



Funding Women Peacebuilders

DISMANTLING BARRIERS TO PEACE

France Bognon, Esq.
Sanam Naraghi Anderlini MBE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	3
Introduction	4
Purpose and Methodology	5
The Perennial Hurdles to Funding Women Peacebuilders	8
A. The Evidence Catch-22	8
1. The novel and interdisciplinary nature of WPS research and scholarship	8
2. Inadequate tools for measuring the impact of peacebuilding	8
3. Institutional inertia within the diplomatic, development, and security sectors	9
4. Denial that business as usual is failing to bring sustainable peace	10
B. Little Appetite for Risk	10
1. Who are the real experts?	11
2. Is financial risk a presumption or reality?	12
3. Who is taking the risk in countering terrorism?	13
C. Administrative Hurdles	14
Conclusion	16
Operational Guidance to Improve Grantmaking to Women's Peacebuilding Organizations	17
Annex I: Existing Grantmaking Modalities	33
Annex II: Normative Frameworks on Funding WPS	38



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication centers the lived experience of women peacebuilders, in particular the members of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) who have generously shared their insights and contributed to this analysis. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the many practitioners, researchers, and policymakers who shared their time and energy through interviews and consultations.

We would like to recognize our colleagues for lending their expertise to the development, review and publication of this brief. France Bognon and Sanam Naraghi Anderlini authored the brief, with Olga Andrew, Helena Grönberg, Melinda Holmes, Maya Kavalier, and Kendahl Tyburski contributing to research. The editorial team was led by Rana Allam and included Sohaila Abdulali and Juliana Jackson. Additional support was provided by Rana El-Behairy, Malalai Habibi, Lauren Mellows, Stacey Schamber, Yodit Willis and Sameen Zehra.

ICAN would like to extend particular thanks to our colleagues for lending their expertise in reviewing and contributing to the publication throughout the process of its development, including Abir Hajibrahim, Mobaderoon Network (Syria); Beth Woroniuk, Equality Fund (Canada); Cath Thompson, Peace and Security Funders Group (United States); Cerue Garlo, Women Education Development Organization of Liberia (Liberia); Charlotte Melly, Peace Direct (United States); Elin Miller, Global Affairs Canada (Canada); Faye Minshall, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (United Kingdom); Ghita El Khyari, Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (United States); Halima Mohamed, Coast Education Center (Kenya); Marita Sørheim-Rensvik, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway); Mohammad Hajaj, Al-Tahreer Association for Development (Iraq); Mossarat Qadeem, PAIMAN Alumni Trust (Pakistan); Nicholas Ryan, Global Affairs Canada (Canada); Rachel Thomas, Human Rights Funders Network (United States of America); Riva Kantowitz, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (Sweden); and Visaka Dharmadasa, Association of War Affected Women (Sri Lanka).

Finally, this publication would not have been possible without generous financial or other support to ICAN from the Channel Foundation; Compton Foundation; German Federal Foreign Office; Global Affairs Canada; Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; One Earth Future Foundation; Ploughshares Fund; Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; United Nations Development Programme; and UN Women.

Suggested Citation:

France Bognon and Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, "Funding Women Peacebuilders: Dismantling Barriers to Peace," International Civil Society Action Network, October 2020.



INTRODUCTION

With global commemorations of the 20th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda just behind us, the fundamental issue of funding women-led civil society organizations involved in peacebuilding is finally and firmly on the table. For years, there has been a yawning gap between the realms of policy documents proclaiming the necessity to support women in sustaining peace and the dearth of funding channeled to women's activism, particularly their civil society organizations (CSOs) and networks. This under-resourcing has been the bane of the global WPS movement. Local peacebuilders state that the lack of funds and resources remains the biggest challenge to sustaining peace.¹ From international to national and local organizations, women peacebuilders have perfected the art of stretching limited resources and adhering to donors' short-term timelines, complicated processes, and project-oriented funding, while also addressing complex, long-term issues and putting themselves at risk.

From the outset in 2000, when the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1325, women peacebuilders and advocates called for the funding of local and grassroots women-led organizations in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. This funding was intended to enable them to sustain their work throughout the longevity of particular conflicts. Although the political realities of the Security Council in 2000 constrained the extent to which reference could be made to civil society peacebuilding, advocates for UNSCR 1325 succeeded in ensuring a key reference calling for inclusion and support to local women's peace initiatives.²

Yet twenty years later, financial resources fail to capture the essence of this commitment. The share of bilateral aid dedicated to programs on gender equality and women's rights in conflict-affected and fragile contexts falls at 4.5%.³ The total bilateral aid targeting these countries from 2017–2018 is a meagre 0.2% of the \$96 million went directly to women's rights organizations—a percentage that hasn't changed in a decade.⁴ In cases of specific policy commitments, including National Action Plans (NAPs), funding plans are often absent. As of June 2020, only 20 NAPs—24% of those drafted globally—included a budget at their adoption.⁵

Even with these staggering statistics, the data continuously fails to provide a complete picture, as there is no insight into the percentage of funds actually reaching the subset of women's peacebuilding organizations. Several donors acknowledge that their "investments in gender equality and women's empowerment [are] not matching their policy statements and commitments and that new approaches to funding [are] needed".⁶ But these words fall short when looking at the glaring contrast to the resources allocated every year to the booming international defense industry by major powers. Global military spending reached new records in 2019, capping out around \$1.9 trillion. UN Women calculates these investments and trades in arms to be nearly 20,000 times higher than the amount of donor support to women's rights organizations.⁷ The 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security highlights the deficiencies in financing the WPS agenda, and urges change:

1. "Connecting the Views of Local Peacebuilders on Sustaining Peace," International Peace Institute, October 17, 2017, <https://www.ipinst.org/2017/10/local-peacebuilders-on-sustaining-peace>.

2. UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) [on women and peace and security], October 31, 2000, S/RES/1325 (2000), Paragraph 8(b), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f4672e.html>.

3. Jen Ross, "Chronically Underfunded, Women Peace Builders Need Support More than Ever: UN Women Data Hub," UN Women, October 29, 2020, <https://data.unwomen.org/features/chronically-underfunded-women-peace-builders-need-support-more-ever>.

4. Ibid.

5. UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security, 25 September 2020, S/2020/946, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2020/946>.

6. DAC Network on Gender Equality, "Innovative Funding for Women's Organisations," Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, July 2008, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/40954592.pdf>.

7. Ross, "Chronically Underfunded".



In a year marking historic milestones for gender equality and peace, concerted action to reverse these trends [of inadequate funding], to grow and diversify the group of donors supporting gender equality initiatives, and to ensure that women leaders and organizations working for peace in fragile contexts have access to sustainable funding has to be a priority.⁸

In 2019, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) affirmed the disparity between local and international non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) access to funds. Paul Okumu, Head of the Secretariat for the Africa Platform on Governance, Responsible Business and the Social Contract, writes that local CSOs receive 2.1% of the funding allocated for development and humanitarian support in their countries. The remaining 97.9% is given to international non-governmental organization (INGOs), which then subcontract 87% of the funds to local CSOs to implement and deliver outcomes.⁹

A 2016 Local to Global Protection Initiative report highlighted these challenges, with particular attention to the Syrian situation, noting: "While Syrian humanitarian actors were responsible for delivering 75% of the humanitarian assistance in 2014, they received only 0.3% of the direct and 9.3% of the indirect cash funding available for the overall Syria response."¹⁰

The report continues to detail how the discrepancy has a direct impact on the capacities of local CSOs to cover basic costs and functions:

Syrian humanitarian actors were found to be much less likely to obtain overheads. Frequently they were not even able to recover the full costs of the relief activities they implement on behalf of donors and their so-called partners. A standard 7% overhead coverage for Syrian NGOs, which is usual for international actors, was only allowed in a few cases such as [The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs] managed Humanitarian Pool Fund. High salary differences between UN agencies, INGOs and Syrian humanitarian actors were reported to hamper Syrian NGO's capacities as qualified staff leaves for better-paid jobs with international organisations.¹¹

When asked over these past two decades about the insufficient resources allocated to local women's peacebuilding organizations (WPBOs), governmental and philanthropic donors have responded by raising three questions and concerns:

1. What evidence is there to prove women's efficacy, contributions, and impact on peacemaking?
2. How can donors identify credible local recipients and manage the "risk" associated with giving funds to "unknown" actors in difficult contexts?
3. How can donors handle multiple grant agreements for relatively small sums given the administrative oversight required?

As the years have passed, WPS proponents have addressed these questions, clarified assumptions, and offered ample evidence to refute these claims. Moreover, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the urgency and relevance of local women's peacebuilding organizations. As the world went into lockdown in March 2020, international relief and development agencies reduced local presence and states diverted their contributions to overseas development assistance (ODA) in order to focus on domestic challenges.

8. UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/946, 29.

9. Paul Okumu, "How NGOs in Rich Countries Control their Counterparts in Poor Countries... and Why they Refuse to Resolve it," Inter Press Service, July 12, 2019, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/07/ngos-rich-countries-control-counterparts-poor-countries-refuse-resolve/>.

10. "Funding to Syrian Humanitarian Actors: Between sub-contracting and partnership," Local to Global Protection, accessed 4 February 2020, <https://www.local2global.info/research/the-humanitarian-economy/funding-syria>.

