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Transfer from Track Two Peacebuilding to Track One Peacemaking:

A Focus on Yemen and Syria

Thania Paffenholz and Kaitlyn Hashem

Report

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SUGGESTED CITATION: Thania Paffenholz and Kaitlyn Hashem, *Track Two Peacebuilding to Track One Peacemaking: Insights from Yemen and Syria.* (Geneva: Inclusive Peace, November 2022).

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations, or any of its affiliated organisations.

Report commissioned and produced by UN Women Regional Office for Arab States, as part of the project "Enhancing Women's Leadership for Sustainable Peace in Fragile Contexts in the MENA Region,« funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in cooperation with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

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List of Acronyms

CSSR	Civil Society Support Room
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OSES	Office of the Special Envoy for Syria
OSESGY	Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WAB	Women's Advisory Board
WPS	women, peace, and security

Executive Summary

Over the past three decades, the multi-track model of peacebuilding has dominated international approaches to peace processes. Initiatives and programmes are funded and developed that follow the widely accepted concept of "transfer" between track one and track two: the influencing pathways for actors at different societal levels to participate from the community level to the high level.

However, the concept of transfer remains ambiguous; it is challenging to grasp and enact. Despite some instances of effective transfer, it is a dynamic process that can, at times, elicit frustration and pessimism among peace practitioners. This report shares new insights about transfer from track two to track one in Yemen and Syria, and provides a framework that all actors and funders can use to assess and plan for effective transfer. It encourages actors to reflect on whether transfer should be sought and, if so, how it could be achieved with careful consideration of women's barriers to access and influence.

Drawing on the insights and perspectives of peace practitioners in Yemen and Syria, the report sheds light on the role of women in transfer from track two to track one. In both countries, transfer between track two and track one is being sought but has largely not been successful, due to certain obstacles and barriers. As one participant in Syria highlighted: "If there is no track one, it is difficult to see the end product."

This report identifies the obstacles and barriers to transfer as follows:

- **Track one blockage:** The overall obstacle to transfer is the protracted nature of the wars in Yemen and Syria and stalled track one processes, which make it extremely difficult for civil society and community leaders, particularly women, to influence processes positively.

- **Structure of track two:** Research participants identified barriers to transfer stemming from the structure of track two: perceptions of the superficial nature of track two initiatives, as well as failures in communication. Transfer was further hampered by sporadic funding patterns and insufficient coordination between track two convenors to convey joint messages.

- **Conceptual and practical confusion:** Peace practitioners in both countries offered some examples of effective transfer, but they were lacking in detail. When they did identify specific instances, their reports were often tempered by cynicism about the impact of these efforts. The examples provided of successful transfer were often phrased in such a way as to suggest a lack of clarity and precision about the concept.

- **Lack of protection:** Concern regarding the safety of track two participants, particularly women, is a primary barrier to their participation. Women who do participate in the track two space face hostility and persecution, including attacks on social media.

- **Exclusion:** In both countries, women—particularly those from marginalised communities—face structural exclusion from public and political life, including from influential track two initiatives. Women have also been systematically excluded from track one negotiations. The research found that they tend to be represented in greater numbers within track two efforts compared to track one negotiations. None of the detailed descriptions of effective transfer concerned initiatives that were led by or involved women or that were focused on gender equality.

Interviewees stated that women tend not to be represented in track two diplomacy. When they are represented in track two initiatives, those initiatives are commonly unconnected to track one efforts and are of a particularly superficial nature. Furthermore, even when women's voices do reach the track two or track one space, they are rarely respected or acted upon, which the interviewees perceived as being due to the conflict parties' unwillingness to listen to women's views. This is due, in part, to the perception that track two initiatives involving women focus predominantly on normative matters.

This report recommends connecting these findings with the perpetual peacebuilding paradigm proposed by Thania Paffenholz,[1] which suggests that dividing peacebuilding and peacemaking into separate tracks may serve to obscure blurred boundaries between the tracks and prevent truly inclusive peacemaking. It may be possible to move away from the very need for transfer by broadening understanding of what constitutes peacemaking and peacebuilding towards a more flexible, homegrown, emancipatory, and participatory conceptualisation.

There is an urgent need to rethink and refine transfer through an evidence-based approach and to address the apparent lack of clarity concerning transfer from track two to track one in the peacemaking, peacebuilding, and women, peace, and security communities. In the context of stalled track one processes, persevering with attempts to transfer to a stuck or struggling track one process could prove futile.

1 T. Paffenholz, "Perpetual Peacebuilding: A New Paradigm to Move Beyond the Linearity of Liberal Peacebuilding," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 15:3 (2021), pp. 367–85.

1 Introduction

The idea that peacemaking and peacebuilding can be divided into separate "tracks" has been prominent within academia and practice for a number of decades. Official diplomacy, between governmental and military leaders and focused on the negotiation of ceasefires and peace accords, has been termed "track one." Unofficial dialogue sessions, workshops, and problem-solving activities, seeking to rebuild relationships and involving civil society leaders and influential individuals, have been termed "track two." Since the concept of track two peacebuilding arose, it has been suggested that one of the crucial aims of this form of diplomacy is to support track one negotiations, and the notion of "transfer" has been introduced to conceptualise the ways in which this aim might be achieved. However, transfer remains challenging both to grasp and to enact. Moreover, the primacy of transfer into track one, together with the very idea that peacemaking and peacebuilding should be divided into rigid hierarchies, has faced contestation as peace processes are not linear, and the reality of processes cannot be neatly separated into tracks. Additionally, the concept of transfer is challenging in the absence of progress at the track one level.[2] Nevertheless, track two as a category of action that seeks to inform formal processes can still be investigated in more detail, particularly in relation to seeking clarity around various challenges (explored in Section 4.4).

Accordingly, through the prism of two profoundly damaging and ongoing wars in Yemen and Syria—which have impacted women, girls, men, and boys in different ways—this research project aims to:

- clarify the process of transfer from track two to track one;
- assess whether additional transfer mechanisms, not identified in secondary sources, are taking place in the field;
- reflect in depth on the experiences of participants, practitioners, and donors on transfer from track two to track one in practice;
- consider the process of transfer from track two to track one through a gender lens;
- critically scrutinise the concept of transfer and the very notion of operating multiple peacemaking and peacebuilding tracks under challenging conditions.

2 See T. Paffenholz, "Perpetual Peacebuilding: A New Paradigm to Move Beyond the Linearity of Liberal Peacebuilding," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 15:3 (2021), pp. 367–85.

This report explores the process of transfer, specifically from track two peacebuilding to track one peacemaking, in the context of the Yemeni and Syrian wars.

The report has three objectives, fulfilled by reviewing secondary literature concerning transfer and by analysing data gathered from 31 interviewees and 25 workshop participants (both men and women), all of whom were participants, convenors, or donors in track two and track one efforts in the two countries at the time of this study.

The first objective has three parts: to assess the extent to which transfer from track two to track one is taking and has taken place in Yemen and Syria, and with what kinds of results; to examine the gender-related obstacles relating to transfer from track two to track one in the two contexts; and to understand the possible means by which transfer from track two to track one can be made more relevant, effective, and gender inclusive in the future in these two countries and beyond. The second objective is to develop a framework based on theory and empirical research. This framework is intended to succinctly present the manifold mechanisms and approaches contained within the process of transfer from track two to track one, and it is intended as a useful tool for all track two and track one practitioners along with experts and researchers. Finally, this report positions the concept of transfer within the broader context of stalled track one processes.

Section 2 defines the concepts of multi-track diplomacy and transfer and then Section 3 outlines the violence suffered in Yemen and Syria since 2011, the manner in which the track one peace negotiations have struggled to promote a sustainable peace, and the variety of track two initiatives that have been launched. Next, Section 4 assesses the interview data in detail, presenting key findings, effective instances of transfer, struggles around and obstacles to transfer, the gendered dimensions of transfer, and a comparison between the research findings and the existing literature.

Drawing on these findings, Section 5 then introduces ideas and next steps for enhancing transfer. These include ideas for enhancing effectiveness, for rethinking track two in light of stalled track one processes, and for better analysing transfer. Section 5.3 proposes a new framework for analysis. Based on both the secondary literature cited throughout this report and the primary qualitative research, this framework is intended as a tool for those analysing transfer from track two to track one together with those planning to enact and monitor such transfer.

The framework identifies three questions that are crucial for understanding the process of transfer from track two to track one:(1) What is being transferred? (2) Who is the target of the transfer efforts? and (3) How is transfer taking

place? Cognisant of the fact that a number of the participants raised difficulties associated with measuring (or tracking) transfer,[3] the framework provides a variety of possible answers to each question.[4]

The findings highlight the specific challenges and opportunities faced by Yemeni and Syrian women in the pursuit of transfer from track two to track one according to the data gathered and analysed. In this context, the report also suggests that two themes require further deliberation: firstly, the need to rethink transfer in the context of stalled track one processes and, secondly, the apparent lack of clarity concerning transfer from track two to track one in the peacemaking, peacebuilding, and women, peace, and security (WPS) communities.

3 Indeed, a number expressed scepticism that such a task could even be achieved. For more on the methodological challenges around tracking transfer, see Section 7.2.

4 See Section 5.3 for a detailed explanation of the framework.

2 The Concepts of Multi-track Diplomacy and Transfer

2.1 Multi-track Diplomacy

The notion of multiple peacemaking, or peacebuilding, tracks first arose in the 1980s; in an article published in 1981, William Davidson and Joseph Montville introduced the idea of "track two diplomacy," distinguishing this approach from "traditional" peacemaking by diplomats.[5] These authors defined track two diplomacy as "preparatory discussions" and unofficial, non-structured, and private meetings in which "representatives of the two parties" can interact "with minimal risk and without prior commitments."[6] In 1991, Louise Diamond and John McDonald further expanded this idea. They proposed that diplomacy consists of nine different tracks,[7] with McDonald later contending that "the system requires all tracks to eventually work together to build a peace process that will last."[8]

The idea of multi-track diplomacy firmly took hold in the 1990s. The early aforementioned definitions notwithstanding, John Paul Lederach's "peacebuilding pyramid model"—which partitioned society into the three levels of tracks one, two, and three—exerted and continues to exert a great deal of influence on practice.[9] While there is disagreement among peacebuilding practitioners regarding how best to characterise and distinguish between these three different tracks,[10] Véronique Dudouet et al. have developed the following succinct definitions of track one and track two:

- Track one "refers to official discussions between high-level governmental and military leaders focusing on ceasefires, peace talks, treaties and other agreements" and is "typically limited to a small number of national stakeholders, while other segments of society tend to be excluded from such processes."

5 W. Davidson and J. Montville, "Foreign Policy According to Freud," *Foreign Policy* 45 (1981), p. 155.

6 Ibid., p. 154.

7 L. Diamond and J. McDonald, *Multi-track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*, 3rd edn (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

8 J. McDonald, "The Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy," *Journal of Conflictology* 3:2 (2012), p. 68.

9 J. P. Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), p. 39. See also J. Palmiano Federer et al., "Beyond the Tracks? Reflections on Multitrack Approaches to Peace Processes," Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (2019), www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Beyond-the-Tracks-Reflections-on-Multitrack-Approaches-to-Peace-Processes.pdf [last accessed: 17 January 2021], p. 7.

10 Palmiano Federer et al., "Beyond the Tracks?" p. 6.

- Track two can be thought of as "unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships between civil society leaders and influential individuals who have the ability to impact the official level dynamics through lobbying, advocacy or consultation channels."[11]

This report focuses on transfer from track two to track one. However, it is worth briefly defining two further tracks here as they were mentioned by interview participants. Firstly, track three is conceptualised by Dudouet et al. as "inter- or intra-community dialogue activities at the grassroots level to encourage mutual interaction and understanding."[12] Furthermore, participants also frequently mentioned the idea of track 1.5, which has been defined by the United States Institute of Peace as "conversations that include a mix of government officials—who participate in an unofficial capacity—and non-governmental experts, all sitting around the same table," offering "a private, open environment for individuals to build trust, hold conversations that their official counterparts sometimes cannot or will not, and discuss solutions."[13] Examples of track 1.5 diplomacy in the contexts of Yemen and Syria include the Women's Advisory Board (WAB), the Civil Society Support Room (CSSR), and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), all of which are discussed in Section 3 and were reflected upon by interview participants. Thania Paffenholz has further refined the understanding of track two by drawing a distinction between first- and second-generation track two in which track 1.5 encompasses the original track two concept as developed by its founders and track two consists of broader and distinctive peacebuilding activities at the civil society level.[14]

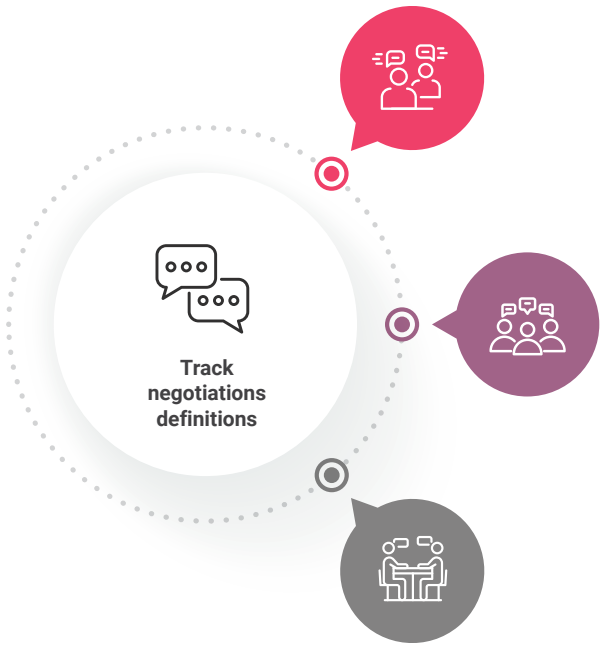
11 V. Dudouet et al., "From Policy to Action: Assessing the European Union's Approach to Inclusive Mediation and Dialogue Support in Georgia and Yemen," *Peacebuilding* 6:3 (2018), p. 190. However, in one of the workshops held for this project, a participant expressed their misgivings regarding the way in which, in their opinion, track two has broadened to include those without sufficient connections to track one. Their view was that this inhibits transfer.

12 Ibid., p. 190.

13 J. Staats et al., "A Primer on Multi-track Diplomacy: How Does It Work?" United States Institute of Peace (2019), www.usip.org/publications/2019/07/primer-multi-track-diplomacy-how-does-it-work [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

14 T. Paffenholz, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2020).

DEFINITIONS OF TRACK NEGOTIATIONS



TRACK I

Refers to official discussions between high-level governmental and military leaders focusing on ceasefires, peace talks, treaties and other agreements and is typically limited to a small number of national stakeholders, while other segments of society tend to be excluded from such processes.

TRACK II

Can be thought of as unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships between civil society leaders and influential individuals who have the ability to impact the official level dynamics through lobbying, advocacy or consultation channels.

TRACK I.5

Has been defined as conversations that include a mix of government officials— who participate in an unofficial capacity—and non-governmental experts, all sitting around the same table offering a private, open environment for individuals to build trust, hold conversations that their official counterparts sometimes cannot or will not, and discuss solutions.

2.2 Transfer

Implicit within a number of definitions and discussions of multi-track diplomacy is the notion of interconnectedness between the tracks and, in particular, the perception that track two primarily exists to shape or, in more passive conceptualisations, support track one.[15] Lederach wrote of the potential of track two initiatives to serve as "a source of practical, immediate action" due to participants' capacity to influence both track one and track three.[16] In the influential track two "toolkit" authored by Heidi Burgess and Guy Burgess, track two is described asaiming towards "complementing 'track I' peacemaking efforts in myriad ways and at various points throughout a peace process," with the authors later defining track two as referring "to any activities that support, directly or indirectly, track I efforts."[17] As a final example, Jeffrey Mapandere has claimed that, "most important, Track Two Diplomacy is intended to provide a bridge or complement official Track One negotiations."[18]

15 Ibid., p. 191.

16 Lederach, *Building Peace*, p. 61.

17 H. Burgess and G. Burgess, "Conducting Track II Peacemaking," United States Institute of Peace (2010), www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PMT_Burgess_Conducting%20Track%20II.pdf [last accessed: 17 January 2021], p. 5.

18 J. Mapandere, "Track One and a Half Diplomacy and the Complementarity of Tracks," *Culture of Peace Online Journal* 2:1 (2005), p. 68. See also E. Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy: The Cases of Water and Jerusalem," *Journal of Peace Research* 46:5 (2009), p. 641.

Specifically, the concept of transfer emerged in an environment in which "civil society and citizen involvement in peace processes were not necessarily welcomed or practised within international organisations and the diplomatic community."[19] Transfer could be viewed, therefore, as being intertwined both with the "local turn" in peacebuilding research, policy, and practice[20] and with the more recent emphasis on the need for inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding.[21] Early definitions conceptualised transfer as relating only to the connection between track two and track one; thus, Ron Fisher described transfer as encapsulating "how effects (e.g. attitudinal changes, new realizations) and outcomes (e.g. frameworks for negotiation) are moved from the unofficial interventions to the official domain of decision and policy making."[22]

Broadening this idea, Esra Çuhadar and Thania Paffenholz have more recently defined transfer as "a process in which ideas and outcomes from track-two workshops move to and influence formal, high-level, so-called track-one negotiations (upward transfer) or move public opinion and impact the conflict-at-large (downward transfer)."[23] Thus, that which is being transferred from track two may not only travel "upwards" to track one and track 1.5 but also "laterally" into other track two initiatives and "downwards" into track three programmes. Such movement can take place in different directions simultaneously or sequentially, and the objective of transfer may be not only to influence the process of negotiating peace but also to shape the outcomes of the talks and the implementation of the peace accords reached.[24] Moreover, as will be explored in greater detail in the framework introduced in Section 5, a wide range of ideas and outcomes should be considered, as different initiatives can take different forms, with more or less intangible outputs.

