

The WPHF Global Learning Hub (L-HUB) Concept Note

Background

The [Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund](#) (WPHF) is a global partnership mobilizing critical financing for local women-led and women's rights organizations to prevent conflict and sexual and gender-based violence, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities in fragile settings. Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has established itself as a highly relevant and credible multi-partner trust fund, channeling urgently needed support to over 200 local civil-society organizations (CSOs) working on women, peace and security and humanitarian action (WPSHA) in 25 countries around the world.

In fulfillment of its mandate to serve as a global knowledge center for local CSOs working on the front lines of conflict and crises, the WPHF Secretariat in 2020 led the design and launch of a global community of practice - fostering a dynamic, innovative and collaborative online space for its CSO grantee partners. Designed, developed and implemented in pro-bono partnership with [Dell Technologies](#), the **WPHF Global Community of Practice (CoP)** enables local women peacebuilders and humanitarian activists from around the world to connect with each other, collaborate, strengthen their networks, share information and best practices, exchange experiences and deepen their skills and capacity.

The WPHF Global CoP constitutes the **WPHF Community (WPHF-C)** digital platform and the **WPHF Capacity Building & Peer Exchange Programmes**, whose processes and training curriculum are administered by the WPHF Secretariat at the global level. These global capacity building efforts are structured around various learning modules, articulating a range of training topics designed to enhance the institutional capacity of local CSOs working in crises-affected contexts, such as Results-Based Management, Data Collection, Strategic Planning, Communications and Resource Mobilization tactics. To complement and further these global efforts, WPHF National Steering Committees (NSC) in two active WPHF countries (Iraq and Colombia) have chosen to allocate WPHF funding to initiate pilot capacity building programmes at the national level, which have been designed and implemented by Management Entities for CSOs in consultation with the global WPHF Secretariat.

The WPHF Global Learning Hub (L-HUB) aims to accelerate the synergies, improve the coordination, enhance the quality and expand the availability of capacity building resources to **support the institutional development and sustainability** of local CSOs working on issues of women peace and security and humanitarian action. Tapping into and fostering the knowledge, skills and expertise of women peacebuilders and humanitarian activists from around the world, L-HUB will connect and multiply the impact of local women leaders who are driving transformative, community-led change.

With a **global community of practice encompassing 200+ civil society organizations**, and a widening **pool of grantee applicants in 25 crises-affected countries** around the world, WPHF is uniquely positioned to mobilize dedicated financing for and facilitate this global hub of knowledge and capacity development for local civil society actors in the field of WPSHA. WPHF plans to build upon its experience harnessing emerging technologies, deepening partnerships with the private sector, and applying its lessons learned in the realm of capacity building and knowledge product development for civil society on a global scale.

Rationale: Why a Global Learning Hub?

Local CSOs worldwide continue to struggle accessing **quality capacity development** and knowledge management tools and resources to support their institutional survival. This is especially true for the smallest organizations with limited access to quality financing. As evidence shows, investment in capacity building remains a priority for local women peacebuilders wanting to sharpen their skills in key areas such as project design, reporting and resource mobilization¹. The urgency to focus on capacity building for women who lack access, to advance the sharing of knowledge using technology and connectivity, while creating structures that amplify women's voices was recently highlighted at the World Humanitarian Forum².

Women's organizations benefit profoundly from **networking and knowledge sharing** with CSO peers tackling similar challenges from a broad range of contexts of conflict and humanitarian crises. When local women's organizations have meaningful access to opportunities for collaboration and quality capacity building tools

¹ See Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) blog "[Sustainable peace requires transformative action! What do local women peacebuilders have to say ahead of the 20th Anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security agenda?](#)".

² See World Humanitarian Forum 2020, [Outcome Report](#) p.106.

and resources, they are more adequately equipped to effectively influence decisions and participate in peacebuilding and economic recovery, prevent and resolve conflict, protect the rights of women and girls, contribute to an enabling environment for women peace and security commitments, and respond to humanitarian crises.

Additionally, developing strong **partnerships for knowledge production** is aligned with the UN Secretary General's 2020 Report on WPS calling for a "gender data revolution on WPS" that reaches policy makers and the general public³. Indeed, the stories of women's empowerment and resilience working in the face of crises are not visible enough, and the existing best practices, experiences and perspectives of local and grassroots women's organizations are insufficiently shared and under utilized. Enhancing coordination and communication of the strategies and lessons learned from local CSOs has proven to effectively facilitate the replication of impactful projects across countries and regions.