11. Christian Els, Kholoud Mansour, and Nils Carstensen, "Funding to national and local humanitarian actors in Syria: Between sub-contracting and partnerships," Local to Global Protection (L2GP), May 2016, 3, https://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_funding_Syria_May_2016.pdf.

12. Rola Al Masri, "COVID-19 and Gender Justice: Feminists in MENA Defying Global Structural Failure," Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, July 2020, 15, https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WILPF_COVID-19-MENA-Consultation_Web.pdf.

Many of the first responders in fragile and conflict contexts are consistently WPBOs who approach these crises with gender- and conflict-sensitive lenses. Through their extensive global networks and localized trust within their communities, WPBOs received personal protective equipment (PPE) early in the process to enable them to safely share messages of awareness and protective measures. Where there was neither soap nor water, the women made soap and fixed water stations. When floods impacted Yemen, for example, it was again local organizations that were at hand to offer help. Their efforts have been documented and captured weekly in national and international media outlets.¹³ By tackling the big issues, these women and their organizations are addressing the public's mistrust in state messaging, creating platforms for domestic violence support, highlighting the resurgence of violent extremist forces, and demanding ceasefires.

The same phenomenon arises in the immediate aftermath of disasters. In a recent notable example, following the Beirut Explosion in August 2020, while international organizations scrambled to raise relief funds for Beirut, local organizations mobilized to address on-the-ground concerns. Many of them, led by Lebanese women and members of the women's movement, produced profound impact by working quickly. WPBOs are both the first responders and the last, as their workplace is also their home. They have no exit strategy.

The events of 2020 have shown how WPBOs are present, active, preemptive, and responsive to crises, making efficient use of limited resources to tackle multiple challenges in already fragile contexts. Yet the international system is still largely marginalizing local women's organizations. What can be done differently? How can the concerns of the donor community be addressed to enable the effective flow of resources to those at the frontlines of crises? This brief discusses these issues, highlighting the gaps between policy and practice, while also addressing the underlying assumptions held by both donors and WPBOs. It provides practical guidance to address the barriers, reduce harm done, and improve funding practices to better support women's peace and security efforts.

"The trust the people have in us enabled us to be the first responders, and the women we work with took the lead not only in getting the essentials to the doorsteps of people, but also to disseminate health regulations using their smart phones and also stitch [and distribute] masks."

– Visaka Dharmadasa, Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka

13. See Jackie Abramian, "How Food4Humanity Is Yemen's Lifeline Amidst War and Covid-19 Pandemic," Forbes Magazine, May 26, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackieabramian/2020/05/26/how-food4humanity-is-yemens-lifeline-amidst-war-and-covid-19-pandemic/?sh=73d17cbe251d>, and "Yemen's First Responders Are Women Peace Builders," Forbes Magazine, May 28, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackieabramian/2020/05/28/yemens-first-responders-are-women-peace-builders/?sh=279c2777592b>.



Purpose and Methodology

The discussion and recommendations presented are drawn from more than two years of primary research, from local to international contexts. Consultations were held to understand the obstacles of funding WPS work from the perspectives of both local WPBOs and the donors. In addition, since 2015, ICAN has directed the Innovative Peace Fund (IPF), the first global multi-donor and independent fund dedicated to supporting women's peacebuilding and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) work at national and community levels. These experiences of developing grant-making modalities and building relationships, as well as our participation in several formal and informal discussions on the question of funding WPS work, have informed this analysis. As the gender equality and feminist foreign policy discourse has evolved, we have mapped existing funding mechanisms and philanthropic ventures that prioritize support to women's civil society organizations and movements.

In February 2019, ICAN, in partnership with the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), convened a multi-stakeholder Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) workshop to identify solutions to overcome the barriers to funding WPS work. Participants represented CSOs, donor governments, international organizations, private funding bodies, and peacebuilders from over 15 countries. The dialogue was followed by a series of consultations with local peacebuilders, bilateral donors, and multilateral organizations to dive further into the issues and recommendations that emerged during the workshop. This brief reflects the findings from these processes. Part one provides a summary of the existing concerns and barriers to funding women's peacebuilding organizations and a discussion of how they can be addressed. Part two offers operational guidance to improve grantmaking to women peacebuilding organizations.

THE PERENNIAL HURDLES TO FUNDING WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS

In order to secure sustainable peace, women must be at the table to inform and influence the discourse. Their credibility in these spaces is tied to their access and trust on the ground, which can either be facilitated or obstructed by their access to resources. Among the international community, it is increasingly acknowledged that funding WPBOs is a necessary and efficient means of promoting sustainable peace. Directing resources to local civil society entities, particularly those that are women-led, requires changes in policies and institutional procedures. This section identifies the three most prevalent obstacles preventing resources from reaching WPBOs: lack of evidence, financial risks, and administrative hurdles.

A. The Evidence Catch-22

Even before UNSCR 1325 was adopted, the importance of demonstrating the contributions of women to peacebuilding and security was obvious to the civil society practitioners advocating for the Resolution. In the run-up and immediate aftermath of the Resolution's adoption, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and CSOs were engaged in this documentation and analysis. In subsequent years, the body of qualitative and quantitative research and analysis grew exponentially. Despite both this and the plethora of policy directives, resolutions, and NAPs on WPS, some foreign policymakers and development agencies still claim there is insufficient proof of women-led CSOs' efficacy and women's contributory participation, particularly in peace negotiations. It is a Catch-22 situation: the lack of awareness and skepticism about women's peacebuilding and P/CVE work among policymakers and technocrats in governmental institutions has meant that limited funds are channeled to such organizations and even fewer resources are available to effectively document and disseminate the impact of their work. Without the dissemination of this knowledge, it is difficult to change long-standing perceptions and funding practices. These perceptions, and the inertia they induce, are driven by four interrelated but enduring factors noted below.

1. The novel and interdisciplinary nature of WPS research and scholarship

Despite its 20-year anniversary, the WPS community and its work are relatively new compared to the fields of international development, security, and human rights. It is also inherently interdisciplinary and intersectional, so it has not found a natural home in the world of discrete traditional academic disciplines. Moreover, since the WPS field arose from the non-governmental sector and has stronger roots in the Global South, particularly in fragile and war-torn contexts, much of the applied work and documentation of evidence in policy and practice spaces over the past two decades has been produced by women-led and feminist NGOs. This research and scholarship have largely been excluded from mainstream development, conflict, and security literature because:

- Research and scholarship outside of the realms of formal academia are deemed as "grey literature" and not valued. Furthermore, anthropological studies that provide rich qualitative information are less recognized than quantitative and statistical studies, despite the inherent challenges and problems that exist with accurate data gathering from conflict zones;
- Knowledge produced in the Global South is still diminished;
- Feminist or gender-related scholarship remains siloed and is often devalued as being advocacy-driven; and
- There is a lack of funding for research on the contributions of women-led peacebuilding organizations and movements.

2. Inadequate tools for measuring the impact of peacebuilding

The demand for evidence of impact is valid, especially when the expenditure of public funds is in question. But the templates in which impact and results are tracked are still often geared towards traditional economic and social development programs and thus cannot capture the essence and reality of peacebuilding work. This field of practice is heavily reliant on relationship building and personal engagement to transform attitudes and mindsets. Central to this work is the fostering of trust. Building trust across cultures or within communities is a complex process that requires people to internalize their attitudes and relations towards others. It is a transformative practice when done well.

But measuring trust-building and attitudinal shifts is complex. Given the sensitive nature of peacebuilding work, a technical approach to quantify and measure the quality of relationships can itself be harmful to that relationship. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 4.3.)

3. Institutional inertia within the diplomatic, development, and security sectors

Despite ten UNSCRs and 86 NAPs¹⁴, officials in governmental and international organizations still lack sufficient understanding and knowledge of the roles women play in local peacebuilding. Too often, staff in foreign ministries or development agencies that are not familiar with the WPS Agenda make generic references to "gender equality" and rely on theoretical and normative frameworks rather than make policy grounded in the lived experiences of women, particularly those of women peacebuilders in war zones. Without a mandatory knowledge requirement, nor any tangible consequences if inclusivity and gender responsiveness are ignored, staff in these international institutions can ignore women peacebuilders' work. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.3.)

There is also a lack of understanding regarding women's experiences of and agency in preventing and countering violent extremism. False assumptions upstage reality. Many in the security, development, and diplomatic sectors still have limited understanding of the central role that gender plays in the ideology of violent extremist movements and thus in effective P/CVE programming. The complexity of women's experiences in relation to violent extremist movements, and how some may be victims and/or perpetrators while others may be leading the fight against violent extremism, is less understood. The agency of WPBOs is often disregarded by international actors. Their leadership is further undermined when it is presumed that their P/CVE work is donor-driven, and they are therefore instrumentalized by external forces.¹⁵ (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.6.)

Peace processes and P/CVE efforts are dominated by the political and security sectors whose exposure to the WPS Agenda and related body of knowledge and practice is still limited at best. So, there is reticence and skepticism about altering processes to enable wider representation, especially the participation of women peacebuilders and leaders within civil society structures. Without the willingness and understanding of how to change practices or why it is necessary, it is difficult to change them and set new norms of practice, standard operating procedures, and precedence. As a result, ad hoc practices, apathy, and institutional amnesia prevail. The traditional, albeit defunct, approaches continue. In other words, the problem is not a lack of evidence. It is that the existing evidence is not sufficiently filtering into institutions to change long-standing attitudes, perceptions, and practices.

