



FURTHERING WOMEN'S FULL AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION AMIDST A SHIFTING PEACEMAKING LANDSCAPE

IMPACTS AND TRENDS FROM THE
WPHF RAPID RESPONSE WINDOW



**Women's Peace &
Humanitarian Fund** 

A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership

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This study is a collaborative effort led by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) Rapid Response Window (RRW) Unit, in partnership with Inclusive Peace and RRW INGO partners, including CORDAID, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Conciliation Resources, and the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN).

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SUMMARY

This study highlights trends and the impact of women-led initiatives supported through the WPHF Rapid Response Window (RRW) to promote women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements. The RRW was established in response to a 2019 call from the UN Secretary-General, as well as requests from Women’s Rights Organizations (WROs) and women peacebuilders. This study examines how the RRW contributed to women’s involvement in Track 1 and Track 2 peace processes and peace agreements, documenting the diverse strategies and experiences of supported organizations. It highlights key trends in women’s participation in peace processes, persistent challenges, and lessons learned from the RRW pilot phase from September 2020 to September 2024. During its pilot phase, the RRW reviewed 1,343 proposals, supported 3,004 women in peace negotiations across 28 countries, and assisted 135 women’s rights organizations (WROs). Direct support reached 34,322 individuals, with over 305,400 benefiting indirectly. The RRW’s support has promoted sustainable peace by enhancing women’s involvement through knowledge building and access to key stakeholders. By promoting an intersectional approach, the RRW has strengthened women’s influence, in their diversity, in peace efforts. This support has also fostered intergenerational dialogue and local ownership of peace initiatives, demonstrating the program’s effectiveness in addressing gender dimensions in conflicts and peace negotiations.

The RRW pilot phase has revealed trends related to the efforts of local women’s rights organizations in peace processes. Women peacebuilders supported by the RRW have increasingly engaged in various thematic areas of the peace agenda, demonstrating that they do not focus solely on women’s rights or gender issues. They have influenced critical issues such as ceasefire agreements, disarmament, and transitional justice. For example, Mozambican women peacebuilders have successfully advocated for urgent ceasefires and played key roles in peace accords. In Sudan, extensive consultations and strategic support have led to significant collaborations and the creation of a “shadow peace agreement,” as well as shuttle diplomacy efforts, which are feeding into wider peacemaking efforts. Women in Syria, supported by the RRW, have engaged in high-level advocacy for missing persons, resulting in the establishment of a new UN mechanism. In Liberia, women’s groups have demanded government compliance with Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) commitments. These examples illustrate the impact of women’s efforts in promoting inclusivity and addressing broader socio-economic agendas, such as land reform in Colombia.

Women have also shown versatility in navigating between formal and informal mediation environments, often acting as “agents of transfer” to influence and support Track 1 negotiations. In DRC, women peacebuilders have developed an advocacy framework and engaged in peace negotiations, while in South Sudan, young women have been equipped with skills to contribute to local and national peace efforts. WROs often operate in highly repressive settings, experiencing conflicts or political crises, such as Afghanistan, CAR, DRC, Guatemala, OPT, South Sudan, Sudan, and Venezuela. RRW support has enabled WROs to better understand gender dimensions and power dynamics in these conflicts and their peace/political processes, as well as to adapt, continue, or resume their peace initiatives when crises arise.

However, despite these successful initiatives, women peacebuilders continue to face challenges. Long-standing patriarchal norms and volatile local security environments significantly hinder women’s participation in peace processes. These structural barriers, exacerbated by violence and increasing

complexity of peace processes and scarcity of formal tracks, make it challenging for women peacebuilders and WROs to influence peace initiatives. The RRW pilot phase underscored the need for innovative approaches to ensure women's influence as formal peace processes evolve. Flexibility and trust in WROs have been essential for navigating these challenging contexts.

The RRW has demonstrated that coalition building and networking among women increase their self-confidence and amplify their voices in peace processes. Initiatives supported by the RRW in countries like Cameroon, Colombia, DRC, and Venezuela have shown that coalition building helps women overcome long-standing disagreements and present a united front to influential stakeholders. These efforts have fostered trust and collaboration across diverse backgrounds and ideologies, enhancing the effectiveness of their peacebuilding work. Women have led initiatives to prioritize trauma healing and emotional well-being as key components of peace work, recognizing the importance of psychological support in breaking cycles of violence and fostering peace. Targeted support and training have significantly increased women's self-confidence and participation in peacemaking, as seen in Kyrgyzstan.

Looking ahead, the RRW plans to enter a second phase from October 2024 to December 2027, focusing on expanding support to WROs, enhancing youth participation, and increasing outreach in key regions. The program seeks approximately \$24.3 million for this period, aiming to support 100 short-term grants and 50 direct support projects. Continued support for the RRW is essential for sustaining and advancing its impactful work.

INTRODUCTION

In the face of increasing global instability marked by geopolitical shifts and fundamental questions pertaining to the efficacy of the international peace and security architecture, the need for innovation and creativity among traditional approaches to peacemaking and peacebuilding is paramount. Women's participation in peace efforts widen the scope not only of actors, but also of approaches to negotiation, dialogue, and mediation fostering a more comprehensive peace agenda.

Nearly 25 years after the adoption of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the world is experiencing a reversal of generational gains in women's rights while violent conflicts, military expenditures, military coups, mass displacements, and hunger continue to increase. In several countries, violent extremist groups, armed groups, and military actors have taken power by force, revoking previous commitments to gender equality, and persecuting women for speaking up or simply for going about their daily lives¹.

“ Women continue to face entrenched barriers to direct participation in peace and political processes, and women's organizations struggle to find resources while military spending continues to grow every year²”.

In peace processes, negotiating parties continue to regularly exclude women, and impunity for atrocities against women and girls is still prevalent.

As recognized by the UN Secretary-General in his Call to Action for Human Rights, concrete measures are needed to overcome longstanding barriers and fast-track women's direct participation in peace and political processes. This requires actively engaging women's groups and women-led civil society organizations, integrating gender in political and conflict analysis, and putting specific measures in place to ensure women's equality in these processes. Women's direct participation as mediators, negotiators, and signatories remains an exception despite repeated calls for change³. The political space for women to participate in decision-making on peace and security is decreasing⁴.

Women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all efforts to build sustainable peace is firmly rooted in the principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in the United Nations Charter and International Humanitarian and Human Rights law. This right is at the heart of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Advocating for and supporting targeted measures to advance women's direct participation is critical for advancing substantive equality and building inclusive and sustainable peace⁵.

Including women in peace processes in a diverse and meaningful way is not only a question of human rights and women's rights, but one of accountability and justice, key elements for sustainable peace. Engaging with and supporting women's civil society organizations is essential to increasing community buy-in, as well as bottom-up, inclusive decision-making processes to shift dynamics and broaden the issues discussed.

¹ UN Secretary General Women, Peace and Security Annual Report, October 2022, S/2022/740, p. 1.

² UN Secretary General Women, Peace and Security Annual Report, October 2022, S/2023/725, p. 1.

³ NGO Working Group 2023 Open Letter to Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in advance of the annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, 16 October 2023.

⁴ Peace Talks in Focus 2022. Report on Trends and Scenarios.

⁵ UN Secretary General Women, Peace and Security Annual Report, October 2023, S/2023/725, p. 2.

Research has emphasized how women’s involvement in peace processes as mediators, negotiators, or signatories can produce the following effects. Firstly, peace agreements are statistically more likely to materialise when women have access to and influence over formal negotiation processes.⁶ Further, gender-equal mediation teams correlate with more varied mediation strategies.⁷ Secondly, peace agreements that involve women as signatories are more likely to generate more sustainable and inclusive peace.⁸ Specifically, the probability of sustained peace after more than 20 years of peace following a peace agreement is 70 per cent higher if women signed the agreement. Also, peace agreements with women signatories have a higher implementation rate of provisions.⁹ Thirdly, peace agreements are more likely to contain gender provisions if women played a key role in Track 1 or Track 2 efforts to reach a negotiated settlement.¹⁰ Gender-inclusive peace agreements, in turn, have on average enhanced women’s political rights in the post-agreement phase.¹¹ These findings indicate the need to continue promoting women’s meaningful participation in peace processes. To generate significant change in this regard, it is important to address these challenges considering the global context.

To accelerate the implementation of this agenda, in October 2019, in his annual report on Women, Peace and Security,¹² the UN Secretary General called on the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)¹³ to open a Rapid Response Window (RRW) for women’s participation in peace processes.

Since its inception in 2020, the RRW has been uniquely positioned to support efforts both to advance women’s meaningful participation in existing peace processes, and to catalyse new approaches and new thinking in contexts where peacemaking efforts have stagnated or been stymied.

The paper takes stock of the changes and impacts generated by RRW’s support to local women’s rights organizations and women peacebuilders during its pilot phase from January 2020 to March 2024. It also highlights the various experiences, entry points, and strategies deployed by these organizations to participate and influence Track 1 and Track 2 peace processes, and the implementation of peace agreements. To do so, the paper builds on experiences from women’s rights organizations (WROs) and women peacebuilders.

We invite all stakeholders involved (Member States, international organizations, WROs, civil society, and women mediator networks, among others) to reflect on the gender architecture of peace processes and their implementation, as well as needs and lessons learned from investing in women’s strategies. This paper is also a relevant source for practitioners, think-tanks, and peace scholars working on peace processes and peacebuilding trends and alternative strategies developed by women to foster sustainable and inclusive peace.

⁶ O’Reilly et al. 2015; Paffenholz et al. 2016.

⁷ Kreutz and Cárdenas 2024.

⁸ UN Women, Christine Bell (2018) *Accessing Political Power: Women and Political Power-Sharing in Peace Processes* p.4; Similarly, one hundred studies indicate a link between sex and gender inequality and violent outcomes (Cohen and Karim, 2022).

⁹ Krause et al. 2018; see also Paffenholz et al. 2016.

¹⁰ Phelan and True 2022; True and Riveros-Morales 2019.

¹¹ Anderson and Swiss 2014; Reid 2021.

¹² UN Secretary General Women, Peace and Security Annual Report, 9 October 2019, S/2019/800, p. 37.

¹³ To address the financing gaps and create greater synergies between different financing sources to meet the needs of women across the humanitarian-development divide, a Women, Peace and Security Financing Discussion Group (FDG) was established in June 2014.



I. METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on a qualitative and participatory analysis that draws on WPHF and RRW reports, INGO partners¹⁴ reports, and publications related to RRW support, UN Secretary General (UNSG) reports on WPS, as well as peer-reviewed journal articles and academic literature. Further, the paper builds on interviews with representatives of WRO and women peacebuilders, and reports from bilateral calls between the RRW Unit and RRW partners¹⁵ during the implementation of their projects. Inclusive Peace, an RRW INGO partner, has supported the RRW unit in drafting this paper by conducting interviews of WROs and women peacebuilders, and providing analysis. Focal points of RRWs INGO partners have also been involved through bilateral interviews and group discussions.

Applying the Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology¹⁶ ensured that RRW civil society partners could shape the substance of the analysis presented in this paper. MSC is a qualitative, inclusive, and participatory approach which allows a more personal, direct, and accessible way of assessing change. It involves different stakeholders throughout the entire analysis process, from data collection to drafting conclusions. Specifically, partners of pilot-phase RRW support were invited to share their reflections and experiences. Women's stories collected in the interviews allow us to understand the impact of RRW's support work from their perspectives. Additionally, this paper provides a critical analysis of RRW interventions to identify key trends in the participation of local women in peace processes, as well as opportunities to support such initiatives during the next phase of the RRW.

¹⁴ The RRW is partnering with INGOs (CORDAID, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Conciliation Resources, Netherland Institute of Multiparty Democracy, International Civil Society Action Network, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) to swiftly identify the needs and type of support to be provided to WROs, and to support the implementation of successful RRW proposals through: management of grants for short-term grants; management of logistical arrangements for direct support; providing technical and strategic support; providing capacity-building, guidance, and support on knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting.

¹⁵ RRW partners include supported WROs and women peacebuilders, UN entities in supported countries, RRW INGO partners, WPHF Board members, and Members States supporting the RRW.

¹⁶ Lennie 2011.



II. CHALLENGES TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESSES

The RRW was launched in a global environment where women peacebuilders, particularly those from grassroots organizations, encounter myriad structural and contextual obstacles that undermine their participation in formal peace processes. These obstacles have manifestly increased over the course of the pilot phase, given the increasing incidence of violent conflict worldwide and the COVID-19 pandemic, which stalled many efforts to move peace-making forward. In multiple conflict settings, women's initiatives have challenged these obstacles and shown how the meaningful engagement of women in peacebuilding boosts prospects for sustainable peace.¹⁷ This section provides an overview of challenges to women's meaningful participation and strategies for tackling these obstacles.

