



# **GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING NEXUS CSPPS BRIEFING PAPER**

**SEPTEMBER 2024**

## ABOUT CSPPS

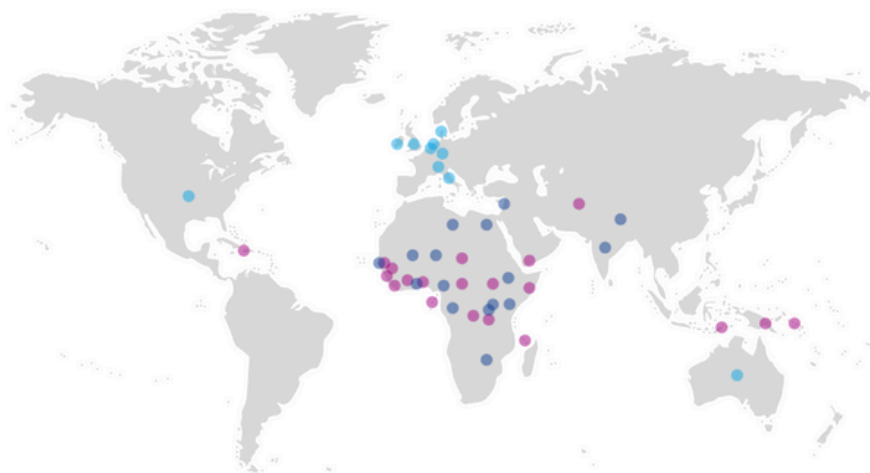
CSPPS brings together a diverse representation of civil society globally, both from countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence, and international civil society organisations working on issues of peacebuilding, statebuilding, conflict prevention and development at national, regional and global levels. CSPPS supports in-country interventions to amplify the voice of civil society in political dialogue and related policy processes.

At the global level, CSPPS is representing civil society in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), a strategic tripartite partnership for political dialogue gathering civil society actors, governments from the g7+ group, and donors represented by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF).

## ABOUT CSPPS BRIEFING PAPERS

CSPPS is developing briefing papers on various themes interlinked to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. These include Gender Equality, Climate Change, Food Security and Poverty, Migration & forced displacement, COVID-19 and its persistent consequences, Digitalisation, Youth, Peace & Security, Civic Space, and Inclusion.

The aim is to give a general introduction how peacebuilding and conflict prevention are interconnected and interdependent to these various themes, but most importantly to demonstrate the multifaceted and diverse work of the various CSPPS members, as well as their expertise and insights on how these interlinkages play out in practice.



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# ADDRESSING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA



## THE WPS AGENDA

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda, is an outcome of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.\* Following this first resolution, nine other resolutions have been adopted, addressing a unique concern regarding the protection of women and girls during conflict, and their participation in decision-making processes. Together, they form the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS).

The WPS Agenda is a policy framework that recognises the need to adopt a gender perspective in peace and security

issues, not only to improve the situation of women but also to respond to these issues more effectively and sustainably.

The WPS Agenda rests on four pillars:

- Prevention
- Participation
- Protection
- Relief & Recovery

Member States of the United Nations are encouraged to implement a national plan to continue the efforts undertaken to achieve the objectives of the WPS agenda.


### \* WHAT IS THE UNSCR 1325?

On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted the resolution S/RES/1325 'Women, Peace and Security'. This resolution commits countries to taking the necessary precautions and measures to protect women from the inordinate consequences of conflicts and post-conflict situations. It also promotes the value of a gendered approach by ensuring the inclusion of women in all aspects of peace processes, conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

*« Missing the gender-peacebuilding nexus is failing to recognize women's role in peacebuilding, missing out on multiple innovative ways in which women around the world can make real impact with their visions of peace. When women are neglected, peace won't last longer as is evident in the case of Afghanistan. »*

