We sent out an initial survey to our membership in order to identify common denominators as well as context-specific issues that came to the surface or intensified due to COVID-19. Many individual member interviews and articles were conducted and published as a result, but the need for an overarching report to grasp the umbrella effect of the pandemic on fragility remained. A second survey was sent out, playing into what we had learned so far.

With the detailed information our membership provided us with, “Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace” became a valuable advocacy resource, used locally, regionally and nationally by our membership, and by the Platform as a whole on the international policy level.

The report managed to bring together not only the ways the pandemic was (and still is) affecting civic space and the fragility of civil society and their communities’ living and working conditions, but also the importance of CSO-government collaboration for a well informed and effective response to COVID-19 in fragile settings. It signalled early on that this pandemic not only affects global health at this very point in time, but can do long-term damage to essential factors for sustainable development: a decrease of national cohesion, human rights abuses and increased instances of violence, especially against women and youth, can easily set back nations worldwide on the pathway to 2030. And just like this virus, continued inequality and fragility in one country will eventually spread worldwide.

In response to the report, CSPPS reissued their annual call for proposals, seeking to support projects that worked with and under the circumstances and consequences of COVID-19, all the while continuing to localise SDG16 with sustained peacebuilding efforts. The Platform facilitated virtual VNR consultations in Libya and ensured that civil society organisations from across the membership kept a voice at international fora such as the UN HLPF 2020 through virtual side-events and lobby and advocacy campaigns such as “The Voices of SDG16+: Stories of Global Action” video campaign.

We must work jointly, governments, civil society and the public sector, nationally and internationally, in order to minimise the consequences of this complex, multi-faceted global crisis we are still facing today. We need to work and minimise the drivers of conflict that COVID-19 has brought along, while ensuring that vital peacebuilding efforts can be continued and social and national cohesion can be warranted by a continuous dialogue and collaboration between all levels and sectors of society. Unfortunately, the pandemic is still affecting peace and conflict to this very day – CSPPS is therefore currently working on a follow-up report, repeating what still has not been heard and accepted by governments worldwide, but certainly needs to be, and highlighting new issues that have come to the fore, more than one year on in this global crisis amongst crises.



You can read the CSPPS report ‘Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace’ [here](#). The interviews that fed into the publication of this report can be read in more detail [here](#).

2020 MAIN OUTREACH EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Global Alliance/DIHR 'Ways Forward on Monitoring SDG 16+' workshop in Copenhagen - organized by Global Alliance for Reporting on Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies and the Danish Institute of Human Rights.

MARCH

Set-up of the Community of Practice on SDG 16+.

Webinar co-hosted by the TAP Network and UNDP on leveraging VNRs for targeted follow-up.

APRIL

Launch of the website article series '[Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace](#)'.

SDG16+ Community Meeting on COVID-19 response by the SDG16+ Community.

Release of the [IDPS joint Statement on Safeguarding Peace during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

MAY

Virtual Workshop on fragility-sensitive Voluntary National Reviews & Post-VNR innovation in Fragile and Conflict-affected settings: leveraging the potential for peacebuilding.

Launch of the Voices of SDG16+ Campaign "[SDG16+ and COVID-19: Local Actions for Global Solutions](#)".

JULY

Organisation of a side-event at the 2020 UN High Level Political Forum "[Accelerating SDG16+ action to restore human well-being and build back better](#)".

Launch of the VNR Animation "[Localising the SDG16+](#)".

Launch of the CSPPS report "[Fighting COVID-19, Building Peace – a Civil Society Perspective](#)".

AUGUST

Just Future Strategic Partnership Planning workshop in four CSPPS member countries (Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, and South Sudan).

Publication of the [2019 CSPPS Annual Report](#).

Launch of the "[Key Voices for Lasting Change: Shaping the Women Peace & Security Agenda for the next 10 years](#)" Webinar Series.

OCTOBER

CSPPS participated in the "COVID-19 & Peacebuilding: Adaptation and Opportunities" meeting co-organized by QUNO and the Life & Peace Institute.

Creation of the Voices of SDG16+ Alumni Community.

NOVEMBER

Launch of the "Sustaining Local Peacebuilding in Times of Crisis: A 'Value Chain' Approach to Change" dialogue, organised by CSPPS and CSP.

DECEMBER

CSPPS Annual Conference, held remotely due to COVID-19, 14-15 December.

