Achieving an Inclusive Peace in Afghanistan

A Guidebook

Acknowledgment

Contents

Introduction

Peace is key for the establishment of a functioning political system in which law and order, human security and economic development is safeguarded, in particular, for vulnerable groups, minorities and women. Peace negotiations and mediations must be inclusive by representing and reflecting diverse segments of a society and its views, needs and interests. For the process to succeed, it needs to include all parties who have been either part of the conflict or somehow affected by it. Experiences of peace processes around the world has proven that processes which are inclusive of broad section of the society last longer than peace pacts signed between elites and leaders of the conflict parties.[1]

The purpose of this *Guidebook* is to help minorities and vulnerable groups to learn about the key steps of a peace process, challenges in peace negotiations, different tools available for them to influence the process and outcomes in their favour, and more importantly learn from other peace negotiations in which minorities have made substantial differences for their communities. This Guidebook is informative in its initial purpose to generate discussion among participants during the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews that HREVO is planning to conduct in the second phase of the project. However, the life of this Guidebook goes beyond the initial information-sharing for this project in making it available to everyone across the county and use it as a manual on peace for minorities. This Guidebook should help vulnerable groups and minorities in Afghanistan to maintain a clear sense of strategic direction to influence the ongoing peace talks with the Taliban and the Afghan government.

This *Guidebook* is drafted by HREVO in-house experts, which for the past 10 years has been supporting minority and vulnerable groups' rights in Afghanistan through strategic advocacy, policy research, trainings and publications. HREVO's mandate is to contribute to the promotion of a society where every citizen's rights are respected and protected, lives in a peaceful environment and free of all forms of violence. It was established to strive for adhering to the its core values such as advancing human rights, a just peace, gender equality, rule of law and accountability. This project, titled, SADA: the Voice of Afghan Non-dominant Minorities in the Peace Process, is funded by the European Union. For the past two months, HREVO with the help of its partner organizations in Kabul, Ghor, Badakhshan, Jawzjan, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Balkh, Bamyan, and Nimroz provinces, have been collecting secondary and primary data to draft this Guidebook. This publication was carefully reviewed by two Afghan experts in the field to ensure that the final product cover a comprehensive review of key peace process steps, issues and challenges and that it will be a useful and reliable resource for practitioners.

This *Guidebook* offers an overview of the key processes involved in a typical peace process, difficulties that the process might face, lessons learned from other contexts to Afghanistan that has gone through a similar peace process. It provides a set of tools which minorities and vulnerable groups could use to influence the process and outcomes to advance their positions. The final section examines experiences of other contexts for

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[1] Nilsson, D., 2012. Anchoring the peace: Civil society actors in peace accords and durable peace. International Interactions, 38(2), pp.243-266.

lessons learned and categorise them in terms of the process they adopted. The Guidebook is structured in eight section, covering a different aspect of the peace process.

This Guidebook is timely. Recent efforts for attaining peace with the Taliban initiated by the U.S. in 2018, and the peace agreement signed between the two parties in February 2020, have raised hopes for a peaceful future amongst the Afghans. The intra-Afghan negotiations which is anticipated to take place in the near future is expected to result in a peace agreement between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan which specifies settlements for the prolonged war in Afghanistan. The planned peace talks among Afghans is certainly not the country's first attempt to achieve a sustainable peace. The failure of the previous political settlements (Rawalpindi 1989, Peshawar 1992, Islamabad accords 1993, Bonn Agreement 2001) among elites and warring groups is still fresh in the minds of many Afghans. One of the main reasons for the failure of these past settlements were exclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups from the process.

1) A Framework to Understand Inclusive Peace

a) What is Peace?

In simple terms, the word peace is translated as the absence of war or a stress-free state of security and calmness that comes when there's no fighting or war by the Merriam-Webster dictionary of English.[2] Theoretically, peace is a *state*/ situation where people can resolve their conflicts without adhering to violence and work together to improve the quality of their lives. People live in peace when they:

- everyone lives in safety, without fear or threat of violence, and no form of violence is tolerated in law or in practice;
- everyone is equal before the law, the systems for justice are trusted, and fair and effective laws protect people's rights;
- everyone is able to participate in shaping political decisions and the government is accountable to the people;
- everyone has fair and equal access to the basic needs for their wellbeing – such as food, clean water, shelter, education, healthcare and a decent living environment;
- everyone has an equal opportunity to work and make a living, regardless of gender, ethnicity or any other aspect of identity.[3]

The definition of peace in its simplest usage as the "absence of war" is very simplistic.[4] Scholars in recent years have broadened our understanding of peace to include "presence of desirable states of mind and society including security, justice, harmony,

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[2] https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/peace

[3] International Alert. "*What is Peacebuilding?*". Available at: https://www.international-alert.org/what-we-do/what-is-peacebuilding

[4] Galtung, J, and Dietrich F. "Positive and negative peace." In *Johan Galtung*, pp. 173-178. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, 2013.

equity;" known as *positive peace*.[5] It is identified as a state where conflicts are constructively resolved, relationships and social order are restored, and social systems that serve the needs of the whole population are created. In such a state; security, rule of law and human rights are assured and adequate institutions for ensuring justice are established.[6]

This understanding of peace is also often referred to as "sustainable peace", which is defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282 as;

"a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development".[7]

On the Afghan peace, analysts and government officials have emphasised the importance of sustainable peace in addressing all aspects of the peace process from de-escalation to ceasefire, to negotiations and other; involving and representing all key local, national, regional and international stakeholders in the process- especially bounding neighbouring countries in the post-settlement process. The discussion has included aspects of post-peace settlements such as reintegration of ex-combatants, to reforming the political system, to holding elections. The involvement of vulnerable groups and minorities including women is key to achieving a sustainable peace.

b) What is a Peace Process?