*Ajmal Ramyar, Afghans for Progressive Thinking [Afghanistan].*

# HOW IS PEACEBUILDING RELATED TO GENDER?



*The consequences that people face due to conflict are strongly influenced by gender and the conflict dynamics of pre- and in-conflict society. In addition, gender dynamics influence inclusivity in peace processes, which in turn influences the strength and resilience of post-conflict agreements. Furthermore, women are often involved in informal peace processes and informally participate in reweaving the social fabric during peacebuilding efforts. Integrating gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding will help highlight and formalise their role, empower them to shape their country's future, and address the structural inequalities which fuel conflict.*

## THE INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN GENDER AND CONFLICT

- GENDER INEQUALITIES AND CONFLICT: A POSITIVE CORRELATION

Conceptualisations of gender cement inequalities and, in doing so, drive conflict. A number of research findings have revealed the correlation between gender inequality and violent conflict. Researcher Mary Caprioli has shown that societies with consistently high levels of inequality between men and women are at greater risk of intra-state conflict. She explains this by saying that the presence of high levels of gender inequality in a state reflects weaker institutions and a reduced capacity to manage social conflict (Caprioli, 2003).

### 1) The masculinisation of war

The role of socialisation in the construction of the norms defining each gender needs to be grasped to understand how war is linked to gender dynamics. Though the notion of gender is often associated with women, in reality, it also refers to men.

Under the patriarchal system, girls are taught to be kind, gentle and empathetic, and are seen as less likely to use force. Boys, on the other hand, are expected not to show their emotions or any form of vulnerability and they often assimilate violence as part of the male identity. These differences impact how each gender is perceived in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Addressing the gender-peacebuilding nexus therefore means seeking to deconstruct the universal male experience of war, in which women are portrayed as victims and vulnerable groups and men as perpetrators of violence.



## **2) Disproportionate consequences**

Men and women do not share a universal experience of conflict as some consequences are disproportionately specific to women, and the impact of war and violence on each gender is not the same. Some consequences of war, such as sexual violence, are disproportionately specific to women.

Whilst the military nature of men's involvement in conflict exposes them directly to physical violence, women suffer more from the ensuing, indirect consequences of war. They are charged with the responsibility of supporting their families in unstable environments, leading them to face malnutrition, poor access to vital services and many other challenges. One such is the rejection that they, and the children born of forced unions, regularly face in post-conflict society, forcing women to deal with the emotional and financial strains.

In many conflict and post-conflict situations, women find no other resort than prostitution to gain economic resources for themselves and their children. Additionally, the financial strain that conflict puts on families, can lead them to force girls and young women into marriage to relieve some economic pressure.

## **3) Gender inequality and the economic system of war**

To understand the causal link between gender inequalities and the economic system of war (e.g. funding for armed groups), it is important to note that gender inequalities, combined with social and economic inequalities make women particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse.

The exploitation and inequality of women then become an essential income to the war economy and disincentive a post-war economic system of equality. For example, belligerents often create sex trafficking networks, of which women and young girls are the frequent victims, and exploit women for "domestic work" such as cooking and health work. This commodification of women perpetuates cycles of violence and creates a type of psychological violence which is often left unaddressed after the conflict. Furthermore, women often face stigma and ostracisation when bearing children of forced unions and sexual assault, and are left to raise children without communitarian or financial support.

The economic inequalities resulting from the war economic system, make women particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse, be it in the after-conflict context or in the case of conflict recurrence.

#### **4) Sexual violence as a war tool**

Sexual violence, such as rape, is frequently used as a weapon in conflicts and occurs in genocide and ethnic cleansing. A report by the UN Secretary-General in April 2022\* states that 97% of victims of sexual violence in conflict are women. In many conflicts, rape is used as an instrument of war not only to humiliate communities but to destroy their social fabric thus allowing armed groups to destabilise and weaken populations. Creating a climate of fear eases armed groups' ability to control the population and prevent resistance. Among the ten resolutions that make up the WPS agenda, resolution 2467 - proposed by Germany in 2019 to the UN Security Council - was adopted on the weaponisation of sexual violence in conflict situations.

In addition to the serious physical and psychological consequences, sexual violence is a real burden for women in many post-conflict societies. In some communities, rape is seen as humiliation and can lead to a woman's exclusion from her community. Thus, the social consequences of sexual violence make women more vulnerable than men to poverty and social exclusion in societies affected by conflict, partly as a result of sexual violence.

