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Feminist Solutions for more Impactful Financing for Peacebuilding

Background Paper for the High-Level Meeting on Financing for Peacebuilding

This background paper was prepared by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), Kvinna till Kvinna, MADRE, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

KVINNA KVINNA

ICAN International Civil Society Action Network
For women's rights, peace and security

gnwp Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

WILPF

GPPAC A Network of People Building Peace

MADRE fighting for feminist futures

* The title of this paper is inspired by the powerful call of Ash-Lee Henderson, Co-Executive Director of the Highlander Center and a leader in the Movement for Black Lives.

The international community recognises that adequate, predictable and sustained financing for diverse women peacebuilders is an imperative prerequisite to sustaining peace and preventing conflict at the field level.[1] Around the world, women are at the forefront of building and sustaining peace in their communities.[2] Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored that when crises hit, local actors are the first and most effective responders.[3]

This background paper focuses on six structural barriers faced by diverse women peacebuilders in accessing funds to support their work and presents concrete, innovative and practical solutions to address:

(1) inadequate cumulative amount of funding for peacebuilding in light of competing priorities of Member States.
(2) scarcity of direct funding to women peacebuilders.
(3) persistent presumption of incapacity and risk when funding women peacebuilders.
4) lack of opportunities for women peacebuilders to influence decision-making about financing priorities.
(5) short-term, output-driven financing models.
(6) severe scarcity of rapidly accessible and flexible funding for the protection of women peacebuilders.

We recognise that innovative solutions to mitigate these challenges have been identified and are being increasingly embraced as good practices. These include establishing pooled funds to directly support local women peacebuilders and channelling funds to grassroots peacebuilders through larger "intermediary" organisations. While acknowledging that existing solutions to mitigate challenges need to be further amplified and strengthened, **this paper explores innovative avenues to transform the current system of peacebuilding financing to sustainably address the challenges faced by diverse women peacebuilders[4] in the pursuit of inclusive and lasting peace.**

1 Resolution 2282 (2016) "stresses the importance of enhancing the mobilisation of resources for initiatives that address the particular needs of women in peacebuilding contexts." United Nations, "Resolution 2282 (2016)," April 2016, https://undocs.org/S/RES/2282(2016)

2 For a documentation of women-led peacebuilding initiatives, see, for example: https://gnwp.org/sustaining-peace-report/, https://www.gppac.net/taxonomy/term/11; https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/KvinnatillKvinna_A-Right-Not-A-Gift_digital.pdf; Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking. ICAN, Fall 2020, pp. 14-21, https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf

3 Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking. ICAN, Fall 2020, https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf

4 While women are disproportionately affected by the limitations of the existing funding systems, their experiences reflect those of diverse local peacebuilders, including indigenous leaders, people with disabilities, peacebuilders in the most remote areas, and young peacebuilders, among others.

Opportunities for Structural Change in Financing for Peacebuilding

Every structural barrier posed by the global peacebuilding financing system can be addressed through the systematic use of innovative solutions that are already embraced by some donors. Innovative solutions require departure from business-as-usual and must embrace the overdue shift in financing modalities that will make peacebuilding donorship more locally-led, inclusive and more effective.

1. Reversing the upward trajectory in global military spending towards locally-led peacebuilding and conflict prevention

Current funding for peacebuilding is insufficient, with women peacebuilders primarily affected. The share of the official development assistance committed to peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries and terreitories declined to 11.4% in 2018 from 19.7% in 2009.[5] Of this, even less is available to women peacebuilders, with many women-led peacebuilding organisations struggling to survive. Between 2017 and 2018, a mere 0.2% of the total bilateral aid targeting fragile countries went directly to women's rights organisations, and this percentage has not changed in a decade.[6] The COVID-19 pandemic further aggravated the situation, with organisations reporting cuts and delays in funding.[7]

In contrast, the global military budget continues to grow, further fueling conflict and tensions.[8] The priorities of bilateral donors are often focused on sustaining and reinforcing militarised security at the expense of human security and inclusive peace.[9] This can be seen, for example, by the allocation of public finances in recent years by the UK's Cabinet Office. In 2020, the British Prime Minister announced a £16.5 billion surge in military defence spending over the next four years,[10] while over £4 billion is being cut from the 2021/22 foreign aid budget, hampering a variety of peacebuilding initiatives.[11] Donor priorities across different policy areas can no longer conflict with each other. States supporting the WPS agenda and peacebuilding should not simultaneously fuel conflict through military spending and trade.