Local CSOs often produce and publish **research rooted in their unique contexts** and based on the lived realities and experiences of their communities. This knowledge is inherently valuable because it contains data and information that is often difficult to obtain in crises-affected areas. However, CSO-led knowledge products are too often ignored or overlooked because they lack appropriate dissemination and circulation among broad audiences. L-HUB will serve as a new source of data and evidence generation by effectively connecting concrete practice on the ground to research on a national and global scale, ensuring that local CSO contributions are adequately reflected in the circles of academic research and beyond. Widely **disseminating CSO-initiated knowledge products** among research entities has the potential to inspire a newfound collaboration between women's CSOs and academic entities, the outcomes of which may further nurture contributions to policy consultations and advocacy processes.

Alignment with the Goals of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

In fulfillment of its mandate to support local women's organizations to create more peaceful and gender equal societies, WPHF is committed to ensure the growth of its CoP to provide capacity building resources, knowledge products and peer exchange opportunities to women-led and women's rights CSOs (including active WPHF CSO grantees, CSO applicants that were unsuccessful in the proposal application process, and additional CSO and INGO actors). Against this backdrop, **WPHF L-HUB** will establish and serve a **broad global network of local women's civil society leaders**, leveraging their expertise to generate value and drive innovation in the thematic areas of gender-inclusive peacebuilding and humanitarian action.

Enhancing cooperation and coordination of women civil society leaders is especially critical in times of crisis when the work of their organizations is routinely underfunded, unacknowledged and deprioritized, issues made only more urgent by the COVID-19 global pandemic. By establishing a new window of dedicated financing to **invest more directly and intentionally in the institutional capacity, connection, innovation and collaboration of women CSOs**, WPHF will double down on its efforts to accelerate support for the work, knowledge and long-term sustainability of women working to respond to crises on the front lines and build lasting peace.

L-HUB contributes to the WPHF mission by marshalling women's exceptional capacity and uniting their voices to create a dynamic global community - transcending borders, language and cultural contexts - to unite their efforts under a universal vision of sustainable peace and gender-responsive humanitarian action. Strengthening the institutional capacity of local women peacebuilders and humanitarian activists, L-HUB will also help advance the goals of driving innovation, connection and community in line with the core pillars of the WPHF **1,000 Women Leaders** campaign, launching in March 2021.

Vision

The WPHF L-HUB makes women-led and women's rights CSOs stronger through mobilizing their **expertise and knowledge** at multiple levels: at the **individual** level (women peacebuilders and humanitarians will sharpen their abilities) and at the **organizational and community** level (new CSO alliances and consortiums will be formed to benefit underserved and marginalized communities). New evidence produced on women's challenges and opportunities will inform public dialogues and shape policy agendas at the **global** level.

Objectives

The WPHF L-HUB aims to:

- Foster the capacity building development and peer learning of local women's CSOs working in conflict and crises.
- Provide exchange opportunities to a wide pool of CSOs from around the world.

³ <https://undocs.org/en/S/2020/946>

- Promote strong relationships among women leaders pursuing common goals of peaceful and gender inclusive societies.
- Connect women’s CSOs to research entities and highlight their impact challenges, lessons-learned, best practices on the global stage.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced knowledge and understanding of the work and vital contributions of local women’s CSOs working in settings of conflict and crises.
- Strengthened relationships and enhanced solidarity among women’s CSOs working on WPSHA issues around the world.
- Increased empowerment of women’s CSOs and their capacity for engagement on critical issues reflected in new partnerships and coalitions at the global, national and local levels.
- Amplification of best practices and lessons learned from local to international levels.
- Wider dissemination and enhanced utilization of CSO knowledge products by research industry leaders, fostering deepened collaboration, communication and potential opportunities for financing.

Targets

Building on its current network of CSOs operating in 25 countries⁴ WPHF L-HUB targets:

- The current CSO members of the WPHF Global Community of Practice (210 at this writing), who have been regularly mobilized since June 2020 through a range of capacity building and peer exchange activities.
- Additional CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) beyond the WPHF active grantee network, including the pool of CSOs that were unsuccessful in their attempts to apply for prior WPHF financing.

Thematic areas

WPHF L-HUB will leverage a global movement of women CSO leaders and harness their community-led impact by focusing on the following five thematic areas:

1. Capacity Building

L-HUB will continue designing, developing and disseminating a wide range of capacity building resources and activities to enhance the institutional skills of local women’s CSOs. A series of custom-made modules and webinars will deal with substantial issues such as leadership, resource mobilization, results-based management and advocacy, which will be made available in multiple formats and languages. WPHF will leverage its broad network of board members, partners, artists, and private sector industry leaders to support the capacity development of CSOs in areas including but not limited to creative storytelling, data visualization and technology.