#### **5) Increasing violence against women**

Another indirect effect of conflict on women is the militarisation of masculinity. Conflict tends to associate men's masculine identity with violence, which can exacerbate the pre-existing systematisation and normalisation of domestic violence. Studies have shown increases in domestic violence against women in the aftermath of conflict. This can partly be explained by the fact that the militarisation of men leads them to characterise their masculine identity through violence, and it is, therefore, important to deconstruct the notion of masculinity as associated with violence and support men in the transition to peace.

By nature, civil conflict leads to a weakening of the state system and the rule of law, leaving many women vulnerable to the pre-existing dynamics of affected societies and the normalisation of violence in conflict can lead to a more fragile reconstruction of legal protections for domestic violence.

This double violence in the public and private spheres exacerbates the psychological and physical consequences women face both in and after conflict.

# WHY IS GENDER-SENSITIVITY RELEVANT TO PEACEBUILDING?

*Gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding efforts is imperative for several reasons, including recognising women's needs but also their contribution to peace processes.*

## ACKNOWLEDGING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE AND NEEDS

### ADDRESSING THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF WOMEN

Ignoring women's experience in wartime amounts to ignoring their needs in the post-conflict period. In conflict situations, as well as in the aftermath, women have specific needs, for instance, concerning Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights. Again, it is important to acknowledge that women have different experiences of conflicts and are disproportionately affected by their consequences, to ensure that their needs and interests are considered in peacebuilding and post-conflict situations.

#### ► Acknowledging women combatants

Due to the masculinisation of war, women are less often seen as perpetrators of violence and their needs as such are not taken into account. This is particularly evident in post-conflict situations and reintegration programmes where militarised women are very often absent because they are not thought of as combatants. This shows the importance of gender sensitivity in peacebuilding.

As part of the drive to build more peaceful and sustainable societies, the United Nations has set up disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes. These programmes aim to facilitate the reintegration of combatants into society but also to create a sustainable social and political environment to facilitate peace processes. However, these programmes are still too far removed from a realistic gendered view of war, and women's participation is little. In addition to making it difficult for women to access these programmes, they can also be counter-productive by contributing to their marginalisation and reinforcing gender stereotypes, rather than empowering their emancipation. These are also places where women can come face to face with sexual and gender-based violence.

This example highlights how important it is to take account of the gender dimension in conflicts and peacebuilding so responses are gender-sensitive and meet the needs of all people.



# THE UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

## • Recognising women as agents of change

### ***Beyond victimhood***

One of the first observations of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda is that women are largely absent from conflict resolution and peace processes. The patriarchal structures of the international system have made it difficult for them to assert themselves in the formal aspects of peace processes, from which they have long been excluded. Yet, women are agents of social change who can have a unique impact when they contribute to conflict prevention and resolution. One of the aims of the WPS Agenda is to overcome the victim status associated with women so they are seen first and foremost as agents of change and partners.

Peace processes must integrate a gender dimension and include women as peacemakers. The equal involvement of women in the shaping of peace processes has been shown to improve the overall outcomes of such processes, leading to more comprehensive and lasting peace agreements.

The inclusion of women into peacebuilding efforts should not be confused with the 'add women and stir' approach, which simply involves including women in peace processes without fully incorporating their perspectives, needs, or contributions into the peacebuilding strategy.

*« While the inclusion of women is crucial, merely adding women to decision-making bodies without ensuring they have a meaningful voice can be superficial and ineffective. The "add women and stir" approach risks treating women's involvement as a checkbox rather than recognizing the substantive value they bring to peacebuilding. »*

*Sara Jouhari, SC4PS [Italy]*

### ***Defining Peace***

In general, peace can be defined as the absence of violence. However, because their experience of conflict is not the same, women and men often have different perceptions of what peace means. For women, the definition of peace goes far beyond the simple cessation of hostilities.