Investment in local peacebuilding, including actions led by women peacebuilders, youth, indigenous communities, queer people, racialised groups,[12] people with disabilities and other marginalised groups, is not only 'the right thing to do,' but is also a cost-effective approach to building sustainable

5 United Nations, "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Report of the Secretary-General," July 2020, https://undocs.org/S/2020/773

6 Jen Ross, "Chronically underfunded, women peacebuilders need support more than ever", UN Women, 29 October 2020, https://data.unwomen.org/features/chronically-underfunded-women-peace-builders-need-support-more-ever

7 Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "Building Peace from the Grassroots: Learning from Women Peacebuilders to Advance the WPS agenda", October 2020, https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/Building-peace-from-the-grassroots-Oct-2020.pdf

8 According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2020, the military spending worldwide amounted to 1.98 trillion U.S. dollars, a 2.6% increased compared to 2019. The increase - highest since the financial crisis in 2009 - is particularly jarring given the dire needs for investments in socioeconomic and peacebuilding priorities in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. Source: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/fs_2104_milex_0.pdf

9 Reaching Critical Will, "First Committee Briefing Book 2020," 2020, https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com20/briefingbook/FCBB-2020.pdf.

10 Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, "PM to announce largest military investment in 30 years," November 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-to-announce-largest-military-investment-in-30-years

11 Devex, "Tracking the UK's controversial aid cuts," August 2021, https://www.devex.com/news/tracking-the-uk-s-controversial-aid-cuts-99883

12 "Racialization is the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life. This term is widely preferred over descriptions such as "racial minority", "visible minority" or "person of colour" as it expresses race as a social construct rather than as a description of persons based on perceived characteristics" - Source: Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Paying the price: The human cost of racial profiling", 2003. https://bit.ly/3EKEpnl

peace.[13] **It is critical for the peacebuilding community to support the UN Secretary-General's call to "reverse the upward trajectory in global military spending"[14] and shift the focus to locally-led peacebuilding solutions that address the root causes of conflict and build lasting peace.[15]**

Good Practice

Moving the Money towards Social Services. It is possible to reduce military expenditure and amplify peacebuilding spending. Between 2008-2020, 100 countries reduced their military expenditure as a percentage of their GDP.[16] The Costa Rican government has directed military spending towards social services and now supports local peacebuilding and sustainable development work.[17]

Recommendations

• **Governments should reduce their military expenditure by at least 15%, with further cuts annually, and increase their investment in local peacebuilding and nonviolent and inclusive approaches to peace and human security** (i.e., direct support to women peacebuilders and supporting women peacebuilding delegations' involvement in and influence over the outcome of peace talks). The Secretary-General in the reporting procedures should further provide updates on the progress.

• **Governments, with support of the United Nations and bilateral donors, should ensure that human security focus in national policies is adequately funded and developed in partnership with local peacebuilders,** including national peacebuilding strategies, National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), national strategies on preventing violent extremism and national arms control and disarmament policies while ensuring sufficient funding for their implementation.

• **Donors should aim for 100% of peacebuilding funds to include gender as a primary or mainstreamed objective.** The Peacebuilding Support Office should track progress towards this goal as part of updating the funding dashboard. The Secretary-General should report on it through his annual reporting procedures.

• **Donors should adopt policy coherence across their own funding commitments and ensure they follow the principles of localisation and equitable partnerships, with adequate accountability systems designed in partnership with civil society** and informed by good practices identified in this paper.[18] The Secretary-General's funding dashboard should allow for donor accountability with consistency across different agendas.

