

Women, Peace and Security

Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict and Complexity
EARTH INSTITUTE | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



Peace and Social Change Fellowship-Nairobi
Workshop Report **January 2019**

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Introduction

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) program is an education and research hub spearheading a transformative approach to addressing issues of women, peace and security. The program advances the visibility of and knowledge exchanges amongst grassroots women changemakers, both within the United States and globally, and disseminates lessons learned from their experiences through fellowship programs, graduate internships, research and public convenings.

The three key goals of the WPS program reflect a commitment to producing real-world impacts through education and research:

VISIBILITY	EDUCATION	RESEARCH
To increase the visibility of grassroots women peacebuilders as experts without increasing risk.	To expand and transform the approach to women, peace and security at Columbia, the UN, and beyond.	To document, foster and forward innovative and participatory women, peace and security research, policies and practices.

In working towards these goals, the WPS program brings together women peacebuilders from various parts of the world with faculty and students from Columbia University and other institutions through a bi-annual fellowship program. This Peace and Social Change Fellowship program is designed to generate knowledges, build skills, strengthen relationships and exchange strategies amongst frontline advocates and organizers working on various issues of justice and genuine security for all people. The fellowship program has two main goals that are aligned with WPS program goals- one, to create a participatory space for collaborative engagement among its participants in order to facilitate cross learning; and two, to increase visibility of the diverse kinds of peace work being done by participants in their communities.

Through the fellowship program, the WPS program aims to enhance current peace and security research and education by, a) building a grassroots understanding of peace and security that captures the complex processes and knowledges that make peacebuilding possible and sustainable and, b) generating a more expansive understanding of peace and security work, including the domains of political, economic, social, cultural, personal and ideological security.

Peace and Social Change Fellowship Pilot

In January 2019, the first workshop of the pilot Peace and Social Change Fellowship program was convened by the WPS program in collaboration with the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY) and the Columbia Global Center in Nairobi, Kenya. This pilot workshop in Nairobi marked the beginning of the fellowship period and brought together women peacebuilders leading diverse forms of peace and security work in five African countries: Cameroon, Ghana,

Kenya, South Sudan and Zimbabwe. Together, they collaboratively created a workshop aimed at strengthening and sustaining each other's peace work by sharing their peace and security expertise across countries, contexts and organizations. The three-day workshop served to generate and share knowledges, strengthen skills and begin a six-month collaboration while building networked relationships between the participating organizations and with Columbia University's Women, Peace and Security program.

Prior to the workshop, five fellowship participants, or 'Fellows', were chosen from a large and diverse pool of applicants from countries across Africa through a highly selective process. **Taking an innovative approach to the very concept of 'fellowships', the selected Fellows were invited to bring a team of collaborators from their respective organizations to the workshop.** This was done for three reasons:

- 1) To recognize the fact that collectives rather than sole individuals drive and create positive social change;
- 2) To highlight the expertise of a diverse group of grassroots women activist participants and center their contributions in program design and implementation;
- 3) To foster greater collaboration and knowledge sharing among participants at various levels within each participating organization.

In the first convening, the workshop brought together five groups of participants from: *Crown the Woman (CREW)*, South Sudan; *Hope for the Needy (HOFNA)*, Cameroon; *Coast Women in Development (CWID)*, Kenya; *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)*, Ghana; and, *Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD)*, Zimbabwe.

The Peace and Social Change Fellowship participants engage in peace work in myriad ways in their organizations through projects dealing with issues such as: demilitarization and deradicalization, gender-based and sexual violence, socio-economic empowerment of women and youth, community and women's health, sexual and reproductive rights, education for women and girls and educational reform, mentorship and leadership training for young women and girls, environmental issues, increasing women's participation in political processes and more.

This report highlights key elements of the participatory planning and implementation stages of the pilot workshop, including its methodology, outcomes and an overview of the adaptive learning and evaluation model employed by the WPS program.