Whereas men's experience of war tends to be within the dimension of combat, women's experience is characterised by violence on multiple dimensions. As a consequence, their conception of peace is focused on multiple levels. Their exposure to sexual, psychological, economic, and social violence, both in conflict and in post-conflict situations shapes a definition of peace which creates social dynamics of equality in all aspects of life in society.

## ***Making Peace***

Women's experience of marginalisation and subordination fosters their ability to deal with the consequences of violence and to transcend divisions. For instance, because women are taught to be more empathetic, more sensitive and less prone to violence, they have a unique insight into areas such as social cohesion, rebuilding communities and addressing the needs of marginalised groups. In addition, gender role expectations give women a higher level of credibility and acceptance to engage in peace and reconciliation processes. Fostering trust and dialogue among conflicted communities is an impactful way women can contribute to creating an environment conducive to sustainable peace.

Another reason why women are a unique asset to peace processes is that they acknowledge the importance and the need to address neglected aspects. This can be in the treatment of victims but also encourage trust and dialogue between diverse communities. They give attention to groups which are often marginalised and neglected in peacebuilding, but essential to the development of lasting peace.

Women's involvement in peace processes goes beyond representation in negotiation forums. It is primarily about recognising the importance of marginalized communities and civil society, along with the necessity for societal transformation, to establish the foundation for sustainable peace.

## **• Include Gender Mainstreaming in Peacebuilding**

### ***Conducting Gender-sensitive analysis***

Peacebuilding activities should include gender-sensitive analysis to ensure that peacebuilding efforts are gender-responsive and take women's needs into account when developing and implementing peacebuilding programmes. They should also make sure that these programmes do not harm women and girls by exacerbating existing inequalities.

### ***Considering intersectionality***

Just as it's crucial to understand that men and women experience conflict differently, it is essential to recognise that women's experiences aren't homogenous. Intersectionality highlights how gender discrimination intersects with other forms of discrimination like race, age, religion, ethnicity, etc. Considering intersectionality in peacebuilding initiatives ensures that the most marginalised groups among women are not overlooked, making the efforts fully inclusive and effective.

### ***Gender-transformative approaches***

Gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding should not be limited to the adoption of gender-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches, but should also adopt a gender-transformative approach, which aims to tackle the root causes of inequality and shift power relations. In the field of peacebuilding, this means that gender must be recognised as a driver of conflict. It also means that political actions must be undertaken. Not only must the Women, Peace and Security Agenda be promoted, but it should also be implemented.

### ***Context-sensitivity***

Before attempting to shift power dynamics, particularly when it comes to gender, it is essential to be aware of the context. Factors such as culture, tradition, and religion must be carefully examined and considered. Gender holds significant importance in many communities and societies, making it resistant to change. In such cases, embracing a transformative approach to peacebuilding can do more harm than good. Therefore, it is vital to support initiatives led by local communities and collaborate with individuals who are familiar with these complexities.

# HOW DOES CSPPS ENGAGE IN THE GENDER-PEACEBUILDING NEXUS

*As part of our drive for more sustainable, just and inclusive societies, gender equality is an important focus area for CSPPS. At both the secretariat and member level, we are committed to promoting and including the gender dimension in peacebuilding efforts.*

## AMPLIFYING

### STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY AND VOICE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

CSPPS strives to enhance civil society's capacity and amplify its voice and impact. By engaging in diverse initiatives, CSPPS empowers organisations with essential skills and resources, enabling them to contribute in policy development and advocacy. Among the peacebuilding organisations CSPPS collaborates with, several are committed to addressing gender-related concerns. Capacity-building and strengthening activities, such as peer-to-peer learning, are organised, and awareness campaigns are conducted to inform stakeholders about the need to adopt gender mainstreaming initiatives .

CSPPS also crafts declarations, statements and resolutions to express common objectives and demands. In the 2024 CSPPS Berlin Declaration, as well as in the Rome 2024 Civil Society Declaration, we expressed our concern about the backlash against women's rights and stressed the linkages between gender and ongoing crises, reiterating the need for greater policy coherence. In addition, to ensure representation in global discussions, CSPPS representatives regularly take part in international events.

