

Case study

Participation of the diaspora in the Colombian Truth Commission

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Abstract

This case study, which was conducted in the framework of the [KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration](#), contributes to a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to inclusion and participation of migrants in the context of Colombia's transition to peace and the formal mechanisms dealing with the past.

It builds on the experiences and practices of people involved in supporting, coordinating, and facilitating the inclusion of diaspora in Switzerland and other European countries into the work of the Colombian Truth Commission. Contacts were established particularly through an initiative funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and implemented by swisspeace with the support of the Instituto Catalan Internacional para la Paz, the Technical Secretariat of the Truth Commission in Europe.² The case study shows the importance of an inclusive approach and the need for governmental and nongovernmental institutions in both host and origin countries to address related challenges.

The following key messages and entry points for peacebuilding engagement at the peace-migration nexus result from this case study.

Key Messages

- The inclusion of diaspora in dealing with the past processes in the country of origin is an opportunity to address tensions among different groups in the diaspora, and the country of origin.
- To avoid doing harm when including diaspora in dealing with the past processes in the country of origin, an engagement with domestic (im-)migration actors and policies is required.
- Managing expectations of the diaspora regarding their involvement in a dealing with the past process in their country of origin and being transparent about processes of selection of participants and interviewers is key to a “do no harm” approach.
- Providing professional psychosocial support for victims and survivors, including for interviewers and interviewees, is an essential element of any dealing with the past initiative involving the diaspora.
- Acknowledging agency, the complexity of migratory experiences, as well as the diversity of identities and views among the diaspora, and understanding how that complexity impacts participation is important to ensure meaningful participation.

Entry-points & opportunities for peacebuilding

- Inclusion of diaspora in dealing with the past
- Research on the role of diaspora in dealing with the past
- Exchange and social cohesion
- Influence narratives
- Psycho-social approach

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1. Overview

1.1 Background

Demands for greater recognition of the rights and agency of migrants¹ stand out in recent scholarly literature, and increasingly in policy and practice. Key elements of recognition include the need to incorporate political rights and demands of migrants, as well as the need to ensure their participation in political processes in their countries of origin and in their host countries. To achieve long-term and sustainable results, peace policies and programs must recognize migrants' agency in shaping their trajectory and contributing to solutions to conflicts, as well as to dealing with the past in their countries of origin. This case study, which was conducted using the framework of the [KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration](#), contributes to a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to inclusion and participation of migrants in the context of Colombia's transition to peace and the formal mechanisms dealing with the past.

The case study builds on the experiences and practices of people involved in supporting, coordinating, and facilitating the inclusion of diaspora in Switzerland and other European countries into the work of the Colombian Truth Commission. Contacts were established particularly through an initiative funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and implemented by swisspeace with the support of the Instituto Catalan Internacional para la Paz, the Technical Secretariat of the Truth Commission in Europe.²

Box 1: KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration

This case study was conducted using the framework of the KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration, which aims to assist better understanding of how to systematically and strategically integrate migration into peacebuilding policy and programming. The underlying assumption, based on a desk study on the peace-migration nexus, is that the strategic inclusion of migration phenomena into peacebuilding offers yet untapped potential for peacebuilding (i.e., conflict prevention, conflict resolution and dealing with the past). The goal of the process was to contribute to bridging the gap between policy and practice and to move toward a more nuanced and conflict-sensitive discourse on migration.

To this end, over 15 months, KOFF facilitated exchanges and learning among actors from the peacebuilding, development cooperation, human rights, humanitarian aid, migration governance, and security sector governance fields. At the same time, KOFF conducted research and developed case studies on issues that are relevant to the migration-peace nexus, that is, social cohesion, migration governance and inclusion/participation. The insights from the process were used to create a migration toolbox for peacebuilding policy-makers and practitioners.

¹ See Glossary in the Toolbox on Migration & Peacebuilding and box p.6 'a note on language' for more information on terminology used in this case study.

² Comisión de la Verdad (2018) Actualidad. Noticias. Encuentros de trabajo con organizaciones de víctimas colombianas en el exilio y organizaciones europeas de derechos humanos. <https://comisiondelaverdad.co/actualidad/noticias/encuentros-de-trabajo-con-organizaciones-de-victimas-en-el-exilio-y-organizaciones-europeas>.

