



GNWP

The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders



Focus Group Discussion Report for the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Survey

Civil Society Input to the Global Study
on Women, Peace and Security

May 2015

Acknowledgements

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), The International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG) and Cordaid thank the following members and partners whose effort and contributions have made this report possible:

- 1325 Policy Group, Sweden
- Afghan Women's Network, Afghanistan
- African Women's Active Nonviolence Initiatives for Social Change (AWANICH), Ghana
- Coalición 1325, Colombia
- Coalition for Action 1325 (CoACT 1325), Uganda
- Dea Dia, Serbia
- Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS), Norway
- Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), UK
- Kayan Feminist Organization, Israel
- Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES), Guatemala
- Permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise (CAFCO), DRC
- Rwanda Women's Network, Rwanda
- Saathi, Nepal
- The Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE Act 1325), Philippines
- WO=MEN, the Netherlands

We hope the report will inform the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security and will help ensure that CSO voices and priorities are adequately reflected in it.

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Executive Summary

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Report is based on findings from **17 FGDs** and **one international 1325 expert conference**, held in **16 countries** with **over 200** participants.¹ The report informs the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security, called by UNSCR 2122 to "highlight examples of good practice, implementation gaps and challenges, and priorities for action," to ensure that civil society voices are adequately reflected in the study.

The promise of UNSCR 1325 cannot be realized without the full participation of civil society activists—a view shared at the global and local level alike. Just as the Global Study team coordinated by UN Women has explicitly sought input from women's groups around the world through this initiative and others, so have participants of the FGDs echoed their fervent desire to have their views, concerns and recommendations feed into the Global Study. Civil society lobbied for the adoption of UNSCR 1325, contributed to its drafting and has stood at the forefront of its implementation, so its voice is a powerful contribution to the Global Study. This report consolidates and presents the results of the FGDs.

The FGDs also raised awareness among CSOs around the world of the High-Level Review on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Global Study and the CSO Survey. Furthermore, they provided a safe and collaborative experience for CSOs to exchange views on issues related to their work on Women, Peace and Security. Finally, the focus group discussions served as a tool to recognize and galvanize women's groups doing important work on women, peace and security on the ground, despite the many challenges they face.

The report found that although WPS resolutions are generally perceived as useful tools, their **implementation is severely lacking in most countries**. Some of the key challenges include: lack of funding or ineffective funding, following donors' priorities rather than the reality on the ground; lack of communication and coordination among actors, including between the UN and civil society; general detachment from local realities in UNSCR 1325 implementation; insufficient effort to advance women's status within societies and involve men in WPS work.

The report also found that sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and women's participation in peace-building and political processes attract the most international attention and funding, although the funds are not always disbursed or used effectively. **Little attention is given to conflict prevention, comprehensive peacebuilding and**

¹ The FGD report also incorporates relevant findings from the 2015 The Netherlands - Civil Society input prepared by WO=MEN drafted on the basis of Civil society input during the international 1325 expert conference held on 16th and 17th February 2015 in Amsterdam and The Netherlands Civil Society Monitoring report Global Network Women Peace Builders 2014.

conflict management at the community level, despite the fact that civil society organizations are often active in these areas.

Introduction

This report has been prepared based on other reports from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), conducted by civil society networks and organizations selected by Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) and Cordaid. The FGDs were held in 16 countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guatemala, Israel, Nepal, Norway, the Philippines, Rwanda, Serbia, South Sudan, Sweden, Uganda and the United Kingdom. Additional input was received from WO=MEN, the Dutch Gender Platform.

Key Findings

Perceptions of UNSCR 1325

1.1. UNSCR is a useful and potentially powerful tool for uniting stakeholders to develop a comprehensive operational framework for the protection and empowerment of women and girls.

1.2. Weak implementation of UNSCR 1325 hampers its potential.

Conflict Prevention

2.1. Conflict prevention is a key element enabling WPS work and positive impact on women's lives, yet it is often overlooked and underfunded.

2.2. Women's leadership can play an important role in conflict prevention. Good practices include community-level engagement, inclusive peace-building and early warning.

Women's Rights to Participation and Representation

3.1. Women's participation in decision-making directly benefits women and girls; however, their representation in decision-making, security sector and peace processes remains low and hampered by marginalization of their voices and discrimination.

3.2. Women's participation faces cultural, political and security obstacles, including harmful stereotypes, lack of political will and international support and sexual violence and threats.

3.3. Good practices in addressing the obstacles to women's participation in decision-making include training for women, advocacy and awareness-raising and engagement with women and men at grassroots level.

Protection and Promotion of Women's Rights

4.1. Protection and promotion of women's rights faces challenges stemming from cultural barriers and weak legislative frameworks.

4.2. These problems are not new; however, there is much need for innovative solutions to resolving them. Some good practices include awareness-raising, including men in SGBV-related work and comprehensive support for SGBV victims.

4.3. Work on protection and promotion of rights of women and girls receives the most interest and funding from international donors. Yet, to increase the effectiveness of activities aimed at protecting women's rights, the efforts should be done more broadly, beyond SGBV, and include protection of women's human rights activists and their access to justice.