This report focuses specifically on the attempts made by track two initiatives in Yemen and Syria to "move" their "ideas and outcomes" to the track one negotiations in these countries. Nevertheless, there is a need, as Çuhadar and Paffenholz argue, to broaden the understanding of transfer to encompass more than the link between track two and track one.

19 E. Çuhadar and T. Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0: Applying the Concept of Transfer from Track-Two Workshops to Inclusive Peace Negotiations," *International Studies Review* 22:3 (2020), p. 653.

20 For an overview of the "local turn," see R. Mac Ginty and O. Richmond, "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace," *Third World Quarterly* 34:5 (2013), pp. 763–83.

21 For an overview of the predominance of inclusion as a norm within peacebuilding practice and policy, see A. de Waal, "Inclusion in Peacemaking: From Moral Claim to Political Fact," in P. Aall and C. A. Crocker (eds), *The Fabric of Peace in Africa* (Waterloo, ON: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2017), pp. 165–86; C. Turner, "Mapping a Norm of Inclusion in the *Jus Post Bellum*," in C. Stahn and J. Iverson (eds), *Just Peace after Conflict: Jus Post Bellum and the Justice of Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 130–46.

22 R. Fisher, *Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution in Peacemaking in Protracted Ethnopolitical Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), p. 3.

23 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0," p. 652.

24 Ibid.; Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy"; R. Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

Following a series of discussions with peacebuilding practitioners, Julia Palmiano Federer et al. argued in 2019 that "despite the common assumption that linking initiatives within and across levels of society creates beneficial outcomes…little attention [has been] paid to how to create linkages and what kind of impact these linkages have in practice."[25] Relatedly, in a more recent article, Çuhadar and Paffenholz claimed that "the question of how to transfer most effectively from track-two to track-one lingers" and that "further research is needed on what constitutes 'quality' transfer."[26] Thus, there are clear opportunities for further research into the process of transfer, and this report aims to address the need for insights into the precise dynamics of how transfer takes place on the ground.

25 Palmiano Federer et al., "Beyond the Tracks?" p. 12.

26 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0," p. 653 (emphasis in original).

3 Introducing the Context of Yemen and Syria

This report explores transfer from track two to track one in the context of two ongoing wars: those in Yemen and Syria. This section provides contextual background to these two wars and their attendant peace processes while also offering a gender-based analysis of the crises.

3.1 The Yemeni War and Peace Process

3.1.1 The Yemeni War

Criticising restrictions on journalists and demanding freedom of speech, civic activists, both women and men, launched what they termed the Yemeni "Revolution of Dignity"[27] on 15 January 2011.[28] Driven by years of dissatisfaction with the government, the demonstrators harboured "long-standing frustration over the lack of economic opportunities and unemployment, flagrant corruption, government malfeasance, and food security, health, and education."[29] Those loyal to Ali Abdullah Saleh, the long-serving president, reacted with violence, yet the protests increased.[30] Thousands of Yemeni women actively joined and arranged rallies, protest camps, and hunger strikes; they also treated the wounded and raised awareness through political seminars, blogs, and photography.[31]

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative, its accompanying implementation mechanism, and the wide-ranging and inclusive National Dialogue Conference (NDC) managed to stave off conflict in the years immediately following the outbreak of protests in 2011.[32] They also saw Saleh ostensibly step down from power and hand over leadership to his vice president, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Overall, the Yemeni NDC is considered one of the most inclusive National Dialogues globally, featuring quotas for the inclusion of women, youth, and people from the

27 It should be noted that classifying the protest movements that swept across the Middle East in 2011 during the so-called Arab Spring remains an area of contestation. However, commonly used terms in academic writing include "revolution," "uprising," and "revolt." In Arabic, the terms *thawra* (revolution) and *intifada* (uprising; literally "shaking off") are commonly used. For more on the contested terminology of the period, see B. J. Brownlee and M. Ghiabi, "Passive, Silent and Revolutionary: The 'Arab Spring' Revisited," Middle East Critique 25:3 (2016), pp. 299–316.

28 H. Lackner, *Yemen in Crisis: Autocracy, Neo-liberalism and the Disintegration of a State* (London: Saqi Books, 2017), p. 35; G. Hill, *Yemen Endures* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2017), pp. 204–5.

29 E. Gaston, "Process Lessons Learned in Yemen's National Dialogue," United States Institute of Peace (Special Report 342) (2014), www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR342_Process-Lessons-Learned-in-Yemens-National-Dialogue.pdf [last accessed: 17 February 2021], p. 2.

30 Hill, *Yemen Endures*, p. 206.

31 T. Finn, "Yemen's Women Revolutionaries," *Dissent Magazine* (Winter 2015), www.dissentmagazine.org/article/yemen-women-revolutionaries-arab-spring-2011-tawakkol-karman [last accessed: 23 December 2021].

32 For an analysis of the inclusive nature of the NDC in Yemen, see T. Paffenholz and N. Ross, "Inclusive Political Settlements: New Insights from Yemen's National Dialogue," *PRISM* 6:1 (2016), pp. 199–210.

south (an underprivileged region) across all delegations as well as an additional three delegations solely for women, youth, and southern activists. Yet, in early 2015, the Houthis, a northern movement dissatisfied with the outcomes of the NDC and, in particular, the proposed plan to federalise Yemen,[33] captured Sanaa and forced Hadi into exile. The conflict intensified as a Saudi Arabia-led coalition launched airstrikes against the Houthis and bolstered factions in support of Hadi and southern separatism.[34]

Six years of war have seen Yemen fragment and have wrought a devastating toll on the population. It has been estimated that 233,000 Yemenis have lost their lives since 2015 and that 3.6 million have been displaced, and the United Nations (UN) has documented "shocking levels of civilian suffering."[35] However, underlying, pre-existing inequalities have meant that women, girls, men, and boys in Yemen have experienced the war in different ways.[36] Briefly, men and boys have suffered casualties at a far greater rate, have been "increasingly expected to behave violently," and have felt and responded to poverty, severe disruptions to their education, and widespread unemployment in a manner divergent from women and girls due to prevailing gender norms.[37] Women have faced mass displacement, severe poverty, and increased threat of violence—sexual and gender-based violence in particular. Growing numbers of women also grapple with the challenges of heading households and caring for family members while facing growing impingements on their rights to work and receive a fair wage, enter into education and training, and even move freely.[38] Prior to and during the war, discrimination against women and girls has been cemented in statutory and customary laws.[39]

33 See, for instance, M. Brandt, Tribes and Politics in Yemen: A History of the Houthi Conflict (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2017), pp. 153–335; G. D. Johnsen, *The Last Refuge: Yemen, Al-Qaeda, and the Battle for Arabia* (London: Oneworld, 2013), pp. 150–3.

34 For detailed overviews of the Yemeni conflict, see, for instance, Hill, Yemen Endures; Lackner, *Yemen in Crisis*.

35 "Global Humanitarian Overview: Yemen," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2021), https://gho.unocha.org/yemen [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

36 Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, "Situation of Human Rights in Yemen, Including Violations and Abuses since September 2014," Human Rights Council (A/HRC/42/CRP.1) (2019), www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/a-hrc-42-crp-1.php [last accessed: 16 August 2021], p. 147.

37 Ibid., pp. 150–1; M. Awadh and N. Shuja'adeen, "Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Yemen," UN Women (2019), https://yemen.un.org/en/15853-women-conflict-resolution-and-peace-building-yemen [last accessed: 16 August 2021], pp. 15–16.

38 Awadh and Shuja'adeen, "Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Yemen," pp. 11, 14–15; Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, "Situation of Human Rights in Yemen," pp. 150–6.

39 Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, "Situation of Human Rights in Yemen," pp. 148–9. Notably, however, the NDC, which featured 30 percent participation by women, proposed a series of recommendations that would have overturned several inequitable laws.

3.1.2 The Yemeni Peace Process

Since 2015, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OSESGY) has "facilitated successive rounds of consultations aimed at obtaining a negotiated settlement to end the conflict and resume the political transition process."[40] These consultations have included direct talks between President Hadi and the Houthis in Switzerland in June and December 2015, and in Kuwait between April and August 2016. In 2018, these two conflict parties reached the Stockholm Agreement, an accord stipulating the redeployment of forces from the port and city of al-Hodeidah and the establishment of a ceasefire in its governorate, and a series of prisoner exchanges was negotiated in October 2020. Although beyond the scope of the UN-sponsored process, it is also worth noting that both Saudi Arabia and Oman have played third-party roles in overseeing official talks.[41] However, both the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh Agreement (the latter brokered by Saudi Arabia in 2019) have faced challenges in their implementation, and violence persists. The OSESGY continues to work towards a mediated resolution to the war, guided by Resolution 2216 (2015).[42] In early April 2022, coinciding with the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, the parties entered into a truce brokered by the OSESGY and stipulated to last two months. At the time of writing, the outcome of this truce—the first official ceasefire in years—remains unclear, but the agreement provides for a stop to all attacks inside Yemen and outside its borders, the entry of fuel ships to the port of al-Hodeidah, and the resumption of some commercial flights at Sanaa's airport.[43]

Since the end of the inclusive NDC, the track one peacemaking spaces have been sharply criticised for excluding and disregarding the varied views of women on the dynamics of the conflict; the nature of any settlement; and the specific experiences, rights, and needs of women and girls.[44] The delegations to official negotiations have rarely included women: for instance, in Riyadh, no women formally participated. Just one woman joined the government delegation at Stockholm while only three of the delegates at Kuwait were women. Furthermore, of the four envoys appointed to Yemen thus far, all have been men.[45] At the level

40 "Background," Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (2015), https://osesgy.unmissions.org/background [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

41 I. Jalal, "The Riyadh Agreement: Yemen's New Cabinet and What Remains to Be Done," Middle East Institute (2021), www.mei.edu/publications/riyadh-agreement-yemens-new-cabinet-and-what-remains-be-done [last accessed: 14 August 2021]; A. al-Shamahi, "'Bitter Pill to Swallow': Saudis Grapple with Yemen Peace Deal," Al-Jazeera (2021), www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/29/oman-takes-on-ambitious-mediator-role-in-yemen-conflict [last accessed: 14 August 2021].

42 "Background"; "Resolution 2216," UN Security Council (S/RES/2216) (2015), www.un.org/securitycouncil/s/res/2216-%282015%29-0 [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

43 B. Hubbard, "Yemen's Warring Parties Begin First Cease-Fire in 6 Years," *New York Times* (2 April 2022), www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/world/middleeast/yemen-cease-fire.html [last accessed: 6 April 2022].

44 See, for example, Awadh and Shuja'adeen, "Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Yemen," p. 17.

45 "Background"; "Yemen War: Houthis and Government Complete Prisoner Exchange," BBC News (2020), www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-54552051 [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

of official talks, the OSESGY, in coordination with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and Tawafuq (a track two network discussed in Section 3.3), formed what can be termed a track 1.5 initiative, the TAG,[46] which is a body of Yemeni women with whom the OSESGY has consulted during the rare occasions of negotiations.[47]

At the local level, women and members of civil society have found greater freedom to work towards peace, carving out and seizing their own opportunities despite significant barriers. Women have mediated local disputes, played instrumental roles in securing humanitarian access and campaigning for information on the whereabouts of missing persons and the release of detainees, and formed networks and launched campaigns to agitate for women's rights and peace.[48] In track two and track 1.5 spaces, they have also had a greater presence than in track one spaces; however, as will be outlined in Section 4.4, concerns remain regarding the opportunities for their participation and enduring exclusion. Notably, women's successful work at the local level has neither been recognised at higher levels nor been capitalised on by translating local success into meaningful participation in the track one space.

Beyond examining the fundamental lack of inclusivity in official talks, it is important to highlight that the track one space in Yemen more generally is in deep crisis, as the last formal talks took place years ago. In this context, the distinction between the tracks seems artificial. Therefore, the question for peacemaking in Yemen is not just which track can do what best or how the other tracks can support track one. Rather, it is necessary to consider whether there are any approaches, ideas, or spaces where it is possible to reflect on the stalled nature of the peace process and develop creative ideas.[49]

3.2 The Syrian War and Peace Process

3.2.1 The Syrian War

The catalyst of the Syrian war can be traced to civilian demonstrations that erupted in March 2011, during the Arab Spring.[50] Amid increasing deaths, casualties, and arrests of civilian protestors, demonstrators demanded the release of prisoners, a new law permitting the organisation of political parties, the repeal of the

46 The TAG, along with other UN-sponsored track 1.5 and track two programming in Yemen and Syria, is analysed in further detail in Section 3.3.

47 See, for instance, "The Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group Plays an Active Role During the Sweden Consultations," UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (2018), https://osesgy.unmissions.org/yemeni-women%E2%80%99s-technical-advisory-group-plays-active-role-during-sweden-consultations [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

48 Ibid., pp. 18–21.

49 For a more detailed exploration of this question, see Paffenholz, "Perpetual Peace-building."

50 United Nations Security Council, "Children and Armed Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic: Report of the Secretary-General" (S/2014/31) (2021), https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/children-and-armed-conflict-syrian-arab-republic-report-secretary [last accessed: 6 April 2022], p. 2.

country's Emergency Law, and eventually the replacement of the government.[51] Throughout, women played critical roles in joining and organising this protest movement; establishing activist networks; securing medicine, food, and first aid for neighbourhoods experiencing violence; and sharing information through various media despite the fact that they continued to face gender inequalities.[52]

The conflict militarised in mid-2011.[53] Several international actors have supported various armed groups, leading to the full-scale internationalisation of the war and the involvement (at the time of writing) of five foreign armies in Syrian territory. After nearly 11 years of war, the Syrian Government and its allies have regained over 60 percent of Syria's territory, including the central and southern areas, the coastal governorates, a fraction of the eastern governorates, and Aleppo.[54] The decade of war has led to more than 350,200 deaths[55] and displaced 13 million Syrians.[56] As in Yemen, the violence has had unequal effects on Syrian women, men, girls, and boys, with underlying gender discrimination exposing women and girls to particularly acute suffering.

3.2.2 The Syrian Political Process

Since 2012, the UN has attempted to promote a peaceful resolution to the war through the political process that it leads, which was convened by the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria (OSES). This process was initially guided by the Final Communiqué of the Action Group for Syria (known as the Geneva Communiqué), developed by Kofi Annan in 2012[57] and later guided by UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015). While this process has succeeded in sporadically convening intra-Syrian talks and is currently focused on supporting the Syrian Constitutional Committee (established under Resolution 2254), these high-level mediation efforts have not been successful in brokering an agreement so far.[58]

51 C. Phillips, The Battle for Syria (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 2; R. Yassin-Kassab and L. al-Shami, *Burning Country* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), pp. 37–8.

52 R. Ghazzawi, "Seeing the Women in Revolutionary Syria," Open Democracy (2014), www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/seeing-women-in-revolutionary-syria [last accessed: 22 December 2021].

53 Phillips, The Battle for Syria, p. 2; Yassin-Kassab and al-Shami, *Burning Country*, pp. 82–3.

54 B. Nasrolla, A. Sahrida, and O. Al-Abdallah, "Map of Military Control in Syria End of 2021 and Beginning of 2022," Jusoor (2022), www.jusoor.com [last accessed: 23 June 2022].

55 M. Bachelet, "Oral Update on the Extent of Conflict-Related Deaths in the Syrian Arab Republic to the 48th Session of the Human Rights Council," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2021), www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27531&LangID=E [last accessed: 22 December 2021].

56 "UNHCR Chief Urges Better Support for 13 Million 'Exhausted' and Displaced Syrians," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2021), https://news.un.org/en/story/ 2021/10/1103342 [last accessed: 22 December 2021].

57 "Special Envoy Syria," UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (n.d.), https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/special-envoy-syria [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

58 "Resolution 2254," UN Security Council (S/RES/2254) (2015), http://undocs.org/S/RES/2254(2015) [last accessed: 18 January 2021].

Though the OSES continues to support the "full implementation" of Resolution 2254,[59] talks have shown limited progress. Parallel initiatives have also been launched to negotiate an end to the war, the most prominent of which has been the Astana track, sponsored by Russia, Turkey, and Iran.[60]

Despite Syrian women's prominent role within the 2011 uprisings,[61] women's participation in the track one space has, as in Yemen, been relatively limited. However, over time, the UN-led process has become more inclusive through a commitment to a minimum level of participation of women in the political process, with women currently making up 28 percent of delegates in the Constitutional Committee. It should be noted, though, that the overall process is still largely dominated by the Astana track, which does not include any mechanisms for inclusivity or civil society influence in its process design. Furthermore, all four envoys to Syria have been men, although the outgoing Deputy Special Envoy is a woman. In addition to the high-level political process, however, the UN has also supported the creation of track 1.5 programmes, including the WAB[62] and the CSSR,[63] both of which will be discussed in Section 3.3.