"ICAN gave us the ability to plan as members from the community. And in reality, this is an important difference compared to other organizations, who come with readymade projects and deal with us as contractors. This grant is like a partnership."

– Abdalaziz Salim, Al Tahreer, Iraq

14. "About Women, Peace and Security in the Security Council," PeaceWomen, accessed November 10, 2020, <https://www.peacewomen.org/security-council/WPS-in-SC-Council>.

15. Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE, "Challenging Conventional Wisdom, Transforming Current Practices: A Gendered Lens on PVE," in Beatrix Austin and Hans J. Giessmann (eds), "Transformative Approaches to Violent Extremism," Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series No. 13, 2018, https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/dialogue13_violentextremism_naraghi_anderlini_com.pdf.

4. Denial that business as usual is failing to bring sustainable peace

Here lies the irony: perhaps the most overlooked obstacle is that 50 percent of existing peace processes exclude women and are failing.¹⁶ The fact that peace processes are likely to fail should be sufficient evidence to prompt a review of their design and approach. However, despite this knowledge, a trend analysis on the 1500 peace and political agreements adopted between 2000 and 2016 shows that only 25 agreements discuss the role of women's engagement in implementation.¹⁷ Diplomatic and political forces are reluctant to acknowledge and take on board the ample evidence that the participation of civil society groups makes a peace agreement at least 54% less like to fail,¹⁸ and when women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years.¹⁹ Yet time and again, the forces engaged in negotiations refuse to implement this evidence and change their practices. Instead, they opt for traditional international diplomatic and mediation machinery, shaping agreements for failure.

The fact that the \$5.6 trillion (and counting) spent on the "War on Terror" since 2002 has resulted in more violent extremism globally²⁰ should be adequate reason that a different strategy is needed. But this logic has not overcome the inertia of business as usual in governmental or intergovernmental institutions' funding practices. It creates its own negative cycle whereby, because of a supposed lack of evidence, funding systems and process designs are not reformed to be more inclusive and supportive of local organizations. As a result, financial and political support for local organizations—especially WPBOs—is not prioritized. With these limited resources, WPBOs are unable to expand their field of work. This leads to gaps in documentation and an inability to disseminate evidence of their impact. And when opportunities *do* arise to properly capture their impact, they have no access to the avenues of power because personal relationships with donors fail to exist.

B. Little Appetite for Risk

Donors often claim that low political "appetite for risk" domestically is a key impediment to the funding of local organizations in fragile and conflict-affected settings. This implies a presumption that such local entities are "risky" ventures. When asked how risk is defined, three key assumptions emerge. Donors presume that local CSOs:

- Lack the competence, expertise, and capacity to undertake the work;
- Have weak financial oversight systems and can be prone to mismanagement of funds and potential corruption; and/or
- May be difficult to vet, so funds could inadvertently be aiding or abetting terrorism.

Each of these assumptions is easily debunked when viewed from the ground up and with consideration of empirical evidence.

16. "Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security," UN Women, 2020, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>.

17. C. Bell and K. McNicholl, "Implementation of Gender Provisions in Peace Agreements: An Overview of the PA-X Database" (forthcoming).

18. "Better Peace Tool - English," International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), March 13, 2018, <https://icanpeacework.org/2016/05/16/better-peace-tool/>. 64% is also often cited. For more see: Desirée Nilsson, "Anchoring the Peace: Civil Society Actors in Peace Accords and Durable Peace," *International Interactions* 38, no. 2 (2012): 243-266, DOI: 10.1080/03050629.2012.659139.

19. Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes," New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015.

20. Erik W. Goepner, "Measuring the Effectiveness of America's War on Terror," *Parameters* 46, no. 1 (2016): 107-120.

1. Who are the real experts?

As the COVID-19 pandemic revealed, when crises hit, local actors become the first and most effective responders. Their depth of local knowledge and access, as well as commitment to their own communities, makes them uniquely positioned to engage and address the challenges that arise. Particularly in contexts where state authorities may be less trusted by the public, local peacebuilders have established relationships of trust and are essential interlocutors to bridge divisions. Moreover, the underlying issues navigated by peacebuilding efforts are rooted in a complex mix of historical, political, gender, and other socio-cultural and economic factors. Simultaneously, the realities on the ground can change fast, as the scourge of violent extremism has shown. Violent extremist groups adjust their tactics and strategies quickly to avoid being caught by the state security apparatus and exploit new opportunities for recruitment and radicalization. To address this mix of historic challenges compounded with contemporary developments requires a depth of understanding of the local contexts. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.2.) Understanding the sensitivity to subtle changes and signs, knowledge of and access to invisible power holders, and systems of dispute resolution that draw on traditional informal and formal processes are critical in building sustainable solutions. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.4.)

WPBOs often have this expertise, but they do not have the communication access to international media and fora that large multilateral or international agencies may have. This missed connection leaves their work and perspective rarely recognized. Hayat Mirshad of the NGO Lebanese Women's Democratic Gathering describes in *The Guardian* how international entities benefit from this imbalance and inherent inequality by marginalizing local actors, especially women's organizations:

Simply put, in every crisis, local organizations have been there – long before foreign humanitarians arrived, and long after they left. Yet in every crisis we are excluded from humanitarian funding and decision-making... To drive the most effective, inclusive, and sustainable response possible, this needs to change. International organizations that received the majority of pledged funds for Beirut must ensure that those resources are distributed to local groups. At least 50% of that money should go to local feminist organizations to make sure the needs of women and girls in all their diversity – often forgotten in times of crisis – are met.²¹

Mirshad's experience is echoed across other contexts by local women's organizations and peacebuilders. International organizations often arrive with pre-designed programs that are not sustainable, contextualized, or gendered, in contrast to the culturally relevant and transformative interventions of WPBOs. They ask WPBOs to implement their plans, but fail to heed the advice of locals who understand the flaws and potential harm that externally designed programs may pose to the community and themselves. They refer to local CSOs as "implementers" rather than recognizing them as independent expert partners. They do not acknowledge the critical role they play past the implementation stage, even though they rely on them for the practices and community access they need. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 2.1 and 2.2.)

Moreover, thanks to persistent advocacy by the WPS community over the past two decades, many governments now require gendered analyses and the participation or inclusion of women as conditions for their large grants. This compels contractors to abide by the requirements. But these requirements are insufficient. Too often, the WPBOs are excluded from the assessment, design, or evaluation of activities. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.2, 2.1, and 4.3.)

"We don't deliver work, we deliver change to the community"

– Abir Hajibrahim, Mobaderoon, Syria

21. Hayat Mirshad, "Grassroots Groups Hold Beirut Together, Yet Big NGOs Suck up the Cash," *The Guardian*, August 27, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/aug/27/grassroots-groups-hold-beirut-together-yet-big-ngos-suck-up-the-cash-lebanon>.

In effect, local CSOs are the backbone of many international peacebuilding and P/CVE programs that are managed by larger INGOs or multilateral organizations, but they are not given due credit for their competence and are rarely given direct access to the donors. There is also a lack of financial transparency between international and local entities. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.2 and 2.1.) The latter typically receives targeted project-specific support but seldom resources to strengthen their own institutions. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 3.1 and 3.2.) Moreover, local organizations have noted that at times, INGOs and multilaterals appropriate locally developed concepts, practices, and products without giving due credit to the local actors. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 2.2.) Added to this is the perpetual reference to the need for “capacity building”, which inherently devalues their skills and contributions and implies a need for oversight by the INGO or international agency. When combined, these elements fuel the international donor assumptions that local CSOs lack the competence to run peacebuilding and P/CVE programs independently.

Given the complexities of peacebuilding work, there is a need for a diversity of actors, both local and international. A fairer, more collaborative approach that draws on the comparative advantages of each, while also sustaining and strengthening local institutions as equal and critical partners, is needed, and is possible if donors require it. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 2.1.)

2. Is financial risk a presumption or reality?

The fear of mismanaged funds or corruption is a valid concern for governmental and international donors. However, this concern stems from the significant bias against local CSOs versus state agencies, multilateral institutions, and international non-governmental organizations, through which most funds are channeled. The prevailing assumption is that these international entities will have better financial control and oversight of resources, but as governments undertake their own audits, the facts reveal otherwise. The stark findings in the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report of 2020 is a case in point:

Between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2019, SIGAR identified approximately \$1.8 billion in waste, fraud, and abuse in its 111 audits, inspections, and special projects reports, and in 55 closed investigations. SIGAR also included an additional \$1.6 billion of waste related to funds allocated to programs with a counter-narcotics component that we did not include in our previous report. These totals, coupled with the \$15.5 billion of waste, fraud, and abuse and failed whole-of-government efforts we reported in July 2018, bring the total amount of waste, fraud, and abuse identified by SIGAR's work to approximately \$19 billion from May 2009 through December 31, 2019.²²

While disturbing, Afghanistan 2020 is not a unique situation. The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) report of 2012 had similar findings for Iraq. Some \$6 to \$8 billion of US taxpayer funds were lost to waste, fraud, or abuse.²³ While these reports date back to 2003, the problems are enduring. Even more unsettling, the lessons drawn from these crises to ensure proper financial oversight are not applied. The contrast between this egregious misuse of funds and the amounts that Afghan, Iraqi, and other WPBOs in conflict zones need, and struggle to secure, is unfathomable.