II.1 Challenges to women's meaningful participation in peace efforts

Patriarchal norms and values continue to constitute a structural barrier to women's meaningful participation before, during, and after peace negotiations.¹⁸ While women experience ongoing exclusion and sidelining in peace processes, their mere attendance and representation during and after formal peace negotiations does not automatically equate to their meaningful participation therein.¹⁹ Women negotiation delegates often grapple with various forms of marginalisation that rest on patriarchal norms and behaviour. Peacemaking and peacebuilding spaces have been described as “cowboy clubs”, which function according to norms of patriarchal masculinities, encourage competition, and perpetuate top-down leadership.²⁰

Women's marginalisation has manifested in various ways under this persistent “male mediation model”, including, for example, men taking more time than women to talk during consultations or negotiations;²¹ reinforced patriarchal stereotypes of women not being fit to join formal negotiations to dismiss their

¹⁷ Antonia Porter, “Women, Gender, and Peacebuilding,” In Karbo, T. and Virk, K (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Peacebuilding in Africa*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 317-337, 2018.

¹⁸ See e.g., McAuliff 2022; Berry 2017.

¹⁹ See e.g., Ellerby 2016; Paffenholz et al. 2016; Turner 2020, p. 21.

²⁰ Porter and Riley 2021, p. 14; Rao and Kelleher 2005.

²¹ Kostovicova and Paskhalis 2021.

interventions;²² men excluding women negotiation delegates from informal decision-making processes;²³ and men limiting women’s formal decision-making power in peace negotiations and national dialogues.²⁴

Long-standing patriarchal norms and values that persist in times of peace and armed conflict perpetuate women’s marginalisation beyond the negotiation phase. Negotiating parties—typically dominated by men—have pursued various strategies to deliberately undermine the implementation of peace agreements’ gender provisions, and to exclude women during the implementation phase of peace agreements altogether. Conflict and peace researchers have coined this phenomenon “patriarchal backlash”.²⁵ Limited access to information regarding ongoing national peace or political transition processes has also contributed to perpetuating women’s exclusion from existing negotiation and implementation spaces.²⁶ Young and often marginalized women, like those living with disabilities, tend to encounter particularly severe social stigmas.²⁷

It is key to analyse the challenges with an intersectional lens. Women at the grassroots level have particularly faced additional barriers to take part in national or international peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. Many indigenous and rural women across different country contexts have a low level of education, lack language skills, and grapple with low income and economic dependence. A volatile local security situation often exacerbates the negative impact that those structural barriers have on local women’s capacity to shape Track 1 initiatives. Grassroots women peacebuilders and researchers have also identified challenges linked to the limited political will of stakeholders involved in the design and negotiations of peace processes,²⁸ including lack of coordination, communication, and consultation between local, national, regional, and global actors; insufficient funding for women-led grassroots organisations, which are often unaware of or struggle to complete complicated funding application processes; and the persistent neglect of women’s intersectional identities by different parties involved in peace processes.

Bureaucratic rules and procedures implemented by authoritarian governments have also limited women-led grassroots organisations’ activities. Further, grassroots women peacebuilders are not always made aware of existing national and global laws, normative frameworks, and action plans on women’s participation in peace processes, which are often not translated into local languages or are not applicable to local realities.²⁹

One of the persistent challenges for women’s participation is the assumption that their participation only concerns themes labelled as “women’s issues” and therefore, their perspectives and ideas about topics from feminist political economy, cessation of hostilities, or the democratic future of their countries are ignored.³⁰ In fact, women’s biggest contribution is bringing a gender lens and rights approach to the peace agenda as a whole.

These challenges are particularly pronounced in a global context where the frequency of armed conflicts have been on the rise since the early 1990s. In 2022, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) counted 56 armed conflicts that involved at least one state as a conflict party (“state-based conflicts”). This is an increase of at least 26% as compared to any year of the first decade of the 2000s. The global prevalence of armed conflict

²² Anderson and Golan 2023, p. 165.

²³ Paffenholz et al. 2016, pp. 24 and 39-40.

²⁴ Close 2018, p. 13.

²⁵ Berry 2017; Berry and Lake 2021; Close 2018; Zulver 2021; see also NIMD and WPHF 2023, p. 3; NIMD and WPHF 2023a.

²⁶ ACDD et al. 2023, pp. 1-2; ICAN 2024.

²⁷ Porter and Riley 2021, p. 8.

²⁸ GNWP et al. 2020; Cobar 2020, p. 7; Paalo 2022.

²⁹ GNWP et al. 2020.

³⁰ https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WILPF_UNSCR-1325-at-20-Years_Web.pdf

demonstrates the urgency of intensifying peace negotiations and peacebuilding initiatives.³¹ Where peace processes do exist, many are stymied by similar challenges relating to geopolitical dynamics, fragmentation, and proliferation of armed actors, exacerbated by the seemingly increasingly limited capacity of regional and multilateral bodies to advance peacemaking efforts. However, even where such efforts exist, the majority of mediators, negotiators, and signatories of peace agreement are men.³² Women's marginalisation in peace negotiations has contributed to the sidelining of gender issues in peace agreements.³³

Such peace efforts have been initiated by the United Nations. In 2022, women participated as conflict party negotiators or delegates in four of five active UN (co)led peace processes.⁸ However, their representation stood only at 16 per cent, a further drop compared to 19 per cent in 2021 and 23 per cent in 2020. Without active measures by the UN, this number would have been even lower. All five UN (co)led peace processes consulted substantively with women's civil society and were provided with gender expertise.³⁴ Despite these efforts, when processes were blocked or stalled, opportunities for inclusion were substantially restricted.³⁵

II.2 Addressing the challenges

Research highlights potential pathways towards addressing the barriers and challenges outlined above. Tangible actions that were identified include:

- ▷ Affording women the same opportunities as men to comment on and veto draft negotiation agendas and agreements;³⁶
- ▷ Combining gender quotas with other temporary special measures to increase women's influence;³⁷
- ▷ Facilitating networking and coalition building among women towards a coordinated agenda and advocacy strategy;³⁸
- ▷ Ensuring women's access to domestic and international political, financial, and technical support;³⁹
- ▷ An intersectional approach to women's participation that treats them as a heterogeneous group;
- ▷ Women's inclusion across all phases of a peace process, the establishment of dedicated gender commissions with a monitoring function, and a combination of participation modalities at the national and sub-national level are additional enablers of women's meaningful participation;⁴⁰
- ▷ Women's meaningful participation will materialise if cultures of masculinity that still permeate contemporary peacemaking and peacebuilding spaces end. Ensuring that women who are committed to transforming patriarchal power structures have influence over formal peace processes is important in this regard.

³¹ In the context of this paper, peace processes are understood as encompassing both the negotiation phase and the implementation phase of peace agreements.

³² Adjei 2019, p. 134; Council on Foreign Relations 2020.

³³ For example, between 2000 and 2016, only 49 per cent of peace agreements included gender provisions (see True and Riveros-Morales 2019, p. 28).

³⁴ These figures reflect data from before June 2023 and do not include subsequent peace talks led by the UN since then.

³⁵ UN Secretary General Women, Peace and Security Annual Report, October 2023, S/2023/725, p. 3.

³⁶ Auda and Liesch 2022; Bell and Turner 2020, p. 5.

³⁷ Poppelreuter et al. 2022; see also Laker 2010 as cited in Porter 2018, p. 323.

³⁸ See e.g., Anderson and Valade 2023; Eschmann and Nilsson 2023; Paffenholz et al. 2016; Phelan and True 2022; Porter and Riley 2021; GNWP et al. 2020.

³⁹ Auda and Liesch 2022; Paffenholz et al. 2016, p. 21.

⁴⁰ Bell and Turner 2020, p. 2; Close 2018; Hirblinger and Landau 2020; Salvesen and Nylander 2017; Santos 2021.

WROs have played an important role in enhancing women’s influence over peace processes. Tangible examples of WROs’ impactful support to women include: appointing women as mediators rather than states or international organisations, supporting women in coalition building, and advocating for peace processes and women’s inclusion therein.⁴¹ WROs, particularly those led by women, are therefore an important partner to engage in efforts to enhance women’s meaningful participation. This also applies to informal peacemaking and peacebuilding functions within women’s grassroots organisations, which are often undervalued.⁴²

While comparative evidence highlights the importance of WROs operating at different levels in promoting women’s meaningful participation, it took time for direct support mechanisms for WROs to materialise within the UN. The establishment of the RRW aims to contribute to addressing this persistent gap, with a particular focus on formal peace processes in Track 1 and 2, and the implementation of peace agreements.⁴³ This mechanism is specifically designed to offer strategic and urgent support to WROs and women peacebuilders operating in polarized, repressive, and violent environments, thereby enhancing their meaningful participation in peace processes. The following sections will delve into the RRW’s achievements, highlighting its impacts, challenges, opportunities, and future perspectives.

⁴¹ Aduda and Liesch 2022; Kreutz and Cárdenas 2024; Paffenholz et al. 2016, pp. 35-36 and 42.

⁴² Kezie-Nwoha and Were 2018.

⁴³ The WPHF also provides funding to local grassroots organizations through another funding mechanism.



III. THE JOURNEY OF THE RAPID RESPONSE WINDOW

III.1 Background

The RRW's journey began in September 2020 as a result of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's call in his October 2019 annual report on Women, Peace and Security for the WPHF to open a rapid response window on women's participation in peace negotiations.

i) "To support rapid response funds to advance the meaningful participation of women in peace processes, which includes financial support for travel, visas, childcare, translation and related expenses, in particular by providing resources to the new window in the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund;"⁴⁴ and

(ii) "United Nations entities are requested to identify resources in support of the meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations and the implementation of peace agreements, and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund is called upon to consider opening a rapid response window that allows for such support for women to participate in peace negotiations and the implementation of peace agreements."⁴⁵

The call was also based on the awareness that there are still significant gaps in the availability of rapid, flexible funding support for civil society-led strategic initiatives to influence peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements.⁴⁶ Anchored within the WPHF, governed by the Fund's tripartite Board,⁴⁷ the RRW was consequently set up as a funding mechanism to support women's meaningful participation in Track 1 and Track 2 peace processes, and in the implementation of peace agreements.

A **"peace process"** is an essentially contested concept, but mostly it refers to a *"political process to resolve violent conflict through peaceful means—usually a mixture of politics, diplomacy, negotiations, advocacy, mediation, and dialogue in different areas."*⁴⁸ The following table below encompasses the conceptual framework used by the RRW.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ UN Secretary General Women, Peace and Security Annual Report, 9 October 2019, S/2019/800.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Other existing funding mechanisms such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund and DPPA Multi-Year Appeal provide long-term, larger amounts of funding support to international civil society organizations or rapid support, but mostly to UN and government stakeholders (DPPA MYA).

⁴⁷ The WPHF Board is comprised of four UN entities, four civil society organizations, and the Fund's four largest donors.

⁴⁸ RRW Call for Applications, see https://wphfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/RRW-Call-for-Applications_FINAL-20-Oct-2022-ENG.pdf.

⁴⁹ As is well-explored in the peacemaking literature, and discussed in this paper through analysis of WRO partners' lived experiences, the meanings of the above descriptions on the ground are far less "box-able" or "neat and tidy".

Track 1	Track 2	Peace Agreement Implementation
<p>High-level decision-making process involving country leadership or national governments, often led by the UN, or multilateral regional organizations through a committee or a special envoy. For example: ceasefire, national dialogues, peace treaty negotiations, political transition, constitution writing, or international mediation.</p>	<p>Activities or exchanges between influential actors intended to influence, advise, or complement a Track 1 process. This can include building trust of stakeholders, raising awareness for community buy-in for the peace process, or implementation of the peace agreement. For example: dialogues, conferences, workshops, or forums bringing decision makers, national leadership, and international community together with women peacebuilders, civil society representatives, community leaders, other experts and mediators.</p>	<p>Activity/event related to the monitoring of the recommendations or action points of a peace agreement at international, national, and subnational levels. For example: through monitoring mechanisms or committees, parliamentary processes, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, reporting and shadow reporting, or civil society activities to hold decision makers accountable to the commitments made.</p>

As is well-explored in the peacemaking literature and discussed in this paper through analysis of WROs partners’ lived experiences, the meanings of the above descriptions on the ground are far less “box-able” or “neat and tidy”. The RRW uses these concepts with flexibility to avoid siloing efforts and to recognize the changing contexts.