At the local levels of the peace process, Syrian women and civil society organisations "have negotiated local ceasefires, deescalated fighting so aid could pass through, organised nonviolent protests, monitored and documented war crimes, led humanitarian efforts for displaced Syrians, and worked in schools and hospitals while the conflict raged."[64] These efforts are, however, rarely recognised as indispensable to a sustainable peace process, which makes the success of a process that structurally excludes women and their concerns less likely. Evidence of successful women's advocacy includes securing a commitment by the OSES for a minimum of 30 percent participation by women in the Constitutional Committee, and women frequently providing high-level briefings to the Security Council since

59 "Special Envoy Syria."

60 Ibid. For a recent analysis of the Astana Process, see C. Thepaut, "The Astana Process: A Flexible but Fragile Showcase for Russia," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (2020), www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/astana-process-flexible-fragile-showcase-russia [last accessed: 17 January 2021].

61 C. Moore and T. Talarico, "Inclusion to Exclusion: Women in Syria," *Emory International Law Review* 30:2 (2015), p. 299.

62 P. Mlambo-Ngcuka, "Statement by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on the Establishment of the Syrian Women's Advisory Board to Contribute to Peace Talks," UN Women (2016), www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/2/ed-statement-on-syrian-womens-advisory-board [last accessed: 18 January 2021].

63 "Civil Society Support Room," SwissPeace (n.d.), www.swisspeace.ch/projects/mandate/civil-society-support-room [last accessed: 18 January 2021].

64 A. Bandura and M. Blackwood, "Women's Role in Achieving Sustainable Peace in Syria," US Civil Society Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security (2018), www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/12th-us-cswg-may22-2018-v2.pdf, p. 1. See also R. Coulouris, "Here's Why Syrian Women Need to Be Included More in Peacebuilding," Atlantic Council (2018), www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/here-s-why-syrian-women-need-to-be-included-more-in-peacebuilding [last accessed: 16 August 2021].

2019. Thus, similarly to Yemeni women, Syrian women have contributed to and led peacebuilding efforts despite facing endemic discrimination within the track one fora.

3.3 Track Two Initiatives in Yemen and Syria

Alongside these official track one peacemaking efforts, an array of track two initiatives have been launched.[65] These have brought together Syrians and Yemenis (respectively) from a range of backgrounds to participate in what can broadly be considered to be track two peacebuilding. Since the truce in Yemen in spring 2022, there have been renewed efforts to make the key track two initiatives more coherent in their support of the process of the OSESGY.

In the two countries, examples of track two activities have included:

- the convening of Syrian experts and conflict parties for meetings to deliberate "pragmatic political steps";[66]
- the supporting of "Yemeni parties and stakeholders" to "identify common ground" through "consultations" and "discussions";[67]
- the bringing together of Syrian "stakeholders" to "develop visions for a political resolution to the conflict and to channel their ideas to top-level mediation processes";[68]
- the facilitation of "informal dialogue among all key Yemeni constituencies on critical national questions";[69]
- the supporting of the Yemeni Women's Forum for Dialogue and Peace;[70]

65 Track two initiatives include those led by Baytna, the Berghof Foundation, the Carter Center, the Centre for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Crisis Management Initiative, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, the European Institute of Peace, Independent Diplomat, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Kvinna Till Kvinna, Mobaderoon, the Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution, the Peace Track Initiative, Saferworld, Search for Common Ground, the Shaikh Group, SwissPeace, the US Institute of Peace, UN Women, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Wujood, among others. This should not be treated as an exhaustive list.

66 "Developing Policy Options for Compromises to Support Peaceful Settlements and Stabilisation in Syria," Berghof Foundation (n.d.), https://berghof-foundation.org/work/projects/supporting-peaceful-settlements-in-syria [last accessed: 25 April 2021].

67 "Yemen Political Dialogue Support Programme (PDSP)," Berghof Foundation (n.d.), https://berghof-foundation.org/work/projects/yemen-political-dialogue-support-programme-pdsp [last accessed: 25 April 2021].

68 "Support for Peace in Syria," Carter Center (n.d.), www.cartercenter.org/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict-resolution.html [last accessed: 25 April 2021].

69 "Enhancing the Inclusiveness of Peacemaking Efforts in Yemen," Crisis Management Initiative (n.d.), https://cmi.fi/our-work/regions-and-themes [last accessed: 25 April 2021].

70 Ibid.

- the facilitation, in relation to Syria, of "dialogue and meetings between diverse groups," the preparation of "parties for negotiations," and the maintenance of "backchannels between Syrian and international actors";[71]

- the stabilisation of "local communities" and the launching of "community dialogue projects."[72]

Notably, UN Women has supported a variety of track two and track 1.5 initiatives in the Yemeni and Syrian contexts. Regarding the Yemeni process, in 2015, in collaboration with UN Women and the OSESGY, nearly 60 women activists, academics, and individuals of various political affiliations founded the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (Tawafuq) to promote women's inclusion in the peace process. According to UN Women, Tawafuq was designed to allow women to "organize, debate, find common ground, and leverage their collective voices to call for women's continued engagement in public decision-making."[73] Representatives of this network were invited to the Kuwait talks in 2016. Subsequently, the OSESGY, in coordination with UN Women and Tawafuq, formed what can be termed a track 1.5 initiative, the TAG, which is a body of Yemeni women with whom the OSESGY has consulted during the negotiations.[74] For example, during the Stockholm Peace Talks, members of the TAG developed and passed recommendations to then-Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.[75] Ultimately, despite this advisory role, the TAG has faced criticism for its perceived superficial nature and lack of influence.[76]

Regarding Syria, the OSES, in partnership with UN Women and with the support of the UN Department of Political Affairs, launched the Syrian WAB in 2016 following advocacy by Syrian women activists. The stated goal of the WAB is "to ensure diverse women's perspectives and the gender equality agenda are considered throughout the political process and at key junctures," including at prospective future peace talks.[77] Similarly to the TAG in Yemen, the WAB has faced criticism for its limited influence on the process, its untransparent selection criteria, and its mandate as an advisory body as opposed to a direct representative in the delegations.[78] Additionally, the CSSR was established in January 2016 by the

71 "Syria," Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (n.d.), www.hdcentre.org/activities/syria [last accessed: 25 April 2021].

72 "Yemen," Search for Common Ground (n.d.), www.sfcg.org/yemen [last accessed: 25 April 2021].

73 "Areas of Work and Programmes: Yemen," UN Women Arab States (n.d.), https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/countries/yemen/areas-of-work-and-programmes [last accessed: 14 March 2021].

74 See, for instance, "The Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group Plays an Active Role during the Sweden Consultations."

75 Ibid.

76 "The Case for More Inclusive—and More Effective—Peacemaking in Yemen," International Crisis Group (2021), www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/221-case-more-inclusive-and-more-effective-peacemaking-yemen [last accessed: 6 April 2022].

77 "Women's Advisory Board," Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria (n.d.), https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/women's-advisory-board [last accessed: 14 March 2022].

78 "The Case for More Inclusive—and More Effective—Peacemaking in Yemen."

OSES. The CSSR aims to serve as a "platform to ensure an inclusive political process by consulting with and engaging a broad and diverse range of civil society actors," providing a forum in which "civil society actors can meet, interact and exchange insights and ideas among themselves, with the Office of the Special Envoy, relevant UN actors, as well as international stakeholders."[79]

Very few of the organisations listed above publicly share considerable detail either on their initiatives, participants, and outcomes or on their attempts to transfer to track one. Indeed, in the interviews conducted as part of this study, while a number of participants were willing to reflect on their programmes, they were not willing for this material to be summarised or quoted in this report. This can be attributed to the need to protect the confidentiality of those who participate in track two efforts, as there can be risks of threats and reprisals, particularly against women participants. Additionally, considerable competition prevails between organisations operating within the track two sphere (a theme that will be assessed in Section 4.4.10 and that recurred in the interviews). The next section analyses, in greater depth, the perspectives of the interview and workshop participants on transfer between track two initiatives and track one negotiations in the Yemeni and Syrian contexts.

79 "Civil Society Support Room," Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria (n.d.), https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/civil-society-support-room [last accessed: 14 March 2022].

4 Findings: Transfer from Track Two to Track One in the Yemeni and Syrian Wars

4.1 Introduction

This section is divided into five sub-sections. Section 4.2 features an overview of the key findings of the report. Section 4.3 explores the participants' assertions that successful transfer between track two initiatives and track one negotiations has been achieved in the Yemeni and Syrian wars. It shows that, while a limited number of participants were able to describe in detail how transfer mechanisms had worked in recent years, these descriptions were frequently coloured by cynicism regarding the impact of what had been transferred. Moreover, many interviewees employed ambiguous language to describe successful instances of transfer, possibly indicating a lack of clarity regarding the process of transfer.

Section 4.4 then considers a theme that received particular consideration within the interviews: the failure of track two initiatives to connect with track one negotiations in Yemen and Syria. This section shows that the interview participants identified a wide array of obstacles preventing transfer from track two to track one in these wars. These obstacles ranged from a lack of receptivity to track two to the structural exclusion of women and marginalised groups, a lack of coordination between track two initiatives, and, critically, the protracted nature of the wars in Yemen and Syria together with the stagnation of the track one peace processes. Following this presentation of general obstacles and challenges, Section 4.5 specifically analyses the gendered elements of track two that emerged in the interviews, along with the experiences of women participants.

Finally, Section 4.6 explores the implications of these findings for research by positioning them within the academic literature on transfer, ultimately highlighting both areas of overlap and new ideas that build upon, diverge from, or challenge the existing literature.

4.2 Key Findings

Overall, analysis of the interview data demonstrates that transfer has been and is being attempted in the Yemeni and Syrian contexts. The interviewees identified a number of examples of effective, yet limited, transfer in both contexts. These examples reveal that transfer is often ambiguous, long term, and not a single act. However, many interviewees also expressed frustration, pessimism, and at times even cynicism about the efficacy of both track two itself and the notion of transfer. These perceptions arose in the context of many challenges to transfer. In Yemen and Syria, the primary obstacle to transfer is the overall stalled nature of the track one processes (Section 4.4.1). Additional obstacles include a perceived lack of receptivity to track two displayed by Yemeni and Syrian conflict parties and members of the international community (Sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3);

the cosmetic nature of many track two initiatives, and of women's initiatives in particular (Section 4.4.4); structural barriers to the inclusion of marginalised groups (Section 4.4.5); strategies by track two convenors and their donors that are often insufficiently adapted to changing contexts but remain path dependent to their original theories of change (4.4.6); security and reputational threats to track two participants, and to women participants in particular (Section 4.4.7); communication and coordination challenges (Sections 4.4.8 and 4.4.10); and a legitimacy deficit, related both to the track one process and to track two participants (Section 4.4.9). The data also reveal challenges more specific to the Yemeni and Syrian contexts.

Furthermore, although women tend to be represented in greater numbers within track two efforts than within track one negotiations, they also face specific gendered barriers in their efforts to transfer to the track one space (Section 4.5). Accordingly, none of the detailed descriptions of effective transfer concerned initiatives led by women, or initiatives focused upon gender or the specific rights and needs of women and girls. Thus, there was a perception that the conflict parties in Yemen and in Syria are opposed and unwilling to listen to the views of women involved in track two initiatives. Moreover, it was suggested that women tend not to be represented in track two diplomacy, or that they tend to be represented within track two initiatives particularly unconnected to track one efforts or ones of a particularly superficial nature. Additionally, when women's voices reach track two or even track one, it was suggested that they are rarely heard. Finally, the perception that track two initiatives involving women focus predominantly on normative matters pertaining to inclusion and women's rights was also contended to be a barrier to transfer.

The findings affirm much of the existing literature on track two and transfer, particularly in relation to obstacles and challenges. However, the data also diverge from and build upon the literature, indicating a need for new ideas and approaches.

4.3 Effective Instances of Transfer

A number of participants were able to recount instances within their programmes and initiatives in which transfer from track two to track one in Yemen and Syria had seemingly been attained. However, several of these descriptions were relatively imprecise, and interviewees also expressed doubt about the impacts of the transfer. This section begins by presenting and analysing illustrative examples offered by interview participants of successful instances of transfer from track two to track one, drawing out the implications of the illustrations. Based on these examples, it can ultimately be concluded that transfer from track two to track one is at least being sought in relation to the two conflicts under study.

4.3.1 Effective Transfer in the Syrian Context

One interview participant, in relation to Syria, discussed at length their experience participating in a brief initiative that had gathered Syrian "experts," praising the potential of this mechanism but expressing doubt that the Syrian parties had meaningfully engaged with the outcomes shared:

> It was very short-lived, we met twice—we were Syrians from different backgrounds. We shared the outcomes with the Special Envoy, who shared them with the Syrian delegations—the government and the opposition. The outcomes were anonymised, there was no reference to who said what...
>
> I imagine—I guess—that the government, they "binned" the recommendations—and the others, maybe they "binned," maybe they read some of it and acted on it and built it into their recommendations—but that is my own impression. I have no information on how they reacted. (I9)

These vignettes raise a number of points. It can be seen how the UN, the official mediator in Syria, acted as a connecting link between track two and track one, serving as the means by which the recommendations from the former were transferred to the latter. However, it is also possible to sense the scepticism of the interview participant, their belief that this attempt at transfer may have proved futile, and moreover their discontent with the lack of subsequent communication between the two tracks. The participant was not informed of the response of the conflict parties, nor do they appear to have held much confidence that the parties were encouraged or, indeed, requested to seriously consider the suggestions made by those participating in track two. This, in turn, seems to suggest that transfer should not be conceptualised as a single act but, rather, as a process that demands longer-term engagement and cycles of feedback.

Also relating to Syria, a further participant described at length a series of meetings that brought together track two actors and the OSES (a track one actor), and additionally included track three actors:

> The conversations, they were productive—the meetings tended to be two days long. In day one, track two would present their ideas. In day two, track two would be connected to track three—it would be focused on their [track three actors'] thoughts, on how aspects of the conflict not covered by track one should be considered or solved. The idea was to integrate these ideas into track one. Or, at least, for track one to be aware…
>
> The response was also always very positive from the Office of the Special Envoy…If one was to judge by the level of interest shown from track one agents, or parties, then we generated interest—they found it helpful to be there and to engage. Of course, the best conversations—they took

> place in the coffee breaks—these more informal meetings. It can be so political, it can be difficult to voice your plans and things you think would work in the bigger room. (I7)

Again, this brief overview of this participant's experience of an attempt to support transfer is illuminating. Firstly, it is notable that, as with the first example provided above, it was the UN that was serving as a link to track one. Secondly, it is significant that this transfer effort not only brought together track two and track one but also included track three; the participant was eager to mention that it was the ideas of track three, in particular, that the organisers of the meeting were keen to "integrate" into track one. Nevertheless, it can be seen how the participant tempered their expectations: they moved rapidly from the idea of integration to the notion that, "at least," track one could "be aware" of the "thoughts" of track three and track two. There is no mention of follow-up; indeed, due to the informal nature of many of the conversations, perhaps such long-term tracing and sustainment of transfer would prove difficult. Of note is also the reference to informal meetings like coffee breaks providing the best space for discussion—it should be recognised that traditional gender norms can function as barriers to women delegates mingling and discussing topics as freely with men decision-makers as men delegates might. This exacerbates the challenges of effectively getting women's core political, social, and gender-specific messages across to decision- makers.

Furthermore, an additional interviewee spoke in detail of the CSSR, describing this mechanism as "a bridge-builder." Developing the point made above, this interviewee divided the transfer that had taken place as a result of the CSSR into two types: "formal and informal." They described the formal means of transfer as follows: "this is when the civil society participants go to Geneva, they hold their meetings and they deliver their advocacy to the Special Envoy and his team." However, this participant noted that, "on the margin, there is also informal transfer." The participant termed this informal transfer "corridor diplomacy": "when they are all gathered in the same place, in the Palais des Nations," this interviewee argued, track two participants can unofficially "meet with those in track one, those with whom they are affiliated" and "transfer can happen here too" (I24). Again, there are risks that gender-based divisions pose barriers for women in accessing, speaking freely, or truly being heard in the informal spaces more than within the formal setting.

4.3.2 Effective Transfer in the Yemeni Context

Turning now to Yemen, one interviewee described in relative detail the relationship between their organisation and the OSESGY, framing the process of transfer as follows:

> We have worked with the Office of the Special Envoy on various things—they are interested in our groups' reactions to specific ideas they are developing. Many track two meetings have followed conversations with the Special Envoy's Office—they might ask, "Could you do a meeting about this?" Or we might pitch to them an idea—and if they agree, they might suggest specific questions or focus areas…
>
> For all of these track two meetings that we have held outside Yemen, a representative of the Special Envoy has participated as an observer—and the office always gets a meeting report…For the meetings held in Yemen, we share specific ideas or proposals they develop and there is also a representative of the Special Envoy in Sanaa, and they attend meetings of the Sanaa group as an observer. (I26)

However, despite describing this apparent collaboration, the interviewee continued by noting: "but if there is no delegation, and no parties to negotiate—and no track one process…" (I26). At this point, their voice trailed away, implying the futility of even speaking of transfer from track two to track one in such a context. This is a theme that will be returned to later in this section.