13 United Nations, "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict," 2018, https://www.pathwaysforpeace.org/

14 United Nations, "Women and peace and security. Report of the Secretary-General", September 2020, https://undocs.org/en/S/2020/946

15 United Nations, 'Peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Report of the Secretary-General," July 2020, https://undocs.org/S/2020/773

16 Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "Investing in Human Security: How Reducing Military Spending Can Ensure Gender-Equal and Safe Communities," November 2020, https://gnwp.org/human-security/

17 International Peace Institute, "Costa Rica: Choosing a Path to Build and Sustain Peace," September 2018, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2018/09/costa-rica-choosing-path-to-build-sustain-peace/

18 Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. Designing Efficient Financing for Peacebuilding: Financing Mechanisms to Support Local Peacebuilders.

2. Directly supporting local women peacebuilders

The existing mechanisms of channeling money to local peacebuilders through multilateral agencies risk reducing efficiency of peacebuilding action in achieving its intended impact.[19] Many of the current model create unnecessary steps before the money reaches the local level and as a result, most funds are exhausted before they reach women peacebuilders.[20] Even when funds are given to national organisations, they are usually large, capital-based organisations, and funds are channelled through them to women peacebuilders.

Current eligibility criteria also makes it impossible for local women peacebuilders to apply for funds. Existing funding processes require significant absorption capacity and fulfilment of technical criteria that smaller or newly established organisations do not have, halting innovation and limiting peacebuilding ownership. Furthermore, current funding mechanisms follow a heavily bureaucratic process, which delays access to resources.

Intermediary models need to be supplemented by funding provided directly to women peacebuilders and their coalitions and networks, to break the cycle of dependence on larger organisations and invest in building local capacities. INGOs can then work with local partners to support capacities missing at the local level and support cross-border and cross-regional learning and experience exchanges.

Good Practices

Direct funding to women peacebuilders through embassies. Embassies of several bilateral donors (e.g., Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and the US) provide direct, flexible funding for women peacebuilders through a dedicated instrument. Direct relations between local organisations and embassies have contributed to their increased societal credibility and access to other donors. Local organisations may be invited by embassies to submit project proposals, or they may do so proactively as open calls for proposals are rare. Often, local organisations and embassies jointly refine proposals in a process of co-creation. The embassies' role during project implementation in this type of donor-recipient relationship is characterised by women peacebuilders as a form of support rather than control.[21]

Fund grantmaking organisations that are the best positioned to reach frontline peacebuilding organisations, when funding local organizations is not feasible.[22] While direct funding should always be prioritised, when a broad swath of peacebuilders cannot be reached, donors should partner with organisations that have the capacity to reach inaccessible local groups. Organis ations that provide long-term sustainable and flexible support to local women peacebuilders can help to reach smaller organisations, providing a capacity bridge that helps to build and support movements in the country and avoid problems associated with funding a few over the many.

19 United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, "Trust Fund Factsheet. The Peacebuilding Fund," http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/PB000

20 Ibid.

21 Government of Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Useful Patchwork: Direct Funding of Local NGOs by Netherlands Embassies: 2006-2012", 2014, https://www.oecd.org/derec/netherlands/Useful-Patchwork-Direct-Funding-of-Local-NGOs.pdf

22 MADRE, WILPF, Kvinna till Kvinna and ICAN are examples of organizations that provide long-term and flexible support to women-led groups that have been impacted directly by war and disaster, and that are small, located in inaccessible or remote areas, or unreachable by embassies or large aid agencies.

Recommendations

• **Donors should review and ease their eligibility, application and reporting criteria and requirements** to better balance their own fiduciary requirements with the realities and capacities of women peacebuilders and reduce the time and resources necessary to meet those requirements.

• **Donors should test innovative approaches to support women peacebuilders, including through the creation or strengthening of pooled funds** aimed at directly supporting women peacebuilders as beneficiaries.

• **Donors should fund grantmaking organisations best positioned to reach frontline peacebuilders** when direct funding to locally-based organisations is not possible.

• **Donors should track, and report on, funding disbursed directly to locally-based and women-led peacebuilding organisations and their networks.** The funding dashboard should track th is progress, and the Secretary-General should include this data in his annual reporting procedures.