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has defined a peace process as "a multilevel, multi-phased effort involving armed and unarmed stakeholders in a conflict to both bring an end to armed fighting and lay out a sustainable political, economic, security, and territorial agreement. It involves top-level negotiation between the armed groups, plus diverse forums for public dialogue and engagement to foster a broad consensus on the future direction of the country."[8]

In simple terms, a peace process covers all confidence building measures, mediation efforts, and negotiations which lead to the cessation of violence, as well as further efforts which lead to the establishment of a positive peace. According to Berghof Foundation, one of the key leading international non-governmental organizations working in the field, and currently involved in the Afghan peace, peace processes may include formal and informal mechanisms, and involve a multitude of actors often over a long period.

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[5] Barash, D.P. and Webel, C.P., 2008. "*Peace and conflict studies*". Sage.
[6] Anderson, R. "A definition of peace." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology"* 10, no. 2 (2004): 101.
[7] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282, "Review of United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture", S/RES/2282 (2016).
[8] Schirch, R. "Designing a Comprehensive Peace for Afghanistan." *United States Institute of Peace.* Peaceworks No. 75. (2011)

c) What is an Inclusive Peace?

Inclusive peace means that participation in the process is broad based and all armed actor groups along with all those affected by the conflict including women, victims, various ethnic groups, civil society, business communities, religious leaders, grassroots and many other stakeholders are included in peace negotiations as well as the implementation of the peace accord. An inclusive peace process provides for the needs, interests, and experiences of all groups within a society, including marginalized groups to be considered in drafting the peace agreement. This in turn enables the process to recognize and address causes of the conflict and design a roadmap for the future institutions to be inclusive and evade inequalities and exclusion which can cause a return to violence.[9]

According to the UN, "inclusivity refers to the extent and manner in which the views and needs of conflict parties and other stakeholders are represented and integrated into the process and outcome of a mediation effort".[10] Studies have highlighted that inclusive peace processes result to greater durability of the established peace and lower risk of relapse into violent conflict.[11] Broad participation in peace process means that more people will become aware of the process and its contents. It will ensure that voices of all stakeholders are heard, and their interests addressed in the final peace agreement. Inclusive peace negotiations will result to agreements acceptable for all stakeholders. This will subsequently ensure minimum opposition and increase coordination for the implementation of the agreement, which definitely contributes to fostering sustainable peace.[12]

d) What are the Different Levels of Engagement in a Peace Process?

There are three important levels of engagement in peace process. These are:

1) Official level: also known as track 1 diplomacy, refers to the official establishment of relations between diplomatic representatives of the conflict parties which leads to formal peace negotiations and signing of a peace agreement.

2) Quasi-official level known as track 1.5, individuals and groups transfer messages between the conflict parties and mediate for bringing them to the negotiation table. These individuals, however, have no official status or authority to directly negotiate terms of a peace deal.

3) Public level: depending on the processes, in most peace negotiations at some point in the process, the public is consulted and engaged by different warring

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[9] Paffenholz, T. and Ross, N., 2015. Inclusive Peace Processes—An Introduction. Development Dialogue, 63(Part 1), pp.28-37.
[10] un, 2012. The United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation.
[11] Nilsson, D., 2012. Anchoring the peace: Civil society actors in peace accords and durable peace. *International Interactions*, *38*(2), pp.243-266.
[12] Paffenholz, T. and Ross, N., Preventing violence through inclusion: from building political momentum to sustaining peace, Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative (IPTI), November 2017.

groups. Also known as track 2, this level complements track 1 efforts, provides a platform for inter community dialogue, building trust among the conflict parties, identifying and addressing needs of the population, and promoting a culture of peace through awareness and education. Civil society actors, community and religious leaders and other influential individuals play a significant role in this level. This is the most relevant part through which minorities and vulnerable groups can best get engaged in and influence the process.

A typical peace process would involve all three levels of engagement to ensure a peace process is accepted by all and therefore sustainable. These levels are often subject to the issue of *sequencing,* which is a key aspect of a peace process and depending on the nature of the conflict, types and number of stakeholders, the level of engagement differs. In Columbia, negotiations begun at the official arena but then soon it involved all levels leading to a referendum which majority of the population rejected it.

In Afghanistan, it seems that ongoing peace talks are likely to involve engagement at all levels, which is likely to ensure minorities and vulnerable groups have the space to influence the process, if not at official level, but at least at civil society and public/community levels. Even though the Afghan peace process has sometimes driven by the US agenda and outside pressure, with the Afghan government initially side-lined. The intra-Afghan dialogue is likely to include all of these levels of engagement. Prior to this, the 2018 Consultative Peace Loyi Jirga brought in hundreds of representatives from provinces to Kabul to identify the red lines and provide a framework for future negotiations in which many felt their voice has been heard.

There have been several Track II attempts by international countries, NGOs and foundations among the Taliban and Afghan officials and civil society. The last one was organized by the United States Institute of Peace in Norway. The goal of these Track II is to build trust and identify opposing groups' positions and stands to help overcome for future formal negotiations.

2) Different Stages of a Peace Process

Broadly, a typical peace process incorporates a wide range of steps. A typical peace process includes two stages: 1) processes during the negotiations; and 2) processes after achieving a deal among warring groups with medium and long-term goals as part of the state building and nation building process.[13]

a) Peace Talks Stage

[13] Burgess, H. "*Peace Process*". Beyond Intractability. 2004. Available at: https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/peace_processes

The first stage includes efforts which lead to the parties coming together and negotiating initial terms for ending hostilities and reaching to a ceasefire through a peace agreement. This stage is aimed at reaching an agreement between the conflict parties to stop violence and work for establishing institutions which guarantee sustainable peace in a society. It includes confidence building measures, negotiations facilitation, peace negotiations, and finally a peace agreement.

- Confidence building/ track I and II / prisoner exchange
- Negotiations (discussed below)
- Signing of peace agreement

Confidence building
Confidence building measures are efforts aimed at convening good will between the conflict parties. In general, confidence building measures are initiated before the peace negotiations start in order to de-escalate the violence, build trust among the conflict parties, and pave the way for peace negotiations. These efforts can include agreements on military information exchange, a decrease in violence, a ceasefire or creating areas of safe passage, and exchange of prisoners. Confidence building also includes efforts by different non-government actors in order to create trust between communities living at both sides of the conflict. Examples of these can include media campaigns, cultural programs such as music festivals, and humanitarian assistance programs. In the case of Afghanistan, confidence building has been the exchange of Taliban and government prisoners prior to talks.