There are many ways in which donors' own policies and priorities can contribute to waste, fraud, and, even worse, harm to local actors. In some instances, donors' financial year deadlines press international actors to disburse large sums of money in short time frames. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 4.1, 4.5 and 4.7.)

22. John F Sopko, “Update on the Amount of Waste, Fraud, and Abuse Uncovered through SIGAR's Oversight Work between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019,” Office of Special Projects, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, October 2020, 5.

23. Zach Toombs and Aaron Mehta, “U.S. Official Says Government Wasted \$6-8 Billion in Iraq Reconstruction,” The Center for Public Integrity, last updated May 19, 2014, <https://publicintegrity.org/national-security/u-s-official-says-government-wasted-6-8-billion-in-iraq-reconstruction/>.



This can prompt international actors to charge costs that are tangentially, if at all, related to the program against funds that are earmarked for country programming. Where INGOs have local programming, the funds may be allocated to their in-country international staff, even though local organizations are the ultimate implementers of programs and can get the work done cost-effectively and with greater sustainability.

There are simple solutions to many of these issues that, by virtue of reducing waste, do not require additional resources. For example, ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund demonstrates that the disbursement of small but regular tranches of funding over longer time frames can deepen impact, build the support of local stakeholders, and strengthen local organizations.

It is also notable that local organizations, especially women-led entities, are highly sensitive to accusations or perceptions of financial mismanagement. These allegations can damage their organizational credibility and, at times, shame their families, putting their lives at risk. Many WPBOs maintain meticulous records and seek opportunities for capacity development in budgeting and monitoring and evaluation. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 4.2.) When given the opportunity, they welcome having external audits to prove their capacities. Under the IPF umbrella, ICAN has also supported larger local organizations to incubate community-based start-up entities and help build their management capacities. This model of layered incubation, from the international to the local across multiple countries, is a means of ensuring the disbursement and effective management and expenditure of funds while building strong civil society infrastructure. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.7 and 1.8.)

3. Who is taking the risk in countering terrorism?

Finally, since 2001 and the expansion of the Global War on Terror and counter-terrorism agenda, donors are concerned about the potential flow of funds into the hands of terrorist networks. But the fear and presumption that local organizations could inadvertently aid or abet such groups in their local contexts is profoundly misplaced. As Mossarat Qadeem, Co-Founder of PAIMAN Alumni Trust in Pakistan and IPF grantee, says, "Who is taking the risk? We are risking our lives to work in communities to stop the terrorists."²⁴ Her sentiments are echoed by women peacebuilders around the world. Amidst violence and terror, they risk their own lives—and all too often, the lives of their families—for the sake of peace. Unlike representatives from state or multilateral entities, they have no security detail or protection. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 2.3.) And unlike international actors, they have no exit strategy. They are often challenging the ideology, vested interests, and established practices of powerful stakeholders. They are disrupting their socio-political infrastructure and therefore carry an inordinate burden of risk for engaging in peacebuilding work. But they do so because the issues are existential to them, their families, and their communities. If extremists win or conflict escalates, they risk losing everything.

Meanwhile, the counterterrorism and P/CVE agendas have exacerbated these challenges.²⁵ On the one hand, governments are imposing evermore burdensome restrictions on civil society. On the other, CSOs are facing polarized and increasing militarized contexts, which puts their activities as intermediary interlocutors at risk. Conflict parties demand to know which side they are on or simply assume that they are agents of foreign entities. This binary framing is particularly dangerous and counterproductive for WPBOs.²⁶ For example, in Iraq, community-based organizations engaged in demobilizing militias post-ISIS have been accused of collusion with the US and UK, which has gravely impacted the security of their staff. WPBs are often a key conduit for undertaking essential outreach, as they are trusted independent interlocutors. Yet, due to the funding mechanisms and policies that exist, they are often marginalized.

24. WASL Community Check-In Call consultations, September 17, 2020.

25. Melinda Holmes; Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE; and Stacey Schamber, "Protecting Women Peacebuilders: The Front Lines of Sustainable Peace," International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), October 2020, 14, https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ICAN_ProtectingWomenPeacebuilders_Brief.pdf.

26. Melinda Holmes; Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE; and Stacey Schamber, "Protecting Women Peacebuilders: Operational Guidance to Establish and Enhance the Protection of Women Peacebuilders," International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), October 2020, https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ICAN_ProtectingWomenPeacebuilders_Guidance.pdf.

There is an urgent need for reform in donor aid strategies and practices directed at fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Local actors who have demonstrated a commitment to addressing the human rights of their communities through humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts need to be prioritized and placed at the center of international assistance efforts. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.1 and 1.2.) A fundamental goal must be to ensure that these organizations, and the vibrant independent civil society sector of which they are members, are recognized as a key pillar of good governance, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding. As such, they must receive a more equitable share of the funds allocated to their countries and be empowered to establish strong local organizations. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 2.1.)

Such reform is possible, cost-efficient, and practical through the steps elaborated in the operational guidance that follows. It simply requires the political will to change business as usual.

C. Administrative Hurdles

In addition to the financial management issues noted above, there are significant administrative challenges to overcome in order to channel funding to local WPBOs. There is a fundamental disconnect between the administrative requirements for traditional development programs and those for peacebuilding programming. The templates and documentation requirements of the former are not fit for the purposes of the latter. Many local partners lack the industry vocabulary required to tackle complex, demanding, and burdensome proposals and reporting forms. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 4.4.) In addition, administering the financial reporting requirements is complicated and many WPBOs lack the managerial capacity and accounting software that is required to manage large grants from donors. Donors' financial reporting measures can also pose risks to an organization's staff. For example, collecting even the smallest receipts, such as for taxis or local travel, can heighten the risks for peacebuilders, many of whom are monitored by conflict parties.²⁷ Where there is general mistrust, insecurity, and political polarization in communities, even collecting supporting documentation for small workshops or community activities can be misconstrued by local state actors and militias. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 4.2.)

Monitoring and evaluation also plays a role in making the funding process arduous. The intended outcomes and impacts of peacebuilding work, be it reduction of violence or greater social cohesion, is often evident in a longer time frame than the lifespan of a traditional development program. Community trust cannot be measured quantitatively in the same manner that economic empowerment or educational programming can. Community-wide shifts in attitude, mindset, and behavior are key outcomes, and attempts to monitor these intangibles can cause irreparable damage. Beneficiaries of the programs may feel manipulated or lose trust in the local organizations. Finally, while programming in non-crisis contexts can be implemented to plan, when crises manifest, quick adjustments may be needed to ensure security on the ground. Even with these difficulties, tracking the impacts of initiatives is still essential. However, there is space for an alternative mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators, as well as improved processes for the monitoring and evaluation of intangible, but transformative, outcomes. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 3.2, 4.2 and 4.3.)

Stringent grant application and reporting requirements take time away from women peacebuilders actually engaging with their communities and doing meaningful work. Most grants lack the flexibility that organizations need to be able to respond to the changing dynamics in conflict contexts and to address obstacles that arise. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.5 and 1.9.) Staff of WPBOs get caught in a continuous cycle of implementing programs or responding to crises, and thus do not have the time or means to be strategic. This presents a grave challenge to the future of peacebuilding, since the growth and sustainability of WPBOs is dependent on their ability to balance the continuity of existing programs with the need to innovate and address the dynamic needs of their communities.

27. Holmes, et al., "Protecting Women Peacebuilders".



Upon first look, it appears one simple solution is to issue grant agreements and process funds through embassies and other modalities to reach WPBOs. But in practice, local organizations within countries affected by conflict, fragility, and violent extremism may feel more threatened through this process. They may find themselves more exposed to accusations of acting as foreign agents within their own communities. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 4.8.)

This is compounded by the volume of detailed work required by donors to handle and track multiple small to medium-sized grants. As experience shows, there are inconsistencies between smaller organizations' institutional capacities and donors' complex requirements. For the donor, the paperwork and administrative oversight of a \$5,000 grant may be as cumbersome—if not more—than that of a \$500,000 grant.²⁸ At the same time, the risks and time associated with reporting to a government or the United Nations may exceed the value of that same \$5,000 grant to a potential grantee.

To avert these assumed risks and reduce administrative burdens, bilateral donors and major foundations typically opt to disburse their funds via multilateral bodies or international organizations and consortia, with which they have established relationships. As such, they end up funding the national and international organizations, meaning the majority of the funds neither reach WPBOs nor are diversified among CSOs in country. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.7 and 1.8.) In effect, a significant portion of funds allocated to overseas development aid never reaches or directly benefits the countries and communities to which it is allocated.²⁹ The burden is then on INGOs to ensure that they apply fair and equitable funding practices that prioritize maximizing the amount of funding that reaches local WPBOs. They must also work to ensure that their presence enables and supports the work already being done in local communities. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 1.4, 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8.)

This places INGOs in a unique position to play a critical role in addressing the administrative hurdles related to funding WPBOs. Firstly, local organizations are much more vulnerable to shifts in funding shortfalls than are INGOs, who have greater institutional security and stability as a result of having easier access to core or flexible funding.³⁰ Where possible, INGOs should support WPBOs in times of crisis through bridge funding that enables them to sustain their organizations. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 3.1. and 4.6) Secondly, INGOs can act as a buffer between the donor and the WPBOs. By taking on the responsibility of satisfying stringent donor requirements, they can better support the local organizations in their efforts to achieve a positive and sustainable impact. (See Operational Guidance Recommendation 2.1.)