From inception, the RRW aimed to provide flexible support for strategic, urgent interventions for increasing women’s meaningful participation and influence in peace processes or peace agreements. The timeframe for initiatives is short, to fill a specific gap at every stage of a peace process: before peace negotiations (preparation/design); during negotiations (gender provisions/women’s input); and after negotiations (monitoring/accountability).

The RRW is demand-driven and is open to all countries eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA), witnessing an existing or an upcoming formal peace process, or working on the implementation of a formal peace agreement. It provides support through two main streams: Direct Support and Short-Term Grants.

- ▷ Direct Support (DS), allows a WRO—including informal women’s groups, women peacebuilders, associations and networks, and unregistered civil society organizations—to request that WPHF finances the provision of services up to 25 000 USD to enable women’s meaningful participation and/ or influence in peace process (Track 1 & 2) or peace agreement implementation. This includes logistical and technical support such as the cost of childcare, access for persons with disabilities, interpretation or translation needs, expert advisory support, training, preparatory meetings, printing documents, film editing, travel arrangements, etc.

- ▷ Short-Term Grants (STG) are an opportunity for a registered WRO, or a consortium of WROs led by a registered organization, to request a grant up to 100 000 USD to implement a project for up to six months addressing strategic and urgent gaps in women’s meaningful participation in a peace process (Track 1 & 2) or a peace agreement implementation. An RRW INGO partner disburses the funds and provides strategic support if requested by the WRO. This includes technical assistance, networking, or joint initiatives.

DS and STG proposals are received on a daily basis and evaluated in six languages.⁵⁰ The RRW Unit is also open to receiving relevant proposals in any local language, provided that an RRW INGO partner, a Member State, or a UN entity can recommend the proposal based on their local knowledge. Proposals that meet the eligibility criteria are transferred to a Technical Committee (TC)⁵¹ for approval. The RRW unit collects feedback provided by the TC and shares the final recommendation with the WRO/women peacebuilders.⁵² (See ANNEX 1. Streams and selection process).

III.2 Pilot phase at early stages and mid-term review

Throughout its pilot phase and consistently since, the RRW has maintained a continual process of reflection and analysis addressing how well it is meeting its mandate and the needs of the WROs and peacebuilders it was set up to support. Through this process, the RRW has actively sought feedback from various partners including women mediators and feminist networks, INGOs and UN entities, and other actors in the peacemaking community through surveys and outreach sessions,⁵³ and during global forums.⁵⁴

Eighteen months after its establishment, the RRW conducted an independent midterm review of this initial period, specifically focused on the funding mechanism’s processes, its adherence to the UNSG mandate, and its impact on needs of women peacebuilders.⁵⁵ The review found the RRW to be “uniquely and impressively configured” and “an innovative and highly-regarded mechanism which offers the potential to play an extremely valuable and niche role in furthering women’s meaningful participation in formal peace processes.”⁵⁶ The review observed that the mechanism was established during the COVID-19 pandemic and had already “begun to have some promising early results.” The RRW was described by stakeholders as “an absolutely critical mechanism that has emerged at absolutely the right time.”⁵⁷

Key recommendations offered in the review included simplifying the mechanism’s Call for Proposal documents; conducting outreach to women mediators, feminist networks, and regional organisations; simplifying and streamlining application requirements; accepting proposals in any language; monitoring its scope carefully to assess continued relevance; creating a more integrated relationship between the two streams; holding another call for INGO partners to achieve a broader geographical representation of these partners; and hiring a full-time operations staff member.

⁵⁰ English, French, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian.

⁵¹ The TC comprises a representative of each RRW INGO partners, 1 UN regional/UN country staff (WPS expert varies based on the country relevant to the request for support), 1 representative from DPPA (for requests that target a Track 1 peace process), 1 representative of the largest WPHF-funder to the RRW from the previous budget year (on a voluntary basis).

⁵² Three options are available. Approval, Approval contingent on revisions, Decline.

⁵³ Bilateral meetings, info sessions, webinars.

⁵⁴ For example, in November 2023, the WPHF attended the “Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference 2023”, which was a platform to gather feedback from frontliners on their actual needs and how to advance and improve the funding mechanism to local organizations following feminist principles.

⁵⁵ The review methodology involved a thorough desk review, and 24 semi-structured interviews with 26 individuals from WPHF Secretariat including RRW staff, WPHF Board Members, high-level UN Women Program Support Management staff, RRW INGO partners, RRW Technical Committee members, and WRO partners for Short-Term Grants and Direct Support from three countries.

⁵⁶ RRW Mid Term Review, December 2021.

⁵⁷ RRW Mid Term Review, December 2021.

The WPHF RRW unit developed a comprehensive management response and quickly implemented 95% of the midterm review recommendations. This review also demonstrated that four key concerns/principles needed to be considered to enhance the relevance and impact of the RRW.

Improving accessibility to women peacebuilders and women's rights organizations

In a context in which funding opportunities often have complex application requirements and restrictive eligibility criteria, notably for local WROs, the RRW has considerably improved its accessibility for potential partners aiming to provide quick application processes to all eligible WROs and women peacebuilders. The following measures illustrate this accessibility:

- ▷ Drawing on principles of clarity, minimal bureaucracy, and minimal burden on applicants, the RRW uses simple vocabulary to describe itself on application templates and information tools.⁵⁸ The initial application stage for short term grants (STG) now requires only a concept note.
- ▷ Templates for applications are available in six languages but applications are accepted in all languages.⁵⁹ The RRW is also open to accepting proposals in various formats, including oral or video submissions, in line with the “do no harm” principle. Only the lead applicant needs to be registered as an organization for STG initiatives. The window has also conducted substantive outreach to improve its footprint in eligible countries with peace processes.⁶⁰
- ▷ The RRW unit also offers guidance to promising applicants to refine their proposals.

For example, since the RRW introduced the concept note stage in 2023, it has received 540 concept notes for short-term grants from all over the world, including conflict zones such as Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sudan, DRC, Yemen, Palestine, and Mali. In adherence to the “do no harm” principles, the RRW Unit received oral information to supplement proposals from Libya, Niger, and Yemen. Additionally, the RRW has actively promoted and supported projects from marginalized groups, including four interventions for women living with disabilities in Syria and Yemen, and nine interventions for young women and internally displaced/refugee women in Afghanistan, Cameroon, DRC, South Sudan, Syria, Uganda, and Ukraine.

Reinforcing partnership and increasing awareness on importance of women's participation

The RRW's operational structure has created partnerships between WROs, INGOs, UN entities, and the RRW Unit rooted on the principle of mutual trust in the implementation of supported projects. This principle entails defined roles for each member of the partnership, effective communication channels with all involved actors, and efficient processes to foster collaboration and achieve the expected goals.

During the pilot phase of the RRW, the mechanism demonstrated that a significant number of its partners had never previously engaged in direct partnerships with the UN or international organizations. Specifically, during the RRW pilot phase, 42% of the partners supported were receiving a grant or logistical services from a UN entity for the first time. Several organizations have begun to use this opportunity with the RRW to build their own relationship with RRW INGO partners and to conduct new projects together. Through the RRW and INGO partnership, WROs have gained recognition and support for their work. This catalytic dimension has been an unexpected and highly positive aspect of the RRW, which helps to address the long-standing gaps between local partners with great expertise and knowledge, and bigger organisations who tend to have more power and resources, but more limited local knowledge and connections.

⁵⁸ Webpage, webinars, powerpoints, and call for proposals.

⁵⁹ If recommended by an RRW partner or a UN entity.

⁶⁰ For example, in 2023, the RRW received proposals from 19 countries that were first proposals.

“Through our work, we’re connecting the grassroots with the national, amplifying the voices of community peace mediators and providing them with new channels to interact with policymakers and other feminist organizations.” Partner from Cameroon

The RRW uses its unique position within the UN system to act as a key tool to channel information and knowledge related to peace processes and implementation of peace agreements, thereby raising awareness about the critical importance of WRO involvement. This includes:

- ▷ Informing Member States and United Nations entities about the pivotal role of women in creating lasting and inclusive peace. These entities can gather evidence, narratives, and key trends to shape their policies and approaches to peacebuilding, integrating a gender perspective.
- ▷ Sharing stories and evidence for the peacebuilding community. The RRW’s website provides concrete examples of successful initiatives, profiles of women peacebuilders, and highlights of relevant campaigns. This is particularly useful for potential WRO applicants exploring their eligibility, but also for donors.
- ▷ Identifying entry points for interventions in specific contexts. The RRW, through policy briefs,⁶¹ has provided levers for women peacebuilders’ interventions in specific peace processes with the goal of sharing lessons, providing intervention strategies, and avoiding competition between or duplication of initiatives.
- ▷ Feeding the global narrative on women’s participation in peace processes. Given the close, meaningful relationships that the RRW has developed with WROs on the ground, in combination with its own analytic capacity, the window has been able to respond to key trends in women’s participation in peace processes and play an informative role by shedding light on such trends, which is hugely beneficial to its broad spectrum of stakeholders.
- ▷ Providing opportunities for peer exchange and capacity building to RRW partners across countries: the WPHF Secretariat runs a Global “Learning Hub” (L-HUB) with a Peer Exchange Series which spotlights the expertise, experiences, and best practice of WRO partners of the Fund.⁶²

This section has described the genesis and rationale of the RRW, its pilot stage and early phases, and key areas of the window’s contributions to filling gaps and addressing barriers, particularly in the funding landscape. The next section will explore the key impacts of the RRW.

⁶¹ The policy briefs, produced in partnership with Inclusive Peace, are produced from countries with high numbers of requests for RRW support, such as South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen.

⁶² For more information, see <https://wphfund.org/wp-content/uploads/22/03/WPHF-Global-L-Hub-Brochure-Draft.pdf>.



IV. OVERVIEW OF RRW'S KEY IMPACTS

The RRW's work has focused on three main objectives: i) fostering meaningful participation of women in peace processes, ii) facilitating the incorporation of gender-responsive elements in peace agreements, and iii) enhancing women's participation in the implementation of peace agreements. Different strategies have been implemented with concrete results.

Since its inception, the RRW has supported the participation of 3,004 women and young women in formal Track 1 and Track 2 peace negotiations in 28 countries⁶³ and supported the work of 135 WROs. A total of 34,322 people directly benefited from interventions and direct support from the WROs and over 305,400 people benefited indirectly through various outreach and social media interventions to influence peace agreements in their countries. From January 2020 to March 2024, the RRW has received 1,343 proposals, including concept notes and proposals for INGO partnership. Overall, 67.9% of proposals and concept notes were received from Africa, followed by 9.2% from the LAC region, 8.3% from Arab States, 7.3% from Asia/Pacific, 2.8% from Europe and Central Asia, and 4.5% from North America or other non-eligible countries .

These results represent just a small part of the overall impact of women's influence in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements. Peace processes are inherently fluid and evolving, requiring sustained efforts and contributions over time. The impact of women-led initiatives supported by the RRW should be understood as a key piece of the puzzle within this context, as these efforts contribute significantly to the ongoing pursuit of peace. This includes direct achievements in accessing critical spaces and stakeholders. Moreover, these initiatives promoted an intersectional approach to women's engagement in peace efforts, enhanced intergenerational dialogue, and fostered the localization and ownership of peace processes, thereby ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to sustainable peace and dissemination of knowledge.⁶⁴

⁶³ Afghanistan, Burundi, Cameroun, Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kosovo, Kyrgyztan, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Palestine, Philippines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tadjikijstan, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen.

⁶⁴ See Annex 2.

IV.1 Facilitating access to key stakeholders

One of the most important achievements of the RRW has been helping to change how WROs are conceived and addressed by key stakeholders. The mechanism has supported a transition in the perception of WROs as recipients, to the acknowledgement of their role as key and equal partners in peacebuilding efforts and dynamics. The RRW has facilitated dialogue between CSOs/WROs and influential stakeholders such as governmental officials, traditional leaders, diplomats, and regional organizations, and has strengthened the channels of communication among them. Impactful advocacy support is another achievement of the RRW that has enhanced women's adaptive capacity to changing or challenging peacebuilding environments.

WRO partners and women peacebuilders have particularly benefited from opportunities to directly share their perspectives with various influential stakeholders at national or local levels. The experience of the Syrian organization Badael illustrates this. Badael has engaged with a diverse group of stakeholders including key national actors, international stakeholders, civil society representatives, academics, media, and grassroots leadership.⁶⁵ By implementing the project "Waving feminist political action", Badael has created a platform for constructive dialogue and knowledge exchange with EU policymakers. By doing so, together they have been able to explore strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of EU consultations in promoting gender-responsive outcomes. Through these initiatives, Syrian women are gaining greater agency and visibility within political arenas and are advancing gender-equal decision-making processes in Syria.