Peace Negotiations
Peace negotiations are a series of official talks conducted between the conflict parties in order to reach an agreement on ending the violence building new political and social systems. Usually official peace negotiations are preceded by a phase of pre-talks efforts by third party mediators who convey the willingness of one party for negotiations to the other, followed up by a series of secret talks between the conflict parties. An important goal of this phase is to ensure that parties are mutually committed to the peace process. Issues which are addressed in this phase include logistics, location of talks, security for each party, participants, timeframe, mediators and their roles and responsibilities, alleviating fears and building trust perhaps through conciliatory gestures such as release of prisoners, and agreement on agenda topics.

By the onset of official negotiations between conflict parties, they publicly express their willingness and commitment for a negotiated settlement of the conflict. Negotiations help both parties to discuss and agree over key issues for ending the violence. Common issues include a ceasefire agreement, power-sharing and governance issues, human rights, demobilization, justice and socioeconomic reforms. A limited negotiation may focus on security and power-sharing issues leaving other matters for post settlement discussions while a more comprehensive agenda may address social and economic reform within the framework of the peace talks.

Peace negotiations include both track one and track two efforts and can adopt a multi-track approach. Engagement of the civil society in the peace process in through arrangements such as direct representation in the peace talks and /or independent forums are multi-track approaches to peace negotiations. For instance, in the Guatemala peace process, the Civil Society Assembly was mandated to provide recommendations on the main issues discussed in the official peace talks.

Peace Agreement
Successful peace negotiations lead to the signing of peace agreement which encompasses the issues that the conflict parties have agreed upon for ending the violence. This can be a 1) framework agreement, which exemplifies principles and agenda for negotiating fundamental issues in the future, or a 2) comprehensive agreement covering all substantive issues in one agreement. Security guarantees, social structural changes, and power-sharing arrangements aimed at addressing the injustices that have led to the conflict in the first place, are the substantive issues which are either stipulated in a comprehensive peace agreement or negotiated in the consequent negotiations of a broad framework agreement. Further, a peace agreement includes implementation provisions such as a timeline and monitoring mechanism.

b) Post-Peace Settlement

Immediately after the signing of a peace deal, a transition phase starts which covers the implementation of the peace agreement and establishment of a transitional government which often seeks to reform of social, political, economic and security institutions, and promotion of social and political reconciliation and holding elections to set up a legitimate government. It includes efforts for installing a new political system with new arrangement for distribution of power, constitution reform, DDR, and elections. Generally, these efforts are intended to address the root causes of the conflict and to move the conflict parties away from confrontation and violence, and towards political and economic participation, peaceful relationships, and social harmony. [14]

- An Interim or Transitional Government
- Constitutional Reform
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation of former combatants (DDR)
- Elections

Interim or Transitional Government
The establishment of an interim government based on an agreed distribution of seats such as the ministries, can be stipulated within the peace agreement. Interim government are formed to facilitate the transition period, undertake institutional reform, and prepare

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[14] Ball, N. 2001. The challenge of rebuilding war-torn societies. *Turbulent peace: The challenges of managing international conflict*, pp.719-736.

for elections. A new cabinet will be formed, and key government positions are distributed among warring groups under the agreement. With the Bonn Agreement, there was a six months interim government which was headed by Karzai who was selected at the Conference. The Administration was tasked to facilitate the emergency Loya Jirga in six months which led to the establishment of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan in June 2002. This led to an 18-month transitional government in 2002 with the organization of the Emergency Loyi Jirga in which representatives of people across the country came to Kabul to elect the Head of the transitional government. This period is generally is intended to address the root causes of the conflict and to move the conflict parties away from confrontation and violence, and towards political and economic participation, peaceful relationships, and social harmony.

Constitutional Reform
Other activities implemented under the Post-Peace Settlement include various peacebuilding and state building initiatives. Constitutional reform and reform of public institutions and elections for establishing a democratic government are the main issues specified in peace agreements and implemented in post-peace settlements. Mechanisms and timeframe for these activities are clarified within the peace agreement. Further, measures for the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants and their integration into the society are crucial for post-peace settlements.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
According to UN's DDR Resource Centre, the aim of DDR is "to contribute to security and stability in post conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin." By relieving ex combatants of weapons and by taking these individuals out of their military structures, the DDR process should integrate them back into society and help them become active participants in the peace process.

Disarmament refers to the collection, documentation, control, and removal of arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons of combatants. It involves establishing and initiating an arms management (e.g., programs for safe storage and/or destruction of weapons) and a de-mining programs.

Demobilization is a process by which conflicting armed groups are induced to disband their military organization and structure and shift from "combatant" to "civilian" status. This often involves an economic livelihood program for ex-combatants and their families in which they receive support/assistance packages to meet their immediate basic needs, such as food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term remedial education, training, employment, and tools.

Reintegration is a longer-term social and economic process with an open time frame designed to facilitate the assimilation of ex-combatants in a way that allows them, and their families, to adapt to civilian life in communities that may not necessarily be ready to accept them.

Elections

Elections are seen as the final stage of the transition from war to peace with opposing groups competing in a democratic process by presenting their agenda to the public. Elections bestows legitimacy needed to consolidate the transition process. In Afghanistan, after the Bonn Agreement, the Transitional Government paved the way for presidential elections in 2004 which provided legitimacy to the winning candidate to form his government.

All of these transitional efforts must be further consolidated which is basically extending the efforts for strengthening established institutions, deepening the reform process, moving towards economic development, and enhancing social consolidation, in order to prevent the recurrence of the violence.

3) Actors in Peace Process

Generally, all armed actors need to be included in peace negotiations beside the primary conflict parties. In addition, all those who have been affected by the conflict and those who will be affected by the agreement needs to be represented in the peace negotiations and the process.

The civil society is the most crucial actor which needs to engage in all stages of a peace process. Civil society includes a wide variety of voluntary associations and groups who work in groups for achieving goals and values shared among all group members. Civil society includes all non-government organizations (NGOs), informal local associations and councils, networks of citizens established to promote certain values or advocate for the needs of certain groups, religious associations, and professional associations such as labour unions. Any community-based association or council formed to promote the interests of a certain group of people are regarded as civil society; for instance, councils of minority groups are considered as part of civil society.