"It's not only about adding more money to ODA, it is about better allocation of existing funds."

***– Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE,
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)***

28. "New Report: Act Now on 'Localisation': COVID-19 Implications for Funding to Local Peacebuilding," Conducive Space for Peace, June 26, 2020, <https://www.conducivespace.org/new-report-act-now-on-localisation-covid-19-implications-for-funding-to-local-peacebuilding/>.

29. Okumu, "NGOs in Rich Countries"

30. "Act Now on 'Localisation'", Conducive Space for Peace.



CONCLUSION

Recognizing the value and need to channel equitable resources to local women's peacebuilding organizations (WPBOs) have been constant stipulations of the value of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda since its inception at the turn of the 21st century. From the United Nations to its 193 member states, the desire and intent to support such organizations has increased over the years. But the chasm between donors' good intentions and their political, financial, and administrative constraints has hampered the flow of funds to the grassroots women who need them the most.

Funding Women Peacebuilders: Dismantling Barriers to Peace provides an analysis of the existing obstacles facing donors and local WPBOs and points to recent developments in this area of practice. It is encouraging that effective funding models and mechanisms exist. From ICAN's independent, multi-donor Innovative Peace Fund (IPF), which offers small to medium-sized grants and technical support globally to WPBOs, to the United Nations' Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), which offers larger grants in select countries, some funds are reaching WPBOs.

Directing resources to local peacebuilding organizations, particularly those that are women-led, requires changes in policies, procedures, and institutional culture. By drawing on consultations with local organizations and donor agencies, the following operational guidance provides practical recommendations for immediate revisions and minor reforms to existing procedures that will be transformational for those in donor organizations as well as those on the ground.

In conflict and fragile settings, local women-led peacebuilding organizations carry a burden of risk and responsibility that is immeasurable, especially when compared to the funds they receive. As the Secretary General's report states, they have "community trust and outreach" and "have demonstrated that they are essential leaders in emergencies and play a key role in maintaining social cohesion and preventing further conflict and instability."³¹ The operational guidance below enables donors to fulfill their intent and commitments to women peacebuilders and invest effectively and sustainably in that trust.

"In conflict-affected countries, women's organizations and networks are a lifeline for their communities and at-risk groups. ... [But] unless they are financially supported, such organizations run the risk of halting operations".

*- United Nations Secretary General,
Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security, 2020*

31. UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security, 25 September 2020, S/2020/946, 2, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2020/946>.



Operational Guidance to Improve Grantmaking to Women's Peacebuilding Organizations

The following recommendations provide practical guidance for governments and multilateral, international nongovernmental, and philanthropic organizations to enable more effective grant making to women's peacebuilding organizations (WPBOs) dedicated to building peace, promoting rights, and preventing or countering violent extremism in fragile, conflict, and violent (FCV) contexts. Those who control the funding have significant leverage and responsibility for setting the conditions of its use. We refer to these actors as "donors".

The operational guidance is organized by common current practices that are detrimental to sustainable peacebuilding and can be harmful to local organizations in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. These current methods are followed by suggestions for better practices. They are designed to be specific enough to operationalize while broad enough to be applied by different entities. The design process included rounds of consultations with stakeholders in the donor and recipient communities.

To facilitate understanding and implementation, the guidance is categorized in the following four inter-related thematic areas:

- 1. Align Funding Priorities with Existing Commitments to Women, Peace and Security**
- 2. Create Equitable Relationships**
- 3. Value the Strengthening of Organizational Sustainability in Local Contexts**
- 4. Streamline Grant Processes**

Align Funding Priorities with Existing Commitments to Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Effective peacebuilding and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) requires inclusive and gender-responsive strategies that are sustained over time and designed to ensure local ownership and execution.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 1 Do not engage in peacebuilding and/or P/CVE work without allocating funding and resources to local groups with experience and expertise in gendered peacebuilding and P/CVE and that are already active on the ground.

WHAT TO DO

- 1.1 Recognize that adequate funding to WPBOs active in FCV contexts is critical to any peacebuilding or P/CVE efforts.
- 1.2 Proactively seek out such local groups.
- 1.3 Recognize peacebuilding as an essential area of practice, expertise, and vocation for women and men, distinct from but related to development, human rights, and humanitarian work, that necessitates adequate resources.

HOW TO DO IT

- Increase total amount of funding dedicated to WPBOs globally.
- Create dedicated funding streams for peacebuilding work and adopt a broad definition for strategic peacebuilding and P/CVE that encompasses the intersections between peace, rights, development, and humanitarian interventions.
- Make specific mention in policy frameworks and budgeting priorities of recognition and support to WPBOs with expertise in peacebuilding and security.
- Require funding for the implementation of WPS legislation and NAPs (where they exist) in ODA packages to governments (including through international financial institutions).
- Undertake local mappings and/or connect with existing global women's peacebuilding networks—such as ICAN/Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), Madre, and others—to identify potential local WPBOs.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- 2** Do not exclude local WPBOs when defining program priorities or developing interventions in FCV contexts as this leads to the marginalization of women's work and expertise, absence of a gendered understanding of the drivers of conflict and peace, duplication of efforts, and repetition of bad practices.

 WHAT TO DO	 HOW TO DO IT
2.1 Ensure that the contextual expertise and local wisdom of women peacebuilders is recognized, respected, and considered when assessing or analyzing any conflict and determining funding priorities. 2.2 Recognize that women peacebuilders' local expertise and representation brings a distinctive lens to understanding the conflict, including: • A unique reach into communities; • An understanding of how conflict and violence impact women, men, girls, boys, and non-binary people differently; and • A way to tap into hidden sources of influence and positive local agents of change.	• Engage and work side by side with WPBOs throughout the entire process, from assessment and project design through completion of reporting. • Conduct meaningful and respectful consultations with women peacebuilders that are not extractive of their ideas and knowledge. • Establish formal consultation mechanisms to ensure the constant inclusion of women peacebuilders. • Use embassies as key convenors to bring women activists and WPBOs to the table with other donors/embassies. • Include women peacebuilders on governance, advisory, and review boards and committees. • Ensure women peacebuilders are included in and remunerated for time spent on consultations and program development. • Include budget line items in proposals for consulting local WPBOs.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 3** Do not put the burden of contextual and gender understanding on a few gender experts within the donor entity.

 WHAT TO DO	 HOW TO DO IT
3.1 Ensure the P/CVE and peace staff of donor organizations have expertise in gender and conflict, strong knowledge of the context/region and relevant conflict-related issues, and commitment for long-term engagement.	• Reduce frequent turnover of staff within donor organizations when possible. • If not feasible, ensure solid handover mechanisms and continuity of work. • Consider peace and conflict sensitivity certification requirements in recruitment and assignment phases.

- Invest in continuous capacity building for staff that includes but is not limited to short-term training modules.
 - Incorporate good practices from women peacebuilders in capacity-building sessions.
- Fund relevant training for governments and international staff in FCV countries (e.g., on gender, conflict sensitivity, etc.).

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 4** Do not solely conduct a conflict assessment, as it will only highlight problems and will neither underscore nor enable the positive structures and systems in place.

WHAT TO DO

- 4.1** Conduct a peace analysis to understand the positive forces in any society and inform the design and implementation of all programming, as failure to do so can cause fundamental harm to a society and especially to locally rooted peacebuilders.

HOW TO DO IT

- Conduct an integrated and gendered peace and conflict analysis that assesses the forces that create instability and stability and provides a broader intersectional understanding of the peace and security context at that time.
 - An integrated and gendered peace and conflict analysis should include input from local women peacebuilders as well as stakeholders in the development, humanitarian, and diplomatic sectors. It should ideally be conducted collaboratively to develop a joint understanding of the context.
- Ensure a gender-sensitive conflict analysis and mapping from the outset of the project design conducted by local gender, peace and security experts when possible.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 5** Do not limit financial support solely to activity-based project funding in crisis settings as this restricts local WPBOs' ability to respond to new and urgent issues related to their contexts.

WHAT TO DO

- 5.1** Allow program flexibility to enable WPBOs to be agile and responsive to immediate changes on the ground, as exemplified by the COVID-19 crisis.

HOW TO DO IT

- Develop alternative funding mechanisms to meet the needs of WPBOs, such as Rapid Response (RR) or flexible funding mechanisms, to enable rapid short-term support for urgent initiatives. Initiatives from WPBOs could include participation in peace- or decision-making processes, protection related to risks or threats faced, response to sudden humanitarian crises, or urgent psycho-social support.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- 6** Do not force donor-driven agendas or Global North priorities on WPBOs by imposing pre-designed programs that have not been tailored to local contexts.

WHAT TO DO

- 6.1** Trust in and respect the local partners' wisdom, judgment, and assessment of the needs in their communities.
- 6.2** Recognize that each context and community, even within the same country, is unique and thus peace programming must respond to this.

HOW TO DO IT

- Ask and allow partners to identify the objectives and types of interventions that are most necessary, urgent, and would have the greatest impact; conduct assessments where needed; and determine interventions based on intimate knowledge of the context and beneficiaries.
- Design programs to reflect the reality that no two conflicts or contexts are the same and each requires unique strategies and approaches that incorporate learnings from past challenges and successes.
- Avoid rigid Request for Proposal (RfP) models that impose pre-determined objectives and priorities on applicants.
- Engage in co-designed processes when possible, which will enable both parties to contribute expertise and develop joint understanding and vision.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 7** Do not assume that scaling up (e.g., expanding or duplicating existing centralized programs) is the best model for peacebuilding or P/CVE work.