RRW's WRO partner in Cameroon, for example, shared the summary of the women's joint research initiative with the prime minister, other government authorities, and international actors involved in Cameroon, who in turn learned about the existence of women's networks. Those targeted advocacy campaigns that were implemented with RRW funding have generated tangible results. Women are now represented on various committees that work on deradicalisation, reconstruction, and the follow-up for the 2019 Major National Dialogue. Women's advocacy efforts also convinced non-state armed groups to embrace the WPS agenda in their strategic planning. This has contributed to a more secure environment for women inside the country. Similarly, Sudanese women have also used RRW support to get access to high-level advocacy spaces, including the food security talks in Nairobi in October 2023 and the 2023 "Invest in Women" global summit in New York. Their increased exposure to influential stakeholders allowed them to push for women's inclusion in any contemporary and future negotiation initiative to manage armed conflict in Sudan.

By facilitating meetings and other events, the RRW has fostered opportunities for women peacebuilders to identify urgent gaps and influence key actors for more inclusive peace negotiations and gender-related provisions within peace agreements. In the Central African Republic (CAR), two direct support initiatives were supported by UN Women, with the aim of increasing women's representation and leadership in the implementation of the peace and reconciliation political agreement (2021) and the Luanda Joint Roadmap for The Central African Republic (2021), as well as the Republican Dialogue (2022). 50 participants—including women leaders; members of women's organizations and youth; members of the Prime Minister's Cabinet and the Ministry of Gender; representatives of decentralized authorities (prefects and traditional leaders); and UN system and media representatives—gathered in Bangui on 1–2 June 2023, to evaluate women's participation in the implementation of Resolution 1325 and the mutualized political process in CAR. Following this workshop, over 450 women leaders representing women's organizations from Bangui and 17 other locations in the country were trained and engaged in the implementation and accountability of national actors in the mutualized political process for peace in CAR. Through their commitment and outreach missions conducted in eight of the country's prefectures, the offices and members of women's organizations from twelve locations presented recommendations to promote their full participation in the political process

⁶⁵ WPHF RRW Report 2022.

and monitor the recommendations of the Republican Dialogue in their areas. As a result, on 14 July 2023, the Prime Minister's office, as the guarantor of the mutualized roadmap, received a memorandum from a delegation of women including a set of recommendations to integrate their aspirations into the roadmap.

By providing an immediate response to specific needs, the RRW has been able to facilitate support for women's participation. It has also shed light on the importance of logistical aspects of generating access for women to act as gatekeepers and stakeholders, particularly in contexts where women's organizations face shrinking spaces. For instance, in Afghanistan, the RRW's logistical support facilitated the safe participation of a woman peacebuilder in high-level dialogues to guide the peace negotiations with the Taliban (before August 2021). Her active role in different events and advocacy meetings related to increasing women's meaningful participation in the Intra-Afghan Peace Negotiations allowed her to share analysis and concerns, and provide recommendations regarding the protection of WHRDs, the importance of diplomatic solidarity with Afghan women, and continued support of women's civil society organizations following U.S. withdrawal.⁶⁶

WRO partners have regarded direct interaction with national and local decision makers as particularly effective in promoting women's visibility and enhancing their capacity to adapt to peacebuilding realities. Furthermore, it has fostered advocacy tools for groups of women particularly marginalised from peace negotiations, such as those living with disabilities, and young women in countries like Colombia, South Sudan, and Yemen.

IV.2 Promoting an intersectional approach in women's engagement to peace efforts

The overall marginalisation from peace processes faced by women is more salient among indigenous, rural women, women living with disabilities, and LGBTQI+. Although there has been progress in relation to facilitating access to the peace negotiations for women from different sectors, ethnic groups, and socio-economic backgrounds, often the expected input from these groups are siloed. A misinterpretation that their interest in the peace agenda is "only" connected to incorporating their claims for the enjoyment of their own rights and developing differential policy responses has limited the participation of these groups in peace efforts. However, the RRW's support work has showed that although the specific claims and rights are crucial in a comprehensive peace agenda, these communities have a lot to say about the peace agenda as whole.

The experience of the RRW's support of AMENA, an organization in Yemen, illustrates the importance of reaching out to women living with disabilities. This organization was involved in a Track 1 peace talks and the humanitarian truce, supported by the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy (OSESGY) and UN Women, and ensured their involvement in the Group of Nine mechanism, the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (PACT) and the Yemeni women's Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The organization developed a strategic engagement and advocacy plan to promote the meaningful participation and effective contribution of youth and women with disabilities in the process. Five women living with disabilities were engaged in workshops in Jordan to reflect on advocacy strategies and effective approaches to influence the peace process in Yemen. The workshop gave birth to the Women Living with Disabilities Group for Peace, which has led to building new alliances within women's rights, as well as gaining visibility. The workshop participated in WROs in key arenas such as G9+1 women peace activities meeting in Amman in November 2022, where the advocacy plan gained momentum and recognition from the international community. Here, several participants highlighted that "women are not only champions for so-called "women's issues", but they also came with diverse agendas and positions on critical issues including the files on detainees

⁶⁶ WPHF RRW Report 2022.

and abductees, the question of the south, economic development, transitional justice, rehabilitating state institutions, freedom of the press, equal citizenship, and the rule of law.⁶⁷

Indigenous women represent another group often overlooked in peace negotiations. The RRW has supported initiatives in Guatemala to shed light on the contributions of indigenous women to the peace negotiations, both in terms of dialogue mechanisms but also agenda. AMUTED in Guatemala conducted a baseline study focused on the role of indigenous women in the implementation of the 1996 peace accords. AMUTED used that report later to enhance indigenous women's visibility and push for their inclusion in decision-making processes during implementation.⁶⁸ Later, they created capacity building and political training opportunities for these indigenous women. They set up autonomous political schools to promote women's critical thinking and their participation in women's rights issues. AMUTED's education programs placed strong emphasis on indigenous women's capacity to write an agenda and advocate for it. The approach of letting indigenous women develop and draft their own strategic plan for political advocacy gave them the unprecedented feeling of being producers of knowledge. The resulting increase in their self-confidence encouraged indigenous women to present their strategic plans and political agendas to key stakeholders in their municipality, which enhanced their visibility as relevant actors in the implementation of the 1996 peace accords.⁶⁹

IV.3 Enhancing intergenerational dialogue

The agendas of Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security are closely connected. The DPPA Strategic Plan on Youth, Peace and Security (2023-2026) emphasizes the importance of “systematically enhancing the participation of youth in peace and security dialogue and processes, including through support and engagement with youth associations and groups”.⁷⁰ Through its interventions, the RRW has aimed to support a wide scope of actors, including those often overlooked in peace processes. By doing so, youth have gained important visibility and access to peace processes.

For instance, early in 2023, advocacy training targeting young women in Occupied Palestinian Territories has enhanced their visibility in the public political space. Specific forms of capacity building focused on fostering internal reconciliation and unity in OPT. Organising meetings between young women and decision makers at the national level (Prime Minister, political party representatives) and local level (mayors) also helped to establish women as relevant peace actors in OPT. Street and social media campaigns that focused on women's peacebuilding activities complemented those initiatives to reach a wider audience.

The intergenerational dialogue is also relevant for stalled peace processes. OMID held an International/Regional Peace Advocacy Conference in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in December 2023, gathering 70 participants, including Afghan women within the country (online), asylum seekers, refugee women, EU and UN representatives, and high-level political actors, resulting in the publication of a Call to Action document. A follow-up dialogue in February 2024, in Dushanbe included 25 participants (15 Afghan women and 10 UN representatives) and focused on implementing the Call to Action. Subsequent dialogues and peace advocacy sessions in March and April 2024 across Kazakhstan, Europe, Islamabad, and Tehran involved 268 women participants, discussing young women's involvement in the peace process and advocating for policy changes, alongside the ongoing Omid International Peace Education Mentoring Program. The OMID initiative was pivotal in creating advocacy spaces for young Afghan women, both within the country and in exile, allowing them to share their concerns and demands with the international community and key actors ahead of the Doha talks.

⁶⁷ Forging an inclusive future: consultation with Yemeni women concludes in Amman | OSESGY (unmissions.org).

⁶⁸ WPHF 2022, p. 11; NIMD and WPHF 2023b, p. 28.

⁶⁹ NIMD and WPHF 2023b, p. 20; NIMD and WPHF 2023c, p. 5.

⁷⁰ dppa_youth_peace_and_security_strategy_2024-2026.pdf (un.org)

Often, the importance of youth participation is not fully acknowledged by actors in official peace negotiations. On the contrary, input to the peace agenda from young people is isolated and perceived as beneficial only for this specific sector of the population, similar to women. The RRW has invested in intergenerational dialogue in which young peacebuilders not only learn from experienced women, but also already established organizations; additionally, experienced women peacebuilders greatly benefit from the ideas, proposals, and strategies of youth activists in relation to alternative paths of community outreach, communication, new agendas, and peacebuilding tools.

In South Sudan, the WRO Women Relief Aid implemented a project to “equip young women with skills and opportunities to contribute to South Sudan’s peace process at both local and national levels”. One of the key approaches has been the creation of spaces for youth from different ethnic groups and tribes “to discuss universally acceptable solutions to existing conflict issues”.⁷¹ Through community-based forums, young women and older counterparts have also discussed advocacy, gender roles, and women’s movements in peacebuilding. Several mentoring relationships resulted from these forums. These young women have now strengthened peacebuilding and leadership abilities, and they are more confident participating in local and national level peace efforts. This includes joining the South Sudan Women’s Coalition, which monitors the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict signed in 2018 in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), and helps to disseminate the roadmap agenda to grassroots levels.

IV.4 Fostering local ownership of peace processes

Through its support work, the RRW has shed light on the importance peace negotiations incorporating contextualized knowledge grounded in direct experience of the conflict at local levels and input on how different communities envision peace. By promoting the localization of peace efforts through various means, the RRW has helped anchor the provisions of peace agreements and fostered diverse citizen engagement.

The experience of Movilizadorio, a Colombian WRO, illustrates the idea of promoting citizen’s ownership of the implementation of the final agreement ending the conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace. Women’s effective participation in implementing agreements has been fostered within the agenda of regional dialogues led by the President. Further, organizations have been able to conduct advocacy efforts targeting newly elected members of Congress to inform decision-making. A series of workshops with survivors and women signatories of the peace agreement in the prioritized regions of Bogota, Medellin, Montes de Maria, and Serrania del Perijá, were conducted to facilitate a citizen-owned advocacy agenda and provide a safe space for 56 women to discuss their realities, current threats, and to identify where there are gaps in implementation of the peace agreement. A digital campaign to hear women victims’ silenced voices reached 500 signatures. Their voices and petitions reflected in the agenda points have been critical in increasing women’s representation and participation in this critical process.

The Regional Women’s Lobby in South East Europe (RWLSEE), a RRW partner in Kosovo, is promoting women’s leadership on physical inter-ethnic trust-building dialogue between Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian minority in northern Kosovo at different levels (CSOs, parliamentarians, and communities). Those dialogue initiatives aimed to identify key issues that women can subsequently raise with government officials at national and local levels. The associated joint dialogues and declarations developed are intended to advance reconciliation efforts and in turn the stalled implementation of the 2023 Ohrid agreement between Kosovo and Serbia.

⁷¹ Entry Points for Women’s Engagement in Peacemaking Efforts in South Sudan. Geneva: Inclusive Peace. February 2023, p. 10.

RRW support has also empowered Libyan women to engage in informal peace efforts, which happen away from public attention and therefore come with lower security risks for involved actors. Specifically, women peacebuilders, women civil society actors, and national as well as international actors with varying political affiliations engaged in informal exchanges organised by Together We Build It (TWBI). The main purpose of those exchanges was to strategize for women's enhanced leadership in the ceasefire monitoring process and the preparations for envisioned national elections, respectively. Five women civil society leaders from Libya also had the chance to informally meet with national and international stakeholders in Norway. Those discussions produced a summary recommendation paper, which Libyan women successfully used to urge involved international stakeholders to embrace women's meaningful participation in the Libyan peace process as a key objective.⁷²

During different conversations with RRW partners, women peacebuilders acknowledged RRW's support as a generous, flexible, reliable, timely, and much needed source of support and solidarity to implement their peace initiatives. Although their opinions regarding the most significant change generated by RRW work naturally varied across the different contexts, interviews allowed us to identify additional areas of specific change generated by RRW on women's participation in peace processes and to gain a broader understanding of supporting women in peace processes.