Minorities and vulnerable groups are important actors who can shape policies, processes and advocate for their interests. Their participation in peace process can help form a comprehensive understanding of the exclusion practices and injustices that have caused the conflict in the first place. In countries where the conflict has mainly occurred along ethnic divides, minority ethnic groups are highly side-lined and fall victims to the conflict due to their trivial access to means of violence. An inclusive peace process will provide them with the opportunity to have their voices heard and their needs addressed. It will also provide a platform for these groups to contribute to building a peaceful future for their societies. Without the inclusion of minority groups in the peace process the process will fail to address root causes of the conflict and will most probably lead to another cycle of violent conflict.

It is important to note that those representing different stakeholders in a peace process should be legitimate delegates of these groups. These representatives must come from within the stakeholder groups and approved by them. This can be achieved through inter-sectoral elections or other means of securing approval from all parties. Symbolic

representation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders through direct nomination by traditional leaders, elites, or one of the primary conflict parties will undermine the process legitimacy and lead to further exclusion and public opposition towards the process. It will also delegitimize the agreement and fail to secure support of eminent groups for peacebuilding efforts. Further, initiatives aimed at ensuring inclusivity through approaches other than direct representation at the negotiation table need to consider that all segments of the target population should be engaged in the process.

Additionally, to reach the goal of sustainable peace where a return to violence is unlikely, much more work needs to be done for resolving the conflict at the community level which requires coordinated efforts from all stakeholders including the conflict parties, civil society, community councils, and religious leaders. This requires a true representation of all social groups in the negotiations which lead to a drafting and signing of a peace agreement.

In the Afghan peace process, the main actors can be grouped into national, subnational, and international actors. At the national level, inclusion of the following actors and groups is vital for the success and legitimacy of a peace process.

a) National level actors

- Government
- Parliament
- Political parties
- Civil society groups including organizations affiliated to religions and faiths
- Special interest groups faith-based organizations
- Special interest groups such as labor unions, professional associations, and minority groups
- Women's organizations
- Human rights, relief, development or peace NGOs
- Researchers and research institutions
- Ethnic groups
- Social and political movements
- Networks of youth

b) Subnational level actors

   Local administrative governments
   Provincial councils
   Provincial powerbrokers
   Civil society
   Tribal elders
   Others

c) Community level actors

Shuras
Tribal leaders
Religious leaders
Women's groups
Victim groups
NGOs

4) Advocacy Tools in Peace Process

Peace processes are complicated and time consuming. Engaged large number of stakeholders in the process, particularly at the negotiations table, can make the process even more complicated. Measures for the inclusion of actors other than the main parties to the conflict can be assured by the main parties or outsider mediators such as the UN, but that is not always the case. In some cases, the primary conflict parties opt to exclude other actors from the negotiations table and negotiate the substantial issues between themselves. Hence, the civil society and other relevant actors seeking to influence a peace process need to use different advocacy tools and approaches in order to include their demands in the negotiation agenda and the peace agreement.

Advocacy is a range of activities an individual or organisation undertakes on behalf of someone, and/or on an issue or issues. The aim is to get a message across to an individual/group in order to influence a decision or promote a position/or an interest to change the outcome. Specifically, minorities and vulnerable groups including women can use the following tools to utilise influence processes and outcomes in their favour.

The following tools and approaches can be used by marginal and minority groups in order to influence a peace process and persuade the main conflict parties to recognize their demands.

Shaping Public Dialogue
Minorities can highlight their message/position on issues by writing articles, appearing in news outlet. This will help them shape discussion and the discourse around peace. Last year, a few of urban Afghan elites wrote a number of articles on their red lines on women's inclusion in peace process at major international news agency which created a lot of debate in Washington D.C. and in other Western countries. In another attempt, Afghan women visited a number of the U.S. and had meetings with U.S. senators and government officials to express their concern about the Taliban-US peace talks. Others appeared in Afghan media and made their case.

Mobilisation
Minorities can mobilise people in their community to raise awareness and visible support for peace negotiations. They can arrange peaceful demonstrations inside and outside the country to highlight their fears and concerns about a process or a position. In Afghanistan, in the last three years, vulnerable groups have successfully taken to the streets to keep

the government and official accountable and even force the government to change their position. Enlightenment Movement was one of them.

Building strong coalition and constituency of supporters
Minorities and marginal groups can build coalitions of support with other actors who share their concerns such as a range of civil society actors and identifying key actors who can be "connectors" and those that are "dividers." With these coalition of like-minded actors, they can advocate for multi-track peace processes that would insure inclusivity. In places like Colombia victims' families formed coalitions with other minority groups successfully campaigning for a transitional justice component to be included in the peace agreement. Others have tried to generate support among journalists covering the issue to bring their concerns onto the national and international attention. They could then reach out to international civil society organizations, stakeholders' congress and others for help and assistance. They could also reach out to like-minded delegations in the negotiations or supporters among national figures including parliamentarians, media, and business personalities and others.

Draft Position papers
Minorities and vulnerable groups could influence their community civil society, academia, elders and etc. to publish regular position papers on key issues undermining their interests in a peace process or post-conflict settlement. They could develop a media campaign, a common agenda or a policy strategy for effective advocacy. Share these position papers with international stakeholders involved in the process.

Regular Community Level Meetings
These groups could organise small scale community meetings at village and district levels to give their community not only a voice but echo those voices at the national level.

Minority and vulnerable groups could identify entry points through advocating with the conflict parties and mediators in order to ensure that they are dedicated a place at the negotiation table as immediate stakeholders or other forms of representation. Further, they need to work for influencing the process through all possible means in order to ensure that the peace agreement does not violate the human rights and basic needs of the citizens and that the agreement lays the foundations for sustainable peace in the society.

5) Lessons Learned from Other Peace Processes

This section highlights different types of peace processes that has taken place over the years that could shed light on minority groups being able to draw lessons from. These examples are also useful to understand steps and tools used in different peace process.

