

On Thursday 29 October 2015, the International Institute for Peace Education hosted a panel panel at the [Peace Forum](#), on, “People’s Action Plans: Empowering Civil Society to Implement 1325.” Participants included: Betty Reardon (International Institute for Peace Education), Asha Hans (Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre & Women with Disabilities, India), Kozue Akibayashi (WILPF), and Nicole Goodwin (Veterans Against the Iraq War).

Betty Reardon opened the panel by condemning the failure of governments to accept action plans for WPS, at any level, with forward action towards implementation. She addressed the ‘foot-dragging’ reluctance of states to draft action plans that take into account the needs of women on the ground. In addition to National Action Plans, people need to plan themselves and take action to work with grassroots actors and strengthen the movement. This includes regional plans, and alternatives to NAPs with the hope that local strategies will find themselves into full legal structures.

Panelist Asha Hans from Pakistan addressed the issue of security of women on borders, particularly contested borders. She lamented that NAPs often ignore people on the borders, refugees, and those moving because of globalisation. (This concern echoed Dr. Melissa Torres’s presentation at WILPF US’s panel on the localisation of 1325.) Women in contested border zones often suffer plurality of identity, with no commonality of state, religion or agency. Ms Hans then shifted to discussing the concept of a People’s Action Plan. She suggested that the patriarchal state cannot understand NAPs because of the centrality of women. In most countries NAPs come from the government and have no link to grassroots actors. She called for a paradigm shift, making it possible to have an action plan without the state. A People’s Action Plan would be bottom-up, making a state accountable and promoting human security. PAPs could also promote transnationalism and work across borders, going back to her original point about WPS challenges in border areas.

WILPF International President Kozue Akibayashi argued for the creation of a People’s Action Plan by using the example of WPS in Okinawa and the creation of a Japanese NAP. Ms. Akibayashi has worked on the issue of long-term military presence and its effect on the local community in Okinawa. She challenged that NAPs do not intend to demilitarize security, rather they are militarizing women’s security. The Japanese NAP does not include Okinawan women’s groups or other women’s groups in Asia/the Pacific. Areas with a high military presence that are not active conflict zones, such as Okinawa, are not addressed. Despite CSO consultation, the government ended up presenting the NAP without input from CSOs and with the term ‘gender’ excluded in the Japanese language version. Civil society had been pushing for language on foreign military presence and sexual violence, which was taken out of the final NAP. This story demonstrates how the process of creating a NAP can be highly political and important, controversial issues may be left out. Therefore a People’s Action Plan is a better option for CSOs to make their priorities heard.

Nicole Goodwin (Veterans Against the Iraq War) shared her experience as an Iraq war veteran who was part of what she now sees as war crimes, and who is now raising her voice against war. She brought attention to the violence both conducted by the military and the violence women in the military experience such as military rape. Her intervention highlighted the importance of mobilising across movements and creating people’s action plans based on diverse experience and action on nonviolent mobilising for gender equality and peace.