1.2 Methodology and scope

Over the course of several months, various interviews were conducted with political refugees from Colombia in Europe, members of the Colombian Truth Commission, volunteers from national committees, and experts to create a comprehensive understanding of relevant perspectives. This case study builds on these key informant interviews (KII), an extensive literature review, and learning meetings held in Switzerland. While recognizing the importance of considering all displaced groups, this case study focuses on the participation of Colombians who had to flee or left their country of origin to live abroad. Because of the COVID-19 situation, all interviews were conducted virtually. This opened the possibility of gathering a broad spectrum of views on participation in multiple European countries, including Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

1.3 Why the inclusion of migration experiences matters to peace

In times of war and political uncertainty, many people are forced to flee and leave their home (country) in search of protection and alternative living conditions. With them, they take memories, stories, skills, and expertise, which later can become important for a peaceful and inclusive transitional process. However, migrants are often excluded from truth and reconciliation processes in their countries of origin, even though they might have a considerable influence on ongoing conflict dynamics, as well as postwar reconciliation. A failure to consult with them, to address their needs, and to find solutions to their displacement, can further escalate existing tensions or contribute to new ones, thus undermining peacebuilding efforts. Simultaneously, ignoring the experiences of a significant part of the local community contributes to the loss of a collective memory and can place obstacles in the way of a just and successful truth and reconciliation process.

While the diaspora³ can play a role in reproducing conflict attitudes, they can also act as agents of change and have a positive influence on peace and how the past processes are dealt with. Often, they have (acquired) skills that are critical to peacebuilding. In this context, scholars and practitioners have pointed to the need for peace education and strengthening of skills needed for meaningful participation in peacebuilding, state building, and reconciliation. Including voices of the diaspora in reconciliation is a contribution to a symbolic reparation, that is, to listen and acknowledge what people have been through in the country of origin, and the host country. Moreover, it brings in new narratives and perspectives on the conflict, and thus enables a gathering of more comprehensive evidence. Additionally, efforts to include these groups might increase the effectiveness of truth and reconciliation initiatives, as they create spaces for bridging the different perspectives between the people who stayed in the country of origin and the displaced or returning people.

However, the inclusion of different identities and perspectives can also polarize. Finding an inclusive approach and ensuring participation of all groups who are interested and willing to participate comes with practical challenges, which need to be addressed by governmental and nongovernmental institutions in both host and origin countries.⁴

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, since 1990 (and as of

³ Henceforth, this case study will use the term “diaspora” to refer to people who left their country of origin (i.e., Colombia) involuntarily or voluntarily, and currently reside in other countries (referred to as ‘host countries’). This includes asylum seekers, refugees, and other migrants, many of whom are victims and survivors of the conflict in Colombia. See more on terminology [here](#). The case study also recognizes the need to address challenges and opportunities of meaningful participation of IDPs in the Colombian Truth Commission; however, it goes beyond the scope of this study.

⁴ Conciliation Resources (2018) Navigating Inclusion in Peace Transitions: Beyond Elite Bargains. <https://www.c-r.org/accord/navigating-inclusion-peace-transitions>

2. Regional context

mid 2019), 3 million people have fled or left Colombia, and more than 7 million have been internally displaced.⁵ Achieving sustainable peace and bridging the divide due to possible resentments requires the active integration of migrants.

Demands for a voice in the peacebuilding processes were raised during the demobilization of paramilitary forces at the beginning of this century. Various victims demanded a space and voice at the table. Thus, this served as a starting point for national as well as international organized victim advocacy and stressed the need for and the consideration of migrants. Following the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), three new bodies were created in 2017 to deal with the past atrocities and conflicts: the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP); the Unit for the Search for Persons Presumed Disappeared (UBPD) in the context of the armed conflict; and the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition Commission (Truth Commission).⁶ The Truth Commission's three-year mandate started on November 29, 2018. Based on a territorial, differential, and gender approach, its mandate is as follows.

It seeks the truth of what happened in the context of the internal armed conflict, to shed light on the violations committed therein, and to offer society a broad explanation of its complexity and an account that includes all voices. The Commission also promotes the recognition of victims' right to the truth, and the voluntary recognition of individual and collective responsibilities of those who directly or indirectly horizon.⁵

A mapping of victims in Colombia and its different regions led to the formulation of a territorial approach, in which each commissioner on the Truth Commission represents one geographical region. Due to the conflict dynamics and the earlier demands for the inclusion of migrants, the Truth Commission decided to include an international region, which includes those who are part of the Colombian diaspora.