Workshop participants, from L to R: Sitting- Susy Auma, Nabath Paska-Alfred, Gillian Chinzete, Loren Cahill, Bantar Rinyu, Varna Joseph, Hannah Yore. Standing, Row 1- Jennet Nfoh, Mercy Osei- Onadu, Racheal Kavata, Munteh Florence Chea, Margaret Sedziafa, Varnica Arora, Linah Kakuphi, Constance Mushayi, Martha Mutisi, Tatenda Madziro, Leymah Gbowee, Ayo Ayoola-Amale, Mikaela Luttrell-Rowland, Padini Nirmal, Nuria Abdi, Chongwain Bay, Ruth Ochieng; Row 2- Mary Juan, Riya Yuyada, Betty Sharon

Workshop Design & Implementation

The agenda for the Peace and Social Change Workshop was created via participatory engagement through preliminary surveys and follow-up scoping phone calls with all the participants. The ideas, themes and needs, identified through initial surveys and the subsequent calls, were used to shape the workshop agenda through a process of collaborative design involving the workshop's co-facilitators, renowned feminist activists and scholars, Ruth Ochieng (Uganda), Martha Mutisi (Zimbabwe/Kenya) and Nuria Abdi (Kenya). The preliminary workshop agenda included several unique and innovative participatory processes catered towards achieving three goals – increasing visibility without increasing risk, creating a critical learning community fostering peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and building solidarity and alliances between participating organizations.

On the eve of the workshop, January 15, the urgency of peace and security work became imminent when the terrorist organization al-Shabab initiated attacks in the Westlands neighborhood of Nairobi, Kenya. As this was in close proximity to the workshop venue, the WPS team and the participants began the first workshop day from within a state of temporary 'lockdown'. Over the course of the workshop, the violence and sense of insecurity in the area had significant bearing on our collective commitment to the sphere of women, peace and security and to each other.

Aligned with the three program goals, the participating organizations engaged in a collaborative exercise of visual storytelling we termed 'Building and Narrating Peace Walls'. Each group created a visual narrative of their peace work using a variety of physical objects, artifacts and printed materials, showcasing a marked diversity in outreach techniques and communication methods employed by the organizations. For instance, the IYWD team from Zimbabwe brought samples of their campaign



Participants from *Crown the Woman* and *Coast Women in Development* create their Peace Walls

t-shirts from a range of years to showcase their youth outreach mechanisms. Likewise, the HOFNA team from Cameroon brought a suitcase full of canvases of artwork made by the young girls they work with in their mentorship program, depicting their experiences of gender oppressions and their hopes and dreams for equitable futures.

After creating the Peace Walls, participants took turns narrating the story of their organization's peace and security work, creating an opportunity for sharing current practices and techniques, and opening up a space for cross learning between the participating groups. **This exercise provided an expansive visual overview of what peace and security**

work looks like at the grassroots level in five diverse contexts. In doing so, the Peace Walls captured meanings of peace and security work ranging from gender-aware educational programming, gender-sensitive leadership training for youth, sustainable agriculture, Tuk-Tuk ambulance programs, community and public health, women's health and sexual and reproductive rights, anti-drone lobbying and advocacy, employing visual arts techniques for development communications, gender-based and sexual violence and socio-economic empowerment strategies.

Margaret Sedziafa, a WILPF-Ghana member, captured the meaning and impact of these Peace Walls in her post-workshop survey:

“ An interesting activity undertaken was building of (the) Peace Walls by the different country participants to showcase their programme of work in a pictorial form. Items such as reports, newsletters, magazines, t-shirts, banners, leaflets, images, paintings and news clippings were displayed on our walls. The purpose was to tell our stories in a picture form. Team members of each country walked participants through their walls from inception of the organization to its current status. ”



Photo of the Peace Wall created by the HOFNA team

Not only did participants present an alternate vision of grassroots peace and security work, they also engaged in a process of shared learning through a series of thematically-focused small group discussions on the second workshop day. In these discussions, participants recorded their collaborative learning on posters about a range of topics that emerged through the scoping phone calls during the participatory planning process. These topics included: ‘strategies to respond to gender-based violence’, ‘strategies for increasing women’s political participation in peace processes’, ‘creative and innovative strategies for resource mobilization and organizational sustainability’, and ‘the role of women in dealing with violent extremism, and effective strategies for countering violent extremism’. Through their contributions, participants shared their expertise on key strategies and techniques in navigating complex opportunities and challenges in peace and security work with one another.