• **Donors should direct their embassies to provide funding to local networks, initiatives and organisations working on peacebuilding,** especially those led by women, youth and other marginalised groups, and proactively encourage them to apply for existing funding opportunities. Embassies should be key convenors to bring women activists and peacebuilders, as well as their coalitions and networks, together with other donors and embassies in a risk-informed way.

• **Donors should invest in building fundraising and organisational capacities of community-based organisations and individual women peacebuilders living in conflict-affected communities,** if there are no existing women-led peacebuilding networks or organisations. Such capacity building must be based on the principles of trust and equitable partnerships, as described below.

3. Promoting authentic donor-recipient partnerships built on trust

A false assumption that local organisations are "risky" and prone to corruption limits the funding they receive.[23] Through their research, the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation (DHF) and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) were unable to identify significant evidence of corruption and misappropriation of funds by local organisations.[24] This false presumption leads to complex requirements and intermediary structures that are designed to minimise the perceived risk for grant-makers and over-reliance on intermediary (often international) organisations, continuing the practice of implementing what initiatives donors – rather than local peacebuilders – think are worthy of receiving funds.[25]

Experiences of intermediary organisations, which manage grants or distribute money through small grants, confirm that it is possible - and necessary - to shift from a narrative of "risk" to one that is based on "trust." Moreover, the international-pooled funds, including the Peacebuilding Fund, have offered some flexibility to INGOs in their implementation and reporting processes, signaling that similar trust levels can be established with local peacebuilders.[26]

23 Bognon, France and Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. "Funding Women Peacebuilders: Dismantling Barriers to Peace", 2020.

24 GPPAC and DHF's conversations with a number of funders or funding intermediates for their research indicated that "the level of fraud amongst local NGO grantees was limited to nominal." See: Kantowitz, Riva "Designing Efficient Financing for Peacebuilding: Financing Mechanisms to Support Local Peacebuilders", 2021

25 For a recent discussion on the challenges with this architecture within USAID, see: https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/18/usaid-biden-power-contracts-money-procurement/

26 GPPAC, "Best Practices in Financing for Peacebuilding: Ensuring Local Ownership in Kyrgyzstan", 2020: https://www.gppac.net/news/best-practices-financing-peacebuilding-ensuring-local-ownership-kyrgyzstan

The narrative shift requires following the principle of authentic partnership based on: 1) designing and managing participatory resource allocation processes with local organisations as primary implementers and with INGOs providing administrative oversight; 2) working with local organisations and their networks to conduct capacity-building needs assessments and then helping them meet those needs; 3) exchanging knowledge and facilitating access to global, regional and cross-border expertise for local organisations; and, 4) prioritising long-term, trusting partnerships, rather than short-term collaborations between INGOs and local organisations for a specific grant process.

The narrative **shift also requires a shift in approaching due diligence procedures** that take into consideration existing social, political and economic factors, power structures, positionalities of peacebuilding groups vis-a-vis other actors, the fragility of contexts and conflict/war economy, among others. Financing peacebuilding will not be efficient or effective if donors continue to use the operational and compliance frameworks that were once applied in development or humanitarian settings.

Good Practices

1. Prioritising local ownership in financial support practices. Kvinna till Kvinna is an intermediary funder that supports women's rights organisations through seven principles of local ownership, prioritising financial support that is: 1) sensitive to an organisation's own mandate, activism and rights holders; 2) organisation rather than project-based; 3) channelled to other legal forms when organisational registration is not safe; 4) long-term; 5) supportive of the development of organisations' own systems and structures for leadership, HR, finance, strategy, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation; 6) coordinated with other donors to align around the requirements; and 7) independent of open calls, as they often create short-term relationships and increase competition among organisations.[27] This has been done without any rise in corruption or misuse of funding.

2. ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund.[28] ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund (IPF) provides financial support and technical assistance to women-led peacebuilding organisations in countries affected by conflict, extremism, transition and closed political space. ICAN "invests in trust" and values the knowledge and access that women peacebuilders have developed in communities that drive how they respond to crises. The IPF funding streams give partners the ability to determine their priorities and define their own programmes, while offering strategic and technical support based on individual need. The IPF partners are members of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), who are valued for their expertise and can adapt their programs as they see fit, without having to receive prior approval. Partners are encouraged to see the funding as support for their institution and an investment in the community as opposed to focusing on demonstrating impact from one project.