Peacekeeping and Security Forces

5.1. Militarized responses to conflict pose a challenge to WPS implementation, as securitization of societies poses a threat to women and girls and limits democratic space for civil society to speak up.

5.2. More attention and resources should be devoted to peace-building and conflict prevention and less to militarized responses. Gender perspective and human security should be incorporated into security sector policies.

Justice and Accountability

6.1. Lack of access to justice and impunity can hinder realization of the WPS agenda. Weak judicial institutions, a culture of impunity and a disconnect between local communities and international justice institutions all pose a challenge in this regard.

6.2. Access to justice can be improved by strengthening national and regional legal tools and providing legal assistance to women to empower them to seek justice.

Peacebuilding and Recovery

7.1. Peacebuilding offers the ability to promote women as agents of change, rather than as victims. Yet, women's participation in peacebuilding and recovery is impeded by lack of gender-sensitive planning and evaluation.

7.2. Economic empowerment and transforming power relations are key elements of rebuilding post-conflict societies. Women's participation in these processes should be ensured by a strong Sustainable Development Goal on peace.

Key Actors on WPS, Collaboration and Coordination

8.1. Many actors are involved in the realization of the WPS agenda, so the importance of effective cooperation and communication between them must be emphasized.

8.2. National governments are important actors in implementing WPS agenda due to, among other things, their role in adopting and implementing National Action Plans. They should ensure good coordination of WPS efforts and work closely with civil society.

8.3. National governments often show lack of political will and limit the democratic space for civil society.

8.4. Civil society collaboration with the UN has been particularly challenging due to bureaucracy, lack of accessibility and other cumbersome procedures.

Emerging Issues Affecting WPS

9.1. The rapidly changing global landscape has affected women's situations and the efforts to implement WPS agenda globally. Global financial crisis, terrorism and counter-terrorism and health pandemics all affect work on WPS.

Key Recommendations

The Focus Group Discussions identified important key challenges and best practices in implementing the different aspects of UNSCR 1325, as well as recommended ways to improve implementation going forward.

In the context of the 15th anniversary of the Resolution and the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security, it is particularly important to pay attention to certain **challenges that exist across the board -- in all countries and all aspects of implementation**. Here is a summary of these cross-cutting challenges, as identified by FGD participants, as well as the **key recommendations** they offered regarding effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 now and in the future.

Financing of the WPS Agenda

Insufficient funding and **ineffective allocation** were overwhelmingly indicated as major problems in UNSCR 1325 implementation.

Lack of funding was cited as a particular challenge by FGDs in *Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, DRC, Ghana, Guatemala, Israel, Nepal, Norway, the Philippines, Serbia, South Sudan, Sweden* and *Uganda*. FGD participants therefore stressed the **difficulty of securing core funding** as well as **long-term funding**.

Ineffective funding allocation was noted by FGDs in *Burundi, DRC, Ghana, Guatemala, Israel, the Netherlands, Nepal, the Philippines, Serbia, South Sudan* and *Uganda*. In this context, FGD participants emphasized donors' heavy focus on numerical targets and "quantity rather than quality" (*Nepal*); money given to think tanks and large organizations rather than to grassroots entities (*Serbia*); uncoordinated and erratic

"Many donors are only interested in ticking the number of programs accomplished rather than the quality and impact of the program."

- FGD in **Nepal**

"Due to lack of resources, there exist tensions between CSOs, which prevent them from building partnerships and coordinating activities."

- FGD in **Guatemala**

funding; shifting donor interests making long-term projects impossible; and the problem with CSOs becoming donor-driven rather than community-driven (*the Philippines*). Participants in *Guatemala* also noted that the project-based model of international financial support fuels competition among organizations, which often puts community indigenous groups at a disadvantage.

Therefore, the following actions need to be taken to ensure more effective allocation of funding:

- **All actors should commit to developing a new, more rapid and community-responsive mechanism to provide quality technical support and funding for long-term efforts** toward national implementation of commitments under UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2010).
- **Civil society, the UN, governments, donors and the private sector should cooperate to exchange knowledge and experiences toward generating innovative methods to address challenges to financing WPS implementation.** Such a new mechanism will also ensure transparency and accountability in resource generation, usage and management.
- **The UN needs to ensure civil society participation in decision-making, particularly related to the allocation of resources for WPS work.** Fifty percent of funds received need to be allocated for the work of civil society as proposed by CSOs involved in the discussions on the Global Acceleration Instrument on WPS.
- **The UN, member states, and other international organizations should support the Global Acceleration Instrument (GAI) on women, peace and security to be launched in October 2015, as called for by the FGD participants in the Netherlands.**

"Member States, the United Nations and other international bodies are called upon to (...) support the Global Acceleration Instrument (GAI) on women, peace and security to be launched in October 2015."

- FGD in **the Netherlands**

Improving coordination between different actors at all levels

Besides the issues of financing and implementation, **insufficient coordination** was recognized as an obstacle by FGD participants in *Burundi, Colombia, DRC, Ghana, Israel, Nepal, the Philippines, Serbia, South Sudan, Sweden and the UK*.

