

OBJECTIVE  
**03**

To support reconciliation, dialogue, closer relationship and trust between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities

# Understanding views on conflict, justice, and peace: voices of women, youth and rural communities (11069)

By Cyprus Dialogue and Peace Center (CPDC) in partnership with Cypology

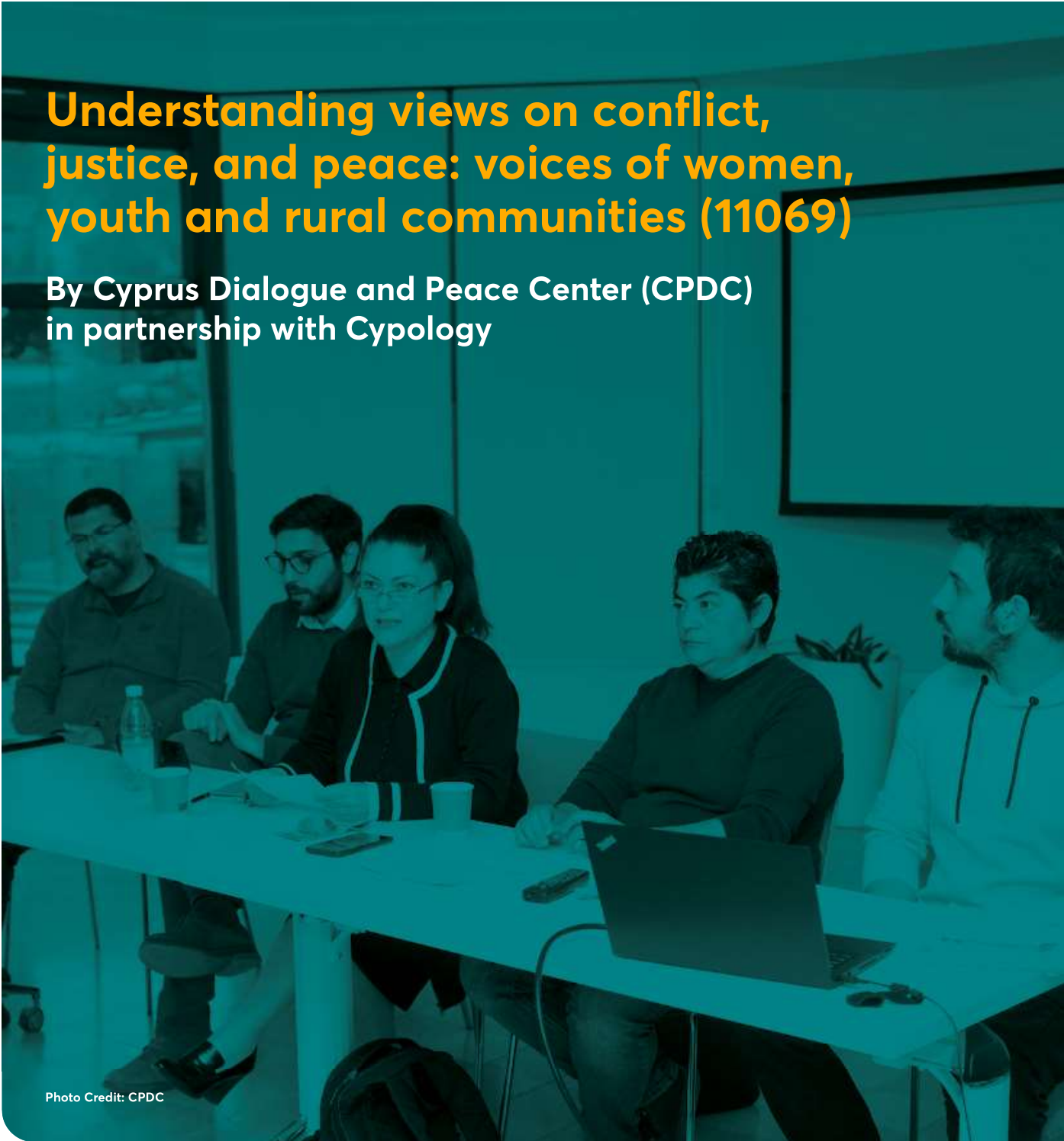


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## THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Organizing focus groups with marginalized groups to gather qualitative data and gather their perspectives on conflict, peace, and justice.

Producing a report and translating it for accessibility in English, Greek, and Turkish.

Disseminating the results and key messages to the public through workshops and social media campaigns.