With this approach, the Colombian Truth Commission paved the way for the collection of testimonies.⁶ Listening to stories from the diaspora, including victims and survivors of the conflict and people who had relationships with paramilitary, guerrilla, or criminal structures, enables a thorough understanding and analysis of common patterns. Various workshops have been organized and implemented to work with people who give their testimony to recognize and visualize the role and impact "exile" has played in Colombia's history. As of June 2020, the Truth Commission had collected testimonies. At the end of its mandate, the Truth Commission will publish a report, analyzing the origins, causes, impacts, and confrontations that people faced in Colombia as well as in host countries. Moreover, the Truth Commission will advocate for their further integration into archives, academic publications, and research.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Other forms of participation for diaspora include the documentation of cases and reports presented by individuals or organizations about selected topics.

The inclusion and participation of the diaspora in a state-led transitional process provides a chance to increase the visibility of already existing work by different organizations at national and international level. It enables local, national, and international organizations to connect and join a collective construction of peace. There are different forms of civil society participation outside Colombia. Two of the biggest organizations advocating and facilitating participation are the Foro internacional de víctimas and the Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission of Colombian Women in the Diaspora.

Box 2: Initiatives engaging Colombians in exile in the transition process

Testimonies to the Colombian Truth Commission

Supported by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), swisspeace, in cooperation with other organizations, is coordinating the collection of testimonies in Switzerland. The project provides space for victims to give testimonies in a safe way. Seven people are taking testimonies in Switzerland. The interviews cover all phases of exile and seek to understand patterns, dynamics, and important events. Further, swisspeace has been doing outreach, meeting with representatives of the Truth Commission, collecting information on the specific context, and informing diaspora communities about the process.

Foro internacional de víctimas⁷

As an autonomous space for victims of the armed conflict, the foro internacional the víctimas is open to migrants who had to leave the country due to their economic situation or discrimination of any kind. The organization claims that it is committed to finding a solution for people regardless of their origin and identity in order to end the armed conflict. Based on the concepts of solidarity and mutual support, the forum is committed to overcoming contradictions within Colombian society in a peaceful way. Through the participation of different groups of victims and diaspora, one of the principal objectives is building trust and a new discourse.

Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission of Colombian Women in the Diaspora⁸

Of the different population groups that fled Colombia during the armed conflict, women have taken a significant role in the contribution to peace and reconciliation. Now an international movement, women in the diaspora have started with one local hub in London, acknowledging the role of women in exile. At the core of their work is the understanding that women experience conflict and migration differently to men, and therefore bring a different set of skills and expertise. In many cases this stays unnoticed and is later lost during reconciliation.

In their work they focus on two main aspects: documentation and empowerment. Similar to the Colombian Truth Commission, this initiative wants to collect testimonies and analyze them in a later step to document the impact war and migration has had on the life of women. Additionally, through the creation of different spaces, the Commission of Colombian Women in the Diaspora wants to provide a chance for women to learn from each other and share experiences. Through psychological support and the organization of activities, the aim is to increase the influence of women in social, political, and cultural processes in the country of origin as well as in the host country.

⁷ Comisión de la Verdad (n.d.) Foro internacional de víctimas. <http://www.forointernacionalvictimas.com/>.

⁸ Conciliation Resources (n.d.) What we do. Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission of Colombian Women in the Diaspora. <https://www.c-r.org/where-we-work/truth-memory-and-reconciliation-commission-colombian-women-diaspora>.

3. Participation in the Colombian Truth Commission

3.1 Doing good: moving toward recognition, healing, and social cohesion

Key messages:

- The inclusion of diaspora in dealing with the past processes in the country of origin is an opportunity to address tensions among different groups in the diaspora, and the country of origin.
- To avoid doing harm when including diaspora in dealing with the past processes in the country of origin, an engagement with domestic (im-)migration actors and policies is required.

While the involvement of the diaspora in the Colombian Truth Commission comes with a set of challenges, it can also be a learning process and opportunity for recognition and building trust among different groups and identities. Further, involvement in dealing with the past processes can be part of a healing process. The Colombian Truth Commission is experienced by the diaspora as a form of recognition of their story about the conflict and the work that is being done in exile to build peace, at least at the level of the Colombian civil society.