WHAT TO DO

- 7.1** Adopt a 'scale across' strategy aimed at identifying and strengthening trusted locally rooted WPBOs in each community and learning from, adapting, and if possible, reproducing effective community-based programs.

HOW TO DO IT

- Identify successful local programs or methodologies that can be replicated and contextualized in other local communities.
- Strengthen community structures by connecting CSOs with local government, police, media, or other institutions (e.g., local businesses, schools, religious communities).
- Provide access for and help facilitate locally rooted authentic voices to be connected to each other and to be recognized at the global level (e.g., by supporting platforms such as WASL).

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 8** Do not focus funding on the large, well-established peacebuilding organizations, located mostly in the capitals.

WHAT TO DO

- 8.1** Diversify funding among smaller WPBOs throughout the districts/provinces that have unique reach and access to their communities.
- 8.2** Ensure money reaches local women's peacebuilding and P/CVE organizations active in communities most impacted by violence and instability.

HOW TO DO IT

- Strengthen community-based organizations (CBOs) or smaller WPBOs that will have greater impact, resiliency, and ability to respond more quickly to crises, rather than relying on a few select larger organizations to carry out this work at the central level.
- Dismantle the monopoly of INGOs over long-term, large scale programs by providing equal opportunities for WPBOs to apply and receive funding for such programs.
- Reinforce and highlight the power of locally rooted, authentic voices that are present in communities and ready to respond quickly to their evolving needs.
- Consider funding through local embassies or alternative funding mechanisms.
- Incubate (i.e., fund, mentor, and support) small community-based programs that are locally rooted and have access in key communities but don't yet have the established infrastructure to manage larger grants.
 - If not feasible, consider funding through embassies or alternative funding mechanisms.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 9** Do not silo funding by requiring programs that support WPBOs to allocate money solely for activities related to women, peace, and security.

WHAT TO DO

- 9.1** Recognize that WPBOs may use different development, humanitarian, security, or human rights-based entry points to engage in their peacebuilding and P/CVE work.

HOW TO DO IT

- Give WPBOs the flexibility they need to respond to the needs on the ground and to define their own priorities without being constrained by rigid project-based funding.



9.2 Address peace and security, humanitarian, rights, and development issues in an intersectional and gender-responsive way.

9.3 Require all stakeholders—including donors, different divisions of government, INGOs, and regional organizations—to coordinate both with each other and with WPBOs on funding initiatives and programming to foster open and transparent dialogue.

- Use funding to break down silos and allow local actors to respond holistically.
 - Permit activities related to peacebuilding, humanitarian response, and development in one proposal.

Create Equitable Relationships

Make the relationship between donors and partners fairer and more equal by improving the transparency of the grant process and eliminating the appropriation of locally developed concepts and practices.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 10** Do not create or perpetuate imbalanced power dynamics where the skills, expertise, and knowledge of WPBOs are not valued, and where they risk being subjected to extraction and exploitation.

WHAT TO DO

- 10.1** Ensure equitable relationships between donors and all partners involved that reflect trust in and ownership of work by WPBOs.
- 10.2** Establish systems that promote fiscal transparency and accountability.
- 10.3** Protect partners and beneficiaries from harm, abuse, and exploitation that may arise from any contact with the donor or the implementation of its activities.

HOW TO DO IT

- Ensure that INGOs (and other international organizations that attain government contracts) are transparent and inform WPBOs of the total programmatic budget allocated by donors.
- Ensure that there is a fair allocation of resources among all parties (especially INGOs and their local partners) and equitable resources for local staff (including competitive salaries and benefits).
- Engage WPBOs in the life cycle of the project, from needs assessments to implementation and evaluation, to ensure gender responsiveness and incorporate knowledge and experience of local stakeholders.
- Foster ownership of local organizations by recognizing and resourcing sustainability and institutional/human strengthening efforts of the WPBO.
- Enable WPBOs to have a safe means of evaluating and/or providing feedback regarding the lead organization to the primary donor.
- Partnership agreements should reflect equal commitments and reference joint responsibility (e.g., both partners have equal access to one another's financial records in relation to the program).
- Develop robust safeguarding policies, which include the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, to prevent, protect partners and beneficiaries from, and respond to any harm.
 - Ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding policies and receive adequate training and support to respond to safeguarding incidents.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- 11** Do not claim credit and attribution for work done by local organizations or refer to them as “implementing organizations,” which can be diminishing and perpetuate imbalanced power dynamics.

WHAT TO DO

- 11.1** Require fair representation and equal attribution of all the accomplishments, results, and impacts of funded programs, with adequate credit given to WPBOs.
- 11.2** Create opportunities for WPBOs to gain independent recognition.

HOW TO DO IT

- Collaborate to develop one communication strategy for funded programs.
- Ensure an agreement between both parties on the use of logos, social media, photos, and other related rights.
- With approval from the WPBOs, publicly recognize the ownership and innovation of the local organizations and their contributions to programming.
- With approval from the WPBOs, International Organizations (IOs) should reference and/or attribute their names publicly when discussing or reporting on the program

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 12** Do not allow international actors to allocate significant resources for the security and wellbeing of their own personnel, property, and premises without offering similar services and care for their local partner organizations and personnel.

WHAT TO DO

- 12.1** Treat all partners and staff equally and value their well-being.
- 12.2** Recognize the physical and psychological toll and the risk women peacebuilders take when engaged in this work.
- 12.3** Adopt and implement the ICAN Protection of Women Peacebuilders Operational Guidance.

HOW TO DO IT

- Provide resources and include space in programming for local peacebuilding organizations to establish security protocols.
- Provide support and resources for psychosocial and emotional support or allow for partners to include these costs in their budgets.
- Include funding for organizational capacity development in personal, digital, and organizational security.
- Include support for risk assessments and protection mechanisms for Women Peacebuilders (WPBs) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) when funding them.

Value the Strengthening of Organizational Sustainability in Local Contexts

Shift grantmaking to focus more on building the institutional strength and sustainability of WPBOs rather than on the completion of activities or project outputs. We recognize all donors are accountable to the sources of the money they manage, with governments being stewards of public money. Therefore, this section strives to strike a balance between the donor's obligations to their stakeholders and the institutional needs of WPBOs.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 13** Do not impose inflexible limitations on overhead or project management costs in the budget. Moreover, do not restrict funding to project activities, which prevents WPBOs from building their institutional and staff capacity.

WHAT TO DO

- 13.1** Recognize the importance of institutional support of partner organizations and enable them to strengthen and improve their governance procedures and policies, including employment policies, safeguarding, etc.

HOW TO DO IT

- As a minimum, ensure that the funding covers all support costs necessary for project implementation. Allow the partner to determine and, where necessary, justify their financial needs.
- Provide opportunities for core and flexible funding, which is critical for fostering the independence of local WPBOs and allowing them to be agile.
 - Allow local organizations to dedicate time and resources to strengthen internal systems and respond rapidly and strategically to the needs, demands, and risks in their communities.
- Provide funding for technical assistance and organizational development—including proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), reporting, staff salaries, and accounting—while recognizing that the requirements of each organization and each context will be unique.
- Provide funding for local organizations to collaborate with and build the capacities of national governments in FCV settings to be more gender responsive in their national planning and budget allocations.
- Provide resources if a conflict analysis or other program-related assessment by the partner is required as part of the proposal or program design process.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- 14** Do not impose donor-driven programmatic, M&E, or reporting requirements without feedback from local WPBOs or consideration for how these requirements could be structured to further build their capacities.

WHAT TO DO

- 14.1** Encourage transparency and open dialogue in an effort to reduce undue burden placed on partners as a result of donor-driven administrative requirements.
- 14.2** Ensure reporting requirements benefit the WPBO partner and further their organizational mission.
- 14.3** Recognize that WPBOs are keen to build their own financial and administrative capacities.

HOW TO DO IT

- Offer an information session prior to the start of the program to discuss deliverables, reporting requirements, procedures, and expectations.
- Create two-way conversation channels that allow some level of flexibility (e.g., allowing partners to work from different reporting templates if they have their own) and provide a safe space for the WPBO partner to openly discuss challenges and obstacles with the donor. This can lead to collaboration on identifying solutions to challenges.
- Narrative reports should include simple, reasonable, and targeted questions and be available for submission in several formats and languages.
 - See Recommendation 4.3 for reasonable expectations for reporting on impact.
- Encourage project reporting that allows WPBOs to better understand their environment and the effects of their activities, validate their theory of change, and identify gaps for future action.
 - Encourage partner organizations to overlay their performance framework and M&E against their logic model and theory of change to confirm that project assumptions and conceptualizations are valid.

Streamline Grant Processes

Reduce rigid program and fiscal requirements that negatively affect the ability of women peacebuilders and their organizations to achieve their greatest impact. Streamline the process of transferring funds from the donor to the WPBO partner organization, with minimal risk and fiscal burden to the organization and its staff. Each recommendation aims to satisfy the constraints of the donor while still providing WPBOs with the flexibility and ownership they need to effectively develop and execute proactive strategies that resolve or prevent the causes of conflict.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 15** Do not impose short one-off implementation periods for programming, which often result from donors' own pressure to work around their fiscal year, thus causing them to disburse large sums of money at once and allow short 3- to 12-month periods for organizations to absorb and undertake activities.

