

# Outcome Document from the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues Series on Innovative Solutions for Feminist Financing for Peacebuilding

July 2022

## Background and Context

The lack of *quality financing for peacebuilding* is a major challenge to sustainable peace. Quality financing is adequate, flexible, predictable, and sustainable financial mechanisms for local women peacebuilders who are the first responders to crises and best positioned to advance sustainable peace in their communities. Improving resources available to diverse women peacebuilders is critical in our current political context where the global economy continues to grapple with economic disruptions caused by COVID-19, as well as ongoing crises and conflicts. However, despite their crucial role in achieving inclusive and sustainable peace, women-led peacebuilding organizations and networks consistently lack access to adequate financing.

To support donor actions to create quality financing amidst this complex political landscape, 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) partnered to publish a background paper titled "Fund Us Like You Want Us to Win: Feminist Solutions for more Impactful Financing for Peacebuilding"<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, in collaboration with UN Women, the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact, and Member States champions, we hosted a series of roundtables. These discussions brought together diverse stakeholders, including Members States, civil society, UN actors, and international financial institutions, to explore concrete avenues to meaningfully support women-led peacebuilding work and develop feminist strategies towards quality financing for peacebuilding. The conversations demonstrated clear consensus among stakeholders that current funding systems can and need to change so that diverse women peacebuilders can deliver greater impacts at the local level.

## Key Priorities Moving Forward

Political will is required to shift the funding architecture in a way that places diverse women peacebuilders at the centre of peacebuilding action. Donors must partner with civil society to build quality financing mechanisms based on the following priorities, which evolved from our *Feminist Solutions* paper and the ensuing discussions:

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<sup>1</sup> 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), 2021, Fund Us Like You Want Us To Win: Feminist Solutions for more Impactful Financing for Peacebuilding Background Paper for the High-Level Meeting on Financing for Peacebuilding, accessible at: <https://gnwp.org/fund-us-like-you-want-us-to-win/>.

- **Ensuring that peacebuilding financing is feminist**

*For current peacebuilding financing structures to become feminist, we must address gender bias in financial mechanisms, foster relationships of trust between donors and women peacebuilders, and dedicate resources to explore mechanisms that better support diverse women peacebuilders.*

All peacebuilding financing should be feminist. This does not merely require increasing the amount of money going to women's organizations, but actually changing existing structures to be more feminist, which can be done by integrating the recommendations found in our *Feminist Solutions* paper. In addition, the adoption of a feminist foreign policies and gender-responsive budgeting, which inform development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian priorities of a country, can be effective in incorporating feminist analysis in budgeting and setting particular targets in existing financing mechanisms. Supporting feminist financing mechanisms will contribute to sustaining peace that is inclusive and based on equal rights and equal participation.

The conversation about shifting current mechanisms cannot be had without recognizing the limitations imposed by national laws. These often prioritize minimal transaction costs, high levels of accountability and oversight, and do not match the implicit challenges of funding in conflict contexts. Donors should build on good practices that exist to address these barriers. For example, the Netherlands merged funding for women's participation and gender equality into one funding window that supports the WPS NAP and sexual and reproductive health rights partnerships, which has allowed greater flexibility, including financing for emergency and protection needs. If amending restrictive national laws is not an option, donors should consider supporting pooled fund mechanisms managed by women's organizations and networks that prioritize support to local peacebuilding.

- **Increasing the quantity and quality of financing for women peacebuilders**

*Meaningfully supporting women peacebuilders entails scaling up existing resources for women-led peacebuilding work, allocating specific resources to support this work, as well as ensuring that women peacebuilders can utilize these resources as they see fit to advance the goals they see as relevant to achieve sustainable peace in their communities.*

The structural barriers that diverse women peacebuilders face when accessing resources relate to both the quantity and quality of available funding. *In terms of the quantity*, the main obstacle lies in the inadequate amount of funding that goes to women's organisations and the scarcity of direct funding allocated to women peacebuilders. Based on the most recent statistics, women's organizations are getting only 0.2% of ODA.<sup>2</sup> Recognizing women peacebuilders' work and providing direct and sustained funding is a prerequisite for them to develop institutional capacities and capitalize on their roles in advancing inclusive and sustainable peace<sup>3</sup>. This requires adopting indicators to assess the amount of funding that goes directly to women-led organizations, rather than only looking at gender-equality as a target.

*In terms of the quality*, analysing how existing resources benefit diverse women peacebuilders is required to reshape existing funding mechanisms and create new financing structures and approaches that could result in better accessibility of funds and more impactful action at the local level. Currently, women peacebuilders face various burdens, including complex application processes, lack of trust, the absence

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<sup>2</sup> *Supra* note 1.

<sup>3</sup> International Civil Society Action Network, "Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking," October 2020, accessible at: [https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN\\_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf](https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf).

of flexibility, and top-down relationships.<sup>4</sup> Our *Feminist Solutions* paper cites specific examples<sup>5</sup> of authentic partnerships between donors and local peacebuilders where the peacebuilding organizations have the autonomy and flexibility needed to adapt to changing contexts on the ground, build their institutional capacity, and maximize impact. Such practices need to be better understood and widely applied by donors.

