

Abstract

Women and Grassroots-Level Engagement in Building Peace

In *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997), John Paul Lederach expressed that “the greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture” (1997:94). Based on this argument, this research promotes bottom-up approaches to peacebuilding and acknowledges the need for more inclusion and coordination between actors. Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda adopted in 2015, we advance the centrality of community engagement and women’s participation in building sustainable peace. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development constitutes a collective action to strengthen universal prosperity and highlights the linkages between development, peace, and gender equality.

More specifically, SDG 5 ‘gender equality’ is central to this research as it advances the need to ensure women’s full inclusion and equal participation in peacebuilding processes. Besides, our perspective supports SDG 16, reaffirming the need to ensure peace and security through conflict prevention and resolution initiatives. We emphasise the need to include grassroots approaches and strengthen capacity-building at the community level. In this regard, this research relates to the Laudato Si’ Goals (LSGs) ‘Response to the Cry of the Poor’ and ‘Community Engagement and Participatory Action’. These goals defend the development of cultures and policies that protect human life and increase solidarity with vulnerable people. Finally, this research highlights the need for increased coordination and collaboration between all stakeholders as a global partnership to achieve inclusive and sustainable peace worldwide.