3. MADRE's Trust-Based Grantmaking Model.[29] As a feminist fund, MADRE provides grants to local organisations and activists in countries experiencing conflict and violent extremism and in post-conflict contexts to advance community-led peacebuilding efforts. MADRE's model is based on trust and consultations with local women and girls leaders. A model of long-term partnership responds to the humanitarian aid needs during conflict and supports the leadership of women and girls essential for building the foundation for sustainable peace, promoting long-

27 The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation Programme Handbook, 2020 https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/The_Kvinna_till_Kvinna_Foundation_Programme_Handbookl.pdf

28 Please see: https://icanpeacework.org/our-work/innovative-peace-fund/

29 MADRE has funded over $52 million to grassroots organizations globally since its inception, https://www.madre.org/grantmaking.

term recovery and rebuilding after conflict. Flexible grantmaking responded in difficult security contexts and removed administrative burdens to reach partners with the resources they need to advance their work.

Recommendations

• **Donors should break with the presumption of an inherent risk in working with local organisations, and endorse women peacebuilders' own assessment of risks and mitigation measures** as these are likely to be the most efficient solutions. Donors and women peacebuilders should discuss together through substantive consultations specific financial and programmatic risks for the donor, as well as security and other risks that local peacebuilders may face through their work.

• **When working through an intermediary model, donors should prioritise organisations that have existing local networks and a strong track record of working with diverse local civil society organisations,** including local women and youth, to act as intermediaries or sub-grantors.

• **Donors should embed the principles of authentic partnerships into their funding modalities and ensure that any intermediary organisations they work with operationalise and apply these principles in their work with local peacebuilders as well.** Donors should work together with local peacebuilding organisations and organisations that have a strong track record of building and sustaining authentic, trust-based partnerships, to develop concrete guidelines for operationalising these principles.

• **Donors should consider creating new funding and oversight models** such as oversight and due diligence capacity 'hubs' that rely on national expertise. These hubs could then support local organisations, rather than relying on INGOs or external auditors.[30]

4. Meaningful inclusion of women peacebuilders in decision-making about financing priorities

The donor community does not consult with women peacebuilders when developing their funding mechanisms. As a result, local women's expertise and understanding of early warning signs and drivers of conflict is not captured, making peacebuilding financing less effective and impactful.

It is critical to create clear opportunities and channels for women's meaningful participation in defining financing for peacebuilding priorities. Local women peacebuilders must be able to directly influence financing priorities and planning and be at the center of partnership frameworks. This can be done not only by channelling multi-year flexible funds to the groups, but also by inviting them to the table when designing peacebuilding financial planning and implementation.

Good Practices

1. Inclusive budget development processes. The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders' (GNWP) participatory methodology for costing and budgeting of National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS[31] allows civil society - including local and national women peacebuilders- direct

30 Kantowitz, Riva, "Designing Efficient Financing for Peacebuilding: Financing Mechanisms to Support Local Peacebuilders", 2021.

31 Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, "No Money, No NAP: Manual for Costing and Budgeting National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325," 2017, https://gnwp.org/no-money-no-nap/

influence over funding priorities and budget of NAPs. The methodology consists of validating key activities and priorities of a plan, before breaking them down into specific costs needed for implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and mitigating potential security threats towards women. Member States should employ similar methodologies to inform their funding plans and strategies.

2. Practicing participatory grant-making. The GPPAC's Youth-By-Youth Small grants project is an example of participatory grant-making, which aims to involve young peacebuilders in the decision on fund disbursement. GPPAC's Youth Peace and Security Working Group – composed of young peacebuilders – aids development of the YPS Small Grants scheme to support other young actors.[32] Having youth take the lead on this scheme ensured that the priorities of young peacebuilders were prioritised, support was provided to strengthen applications, and the peacebuilders were able to better understand the requirements and develop flexible models of donorship.

3. Including civil society on the WPHF's board. The Funding Board of Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) serves as a guiding and supervisory body of the Fund and is composed of four UN entities, four civil society organisations and the four largest government donors. This composition allows civil society to directly influence funding priorities and decisions and provides a relevant forum for coordination on policy issues.