Also concerning Yemen, one participant described an innovative, if indirect, form of transfer to track one as having been enacted and as having achieved relative success. After noting their perception that "it can be very hard to engage with the UAE [United Arab Emirates], with the KSA [Kingdom of Saudi Arabia] officials," this interviewee explained that it is, however, possible to connect with "think tanks and universities" within these states: "you can discuss security issues with them, and you know the government will be paying attention." When pushed to elaborate on the precise outcomes or effectiveness of this initiative, the participant did nevertheless admit the following: "it is not effective in changing minds, necessarily—but, influencing directions, floating possibilities, taking the temperature of the governments—we can do this" (I12). A second interviewee noted their organisation's engagement with GCC think tanks but did not, or could not due to the need to protect confidentiality, describe the precise nature of these interactions and the impact of any transfer attempted (I26). Furthermore, one interviewee, again in relation to Yemen, claimed the following:

> [Yemeni political] party members agree to come to our meetings. This can be an indicator that they find what we do useful and that they trust us and the format…Sometimes we also hear back how discussions continue, [how] the recommendations have reached the party or how ideas are further discussed. (I22)

Furthermore, this same interviewee argued that, in the field of community safety, there has been successful transfer, demonstrated by "the reaching of shared terminologies, a shared understanding of priority issues and topics" between "the UN security team and track two organisations" operating in this sphere (I22).

4.3.3 Means of Transfer in the Yemeni and Syrian Contexts

Therefore, in both Yemen and Syria, effective attainment of transfer between track two and track one was depicted, in relative detail, within a limited number of the interviews.

Other participants, however, spoke more vaguely of the transfer attempts that have been made in relation to Yemen and Syria. This ambiguity may reflect a lack of willingness among participants to discuss their work in detail; this is, of course, understandable due to the sensitive and confidential nature of a great deal of the work undertaken in the track two peacebuilding sphere. However, it may also be reflective of a lack of conceptual clarity surrounding transfer and may indicate the need for donors, practitioners, and participants in track two and track one to consider, in detail, the precise meaning of transfer and what it entails.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the following means of transfer between track two and track one were cited as having been attained by interview participants in Syria and in Yemen, although detailed examples very rarely accompanied these statements.

Regarding transfer in the Syrian context, interviewees cited lobbying (I9); making suggestions "to the Russians, the Americans, the Europeans" (I9); producing knowledge "about areas that are difficult to access" and sharing these findings with European Union (EU) member states (I5); "reflecting on the reality on the ground" (I5); providing policy recommendations (I5); and providing "advocacy-type" messages (I24). Interviewees also mentioned the efforts of Syrian women to "target" the EU (I29) along with the existence of shared members between the track one negotiations in Syria and the WAB (I6).

In addition to the interviews, transfer can be observed in practice in the adoption of actual text segments provided by women leaders. An example is gender-related language in the 17 August 2015 presidential statement by the UN Security Council explicitly calling for women's participation in a political solution to resolve the war in Syria,[80] as well as a clause on women's meaningful participation in UN Security Council Resolution 2252 following advocacy by civil society organisations.[81] Securing nearly 30 percent participation by women on the Constitutional Committee in October 2019 was also a significant achievement of women activists and the WAB, supported by the strong prioritisation of the OSES.

80 "Statement by the President of the Security Council," United Nations Security Council (S/PRST/2015/15) (2015), https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2015/15 [last accessed: 6 April 2022].

81 "Resolution 2252," UN Security Council (S/RES/2252) (2015), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/814592?ln=en [last accessed: 6 April 2022].

Furthermore, WAB initiatives have repeatedly been featured in the OSES's Security Council statements[82] and remarks,[83] as well as in the co-chairs' statements at the Brussels IV (June 2020)[84] and Brussels V (March 2021)[85] conferences.

Regarding the Yemeni context, interviewees cited speaking "to the Swedes, to the German Foreign Office, to the UK as a penholder on Yemen in the UN Security Council" (I26); providing updates, briefings, and reports to the OSESGY (I11, I22, I26); negotiating topics for discussion in track two with the OSESGY (I26); absorbing the needs of the OSESGY and reflecting these needs in track two programming (I11); coordinating with the OSESGY concerning "approaches and angles" (I2); inviting OSESGY representatives to track two meetings as observers (I11, I22, I26); developing strong relationships with OSESGY staff members (I11); increasing the capacity of members of the TAG (I11); "pushing up" ideas from "dialogues between armed groups and communities" to track one "discussions on the transitional arrangements" (I12); holding consultations between track two participants and the OSESGY (I3); and "planting" the members of a track two initiative in the track one space (I25). Additionally, and related to women's efforts specifically, interviewees cited the provision of feedback and advice by Yemeni women relating to the WPS agenda (I27), along with the time spent by Yemeni women on the margins of the track one space (I27).

Transfer in the Yemeni context can also be observed in the passing of recommendations from Yemeni women to the OSESGY. During the Stockholm Peace Talks, according to a statement released by the OSESGY, the members of the TAG "discussed possible ways of bringing the voices of Yemeni women to the peacemaking process" and delivered "strategy papers and proposals" that had been prepared in advance in a bid to guide the OSESGY.[86] One TAG member explained that the envoy would meet the TAG members each morning before the negotiations began, allowing them to receive updates on the progress of the negotiations and offer concrete suggestions. Indeed, one interviewee who was present contended that elements of the roadmap developed in Stockholm emerged directly from recommendations offered by Yemeni women to the OSESGY.[87]

82 All of his briefings to the Security Council in 2021 included references to the WAB.

83 "Letter Dated 6 April 2020 from the Representatives of the Dominican Republic, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General," United Nations Security Council (2020), www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2020_283.pdf.

84 "Brussels IV Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region': Co-chairs' Declaration," European Union and United Nations (2020), www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/06/30/brussels-iv-conference-on-supporting-the-future-of-syria-and-the-region-co-chairs-declaration [last accessed: 6 April 2022].

85 "Co-chairs' Statement 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region,'" European Union and United Nations (2021), https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20210330_b5c_co-chr_final_en_1.pdf [last accessed: 6 April 2022].

86 "The Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group Plays an Active Role during the Sweden Consultations."

87 These accounts emerged in interviews conducted by Inclusive Peace in 2021 in relation to its broader Yemen research portfolio.

Transfer from track two to track one is, it would seem, being sought in Yemen and Syria. Indeed, to conclude this section, it is worth noting that several interview participants deemed transfer to be crucial. As one remarked, "track two in isolation isn't helpful—there always needs to be a link and a multi-track approach—this is very important" (I19). However, as is clear in the sections that follow, a number of obstacles to successful transfer exist in the context of the Yemeni and Syrian wars.

4.4 Struggles and Obstacles

Despite the illustrative statements analysed in the previous section detailing effective instances of transfer from track one to track two within the Yemeni and Syrian wars, many interview participants were willing to openly reflect on their perceptions that track two initiatives in both Yemen and Syria have been, and are, struggling to connect with track one. Participants expressed frustration, pessimism, and at times even cynicism. Their words appear to reflect the fatigue doubtless experienced by donors, practitioners, and participants following years of violence but also, perhaps, the challenging nature of enacting transfer from track two to track one. One interviewee simply commented: "in terms of the transfer rate—it is negative in a lot of the conflicts we are involved in" (I17). A second remarked that "there is something going wrong on transfer," elaborating by expressing their view that a number of recent track two initiatives conducted in relation to Syria have failed to contribute "to changes in track one"; while there had been "some capacity-building" and while "there were projects providing input, such as policy recommendations," there was, nevertheless, "a shortage of track one policy action" in response (I5). Moreover, a third interview participant commented that transfer "is not really happening to the degree that we would like it to" (I1). This must be viewed within the wider context of global track one peace processes and methods for transfer into track one, which rarely unfold along a linear path in the complex realities of conflicts. Attributing direct changes to a peacebuilding intervention is recognised as challenging.[88] Nevertheless, there is now a wide range of approaches to and methodologies for peacebuilding evaluations that also look at transfer.[89]

Interviewees spoke at length regarding the possible reasons behind the failure of transfer from track two to track one. These obstacles are summarised in the following paragraph and will be elaborated on below.

88 See "Building Peaceful Societies: An Evidence Gap Map," International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (2020), www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/EGM15-Building-peaceful-societies.pdf [last accessed: 6 April 2022], p. 3; Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy"; Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0"; Paffenholz, Civil Society and Peacebuilding.

89 See T. Paffenholz, "Methodologies in Peacebuilding Evaluations: Challenges and Testing New Approaches," Inclusive Peace (2016), www.inclusivepeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/article-methodologies-peacebuilding-evaluations-en.pdf [last accessed: 14 March 2022]; "Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully," Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021), www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/applying-evaluation-criteria-thoughtfully_543e84ed-en [last accessed: 14 March 2022].

In Yemen and Syria, the primary obstacle to transfer is the overall stalled nature of the track one processes (I24, I25, I27, I29). Beyond this overarching challenging dynamic, obstacles include a perceived lack of receptivity to track two displayed by Yemeni and Syrian conflict parties (I1, I5, I6, I18, I20, I25, I26); a perceived lack of receptivity to track two displayed by the UN and/or members of the international community (I1, I10, I13, I18, I21, I25, I26); the cosmetic nature of track two initiatives, and of women's initiatives in particular (I4, I18, I20, I27); structural barriers to the inclusion of marginalised groups, such as particular resistance to women's inclusion by conflict parties (I1, I19, I21, I25, I27), the entrenched exclusion of women in Yemen and Syria (I2, I17), and resistance to the inclusion of women in diplomacy in Yemen and Syria (I19, I21, I25, I27); flawed strategies and knowledge of both donors and track two convenors, and security and reputational threats to track two participants and to women participants in particular (I8, I12, I17, I20, I21); communication challenges, including messages, ideas, and outcomes of track two initiatives being communicated in an unsuitable format (I24, I27); a legitimacy deficit, related both to the track one process and to track two participants (I5, I11); and, finally, coordination challenges (I5, I24, I27).

While interviewees cited challenges in relation to both the Yemeni and Syrian contexts, they also raised challenges specific to each context and often stemming from the structure and dynamics of the broader peace processes in these countries. In Syria, for instance, the unique obstacles cited must be situated and considered within an environment in which the legitimacy of the entire track one process, as well as that of the track one participants, has been subject to question, with one interviewee observing a discrediting of track one actors (I16). Context-specific challenges include the sporadic and disjointed funding patterns of donors (I16, I21); a lack of knowledge on the part of donors regarding how to support transfer between track two and track one (I5); a lack of trust between track two and track one participants (I16); track two participants lacking legitimacy (I21); track two participants lacking adequate skills in communication (I24); and a lack of coordination between track two initiatives (I5, I24).

With regard to Yemen, context-specific obstacles include the novelty of inclusive peacemaking (I4); a failure by the UN to impose the participation of women and other marginalised groups as a condition upon the conflict parties (I1); a lack of research and analysis pertaining to the actors and allegiances in the track two sphere (I4); a lack of clarity on the priorities of track one (I11); and the need to protect the anonymity of track one participants (I11). The following sections look closer at these obstacles.

4.4.1 Overall Stalled Nature of Track One Processes

The interviewees highlighted the length of the Yemeni and Syrian conflicts and the failure of previous and ongoing efforts to secure peace as potential impediments to transfer from track two to track one. Overall, the track one processes in Yemen and Syria are struggling. Since the crises erupted in 2011, the official track one

negotiations have failed to deliver sustainable peace, and many interviewed participants agreed with a characterisation of the peace processes as "stalled," with one even deploying the term "inexistent" (I9). A number of interviewees framed this as an obstacle to transfer. For instance, in relation to Yemen, one interviewee simply described the "stalled" nature of the talks as the most "important" barrier to transfer (I27). A second interviewee developed this view further, presenting their analysis as to precisely why the talks were both stalled and ineffectual: they argued that those invited to the official talks "are not committed to peace," lack "direct connections to or control over what is happening on the ground," and are thus incapable of grappling with the fluidity of the conflict. Summarising the futility of the track one talks in Yemen and of attempting transfer into such a space, they concluded: "by the time an agreement is reached, so much has happened on the ground that you have to go back to square one" (I25).

Concerning Syria, one interviewee commented that "now, eight years later, there is such doubt about the impact of the process that no one wants to engage"; the Geneva talks, as this participant pointed out, have "not been as meaningful or as anticipated by Syrians" (I17). A second interviewee, once more in relation to Syria, explained that civil society representatives with whom they had worked struggled to meet with the conflict parties because "there was no table, no room" that the track two participants could access; they also later commented that "if there is no track one, it is difficult to see the end product" (I24; a similar comment was made by I29). A third interview participant also linked the stalled process in Syria with a lack of transfer between track two and track one: "there has been a stagnation of track one, and a disconnect" (I21).

4.4.2 Perceived Lack of Receptivity to Track Two Displayed by Conflict Parties

Additionally, a number of interviewees described the Yemeni and Syrian conflict parties as being unreceptive to the ideas of, and participants in, track two initiatives. This was framed as a significant obstacle to successful transfer from track two to track one. One interviewee described the Yemeni parties as being unaware of the wide variety of track two initiatives (I1). This lack of willingness to engage with track two initiatives was raised by others, too. Concerning Syria, one interview participant stated: "at several points, we have not been welcomed by the negotiating parties," claiming that "political parties do not see civil society as an influence" (I18). A second expressed their belief that the Government of Syria had not been amenable to track two work (I5). A third, also referring to the Syrian conflict parties, was similarly dismissive: "they are not receptive to anything," this interviewee remarked; "the Coalition—it is focused on the other countries while the regime is mainly interested in its alliance with Russia and Iran—it is far away from the reality of Syrian civil society" (I6). Nevertheless, this notion was challenged on occasion; for instance, one interviewee—a track two convenor as opposed to a participant—described the Yemeni conflict parties as "receptive and responsive" to the messages and concerns of track two participants (I22).

4.4.3 Perceived Lack of Receptivity to Track Two Displayed by the UN and Other International Actors

Furthermore, it was not merely the conflict parties who were accused of a lack of receptivity to track two insights. Interview participants also directed criticism in this vein towards the UN and other members of the international community. One interviewee, in relation to Yemen, remarked that "there is a question as to whether the Special Envoy has the interest or bandwidth to absorb the masses of information generated by all of these [track two] initiatives," with this interviewee later commenting that the "enthusiasm" of the OSESGY does not tend to "translate into engagement" (I1):

> They send their representatives to events…and the representatives give the spiel from the Special Envoy, they sit in and listen—but I doubt whether that's taken, whether something is then done. The UN hasn't taken ownership of track two—and this is a testament as to whether their engagement is meaningful. (I1)

Indeed, supporting this sentiment, one interviewee commented, in relation to Syria, that "the UN doesn't know how to deal with a conflict with so many actors" (I18). Expressed simply, as one interviewee observed, if the UN is not interested, "there is nothing you can do" (I10). However, it must be noted that a track one actor working on the war in Yemen emphasised their deep respect and enthusiasm for track two initiatives: "track two is extremely important," they commented, continuing by stating that "with track two, we completely depend on them—they are the ones with the access, with the expertise" (I12). Separately, a track two convenor, in a discussion concerning Syria, noted that the Special Envoys with whom they had worked had "all listened and offered kind words" (I24).

Concerning the alleged lack of receptivity of members of the international community more broadly, a further interviewee described the "first challenge" in relation to transfer from track two to track one as being the need to "convince" members of the international community that transfer from lower tracks "is something of value." This interviewee mentioned that "there is always residual scepticism" (I19). This belief was supported by a second research participant, who noted their belief that "international actors are extremely stuck in their own thinking" (I9).

4.4.4 Box-Ticking: The Cosmetic Nature of Many Track Two and Track 1.5 Initiatives

A further obstacle raised by the participants to successful transfer from track two to track one in the Yemeni and Syrian contexts was what they perceived as the frequently "cosmetic" or box-ticking nature of track two and track 1.5 initiatives

and, in particular, of those led by or involving women.[90] One interviewee, in a discussion concerning Syria, mentioned the CSSR in particular, claiming that "it was so clear from the Special Envoy" that this initiative was merely "at the level of consultation" and that the participants "didn't feel it had any kind of importance." This interviewee later expressed their broader sense that track two initiatives were often treated as a checklist, an approach with which track one mediators superficially engaged but to which they neglected to commit, thus removing the possibility of transfer (I18).

This idea was also expressed in relation to Yemen. One interviewee, for example, remarked on the participation of the TAG, the group of Yemeni women experts, in the Stockholm process:

> They [members of the TAG] were not able to substantially participate in Stockholm—well, they were present—they were able, at least, to participate in photo opportunities. But, for the meetings, they were not in the room. They were more of a parallel strand. (I20)

Another participant raised this notion of superficiality in relation to the UN's approach to track two in Yemen and framed it as an obstacle to transfer: "track two is often more of a visual—a symbol." It is notable, here, that the superficial nature of these track two programmes seems to have been blamed upon the perceived attitudes of the UN. The same participant continued by noting that track two participants "will attend Stockholm and so on—but it is more of a ceremony, to satisfy the UN's way of doing things" (I13). This latter statement implies that conflict parties and member states understand that inclusion is required for legitimacy but that the impact of track two groups is limited. Notwithstanding the perceptions of this interviewee, the WAB has recorded notable impacts, such as contributing to securing approximately 30 percent participation by women in the Constitutional Committee formed in 2019 as well as giving repeated briefings to high-level officials on all aspects of the political process, not limited to gender equality and women's rights.