El hecho de la participación de los colombianos en el exterior, para nosotros nos hizo existir.⁹

Increasing visibility and contributing to the healing process

Participation in the Truth Commission makes a public debate in the diaspora and the country of origin possible. The process of giving a testimony might be a contribution to the healing process, especially when seeking professional help is not possible or is complicated because of accessibility issues or cultural barriers in host countries. However, providing psychosocial support is not part of the mandate of the Truth Commission and should only be undertaken by experienced professional people.

The Truth Commission's psychological approach focuses on gender, age, and ethnic groups. With this approach, the interviewer tries to understand the impacts that past and current violence have on the individual sharing their story. Often the interviewers are the ones who detect what kind of support a victim might need and cooperate with other organizations to ensure they get the appropriate assistance. The impact of this kind of work on the interviewers themselves should not be underestimated. They often require psychological assistance to process the information and emotions while collecting testimonies. Peacebuilding actors implementing such initiatives dealing with the past should cooperate with organizations and individuals that provide psychological support and specialize in psychosocial support, to jointly identify coping strategies for victims and survivors, as well as interviewers. Psychosocial support and psychological assistance should be part of the design of the initiative and donor agendas to ensure that interviewers have sufficient resources to deal with psychological effects of this work. Moreover, it is crucial to build on traditional concepts and practices of trauma healing, which might be more accessible and effective for certain groups.

9 From a KII with a member of the diaspora, May 20, 2020.

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Es mejor para una sociedad no tener víctimas, sino sanar y si una persona se sana, sana su familia, si sana su familia se sana la sociedad.¹⁰

The mandate of the Colombian Truth Commission to involve diaspora opens ways for victims to be included in this dealing with the past process and offers spaces for storytelling and listening, for healing, as well as for reflection on one's own role in exile. It also makes the specific victimization of victims in exile visible.

Promoting reconciliation and social cohesion in the diaspora and the country of origin

Within the diaspora, there are differences between people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and with different ideologies and political views, which tend to persist, and at times polarize even more. Hence, while working with people and organizations from the diaspora of a certain country, it is important to keep political risks in mind and always work with the objective of building peace. As a peace-building actor facilitating such a process, it is important to keep in mind that the diaspora should be a supporting element in the transition process and to make sure that the involvement of the diaspora is a positive contribution to the implementation of the peace agreement.

No los llamemos conflictos, digamos que son resultados de trabajar colectivamente.¹¹

Moreover, including migrants in dealing with the past offers opportunities for dialogue and reconciliation. It makes visible that there are other Colombians committed to peace. Therefore, the process can promote social cohesion in the host country and the country of origin, as well as across transnational relationships. The host country government and civil society play an important role in supporting diaspora involvement in dealing with the past processes by supporting/funding initiatives, engaging in diplomatic relations with the country of origin, facilitating exchange between different diaspora groups from different conflict contexts, sharing information about the reasons why people left their country, and building trust in the local governmental institutions and civil society actors. The process can also contribute to raising awareness about the political situation, as well as the challenges and opportunities of involvement in a dealing with the past process in the country of origin. Here it is important to pay attention to the sentiments of the diaspora toward the host government and the country of origin, which might be one of distrust. Local civil society actors can address this issue and act as facilitators between the diaspora and respective governments. Moreover, by showing that it is possible to work together amid different interests and backgrounds, the diaspora can serve as an inspiration for similar collaborations across lines of conflict in other contexts. However, it is important to acknowledge that working with the diaspora looks different in every context, depending on the role that the host country and country of origin chose to play and the state of their relationship, as well as the relationships among different groups within the diaspora.

¹⁰ From a KII with an expert and coordinator of the diaspora work of the Colombian Truth Commission in Europe, May 12, 2020.

¹¹ From a KII with an expert and coordinator of the diaspora work of the Colombian Truth Commission in Europe, May 12, 2020.

3.2 Between “do no harm” and revictimization: navigating complexity

Key messages:

- Managing expectations of the diaspora regarding their involvement in a dealing with the past process in their country of origin and being transparent about processes of selection of participants and interviewers is key to a “do no harm” approach.
- Providing professional psychosocial support for victims and survivors, including for interviewers and interviewees, is an essential element of any dealing with the past initiative involving the diaspora.
- Acknowledging agency, the complexity of migratory experiences, as well as the diversity of identities and views among the diaspora, and understanding how that complexity impacts participation is important to ensure meaningful participation.