- **Building relationships of trust between donors and women peacebuilders**

*Embracing trust and authentic partnerships with women peacebuilders includes supporting new and unregistered organizations, facilitating rapid response windows for emerging needs, and engaging civil society in donor strategy development. Donors must consult with local women peacebuilders in the development, monitoring, and assessment of their financing strategies.*

The belief that local organizations are “risky” has severe impacts on the types of funding they receive.<sup>6</sup> As addressed in our *Feminist Solutions* paper, the possibility of corruption or misappropriation of funds is small,<sup>7</sup> yet women peacebuilders carry the largest burdens of risk. This is compounded by the fact that women peacebuilders need to manage demanding donor requirements regarding proposal, implementation, and reporting processes.

The donor community must explore avenues for building trust. There are several steps the donors should consider. First, they should support emerging women’s peacebuilding organizations. For example, Kvinna Till Kvinna emerged as a result of the trust bestowed upon them by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to support local women peacebuilders during the 1990s war in the Balkans. As of today, this organisation is one of the leading feminist actors in the world. Partnerships with civil society can lead to impactful results when flexibility and trust are granted. Second, they should engage and consult women peacebuilders, such as inviting civil society to join advisory boards and selection committees, to set achievable targets and shape funding priorities. Some bilateral donors, such as Canada, have also been re-assessing their programming to ensure that it meets the needs of women peacebuilders, and builds on their local knowledge and skills as a starting point.

- **Earmarking peacebuilding allocations across the peace-development-humanitarian nexus (the Triple Nexus)**

*At no point across the conflict cycle should peacebuilding resources be diminished. On the contrary, donors should scale up peacebuilding resources and demand the integration of conflict-sensitive analysis across all actions aimed at prevention, de-escalation, humanitarian support, and restoration of peace.*

In times of crisis, sustainable funding for diverse women peacebuilders is often disrupted as donors shift priorities to emerging crises and new humanitarian needs, as was witnessed during COVID-19, after the Taliban takeover of power in Afghanistan, and the Russian invasion in Ukraine. In each case, women peacebuilders were the first to respond. As such, women peacebuilders require uninterrupted peacebuilding funding, as well as the flexibility and trust to enable them to evolve with their community, so they can provide conflict-sensitive humanitarian and development support where and when needed. To achieve inclusive and sustainable peace, funding mechanisms and donors’ expectations should be

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<sup>4</sup> *Supra* note 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Supra* note 1. See also, GPPAC, 2020, Best Practices in Financing for Peacebuilding: A Funding Stream for Youth by Youth, accessible at: <https://gppac.net/resources/youth-and-youth-re-imagining-financing-peacebuilding>. The Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) also finds avenues to support first-time recipients of UN funding, demonstrating that changing existing funding mechanisms within the UN system is also possible.

<sup>6</sup> Bognon, France and Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. “Funding Women Peacebuilders: Dismantling Barriers to Peace”, 2020, accessible at: <https://icanpeacework.org/2020/11/funding-women-peacebuilders-dismantling-barriers-to-peace/>.

<sup>7</sup> *Supra* note 1.

flexible, minimize bureaucratic burdens, and integrate the Triple Nexus approach that links peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian actions across the conflict cycle.<sup>8</sup>

- **Promoting coordination among existing donors and funding mechanisms**

*In the spirit of good peacebuilding financing, donors should advance mutual collaboration to maximize synergies, minimize duplication, and ensure policy coherence.*

The global peacebuilding financing architecture includes a multiplicity of funding mechanisms, such as bilateral investments and global- and country-level pooled funds. However, these mechanisms have limited coordination processes to evaluate their own complementarity, assess the possibilities for duplication, identify the gaps, and facilitate learning and exchange of good practices. There is clear consensus around the need for better donor coordination to maximize support to local women peacebuilding organizations and ensure more impactful use of resources at the local level. Ongoing processes that could help facilitate better donor coordination include the WPS-HA Compact<sup>9</sup> and the Alliance for Feminist Movements.<sup>10</sup> Through the Good Peacebuilding Financing<sup>11</sup> initiative, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has convened a group of donors to revisit the principles and practices of financing for peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) could also provide a useful platform for coordination among donors and mutual support in the effective implementation of the WPS Agenda and other financial commitments.

## **Conclusion**

The donor community cannot change the peacebuilding funding landscape alone. Building on the momentum created by the High-Level Meeting and the renewed attention of the international community to financing for local peacebuilding, we will use the findings from the roundtables to explore and advocate for innovative solutions for feminist financing for peacebuilding. Together with donors, UN partners and civil society, we can realize the above priorities, and ensure that existing mechanisms reduce duplication and maximize impact. The process will be locally rooted in the priorities of women-led peacebuilding organizations.

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<sup>8</sup> GPPAC, Operationalising the Peace-Development-Humanitarian Nexus through the Boe Declaration in the Pacific, 2018, accessible at: <https://gppac.net/resources/operationalising-peace-development-humanitarian-nexus-through-boe-declaration-pacific>.

<sup>9</sup> More information about the WPS-HA Compact can be found at: <https://wpshcompact.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> More information about the Alliance can be found at: <https://www.awid.org/get-involved/request-proposals-global-alliance-sustainable-feminist-movements-strategic-planning>.

<sup>11</sup> NYU Center for International Cooperation, 2022, Good Peacebuilding Financing, accessible at: <https://cic.nyu.edu/programs/subprograms/good-peacebuilding-financing>.