Overview of CSPPS Project Support in 2020

Country	Organisation	Subject
Sierra Leone	WASH-Net	Deepening citizens' voices, strengthening awareness around the COVID-19 emergency, and spotlighting critical conflict-sensitivities affecting the wider response efforts around national cohesion as well as state-society relationships.
Burundi	Réseau Femmes et Paix	Dissemination of accurate information on the pandemic and gender-based violence.
CAR	National Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for the New Deal	Combating the spread of the pandemic and promoting social peace.
Democratic Republic of Congo	CSPPS Country Team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Gender and youth inclusion in the New Deal process, the importance of state-society relationship in the implementation of the ND and SDG16+.
Cameroon	Association Rayons de Soleil	National civil society consultation on the impact of conflict and COVID-19 on vulnerable groups.
Guinea Conakry	ODDI-GUINEE	Prevention of the spread of the pandemic.
Nigeria	CSDEA	Youth Peace and Security, supporting the implementation of SDG16 in Nigeria.
Nigeria	CSDEA	Localisation of SDG16+ using mass Media, publication of prevention and appropriate information on COVID-19 and the linkages with SDG16+.
Togo	Floraison	Enabling CSPPS-Togo member organisations to take ownership of the New Deal concept and the principles of CSPPS.
Yemen	CAP	Facilitating and implementing advocacy campaigns to influence local, national and international actors to implement the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and the IDPS Vision 2019-2021.
Libya	TWM	Ensuring inclusive involvement of civil society actors in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Voluntary National Review process.
Somalia	IIDA	Enhancing local Somali CSOs' engagement in peacebuilding and statebuilding processes with the aim to rebuild the social contract in Somalia.



2021 AND BEYOND

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK 2021

In 2021, the ability of the Platform to continue its work of facilitating civil society's meaningful contribution to relevant national and international policy processes on peacebuilding, statebuilding, conflict prevention, and sustaining peace will be supported by a 1-year operational grant from GIZ/BMZ. Next to this grant, CSPPS will also be joining the Just Future Strategic Partnership, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the international networking partner. One of its key activities in this regard for 2021 will be the organisation and hosting of monthly Just Future Networking meetings, which foresee bringing together all consortium partners and stakeholders to share their experiences and learn from each other in their efforts to strengthen civil society organisations to lobby and advocate for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

With 2021 representing the second year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, a key priority of the Platform's work will centre around continued work in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery. Over 2020, as highlighted in this report, CSPPS worked in collaboration with its civil society partners and members to support the implementation of COVID-19 response projects, publish a series of articles, and release a final report on the impacts of COVID-19 in fragile and conflict-affected settings and how local CSOs are working to combat these. In 2021, CSPPS plans to continue this work by sharing another survey with our membership to see how COVID-19 is still affecting their contexts, the responses of which will feed into a second COVID-19 report and further lobby and advocacy work on the meaningful inclusion of civil society in the global COVID-19 response.

As a first step in elevating the voices of local actors of everyday peace and how they continue to navigate their work during the pandemic, CSPPS has embarked on a new collaboration with the Political Settlements Research Programme, located at the University of Edinburgh, in the form of an online article series. Each article published in this series will initially focus on peacebuilding actors in Syria, after which a call for contributions will be opened up to the wider CSPPS membership and beyond, to spotlight and showcase stories of how local actors work towards advancing peace and social cohesion in their countries.

2021 is also a pivotal one for Sustainable Development Goal 16, as this year's edition of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum will include a review of this Goal, assessing progress made and steps required to take this further. As a member of the SDG16+ Community, CSPPS plans to work closely with our fellow partners in lobby and advocacy work in the months leading up to this event and will submit several official side-event proposals to put civil society in the spotlight and showcase their work on advancing SDG16+. 2021 also marks the 10th year of the New Deal Agreement, and as the civil society representative of the IDPS, CSPPS will mark this occasion by a continued partnership with its INCAF and g7+ partners to accelerate local action towards more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies and support inclusive pathways towards greater resilience and stability.

Aside from these specific and targeted plans for 2021, at the heart of our activities the Platform will continue to support its membership in their work towards peacebuilding, statebuilding, and sustainable development. Where possible, we also foresee deepening and broadening our in-country engagement towards the advancement of the 2030 Agenda.

On behalf of the entire membership, we would like to thank our key partners for supporting the work of CSPPS and for partnering with us on our journey towards a more peaceful and resilient future.



**CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM**
FOR PEACEBUILDING
AND STATEBUILDING

Cordaid, as part of its commitment to addressing fragility, hosts the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS). The Secretariat is managed and coordinated by Peter van Sluijs, Senior Strategist at Cordaid. Please find attached relevant contact information for the Secretariat and please do not hesitate to contact us with any question you might have.

info@cspps.org

CSPPS

c/o Cordaid

Grote Marktstraat 45, 2511 BH

The Hague, Netherlands

CSPPS Secretariat Staff

Peter van Sluijs
CSPPS Secretariat Coordinator

Peter.van.Sluijs@cordaid.org

Charlotte de Harder
Programme Officer

Charlotte.deHarder@cordaid.org

Caitlin Masoliver
Programme Officer

Caitlin.Masoliver@cordaid.org

Laura Marcucci
CSPPS Trainee

Laura.Marcucci@cordaid.org

Vera de Amorim Araújo
CSPPS Trainee

vera.deamorimaraujo@cordaid.org

Website

<https://www.cspps.org/>

Twitter

[@idps_cspps](https://twitter.com/idps_cspps)

Facebook

[@civilsocietyplatform](https://www.facebook.com/civilsocietyplatform)

Instagram

[@cspps_global](https://www.instagram.com/cspps_global)

LinkedIn

[@cspps](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cspps)