Columbia Global Center-Nairobi’s director, Dr. Murugi Ndirangu, and their communications coordinator, Ann Grosskurth, joined the participants to learn more about the scope and depth of their peace work and social justice programming. Through their engagements, the participants also had the opportunity to further their cross learning and forge new connections with the Global Center team.

Following the events of the second day, the participants gathered together in the early evening for a screening of ‘Pray the Devil Back to Hell.’ Showcasing how the grassroots mobilizations and activism of women such as Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee fueled the end of the dictatorship in Liberia, the film allowed the participants to unburden themselves and connect the personal to the political in profound ways. Through an emotional viewing and discussion, participants shared their intimate experiences of war, conflict and insecurity, and reflected collectively on the critical work of building and sustaining peace in their communities and countries. In this way, film also evoked and strengthened a sense of community among the participants.

On the final day of the workshop, the participants brainstormed with their organizational teams about how to shape their collaborative projects with the WPS program’s graduate student interns. In conversations between the WPS team and the participants, each team presented a customized articulation of what they hoped to learn and gain over the six-month fellowship period.

Key Themes to Emerge from Shared Participatory Learning

THEME ONE:

The ways in which the 'grassroots work' of each participating organization extends far beyond direct service alone.

“ One [of our] focus areas is health and in health we do advocacy on comprehensive healthcare...Especially in response to GBV, HIV/AIDS and we also work closely with the county government of Mombasa in designing policy on health...We are working towards gender sensitive service delivery especially in hospitals...The whole dynamic needs to be looked at...policy, plans of action, advocacy, mobilization, capacity building, documentation, research, monitoring and evaluation, and [we need to] connect all [of] these...”

—Betty Sharon, CWID, Kenya

“ We are currently in the third phase of implementing our national advocacy plan against the use and proliferation of killer robots. We have just met with several parliamentarians and local leaders to get this done.”

—Margaret Sedziafa, WILPF-Ghana

“ The government campaign against extremism in Kenya did not speak about women as an important force (in combating extremism). It spoke about three pillars of youth, religion, men. We disagreed. In Mombasa county, CWID advocated for including “women” as a key pillar and it was eventually included.”

—Betty Sharon, CWID, Kenya

In conventional accounts about ‘development’ work, grassroots organizations are often understood primarily as those offering direct services. In the case of organizations working on issues of gender-based violence, for instance, this may take the form of psychological and legal counseling, filing police reports, accompanying victims of violence to health centers/hospitals and so on. However, the participating organizations present a challenge to this limited view and disrupt the understanding that grassroots organizations work solely in the sphere of direct service with communities at the ‘grassroots’ level. Several of the participating organizations, for instance, work on gender-based violence advocacy and domestic violence legislation alongside other direct services, making advocacy and policy change a part of their regular operational agenda.

While all of the participating organizations position themselves as ‘grassroots’ organizations and engage with a wide range of communities on a regular basis, they also work at multiple levels in advocacy, policy, direct service and political organizing. However, while they highlight their work on the direct service front, much of their work involving other institutions, including the state, often remains invisible at first glance. Making visible the policy, advocacy and governance elements of their engagements challenges this limited interpretation of ‘grassroots work’ and offers the chance to reexamine and expand the latter notion to include a much broader and wider scope of possibility and praxis.

THEME TWO

The need for increased documentation to showcase and make visible the breadth and range of women's peace work and organizing, especially as it is based on a complex understanding of the structural barriers to sustainable peace.

