United States Institute of Peace
Call for Proposals
Grant for Research and Analysis:
What Makes for Effective Peace Processes—A Comparative Approach

Grant Context

Peace processes continue to become increasingly complex due to the protracted and fluid nature of armed conflict, the shifting composition of actors, and the longer-term political consequences at stake. It is important, therefore, to generate new thinking about the growing challenges for peace processes and develop ideas for greater effectiveness. Much of the study of peace processes has been confined to specific moments in time or specific country cases in which each peace process is viewed as unique because of the nature of the country or the conflict. Practitioners and policymakers increasingly note that comparative discussions or analyses of peace processes more generally would be very instructive, particularly those that focus on negotiation and mediation challenges, the characteristics of civil wars and peace processes, and the impact of political dynamics and influences on peace processes.

A signed peace agreement is rarely the conclusion of a peace process but an important stepping stone in a process that culminates in the establishment of a new relationship between the warring parties. At a minimum, a peace agreement should stop the violence; ideally, it should address the roots of conflict and create or revive mechanisms for non-violent resolution of conflicts. A peace process may involve many steps to stop the immediate fighting, build trust between the parties, address specific issues in dispute, or present a framework for future political arrangements. Often, third parties, including governments, regional organizations, international governmental organizations (including donor agencies), peacekeeping and security forces, and non-governmental organizations, guide these processes as facilitators or mediators. This is particularly noteworthy in the context of increasingly integrated responses to armed conflicts from international NGOs, state actors, regional organizations, and military actors.

Bringing peace to a conflict between parties, usually states, but increasingly involving armed non-state actors, has been thought of primarily in terms of negotiating a peace agreement. While much analysis revolves around national-level peace talks among key governmental and non-governmental leaders, there is an increased interest in greater inclusivity so that other relevant constituencies and stakeholders are brought into a peace process.

While scholarship on preventive diplomacy, humanitarian intervention, and reconciliation and justice is increasing, there have been few efforts to develop a comparative analysis and conclusions from which to draw significant lessons applicable across geographic or conflict contexts. Peace processes

cannot just be localized but are increasingly multidimensional. Therefore, the field should go beyond how and when to achieve ceasefires and an end to war and violence, and address increasingly relevant and emerging challenges such as reconstruction, the needs of victims, the legacy of history and truth, and future political arrangements. Peace processes often have to consider trade-offs such as when to focus on security reform at the cost of stability or the tension between amnesty and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs.

While some scholars have pivoted from transactional approaches ("Getting to Yes") to transformational approaches, USIP seeks to support comparative research and analysis to extract lessons about what is most effective in a peace process across contexts, and why and how these practices will enable negotiators and others engaged in conflict-affected societies to facilitate more effective peace processes. What lessons, effective strategies and designs for peace processes can be substantiated in ways that are useful for the diplomatic/practitioner communities? For this grant competition, we encourage proposals that will test peace process strategies, analyze new and emerging challenges to such processes, and suggest how they can be most effectively addressed.

Critical questions or issues for comparative exploration could include which strategies for peace processes have been most effective, and to what degree success or failure depends on the nature of the violent conflict? What can we learn from the many peace processes of the past two decades? As in Afghanistan, or the Central African Republic, what are the relationships between international engagement and national ownership that have proved themselves most successful? How can a peace process be transformative while working with existing political structures—a challenge faced by countries in the throes of political transitions such as Tunisia and Myanmar? What are the weaknesses of a peace process that culminates in elections, as in El Salvador? Was the exclusion of Abu Sayaf in the peace processes in the Philippines with the MNLF and later MILF critical to a successful peace agreement? How has the deferment of tough issues (such as Jerusalem) in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process affected the likelihood of a successful outcome? What mechanisms have been used to engage civil society, such as in Colombia, or the business community, as in Northern Ireland, during a peace process and how effective have they been? How has the inclusion or exclusion of different parties at the table contributed to the success or failure of peace processes and the stabilization of peace?

Grant Description and Competition

Under this grant competition, the United States Institute of Peace encourages proposals for research and analysis on what makes a complex peace process effective, how the success of a peace process is defined, and if successful processes share common elements. Selected proposals will incorporate a comparative approach and address one or more of the following cluster areas (with examples of possible questions):

1) **Inclusion**

- What is the impact, negative and positive, of a multiplicity of actors and how are they best managed?

- What kind of inclusion is most effective with respect to the scope of a peace process? How has inclusion of non-state actors been addressed effectively in different contexts?

- Can exclusion, particularly of spoilers, be helpful in certain cases? Is timing important, so that certain spoilers are excluded from the peace agreement phase but later brought into the implementation phase?