Associations representing the interests of specific social groups, such as the non-dominant ethnic minorities in Afghanistan, need to act proactively to form coalitions with other groups and civil society actors and advocate for direct participation in all stages of

a peace process. In Afghanistan, councils and associations of minority groups need to document the views and concerns of the minority population and develop explicit proposals for addressing them. Additionally, it is important for these associations to identify the most effective inclusion models and apply a combination of several approaches for achieving the desired outcomes. The seven models explained below are the most effective approaches for ensuring inclusivity in a peace process. Starting with representation of all parties in the negotiation table, the list includes a variety of option for civil society actors to participate and/or influence a peace process.

a) Direct Representation at the Negotiation table

Direct Representation at the Negotiation Table refers to a form of peace making where all relevant groups are part of the negotiations. In other words, no major or minor party is excluded from the negotiation table and anyone can raise their concerns during peace talks. It is the most direct form of participation that gives all players the same status as the main conflict parties. This means that each group or party that participates in the negotiations is engaged in the decision making and has a right to vote on the outcomes of the negotiations.

There are mainly three ways to achieve direct representation:

1) Main conflict parties may include more actors in the negotiation delegations. This means that there are two or more delegations at the negotiation table each representing one of the primary conflict parties, such as the representatives of a state and an armed group, and one or both of the parties include additional actors in their delegation team. For instance, in case of US-Taliban peace talks, First Track parties were representatives of the Taliban, mostly from their political office in Qatar, led by Abbas Stanikzai and representatives of US, led by Zalmay Khalilzad. To achieve a direct representation, both or one of the parties may decide to include more actors in the negotiations, such as experts in the field of peace-building.
2) Negotiating parties may increase the number of delegations at the table (as opposed to actors in the previous point). For instance, in the US-Taliban negotiation example, one or both parties may decide to include all Afghan political parties at the table, and not just the major ones. In this approach, relevant actors can raise their voice through existing political parties or form a new party in order to be included in peace negotiations.
3) Negotiating parties can include almost all relevant actors at the table. This means that conflict parties can have a voice at the negotiation table through various formations, such as political parties, NGOs, civil society, representatives of majority and minority groups, and many more. This usually forms a National Peace Dialogue where everyone has is engaged in the negotiations.

While this model ensures a broader public buy-in and gains a greater acceptance level from all conflicting and/or conflict-hit parties for the agreement, there are few challenges that arise when applying this approach. First, more participants make it more complex

and challenging to reach to an agreement that satisfies demands of all relevant parties. To address this challenge, facilitators and even main conflict parties can reshape the formation and divide participants in smaller or sub-working groups or committees to make it easier for everyone to come to an agreement. Each work-group can then focus on issues that are most important for their constituencies.

Second, international norms can be challenging to peace negotiations in some cases. For instance, if as per the international norm of "don't negotiate with terrorists", some key individuals or groups (such as Hassan Nasrullah, Al-Baghdadi, ISIS and etc.) are in black-list then they are excluded from the table, which hinders the direct participation to be achieved fully. To tackle this challenge, so far two approaches have been used in the peace processes: 1) inclusion of more political parties and civil society groups to gain more legitimacy for the process; and 2) deliberate inclusion of some militia groups (although they are in black-list).

Lastly, the issue of weak or unclear representation. Some delegations or groups may not be well-qualified to represent their respective constituencies properly and clearly. This challenge arises when some of the participants do not have sufficient capacity to represent their respective groups or when some of the participants are not genuine representatives (e.g. the issue of splintered groups). To address this, civil society or other entities such as international NGOs and advocacy groups can initiate trainings for such groups to prepare them better for the negotiations and choose to send more qualified representatives to the table.

The case of Yemen:

The current conflict in Yemen dates back to the Arab Spring in 2011 when the uprisings wanted the country's authoritarian president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to step down and pave the way for structural reforms in the country. Due to the escalation of violence, a show election was held in 2012 as a result of which the president's deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, was elected to run a transition government for a 2-years term. Yet, since his government failed to deliver on demands related to structural changes in the government, the conflict escalated.

To resume the negotiation between the stakeholders and consequently establishing an inclusive government in the country, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) was launched by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which took place between March 2013 and January 2014. Looking into its architecture, the NDC was inclusive to a large extent. It entailed different groups concerned with the conflict in the country, from the main conflict parties to groups of women, youth, and civil society.

A preparatory technical committee comprising of different parties, mostly women and youth, started endeavors to discuss and set the structure and agenda of the conference in December 2012. The committee was mandated to prepare for inclusive representation of relevant parties to the conference. The committee decided that the NDC would include 565 members with broad representation of political parties from the north and south of the country as well as the civil society, women and youth.

Negotiations during the conference were carried out in nine working group and led by a nine-member presidency. Each member of the presidency came from one of the major political parties attending the conference. Each working group discussed a specific topic and its members were selected based on relevance of the discussed topics to their constituencies.

With the adoption of the NDC Document stipulating "a roadmap towards the full transition of Yemen into a state that upholds democracy, freedom, rule of law, human rights and good governance", the NDC came to an end on 25 January 2014. Regarding its structure and proceedings, the NDC is defined as an example of inclusive and democratic process for transitioning form war to peace. The broad inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the conference is a success story for direct representation of all actors in the negotiations table. However, signing of the NDC document did not end the conflict in the country due to several reasons; among them the ambiguity of power sharing mechanism in the country.

b) Observer Status

Another approach through which an inclusive peace process can be achieved is dedicating observer status for the civil society and other relevant actors. In this modality, instead of participation as an additional party at the table, groups can have observer status. Except for direct participants who are the main negotiating parties in the process, rest of the participants attend as observers and do not directly engage in the negotiations and do not have a right to vote on the outcomes. Instead, they can use different ways to provide their input to the negotiations and consequent agreement. There are few ways observers can participate in the process. First, observers can be passive and just monitor the process without having any major inputs. Second, the observers can be active advisers to the negotiating parties and/or the mediators.