“ ...peace building [is] not just about post-conflict reconstruction but [it is] quite broad to include issues of young women's participation in decision-making processes, young women's political participation, women's access to land, social services and human rights.”

—Gillian Chinzete, IYWD, Zimbabwe

“ We all define peace in our own way. For some of us it means silencing the gun, for others it is allowing the children to go to school.”

—Riya Yuyada, CREW, South Sudan

The workshop participants articulated a complex understanding of peace work, identifying structural ties between issues of economic, political, social and personal security, and thus orient much of their programming towards these diverse domains. However, much of the work being done by the participating organizations is neither documented nor reported to public audiences, because of institutional constraints that direct their reporting towards the immediate demands of donors and funders. As a result, as several participants noted, there are real and mitigating constraints to be navigated. One, only a small portion of the work done by each of these organizations is reported on their website, as a direct outcome of not having enough time to update the website on a periodic basis. Two, some of the organizations' campaigns and events are reported on different social media platforms but do not converge on any one platform. For instance, some of the work involving youth is regularly reported and advertised on the organizations' Facebook pages, but is not recorded on their Twitter platforms or on their websites. Three, there is a push from donors and funders to report on certain outcomes, which skews documentation and reporting in favor of donor-focused reporting, rather than internal learning, or community learning and dissemination.



Workshop participants gathered together during the workshop

At the same time, several organizations (such as *Hope for the Needy*, *Institute for Young Women's Development* and *Crown the Woman*) currently employ social media strategies for documentation and outreach, but have little time to focus on building their organizational and work profiles on these platforms. This points to a tension for many organizations when it comes to questions of 'visibility', where putting resources towards building organizational visibility might mean diverting resources away from community

outreach. Additionally, participants also reflected together on the implications of this bind, when they shared their difficulties in finding time to post updates on their websites, versus attending to the everyday demands and constraints of doing peace and security work in vulnerable communities. This lack of sufficient time poses a significant challenge to increasing their documentation and visibility themselves. Bolstering and supporting their efforts to increase visibility through increased documentation and research of complex peace and security work, hence, continues to be a key goal of the fellowship program.

THEME THREE

Creating a platform for horizontal engagement across movements is needed, especially while working within a dominant development framework that often pits organizational sustainability against the peacebuilder's collective and community responsibility.

“ The three days [were] worthwhile. We learned a lot of information and knowledge from our peers. The conversations were genuine in that they spoke to real life realities. Such conversations sustain advocacy initiatives. ”

—Gillian Chinzete, IYWD, Zimbabwe

“ From my peers, I learned new strategies for responding to gender-based violence in communities. This involves training paralegals and the police on effective referrals, training village elders, police, judiciary, teachers, CBOs and religious leaders on handling and referring SGBV (sexual gender-based violence) cases and working with sexual offenders to end SGBV, engaging young women in decision-making processes in traditional courts where cases of GBV are addressed. This has built on our strategy and will help us maximize outreach in addressing GBV. ”

—Christelle Bay, HOFNA, Cameroon

One of the key aims of the fellowship program is to create a shared learning community among participating peacebuilders. This is primarily based on the recognition that while building productive spaces for collaboration and knowledge exchange among diverse groups of peacebuilders stands to strengthen efforts towards creating and sustaining peace for all, these spaces are often hard to create and maintain, given the demands of a competitive donor-oriented NGO economy.

The shared learning community created at the workshop had two particular features—one, participants at multiple levels within each organization shared different kinds of knowledges and strategies which fostered diverse knowledge and skill exchanges across various operational and conceptual domains. Two, the workshop included learning-focused activities such as the Peace Walls and small group discussions that facilitated significant cross learning among the participants. For instance, after the team from Cameroon, HOFNA, outlined their art-based outreach strategies while presenting their Peace Walls, several other teams expressed their interest in exploring such a strategy in their work to reach more youth in their communities. The value added by this shared space to the workshop was marked, particularly as participants inspired each other with their creative and unique ideas and strategies.