The Colombian Truth Commission has a mandate of three years. The first year focused on collecting testimonies in and outside Colombia. Overall it is an ambitious process that requires a lot of trust-building, individual participation, and supportive mechanisms, all within limited time and budget frames. Hence, it is important to manage expectations and clearly define what will be dealt with within the Truth Commission.

Building trust: the role of host governments and interviewers

Host governments can play an important role by supporting and funding local initiatives in host communities that are led by Colombians living in exile and/or other nongovernmental actors working in or in relation to Colombia that seek to support the official truth and reconciliation process, informing people about the process, and providing avenues for engagement. Therefore, it is crucial to start the process by conducting participatory context analysis, by listening to the concerns and expectations of the diaspora. This helps to create a better understanding of the potential negative or positive impact of the planned initiative and might at the same time be a first step toward building trust between the organizations and individuals involved.

Yo creo que ya es la hora de que no se mire de arriba hacia abajo, sino que se mire de forma horizontal. De acercarnos a las realidades que tenemos.¹²

One of the challenges for the Truth Commission was the selection of interviewers and interviewees in exile. The tasks of the interviewers include establishing contact with members of the diaspora who are willing to give interviews, conducting the interviews, and assessing if the interviewees need psychological assistance after the interviews. The interviewers function as a bridge between the Truth Commission and the diaspora as they collect stories and build trust in Europe. There is a risk that selected interviewers might only represent and build trust with certain groups of people. In Colombia there is widespread mistrust between different groups of people, as well as between certain groups and the government—in particular, among people who fled the country for political reasons. In addition, the variety of actors, patterns of violence, and political dynamics of the conflict are complex. In the diaspora, conflict lines usually do not automatically dissolve. Hence, the experience of arriving in a new country and getting to know people, even if they are from the same country, is often characterized by a feeling of mistrust by the host society and among members of the diaspora originating from the

12 From a KII with an expert and coordinator of the diaspora work of the Colombian Truth Commission in Europe, May 12, 2020.

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same country. This can lead to isolation—first, not knowing who else from the country of origin is in the host country, and second, avoiding contact with people who were on the other side of the conflict. Therefore, taking testimonies needs time and requires trust- building.

It is important to be transparent about the process of selecting and training interviewers. In Switzerland, interviewers were selected from among the communities of Colombian people living in exile, including victims and survivors of the conflict, members of the diaspora, and people who have been active in the peace process for a while. This enables people who are giving their testimony to decide with whom they want to share their story. However, some interviewers may also be victims of the conflict themselves. Hence, to prevent revictimization, understanding who is a victim and providing the appropriate support is key to a “do no harm” approach in the process of collecting testimonies in the diaspora. Finally, the selection and training of interviewers should also include a discussion on victims of structural violence, such as corruption, poverty, and inequality.

Challenges of broad inclusion and revictimization

Victims face various problems when it comes to accessing political peace processes in their countries of origin, and the organizations that coordinate and take the interviews face challenges when it comes to ensuring broad participation and inclusivity in reaching out. For instance, in some cases, political refugees must give up their nationality in the host country. This practice makes it difficult for Colombians in exile to register as a victim and access to reparations and justice. People can, however, still participate in the Truth Commission. In addition, sometimes the more integration found in host communities, the bigger the psychological distance to the country of origin. This can create dilemmas and feelings of guilt within diaspora groups. Moreover, the participation of people also depends on their resources and socioeconomic background. Even though people are often struggling with everyday survival, the experiences of nodos in Switzerland and Germany have shown that many people are keen to talk about peace and justice matters. Hence, the question is how to create enabling conditions for people to participate, and this includes the need for well-funded initiatives that are equipped to ensure the inclusion of people who might not be able to participate otherwise.

Inclusive dealing with the past processes are often on a voluntary basis, which in turn could lead to an exclusion of certain groups who decide not to be part of this specific process. This raises questions about representation. Finally, there is a certain amount of fear within the diaspora, that their contribution will not change anything, interviews will be leaked, information will be stolen, and the testimonies they give may lead to further persecution in exile and of family members still living in Colombia. Therefore, it is important that the information is ethically and safely preserved to guarantee that people are not put at risk. Moreover, it is important to be transparent about the process, manage expectations, and communicate clearly about what will happen with the testimonies. To this end, the commissioners who are responsible for different territories have been building trust by traveling to different places to meet people personally, explain about the process, and answer questions. Moreover, it is not only important to build trust in the Truth Commission itself, but also among the people and civil society organizations working on implementing the Truth Commission’s mandate.