4.4.5 Structural Barriers to the Participation of Marginalised Groups

The next series of obstacles centre around structural barriers to the participation of marginalised groups, and women in particular, in both track two and track one processes. Interview participants described the Yemeni and Syrian conflict parties as being particularly opposed to listening to the views and priorities of Yemeni and Syrian women participants in track two programmes. For instance, one interviewee remarked that the Yemeni "parties don't take women seriously—or their ideas seriously" (I1), thus inhibiting the capacity of Yemeni women to transfer to track one. Indeed, a second participant remarked on the "lack of political will"

90 Relating to this, within the workshop conducted with track one and track two convenors, mediators, and donors, the view was expressed that those in track two lack information and that, without detailed information regarding the conflict and the peace process, it is difficult "to navigate the turmoil."

to include both women and their views and ideas: those in the track one space, according to this interviewee, do not "perceive women to be decision-makers" (I27; a similar comment was made by I25). Furthermore, a third interviewee commented that the emphasis, by Yemeni women activists, on transferring their ideas to the OSESGY as opposed to the conflict parties "is not by accident—it is because there is no room to target the parties. Or there is a perception that there is no room to target."

Indeed, in relation to Syria, one interview participant commented that "a very important challenge that we have faced from the start" has been the "high degree of resistance to including women." This interviewee elaborated on this point: "some actors, the topics that are being discussed—they think that these are not the concern of women—it is very male-dominated, and it is just not intuitive for them to include women." This interviewee concluded by noting that "just participating is not actually meaningful if the participants don't have a voice, if they are not heard" (I19). Supporting this, also in relation to Syria, one interviewee noted the following: "we have witnessed some women trying to articulate their needs to high-level representatives of the track one negotiating parties—who tend to be men—and we have seen them [the women] have their concerns dismissed" (I21). Moreover, in the workshop conducted with Yemeni and Syrian track two participants, it was emphatically and repeatedly mentioned that the conflict parties in both Yemen and Syria refuse to listen to women.

More broadly, inclusive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacebuilding were framed as novel: one interview participant argued that such "inclusive public policy-making" remains "new and foreign in the Yemeni context" for donors, for Yemeni women leaders, and for Yemeni civil society (I4) (this view could, however, be challenged: the NDC, for instance, achieved notable and meaningful participation by women). Within this theme, interviewees spoke more specifically regarding the exclusion of women and the obstacles this posed to transfer. For example, concerning track two programmes in Yemen, this same participant commented that women "tend not to be represented, or they are represented in separate tracks that are rarely connected to other tracks with the main political actors" (I4).

Interview participants speculated as to why this might be. A number turned to what they perceived to be the legacy of women's exclusion; this was particularly seen to be relevant to Yemen but also to Syria. Therefore, one participant argued that "there is very little women's participation or representation in the higher levels of political formations in Yemen," further remarking that, while Yemenis "may respond to prerequisites [i.e. requirements] about adding women," they may not then meaningfully "allow space for their contribution," reducing the presence of women to tokenism. The "history of Yemeni society" was further presented by this participant as an obstacle to transfer (I2). A further comment supported these arguments: concerning the opportunities for women to transfer to track one, a second interviewee, in a discussion concerning Syria, highlighted that "the backdoor influence that men can have—this is not available to women, to

civil society" (I17; a similar comment was made by I28). Section 4.3.1 showed that transfer can often be informal; however, if these informal routes are not equally accessible, transfer processes will prove exclusive and inadequate. The participants did not explore the roots of this inequity but it is possible to speculate that historical discrimination and disparities, together with resistance on the part of conflict parties and mediators, can explain the inaccessibility of informal transfer for women.

Providing further specificity, one interview participant spoke of their belief that there has been an absence of women's movements and peace movements in Yemen; they argued that the citizens of the state have faced authoritarian rule for decades and must also grapple with the painful legacy of reunification together with the involvement of external actors (I4).[91] This, in turn, was framed by this interviewee as an inhibitor to inclusivity and, therefore, to the transfer of the shared priorities and insights of Yemeni women. This interview participant also argued that many women's initiatives have failed to develop their "cross-cutting priorities" for a peace agreement, or for a transition, thus raising a barrier to their ability to transfer to track one (I4) (however, as just one example, it is possible to point to the work of the Peace Track Initiative, which has recently published what it terms a "Feminist Peace Roadmap in Yemen"[92]). Finally, a further interviewee offered a different reason for why Yemeni women, and other marginalised groups, were struggling to connect with track one processes. This interviewee argued that there had been "a failure from the Special Envoy's Office—he did not impose, as a condition on the parties, the participation of women." This interviewee claimed that "this is one example of why transfer is not happening, especially when it relates to women—but I think this also applies to other marginalised groups" (I1). Overall, while resistance to including women is, in part, a function of resistance to the inclusion of civil society generally, the findings suggest that resistance is distinctive in relation to women- dominated segments of civil society.

91 This view, however, should perhaps be challenged. Lisa Wedeen, for example, writing before the Arab Spring, described Yemen as possessing "a dense network of associations and a degree of local civic political participation unparalleled in other parts of the Arab world." She continued, "In the (qualified) public spheres of opposition-oriented conferences, political party rallies and meetings, Friday sermons, newspaper debates, and qat chew conversations—even in the daily television broadcasts of parliamentary sessions—Yemenis from a variety of regional and class backgrounds routinely criticize the regime without fear of repercussions usually found in regimes classified as 'authoritarian.'" See L. Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 76.

92 The roadmap can be accessed here: "The Feminist Peace Roadmap in Yemen: A Guiding Framework for Transforming the Peace Process," Peace Track Initiative (2021), https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/publicate/contentupload/OF81CgB1995040/eng-feminist-peace-roadmap-draft2.pdf [last accessed: 16 August 2021].

4.4.6 Path Dependency and Sporadic Funding: Lack of Adaptability of Approaches of Track Two Convenors and Donors

Participants highlighted the strategies and knowledge of both track two convenors and donors as further obstacles to successful transfer between track two and track one. Specifically, they mentioned lack of adaptation to changing contexts, pursuit of the same theories of change time after time, unhelpful funding patterns, and the complexity of the web of relationships within the track two sphere. One interviewee, in a conversation on Syria, noted the sporadic engagement of donors, describing this as a hurdle in terms of transfer. This interviewee criticised donors for failing to support "the same constituencies in each track," claiming that "there is not a continued line of thinking, knowledge-sharing, breaking of the ice, building the credibility of negotiators, that extends from track three to track one." Instead, "there are sporadic efforts to support different types of actors and constituencies" and a failure to fortify "the linkages between them…they are so disconnected from one another" (I16). A second interviewee, also regarding Syria, supported this point, commenting that "track two actors were flitting from one topic, one initiative, to another" (I21). A third similarly remarked that "donors don't know how" to support transfer and that "they just invest in a particular issue—[but] that will not automatically lead to transfer to track one" (I5). In a further criticism of donors—but also of track two convenors—one interviewee also highlighted, in a conversation concerning Yemen, their sense that there is an acute lack of research and analysis, and a failure to understand the complex web of actors and allegiances operating within the track two peacebuilding sphere (I4). They implied that without such insight, track two efforts could not hope to be successful or to have an impact upon track one negotiations.

4.4.7 Security and Reputational Threats Facing Track Two Participants

A crucial and concerning set of obstacles to supporting transfer from track two to track one relates to fears regarding the safety of track two participants. A number of participants, in relation to both conflicts, raised the idea that fostering links between track two and track one posed security risks to track two participants. More broadly, they spoke of the notion that participants' very involvement in track two had provoked intimidation and threatened their reputations. As the following paragraphs show, in the views of many of the interviewees, women are at particular risk.

Beginning with Syria, one interviewee commented: "when people have participated, they have been called complicit, their participation has been tokenised—and a lot have therefore moved to work with the grassroots." Indeed, this participant later used stronger terms: "by participating, women are being socially executed—there are no measures to control the hostility faced" (I17). This was supported by a second participant, who noted that "there were several campaigns attacking track two figures—women were accused on both sides" (I8). A further participant,

speaking in a wider sense, developed the argument that, in relation to Syria, "distrust" prevails between those involved in track two and track one: "there is the discrediting of track one actors," this interviewee argued (I16).

This idea was also discussed in relation to Yemen. In a conversation surrounding peacebuilding efforts concerned with security sector reform, one interviewee raised the following caution:

> In track two, there can also be trouble discussing security—it can be so risky—it can be terrifying…By participating, you are brought a little closer to the violence—if you cross the wrong people in the dialogue—it is so sensitive—people can do instant damage. (I12)

Furthermore, a second participant, speaking about both conflicts, reflected that:

> There are risks [to multi-track work]—donors push for track two to show how their work is impacting track one—and in cases like Yemen and Syria, one of the biggest concerns is ensuring the safety of participants. There are a lot of potential reasons why actors are in track two and not in track one—there are reasons why they have not been included… they might be pushing against established power structures—there is a lot of risk, of potential danger. (I20)

The possibility that transfer may imperil track two participants is a troubling hurdle for those seeking to influence track one, particularly through more direct means. It may also partially serve to explain why there has been a perceived lack of transfer in Yemen and Syria. Such risk particularly affects women peacebuilders, who face more social scrutiny due to inequitable gender-related social norms, which exacerbate the barriers to their meaningful influence on track one. Women are facing the risk of "character assassination" based on their gender, are being targeted with sexual harassment online and offline, and are further worried about harmful backlashes targeting their families. These factors, in turn, lead to self-censure of activists even in the diaspora, as their families remaining in Syria or Yemen are vulnerable to threats, including arrest. A further gendered risk for women is that efforts to "protect" them may impact their ability to speak out and travel as needed, with safety measures constraining their participation. Thus, effective support to enhance transfer of track two women participants' priorities to track one could be informed by gendered risk assessments and bolstered by budgets allocated for women's protection.

4.4.8 Communication Challenges

A further interrelated group of obstacles to transfer from track two to track one discussed by interview participants broadly concerns communications. One obstacle to transfer that was raised was "a lack of clarity on the priorities of track one" (I11). The implication was that a lack of clear and open communications

between the convenors of track one and the convenors of track two regarding the focus and concerns of track one can damage the potential for transfer. Also on the theme of communications, a second interviewee, in a conversation surrounding Syria, remarked that if the format or the style in which the ideas, messages, and outcomes of track two are shared fail to suit the "needs" and "objectives" of the OSES, then this is likely to prove an impediment to transfer. On a similar point, this interviewee additionally commented that a lack of skills in communication—and, specifically, in the style of communication of the target of transfer—can also prove an obstacle to successful transfer: "you need to frame your messages for your recipients," they commented (I24).

Considering women's initiatives specifically, one interviewee remarked that a particular challenge is that such track two processes are often "presented as revolving around so-called women's issues" and that such framing further discourages "the men with guns" from heeding their ideas (I27). This indicates a lack of awareness on the part of track one stakeholders and convenors on the full range of topics that inclusive peace agreements might cover, including topics often raised by women, such as health and education. Lastly, two interviewees noted that track one actors must protect the confidentiality of participants, and their negotiations, and that this can pose a challenge to transfer, inhibiting the capacity of track one mediators to freely discuss the proceedings of track one with track two partners (I11, I27). Without such open communications, the implication was that transfer between track two and track one will be inhibited.

4.4.9 Legitimacy Deficit

Interviewees raised a further important challenge to transfer regarding legitimacy, relating to both the track one process and participants in track two initiatives. For instance, one interviewee commented that "maybe stakeholders explicitly don't want to be involved with the UN, with the main mediator in that conflict" (I11). This was supported by a remark from a second interviewee: "there is a big question as to whether providing input to the Constitutional Committee legitimises the committee, and whether actors want to do that" (I5). The idea of legitimacy was also raised in another way; one interviewee described the following as a barrier to transfer: "the people who were participating [the track two participants], they had no legitimacy—they were low-hanging fruit in the diaspora, those who spoke English" (I21). This perception from earlier interventions lingers despite efforts since the 2018 WAB rotation to ensure the participation of a broader spectrum of women, including from more conservative communities. A study of the CSSR in the Syrian context found that, although it had a limited impact on the gridlocked track one process, it entailed positive side effects for CSSR participants, who gained more local legitimacy and higher regard for the role of civil society in peacemaking and peacebuilding.[93]

93 The study did, however, identify a weakness in the CSSR in relation to the inclusion of Syrian Kurds. See R. Turkmani and M. Theros, "A Process in Its Own Right: The Syrian Civil Society Support Room," London School of Economics and Political Science (2019), http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/101034/5/A_process_in_its_own_right.pdf [last accessed: 6 April 2022], p. 6.

4.4.10 Coordination Challenges

Finally, an overwhelming number of interview participants independently raised the topic of coordination, or complementarity, between track two initiatives in both countries. While this was often discussed without reference to transfer, a lack of coordination was, on occasion, described as an impediment to transfer between track two and track one. As the tendency to discuss coordination emerged, this topic was introduced in later interviews and participants were encouraged to link this subject with the idea of transfer. How might coordination—or a lack of coordination—between track two initiatives affect such programmes' capacity to connect with track one peacemaking?

The link between transfer and coordination proved difficult for interview participants to untangle. One interviewee, however, suggested that a lack of coordination does "impede" transfer because:

> If, for example, five track two organisations come together with the same recommendation, at the same time, it will be much more impactful, more likely to make a difference. But if they all come with this, at different times, or all come with different ideas, then it will not be as impactful. (I5)

The implication is that, if track two organisations are able to work in harmony, this may increase the likelihood that their message will be received and acted upon by track one actors. Secondly, one interviewee noted that "the Special Envoy does not have the time to deal with all the bureaucracy [associated with] the different projects." Therefore, this interviewee claimed, if there is one coordinated mechanism, then the Special Envoy "will be very happy" (I24). This was supported by a third interviewee: "it can be challenging—lots of overlapping issues and initiatives, with the same faces, bombarding the mediator, the Special Envoy, the warring parties—it can be overwhelming, absorbing all this" (I27).

4.4.11 Summary of Struggles and Obstacles

In conclusion, many of the interviewees candidly discussed the apparent failures of transfer from track two to track one in Yemen and Syria, and several were also willing to explore the obstacles preventing transfer between these two tracks. An array of impediments to transfer were suggested and these have been assessed in detail here. Gaining an understanding of the potential hurdles to transfer between track two and track one is crucial if donors, practitioners, and participants wish to improve the rate and quality of transfer in the future.

4.5 Gender, Women, and Transfer from Track Two to Track One

While this report has focused on a wide range of track two initiatives that have taken place in Yemen and Syria since 2011, it has sought to include gender-related perspectives throughout and highlighted a number of initiatives involving or led by Yemeni and Syrian women. A number of the interviewees had been involved in such programmes and, as recounted in this section, they discussed the experiences of women in the context of transfer from track two to track one. Section 3 incorporated a brief analysis of the gendered dimensions of the Yemeni and Syrian wars and attendant peace processes within the overviews of the cases. It was noted that Yemeni and Syrian women, girls, men, and boys have experienced the violence in their states in different ways. Further, it was noted that women and girls have struggled with endemic discrimination and faced specific violations of their rights following the eruptions of the crises. Women have been systematically excluded from the track one negotiations despite the fact that they were at the forefront of the 2011 uprisings and have created and seized opportunities to spearhead grassroots peacebuilding. Section 4.4 showed that although women tend to be represented in greater numbers within track two efforts (compared to track one),[94] there exist a number of barriers to their efforts to transfer to the track one space. The current section draws out, and further reflects upon, these specific findings.

None of the detailed descriptions of effective transfer assessed in Section 4.3 concerned initiatives led by women or initiatives focused upon gender, or the specific rights and needs of women and girls. Women were present within the less precise descriptions of effective transfer. It was mentioned, for instance, that Syrian women have been successful in targeting the EU; that Yemeni women have provided advice relating to the WPS agenda to the OSESGY (in the context of the Constitutional Committee in Yemen), to international ambassadors, and to national political blocs with ties to the negotiating parties; and that Yemeni women have spent time on the margins of the track one space in Geneva in a bid to achieve informal transfer. However, there are significant differences in views and priorities between women, who are never a homogenous group. Differences in resources and access to opportunities can lead to women participants primarily coming from elite backgrounds, with rural women often facing greater barriers to participating in dialogue activities. The WAB in Syria has diversified its membership after a rotation of its members.

Nevertheless, women featured most prominently within the sections of the interviews concerned with the obstacles facing transfer. Participants argued that the conflict parties in Yemen and Syria are opposed and unwilling to listen to the views of women involved in track two initiatives. Moreover, it was suggested that women tend either not to be represented in track two diplomacy or to be

94 A. K. Dayal and A. Christien, "Women's Participation in Informal Peace Processes," *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 26:1 (2020), pp. 70–1.

represented within track two initiatives particularly unconnected to track one efforts or of an especially superficial nature. When women's voices reach track two or even track one, it was suggested that they are rarely heard. Furthermore, the perception that track two initiatives involving women focus predominantly on normative matters pertaining to inclusion and women's rights was also contended to be a barrier to transfer. More broadly, the entrenched exclusion of women from political and public life was lamented while participants also spoke of the hostility and persecution women have faced for participating in track two initiatives and the attacks they have endured in the social media sphere in particular.