In this approach, observers can function as monitoring bodies and watchdogs. They can observe the entire process and lobby for their proposals through direct consultations with the conflict parties and mediators as well as through disclosing critical information to the outside public to exert pressure on the negotiating parties. Observer status can be granted to civil society groups, national and international NGOs and other relevant stakeholders.

However, one of the major challenges to this modality is the selection of observers. Not all groups or bodies can be granted observer status, hence the selection of observers needs to be made with precision. This means that only those should be given an observer status whose participation in the process is meaningful and can have a positive impact on the overall result. Another challenge to this approach is side-lining. Side-lining means that there is no guarantee that conflict parties, mediators and others will listen to powerless observers. Observers' role in this case becomes meaningless and cannot incur any changes to the process or the final agreement.

The case of Liberia:

The Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2003 ended the second Liberian civil war. The agreement led to the establishment of a post-war interim government called the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL). The NTGL was comprised of 76 members with the composition of 12 members form each warring party (total 36 members), 18 from political parties, 7 from civil society, and 15 members from each first-level administrative divisions called counties. The ministerial portfolios and employment opportunities were shared between the parties to jointly work for holding the elections before 2005.

Under the agreement, all parties agreed to promote democracy and committed to fully respect the international humanitarian law and human rights documents. However, leaders of civil society struggled hard to reserve the right to oversight the peace process. In contrast, beyond their traditional roles, they took part as advocates, educators, and monitors by participating in the formal peace negotiations and the NTGL between 2003 and 2005.

Six civil society organizations including a women group received observer status after the ceasefire agreement was signed. Through the establishment of working groups, lobbying with the negotiation delegations, and exerting pressure from outside through coordination among the representatives present in the negotiations as observers and groups outside the negotiations, the civil society and women groups played an important role in the Liberia peace negotiations.

There were no women present during the formal peace talks, yet, the first-ever female president in Africa was elected from Liberia in the 2005 elections. The women's rights defenders initiated the Women Mass Action for Peace (WMAP) in April 2003. Campaigns initiated by WMAP were crucial in holding formal peace talks, holding the conflict parties accountable for the negotiation timetable, facilitating national support for the peace process, and finally the disarmament of ex-combatants. The campaign organized demonstrations, marches, and weekly rallies in central fish markets with participation of thousands of women from all regions including returnees. As part of their campaign the WMAP mobilized women from across the country and staged a sex strike demanding for peace. Additionally, the WMAP organized a set-in in Accra, where the peace talks were being held, blocking all the exists of the negotiations venue until the peace agreement was signed.

c) Consultations

Consultation is also an important part of peace settlements. It adds more insight to the overall process and plays a crucial role in easing the difficulties associated with negotiating complex issues. Examples from the past prove that consultations add many ignored and forgotten issues to the peace agenda and provided better alternatives to solve complex issues. Consultations allow bodies such as the civil society to echo unheard voices and neglected issues and positively impact the final outcome of the negotiations. Consultations may take place before, during or after the actual negotiations and augment additional major or minor unsolved and undiscussed issues to the peace

agenda. Usually, consultative forums follow the same agenda as the main negotiation team, but in some cases, these forums add and incorporate more issues to the table and hence enrich the final agreement.

Mainly, two types of consultative forums can be organized as part of a peace process:

- **Official Consultative Forums**

This model consists of formal forums composed of societal or political groups that are an official part of the peace process design. In other words, consultative forums are formally endorsed by conflict parties and the mediators. In addition to endorsement, conflict parties or mediators set the mandate for the official consultative forums, where it should also consider if recommendations of such forums are binding, similar to, or different from those of the official negotiation teams. In some cases, the forums themselves specify their mandate and are then endorsed by the conflict parties. The purpose of such forums is not merely augmenting more issues to the process, but also in some cases, participants of such forums can provide back-channel advisory to the negotiation delegations and monitor the negotiations.

An advantage of official forums is that by adding more issues to the table, they add more legitimacy to the agreement while avoiding the problems associated with having too many parties at the main negotiation table. In addition to it, these forums can play a vital role in providing easy or alternative solutions to the difficult issues between the official negotiators, that can sometimes lead to postponement or halt of the process.

However, there are few disadvantages to it as well. First, its distance from the negotiation table. The fact that consultation forums are not directly part of the negotiation teams, constrains them from incorporating their recommendations thoroughly and effectively. Second, the forums might be sidelined, neglected or ignored by the negotiation teams despite their official status. Finally, there is a risk of disunity among the consultation forum members, which in turn can add to complexity of the process and cause barriers against achievement of an effective agreement. Therefore, the selection process for consultation forum members should be conducted with double precision in order to ensure process legitimacy and effectiveness of the forums.

- **Unofficial Consultations:**

In contrast to the official forums, unofficial consultations do not only differ in terms of status in the process, input, effectiveness, and scope. Unofficial consultations are endorsed neither by the conflict parties nor the mediators. Their purpose is to add more insight to the process, augment critical neglected information and issues, enable diverse voices from the population and inform wider constituencies about the process. Further, they not only allow the mediation team to better understand the conflict dynamics, but also allow mediators to gain insights into people's needs, concerns and views as well as to determine which players should be involved in shaping the post-agreement agenda.

Unofficial consultations take place at a greater distance from the official negotiations and hence has a greater potential to be ignored and sidelined partially or completely. Nevertheless, in addition to challenges associated with official forums, unofficial

consultations are at a greater risk of disunity and ineffectiveness. On the other hand, although, unofficial consultations are not binding, examples from several cases have shown that they add vital inputs to the process, have substantial positive impact and shed light on the many issues that would be neglected otherwise. Therefore, this approach can be effective in ensuring an inclusive process and civil society actors should consider it during their efforts to engage in peace processes.

The case of Guatemala:

The 1996 peace accord signed between the Guatemalan government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) ended the Guatemalan civil war which had started in 1960 and lasted for 36 years. In 1994, representatives of the government of Guatemala and the UNRG met in Mexico City and reached an agreement on a framework for negotiations. Among other mechanism and instrument, establishment of the Civil Society Assembly (CSA) was one of the main provisions of the Framework Agreement. The main goal of the CSA was to engage the non-government institutions in different stages of the peace process.