Experience has shown that the process of collecting testimonies can lead to a revictimization of the people who are sharing their stories and of the people taking the testimonies as they are often victims of the conflict themselves. A way to avoid revictimization might be to select interviewers who do not identify as a victim. In addition, revictimization often happens when people go through the asylum and integration process upon arrival in the host country. In this context, challenges include prolonged legal insecurity, adapting to a different culture, learning a new language, and lacking validation of careers, diplomas, and professional qualifications. These concerns might hamper people’s involvement in pro-

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cesses in their country of origin, as their main interest might be raising attention and advocating for better conditions in the host country. Peacebuilding should thus engage with migration actors and policies in the host country to ensure that an involvement in the process dealing with the past does not impact negatively on the integration or asylum-seeking process.

It is a double standard; it is a game of interests in which we political refugees [in certain camps] are trapped and revictimized.¹³

13 From a KII with a member of the diaspora, May 20, 2020.

4. Entry points and opportunities for peacebuilding

The case study on the involvement of the Colombian diaspora in the Colombian Truth Commission has revealed the following entry points and opportunities for peacebuilding.

4.1 Inclusion of diaspora in dealing with the past

The meaningful participation of the diaspora is one important element in dealing with the past of a violent conflict as their stories are an important part of the story of the conflict, and their involvement is needed to achieve a meaningful reconciliation. In addition, their participation is key to preventing reemergence of conflicts as it provides an opportunity for a part of the society that still has connections to the country of origin, but resides outside it, to restore relationships with the country of origin and among the diaspora members, to deal with the multiple layers of trauma related to the conflict and the displacement or migration, as well as the experience of seeking asylum, integrating, and being a member of the diaspora in that particular country. However, dealing with the past mechanisms and peacebuilding actors should invest in understanding how to support meaningful inclusion of diaspora.

4.2 Research on the role of diaspora in dealing with the past

Working with diaspora offers an opportunity for peacebuilding actors to get a better understanding of the interrelationships between migration, conflict, and peace. Understanding the complex experiences of different groups of migrants, the relevance and added value of the participation of diaspora in dealing with the past processes, as well as the challenges that arise for the various actors involved, is key to designing and implementing inclusive initiatives. Moreover, practice-oriented research in this area can inform peacebuilding. Such knowledge is key to a 'do no harm' approach and to enable meaningful participation of members of the diaspora in dealing with the past processes.

4.3 Exchange and social cohesion

The inclusion of the diaspora provides opportunities for enhancing social cohesion, building trust, and fostering reconciliation in different contexts and between different groups: between the country of origin and the diaspora, between different generations and groups within the diaspora, and between the host community and the diaspora. Moreover, it creates spaces for already existing knowledge and experiences in peacebuilding to serve as a source of enrichment and expertise for the overall process. Networks that are created in the process can provide spaces for reflection and dialogue among different groups within the diaspora and between the diaspora and the local host communities. Peacebuilding actors can support such processes by including elements of dialogue and exchange when working with the diaspora in dealing with the past processes.

4.4 Influence narratives

The stories that are shared in such a process illustrate the challenges and opportunities of migration in a more nuanced way than often portrayed in public discourse. Therefore, peacebuilding actors could support the creation and sharing of such stories as a contribution to a more nuanced understanding of the trajectories of migrants.

4.5 Psycho-social approach

The participation of the diaspora can be an element in their personal healing process. It can, however, also be a difficult and painful process. Because of the challenges this kind of work poses for peacebuilding actors regarding risks of revictimization and traumatization, it requires a professional handling of the psychological effects, including enough funding to do so. This provides opportunities for peacebuilding actors to engage with other actors who are professionals in mental health and psychosocial support and to gather experiences that are valuable to the improvement of the psychosocial dimension in peacebuilding approaches and methods. Moreover, while providing psychosocial support it is important to build on indigenous concepts and practices of trauma healing that exist within the diaspora community, as it might be more accessible and effective for certain groups.