## ABOUT CYPRUS PEACE AND DIALOGUE CENTER

CPDC is a group of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot individuals who bring together key stakeholders, leading personalities, and organizations from the two communities in Cyprus to revisit and build on existing mechanisms and find new creative modalities for long-lasting peace. CPDC is not affiliated with any political party nor governmental body in Cyprus or beyond.

## STORY OF THE ACTION

Peace and reconciliation processes must prioritize the inclusion of marginalized groups' expressions and perspectives. This inclusivity should extend beyond the two main communities in Cyprus to encompass all communities of the island. This involves giving voice to women, youth, non-binary individuals, trans women, and individuals from rural communities. The action supported by Grow Civic, titled "Understanding Views on Conflict, Justice, and Peace: Voices of Women, Youth, and Rural Communities," sought to provide a platform for marginalized groups who typically do not participate in decision-making and policy-formulation processes. According to CPDC, the strategies for peacebuilding and reconciliation are often developed without input from the communities or groups they aim to serve. Consequently, these strategies lack the capacity to effectively engage these communities, resulting in failures to involve them in the process.

### Organising focus groups with vulnerable groups

A total of 13 focus groups, comprising 90 participants, were organized in various locations across Cyprus, including Larnaca, Lefka/Lefke, Limassol, Famagusta, Kyrenia, Morphou, Nicosia, Paphos, and Trikomo/Iskele in November 2022. These focus groups centered around discussions related to justice, conflict, and peace. The participants were specifically selected from vulnerable groups, with a focus on women and youth, including those from rural communities. The University of Cyprus, in collaboration with a polling company, coordinated the organization of these focus groups and subsequently produced an analytical report. This report has been made available in English, Greek, and Turkish.



"Participants from Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities perceive the Cyprus problem similarly, either as a problem between the two communities or as something created and prolonged by 'outsiders', or politicians or those who benefit from it. The misrepresentation of history is evident on both sides and there is a need to deal with past traumas to move forward. Social empathy projects and common interpretations of history would be a good place to start.

For most participants, the Cyprus problem affects them personally, professionally, economically, and politically. There is a shared feeling of pessimism among groups in both communities about the future of the Cyprus problem.

And while each community often believes they suffer more, this study shows the issues are similar and that it is important to share stories of how the 'other' is also affected. Participants from both communities do not believe that the status quo can be maintained indefinitely and that the longer the problem remains unsolved, the higher the chances that their community will become extinct".

– Extract from the Report Understanding views on conflict, justice, and peace: voices of women, youth and rural communities.

### Disseminating the key messages to the public

In order to share the key messages conveyed by the focus groups and stimulate debates and brainstorming regarding the recommendations put forth by these groups, CPDC conducted two dissemination events in March and April 2023. The first event involved over 40 participants and took place at the Home for Cooperation, while the second event involved 20 high-level political figures and was hosted at CPDC premises. Simultaneously, a social media campaign was launched with the objective of increasing the visibility of the findings, reaching out to more than 800 individuals. During this campaign, a multitude of visuals were created and distributed in English, Greek, and Turkish on Facebook and Instagram platforms.

## RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The research report includes recommendations for the involvement of marginalised groups' views in future policy and peace talks in Cyprus. In addition to the two public and high-profile dissemination events and the availability of the report in three languages, the dissemination of the key messages is an ongoing process for CPDC, and any organisation involved in peace and reconciliation.

### Crosscutting topics mainstreaming:

This initiative encompasses measures aimed at ensuring gender mainstreaming, equality, youth inclusion, environmental protection, and accessibility. CPDC's approach to designing the focus groups was to provide a platform for both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, with some sessions exclusively targeting youth, women, rural communities, and individuals of Turkish origin residing in the northern part of Cyprus. These focus groups were conducted in various regions across Cyprus, with CPDC giving particular attention to maintaining gender balance, including the inclusion of trans women and non-binary persons.

To minimize the need for travel and to enhance accessibility, the dissemination events were designed as hybrid experiences, and they took place in venues that catered to accessibility requirements. Visual materials were crafted using fonts and formats that are easily accessible to all.

Ways Grow Civic support contributed to CPDC action:



CPDC engages in policy work relating to the Cyprus problem and thus the Grow Civic support helped us greatly to conduct our first organisational study into views of the public, thus helping to shape our roadmap and activity plans. It helped not only CPDC's capacity but the field of peacebuilding in Cyprus more generally.

– Meltem Onurkan Samani



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