Recommendations

• **Donors should adopt participatory and transparent approaches to developing their peacebuilding financing plans and strategies**. This can be done by consulting with underrepresented parties such as women and youth-led organisations on priority themes and regions to ensure diverse voices are heard in order to create specific funding goals to inform policy.

• **Donors should include diverse women peacebuilders and their networks on governance, advisory, funding and review boards and committees.** This enables fund managers to better understand the experiences of civil society with the fund and adjust the requirements accordingly. Member states should prioritise incorporating civil society input during NAP planning and financing stages to inform their funding plans and strategies.

• **Donors should invite women and youth peacebuilders to participate in donor conferences** and ensure that there are clear channels for meaningful participation which allow for a more complete understanding of early warnings of conflict and thus bolster response mechanisms and higher effectiveness of peacebuilding financing.

5. Investing in long-term approaches to peacebuilding through flexible funding and locally-informed measurement of success

The focus on short-term outputs over long-term transformation leads to the "projectisation" of peacebuilding work and creates unreasonably high expectations for short-term results. When peacebuilders are forced to rely solely on funds dedicated to specific programmes, they cannot respond to changing needs on the ground. Even longer-term project funding is often not sufficiently flexible, making it difficult for peacebuilders to generate and sustain impact. Competition for

32 GPPAC, "Best Practices in Financing for Peacebuilding: A Funding Stream for Youth by Youth," October 2020, https://www.gppac.net/news/best-practices-financing-peacebuilding-funding-stream-youth-youth

limited funds, coupled with the need to regularly report outcomes using standardised indicators, incentivises the inflation of reported results. Core funding and operational support, which would allow organisations to better respond and adapt to situations and develop long-term approaches, is insufficient. Donors also want to fund as many organisations as possible, leading to fragmentation, instead of providing core funding to coalitions and networks.

The donor community can reshape their approaches to focus on long-term peacebuilding strategies. Long-term approaches to women-led peacebuilding include flexible and core soft-earmarked funding for institutional and network strengthening, with adaptive monitoring and evaluation processes. Core funding and prioritisation of long-term outcomes allows peacebuilders to dynamically adapt to shifting priorities and exercise agency over funding while minimising dependency on donors.

Good Practices

1. Flexible donorship in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The increased donor flexibility in the times of COVID-19 - for example, by allowing budgetary changes of up to 20% and changes in project outputs without prior approval - demonstrates that more flexible approaches to funding are possible. Kvinna till Kvinna – an intermediary-donor – provided flexibility and adaptability essential to respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Syrian organisations were able to adapt their work to address the diverse situations of women.[33] The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) was able to use the flexibility of some of its donors to support women peacebuilders in Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, the Philippines, South Sudan and Uganda to address their communities' urgent humanitarian needs (e.g. by distributing dignity kits to) and address community tensions (by disseminating messages of peace and organising awareness campaigns). During the COVID-19 pandemic, MADRE contributed with flexible funding to support livelihoods and food security efforts, which included locally sourced food baskets in communities under curfew and lockdowns in Yemen, Syria, Philippines, Sudan, and Colombia, where women peacebuilders were playing a critical role as first responders.

2. Ensuring Funding that meets the needs of women peacebuilders. ICAN's IPF offers bridge funding during crisis situations (e.g., the COVID pandemic) which provides operational costs so the staff and organisation can stay afloat even when activities need to be suspended. The IPF also offers rapid response funding to enable protection and participation in peace processes or respond to other urgent situations (e.g., responding to security threats). As one example of flexible funding, the IPF supported the operational costs for a non-ICAN funded project which only gave enough funding for the activities but not for staff or other institutional needs. MADRE offers rapid response grants for defenders in high-risk contexts to respond to emergency situations, addressing digital or physical security, providing support to temporary relocation, medical and legal services, and campaigns to counter the backlash for their work. For example, this summer when hearing from partners in Afghanistan about the needs to support the safety and protection of women human rights defenders, journalists, activists and local leaders at risk, MADRE delivered urgent grants through Afghan Women's Survival's Fund, which allowed them to provide shelter, find escape routes, and document crimes.