2. Peer Exchange Programme

L-HUB will further expand on WPHF efforts to leverage the multiple channels of WPHF-C (digital platform, social media and email exchange functions) to facilitate online exchange forums promoting knowledge transfer and capturing best practices from women’s CSOs operating in diverse regions and countries. The Peer Exchange Platforms constitute two primary components:

- **The WPHF Peer Exchange Sessions** that feature several CSOs in an online discussion to share their organizations’ experiences, impact, strategies, lessons learned and challenges on a specific topic related to a WPSHA issue.
- **The WPHF Knowledge Cafés** where a CSO presents a knowledge product resulting from their work. (e.g. purpose and context, scope, methodology, use of the results, etc.), showcasing the diversity of research products and allowing their peers to learn, exchange and cross pollinate on CSO challenges, strategies, best practices and results.

3. The L-HUB Global Convening

Once a year, the WPHF L-HUB will bring together around sixty CSOs from different continents to discuss their experiences and success stories and to reflect together on their concerns, priorities and perspectives to help influence the WPSHA agenda. The event will be an opportunity for local women peacebuilders and humanitarians to further define, articulate and advance their global agenda, building on the success of the first Global Women's Forum for Peace and Humanitarian Action held in Vienna in 2020. CSO participants will be selected among active WPHF grantees and participation costs of successful applicants will be covered.

⁴ Afghanistan, Burundi, Bangladesh, Colombia, DRC, Fiji, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Uganda, Palestine, Palau, PNG, RCA, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Ukraine, Vanuatu and Yemen.

One specific session of the Global Convening will engage participants of the **Mentorship Scheme** (see below) highlighting the results and benefits of their collaboration. In addition, a one-day forum during the Global Convening will promote a **dialogue with researchers** around the diversity of CSO-led knowledge products and increase their reach and uptake among academic audiences and research groups. Furthermore, **training workshops** providing techniques and tools on critical issues such as data collection and interpretation, or how to adopt a feminist and intersectional approach will be organized.

4. Mentorship Scheme

Each year 20 CSOs involved in L-HUB will have a chance to take part in a collaborative coaching programme. This Mentorship scheme will set up **ten one-to-one tandems of organizations willing to support each other by joining in a mentoring relationship**. The WPHF Secretariat will facilitate the identification of CSOs sharing similar interests and working in the same thematic domains, which would benefit from each other's advice and peer coaching. By simultaneously serving as both mentor and mentee, each CSO has the chance to create a long-term relationship built on trust and solidarity, while gaining new skills and knowledge in the process. The two CSOs will collaborate and exchange skills and advice to enhance mutually their effectiveness and institutional capacities in the long run.

Each tandem will elaborate an outline of their collaboration's goals and activities with a budget (e.g. 5,000\$ for each tandem). The funds related to the mentoring experience may be used to organize a field visit (one CSO representative goes to see how the other organization operates), as a fee for the organizations' staff members to provide technical support to the other CSO (for instance, to design a communication plan) or to develop a joint action (for example, an online advocacy campaign). Tandem members will be invited to share their learnings and the results and benefits of their collaboration during the above-mentioned Global Convening (or an online event if travel is not possible) at the end of the process.

5. Collaboration with Research Entities

L-HUB will develop **dialogue and knowledge sharing activities** involving women CSOs and research entities specializing in WPSHA issues. The knowledge dissemination activities will be held both online and in person during the above-mentioned Global Convening (health situation permitting), where a dedicated one-day forum dedicated to the collaboration between civil society actors and research centres will be spotlighted, and evidence on the experiences of women's CSOs in conflict and crisis contexts will be presented. A **training workshop** will also build the CSOs' capacity in the areas of developing research and systematizing data to generate strengthened knowledge for continued policy and advocacy for local women peacebuilders and humanitarian responders in crises contexts, arming them with tools to further their goals, acknowledge their work, amplify their voices and mobilize resources to support their critical work.

Strategic Partners

To attain its objectives, WPHF L-HUB will develop strategies to partner with governments, INGOs, private sector, academic and cultural leaders. Promoting networking with the academic sector (think tanks, research entities, universities) will support women's CSOs' access to knowledge, build their research capacities and lead to new types of partnership (e.g. joint research projects). Engaging with companies will provide technical and technological support in benefiting women's organizations (e.g. through pro-bono partnerships).