- Can inclusion of local-level peacebuilding efforts in a national peace process help lay the foundation for social cohesion and effective governance? If so, how?

- How does inclusion relate to the design, structure, sequencing, and third-party support of a peace process?

2) **Political Settlements**

- What kinds of political reform agendas are successfully developed as part of the peace process?

- How can a peace process strengthen the establishment of new or reformed formal government institutions? How can an effective and sustainable peace process lead to strengthening or transforming political arrangements and institutions that already exist?

- What is the most effective link between development efforts and a political settlement in a peace process?

- How can political settlements be structured to ensure inclusivity and how can implementation of a peace process reinforce inclusivity?

- How can the role of the international community carry forward beyond the agreement phase to the implementation stage to help ensure a sustainable political settlement?

3) **Peace Process Design and Sequencing**

- What are the trade-offs that negotiators/parties are called upon to make and how are they most effectively anticipated and addressed?

- What are the conditions under which a ceasefire is most likely to hold?

- What is the most effective timing for reconciliation efforts?

- What kind of structure is more likely to contribute to the successful implementation of an agreement? How should critical issues be sequenced, and what capacities and areas of expertise—e.g., law, security, governance, and communications—are critical for the successful implementation of an agreement?

- How can a peace process that includes multiple levels—community or sub-national, national, international—be managed or guided most effectively?

- How can a peace process be designed so that it lays the groundwork for the transformation of relationships, builds trust between groups in society, and restores the legitimacy of the state?

Those interested in applying for this grant competition should have demonstrated experience in research and strong scholarship related to conflict management and peacebuilding. Depending on the nature of the proposed project, USIP expects to make three to five grants in the general range of $70,000-$100,000 each, with an implementation period from 10 to 24 months.

How to Apply

USIP's grants program recently transitioned to an online management system and uses that to manage grant competitions. This system is used by all applicants, reviewers, grantees, and USIP staff for each step of the application process and grant administration. To register for this competition, please visit **https://usip.fluxx.io/user_sessions/new** and complete the registration form. Be sure to select Applied Conflict Transformation for the center to which you are applying. USIP will contact applicants directly to give access to the concept note application form in the system. Please allow up to 3 business days for the registration to be approved. All applicants seeking consideration for this competition must register by March 17, 2017 at 5pm U.S. Eastern Time.

The deadline for submitting concept notes is March 21, 2017 at 5pm U.S. Eastern Time. Those submitting concept notes will be notified on or about March 30, 2017 as to whether they will be invited to submit full applications. Selected applicants will have until May 15, 2017 at 8:30 am U.S. Eastern Time (EST) to develop and submit full applications. Concept notes or applications submitted after the respective deadlines will not be considered. Award notifications will be made by mid-September 2017. Please send questions about this competition or usage of USIP's online grants management system to actgrants@usip.org.

Eligibility and Guidance

- Non-profit and academic institutions are eligible to apply for funding, provided they are duly registered organizations with demonstrated capacity to manage U.S. government funding. Private sector for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. USIP does not make grants to individuals.
- Support cannot be provided to government agencies or to employees thereof.
- Support cannot be provided to non-governmental organizations for a formal evaluation of their own programming unless otherwise indicated. USIP will, however, consider applications that propose an NGO research or evaluation consortium for the purposes of conducting a comparative study.
- Those working on USIP-funded projects or contracts may not be eligible to apply. Please contact actgrants@usip.org with any questions.
- USIP does not provide funds for the creation of a new organization, the construction or maintenance of an office, direct social services, or micro-enterprise projects.
- Grant funds are not available for degree-related work. Requests for dissertation research support should be directed to USIP's Jennings Randolph Peace Scholarship Dissertation Program.
- Applications that list as participants, consultants, or project personnel any members of USIP's Board of Directors, staff or fellows will not be accepted, nor will applications that list USIP as a collaborator in the project's activities.
- Please review the *Grant Application Process* (https://www.usip.org/grants-fellowships/grants) and *Frequently Asked Questions* "FAQ" (https://www.usip.org/grants-fellowships/grants/grant-faqs) sections of the website.

Notice to Applicants

Please follow the system registration instructions detailed in this document and on USIP's website. If you do not hear from USIP after registering, please contact actgrants@usip.org to confirm the status of your registration. Registration via the online system is a requirement for consideration in this competition. The Institute is unable to retroactively review incorrectly submitted registrations, concept notes, or applications after the relevant deadline. Please do not hesitate to contact actgrants@usip.org with any questions about the system or registration process.