IV.5 Knowledge building and dissemination

RRW's support work has enhanced the necessary knowledge-building exercise in two areas during phase one. First, RRW support has enabled the gathering of context-specific knowledge on women's role in ongoing peace and dialogue efforts. The Institute for Multiparty Democracy in Mozambique kicked off their project activities supported by the RRW with a baseline study on the challenges and opportunities for women's participation in the implementation of the peace and reconciliation accord between the government and Renamo.⁷³ That baseline report later fed into the joint advocacy strategy for women's meaningful participation that 114 women peacebuilders and women's rights organizations developed during a national conference.⁷⁴

In addition, Cameroonian, Palestinian, and South Sudanese women, received training or support in survey design and the implementation of research initiatives at the grassroots level. Fifteen young women in Occupied Palestinian Territories capitalized on their newly acquired skills to publish a research report entitled "The Future of Palestinian Women's Active Political Participation", which summarized obstacles and corresponding mitigation strategies for women's participation in political processes.⁷⁵ Other similar initiatives have been supported by the Association pour la Promotion de la Femme et de L'Enfant au Mali (APROFEM) in Mali; and by the Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) in Liberia.

Further, several research initiatives that the RRW supported during phase one have also pointed to alternative peacebuilding spaces that women could or have already tapped into. For example, in November/December 2022, Reach out Cameroon led a six-week community survey that took stock of traditional structures that women have used to engage in local peacebuilding.⁷⁶ In-depth knowledge about those local peacebuilding structures highlighted potential alternative entry points for women to lead efforts to manage Cameroon's persistent Anglophone crisis. The RRW financed a similar assessment study on local customary structures and institutions as well as women's self-help groups as potential alternative peacebuilding spaces in Ethiopia's Somali and Oromia regions.⁷⁷

⁷² WPHF Annual Report 2022, p. 10.

⁷³ Macuane et al. 2023.

⁷⁴ WPHF 2022, p. 8; WPHF 2023, p. 54.

⁷⁵ https://www.gppac.net/files/2024-04/GPPAC%20RRW-PCPD%20Research%20Summary_20240409.pdf

⁷⁶ WPHF and ICAN 2023.

⁷⁷ ACDD et al. 2023.



V. KEY TRENDS IN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS FROM THE RRW

The RRW's efforts supporting women peacebuilders reveal critical insights into the evolving role of women in peace processes globally. This section highlights how the RRW has facilitated the transfer of effective practices and lessons from local to national and international levels, showcasing the expanded scope of women's contributions beyond traditional gender-focused roles. By examining diverse case studies, this analysis underscores the growing recognition of women as pivotal actors in peacebuilding even when crises erupt. These trends not only challenge conventional perceptions but also emphasize the unique added value of women's involvement to enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of peace efforts worldwide. Many of the narratives listed below are not new. However, they confirm the importance of investing more in the work of WROs.

V.1 Expanding the “Women's Agenda”: Beyond gender-responsive provisions

The journey of the RRW, the achievements and the reflections of the women peacebuilders interviewed for this paper illustrate the trend of increasing participation of women in different thematic areas within the peace agenda. Women peacebuilders whose work has been supported by the RRW challenge the idea that women only talk about women's rights or are by definition gender experts.

Women have demonstrated their capacity to influence the most difficult topics on peace agendas such as ceasefire, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), and transitional justice. The testimony of an Afghan peacebuilder reflects that argument: “My recommendation [in the peace dialogue meeting] was about urgent ceasefire and decrease of violence, because in case of no ceasefire, no one can talk about protection of women's rights and achievement.”⁷⁸ In Mozambique, IMD, with RRW support, influenced the Maputo Accord for Peace and National Reconciliation between the government of Mozambique and Renamo, signed on August 2019, and the DDR process. An advocacy strategy was developed, focused on engaging with government officials and relevant stakeholders, and ensuring the implementation of the Maputo Accord and DDR process.

⁷⁸ From report 2021.

In Sudan, 100 Sudanese women and 25 men civil society actors have collaborated to analyse Sudan's conflict context, pinpointing obstacles, and opportunities for influencing peacemaking efforts. Through the RRW's Direct Support, they received discrete technical and strategic support for Sudanese women civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders to assess the conflict context, identify obstacles and opportunities to influence peace-making efforts, and gain coalition-building and advocacy strategies. To this end, consultations spaces were held in Nairobi, Kampala, and Cairo, complemented by online consultations spaces in Ethiopia, UAE, and South Sudan. The Cairo workshop which took place in June 2023 was the first time Sudanese women civil society and political actors had been convened to take stock and respond to the ongoing violence in the country. The engagement came at a critical time and resulted in a multi-track action plan prioritising advocacy, influencing, and strategies for ensuring inclusion of women in peacemaking efforts; it also suggested recommendations and ideas to end violence and restore peace. This collective effort resulted in the creation of a "shadow peace agreement," serving as a comprehensive document outlining expectations and demands of civil society.

Other topics such as forced disappearance and arbitrary detention have been raised by women peace-builders in Syria. For instance, Dawlaty's project aimed to enhance the participation of women relatives of arbitrary detainees and those who have been forcibly displaced in leading advocacy and networking activities. Through RRW support, Dawlaty assisted two women from its Families for Freedoms project with advocacy trips to New York and Washington, D.C. in advance of UN deliberations on a new institution for missing persons in Syria. As a result, the women presented key recommendations to UN Member States and held a meeting with Luxembourg, the penholder, during the UN General Assembly. During a second advocacy trip to New York and Washington, D.C., days before the UN General Assembly vote on the UN mechanism, Dawlaty and the Syrian women representatives successfully mobilized international organizations to work on an open letter in support of the mechanism, resulting in the General Assembly adopting a resolution to set up the new mechanism on 26 June 2023. The Resolution recognizes the impact of missing persons on women's suffering and welcomes the work of survivor and family groups, as well as women's organizations in their work seeking truth and accountability. Further, a side event was hosted in Brussels with Syrian women, "Addressing the issue of disappearance in Syria: Syrian victims pursue the right to know." Dawlaty noted that the event had a positive impact on civil society actors and international bodies and family groups; a video was produced about the UN mechanism and women's experience advocating for the institution. Finally, Dawlaty held a workshop for nine Syrian women to build their capacity on advocacy, awareness raising, and to strategize for ensuring implementation and effectiveness of the new UN mechanism. This workshop helped to prepare Syrian women relatives of arbitrary detainees and forcibly disappeared persons for the next phase of advocacy that will take place now that the UN mechanism has been created.

In Liberia, the Women's Civil Society Advisory Group on Accountability for War Crimes has been a key actor in demanding the government's compliance with TRC commitments. As a result, a CSO-led advocacy movement was established, calling for the creation of judicial body to monitor implementation of TRC recommendations; this movement has supported seven women's grassroots organizations for community outreach. Advocacy messages were published through media outreach to targeted actors to engage policymakers and international actors with political influence and to garner support for implementation of TRC recommendations.

These examples illustrate women's actions with regards to fighting injustice and inclusivity for all. However, women's engagement in the implementation of peace agreements also incorporating a gender lens in the socio-economic agenda. The experience of a Colombian WRO, *Colectiva de Mujeres Enredhadas por la Paz, la memoria y la vida sin violencia*, supported by the RRW evidences the need to use women's expertise on land reform and access to land, particularly in the *Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial (PDET)*, as laid out in Colombia's Final Peace Agreement. The PDETs are development plans with a territorial focus,

which are part of a national participatory strategy included in the Peace Agreement. They promote a structural transformation of the Colombian countryside, particularly in the 170 municipalities most affected by violent conflict. The ongoing initiative seeks to increase a fair distribution of the Land Fund's 3 million hectares to strengthen and design mechanisms for surveillance and implementation of the Action Plans for Regional Transformation (PATR).

V.2 Women's versatility in mediation environments: bridging "informal" and "formal" peace efforts

Women often work across multiple mediation spaces and conflict situations.⁷⁹ In alignment with research, through its support the RRW has seen that women are adept at moving between "formal" and "informal" peacemaking environments. This may be a product of patriarchal conditioning which attempts to compel women globally to "fit" or adapt themselves to different contexts, as well as a response to negotiation dynamics and stalled peace processes. For example, in South Sudan, in addition to directly participating at the negotiation tables and conveying messages between adversaries, South Sudanese women have engaged in important informal peace activities. These have included establishing peace forums to facilitate local exchanges about peace and reconciliation, organising interfaith prayer meetings, creating space for youth from different ethnic groups to jointly discuss solutions to conflict issues, and organising silent protest marches to push for a peace deal. Where these efforts faced resistance from key stakeholders of the country's peace process, women have found other formal spaces to engage other influential stakeholders.

For example, an RRW WRO partner in South Sudan has organised and used an annual Women, Peace, and Security conference to invite and challenge embassies, government representatives, and international organisations about the limited progress made on women's meaningful participation in South Sudan's peace processes. Through their efforts, the lead WRO of the South Sudan Women's Coalition⁸⁰ has conducted workshops on the R-ARCSS 2018: Roadmap and Constitution-Making Process, for about 180 women in five refugee camps in Uganda.⁸¹ This organisation then set up sustained advocacy meetings with the parties to the agreement and key government institutions to ensure that South Sudanese women's issues are prioritised during R-ARCSS implementation. Women have also managed to convince reluctant opposition actors to join peace negotiations, as the ARCSS and the R-ARCSS have shown.⁸² Further, in South Sudan, women's organisations regularly interact with traditional and cultural leaders on the ground as a way of sustaining impact and influence.⁸³

Women's versatility in moving between and operating in diverse mediation contexts also enables them to act as "agents of transfer". The concept of "transfer" conceptualises the ways that Track 2 peacebuilding

⁷⁹ WMC "Beyond the Vertical: What Enables Women Mediators to Mediate".

⁸⁰ Through RRW's INGO partner Cordaid.

⁸¹ The women reached through these workshops included leaders from various states and payams, women's organisations, entrepreneurs, civil society, security sector, members of parliament, women in the media, church leaders, human rights and faith-based organisations, women's associations, academia, and young women in the refugee camp in Bidibidi.

⁸² Mattijo Bazugba et al., "Women's Experiences in the South Sudan Peace Process 2013-2018," p. 6. In Inclusive Peace Policy Brief on South Sudan, p. 16.

⁸³ Inclusive Peace Policy Brief on South Sudan, p. 18.

can influence and/or support Track 1 negotiations.⁸⁴ In South Sudan, women have acted as “agents of transfer” in four ways. First, through arranging physical encounters of grassroots women peacebuilders with national political actors in the peace process, such as the Ministry of Gender.⁸⁵ Second, through organising talk shows called “Women of Peace”, which have given women peacebuilders a platform to publicly share about their work at the grassroots level. Third, through establishing an on-the-ground presence in various regions to collate, streamline, and share information about the work of women grassroots peacebuilders at the national level. Finally, through assisting young women at the grassroots level to write advocacy letters to share their peacebuilding activities and their associated needs with national political leaders.⁸⁶

The notion of women’s capacity to act as agents of “transfer”, unlocking and opening doors between “levels” and “tracks” of processes, is less accepted than other narratives. As such, it is particularly important to draw attention to and recognize the importance of their key role and strategic approaches in localizing peace processes. However, the roles of women as “agents of transfer” in peace processes should not be reduced to merely instrumentalizing them as intermediaries or the “small hands” of peace. Such a limited view fails to recognize their full potential, agency, and pivotal impact. Instead, the RRW experience shows that when women are empowered at all phases and levels of peace processes, these initiatives become genuinely inclusive and sustainable. By fully integrating women’s perspectives, leadership, diversity, and decision-making capacities, peace initiatives can more effectively address the diverse needs of communities, foster broader societal buy-in, and create lasting stability. Women bring unique insights and approaches that are crucial for resolving conflicts and building resilient societies. Empowering women as active participants, rather than passive conduits, not only honours their rightful role but is also essential for achieving comprehensive and enduring peace. This approach recognizes that sustainable peace is only possible when the contributions of all members of society, especially women, are valued and utilized to their fullest extent.

V.3 When crises erupt: the work adapts and continues

WROs that operate in highly repressive settings impacted by conflict or political crisis like Afghanistan, Guatemala, OPT, South Sudan, Sudan, and Venezuela have struggled to attract continuous international attention for the situation in their country. Fears of being forgotten by the international community are high. RRW support has mitigated those concerns and allowed women-led organisations to start, continue, or resume their work.

The adaptability to changes in the political/conflict dynamics and a high level of flexibility regarding the scope and nature of project activities has allowed the WADI, an RRW partner, to continue delivering meaningful work under highly challenging circumstances. For instance, RRW partners in Sudan have witnessed a rapid deterioration of the domestic political situation. The outbreak of the armed conflict between RSF and SAF on 15 April 2023 derailed the peace process linked to the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement (JPA). Armed fighting and state collapse undermined the relevance of the initially approved RRW project for Sudan, which focuses on the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. RRW supported its WRO partner in both adapting the project’s scope and relocating its office from Khartoum to a safer region inside Sudan.