Participants proposed ideas for change.[95] For instance, they raised the notion of gender-responsive budgets[96] together with the argument that women must, at the very least, be supported to enter the margins of the track one space in a bid to seek informal transfer. Nevertheless, while participants argued that capacity-building was required to improve the communication skills of Yemeni and Syrian women involved in track two, and while it was proposed that track two convenors must support women to develop better relationships with the Yemeni conflict parties, there appear to be deep-seated barriers to the inclusion of women and to their ability to transfer to track one. Therefore, it seems highly unlikely that capacity-building[97] would truly address these structural barriers,[98] and cultural and attitudinal shifts on the part of track one actors may prove more likely to enact change in this area. Indeed, one interview participant sharply criticised the peacemaking system: "the peace process is designed for men," they argued, before condemning the lack of leadership by women within the international community. "We ask for more representation within the negotiating parties," they claimed, "but are we leading by example in the international community?" (I29).

95 Although, of course, improved transfer by or from women involved in track two into track one does not remove the need for the equitable inclusion of women within track one spaces.

96 Gender-responsive budgets are informed by a gender-based analysis of how allocated resources would affect men and women differently, in order to ensure that resources are allocated in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment rather than reinforcing pre-existing gender discrimination. This could enable women's participation by including allocations to allow women to bring childminders and children along, or by funding the travel costs of men "guardians" (*mahram*) if required.

97 Indeed, within the workshop conducted with Yemeni and Syrian participants in track two, a number of participants expressed the view that women involved in track two do not require any further capacity-building.

98 It should be noted, however, that a participant within the workshop held with track one and track two convenors, mediators, and donors expressed their opinion that it is not merely women who face structural exclusion from the peace process in Yemen but those whom they termed "independent voices" more broadly.

4.6 Research Findings

As illustrated in Section 2 of this report, the existing literature on track two, and that on transfer, focuses on several themes: the role and traditional characteristics of track two initiatives, the nature of communication and transfer between the tracks, and the positioning of the multi-track approach within the broader shift—in academia and practice—to "local" and inclusive peacebuilding. This section proceeds by comparing the report's findings with the existing literature on these three categories. The section concludes by positioning the findings within the perpetual peacebuilding model developed by Paffenholz. It concludes by noting that the ways in which the findings diverge from the existing literature demonstrate the need for a new framework of analysis.

Overall, the findings affirm the challenges faced by track two initiatives in the absence of progress at the track one level, the continuing prevalence and embrace of the linear theory of change between track two and track one, and the risks and difficulties inherent in participation in track two.

The literature on the role of track two has tended to focus on the notion that track two exists to shape, or at least support, track one. Additionally, the literature has noted the importance of the identity of track two participants and, thus, their capacity for influence. The findings illustrate that the perceptions and goals of track two participants, donors, and convenors align—and are indeed rooted in—these traditional understandings of track two: namely, that track two exists to influence track one. Indeed, track two initiatives in Yemen and Syria continue to be animated by this linear and upward theory of change. Participants also noted the difficulties of engaging in or maintaining track two programming in the absence of track one. Regarding areas of divergence and novel insights, it emerged that track two actors in Yemen and Syria aim to influence track one specifically through one avenue: the UN in its role as mediator. Additionally, regarding the identity of track two participants, it appears that challenges arise when the legitimacy of the track one process, and/or the legitimacy of track two actors, is called into question.

Regarding the traditional characteristics of track two, the findings affirm that there is an emphasis on relationship-building within the Yemeni and Syrian track two contexts, and that significant resources have been devoted to track 1.5 initiatives. The findings also confirm that track two participants from marginalised groups, and women in particular, face specific challenges in engaging in track two, and that participants in track two initiatives face significant security risks. Finally, it was possible to observe general fragmentation within the track two spaces in Yemen and Syria, which has led to coordination challenges. While these themes have been explored in the literature, this report provides additional clarity and precision on the nature of the security and coordination challenges that women face.

Additionally, regarding the nature of transfer between track two and track one, it was clear that much emphasis is still placed on upward transfer from track two to track one, but there are communication challenges that hinder this transfer. The findings also indicate a need to broaden the concept of transfer to include lateral or downward transfer. Overall, the precise mechanisms of transfer between track two and track one are inadequately understood in theory and in practice. Furthermore, critically, the data reveal that transfer is often a long-term process and not a single act.

Regarding the turn to local and more inclusive peacebuilding, the findings confirm that civil society participation continues to face opposition from conflict parties and is not perceived to receive adequate support from international actors. Additionally, it seems that initiatives involving women—and inspired by the turn towards inclusive peacebuilding—are often cosmetic in nature. Finally, while the emphasis in the inclusion literature is usually focused on the participation of traditionally excluded groups in official peacemaking spaces, the mediation skills and networks of track two participants can be viewed as aspects that it is desirable to include in transfer between track two and track one. The findings also align with Paffenholz's contention that there is a need to question fundamental assumptions about the multi-track approach in light of stalled track one processes and protracted conflicts,[99] with some interviewees even alluding to the possibility of moving away from the concept of tracks or transfer.

This comparison of the report's findings with the existing literature indicates that there is a need for a new framework of analysis aimed at capturing the complexities inherent in transfer, particularly those that deviate from the existing academic literature. Section 5.3 introduces such a framework for analysis.

99 Paffenholz, "Perpetual Peacebuilding."

5 Ideas and Next Steps for Enhancing Transfer

The findings presented in Section 4 demonstrate that there are a number of challenges to transfer between track two and track one at both the theoretical level and the practical level. In light of these challenges—and the attendant frustration and pessimism expressed by track two participants, donors, and convenors—it is clear that new ideas to analyse, carry out, and monitor transfer are critically needed. Thus, this section highlights such ideas and possible next steps. The ideas were generated from suggestions made by the interviewees as well as those offered by participants in the two consultations convened with practitioners and donors of track two programming. Additionally, this section draws on the findings of this report, in particular by comparing them with the existing literature on track two and more recent literature on stalled peace processes.

In this context, this section includes ideas for enhancing the effectiveness of transfer (Section 5.1), ideas for rethinking track two (Section 5.2), and ideas for better analysing transfer (Section 5.3). The last of these sections presents and reflects upon a new framework for analysis based on the interview findings and the secondary literature.

5.1 Ideas for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Transfer

Despite the general pessimism expressed within the interviews and consultations, a number of the interviewees suggested several ways in which transfer between track two and track one might be improved in the future. Suggestions tended to revolve around participating in track one, increasing the efficacy of track two, and mitigating communication challenges. In addition, some recommendations were directed to donors directly. These recommendations are listed and categorised below, and then explored in greater detail.

Participating in track one:

(1) Collapse the very idea of tracks, meaningfully involving civil society representatives in track one negotiations (I6).
(2) Ensure that there are participants common to both tracks (I8).
(3) Ensure that local mediators, or local mediation skills, are deployed in the track one negotiations (I7, I10).
(4) Allow track two to set the agenda for track one (I6).
(5) Specifically support women to enter the margins of the track one space (I27).[100]

100 As participants in the workshop conducted with Yemeni and Syrian track two participants specified, this should include protection for women.

Enhancing the efficacy of track two:

(1) Ensure "proper communication" following each round of negotiations or activities in both tracks (I8).
(2) Organise small meetings, involving participants in tracks two and one, following each round of negotiations or activities in both tracks (I8).
(3) Enable track one mediators to take ownership of track two initiatives (I1)
(4) Facilitate track two convenors to encourage track two participants not to view the conflict parties as the "enemy" and help to build relationships between track two participants and track one conflict parties (I4)
(5) Support track two convenors to conduct better research and analysis (I20)
(6) Support track two convenors to provide better guidance to track one actors regarding how to implement the ideas of track two participants (I11)

Mitigating communication challenges:

(1) Support track two convenors to better communicate and coordinate with the track one mediator (I4)
(2) Ensure that track two initiatives focus on the agenda of track one (I3).
(3) Improve the communication skills of track two participants (I20, I21, I24)

Recommendations to donors:

(1) Support donors to ensure that budgets are flexible, responsive to women's needs, and long term (I4, I24, I25).
(2) Support donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to create a framework for transfer and collectively adhere to it (I1).

5.1.1 Participating in Track One

Concerning a possible way in which transfer between track two and track one might be improved, one interviewee appeared to propose the need to collapse the very idea of "tracks," based on the idea that truly meaningful transfer would entail the inclusion of track two participants in track one negotiations. This interviewee argued the following: if civil society wishes to participate, they must be directly involved in track one, and "the connection between track two and track one is not working…you must have the participation of track two in track one." This participant further claimed that "there is a huge gap between what we [Syrians] need and what they [the Syrian political parties] are negotiating. If you want to bring more from track two to track one, civil society needs to be directly involved. There is no other solution" (I6). In addition to arguing for the abolition of tracks, this contention could also be interpreted as calling for the need for track two to shape—or even decide the agenda for—discussions at the track one level.

Less radically, but on a similar theme, one interviewee suggested that a means of improving transfer between tracks would be to ensure that there were participants who were involved "in each of the different tracks"—that is, "common" to each (I8)—and that these could include women participants. Relatedly, two interviewees proposed a specific "output" that should be better transferred in the future: local mediation techniques and skills (I10). Indeed, another participant evocatively remarked that "the skills to mediate are present in the texture of society" and commented that "there are local ways and they should be transferred to the major processes—there are exciting local methods of conflict resolution" (I7). Local women leaders are likely to have developed their own approaches to mediating and transforming local conflicts (often negotiating from positions of less formal power), which could be drawn on. Therefore, interviewees firstly suggested that track two participants could be empowered through challenges to the very idea of tracks and through allowing track two participants to decide upon the agenda for track one negotiations. Secondly, they suggested that in order to improve transfer between track two and track one, certain participants must be involved in both track two and track one, and local mediators or mediation skills must be deployed within the track one negotiations.

5.1.2 Enhancing the Efficacy of Track Two

The interviewees made further suggestions about ways of improving transfer between track two and track one. Firstly, while their statement was vague, one interview participant made the argument that "proper communication" following "each round of the tracks" would help transfer efficacy. Secondly, this interviewee suggested that "small meetings, there, at the different tracks" could help to involve participants in the various tracks, claiming that such gatherings would need to "be very specific, very focused" (I8). Smaller meetings may be more conducive to women participants feeling able to raise their concerns and to those concerns being properly considered by men participants, as gender norms can work to make men's suggestions seem more legitimate in a context where public leadership assumptions are coded male.

In addition, interview participants suggested more specific ways in which track one mediators and track two convenors could help to improve transfer between track two and track one. For example, one interviewee commented that "the Special Envoy could take ownership of track two—this would give [track two] the gravitas that is needed to be taken seriously by Yemeni society and by the conflict parties" (I1). Indeed, it was forcefully suggested within the workshop held with Yemeni and Syrian participants that international actors must exert pressure upon the conflict parties to include women, and that the value of track two, together with channels to track one, should be protected within UN Security Council resolutions and international frameworks. It was also suggested that track two convenors could help to improve relationships between track two participants—particularly women—and the Yemeni political parties, and that this would greatly benefit transfer: "there needs to be an understanding that the political parties are not the enemy, that there needs to be

relationship-building with them—and, then, within these relationships, one can present, suggest, and develop ideas and solutions." Indeed, this participant remarked that "a key part of the work involves assisting and connecting women's groups to the parties" (I4). More broadly, one participant suggested that better research and (gendered) analysis, on the part of track two organisations, are necessary prerequisites for improved transfer: "analysis should be one of the first steps to inform track two—to make the work more efficient," this participant stated, claiming that this was "necessary, for track two to…feed into track one" (I20).

A further participant suggested that the convenors of track two may have a responsibility to better guide track one participants and mediators in how to implement the ideas generated by track two initiatives:

> Sometimes, when we have recommendations or more difficult suggestions—our various stakeholders have sometimes not developed these enough to provide ideas on how these should be implemented—and maybe we, as track two [organisations], could support this in some form, in talking through how these recommendations should be done, so that it is easier for track one to implement them. (I11)

5.1.3 Mitigating Communication Challenges

Relatedly, a number of the participants' suggestions for means of improving transfer between track two and track one focused on communications. Thus, one interviewee claimed that track two organisations must communicate and coordinate better with the OSESGY, stating that the relationship "should be more like an exchange or an ongoing conversation" (I4). Similarly, it was argued that track two initiatives must focus on those themes that are being discussed at the track one level: "whatever the subject is at track one—prisoner exchanges, security, the economy, whatever it is—then track two needs to also talk about these, and to provide direct recommendations." However, participants also expressed the view that the topics being discussed in the track one fora "must be interpreted" to ensure track two participants are able to grasp the themes (I3).[101] The converse is also needed: the peacebuilding issues that matter to track two women stakeholders face being dismissed by track one participants as not being "hard security" topics or just "women's issues." Donor and UN support could be improved by ensuring all advisory bodies and the track one discussions cover all aspects of the political process, including those relating to women and inclusion. This will enhance the likelihood of securing inclusive outcomes. Furthermore, highlighting gender inequality could function as an avenue to discuss other topics, providing an indirect opportunity to bridge positions on sticky issues.

In particular, interviewees contended that there is a need to build the communications "capacity" of track two participants. For instance, one

101 This idea, that improved coordination was required, was also aired within the workshop conducted with track one and track two convenors, mediators, and donors.

interviewee argued that "there is a lot of potential for track two actors to engage with women, to build up their capacity, to help them become better at advocacy—so they are able to target the UN and target the conflict parties" (I20).[102] This broader argument, regarding skills, was supported by a second interviewee, who posed the following question: "if you are not given the right skills, how can you frame your messaging correctly?" This interviewee continued by describing the communications and advocacy training received by members of the WAB, claiming that this capacity-building has made an "important difference" as the participants are now able to "reach out in a more efficient way" (I24). One interviewee, however, broadened this point, arguing that both the initiators and the receivers of transfer must undergo training in communications: "it is important to prepare both in how to effectively communicate." The interviewee linked this to the idea of guaranteeing "a safe space": "there can be an awful lot of anger, an awful lot of tension…it is not the case that you can just come up with a few points and then communicate these—it is more tricky than that" (I21). This points to the importance of the social conditioning of the listeners or targets of the transfer, which is shaped by gendered expectations.

5.1.4 Recommendations to Donors

Finally, the interview and workshop participants also discussed improvements that could be made by donors. One interviewee commented on the importance of both flexible and gender-responsive budgets, arguing that both of these would help with ensuring transfer. In relation to flexibility, they commented that "it is about being reactive, flexible, open": for instance, "if you find out that you need to travel tomorrow to a high-level event, it is about having the ability to quickly find an appropriate communications expert." In relation to gender, this interviewee noted the benefits, concerning the WAB, of members having access to funding to enable their children to travel with them, and funding for childcare (I24). This was supported by a second participant (I4) and a third, who further argued that if conveners of track two and track one were truly committed to inclusion, "they would do everything in their power to ensure women's participation" (I25; a similar comment was made by I29). Lastly, and more broadly, one interviewee noted that "the NGOs and the donors—they must also do a better job of working together and ensuring their respective initiatives feed into a coherent framework which facilitates transfer" (I1).

5.1.5 Summary of Ideas for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Transfer

Therefore, within the sample, there appears to be a degree of hope and an ability to envisage how transfer between track two and track one in Yemen and Syria

102 However, it should be noted not only that Yemeni and Syrian women have been engaged in an array of advocacy efforts but also that, as already explored, there exist a range of structural and gendered barriers that hinder the attempts made by women to transfer to the track one space. It is imperative to question whether capacity-building and/or attitudinal shifts on the part of track one actors may be more appropriate.

could be better supported in the future, particularly for women participants in track two. The broader implication of these comments is, furthermore, that facilitating transfer between track two and track one in the Yemeni and Syrian contexts remains worth pursuing.

5.2 Ideas for Rethinking Track Two

This report has focused, specifically, on transfer between track two and track one. Nevertheless, as noted in Section 2, different forms of transfer exist: transfer can move both up and down, and can also involve track three initiatives. Many of the interviewees consulted appeared frustrated with the failings of transfer between track two and track one and, moreover, seemed disappointed with track one processes. In both Yemen and Syria, these peace processes appear to have staggered along, achieving little, as the crises have become protracted and destructive.

In light of these frustrations, Paffenholz has suggested that there is a need, within the peacebuilding and peacemaking community, to abandon the very notion of tracks. In her analysis, the process of negotiating peace is inherently intricate, non-linear, and, crucially, perpetual. Rigidly dividing peacebuilding and peacemaking, and thus societies, into separate tracks may serve not only to obscure the hazy boundaries between the tracks but also to prevent truly inclusive peacemaking.[103] As has been related, this perspective was also supported, on occasion, by the interviewees; one, for instance, claimed that transfer could only truly be achieved by the direct participation of civil society in the official negotiations. Indeed, participants bemoaned the international community's adherence to traditional approaches: track two must "encourage a rethink of the track one process," argued one (I26), while another proclaimed the need to rebuild the system in its entirety (I29). By broadening our understanding of what constitutes peacemaking and peacebuilding towards a more emancipatory and participatory conceptualisation, as suggested by Paffenholz, it may even prove possible to move away from the very need for transfer. Track two initiatives like the CSSR can deliver peacebuilding impacts including enhancing the legitimacy of local civil society.[104]

At the very least, in the context of dysfunctional track one processes, there appears to be an urgent need to rethink transfer. Persevering with attempts to transfer to a stalled or struggling track one process could prove futile, and other forms of transfer may prove more fruitful. Moreover, it is surprising that only one of the interview participants consulted (I29) considered the challenges posed by the existence of multiple track one processes and their differing characteristics.