The CSA was mandated by both sides to provide recommendations on the six main topics addressed in bilateral negotiation. These topics were: (1) strengthening civil society and the functions of the army in a democratic society; (2) the identity and rights of indigenous people; (3) constitutional reform and the electoral regime; (4) the resettlement of those displaced by the conflict; (5) socio-economic conditions; and (6) the agrarian situation.

Although the structure and working mechanism of the CSA was not specified in the Framework Agreement, the head of CSA and the organizing committee were able to specify a number of actors wishing to participate in the peace process and the mechanisms for their intervention. In addition to the six sectors (political parties, religious groups, trade unions and popular organizations, the Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations (CACIF) and the Atlixco grouping) which had already been specified in the Framework Agreement, they were able to embed five more sectors (women's organizations, other non-governmental development organizations, research centers, human rights groups, and media organizations) to the list of sectors engaged in the CAS. While each sector had its internal structure and mechanisms to discuss relevant topics, they were mandated to identify priorities and formulate proposals. Each sector had ten delegates to represent them at the CSA and discuss and comment on the final proposals brought in by the CSA.

On the other hand, the indigenous people of the country were not contented to be counted as a sector under the umbrella of the CSA. Therefore, they formed their own organization comprising of over 200 different grassroots groups by the title of Coordination of organizations of Mayan People of Guatemala (COPMAGUA). The organization functioned as a platform for the indigenous people to bring up their concerns and discuss them in public forums. Throughout their discussions within the CSA, all indigenous groups echoed a unified voice and consequently were able to draft the "Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples" as one of the most controversial and challenging proposals in the CSA's agenda.

d) Public Participation

Public participation refers to activities and settlements that aim to connect large segments of public to the official negotiations. It acts as a means of sharing concerns of the population with the main negotiating parties. Public participation can take place during the negotiations as well as during the implementation phase. These activities include, but are not limited to, public hearings, citizen panels and opinion polls.

The main objectives of public participation are:

- To improve understanding of the public needs and concerns and incorporate them to the agenda and consequently the agreement;
- Create legitimacy and public buy-in for the peace process; and,
- Gather evidences from the public about human rights violations and other grievances.

This model does not only enrich the negotiation agenda and the agreement, but also gives all parties and relevant constituencies a feeling of inclusivity, which in turn adds to the overall legitimacy of the process. It also serves as a tool to inform the participants of formal negotiations about the issues and concerns that remained unheard or ignored. In addition, it is a useful approach to settle the post agreement arguments which can arise as a result of misinterpretation and mislead of provisions. Further, it equips the post-agreement mechanisms with better information and evidences for effective and efficient monitoring in the implementation phase.

The case of Northern Ireland:

The Northern Ireland modern conflict begun in late 1960s and ended with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The constitutional status of Northern Ireland was the major driver of conflict between the Unionists/loyalists and the Irish nationalists/republicans. The former wanted Northern Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom; however, the latter was struggling for the Northern Ireland to leave the United Kingdom and join the United Ireland. After decades of ongoing conflict, the two sides agreed to launch public opinion polls in both the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to put an end to the conflict. On May 22 1998, two simultaneous referends were held in two mentioned territories to get the agreements approved through public referendum which succeeded in securing a "Yes" vote from majority of the population.

In addition, a total of eight opinion polls were conducted to gather peoples view in implementing the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland between April 1996 and May 2000. Questions of the opinion polls were developed with the co-operation of party negotiators to enhance the peace process through public participation on decision-makings related to policy making, development, and political structures. The following polls were conducted before and after the peace agreement was signed.

1. **Peacebuilding and public policy**: The first poll was conducted in April and May 1996 to explore various policy options for improving relations between the

two communities in Northern Ireland. Topics covered included; housing, education, parades, Irish language, policing and political development.

2. **After the Elections:** The second poll was conducted in March 1997 and aimed to gather public opinion on the participation of different parties after the election which were held in May that year. The respondents voted on whether parties with para-military associations would be included in peace negotiations or not, which resulted to inclusion of all parties in the negotiations.

3. **The Stormont Talks:** The third poll conducted in September 1997 was conducted to seek public opinion on the continued participation of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) which demonstrated public support for the continuation of talks.

4. **In Search of a Settlement:** The fourth poll was conducted in December 1997 on the substantive issues of the peace process while the official negotiations were halted due to procedural issues. The polls helped restart the negotiations.

5. **A Comprehensive Settlement:** The fifth poll was conducted in March 1998 to collect public opinion on the proposal prepared by the seven parties participating the negotiations as well as alternative proposals of the parties who had left the negotiations. This poll demonstrated that the public supported the proposal of the negotiating parties.

6. **Implementation of the Belfast Agreement:** The sixth poll was conducted in February 1999 after some parties refused to cooperate in implementing the Belfast Agreement. Outcome of the polls indicated that over 90% of the population wanted their representatives to work for implementing the agreement.

7. **The Mitchell Review:** the seventh poll was conducted in October 1999 after the peace process was halted due to one of the parties refusing to take their executive sets before the handover of arms. The poll was initiated by Senator George Mitchell and indicated broad public support for the process to proceed.

8. **The Future of the Peace Process:** The eight poll was conducted in May 2000 in order to collect public opinion on disarmament proposals which secured public support for the proposals.

d) Public Decision-making

A crucial next step to the negotiations and peace deals or agreements is public decision-making. It refers to an election or a referendum about the peace agreement and is practiced mostly in democratic post conflict societies. Public decision-making is highly binding and takes place after ratification of constitution or peace agreements by the conflict parties. This means that once the voting or referendum happens, its consequent decision should be implemented. In other words, if for example the public in referendum gives a 'Yes' to the ratification of agreement or the constitution, it mandates the decision-makers to continue the process and also gives them a leverage against the hard-liner's

opposition to the process, while if they decide to say 'No' to it, it usually puts the process on hold and stops any further actions in regards to its implementation.

The success of a public vote depends on a number of factors, such as the level of public support for and understanding of the agreement; the pertinence of the questions put to the public; and the mobilization of public support for or against the referendum. It is to be mentioned that public decision-making such as a referendum can have unwanted and unexpected outcome against or for the ratification. Therefore, the timing of and the issues put to referendum must be very carefully done and be part of a well-considered and well-planned strategy.