CSPPS frequently publishes and shares success stories to enhance the voice and impact of civil society actors working for more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and recognise the importance of addressing gender issues. The publication of these stories contributes to a broader understanding of the critical role gender equality plays in achieving sustainable peace and development. For example, the article by CSPPS member [Rayons de Soleil in Cameroon](#), focuses on the verifiable and essential impact which the inclusion of women and girls in peacebuilding can make in establishing sustainable peace. This initiative aims to inspire other stakeholders to advocate for policies that support gender mainstreaming. The articles 'Empowering Women Against Online Violence' and 'Réseau Femmes et Paix: a new impetus for gender equality in Burundi', available on our website, showcase CSPPS's commitment to empowering women peacebuilders, amplifying their voices, and promoting their active participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

## LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY PLATFORMS

Lobbying and policy outreach is a key element of CSPPS' activities. The CSPPS provides its members with lobbying and advocacy platforms where possible and needed, to amplify the voice and agency of women peacebuilders but also to support their meaningful engagement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. This commitment ensures that the perspectives and needs of women are heard and integrated into policy decisions and peace processes.

CSPPS is one of the constituencies that form the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS). The dialogue serves as an opportunity for lobbying and advocacy activities within the policy space of peacebuilding and statebuilding. CSPPS collaborates with IDPS partners and assists its civil society members in attending significant political dialogues, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of local CSOs are consistently heard and represented in related policy procedures. Advancing gender equality and the WPS Agenda were identified as thematic priorities of the IDPS' work. As a result, a Women Peace and Security Advisory Group was created within the IDPS in July 2023, with the task of developing and implementing the roll-out of follow-up work on this thematic priority.

Since January 2024, CSPPS has also been in partnership with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This partnership is crucial for CSPPS to enhance its focus on the intersection of peacebuilding and gender, as BMZ also dedicates itself to mainstream gender in peace initiatives. Additionally, the German government is among the countries that have adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy. The political commitment of Germany highlights the importance of women's roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding and seeks to ensure that their voices are heard and their rights are protected. This partnership increases CSPPS opportunities for advocacy and lobbying efforts. The collaboration with Germany allows CSPPS to leverage their political influence and commitment to feminist principles to drive meaningful change. Cooperating with BMZ allows the CSPPS to raise its voice collectively and advocate for policies that support, safeguard, and empower women globally. By leveraging this partnership, CSPPS can amplify its influence on policy-making processes and drive impactful change in international development agendas.



# NETWORKING

## ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

As a global network of civil society actors that promotes peacebuilding and statebuilding, networking is one of the main activities of the CSPPS. Our membership is made up of civil society organisations that are involved in peacebuilding and statebuilding activities, many of which have gender equality as the main thematic focus and have direct engagement in the Gender and Peacebuilding Nexus.

## NETWORKING WITH PEACEBUILDING STAKEHOLDERS

Furthermore, the CSPPS actively collaborates with international organizations, governments, and civil society groups to create a broad coalition that supports gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding. CSPPS' network thus offers strategic access to key networks and events where discussions revolve around the Gender and Peacebuilding Nexus. Additionally, it provides grounded technical expertise and advocacy across various policymaking spheres. Engaging in this network provides opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, capacity development and resource acquisition.

The CSPPS is also part of the Just Future (JF) Alliance, a programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society to lobby and advocate for peace initiatives and to foster accountability. Women are one of the target groups benefiting from this programme. The JF Consortium seeks to promote the Women, Peace and Security Agenda across three outcome areas:

1. Access to Justice
2. People-centred Security
3. Inclusive Political Decision Making

The CSPPS is responsible for organising monthly Just Future Networking meetings. They are an occasion to share opportunities, and experiences, and to get to know each other better for a strong and consolidated wider network within the Just Future Alliance. One of our recent meetings focused on the implementation of the WPS Agenda across the three outcomes and exploring the linkages among three areas. The goal was to brainstorm how the Just Future consortium can contribute to the implementation of this agenda.

# EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

*CSPPS advocacy activities and efforts to amplify the voice of civil society involve promoting and highlighting the work of its membership. This section features the contributions of some of our members who are driving progress in the Gender and Peacebuilding Nexus. You will find examples of their work.*

## APT'S MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES & ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghans for Progressive Thinking helps youth reclaim their voices by providing them with Mentorship and Leadership programs to learn how to address the current barriers they are facing by writing articles and policy briefs and present recommendations for sustainable change and advocate for their rights. Their papers are then published and shared to further amplify their voices. This way, APT helps them pursue their individual potential to self-determination and encourage their active engagement in all areas of life.

Additionally, the regressive policies by the Taliban have had a severe impact on the well-being and mental health of young women in Afghanistan. Today, Afghan women grapple with trauma, anxiety, depression, and even contemplate suicide, feeling confined, isolated, and voiceless. In response, APT provides trauma healing sessions to help young women cope with the challenges and enable them to effectively continue their advocacy journeys



**[Read more about APT's work in our Storytelling Article 'Bringing Hope and Light to the Lives of Women and Youth Amid Darkness'.](#)**



**Example of APT's work:  
Creative writing, Afghan women advocating through narratives**

*This advocacy program launched by APT is centred on sharing the narratives and stories of Afghan women about their experience under the Taliban regime. Read the 2024 edition [here](#).*

# EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

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## P4DP'S INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS AND ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.



Observing that women are largely absent from decision-making processes and bodies in Liberia, The Platform for Dialogue and Peace designed the project *Platform for Women Empowerment and Next level*, which aims to recognise their importance in political participation but also to promote equal access to socio-economic opportunities. The foundation of this program was rooted in the belief that women's economic empowerment serves as a two-pronged approach, contributing to the enhancement of women's socio-economic and political participation.

The project strategically coordinated social and economic activities by providing training sessions, sharing experiences, and granting support to local Peace Mother Clubs. Women in the project's districts were empowered through livelihood activities, mentorship, and small grants allocated to six Peace Mother Clubs (PMCs).

The initiative also enhanced the knowledge of female political candidates by offering expert training, stakeholder dialogues, and consultations on election-related topics such as campaign planning, strategies, and monitoring compliance with Elections Law.

### **Embracing New Hopes in Liberia: P4DP's work to counter sexual and gender-based violence**

*Learn more about the project Mobile4Women, that was created to promote justice for women in Liberia by conducting research on women who are experiencing marginalization and SGBV. The project advocated for women's rights as well as aiming to enhance their access to justice through the use of audio-visual tools. You can read CSPPS article on the project [here](#).*

# EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

## ALDEPA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S ROLE IN PEACEBUILDING

Local Action for Participatory and Self-Managed Development is involved in the Platform of Women for Peace in Cameroon's initiative, which unites 70 women's organizations to showcase the pivotal role of women in peacebuilding in Cameroon. As a first activity, a national women's convention was held, mobilizing over 1,500 women from all regions. A peace declaration signed by the women was handed over to the government and other stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of involving women in all aspects of the country's peace processes. Additionally, the women conducted a peace negotiation simulation to demonstrate their skills to contribute to peacebuilding in Cameroon.

Further peacebuilding efforts have seen the establishment of a network of women community mediators who have been trained to act as peace ambassadors within their communities. These mediators focus on both conflict prevention and conflict management at community level. In terms of prevention, they work with young people to discourage recruitment by non-state armed groups.

## RÉSEAU FEMMES ET PAIX

RFP have been working on a project entitled "Bakenyezi, Dukenyerere Amahoro" or "Women, let's consolidate peace". The project relies on networks of women's associations from all walks of life to participate meaningfully in decision-making and political spheres. More specifically, seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of 6 networks of local women's associations, to enable them to operate and manage their associations effectively. Today, this network represents a total of 3,562 women, including both native and lifelong residents of Burundi, as well as repatriated and internally displaced women.