Additionally, by engaging with one another through sessions and informal activities during the workshop, participants also responded to each other's organizational challenges, particularly with regard to navigating complex development funding and discussed the issue of resource mobilization in significant detail. One participant, inspired by the Kenyan team, CWID's stories about their successful alliances with local government and other regional partners, remarked that they had subsequently

developed a more expansive understanding of the term, ‘resources’. This new understanding encompassed ‘resources’ beyond monetary resources, especially, noting the value of developing strategic alliances and expanding support networks as a form of resourcefulness. Similarly, other participants expressed their desire to explore alternative strategies for organizational sustainability in response to the HOFNA team’s story of successfully using agriculture as an income-generating programming strategy.

While navigating the world of development funding often means competing for donors’ attention and resources, by engaging with one another as co-participants in a broader community of women peacebuilders working toward the same end of creating and sustaining peace in their communities, participants broadened each other’s imaginations and inspired one another to maintain organizational sustainability while fulfilling their community responsibilities.

Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MLE)

MLE Strategy and Approach

Aligned with the three key WPS program goals of *visibility, education* and *research*, the monitoring, learning and evaluation strategy is based on a participatory framework that bolsters the WPS program’s paradigm of ethical engagement with women changemakers from around the world. Hence the key goals of the MLE strategy are to create, support and learn from participatory processes and to further collective and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing among women peacebuilders.

The Peace and Social Change Fellowship program is designed using a participatory MLE approach and is bookended by two in-person workshops in Nairobi, Kenya, with six months of remote engagement in-between, during which the participants continue to build and engage in a critical learning community (Figure 1). During the six months after the first workshop, participants co-create a web-based *Living Archive* to foster knowledge and skill exchanges, and to build community through networked communications across geographies and contexts. The participants also engage with one another and the WPS team through live webinars, scheduled calls and continued email exchanges to both solicit continued participation and create and maintain an intentional and responsive feedback loop. The fellowship program is bolstered by a complementary internship program that engages graduate students through participatory research processes to respond to the needs of the women peacebuilders. Through the internship program, students not only have the opportunity to engage in applied research, but also to expand their own learning about the women, peace and security field through direct partnership and collaborations.

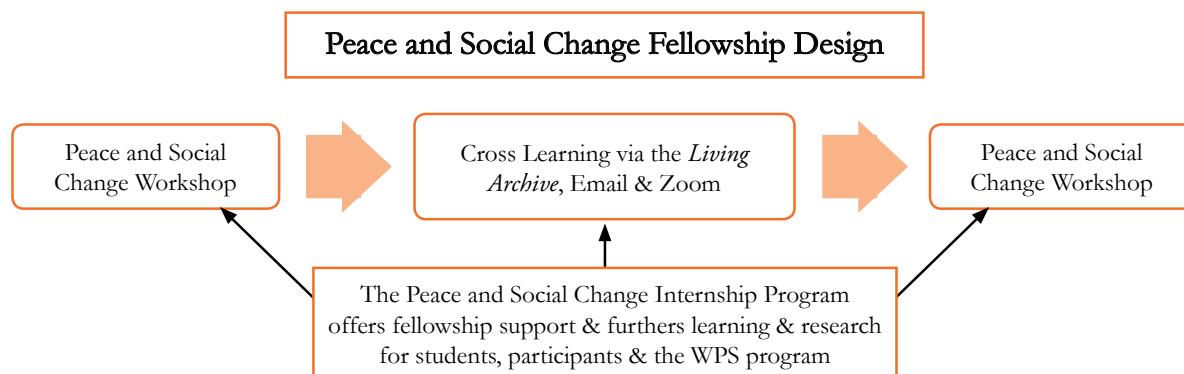


Figure 1: Peace and Social Change Fellowship Design

The participatory monitoring, learning and evaluation strategy of the WPS program thus involves designing, monitoring, learning from, evaluating and re-designing (based on the results of evaluation and learning) each of the fellowship components depicted in the above diagram (workshops, the Living Archive, intern engagement, participatory research etc.).