⁸⁴ Cuhadar and Paffenholz divide the concept of transfer into two categories: “upward transfer” through which ideas and outcomes from Track 1 workshops move to and influence formal, high-level, Track 1 negotiations; and “downward transfer” through which ideas and outcomes influence public opinion and impact the conflict at large. E. Cuhadar and T. Paffenholz, “Transfer 2.0: Applying the Concept of Transfer from Track-Two Workshops to Inclusive Peace Negotiations,” *International Studies Review* 22:3 (2020), p. 652. Inclusive Peace’s research, commissioned by UN Women, discusses the concepts of transfer and multi-track diplomacy and further investigates how what is being transferred from Track 2 can travel “upwards” to Track 1 and Track 1.5, but also “laterally” to other Track 2 initiatives and “downwards” to Track 3 programmes, and how this “movement” can take place in different directions simultaneously or sequentially. Thania Paffenholz and Kaitlyn Hashem, *Track Two Peacebuilding to Track One Peacemaking: Insights from Yemen and Syria*. (Geneva: Inclusive Peace, November 2022).

⁸⁵ Minister of Gender, and Child Welfare, Social Welfare, Administration, and Research and Planning.

⁸⁶ Inclusive Peace Policy Brief on South Sudan, pp. 19-20.

“ We submitted our project proposal on strengthening the implementation of the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement at the national level under the absence of armed conflict in Sudan. The escalation of violence on 15 April 2023 changed everything. RRW’s flexibility was key for us to adapt our project’s scope. For example, we have targeted women’s spaces of traditional gatherings for food distribution or coffee roasting to spread messages of reconciliation, strengthen social cohesion, and indicate to local women that they care. Work they do in their community fulfils an important peacebuilding function under conditions of escalating conflict. Local women peacebuilders have multiplied those messages and enhanced local communities’ resilience to the various hardships caused by armed conflict. Their work has mitigated local polarisation, ethnic tensions, and destruction.” Partner from Sudan

When talking about the challenges, several interviewees stressed how increasingly severe security threats undermine the work of women peacemakers and peacebuilders. The ongoing armed conflict in Sudan demonstrates how women and WROs bear the brunt of security threats:

“ The armed conflict in Sudan has been a war on women’s bodies. Rape has been rampant. Armed fighting has also forced our organisation to leave Khartoum and relocate twice. RRW’s flexibility allowed us to adapt the target group and scope of our project and thereby mitigate security risks for our staff and project beneficiaries. We therefore have been able to continue our work in less dangerous parts of the country.” Partner from Sudan

Similarly, Afghan women have experienced massive human rights violations and security risks since the takeover of the de-facto authorities in August 2021. By providing support, the RRW is facilitating steps towards strengthening Afghan women’s role in peacebuilding efforts under the extremely challenging circumstances, both in and out of the country. Women for Peace and Participation in Afghanistan (WPP), an RRW partner, is providing training to senior women mediators and peacebuilders, and developing a mapping of Afghan women’s roles, influence, and spaces, while involving international stakeholders and allies in the Afghan peace process. Since August 2024, WPP has been developing a joint strategy with women peacebuilders and international stakeholders, aimed at increasing the full and meaningful inclusion of Afghan women in all peace processes. Women Peacebuilders for Afghanistan (WFA), another RRW partner, is conducting a study to identify the specific needs of women within the country, focusing on their safety and their involvement in the peace process. Despite the challenges, 160 women were safely interviewed. Additionally, WFA is holding consultations with women in Central and South Asia to build unity and foster collaboration. Following a dialogue held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in July, Afghan women in Afghanistan and Tajikistan issued demands and a Call to Action, seeking a coalition for women’s education, access to work, and a peaceful political settlement. In September 2024, WFA organized a summit in Tirana, Albania, bringing together over 120 Afghan women, including those in exile, the diaspora, and from women’s resistance movements inside and outside Afghanistan. This was the first time since the Taliban takeover that such a diverse group of Afghan women⁸⁷ gathered to discuss unifying their efforts. The summit concluded with a declaration to form a working group tasked with drafting the Afghan Women’s Political Manifesto, focusing on the future of Afghanistan and calling for ending the ongoing gender-based Human Rights violations in the country.

Severe political crises have endured for years or decades in several country contexts. However, the scarcity of funding opportunities has made it difficult for WROs to stay engaged and actively advocate for women’s interests over an extended period. RRW support work has mitigated this issue, allowing some partners to

⁸⁷ Participants included human rights activists, women’s rights advocates, artists, academics, media professionals, political leaders, representatives of ethnic and religious communities, and individuals with special needs.

resume work on their country's peace process after a prolonged period of inactivity due to funding constraints. For example, it is the first time in two years the necessary funds are available to work on dialogue and reconciliation in Kosovo and the broader region.

“ The outbreak and escalation of armed conflicts in other parts of an increasingly chaotic world has—for understandable reasons—distracted international attention from the tensions between Kosovo and Serbia and the Balkans region more generally. The corresponding lack of funding forced RWLSEE to stop its activities for two years, which made it impossible to influence the peace process between Kosovo and Serbia. RRW provides the necessary funds to resume our work on peacebuilding, and reconciliation in one of the forgotten conflicts in the world.” Partner from Kosovo



VI. PERSISTENT CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

As previously mentioned, long-standing patriarchal norms pose significant challenges to women’s meaningful participation in peace processes. These difficulties are further exacerbated in contexts with volatile local security, which intensifies structural barriers and hinders local women’s ability to influence peace-making and peacebuilding initiatives. The shifting dynamics of peace initiatives, coupled with the scarcity of formal negotiation tracks, underscore the necessity for adaptive and resilient strategies. As the RRW navigates these complexities, it has encountered a range of lessons and challenges—from the difficulties of engaging in fragmented or ambiguous peace processes to the critical importance of coalition-building and emotional well-being for women peacebuilders. The RRW’s experience also shows that providing more flexibility and trust to WROs is pivotal in navigating these challenging contexts.

VI.1 Increasing complex peace processes and scarcity of formal tracks

Many proposals submitted to the mechanism focused on initiatives occurring in contexts with stalled peace processes or undergoing political transitions following military coups. For example, the RRW has received a significant number of applications from Afghanistan since August 2021, when the Taliban returned to power. Despite the breakdown in the peace process, the RRW was able, on an “exceptional basis,” to provide critical subsistence support to 15 evacuated Afghan women peacemakers for their protection following engagement in the negotiations. The window also later supported work that brought Afghan women, refugees, and members of the diaspora together to strategize and build trust to influence the political process in Afghanistan.

Sometimes interpretations of the legitimacy of a peace process can differ significantly among and within domestic and international communities, which adds another dimension of complexity. For example, in Cameroon, the national dialogue proposed in 2019 by President Paul Biya to address the armed conflict between the government and Anglophone separatists was welcomed by some stakeholders, but not considered credible by others. Questions around the dialogue’s legitimacy and status already posed challenges for women’s groups seeking to influence the process, and this was compounded by the fact that women were not included in the pre-talks, so they had to lobby for their inclusion.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ The RRW’s partner in Cameroon shared that women’s groups had to go back to the constituencies and engage with women at the grass-roots within party lines. When it came to the (disputed) talks themselves, women were invited to the opening but not to the actual talks, so they were compelled to force their entry.

The ambiguous status of some peace agreements and processes can also pose difficulties for women's groups seeking support from the RRW. Exemplifying this is the situation of Azerbaijan and Armenia: the two countries have been pledging for several years to work towards signing a peace agreement, and diplomats have continued to exchange drafts of an agreement. However, during talks in late February 2024 between the foreign ministers of the two countries, the tension did not decrease between the two countries and the peace agreement was compromised.⁸⁹ This came five months after Azerbaijan recaptured its Karabakh region from the ethnic Armenians majority, prompting a mass exodus of ethnic Armenians. The RRW is supporting a project led by OxYGen Foundation for Protection of Youth and Women Rights in Armenia, to ensure that women have access to the tools, networks, and resources to meaningfully engage and contribute to long-lasting peace in Armenia. In a context of an elusive peace negotiation process, the project focuses on preparing women for any upcoming peace negotiation processes by equipping them with skills and knowledge to take part in decision-making processes.

Indeed, the RRW's experience reveals that it is often very difficult for women's groups to connect a particular peace initiative to a specific process or agreement in their countries because of the lack of clarity around the status of a process; the process may change or there may be conflicting perceptions regarding the credibility of a process. Moreover, processes rarely, if ever, start with an official or "formal" effort and a declaration of such; they often have their origins in an organically unfolding journey that was initiated from within civil society. An increase in conflicts worldwide does not necessarily mean an increase in formal peace processes; the level of global attention that a conflict receives also shapes whether or not, and how, a peace process takes place. RRW's WRO partners have broadly expressed that it is therefore important to support women from the very initial stages of a peace process, and to recognize that it encompasses many informal phases. They observe that although there are specific "moments" that can be identified to access the "peace table", these arise as a consequence of earlier peacebuilding work, and it is difficult to isolate and support only these moments.

Track 1 processes are also increasingly scarce: most official high-level peace processes are stalled or entirely stuck. The RRW has seen, in congruence with research, that it is exceedingly difficult for women to access these spaces, and in some cases, women would rather avoid the spotlight that a Track 1 process tends to require. Highly visible participation in a Track 1 process can also jeopardize other projects or feminist agendas, not to mention women's safety. Since the RRW was established, the vast majority of the interventions it has supported have focused on Track 2 peace processes (47% in 2022, and 54% in 2023), and on the implementation of peace agreements (41% in 2022, and 35% in 2023). Only 12% of interventions supported by the window have focused on Track 1 processes, for instance in the cases of Yemen and Libya. This reflects the fact that there are very few such processes; many are not functional; and their sensitivity can even discourage women's participation or pose a threat to them.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency and restricted entry into Track 1 peace processes, has long been a challenge. Civil society activists, especially those who have not directly engaged in conflict, face even greater barriers to participation. This issue is particularly concerning amidst a resurgence of violent armed conflicts, resulting in a mismatch between the number of armed conflicts and the evidence of active participation of women peacebuilders. This disparity highlights the urgent need to address the structural barriers that hinder the meaningful participation of women in peace processes.

⁸⁹ Germany hosts peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan, <https://www.reuters.com/world/germany-hosts-peace-talks-between-armenia-azerbaijan-2024-02-28/>.

Given this combination of scarcity, opacity, ambiguity, and elasticity of peace processes and agreements, and the resultant challenges for women’s groups to formally participate, the RRW has applied flexibility to its scope when reviewing proposals. With the understanding that “you don’t need to be at the [peace] table to influence the peace process”, WRO initiatives supported by the RRW have found linkages between grassroots peacebuilding efforts and potential entry points within formal peace processes or the implementation of peace agreements; building bridges between women in WROs and women in political parties; and building coalitions and organizing community dialogues to build trust and safe spaces for discussion.

Partners emphasize the importance of focusing on the preparation phase, even when a peace process is stalled, so that women can be ready and equipped to participate when the process is resumed. Recognizing the significant challenges for local women’s organizations to identify, participate, and influence peace processes—and in line with principles of responsiveness and flexibility that have characterized its operations so far—the RRW managed to be open to different interpretations from applicants and partners as to what constitutes a peace process and what is needed to influence it. The RRW’s intention is not to redefine a peace process, but to respond to the changing landscape in conflict dynamics and approaches to negotiation. This requires prioritizing trust and the agency of its WRO partners, values and practices which are at the heart of the RRW establishment.

VI.2 Bringing different voices together as a key strategy for amplifying influence

Opaque peace processes, violence and patriarchal values have contributed to women’s invisibility and marginalisation in peace processes. WROs partners have stressed how impactful coalition-building and networking exercises among women through the RRW contributed to increasing their self-confidence, promoting collective strategizing and advocacy, and thereby amplifying their voices to influence and revive peace processes.

“ The network exercise conducted by RRW funding has allowed targeted women to collectively identify and rally behind the common cause of promoting dialogue and women’s rights. Focusing on those overarching objectives, while avoiding touching on the sensitive political issues that have divided them, has created a common ground for women to push for dialogue.” Partner from Venezuela

RRW has enabled women’s power of unity in several country contexts. The representative of a partner in Cameroon argues:

“ The RRW support allowed us to connect seven independent women’s networks to start discussing and identifying common positions as well as jointly strategize, do research on Cameroonian women’s proposals for how to resolve the Anglophone crisis, and advocate for their positions as women. Having this space for coalition building helped women to overcome long-standing patterns of disagreement and competition among women. They came to realise that influential domestic and international stakeholders will only see them if they unanimously push for their common interests and positions. We were excited to see four additional women’s networks joining the initial group of seven women’s networks in their discussions as the project progressed.”