One of the goal of the project is also to increase the participation of women and young people in local, national and regional political dialogue and decision-making, with the aim of reinforcing institutional equality between men and women. Finally it seeks to transform discriminatory and harmful gender norms within households, with the aim of moving towards new approaches and mentalities more oriented towards gender equality. You can find out more about RFP in the CSPPS article dedicated to the organisation '[Réseau Femmes et Paix: a new impetus for gender equality in Burundi](#)'.





# EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

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## IIDA WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

This year marks the 34th anniversary of IIDA's work in Somalia, a country marked by decades of civil war and terrorism that led to the breakdown of social and legal structures that traditionally protected women, making them more vulnerable to violence. In addition, Somali society is deeply patriarchal and conservative, terms like "feminism" or "gender" often carry negative connotations, perceived as foreign concepts that threaten traditional values and social norms.

In this context, the gender-peacebuilding nexus is an essential pathway toward achieving sustainable peace. In this regard, for the last 34 years, IIDA has played a pivotal role in defending human rights, statebuilding, promoting conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and delivering humanitarian services.

Over the past decade, IIDA, through its Social Contract Building initiative, has partnered with the Federal Government of Somalia to enhance legislative inclusivity, accountability, and governance. As part of its 'Big Picture' strategy, IIDA has focused on strengthening relationships between Somali citizens and the state at various levels, while also building the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to actively engage in governance processes.

Through this strategy, IIDA has equipped policymakers, CSOs, and other duty bearers with the knowledge and skills to create inclusive policies that uphold the rights and dignity of Somali women and girls. Notable examples include supporting the development of the Somalia Women's Charter (2019), the National Disability Agency Act (Draft, 2019), the FRS Disability Bill (Draft, 2019), the FRS Sexual Offenses Bill (2018), and the Independent Human Rights Commission Law (2015). IIDA has also contributed to key legislation on health, education, migration, child rights, and the Federal FGM Bill.

IIDA's latest achievement is the passage of the first Anti-FGM law in Somalia, enacted in March 2024 by the State of Galmudug. IIDA played a central role in drafting the legislation and extensively lobbying for its passage, marking a significant step forward in the fight to eliminate the harmful practice of FGM in Somalia.

Furthermore, IIDA has integrated conflict management and peacebuilding into its initiatives by actively promoting reconciliation and addressing the root causes of conflict. Working closely with communities to reduce clan conflicts and create inclusive dialogues, IIDA has enabled communities to experience the peace dividends of sustainable development, build stronger local governance structures, and create lasting solutions to conflict that support long-term growth and prosperity.



# SDG16 + EXPLORING INTERLINKAGES

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Peacebuilding is intertwined with various factors, including gender, as well as climate change, health, food security, and poverty. This is highlighted by SDG16+, which acknowledges that to achieve SDG16, we must also focus on promoting other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Investing in the Gender and Peacebuilding Nexus will not be effective unless these other elements are also taken into account.

Just as conflicts tend to have a greater impact on women, many of the current crises primarily affect women and girls first. Issues such as pandemics, the climate crisis, and food scarcity disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, particularly women. What's more, these issues are also closely interlinked with conflicts and therefore peacebuilding. You will be able to learn more about these various interlinkages in our upcoming briefing papers.

## **Example 1:** *Gender, Peacebuilding & Health*

In conflict and post-conflict situations, the destruction, the closure of the health infrastructures, and in particular sexual and reproductive health services, is particularly problematic for women and girls. This often leads to an increase in unwanted pregnancies, maternal and infant mortality. Gender-transformative approaches to peacebuilding must recognize and consider the specific health needs of women and girls, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health rights.

## **Example 2:** *Gender, Peacebuilding & the Climate crisis*

Among those suffering the effects of the climate crisis, women and girls are at the forefront. Once again, women's primary exposure is the result of socio-economic inequalities and cultural factors originating from the patriarchal model. The patriarchal model has excluded women from decision making and on peace and security issues, but also from decision making on environmental issues. Tensions associated with climate change are increasingly likely to contribute to conflicts, which can further intensify women's vulnerability. These effects interact with each other and constitute the triple nexus.

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