Post-Workshop Reflections and Learning

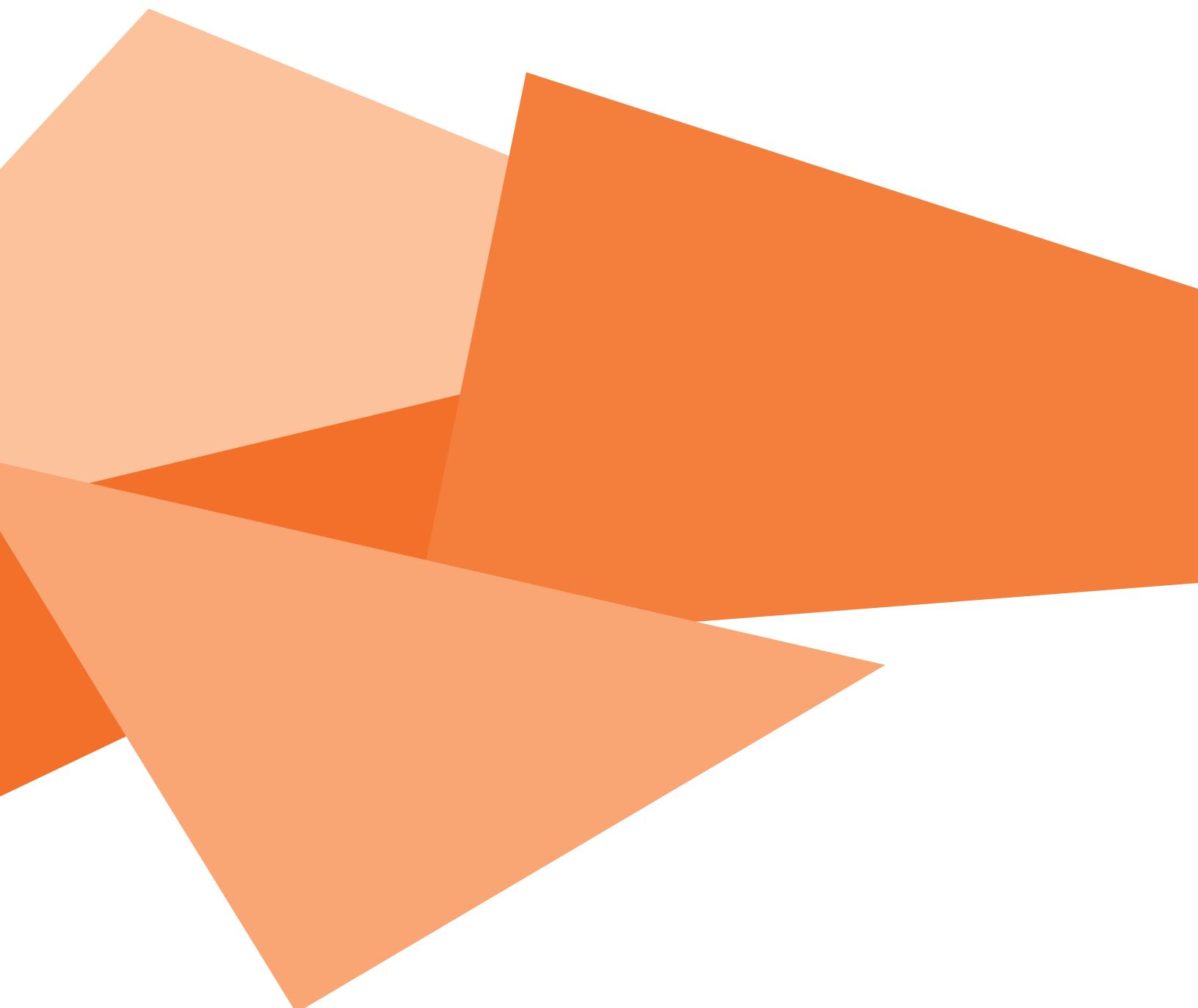
The lessons from this workshop were significant in terms of shaping our collective understanding of the breadth, depth, and complexity of peace and security work. The workshop also served to create a sense of community among the participants, which will continue to shape our engagements in the months to come. Several participants reflected on their daily experiences of collective learning and sharing during the workshop's closing and opening circles using words and phrases such as, 'I am glad to meet so many of my sisters and learn about their work', 'it was great to learn more about my sister from Cameroon', 're-energizing', 'feeling inspired', and 'feeling strengthened'. At the same time, the workshop also allowed for a collective re-imagining of key concepts and strategies within peace and security work, such as the meaning of 'peacebuilding' and 'resource mobilization', the role of men in effective peacebuilding, the role of the state in creating and sustaining peace in communities, ways to build and reimagine alliances and partnerships and ways to expand local and national partners beyond those with immediate shared interests.