RRW support has also fostered coalition building among women across domestic administration and country borders.

“ We organised the festival for care of life and other spaces to bring women from different communities together and discuss their place and role in politics. Women from different municipalities realised during their exchanges that they encountered common obstacles to their political participation. This created a sense of belonging among women,” noted a partner from Colombia.

Furthermore, RRW’s intervention in Afghanistan, has created bridges between Afghan women based in Afghanistan and part of the diaspora to jointly work on a vision and tangible steps for enhancing Afghan women’s engagement in ongoing peacebuilding processes.

“ Our project aims to set up a mentor system where 20 Afghan mentors based inside Afghanistan and 20 Afghan mentors based outside Afghanistan cooperate in peace education. Specifically, they focus on transferring their peacebuilding-related skills on education, economics, and security to young Afghan women and Afghan refugee women at the grassroots level. The majority of the young Afghan women targeted by the mentor system are between 18 and 26 years old and have little knowledge of peace. The peace education efforts therefore provide them with a unique hook to learn about peace and peacebuilding, and how they can actively contribute to peacebuilding in a hostile environment and outside of a formal peace process.” Partner from Afghanistan

The impact of movement building is visible, for example, in Colombia, where a Colombian peacebuilder argues:

“ Polarisation inside society and persistent security challenges related to the presence of armed groups, as well as drug and arms trafficking, have undermined people’s trust in the capacity of the political system and the 2016 peace agreement to address the country’s major problems. Reconciliation between conflict parties has also been slow to materialise against the backdrop of fake news around the 2022 truth commission report. RRW’s financial and technical support has enabled the establishment of women’s alliances who publicly defend the truth commission report, stress its value for enduring peace in Colombia, and seek to render its implementation more gender inclusive. Women beneficiaries of our RRW-funded project have therefore acted as multipliers for peace and reconciliation in a polarised environment.”

In recent years, awareness women’s propensity to work together is reflected among feminist donors, some of whom increasingly fund women’s movement building. However, less well-known is women’s capacity to collaborate across steeply conflicting political lines, as well as other fault lines of difference, such as class, faith, ethnicity, and even age. This is important because, as research notes, coalitions of like-minded people, with similar ideological views and tactical preferences, are much easier to form than diverse ones. The RRW has observed that women sometimes manage to build meaningful, effective collaborations in efforts to make peace, even when their members are diverse in background and ideology; the RRW has specifically chosen to advance such approaches.

In DRC, and in the Great Lakes more broadly, there is a long history of women building high-functioning women’s coalitions and movements to help stop sexual violence and build peace. One Congolese organisation recently brought together a highly diverse mix of women peacebuilders, activists, and women’s WROs from eastern Congo. The group combined their list of demands and developed an advocacy framework and action plan. The group managed to engage DRC leadership to advance women’s representation in the formal peace negotiations, the “Nairobi Peace Talks”, in 2022. The RRW supported this coalition-building initiative by financing the WRO’s work so that after the Nairobi conference, women participants could successfully present the terms of reference and messages to the conference attendees and key actors addressing: the

demands of women from eastern DRC, information about their participation, and efforts to end hostilities in eastern DRC. The advocacy efforts continued afterwards, and a brief book of these demands was sent to the command of the East African Community (EAC) force in DRC.

In South Sudan, the mechanism supported a project bringing women from diverse ethnic, socio-economic, and political backgrounds from all ten South Sudanese states to “equip young women with skills and opportunities to contribute to South Sudan’s peace process at both local and national levels”. Recognizing the often-neglected tensions between generations of women peacebuilders, the RRW also chose to support the WRO to host two intergenerational CBO forums to discuss advocacy, gender roles, and women’s movements in peacebuilding. Young women were consequently able to learn from and with their older counterparts, ensuring both groups felt that their knowledge and capacity for impact were respected. Several mentoring relationships resulted from these forums. These young women have now strengthened their peacebuilding and leadership abilities and are more confident participating in local and national peace efforts, as previously noted.

In some contexts, large-scale actions and utilizing multiple entry points simultaneously are highly effective, making it harder for decision makers to ignore women’s contributions to peace processes. Coalition building and networks amplify the collective voice and increase visibility, while also facilitating resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and coordinated strategies, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of their efforts in influencing peace processes. Important progress has been made in this matter through the RRW support work which has enhanced a more dynamic and sustainable dialogue between local and national women’s organizations in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen, among others.

According to a WRO representative from Cameroon, network strengthening by the RRW has “enabled women in the country to come back together after they had split into factions”. Its assistance allowed them to “do game-changing initiatives”.

RRW’s strong emphasis on coalition-building has enabled women to identify and rally behind a context-specific common, innovative agenda to collectively promote their meaningful participation in peace processes. The support provided to “Women for Dialogue and Peace in Venezuela” (WDPV) illustrates one of the biggest achievements of the RRW: building alliances across political and conflict divides. In Venezuela’s context of high polarization, distrust between conflict parties undermined prospects of a negotiated solution to the country’s political crisis. Promoting interaction across the main conflict division has helped women to advocate for dialogue moving forwards. RRW support has fostered constructive dialogue between women from both conflict parties and contributed to increasing their interaction. It has fostered agreement on joint statements that advocate for peace, establishing dialogue as a viable approach to managing conflict drivers.

“ The spirit of dialogue is expected to incrementally permeate the entire society as the number of MDPV members increases.” Partner from Venezuela

CAUCE, the implementing partner, has facilitated spaces in which women find common challenges in their experiences as women. As one of its leaders argues:

“ We have a political system that we do not all share, but we do share some common problems in the context of the crisis. We managed to understand that we must set aside our own personal interests, even our ideologies, and work with what unites us all as the central point.”⁹⁰

⁹⁰ NIMD and WPHF 2023.

Women from different sectors in Venezuela have faced barriers to participation, exclusion from decision-making spaces, and traditional structures that disenfranchise their work. Gender equality as the foundation of a feminist platform and the precondition for meaningful participation have been the premises of the organizations supported by the RRW, not only to build agreements but to agree on collective advocacy actions implemented with the national government as well as the “opposition”.

VI.3 Healing trauma and building emotional well-being as a key element of reinforcing self-confidence

Women in particular have promoted the importance of healing trauma, self-care, and building the emotional well-being of all involved in effective peace-related work. Women have been leaders in this work. There is a growing recognition that providing psychological support to survivors of violence is integral to breaking cycles of violence and building peace: it is part of creating the right environment for peace talks.⁹¹ Accompanying, or even leading, the gradual global paradigm shift that sees “mental health” as a priority is the awareness that healing personal and collective experiences of oppression and violence is critical for ending wars and violent conflict. Although this work is for the benefit of all, women tend to lead on developing and implementing it. There are countless examples of this and yet limited funding supporting these efforts.

In 2023 a WRO in Kyrgyzstan, the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), focused on a trauma-healing and resilience-building project as a form of empowering local women. FTI received RRW Direct Support to pilot a project aimed at strengthening local women’s capacity as actors of change in the ceasefire negotiations to address the cross-border conflict between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Their work focused on trauma healing and resilience building as a form of empowerment for local women—an emerging need in the region, which they had not been able to fund in the past. The trauma healing workshops held in March 2023 helped 13 women participants (and 4 men) to become “actors of change” in the peace recovery process. Being part of the same network fostered a sense of safety, encouraging sharing personal stories. Participants noted that the workshop was useful, applicable, timely, and relevant. Many participants noted that they gained new knowledge to apply to their work, “I received specific concepts on resilience and emotional literacy. I deepened my knowledge of critical thinking skills, dialogue, and mapping techniques. I will apply this knowledge in my family, team, and communities where we implement other projects.” Another participant shared, “It allowed me to look at my activities from a different angle and new ideas for further work appeared. [I feel] motivated for further actions”. Participants also noted that healing trauma and building emotional well-being are necessary to increase women peacebuilders’ potential and contribute to reinforcing self-confidence.

Men’s dominance in peace and political processes has created and reinforced feelings among women that peacemaking and peacebuilding are purely the domain of men. Some interviewees indicated that women tend to be neither interested nor self-confident about ongoing peace processes and their role therein. “Women’s exclusion from peace and political decision-making processes in OPT has undermined their interest in peace and politics more generally.” Sudanese WRO partners observed that “women tend to regard themselves as irrelevant actors in the peacebuilding field, which they have barely been involved in in the past.” Similar patterns are evident in Colombia. Here, according to a Colombian partner, a combination of “women grappling with low self-confidence in their leadership capacity and their care work duties to mitigate the impact of economic hardships has distracted them from strengthening their political influence. Supporting women in collectively formulating their citizens’ agendas has encouraged them to raise their voice in public and present themselves as political leaders with distinct positions.”

⁹¹ Report of RRW-WRO workshop, May 2023.

RRW support work generated significant change by increasing women’s self-confidence and self-perception as relevant peacemaking and peacebuilding actors. “Your support with me is one of the causes of my recent role and achievements”. Targeted training on research, advocacy, and political analysis skills were conducive in this regard. Beyond capacity strengthening, women peacebuilders highlighted the importance of facilitating channels to amplify their voices.

Awareness-raising exercises among Palestinian and Sudanese women made them realize that they have both legitimacy and the duty to be involved in contemporary and future local and national peacebuilding efforts. A partner from OPT noted that:

“ Young Palestinian women used RRW-funded training opportunities to develop their own political positions, which they have enthusiastically discussed with civil society organizations, politicians, and their communities. The project and associated training have turned its women beneficiaries into multipliers of dialogue and peace who are interested in actively shaping their people’s future, achieving internal reconciliation, and paving the way towards negotiations between OPT and Israel.”⁹²

At the time of writing this study, the ongoing war and the humanitarian disaster in Gaza have impeded and stopped those activities while the local women peacebuilders emphasize the need for a peace-development-humanitarian nexus approach with a focus on democracy, institution building, and human security.

RRW support to increase women’s self-confidence as peacebuilders, enhance women’s interest and ambitions to play a key role in peacemaking, advance women’s political analysis and dialogue skills, and help women to develop and implement joint advocacy plans have also contributed to preparing women to influence future peace processes and increase efforts to revive peace processes. A Libyan WRO used RRW support to conduct similar preparatory training activities with a view to potential future peace talks. In Libya, those activities have helped “Together We Build it” (TWBI) to become a visibly key expert on women’s participation during and beyond the RRW project phase. This bodes well for women’s visibility in any future peace process. It also strengthens TWBI’s medium- and long-term prospects of continuing their work.

VI.4 Requests for more flexibility in supporting WROs and women peacebuilders

WROs and women peacebuilders have long advocated the need for funding to be characterised by flexibility, trust, and willingness to take risks, especially when supporting local women’s groups and movements.⁹³ As previously mentioned, this implies flexibility in understanding, defining peace processes, and key phases for women’s influence. This also implies flexibility in adapting the activities to evolving contexts and resumption of violence or crisis. The RRW has striven since its inception to operationalise these principles deeply within its work. It has committed to gathering feedback from WROs and the feminist peacebuilding field on a regular basis to best respond to the needs and challenges of women working for inclusive peace.

⁹² This quote was recorded prior to the attacks of October 7 in Israel.

⁹³ Feminist financing consultations outcome document on the WPS-HA compact repository https://wpshacomcompact.org/?jet_download=498c74728e1a09bba08e9c13d71bb4f270c1d7e3 and the feminist financing paper: *FUND US LIKE YOU WANT US TO WIN: Feminist Solutions for more Impactful Financing for Peacebuilding* prepared together with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), Kvinna till Kvinna, MADRE, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) <https://www.gppac.net/resources/fund-us-you-want-us-win-feminist-solutions-more-impactful-financing-peacebuilding>.

In terms of scope, an interviewee from Kosovo reflected on how their envisioned RRW project extended beyond enhancing women’s influence over peacebuilding efforts to also promoting reconciliation in northern Kosovo through local inter-ethnic dialogue.

“ Reconciliation in northern Kosovo is stalled against the backdrop of tensions between Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian minority. Those regional tensions have undermined national political leaders’ willingness to normalise the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia...RRW support for physical inter-ethnic dialogue between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs in northern Kosovo will help to defreeze their relationship and provide an entry point for reconciliation. Regional tensions are expected to ease as a result, which will create a more conducive environment for dialogue and the full implementation of the 2023 Ohrid Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia.”

In addition, the RRW has supported an organisation with a regional, rather than national, focus in Kosovo. This makes RRW one of the very few hooks for innovative interventions to strengthen women’s meaningful participation in peace processes in contexts that receive little international attention.