103 Paffenholz, "Perpetual Peacebuilding."

104 Turkmani and Theros, *A Process in Its Own Right*.

In Yemen and Syria, parallel track one processes have been initiated, as was explored in Section 3. This aspect of the crises emphasises ever further the need to rethink transfer from track two to track one.

Finally, there was often a lack of specificity in interviewees' recollections of transfer (with the exception of the detailed documentation of concrete impacts by the WAB on track one collated by UN Women). This could, as was acknowledged in Section 4, be attributed to interviewees' unwillingness to reveal details concerning their sensitive and confidential work. It could, however, also be due to an insufficient understanding within the community of how exactly transfer can take place and, moreover, a failure to plan in detail how transfer will be supported. Therefore, there may be a need for those involved in track one and track two peacemaking and peacebuilding—track one mediators, track two convenors, track two donors, track one conflict parties, and track two participants—to reflect on whether transfer should be sought and, if so, exactly how it could be achieved in each context. The framework introduced in the following sub-section may prove a useful tool in this endeavour and could be integrated within organisations' theories of change. However, it should also be treated as a working document; there are doubtless numerous further means of enacting transfer, and additional "objects" and "targets" of transfer that could be added. Nevertheless, it seems certain that greater clarity is demanded.

5.3 Ideas for Better Analysis of Transfer

5.3.1 Introducing the Framework

This section proposes an original framework for understanding transfer from track two to track one. Its contents are drawn from a review of scholarly literature on transfer, in particular building on work by Çuhadar and Paffenholz in 2020[105] and from the interviews and workshops conducted with donors, practitioners, and participants involved in track one and track two peacemaking and peacebuilding in Yemen and Syria. It is therefore grounded in both secondary literature and primary qualitative research. The possibilities for transfer drawn from the interviews and workshops include ones that are taking place or have taken place in Yemen and Syria, together with options raised as conceivable by interviewees.

The framework identifies three questions that this research concludes are crucial for understanding the process of transfer from track two to track one:

(1) What is being transferred?
(2) Who is the target of the transfer efforts?
(3) How is transfer taking place?

105 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

The framework provides a variety of possible answers to each question. It is intended to be helpful to those analysing transfer from track two to track one together with those planning to enact and monitor such transfer. As acknowledged in Section 2, multiple forms of transfer can take place concurrently and users should therefore feel able to select all options of relevance. The framework also allows users to specify the stage of the peace process at which the transfer mechanism is taking, or will take, place. Finally, for each answer there is the option to add a response that is yet to be identified.

Within the framework, responses that were both found within the secondary literature and mentioned by interview or workshop participants are highlighted in green. Those that were only found within existing academic studies on transfer are highlighted in purple. Those that were only mentioned by participants are highlighted in blue. The implications of this categorisation will be reflected upon later in this section. A non-highlighted version of the framework is available in Appendix D.

5.3.2 Presenting the Framework

1. What Is Being Transferred?

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Binding policy recommendations[106]				
Non-binding policy recommendations[107]				
Policy options, ideas, and suggestions[108]				
The priorities of the track one peace talks				
Normative demands (e.g. women's quotas)[109]				

106 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.;R. Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation," International Negotiation 11:1 (2006), pp. 65–89; E. Kaufman and S. Sosnowski, "The Peru–Ecuador Peace Process: The Contribution of Track Two Diplomacy," in R. Fisher (ed.), Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution in Peacemaking in Protracted Ethnopolitical Conflict (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 175–201 H. Kelman, "Contributions of an Unofficial Conflict Resolution Effort to the Israeli–Palestinian Breakthrough," *Negotiation Journal* 11:1 (1995), pp. 19–27; H. Kelman, "Interactive Problem Solving in the Israeli–Palestinian Case: Past Contributions and Present Challenges," in R. Fisher (ed.), *Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution in Peacemaking in Protracted Ethnopolitical Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 41–63.

109 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Draft peace agreement[110]				
Draft constitution[111]				
Negotiated agreement articulating the joint position of track two participants[112]				
Insights from track two participants regarding the perspectives of the conflict parties[113]				
Insights from track two participants regarding the flexibility of the conflict parties on particular issues[114]				
Insights from track two participants (possibly also gained from track three participants) concerning the realities on the ground of the state(s) in conflict				

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.;Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation"; A. Williams, "Second Track Conflict Resolution Processes in the Moldova Conflict, 1993–2000: Problems and Possibilities," in R. Fisher (ed.), *Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution in Peacemaking in Protracted Ethnopolitical Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 143–60.

112 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

113 Ibid.; D. Lieberfeld, "Evaluating the Contributions of Track-Two Diplomacy to Conflict Termination in South Africa, 1984–90," *Journal of Peace Research* 39:3 (2002), pp. 355–72.

114 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Insights from track two participants concerning the web of actors implicated in the conflict and their shifting relationships				
Data and evidence-based findings together with analysis[115]				
Results arising from the monitoring of the implementation of a peace agreement[116]				
Records of hearings, testimonies, and interviews in the case of truth and reconciliation commissions[117]				
Knowledge and skills (to better enable track two participants to influence or participate in track one)[118]				
"Local" mediation skills (i.e. transferred to the official mediator)				
Other (specify):				

Note: purple, secondary literature only; blue, interview and workshop participants only; green, both secondary literature and interview and workshop participants.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy."

2. Who Is the Target of the Transfer Efforts?

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Conflict parties (or political actors) involved in track one[119]				
Armed opposition groups[120]				
Political actors from the conflicting state(s) not involved in track one				
Official mediator involved in track one[121]				
Representatives (usually ambassadors) of external states implicated, or interested, in the conflict and/or the peace process[122]				
Coalitions of external actors or states (e.g. observers of negotiations or "Friends" groups)[123]				

119 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0";Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation"; Kaufman and Sosnowski, "The Peru–Ecuador Peace Process." Kelman, "Contributions of an Unofficial Conflict Resolution Effort to the Israeli–Palestinian Breakthrough"; Kelman, "Interactive Problem Solving in the Israeli–Palestinian Case."

120 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
UN agencies				
Track two convenors (organisations or individuals, usually international, that organise track two initiatives)[124]				
Other track two initiatives[125]				
National journalists[126]				
International journalists[127]				
Other (specify):				

Note: purple, secondary literature only; blue, interview and workshop participants only; green, both secondary literature and interview and workshop participants.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

3. How Is Transfer Taking Place?

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Track two convenors work with "insiders" considered to be members of the "elite" (i.e. individuals close to those involved in track one) in track two initiatives in the hope that these insiders will communicate the dynamics, insights, ideas, and outcomes of the initiatives to those involved in track one[128]				
Communicate and/or send the ideas, insights, and outcomes (e.g. through reports) of track two initiatives to the conflict parties involved in track one[129]				
Communicate and/or send the ideas, insights, and outcomes (e.g. through reports) of track two initiatives to the official mediator[130]				
Lobby the conflict parties involved in track one[131]				

128 J. Burton, Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations (London: Macmillan, 1969); E. Çuhadar and B. Dayton, "Oslo and Its Aftermath: Lessons Learned from Track Two Diplomacy," *Negotiation Journal* 28:2 (2012), pp. 155–79; Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation"; Lieberfeld, "Evaluating the Contributions of Track-Two Diplomacy to Conflict Termination in South Africa, 1984–90."

129 Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy"; Çuhadar and Dayton, "Oslo and Its Aftermath."

130 Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy"; Çuhadar and Dayton, "Oslo and Its Aftermath."

131 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Lobby the official mediator[132]				
Lobby external states implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process				
Develop the negotiation skills of track two participants and "export" these participants to the track one negotiations[133]				
Track two participants design mechanisms for their inclusion in track one, and these mechanisms are then implemented				
The official mediator imposes conditions on conflict parties involved in track one demanding the inclusion of traditionally marginalised individuals and groups that would usually only participate in track two				
Track two participants become advisers to conflict parties involved in track one[134]				

132 Ibid.; Çuhadar and Dayton, "Oslo and Its Aftermath."

133 Çuhadar and Dayton, "Oslo and Its Aftermath";Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation"; Kelman, "Contributions of an Unofficial Conflict Resolution Effort to the Israeli–Palestinian Breakthrough"; Kelman, "Interactive Problem Solving in the Israeli–Palestinian Case."

134 Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy"; Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Track two participants become advisers to the official mediator[135]				
Conflict parties involved in track one initiate consultations with track two participants[136]				
The official mediator initiates consultations with track two participants[137]				
Track two convenors initiate meetings involving the track one conflict parties and track two participants to take place alongside the official negotiations				
Track two participants initiate informal meetings with track one conflict parties on the margins of track one talks and/or track two initiatives				
Track two convenors initiate meetings involving track two participants and the official mediator				

135 Çuhadar, "Assessing Transfer from Track Two Diplomacy"; Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

136 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0";Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation"; H. Saunders, "Sustained Dialogue in Tajikistan: Transferring Learning from the Public to the Official Peace Process," in R. Fisher (ed.), *Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution in Peacemaking in Protracted Ethnopolitical Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 127–41.

137 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
One main actor initiates consultations with multiple track two initiatives; this main actor then acts as the centre of an information network[138]				
Conflict parties involved in track one temporarily attend or observe track two initiatives[139]				
Conflict parties involved in track one also participate in track two or track 1.5 initiatives[140]				
The official mediator attends track two or track 1.5 initiatives and shares ideas, outcomes, insights, perspectives, and/or priorities with conflict parties involved in track one[141]				
Track two convenors share the ideas, outcomes, insights, perspectives, and/or priorities of track two participants with the official mediator				
Track two convenors share the ideas, outcomes, insights, perspectives, and/or priorities of track two participants with external states implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process				

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.; Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation"; Saunders, "Sustained Dialogue in Tajikistan."

141 Fisher, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Pre-negotiation"; Williams, "Second Track Conflict Resolution Processes in the Moldova Conflict, 1993–2000."

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Track two convenors ask external states implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process to encourage conflict parties involved in track one to engage with the ideas of track two participants				
There are common or shared participants in track one and track 1.5, and track 1.5 also includes track two participants; those participants in both track one and track 1.5 thus serve as a link, reflecting back the ideas of track two participants included in track 1.5 to the conflict parties in track one				
The official mediator regularly compiles reports documenting the activities of track two organisations and initiatives				
The official mediator organises coordination meetings, gathering together track two organisations and initiatives				
Track two convenors initiate meetings involving track two participants and the donors that are funding or acting as sponsors of track one				
Participants in track two skilled in local mediation are “exported” to mediate in track one				
Participants in track two skilled in local mediation train the official mediator				
External states, implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process, attend track two initiatives				

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Track two convenors and the official mediator collaborate and co-develop complementary priorities for both track one and track two				
Track two participants mobilise a peace campaign[142]				
The insights, ideas, and outcomes of track two initiatives are reported in the national media[143]				
The insights, ideas, and outcomes of track two initiatives are reported in the international media[144]				
Track two participants connect to "street power"[145]				
Track two participants make public statements and/or deliver press releases[146]				
Other (specify):				

Note: purple, secondary literature only; blue, interview and workshop participants only; green, both secondary literature and interview and workshop participants.

142 Çuhadar and Dayton, "Oslo and Its Aftermath."

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 Çuhadar and Paffenholz, "Transfer 2.0."

146 Ibid.

5.3.3 Reflecting on the Framework

This sub-section reflects upon the framework presented in the previous section. It considers the array of options offered by the framework: the possibilities for what can be transferred between track two and track one; the potential individuals, groups, and organisations to which these ideas and outcomes can be transferred; and the actions that can be undertaken to transfer them. It also highlights the discrepancies between the secondary literature concerning transfer and the ideas raised by interviewees and workshop participants. The implications of these discrepancies are additionally explored.

What Is Being Transferred?

There were 17 possible answers to this question and, of these, eight were found in the secondary literature only. This would seem to indicate that, at least within this project's sample of participants, there remain several potential transfer "objects" that are not being considered or attempted in Syrian or Yemeni track two initiatives. However, it may also indicate that the participants deemed these eight objects, which include a draft peace agreement and a draft constitution, inappropriate for these two conflicts and the current stages of the two peace processes.

These eight omissions notwithstanding, there were a number of proposals for what is being, or can be, transferred from track two to track one that were common to both the secondary literature and the data gathered within the interviews and workshops. For instance, the following ideas were found within both sources: targeted and exploratory policy recommendations, normative demands, research, and skills. It is noteworthy, however, that these shared objects are "softer" than those found solely within the scholarly work on transfer. There is a clear difference, for example, between generating research findings—a "soft" possibility that was common to both data sources—and the drafting of a peace agreement—a "hard" possibility found only within the secondary literature. That "harder," or more concrete, possibilities dominated the secondary literature and were not raised by interviewees and workshop participants may imply the perceived lack of power and influence of track two initiatives in Yemen and Syria.

A crucial suggestion was found within the interviews and workshops that was not observed in the academic literature concerning transfer: the suggestion that the mediation skills of track two participants could be transferred to the official mediator. This idea represents a clear instance in which authority and expertise are deemed to lie with track two participants; transferring the mediation skills of track two participants would offer an opportunity for such individuals to meaningfully shape the process of negotiating peace at the track one level.

Who Is the Target of Transfer Efforts?

Concerning this question, 11 options were found within the two data sources, and seven of these were found in both. For example, the participants did not recognise the transfer of concerns or possible solutions to other track two initiatives (potentially to track two initiatives with better links to track one spaces) as a possible option for shaping track one discussions.

However, participants did also mention possible targets of transfer that were not found within the academic literature. These targets were UN agencies and those political actors within the state or states at war who have been excluded from the official track one talks. This possibility is particularly relevant in relation to Yemen, where the UN has a mandate for two-party peace negotiations yet the locus of power in the state is fragmented across multiple entities.

How Is Transfer Taking Place?

This question is the most complex and can overlap slightly with the first two questions posed within the framework. In all, 36 options were found to answer this third question. However, several of these options are variations upon the same mechanism but are altered slightly depending upon the target of transfer. It is striking that the majority of the answers to this third question were found in the interview data only. This seems indicative of the manifold creative ways in which transfer is being attempted or, at least, envisioned by those with whom this project conducted interviews and workshops. It may also reflect the intricate and varied nature of the process of transfer from track two to track one.

The 36 options can be grouped into three broad categories. The first contains the more passive mechanisms, in which "ideas," usually expressed in a written format, are shared with either the official mediator or the conflict parties involved in track one. The second category entails the slightly more active initiation of shared events, usually termed "consultations" or "meetings," between track two participants and the official mediator or the conflict parties involved in track one. The third category includes mechanisms that offer greater control to track two participants. This category includes mechanisms such as the involvement of track two participants in track one and the use of track two participants as advisers to either the official mediator or the conflict parties.

There were seven options found in the academic literature but not explored within the interviews or workshops. This suggests either that these mechanisms are not happening in Yemen and Syria but could take place or that they are deemed inappropriate by practitioners and participants for these two conflicts.

6 Conclusion

This report analysed primary data on transfer between track two and track one initiatives in the Yemeni and Syrian contexts. It highlighted a lack of detailed descriptions of successful instances of transfer and noted that even the few successful examples were often tempered by cynicism regarding their impact. It also suggested that ambiguous language used to describe effective transfer potentially reveals a lack of clarity and precision surrounding the concept. Furthermore, while women tend to be represented in greater numbers within track two efforts than track one, there are a number of barriers to their efforts to transfer to the track one space. Finally, the data revealed two important characteristics of transfer from track two to track one: that such a process is frequently long term and not a singular act, and that it can be informal.

Overall, within the conversations, pessimism, cynicism, and frustration could be detected, and the barriers identified were wide-ranging. Nevertheless, drawing on the recommendations of interviewees, suggestions from workshop participants, and a comparison of the data with the existing literature, it was possible to outline a variety of ideas and possible ways forward for improving the efficacy of transfer between track two and track one. In particular, Section 5.3 presented a framework that can be used to understand transfer from track two to track one, centred around what is being transferred, who is the target of transfer efforts, and how transfer is taking place. A multitude of possibilities were discovered, indicating the intricacies of transfer but also the wide range of choices and flexibility available to track two participants and convenors. There were discrepancies between the possibilities for transfer found within the secondary literature and those mentioned within the interviews and workshops, and these differences and their implications were discussed.

More generally, however, in the context of broader and systemic challenges facing peace processes, the report suggested throughout that rethinking the concept of transfer is a constructive and necessary avenue for future exploration.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A: Detailed Research Methodology

The findings of this report are based on three sources of data: secondary literature concerning transfer; a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals who had been involved with track one and track two peacemaking and peacebuilding in Yemen and Syria since 2011; and two validation workshops, one with Yemeni and Syrian track two practitioners and the other with track two convenors and funders. This appendix reflects on the ways in which the findings in Section 4 were reached and the framework in Section 5.3 was developed, focusing in particular on the method of semistructured interviewing, the sample of research participants, and the approach taken to analyse the data gathered.

This study began with a review of academic and policy literature concerning transfer, particularly relating to transfer from track two peacebuilding to track one peacemaking. On the basis of this assessment, three needs emerged: to clarify the process of transfer from track two to track one; to assess whether additional transfer mechanisms, not identified in the secondary sources, are taking place in the field; and to reflect in depth on the experiences of participants, practitioners, and donors on transfer from track two to track one in practice. The researchers therefore devised a draft framework that summarised the options for what is being transferred, the options for the targets of transfer, and the various ways in which transfer may take place. They then conducted a review of the various track two initiatives that have recently taken place in Yemen and Syria, or that are ongoing. They attempted to contact those who had convened, funded, or participated in these programmes, together with track one actors, to request an interview to discuss the process of transfer from track two to track one.