33 Kvinna till Kvinna, "A Covid-19 snapshot", 2020, https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/A-Covid-19-Snapshot-by-Kvinna-till-Kvinna.pdf

Recommendations

• **Donors should use the most flexible funding instruments and modalities available** when funding women peacebuilders, including soft earmarking and flexibility on output and budget changes.

• **Donors should prioritise long-term support and core funding whenever possible,** especially to women-led and locally-based organisations and networks. Institutional strengthening should be prioritised, including enhancing skills and capacity to collect data and analyse results.

• **Donors should support adaptive monitoring and evaluation processes, including community-led determination of impact** and encourage clear and realistic goals. This includes basing measures of success for peacebuilding programmes on the local expertise of funding recipients, using non-indicator-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies, prioritising and investing in programmes that have a structured way of learning by doing, and conducting "ripple-effect" evaluations which involve returning to understand long-term impacts.

6. Dedicating funding for protection needs of women peacebuilders

Women peacebuilders face a complex matrix of risks and targeted threats to their physical, emotional, political, economic, and spiritual health and safety.[34] Threats to women use gender roles and social norms against them, often through sexualised attacks. Women peacebuilders often engage with all actors involved in a conflict, and that poses particular security threats.[35] Despite this, there is no mention of peacebuilders or their protection as a group or of their needs in existing international and legal mechanisms, apart from the brief reference in the operational paragraph 6 of UNSC Resolution 2493.[36] Moreover, most of the time women's security needs are not acknowledged or guaranteed in peacebuilding programming and financing. It is crucial that all peacebuilding programmes include specific resources available for women peacebuilders to ensure their protection. This has never been more apparent than in the risks and threats currently faced by women peacebuilders in Afghanistan.

Good Practice

Ensuring flexibility of funding to allow protection of women peacebuilders. Following the coup and the deterioration of the security situation in Myanmar, GNWP was able to include a lump sum, flexible budget line to cover protection and security needs in its ongoing project in Myanmar, supported by Global Affairs Canada, Peace and Stabilisation Operations Program. The Protection and Security line is being used to rapidly disburse funds or provide support to women and youth peacebuilders, activists and human rights defenders, and LGBTQI persons, including those who face threats due to their work or identity. Should any of the funds not be needed for immediate protection needs, they will be used to increase resilience and support self-protection mechanisms of local women and youth peacebuilders - for example, by providing training on cyber-protection or supporting community-based early warning mechanisms.

34 International Civil Society Action Network, "Protecting Women Peacebuilders: The Front Lines of Sustainable Peace," October 2020, https://icanpeacework.org/2020/10/21/protecting-women-peacebuilders-the-front-lines-of-sustainable-peace/

35 International Civil Society Action Network, "Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking," October 2020, https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf

36 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2493 (S/RES/2493), 29 October 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/2493(2019)

Recommendations

• **The Peacebuilding Support Office and the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights should develop international guidelines to protect peacebuilders** that recognise specific needs of women and other groups.

• **Donors should invest in recognising the unique risks faced by peacebuilders, in particular women and youth.** As such, all peacebuilding program budgets include a contingency line to respond to emerging security threats. This line should amount to no less than 2% of the total project budget and should allow the recipient complete flexibility on how the funds are used.

• **Donors should review their disbursement of funds and contract modalities to ensure that they prioritise the safety, security, and independence of the recipient organisation.** For example, donors could allow for smaller tranches that ensure effective absorption of available funds to enable sustainable growth, functioning and planning. Donors should consult with women peacebuilders on what kind of flexible and sustainable funding mechanisms they need.

• **Donors should invest in Rapid Response Windows dedicated to the protection of women peacebuilders.** This support should come in the form of both financial grants and resources dedicated to rapid, emergency responses to emerging threats and in the form of long-term flexible funding for women's protection.[37]

37 International Civil Society Action Network, "Protecting Women Peacebuilders: The Front Lines of Sustainable Peace," October 2020, https://icanpeacework.org/2020/10/21/protecting-women-peacebuilders-the-front-lines-of-sustainable-peace/