WHAT TO DO

- 15.1** Recognize that peacebuilding and P/CVE programs take a significant amount of time to plan, implement, and report on. Short implementation periods will undermine the desired outcomes of the programs.
- 15.2** Support institutional strengthening and program sustainability by not forcing organizations to be constrained by short timelines.
- 15.3** Promote continuity of partnerships, which promotes sustainability and programs being rooted, owned, and developed organically by local communities.

HOW TO DO IT

- Allow for longer implementation periods (minimum: 12 months, ideal: multi-year).
- Allow for multi-year collaborations with the partner during which programs build upon each other.
- If multi-year formal agreements are not feasible, where possible:
 - Deepen and value relationships with partners (e.g., through ongoing communication after project completion).
 - Prioritize continuity of programming by encouraging WPBO applications to recognize and build off achievements and lessons learned from completed projects.
 - Reduce gaps between annual funding cycles.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- 16** Do not impose financial management and reporting requirements that may pose security threats to organizations working in FCV settings and/or can be extremely cumbersome to implement.

WHAT TO DO

- 16.1** Financial management and reporting requirements should aim to reduce administrative costs for all parties while still ensuring accountability and the safety and security of partners.
- 16.2** Recognize that WPBOs and others in the peacebuilding and P/CVE space are risking their lives to do their work. Funding arrangements should not increase this risk.

HOW TO DO IT

- All donors, including INGOs, should engage in collaborative financial planning with WPBOs, including developing joint budgets and implementation plans.
- Allow partners to follow their own internal financial policies and guidelines (e.g., regulating submission of receipts for meals or transportation) instead of imposing regulations that were designed for larger actors or non-conflict settings.
 - If warranted, provide technical assistance and work in collaboration with partners to establish such guidelines.
- Consider eliminating donor pre-approval requirements for small variances at the level of individual budget positions. Instead, consider requiring donor approvals for larger (10% or more) variances at activity (or output) level.
- Consider alternative contract models that focus on outputs and impact such as a [Fixed Amount Award \(FAA\)](#) under U.S. law that allows for:
 - A range of different means to prove expenditure of funds and completion of deliverables and activities (e.g., through videos, pictures, short synopses, social media highlights, attendance lists for workshops, news headlines, etc.), and
 - Payments to be made in fixed tranches based on the achieved milestones and pre-approved budget versus the actual expenditures.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 17** Do not demand immediate, demonstrable impact of short-term programs and activities that are designed for peacebuilding and P/CVE programming, given that such initiatives aim for sustained behavior change.

WHAT TO DO

- 17.1** Ensure the M&E methodology recognizes that impact in this field, even if achieved in the short-term, is best evident over time.

HOW TO DO IT

- Allow for a gap of 3-12 months between the completion of activities and impact reporting, recognizing the challenges of showing behavior change or success of a peacebuilding program, particularly in a short time frame.

17.2 Ensure the M&E methodology reflects the challenges of demonstrating behavior change and difficulties of proving a negative occurrence (e.g., violence did not occur).

- Allow local partners to co-lead when developing evaluation indicators to ensure they are reasonable for both parties and focus on impact in the communities.
- Allow evidence of increased institutional strength and organizational sustainability as demonstrations of successful programming (e.g., improved staff capacity, soliciting new donors, stronger financial accounting, etc.).
- Accept quantitative studies contextualized with observation and other qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, self-assessments) as part of reporting.

WHAT NOT TO DO

18 Do not design program or applicant requirements that impose undue administrative burdens or that may increase risks imposed on WPBOs.

WHAT TO DO

18.1 Ensure that program designs and financial requirements recognize that working in FCV contexts means that many variables can affect stability and security, and thus program implementation.

18.2 Reduce administrative burdens on the partner organization from the initial call for proposals through the final reporting period.

HOW TO DO IT

- Allow partners to revise their project implementation and M&E plans to reflect changing conditions and lessons learned during the project.
- Balance donors' proposal and reporting requirements with the capacity of the partner organization.
 - Such requirements should be funded and serve both the donor and the local organization.
- When feasible, use a solicited process for identifying organizations to fund rather than an open call for proposals, which can be incredibly labor intensive with little to no return for organizations that aren't selected.
- If an open call is necessary, reduce the burden on the grantees by, for example, only requiring a concept note or 1-pager with intentions to assess likelihood of funding.
- Adjust documentation requirements, such as proof of registration, to be consistent with local contexts.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- 19** Do not use cost reimbursable agreements where organizations are required to front their own cash and then are reimbursed after submitting a financial report and/or other financial documentation.

 WHAT TO DO	 HOW TO DO IT
19.1 Design contractual arrangements for cash disbursement, which avoid undue financial burden to the partner organization.	• Allow for some cash to be disbursed in advance of the start of activities.
19.2 Consult with the partner to determine the most effective, fair, and risk-averse arrangement for disbursing funds.	• If subsequent installments are conditional on submission of a financial report and supporting financial documentation, consider requesting a sample of documentation instead of 100% of all supporting documents. This will shorten reporting and payment approval time significantly.
19.3 Shorten donor's approval process for disbursements.	• If possible, consider issuing an award in a local currency if that is partner's preference.
19.4 Decrease risk of foreign currency losses to the partners.	

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 20** Do not unconditionally request that WPBOs re-pay all unspent funds, including interest income and/or foreign currency exchange gains, if they implemented the program with cost savings and achieved all objectives/outcomes.

 WHAT TO DO	 HOW TO DO IT
20.1 Encourage the partner to manage their resources efficiently instead of encouraging them to spend 100% of the award.	• Establish or increase the existing minimum amount of unspent funds that must be returned.
20.2 Consider allowing remaining funds to be used to improve organizational capacities or for other institutional needs	• Allow foreign currency gains and any interest income associated with the award to be spent on the project activities or partner's institutional needs • Offer one of the following options (which may be contingent upon donor approval) for using all or some of the remaining funds: • For institutional support (overhead); • For post-implementation grant administrative costs, such as costs associated with final reporting or auditing (which are often considerable and not covered by the funding) or potential currency exchange rate losses on the final award installment;



- For similar program activities;
- As a bridge between different funding cycles, enabling organizational stability; or
- Towards emergency needs (e.g., protection from threats or participation in peace processes).

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 21** Do not impose a minimum installment amount for disbursement of funds, which may pose high-security risks to partners and draw unwanted attention from local powerful elites.

WHAT TO DO

- 21.1** Disbursement of funds and contract modality should be in line with policies that prioritize the safety, security, and independence of the partner.

HOW TO DO IT

- Allow for smaller tranches that ensure effective absorption of available funds to enable sustainable growth, function, and predictable funding that allows for planning.
- Consult with women peacebuilders on what kind of flexible and sustainable funding mechanisms they need.
- Reduce potential risks and harm by offering flexible funding mechanisms that allow for regular installments of smaller amounts of money.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- 22** Do not restrict disbursement options to traditional bank transfers.

WHAT TO DO

- 22.1** Allow for alternative financial transfer mechanisms when a traditional bank transfer is not a feasible or safe option.

HOW TO DO IT

- Determine disbursement of funds and contract modality in consultation with the organization.
- Include policies and procedures that allow options for cash payments, Western Union, and pre-paid debit cards.

Annex I: Existing Grantmaking Modalities

The table below offers a sample of the existing funding models and a brief comparison of their characteristics and priorities.

Organization	Geographic Focus	Government/Non-government	Sources of Funding	Are Gendered Peacebuilding & P/CVE a Focus of Grantmaking?	Grant Range	Is Technical and/or Other Capacity-Building Support Provided?	Is It Dedicated to or Does It Specifically Mention Support to Women's Organizations?
The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)	Africa	Non Government	Governments, Corporations, Individuals	No, not as a specific grantmaking focus.	USD \$8000 – \$100,000	Yes, capacity-building program provides technical skills and trainings aimed at developing and strengthening grantees' organizations and their work.	Yes, only funds African women and women's movements.
Equality Fund	Global	Non-Government	Government of Canada, Private Foundations, Individuals	No, broadly focused on advancing women's rights and gender equality.	CAD 15,000 – 100,000	Yes, provides capacity support, uses a "grants plus" model that gives both financial support (for example, for travel grants) and capacity building for grantee partners.	Yes, primarily focused on supporting women's organizations and feminist movements around the world.
FRIDA: Young Feminist Fund	Global	Non-Government	Foundations, Non-Profit Organizations, Multilateral Institutions, Individuals	Yes, they fund young women, girls, and trans youth organizations working in peace and conflict.	Undisclosed	Yes, provides different types of technical support and resources to partners in addition to the core grant they receive.	Yes, only funds young and emerging feminist-led organizations.