In all, 28 interviews were conducted with 31 individuals (both men and women) between October 2020 and August 2021. The interviewees included a number of track one actors together with representatives of bodies that had funded track two initiatives, employees of track two organisations, and Syrians and Yemenis who had participated in the work convened by these track two organisations. The majority of the interview participants requested to speak under the condition of anonymity and, therefore, it is not possible to specify the numbers of each category (track one actor, track two donor, track two practitioner, and track two participant) of interviewee, or to disaggregate the interviewees by gender. Moreover, each interviewee was allocated a random number and the decision was taken to make attributions to this number only; however, interviewees' names, roles, and organisations, where consent was given, have been listed in Appendix E. While the number of interviews conducted is relatively high, with each interview having been in depth and wide-ranging, the interviews should not be considered

to have comprehensively captured all views and perspectives. Nevertheless, they do provide an initial, and detailed, insight into the topic and are sufficient for this unique and exploratory consideration of an under-researched topic.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were all held remotely using secure software. They adopted a semi-structured format, which empowered the participants to steer the conversations towards subjects that they deemed to be of importance. The interview guide is included in Appendix C. Briefly, the interviewers began by inviting the participant, or participants, to reflect on any current or recently completed track two initiatives in which they had been involved or of which they had been aware, before focusing on the concept of transfer. The interviewers then asked the participants whether, in the context of the programme or programmes they had described, transfer to track one negotiations had been sought. If it had been, the interviewers then asked how exactly this transfer had taken place, to whom precisely the initiative had sought to transfer, and whether the transfer attempt(s) had been effective. They then further enquired into obstacles to transfer, concentrating in particular on the challenges posed by the protracted nature of the wars in Yemen and Syria; the struggles of the track one negotiations; and, if appropriate, the precise opportunities and challenges facing Yemeni and Syrian women seeking to transfer to the track one space. The interviewers also asked the participants for their views regarding the utility of a framework to measure transfer, the shape such a framework might take, and any obstacles they saw in seeking to monitor and assess transfer. These interviews were therefore guided by the secondary sources reviewed prior to the interviews.

Nevertheless, the semi-structured interviewing method "is sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of study, while leaving space for participants to offer new meanings to the study focus."[147] The participants were permitted and, moreover, encouraged to digress from the topic while the interviewers listened intently, reacting to their responses by further exploring points deemed crucial, interesting, or under-explained. The interviewers also introduced further topics and questions not featured in the guide if they believed these to be relevant based upon the data gathered during the interview. The aim was to receive rich, detailed answers in which the interviewees revealed, either explicitly or implicitly, that which they believed to be significant in relation to the topic of transfer from track two to track one in the contexts of Yemen and Syria.[148]

The interview data were thematically analysed. Thematic analysis can be defined as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within

147 A. Galetta, *Mastering the Semi-structured Interview and Beyond* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), p. 24.

148 P. Berger and T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Anchor, 1967); H. Rubin and I. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1995), pp. 8–9.

data."[149] Within this study, the method entailed the following steps: firstly, the researchers immersed themselves within the data gathered during the interviews and, secondly, the data were labelled, or "coded."[150] This second step allowed the identification of particularly salient and recurring ideas within the interview notes, which were then organised into broader categories and themes; these themes then guided the structure of Section 4. The data were also assessed for responses to the three questions presented within the framework and all of those that were identified were included. Throughout the analysis and writing phase, the data were repeatedly returned to in order to ensure "sensitivity to [their] meanings" and to ensure the researchers remained cognisant of the data as a whole; after all, coding can "fragment" data into a "number of different parts which may then seem disconnected from the whole."[151] The approach taken here can therefore be thought of as data driven yet semi-inductive. The researchers were deeply engaged with the views of the participants but also approached the analysis phase having researched the concept of transfer, having drafted a framework, and with two clear objectives that also shaped the questions posed within the interviews.

Finally, two remote workshops were conducted in October 2021 to present the preliminary findings, explore their resonance with the participants, and assess whether the initial results could be expanded upon. The first workshop was conducted in English with 19 participants: track one and track two convenors, mediators, and donors. The second was conducted in Arabic with six Yemeni and Syrian participants in track two spaces.[152] All participants took part on a confidential basis; their reflections have been incorporated both within the framework and within the analysis in Section 4.

149 V. Braun and V. Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3:2 (2006), p. 83.

150 Ibid., pp. 93–99; J. Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London: SAGE, 2014), p. 4.

151 C. Rivas, "Coding and Analysing Qualitative Data," in C. Seale (ed.), *Researching Society and Culture* (London: SAGE, 2012), p. 368; R. Boyatzsis, *Transforming Qualitative Information* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1998), p. 30.

152 We would like to express our gratitude, once more, to all those who participated, to UN Women for their organisational support, and to Karma Ekmekji for her skilful facilitation of the Arabic workshop.

7.2 Appendix B: Methodological Challenges in Tracking Transfer

In the context of the research methodology employed for this project, it is important to note the difficulties inherent in measuring, or tracking, transfer. Indeed, a number of the interviewees expressed scepticism that such a task could be achieved. For instance, one interviewee bluntly stated, when asked how transfer might be tracked: "I don't know how you would do that…often, there are so many iterations of an idea—how, at the end, could you say that this happened because of track two—I don't know how" (I12; a similar comment was made by I26). This was supported by a second participant, who claimed that it is "rare" to be able to "trace the transfer from our work directly," mentioning the array of formats in which ideas are developed. Indeed, this interviewee further claimed that "the important thing for us is not to trace where ideas originate or come from but that various channels of communication are kept open, that ideas can resonate with different actors" (I22). Moreover, a third interviewee commented that "we are not sitting in the discussions with all the parties, with the UN—and without this, we can't measure" (I24).

Offering further support for this idea, one participant commented that their organisation "tried to gather together, as much as possible, the effects or outcomes" of coordination initiatives but that "it is easy to ask, are you going to change anything, what is the next course of action, will you create new partnerships?" However, it is rare for those involved in track two to want "to share the details of the specific changes that meetings generated." Indeed, this participant later remarked: "I wish we had more specific examples of practical outcomes—but it is very difficult to gather these." Moreover, this participant also questioned how to define success in the context of transfer from track two to track one: "What does success look like?...Is it how much track one can push forward a decision made at track two?...If there is a document which track one absorbs and pushes forward—but then it stalls—where is the success?" (I7). These views were supported by others: "it is tough to prove or claim success," commented one, who also remarked on the intangible, subjective, and sensitive nature of transfer in the context of track two and track one (I5).

Nevertheless, one participant did offer ideas concerning how transfer could be measured in the future. They remarked, for instance, that "maybe you could look at whether topics at the local level, whether they were then discussed at track two and all the way through to track one," arguing that, if these topics were raised at the level of track one, "you could see the coordination was working." They also suggested that "evaluation at the local level" could be introduced to assess local actors' understandings of track one but that such work would require deep and extensive observation: "it would be a full-time job, you would need many people!" (I8), they concluded. On a similar note, a second participant claimed that it had been possible for their organisation to trace the impact of its work by monitoring the extent to which its initiatives were referred to by the Special Envoy "in his

briefings to the Security Council" (I24). The WAB's initiatives have repeatedly featured in the remarks of the Special Envoy for Syria,[153] including to the Security Council, where he mentioned the WAB in all of his statements in 2021,[154] as well as in the co-chairs' statements at the Brussels IV (June 2020)[155] and Brussels V (March 2021)[156] conferences.

However, returning to the theme of risk and the potential dangers posed to participants in track two through an over-emphasis on transfer, one participant warned: "while monitoring and indicators might be useful, they must not put participants in danger." They continued by commenting that "we are not always expecting to see results that are easily captured by a monitoring and evaluation framework" (I20). Indeed, it was emphasised that the sole purpose of track two is not always to move ideas and outcomes to track one. To drive home this point, one participant stated that "some discussions explicitly aim to transfer, but some don't want to connect"; indeed, they further claimed that "there is a benefit in having different formats where different discussions can take place" (I22). This was expressed in stronger terms by a second participant, who asked: "If we were expecting to transfer all the time, what might be lost?" The "objectives of track two," this participant commented, "are not just to transfer to track one" (I20).

7.3 Appendix C: Interview Guide

Project: Transfer from Track Two Initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa

The interview will begin with the provision of a brief overview of the project. The following questions will then be explored; however, the interviews will be semi-structured, empowering the participants to introduce further topics for consideration and allowing the researcher to follow up on particularly significant ideas.

(1) Can I begin by asking for your general reflections on peacemaking efforts, and peacebuilding efforts, in relation to Syria/Yemen at the moment?
(2) Please can you tell me about any current or recently completed track two initiatives in which you are involved in Syria/Yemen? (Follow up questions if necessary and appropriate: When did this project begin? What were its aims? What did the initiative entail? How did you become involved? Which body funded the project?)
(3) We are interested in the concept of "transfer." Have you come across this term before? (If the participant has not, provide a brief explanation. If appropriate, ask how the participant would define transfer.)

153 "Letter Dated 6 April 2020 from the Representatives of the Dominican Republic, Germany and the United Kingdom."

154 Ibid.

155 "Brussels IV Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region.'"

156 "Co-chairs' Statement 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region.'"

(4) Returning to the project(s) we discussed earlier in the interview, did you plan to achieve particular types of transfer during these project(s), and to what extent were these achieved? Which actors or individuals did you plan to target in terms of transfer? Was this successful? Was transfer achieved to actors or individuals that you did not expect?
(5) (Only include if limited information provided on transfer.) How would you define a successful track two initiative? Do you feel the project(s) discussed above achieved success? What change, or impact, do you think was brought about by the project(s)? Was this the impact that was planned for?
(6) In the current political and peacemaking climate in Syria/Yemen, which seems to feature stalled or struggling track one initiatives, what should the role be for track two initiatives? In the light of this climate, should ongoing initiatives focus on a particular form of transfer?
(7) Is there anything you would like to add, or is there anything I have not asked that I should have?

7.4 Appendix D: Framework for Assessing and Planning for Transfer from Track Two to Track One

1. What Is Being Transferred?

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Binding policy recommendations				
Non-binding policy recommendations				
Policy options, ideas, and suggestions				
The priorities of the track one peace talks				
Normative demands (e.g. women's quotas)				
Draft peace agreement				
Draft constitution				
Negotiated agreement articulating the joint position of track two participants				
Insights from track two participants regarding the perspectives of the conflict parties				
Insights from track two participants regarding the flexibility of the conflict parties on particular issues				

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Insights from track two participants (possibly also gained from track three participants) concerning the realities on the ground of the state(s) in conflict				
Insights from track two participants concerning the web of actors implicated in the conflict and their shifting relationships				
Data and evidence-based findings together with analysis				
Results arising from the monitoring of the implementation of a peace agreement				
Records of hearings, testimonies, and interviews in the case of truth and reconciliation commissions				
Knowledge and skills (to better enable track two participants to influence or participate in track one)				
“Local” mediation skills (i.e. transferred to the official mediator)				
Other (specify):				

2. Who Is the Target of the Transfer Efforts?

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Conflict parties (or political actors) involved in track one				
Armed opposition groups				
Political actors from the conflicting state(s) not involved in track one				
Official mediator involved in track one				
Representatives (usually ambassadors) of external states implicated, or interested, in the conflict and/or the peace process				
Coalitions of external actors or states (e.g. observers of negotiations or “Friends” groups)				
UN agencies				
Track two convenors (organisations or individuals, usually international, that organise track two initiatives)				
Other track two initiatives				
National journalists				
International journalists				
Other (specify):				

3. How Is Transfer Taking Place?

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Track two convenors work with "insiders" considered to be members of the "elite" (i.e. individuals close to those involved in track one) in track two initiatives in the hope that these insiders will communicate the dynamics, insights, ideas, and outcomes of the initiatives to those involved in track one				
Communicate and/or send the ideas, insights, and outcomes (e.g. through reports) of track two initiatives to the conflict parties involved in track one				
Communicate and/or send the ideas, insights, and outcomes (e.g. through reports) of track two initiatives to the official mediator				
Lobby the conflict parties involved in track one				
Lobby the official mediator				
Lobby external states implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process				
Develop the negotiation skills of track two participants and "export" these participants to the track one negotiations				
Track two participants design mechanisms for their inclusion in track one, and these mechanisms are then implemented				

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
The official mediator imposes conditions on conflict parties involved in track one demanding the inclusion of traditionally marginalised individuals and groups that would usually only participate in track two				
Track two participants become advisers to conflict parties involved in track one				
Track two participants become advisers to the official mediator				
Conflict parties involved in track one initiate consultations with track two participants				
The official mediator initiates consultations with track two participants				
Track two convenors initiate meetings involving the track one conflict parties and track two participants to take place alongside the official negotiations				
Track two participants initiate informal meetings with track one conflict parties on the margins of track one talks and/or track two initiatives				
Track two convenors initiate meetings involving track two participants and the official mediator				

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
One main actor initiates consultations with multiple track two initiatives; this main actor then acts as the centre of an information network				
Conflict parties involved in track one temporarily attend or observe track two initiatives				
Conflict parties involved in track one also participate in track two or track 1.5 initiatives				
The official mediator attends track two or track 1.5 initiatives and shares ideas, outcomes, insights, perspectives, and/or priorities with conflict parties involved in track one				
Track two convenors share the ideas, outcomes, insights, perspectives, and/or priorities of track two participants with the official mediator				
Track two convenors share the ideas, outcomes, insights, perspectives, and/or priorities of track two participants with external states implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process				
Track two convenors ask external states implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process to encourage conflict parties involved in track one to engage with the ideas of track two participants				

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
There are common or shared participants in track one and track 1.5, and track 1.5 also includes track two participants; those participants in both track one and track 1.5 thus serve as a link, reflecting back the ideas of track two participants included in track 1.5 to the conflict parties in track one				
The official mediator regularly compiles reports documenting the activities of track two organisations and initiatives				
The official mediator organises coordination meetings, gathering together track two organisations and initiatives				
Track two convenors initiate meetings involving track two participants and the donors that are funding or acting as sponsors of track one				
Participants in track two skilled in local mediation are “exported” to mediate in track one				
Participants in track two skilled in local mediation train the official mediator				
External states, implicated or interested in the conflict and the peace process, attend track two initiatives				
Track two convenors and the official mediator collaborate and co-develop complementary priorities for both track one and track two				

	Planned for?	Stage	Achieved?	Stage
Track two participants mobilise a peace campaign				
The insights, ideas, and outcomes of track two initiatives are reported in the national media				
The insights, ideas, and outcomes of track two initiatives are reported in the international media				
Track two participants connect to “street power”				
Track two participants make public statements and/or deliver press releases				
Other (specify):				

7.5 Appendix E: Interview Participants

A. Heather Coyne, OSESGY, interviewed on 18 December 2020

Assaad Al-Achi, Baytna, interviewed on 28 October 2020

Confidential Source (A), interviewed on 26 October 2020

Confidential Source (B), interviewed on 4 November 2020

Confidential Source (C), interviewed on 9 November 2020

Confidential Source (D), interviewed on 9 November 2020

Confidential Source (E), interviewed on 9 November 2020

Confidential Source (F), interviewed on 17 November 2020

Confidential Source (G), interviewed on 26 November 2020

Confidential Source (H), interviewed on 30 November 2020

Confidential Source (I), interviewed on 2 December 2020

Confidential Source (J), interviewed on 2 December 2020

Confidential Source (K), interviewed on 7 December 2020

Confidential Source (L), interviewed on 14 December 2020

Confidential Source (M), interviewed on 14 December 2020

Confidential Source (N), interviewed on 16 December 2020

Confidential Source (O), interviewed on 16 December 2020

Confidential Source (P), interviewed on 22 December 2020

Confidential Source (Q), interviewed on 18 January 2021

Confidential Source (R), interviewed on 21 July 2021

Confidential Source (S), interviewed on 23 July 2021

Confidential Source (T), interviewed on 26 July 2021

Confidential Source (U), interviewed on 27 July 2021

Florence Mandelik, Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution, interviewed on 4 March 2021

Ivan Shalev, European Institute of Peace, interviewed on 1 December 2020

Joshua Rogers, Berghof Foundation, interviewed on 23 July 2021

Nadia al-Sakkaf, Connecting Yemen, Peace Track Initiative, and National Reconciliation Movement, interviewed on 27 July 2021

"Peacebuilding Expert," interviewed on 20 July 2021

Sylvia Thompson, Crisis Management Initiative, interviewed on 16 December 2020

Tina Sandkvist, Kvinna Till Kvinna, interviewed on 2 November 2020

Yasmine Masri, Kvinna Till Kvinna, interviewed on 2 November 2020

Acknowledgements

The authors are very grateful to all the interviewees for their valuable contribution to the research; and to UN Women - in particular Cecilia Pellosniemi and Aleksandra Dier - for their support and critical reflection throughout the research and drafting process. They would also like to thank Jana Naujoks, Alexander Bramble, and Caroline Varin for all their insightful substantive input; Eckhard Volkmann, Jana Naujoks, and Giulia Ferraro for their operational support; and Hazel Bird for her copy-editing and proofreading.

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