Call for Consultancy

The Berghof Foundation in cooperation with the Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung / Platform Peaceful Conflict Transformation is calling for applications by consultants for a study on the topic of "Towards an intersectional feminist approach: Exploring chances, risks and potentials to the use of digital technology in peacebuilding"

Submission of proposal: 09.10.2022

Scope of the Study: approx. 25 pages + 2 pages of recommendations + 1 pager executive summary

Background

New digital technologies are becoming increasingly important worldwide, and the Corona pandemic has further accelerated the digitalisation process. It will continue to evolve and impact the field of peacebuilding in manifold ways, as it has huge implications on conflict dynamics and peacebuilding efforts. The hope that digitalisation can promote inclusion and empower marginalized groups, was accompanied by the sobering reality the same mechanisms of marginalization are often reproduced in the online space. It is therefore important to understand the interactions between digitalisation and peacebuilding, and how the use of digital technology can support conflict transformation work from a feminist and conflict sensitive perspective.

The recent study conducted by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2021)[1] "Women, Peace, and Security and Human Rights in the Digital Age: Opportunities and risks to advance women's meaningful participation and protect their rights" looked at how women in peacebuilding can use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) to advance their work and it pointed to the challenge that in "*fragile and conflict--affected contexts, intersectional issues including poverty, limited infrastructure, digital literacy, marginalisation, and restrictive regulatory environments have perpetuated – and in some case exacerbated – restrictions in access to digital technologies*".

While digitalisation has potential for the inclusion of women and marginalised groups in peace processes, it can also perpetuate existing patriarchal & power structures, and replicate existing inequalities since women and other marginalized groups "*face critical political, financial, technical, and cultural barriers to effectively using ICTs for greater inclusion in conflict prevention and peacebuilding*" (Brown 2018)[2]. Nevertheless, including more women and other minority groups means more diversity - which requires a different way of thinking about the design and use of technology (Hutchinson 2022)[3]. To reach greater inclusion, peace actors should be aware of the underlying structural barriers and power dynamics. An intersectional feminist lens[4] can help to take a holistic view of digitalisation in peacebuilding and explore the intersectional patterns of discrimination. Women for example may face intersectional discrimination and bias based on age, ethnicity, religion, and other markers and we need

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[1] Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2021): Women, Peace, and Security and Human Rights in the Digital Age: Opportunities and risks to advance women' s meaningful participation and protect their rights DIL-GNWP-Research-Report_WPS-and-Human-Rights-in-Digital-Age_2021.pdf

[2] Clare Brown (2018): The Use of ICTs in Conflict and Peacebuilding: A Feminist Analysis, Australian Feminist Law Journal, 44:1, 137-153.

[3] Clare Hutchinson (2022): Digital diversity and other myths. Supporting the implementation of mandated tasks through digital technologies. ZIF Techpops. https://tech-blog.zif-berlin.org/digital-diversity-and-other-myths.

[4] There are different understandings of what feminism means and the discussions on feminist foreign and development policies have put the discourse back on the political agenda. In this paper, we start from the understanding that feminism helps to expose asymmetries and imbalances of power quite generally. It aims to combat inequality of women and other marginalized groups, recognize the intersectionality of gender with other identity makers and highlights other forms of oppression, such as colonialism.

to challenge current innovation narratives and highlight the underlining power structures in the digital transformation in the sphere of peacebuilding (Superrr Lap)[5].

Peace Direct (2020)[6] calls for a "*more holistic approach when using technology in programming, which must consider ethical guidelines, conflict sensitivity and security planning across*" peace intervention Track I to III.

But how can peace practitioners and activists make this a reality? Which policy frameworks can support this? The aim of the study is not to see peacetech - the use of technology to support peacebuilding activities - as a panacea, but to question its usefulness, access the positive and negative impact and provide recommendations from a feminist and conflict-sensitive perspective.

Research Question

- How can the design and implementation of projects using peacetech successfully contribute to the strategic goal of adding a feminist lens to peacebuilding? What are pitfalls? What are consequences for funding, structure of partnerships and thematic approaches?
- How can peacebuilding projects using peacetech ensure that they do not reinforce existing inequalities and the marginalization of vulnerable groups? How can such solutions be made sustainable?
- What concrete recommendations for peacebuilding practice can be formulated? What needs to change in political frameworks and policies in order for such recommendations to be implemented and to "stick"?

Methodology
Desktop research considering key research reports and academic papers as well as publication/project reports from (I)NGOs, complemented by expert & practitioner interviews

Target audience
Peace practitioners working for (I)NGOs and peace activists who are using or consider using technology solutions in peacebuilding to support their work; policy makers

Deliverables

- Report: 20 - 25 pages + 2 pages of recommendations + 1 pager executive summary. The complete draft study is to be submitted for review no later than 15 December 2022; further process (feedback and finalization) to be discussed and agreed.
- Presentation of the study in an online public event

Requirements / Consultant profile

- Completed university studies in a thematically relevant field
- Extensive knowledge of the gender and peacebuilding nexus
- Extensive knowledge of use of digital technologies in peacebuilding as well as social and political dynamics of digitalization
- Proven research and publication track record

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[5] Superrr Lap developed recommendations for a feminist digital policy as mentioned in the German Digital Strategy, see https://superrr.net/project/feministische-digitalpolitik/ and https://digitalstrategie-deutschland.de/medien/. Else Helmke also explores the importance of a feminist perspective on digital strategy, https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/de/von-feministischer-digitalpolitik-profitiert-die-gesellschaft-als-ganzes.