Organization	Geographic Focus	Government/Non-government	Sources of Funding	Are Gendered Peacebuilding & P/CVE a Focus of Grantmaking?	Grant Range	Is Technical and/or Other Capacity-Building Support Provided?	Is It Dedicated to or Does It Specifically Mention Support to Women's Organizations?
The Fondo Centro-americano de Mujeres	Central America	Non-Government	Governments, Foundations	No, not as a specific grantmaking focus.	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Yes, focused on resourcing grassroots women's organizations.
Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)	Global	Non Government	Governments, International Organizations, Foundations, Corporations, Individuals	No, but organizations that prioritize work on P/CVE are given priority; not specifically gendered.	USD \$10,000 – \$50,000	Yes, builds capacity and strengthens and improves monitoring capabilities.	No.
Global Fund for Women	Global	Non-Government	Foundations, Investments, Corporations, Individuals	No, focused broadly on gender justice.	USD \$15,000 (Average Grant Size)	Yes, offers general support funding that allows organizations/movements to choose how to best allocate their funding. Additionally, they offer capacity-building training and skills development for those who receive their grants.	Yes, offers general support funding that allows organizations/movements to choose how to best allocate their funding. Additionally, they offer capacity-building training and skills development for those who receive their grants.

Organization	Geographic Focus	Government/Non-government	Sources of Funding	Are Gendered Peacebuilding & P/CVE a Focus of Grantmaking?	Grant Range	Is Technical and/or Other Capacity-Building Support Provided?	Is It Dedicated to or Does It Specifically Mention Support to Women's Organizations?
ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund (IPF)	Global	Non-Government	Governments, Foundations, Individuals	Yes, focused on peacebuilding and P/CVE, promoting pluralism, and preventing conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.	USD \$3,000 – \$100,000	Yes, offers strategic and technical program design support, financial management, capacity building in M&E and advocacy, rapid response/emergency support, self-care/integrated security training.	Yes.
Madre	Global	Non Government	Foundations, Community Organizations, Religious Communities, Individuals	Yes, supports grassroots women's organizations who are focused on building peaceful communities.	USD \$39,000 (Average Grant Size)	Yes, works to offer training for organizations to acquire the skills and build leadership capacity to advocate for long-term social change.	Yes.
NoVo Foundation	Global	Non-Government	Endowment Funded by Warren Buffett, Individuals	Yes, they specifically prioritize advancing gender equality, SGBV, and P/CVE.	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	No, recently shifted funding previously dedicated to ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) into a separate nonprofit.
Oak Foundation		Non-Government	Endowment	No	USD \$25,000 – \$7 million (\$600,000 Average Grant Size)	Yes, provides general project support and technical assistance.	Yes, dedicate funds to women's civil society organizations globally who focus broadly on issues affecting women.



Organization	Geograph- ic Focus	Government/ Non-govern- ment	Sources of Funding	Are Gendered Peacebuilding & P/CVE a Focus of Grantmaking?	Grant Range	Is Technical and/or Other Capacity-Build- ing Support Provided?	Is It Dedicated to or Does It Specifical- ly Mention Support to Women's Organiza- tions?
Peace De- velopment Fund (PDF)	USA & Mexico	Non- Government	Individual Do- nors	No	USD \$2,500 – \$10,000	Yes, offers capaci- ty-building support.	Yes, funding collabora- tive peace initiatives led by women is among their emerging priorities.
Peace Direct	Global	Non- Government	Governments, Foundations, Corporations, Individuals	Yes, along a wide spectrum of projects, including women's em- powerment and community reinte- gration of ex-com- batants.	Undisclosed	Yes, strengthen partners through specific technical support and funding for organizational development, including core funding and support for their own income generation.	Yes
Search for Common Ground (SFCG)	Global	Non- Government	Foundations, Non-Profit and For-Profit Organizations, Corporations, Governments, Multilateral Institutions	Yes, they have global programs for promoting gender equality to build peace and analyzing the intersection of gender and conflict analysis.	EUR 37,500 – 60,000	No, suggests organiza- tions find intermediary partners who will offer technical support and training.	Yes, a key pillar is part- nering with women to give them tools to count- er violence and lead within their communities.
Urgent Action Fund	Global	Non- Government	Governments, Foundations, Individuals	Yes, supports women that create cultures of justice and peace.	USD \$8,000 (Maximum Grant Size)	Undisclosed	Yes, dedicated to funding women's movements and organizations.



Organization	Geographic Focus	Government/ Non-government	Sources of Funding	Are Gendered Peacebuilding & P/CVE a Focus of Grantmaking?	Grant Range	Is Technical and/or Other Capacity-Building Support Provided?	Is It Dedicated to or Does It Specifically Mention Support to Women's Organizations?
Women's Fund Asia	South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia	Non-Government	Governments, Corporations, Individuals	No, not as a specific grantmaking focus.	USD \$5,000 – \$10,000	No, but grants fund opportunities for capacity development.	Yes, they only support women's and trans rights organizations and activists in their work to advance human rights in the region.
Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund	Global	Intergovernmental	Governments, Foundations, Corporations, Individuals	Yes, WPHF aims to stimulate funding for women's participation, leadership, and empowerment in situations of conflict and humanitarian crises around the world.	USD \$2,500 – \$200,000	Yes, fosters technical support to ensure adoption, monitoring, and financing of relevant local accountability frameworks.	Yes, 100% of their programmable funding goes to civil society organizations.
Women for Women International	Global	Non-Government	Foundations, Corporations, Individuals	Yes, they target the social, economic, and cultural barriers women face and respond to needs of women survivors of war through the Conflict Response Fund.	Undisclosed	Yes, vocational skills trainings offered help women develop a livelihood and earn an income.	Yes.

Annex II: Normative Frameworks on Funding WPS

Summary of Notable Policy Commitments Calling for Increased Funding to Civil Society, Especially Women

Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security [2020]	Upon the twentieth anniversary of 1325, United Nations Secretary General António Guterres released a report that, among other notable commitments, highlighted that providing sustainable and flexible funding to women must be a global priority. In particular, he committed to "[reversing] the upward trajectory in global military spending with a view to encouraging greater investment in the social infrastructure and services that buttress human security" and "[galvanizing] the donor community for universal compliance with a minimum of 15 per cent of ODA to conflict-affected countries dedicated to advancing gender equality."
USAID's Women, Peace, and Security Implementation Plan [2020]	The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has invested more than \$27 million in dedicated funding to catalyze the implementation of the WPS NAP through incorporating targeted training and technical assistance. USAID intends to "track planned investments aligned with WPS objectives. These data will support WPS program planning, help identify and address geographic and sectoral gaps, and inform reporting to key stakeholders."
GAPS 10 Steps: Turning Women, Peace, and Security Commitments to Implementation [2019]	The consultation findings provide a body of evidence that outlines the need for the implementation of existing commitments through a holistic approach, including funding for Women's Rights Organizations and civil society. Flexible, accessible, and long-term funding for civil society, particularly women's rights, should be a priority.
EU Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security [2019]	This report gathered experts from nearly 80 countries who concluded that NAPs on WPS are driven by a combination of strong leadership, necessary financing and localization strategies, and robust monitoring and evaluation systems. "Most importantly, the development and effective implementation of NAPs-WPS must be inclusive and reflect civil society perspectives, especially women's groups, on women's peace and security."
World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2016 – 2023 [2016]	In this comprehensive document, the World Bank voices a new strategy to operationalize gender equality within their institution as well as within specific country-driven approaches. In particular, it is noted that "mainstreaming has not been linked to flows of funding [as]... Neither donor resources nor country budgets match the policy rhetoric on gender equality."
Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 [2016]	The study "recommends an increase in predictable, accessible and flexible funding for women's civil society organizations working on peace and security at all levels, including through dedicated financing instruments such as the new Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (now the Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund).

Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment [2015]	A plan of intent to identify and agree on policy and financing actions to accelerate the existing commitments in the Beijing Declaration with the goal of "significantly increasing investments, in both scale and scope, to close the financing gaps that hinder progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment."
White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) [2015]	Referenced the importance of women and gender perspectives in addressing extremism; highlighted the need for socio-economic responses; and encouraged support for innovative practices by civil society, youth, and women.
Global Study on UNSCR 1325, Chapter 13: Financing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda [2015]	Provides a comprehensive overview of both the current facts of underfunding gendered organizations. Proposes a series of four recommendations including encouraging donors to "adopt the UN's 15 percent target (the percentage of funds which should be earmarked for programmes that further gender equality and women's empowerment in peacebuilding contexts)" and "increase predictable, accessible and flexible funding for women's civil society
OECD Financing UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Fragile Contexts [2015]	While OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members' aid in support of gender equality and women's rights in fragile states and economies has increased rapidly, it falls short of the political commitments that governments have made. This document encourages nation-states to ensure their commitments are not lost by increasing dedicated efforts to gender mainstream and increase predictable, accessible, and flexible funding for women's
United Nations Sustainable Goal's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism [2015]	Recommends that member states "[e]nsure that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to projects that address women's specific needs or empower women, as recommended in [the UN Secretary General's] recent report to the Security Council on women and peace and security (S/2015/716)."
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 [2015]	Called for "adequate financing within the funding of the UN for counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism...to be committed to projects which address gender dimensions including women's empowerment."
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2122 [2013]	UNSCR 2122 calls for stronger measures to include women in peace processes as well as encourages member states to develop dedicated funding mechanisms to support the work and enhance the capacities of organizations that support women's leadership development and full participation in all levels of decision making.



"It is crucial for donors to be flexible and understand the needs of civil society. As seen [with our IPF] project, the situation can change rapidly. Supporting civil society, even during crisis when direct activities cannot be conducted, is key, as it reinforces the organization's sustainability and ability to be ready when activities are allowed again"

– Charlotte Midouni, Mobdi'un Creative Youth, Tunisia