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Uncovering the story of women's participation in the Kenya mediation process

The 2008 [Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation](#) is an exceptional example of good practice in terms of the representation of women in a formal mediation process. Not only were women represented in high numbers (25% of negotiating teams, one of three members of the mediation Panel), but most of those female participants were high-profile personalities.

Numbers should be distinguished from substance however: while the Kenyan process successfully included a high number of women, it is unclear what impact this had on the representation of gender issues in the process.

In the [Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue](#)'s latest publication, [Beyond Numbers - Women's participation in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation](#), released today, [Meredith Preston McGhie](#) and E. Njoki Wamai reflect on the Kenya dialogue process and look beyond statistics to unpack the true role of women in the process. The authors reflect on how this experience can offer lessons for other peace processes in their efforts to more effectively include women's voices and reflect gender concerns.

The [publication](#) focuses in particular on:

- What affected women's participation in this process.
- What participation has meant for those women involved.
- How participation affected the consideration of women and gender issues in the substance of the talks.

"The Kenya process gives us an excellent example of the complexities of women's participation and the representation of their views in a peace process." said Meredith Preston McGhie, co-author of the [publication](#).

“It highlights the importance of not only including women within the talks, but ensuring they have the skills needed to identify and address gender issues in the substance. It also highlights the importance of the commitment of mediators and negotiators to consult and engage with a broad constituency of women in order to reflect their complex and varied views in the final agreement.” she added.

The [publication](#) has been produced as part of the HD Centre's '[Women at the Peace Table - Africa](#)' project, which brings together women active in peacemaking across the region to identify and employ strategies for enhancing the contributions of women to peace processes. The project is supported by the [Open Society Institute](#).

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For more information on the HD Centre's 'Women at the Peace Table' project or activities, please visit the HD Centre's [website](#) or write to pr@hdcentre.org.

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The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue is an independent mediation organisation dedicated to improving the global response to armed conflict. It mediates directly between belligerents and helps others to do the same. The HD Centre is active in approximately 15 conflicts around the world, some of which are necessarily confidential.