“ Our organisation pursues a cross-border approach to promoting peacebuilding in the Balkans. However, we have struggled to secure funding for our regional focus in the past as donors normally support organisations who concentrate on one country. The RRW has been an exception. Its willingness to support us as a regional organisation demonstrates its effectiveness in responding to contemporary challenges to peace and security in the Balkans and the world more generally.” Partner from Kosovo

The RRW has also learned from the types of enquiries and requests it has received since its inception—not only from WROs, but also from UN Women Country Offices—that some flexibility in interpretations of what constitutes a peace process and what is needed to influence it is required if the window is to be truly supportive of WROs working on peacebuilding. The RRW is among the first funding mechanisms to implement this principle within the UN system. To do so, it has implemented several measures:

- ▷ Expanding the scope of the RRW to include stalled peace processes, aiming to break negotiation deadlocks or influence key actors to adopt gender provisions in peacebuilding efforts. For instance, this allowed the RRW to support proposals from Afghanistan, including after the takeover by the Taliban.
- ▷ Allowing simultaneous applications for both Direct Support and Short-Term Grants, when relevant, for WRO applicants. This offers opportunities for organizations to leverage their initiatives and amplify their impact. WROs can apply to both streams simultaneously and consecutively.
- ▷ Enabling applications for Direct Support from UN entities and INGO partners on behalf of WROs or an informal group of women peacebuilders.⁹⁴ This mechanism creates more opportunities to foster collaborations and leverage strategic entry points for women’s participation in peace processes.
- ▷ In cases of outbreaks of violence in supported countries, reprogramming grants for institutional support to ensure the continuity of organizations until projects can be relaunched. This enables organizations to maintain their operations until they can resume programmatic activities while adhering to “do no harm” principles. In OPT for instance, the RRW was supporting a consortium of three WROs. Following the attacks of 7 October 2023, and the subsequent increase in violence and escalation of the war, part of the funding was reallocated for institutional support, in accordance with WPHF’s grant-making principles and Board’s approval, to ensure the continuity of these organizations until the project can be relaunched.

⁹⁴ An applicant could benefit from a maximum of two DS requests per year.



VII. PERSPECTIVES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

After three years in the pilot phase, evidence shows the significant impact of the RRW in addressing the funding gaps for women peacebuilders and WROs to influence and participate in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements. The RRW's work not only shed light on the structural barriers to women's participation, but also helped address such barriers. It takes time to transform patriarchal norms and values that perpetuate male-dominated decision-making spaces, as well as women's extensive care duties that give them little time to engage in peace issues. However, the Direct Support from the RRW has facilitated access to peace negotiations for women and by doing so, has raised their visibility and demonstrated their capacities as peacemakers. This paper has highlighted the key role women have in the permeable borders between Track 1 and Track 2, as well as women peacebuilders' willingness and creativity to shape alternative peacebuilding strategies. The RRW has captured these trends based on projects implemented in several parts of the world, sharing strategies and alternatives to the traditional mediation model, with a specific lens on initiatives from grassroots women activists.

Throughout the pilot phase, partners have also consistently requested flexibility to address the complexity of peace processes. Through this unique partnership between United Nations entities, Member States, INGOs, and WROs, the RRW intends to provide opportunities across its various streams, particularly those aligned with RRW objectives. Flexibility in the scope of interventions and the evolving context of peace processes is prioritized throughout the entire partnership cycle with WROs and women peacebuilders. The RRW's interventions have also addressed challenges related to women's well-being as a critical factor in enhancing their participation. The RRW will continue to focus on both the protection and mental health of women peacemakers.

Building upon the successes achieved, the RRW is poised for an auspicious trajectory, commencing with the launch of its second phase in October 2024 through December 2027.

Sustaining the Phase 1 impacts is a priority for WRO partners. During interviews, they highlighted the importance of continued flexibility and creativity of the RRW during Phase 2 and offered several suggestions for the RRW to support efforts towards sustaining former initiatives. For instance, extending the timeframe of the grant beyond six months on an exceptional basis for promising initiatives with impact on increasing direct and active meaningful participation of women peacebuilders or for exceptional circumstances due to the context, connecting WROs with other peacebuilding actors, networks, or donors to learn about new funding opportunities, and providing technical fundraising support after the end of the support grant.

The RRW aims to build on existing efforts and structures to provide additional flexible and responsive funding for women's rights advocates, women peacebuilders, including young women-led civil society organizations. It aims to empower them to define their strategies and lead their initiatives, while amplifying their voices and building their capacity through the RRW partners and to leverage multi-partnership strengths for improved impact. Collaboration, coordination and communication among partners and actors will contribute to the effectiveness and reach of the initiatives undertaken through the RRW.

The upcoming phase entails activities strategically designed to provide more support to women WROs, develop a more targeted approach on youth participation in peace processes, enhance outreach and visibility, with a focus on emerging priority countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Europe, and South Asia. Moreover, this phase aims to coordinate initiatives from partners involved in peace processes and peace agreements and amplify global advocacy efforts aimed at increasing women's meaningful participation in peace processes. The RRW Unit will also be more engaged in advocacy initiatives through active participation in various events worldwide, all while highlighting the key supported actors. Additionally, the RRW Unit will deploy various tools to enhance the visibility of women peacebuilders' actions. An example of this is the podcast series on women peacebuilders, which will provide an opportunity to discuss the journeys and different experiences of these activists to not only inform but also inspire.

To achieve these goals, according to the RRW Unit's forecasts, for the 2024–2027 period, the funding mechanism will need approximately \$24,344,058. At least 100 Short-Term Grants and 50 Direct Support projects are expected to be supported. Four thousand women and youth peacebuilders are targeted as direct beneficiaries in a potential pool of at least 32 countries. The relevance of this funding mechanism is prominent amidst shrinking spaces for CSOs, especially WROs, and growing threats against peace activists, as well as patriarchal norms and regressive legislation that constrain their financial opportunities and programmatic freedom. Unfortunately, in a context of dwindling funding sources, the RRW is facing an urgent need for funding that jeopardizes its interventions and partnerships. It is crucial to support the RRW to continue strengthening the promising results observed during the pilot phase. In the meantime, we invite you to stay updated on RRW's work by visiting the WPHF webpage and following us on various social media channels.

About WPHF

The United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a UN pooled funding mechanism accelerating programmatic and institutional support for local women's civil society organizations and WHRDs working in crisis settings worldwide. WPHF is addressing critical financing gaps for local women-led and women's rights organizations on the front lines, fostering coalition building and breaking the silos across humanitarian-development peace financing. Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has funded over 1,300 local and grassroots civil society organizations across 44 countries, with close to half of its CSO partners receiving UN funding for the first time. Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has mobilized over 200 million USD in support of women civil society leaders and their local organizations working to prevent conflict, respond to crises, end sexual and gender-based violence, and forge lasting peace in their communities.

Learn more about WPHF and join the Invest-In-Women Global Campaign at WPHFund.org/InvestInWomen.

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ANNEX 1. Streams and selection process

Direct Support (up to 25 000 USD):

A Women’s rights organization (WRO) or a network of women peacebuilders requests a logistical and/or technical service (service duration up to six months) to ensure women’s meaningful participation in a peace process/peace agreement implementation.

WPHF covers the service costs directly.

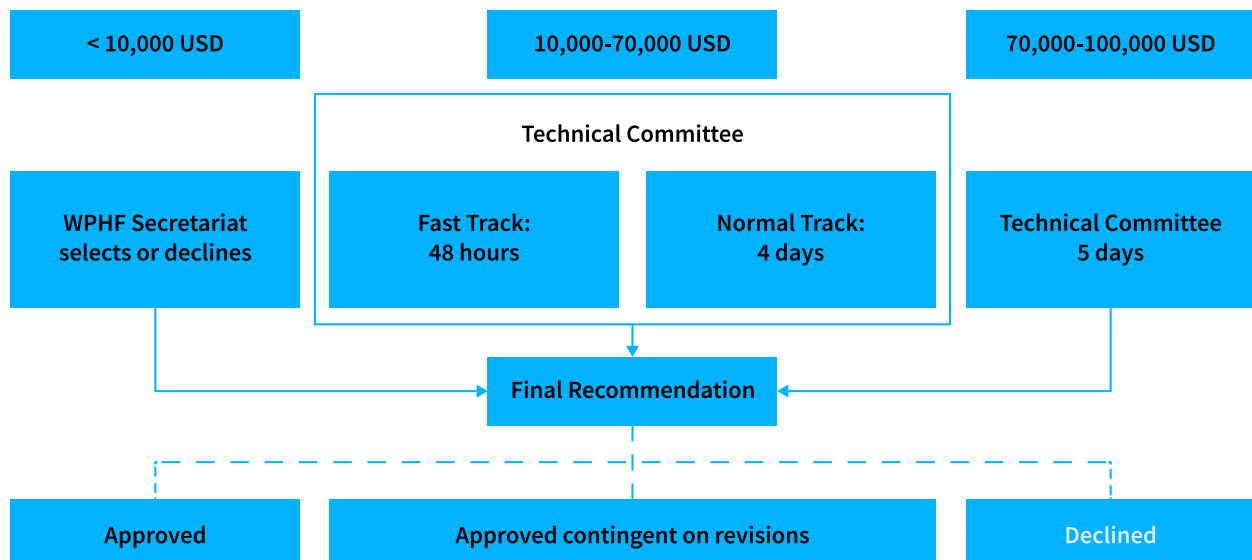
The WRO receives/uses the service to support its work on women’s influence and meaningful participation in peace processes or peace agreement implementation.

WRO does not need to be formally registered for the Direct Support stream.

Informal groups, including women’s associations and networks, are encouraged to apply.

Short-Term Grants (up to 100 000 USD):

A registered civil society organization requests a small grant to implement a project for up to six months addressing women’s meaningful participation in a formal peace process/peace agreement implementation. An INGO partner of the RRW Unit disburses and manages the grant (and provides technical assistance to the WRO if needed).



ANNEX 2.



WPHF - Rapid Response Window on Women's Participation in Peace Processes and the Implementation of Peace Agreements (RRW)

As of April 15, 2024

Proposals and Concer Notes Received 1,343	Countries Supported 28	CSOs Supported 135	Average length of projects 6 months	Types of CSOs 88.1% women's rights and/or led 2.4% youth focused and/or led	Total USD Mobilized \$ 15,824,083
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The Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), launched in 2016, mobilizes critical support for local and grassroots civil society organizations working on women, peace and security and humanitarian action. WPHF is a flexible and rapid financing mechanism supporting quality interventions designed to enhance the capacity of women to prevent conflict, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities. The Rapid Response Window on women's participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements was launched in 2020 based on the recommendation of the UNSG's October 2019 annual report on WPS and addresses a gap in urgent, practical support to increase women's participation in Track 1, Track 2 and implementation of formal peace processes.



Direct Support

Afghanistan-WHRDs
14 WHRDs evacuated/received visas
with WPHF-UNW-UNAMA support (Aug-Sept 2021)

19 WHRDs & 25 Dependents relocated to 10 countries
(funds disbursed and collected for travel emergency funds for evacuation, support through advocacy and coordination for evacuation) Oct 2021-Jan 2022
\$158,567

RRW Direct Support Recipients
31 direct support initiatives led by 62 CSOs and their co-implementing partners across 16 countries

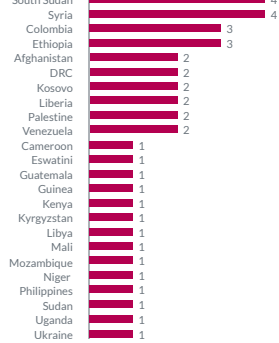
Afghanistan, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, D.R.C, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen

INGO Partners

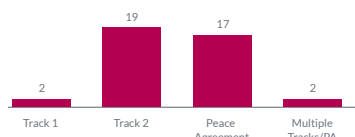


Short-Term Grants

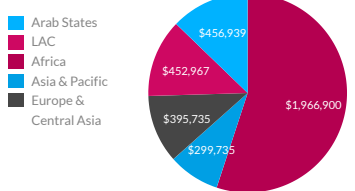
Approved Grants by Country (40)



Grants by type of Peace Process



Allocated by Region



Key Results (2023)

- 703 women peacebuilders and activists participated in Track I and Track II peace processes, negotiations or the implementation of peace agreements across 23 countries
- A total of 8,014 people (82.9% women) directly benefited from interventions and direct support from the CSOs and 33,548 people benefited indirectly through various outreach and social media interventions to influence peace agreements in their countries
- Evidence-based advocacy agenda, policy papers, strategic engagement action plans and studies channeling the needs of women peacebuilders and their recommendations on effective mechanisms to increase their influence on formal and informal peace processes, were developed and disseminated among the international community and key decision makers



WPHFund.org

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