



KOFF Roundtable

Against all odds? Making space for peacebuilding

1 December 2021, 9.30am – 12pm, online

With an input about «shrinking (civic) space» by

- ❖ Una Hombrecher // HEKS // based on the ACT Alliance study [“Development needs Civil Society”](#)

Followed by a fishbowl conversation on «making space» with

- ❖ Stephanie Hofer // cfd
- ❖ Gorana Radovanovic // Helvetas
- ❖ Claske Dijkema // swisspeace
- ❖ Kim-Mai Vu // PBI Switzerland

Over the past years, KOFF members have experienced and examined what it means when the space for civil society shrinks. At the same time, many organizations and individuals around the world have adapted old and developed new strategies and approaches to continue their work for peace, against all odds. The upcoming roundtable will highlight the creative, persistent, and innovative ways in which civil society «makes space» for peacebuilding.

Spaces for peace can be physical but also ideational. They can have the purpose of allocating new meaning to a place, ensuring that people are safe from physical and emotional threats, or enabling dialogue and participation, among others. In the KOFF platform, there are numerous examples of how space is created for peace(building), including women's shelters to provide women and girls protection, artistic initiatives to create space for discussions, physical accompaniment to protect human rights defenders or psychosocial support to find inner space for peace.

Even though space inherently plays an important role in practical peacebuilding, little attention has been paid to the spatial aspect of peacebuilding. In contrast, research is increasingly interested in the question of where peace takes place. Scholars have started to address how peace is shaped by space and place and vice versa. This "spatial turn in peacebuilding" moves away from the assumption of a linear development of transitions from war to peace. According to this understanding, peace and war are intertwined and often coexist. *"During conflict there are islands of peace and in times of peace there are outbreaks of violence"* (Hancock & Mitchell, 2007).

Against this background, this roundtable will make space for a discussion about challenges and opportunities in the context of «shrinking space» by spotlighting some initiatives and approaches and addressing the following questions:

- What are the peacebuilding challenges related to shrinking space for civil society?
- In this context, how do KOFF member organizations make space for peace(building)?
- What support and strategies are needed to make and protect the space for peacebuilding (e.g., alliances, methods, approaches, and conditions)?

We look forward to exchanging with you.

Registration link: <https://invtdu.to/4n3o6>