[6] Peace Direct (2020) Digital Pathways to peace. Insight and lessons from a global online consultation: https://www.peacedirect.org/us/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/PD-LVP-Tech-Report.pdf

The offer should include the following information:

- Price calculation, including a breakdown of working days
- Brief outline of the chosen approach and focus
- Curriculum vitae of the person(s) involved
- Explanation of how the applicant fulfils the requirement profile; knowledge must be demonstrated by references or publications
- List of relevant publications

Applications

Interested applicants should submit their offer to Berghof Foundation's Conflict Transformation Research Department, contact person: Nina Strumpf at nina.strumpf@frient.de by October 09, 2022. Nina Strumpf is also available for questions on the call and application.

Selection of relevant literature

Brown, Deborah/ Pytlak Allison 2020: Why Gender Matters in International Cyber Security. Geneva/ Melville: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom/Association for Progressive Communications, https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/Gender_Matters_Report_Web_A4.pdf

Brown, Clare 2018: The Use of ICTs in Conflict and Peacebuilding: A Feminist Analysis, Australian Feminist Law Journal, 44:1, 137-153.

Buzatu, Anne-Marie/Fal-Dutra Santos, Agnieszka/Lakeha, Dinah/Pourmalek, Panthea/Zelenanska, Michaela 2021: Women, Peace, and Security and Human Rights in the Digital Age: Opportunities and risks to advance women' s meaningful participation and protect their rights. New York: Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and ICT4Peace Foundation, DIL-GNWP-Research-Report_WPS-and-Human-Rights-in-Digital-Age_2021.pdf

Chandler, Katherine 2021: Does Military AI Have Gender? Understanding bias and promoting ethical approaches in military applications of AI. Geneva: UNIDIR https://unidir.org/publication/does-military-ai-have-gender-understanding-bias-and-promoting-ethical-approaches

Cheung, Jessica/Gürsel, Dilek/Jelenka, Marie/Victoria, Kirchner 2021: Practicing Feminist Foreign Policy in the Everyday: A Toolkit. Berlin: Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit Deutschland https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/2022-02/220201_WILPF_V2.pdf

Firchow, Pamina/Martin-Shields, Charles/Omer, Atalia/Mac Ginty, Roger 2017: PeaceTech: The Liminal Spaces of Digital Technology in Peacebuilding, in: International Studies Perspectives, 18:1, 4-42

GIZ 2020: Smart Prevention. Digital Approaches in the Peace and Security Sector of Development Cooperation. Eschborn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), https://toolkit-digitalisierung.de/app/uploads/2020/09/Smart-Prevention_engl_Web.pdf

Hirblinger, Andreas T. 2020: Digital Inclusion in Peace Processes. How technology can enhance participation. Peaceworks No. 168. Washingtion DC: United State Institute for Peace, https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/09/digital-inclusion-mediated-peace-processes-how-technology-can-enhance

Hofstetter, Julia-Silvana 2021: Digital Technologies, Peacebuilding and Civil Society. Addressing Digital Conflict Drivers and Moving the Digital Peacebuilding Agenda Forward, INEF Report 114/2021, Duisburg: Institute for Development and Peace, https://ict4peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ir114_hofstetter_final_web-1.pdf

Hutchinson, Clare 2022: Digital diversity and other myths. Supporting the implementation of mandated tasks through digital technologies. ZIF Techpops. https://tech-blog.zif-berlin.org/digital-diversity-and-other-myths

Joëlle, Jenny/Greenberg, Rosi/Lowney, Vincent/Banim, Guy 2018: Peacemaking and New Technologies Dilemmas & Options for Mediators. Mediation Practice Series No. 8. Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MPS-8-Peacemaking-and-New-Technologies.pdf

Peace Direct 2020: Digital Pathways to peace. Insight and lessons from a global online consultation, https://www.peacedirect.org/us/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/PD-LVP-Tech-Report.pdf

Schirch, Lisa 2022: The Digital Space and Peace Processes. A thought Piece. Geneva: Principles for Peace, https://www.hirondelle.org/en/blog/1765-the-digital-space-and-peace-processes-a-thought-piece

Sharland, Lisa/Goussac Netta/Currey Emilia, Feely/Genevieve/O'Connor, Sarah 2021: System Update: Towards a Women, Peace and Cybersecurity Agenda. Geneva: UNIDIR, System Update: Towards a Women, Peace and Cybersecurity Agenda | UNIDIR