The case of Northern Ireland: Referendums

The simultaneous referendums that were held in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on May 22, 1998, secured absolute buy-in of the public in both territories. As a result of the referenda, the Good Friday Agreement which had already been approved by opposing sides were ratified by a majority of the constituency in both territories on May 22 1998. The electorates of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were supposed to respectively vote for two different but inter-related documents: (1)- the Multi-Party Agreement and (2)- the British–Irish Agreement. Since the two territories were supposed to vote for two different documents, two different questions had been given to them during the referendum. The wording of the referendum question on the ballot paper for Northern Ireland was as follows: "Do you support the Agreement reached the multi-party talks on Northern Ireland and set out in Command Paper 3883?". The result of this question is mentioned below:

Turnout	81.1%
Yes	676,966 (71.1%)
No	274,879 (28.9%)
Invalid	1,738

On the other side, the question on the ballot paper for the Republic of Ireland was focused on the amendment of the constitution: "Do you approve of the proposal to amend the Constitution contained in the undermentioned Bill?". Below is the result for the mentioned question in the Republic of Ireland.

Turnout	55.6%
Yes	1,442,583 (94.4%)
No	85,748 (5.6%)
Invalid	17,064

As it is shown above, the turnout in the Republic of Ireland was lower (55.6%) than the turnout in Northern Ireland (81.1%), however, the electorate who voted "Yes" to the question in the Republic of Ireland (94.4%) was more than the electorate who voted in favor of the question in Northern Ireland (71.1%).

e) Mass Action

The last approach for an inclusive peace in this manual is mass action. It is one of the methods for incorporating population's serious concerns into the process. It takes place in the form of street protests, signature campaigns and also what have recently been added to the model, the social media campaigns and online petitions. These means have the potential to mobilize public in huge numbers and can greatly impact the final agreement and decisions. It can mobilize a significant number of people to voice their concerns and hence can create a pro or anti-process atmosphere in the country.

Examples from various countries have shown that the power of mass action can incur a great deal of impact on the agreements. Once again, civil society can play a crucial role in mobilizing, advocating and guiding the general public to take mass action for or against a process and put pressure on the first track negotiators to include or exclude certain items to or from the agenda as well as the agreement.

The case of Nepal:

Nearly after a decade of vacillated conflict and violence, the Nepalese civil war (aka Maoist conflict) which had begun in February 1996 between the government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-M), ended with signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord on 21 November 2006. The main cause of the conflict was rested in holding of the constituent assembly to bring reforms and change the structure of the government. The warring parties agreed to establish a constituent assembly to redraft the country's constitution (including the continued existence of a monarchy), and to establish an interim government.

Few months after, King Gyanendra seized the power by dismissing the Prime minister and dissolving the elected Parliament in February 2005, all the existing political parties established an alliance i.e. the Seven party alliances–SPA and together with the Maoist party and other organizations stood against the decision of the king and called for a pervasive protest. As a result, a widespread public protest took place that lasted for 19 days in April 2006. The protests terminated the seizure of power by the king and paved the ground for ending the civil war in the country through the establishment of conducive conditions for peace talks between the government and the CPN-M forces,

The protestors had three specific demands (restoration of the parliament, transition of power to an all-party government, and establishment of a new constituent assembly), which the king was compelled to accept and bring them into effect on April 24 2006. Moreover, the widespread demonstration caused the civil war to come to an end by signing the Comprehensive Peace Accord on 21 November 2006 between the warring parties. The case of Nepal's widespread protest is considered as a prominent and successful example showing the role of mass action in ending the conflict in a county.

6) Implementation and Oversight of the Peace Deal

Once an agreement is made between the conflict parties, the next step which is even more crucial is the implementation and monitoring of the provisions of it. In order to assure the proper implementation of an agreement and its provisions, there is a need for certain mechanisms to facilitate the implementation phase and also monitor that all relevant parties act upon the agreed terms.

Implementation mechanisms can take a variety of forms. It includes mechanisms on making sure that ceasefire holds for which it includes a monitoring, verifying and reporting mechanisms; that DDR successfully takes place for which a commission is needed to monitor, verify and reform on decommissioning of weapons; that power-sharing is inclusive of all groups for which a committee or council of elders/advisors could be established to highlight violations; that elections are held for getting a legitimate government in place; and others.

Setting up Inclusive Commission

Inclusive commissions, also known as the post-agreement mechanisms, are a set of mechanisms and commissions that carry out tasks such as monitoring and facilitation for implementation of the agreement, sustainability of the agreement and informing the general public about the agreement and its terms. Examples of these commissions, differing from country to country and from case to case, are ceasefire commission, peace and reconciliation commission, permanent peace bodies and etc.

For instance, an agreement between Comoros and Anjouan led to the establishment of a Follow-Up Committee to, amongst other tasks, interpret the provisions of the Peace Agreement and resolve any disputes arising from the Agreement. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a special tribune was set up to which both parties could appoint one member each, with the Chairman appointed jointly. Any dispute arising out of the Agreement was submitted to the Tribune to get resolved. In other places, international actors have played a key role often mandating the UN to act as the guarantor.

Some peace agreements include provisions for civil society to raise awareness about the agreement and in some cases reach to all parts of the country to inform the population about the provisions of the agreement. In other examples, the agreement provides the civil society a seat in the country's national legislature to put more pressure on the conflict parties in order to better comply with the provisions of the agreement. Therefore, these mechanisms play a crucial role in post-agreement phases of the process and can assure the sustainability of agreement and peace in the country.

Nevertheless, as in all other models, selection of the representatives and commission members is a vital step. Primary conflict parties and mediators need to assure that appropriate representatives are selected for such commissions parallel to or after the negotiation stage, because inappropriate members of the commissions can stray the process and consolidate social divisions, in which case the commissions can be counter effective.

It is important that minorities and vulnerable groups get representation in these Commissions and influence their decision for their favour through systematic advocacy efforts highlighted above.