Peace and Social Change Workshop Attendees

Nuria Abdi, Chairperson, Wajir Peace University Trust
Varnica Arora, Graduate Student Intern, The City University of New York
Susy Auma, Field Officer, Coast Women in Development
Ayo Ayoola-Amale, President, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF-Ghana)
Chongwain Bay, Founder, Hope for the Needy Association
Loren Cahill, Graduate Student Intern, The City University of New York
Munteh Florence Chea, Program Manager, Hope for the Needy Association
Gillian Chinzete, Acting Director and Program Leader, Institute for Young Women's Development
Leymah Gbowee, Executive Director, Women, Peace and Security Program
Varna Joseph, Team Leader, Crown the Woman
Mary Juan, School Mentor, Crown the Woman
Linah Kakuphi, Field Officer, Coast Women in Development
Racheal Kavata, Director of Board, Coast Women in Development
Mikaela Luttrell-Rowland, Director, Women, Peace and Security Program
Tatenda Madziro, Program Assistant, Institute for Young Women's Development
Constance Mushayi, Membership Officer, Institute for Young Women's Development
Martha Mutisi, Board Member, Peacebuilding & Community Development Foundation
Jennet Nfoh, Project Coordinator, Hope for the Needy Association
Padini Nirmal, Learning and Evaluation Program Manager, Women, Peace and Security Program
Ruth Ochieng, Board Member, Association of Women, Human Rights and Development
Mercy Osei-Onadu, Vice-President, WILPF-Ghana
Nyaboth Paska Alfred, Gender-Based Violence Project Officer, Crown the Woman
Bantar Rinyu, Project Coordinator, Hope for the Needy Association
Margaret Sedziafa, Treasurer, WILPF-Ghana
Betty Sharon, Director, Coast Women in Development
Hannah Yore, Program Coordinator, Women, Peace and Security Program
Riya Yuyada, Founder, Crown the Woman

The Women, Peace and Security Program

The Earth Institute's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) program, led by Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee, contributes to greater global and regional understanding of the diverse roles women play to successfully influence sustainable peace and promote human security through everyday activism. Through education, public service and research, the WPS program advances the visibility of and knowledge exchanges among women changemakers, domestically and internationally, and disseminates lessons learned from their experiences. The core beliefs and principles of the program are: 1) Grassroots women peacebuilders and frontline activists employ a diverse range of strategies and practices to forward and sustain justice in their communities. Often, such work is not recognized or named as peace work. 2) Security is more than armed conflict and war, and includes issues of everyday safety like access to clean water, affordable housing, and bodily autonomy. 3) Expanded recognition of peace and security requires that we must not look only to war zones, but also to a range of contexts, places and spaces, including the United States. 4) New analytical tools are needed to understand what 'counts' as women's participation in peace activism across the globe.



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