

# Foreword

## “ Excluding women from peacebuilding neglects a rich source of skills, insights and energy”

This is the first *Accord Insight* paper, a new format presenting cutting-edge analysis and contemporary peacebuilding innovation by examining key challenges and practical lessons from peacebuilding experience.

For nearly two decades Accord has been documenting and analysing lessons from peace processes, featuring first hand accounts of people’s efforts to build peace. The range of experience and regions covered by Accord brings a breadth of insight and expertise and a unique source of applied and comparative learning.

The role of women in peacebuilding and peacemaking has been a recurrent theme in the Accord series, and we are delighted that our first *Accord Insight* presents case studies and lessons on this important topic.

The protection of women in conflict-affected areas, as well as their participation in political decision-making, has been increasingly prominent in international policy over recent decades. But the development of new policy and approaches has not yet had the impact many had hoped for.

This publication presents nine case studies drawn from past issues of Accord that examine the roles women have played in addressing violence and building peace. An expert analysis highlights common themes and experiences and situates these in the context of current policy on women, peace and security. To help place the articles in their broader context they have been extended through the addition of an abstract, contextual background and biographical note about the author.

Both individually and collectively the articles make a powerful story. Excluding women from peacebuilding neglects a rich source of skills, insights and energy. The case studies illustrate how women have found innovative and creative ways to contribute to peace through both formal and informal processes. They also show how women’s peace efforts play a role in addressing the structural changes necessary for sustainable peace.

But overcoming barriers to political participation remains a key challenge – and peace itself is invariably gendered. Peace process assistance and practice needs to rethink how to better support and integrate women’s peacebuilding.

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