To respond, **the UN, member states, and international partners and donors** should:

- **Provide technical and financial support for creating local, regional and national CSO networks.**
- **Develop mechanisms to systematize and regulate cooperation** between CSOs, the governments and the UN, such as **consultative councils**.
- **Provide incentives for governments to reach out to CSOs.**
- **Develop a UN-civil society cooperation mechanism.**
- **Translate all WPS-related documents into local languages.**

Adopting a better monitoring mechanism

Most FGDs, particularly in *Burundi, Colombia, DRC, Israel, Norway, the Philippines, Uganda and the UK* indicated **lack of effective monitoring mechanisms** as a key challenge in UNSCR 1325 implementation.

- **UN should** introduce, in consultation with local actors, a **global, UN-led monitoring and accountability mechanism** and put **greater international pressure** on governments to support local and national CSO advocacy.

FGD participants in the *UK* pointed out that **CEDAW** is often perceived as a more effective tool than UNSCR 1325 because of its systematic monitoring. Participants in *Afghanistan* and *Uganda* also pointed to CEDAW reports as a positive example of monitoring.

- Considering a **parallel monitoring system** could be a good step forward. This input aligns with current efforts by GNWP to provide training and awareness-raising among civil society members to encourage them to utilize (CEDAW) General Recommendation 30 (GR 30) on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-conflict Situations as a valuable complementary accountability mechanism to UNSCR 1325, 1820 and the supporting resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.

Moving from global, to national, to local

The need to **make UNSCRs relevant in local contexts** was recognized across the board, most directly by FGDs in *Ghana, Israel, the Philippines, Serbia, South Sudan and Uganda*.

In this context, **National Action Plans** are crucial:

- **National governments** should commit to developing and implementing National Action Plans, in collaboration with the civil society;
- **UN, international partners and donors should provide more incentive for their development and more support for making them comprehensive, participatory and ready for implementation.**

Further, **localization of National Action Plans** is tantamount to the success of WPS.

- **All actors should support creation of Local Action Plans** (*the Philippines, Serbia*) and **training women to lead localization processes** (*Uganda*) can create powerful drivers of change and impacts on women’s lives.

“Women are now present in mechanisms which were formerly exclusive to men (i.e. Bodong council) thanks to our localization program.”

- FGD in **the Philippines**

Engaging men in UNSCR 1325 implementation

In line with UN Women's “He for She” campaign, FGD participants in *Burundi, the Netherlands, Norway, South Sudan, Sweden* and *Uganda* noted the importance of **engaging men in women’s empowerment and WPS agenda realization.**

- Therefore, mechanisms for **including men, while not depriving women of ownership over these processes,** should be encouraged and developed.

Analysis of Findings

1. Perceptions of UNSCR 1325

1.1. UNSCR is a useful and powerful tool for uniting stakeholders to develop a comprehensive operational framework for the empowerment of women and girls and their protection from Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV).

Most participants of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) recognized UNSCR 1325 as a **useful tool**. In particular, participants in *Burundi* pointed to its ability to unify different actors at all levels and provide an operational framework for empowering and protecting women and girls from SGBV. FGD participants in *Israel* appreciated that WPS resolutions provide a “universal language to voice women’s concerns,” and

“[UNSC 1325] is a universal language to advance women globally.”

- FGD in **Israel**

participants in *Serbia* appreciated its ability to “merge local context and political demands of women.”

1.2. Weak implementation of UNSCR 1325 hampers its potential.

Nonetheless, many participants expressed concern that this positive potential has not been realized because of the **weak implementation** of UNSCR 1325 and the supporting WPS Resolutions. In particular, some of the FGDs pointed to the fact that new resolutions are adopted before the old ones have been implemented (*Israel; Uganda*), resulting in a **complex normative framework with little to no impact** on women on the ground (*DRC; Norway*), making WPS “the most advocated but the least implemented” agenda (the *Netherlands*). However, it should be noted that FGD participants in *Serbia* called for

“WPS agenda should move beyond ‘being the most advocated but the least implemented’ set of resolutions.”
- FGD in the **Netherlands**

adoption of further resolutions, particularly covering the problems of **women asylum seekers and torture survivors**. Participants in *the UK* also saw the advantage of introducing further resolutions.

The FGDs identified several reasons for the non-implementation of WPS resolutions. Many of them pointed to the **political reality** in their own countries, including lack of political will (*DRC; Ghana; Guatemala; Israel; Serbia; Uganda; UK*); political divisions within the society (*Israel, Serbia*); and restrictive legislation or lack of rule of law (*DRC; Uganda*). Despite the fact that women’s participation is one of the best-funded areas of the WPS agenda, the *Norwegian* FGD also noted that national and international *support* for specific activities aimed at increasing women’s participation is often lacking. This is reflected in ineffective distribution of funding, as indicated by most FGDs, a problem discussed later in this report.

The FGDs also identified **lack of knowledge about WPS issues** (*Colombia; the Philippines; Rwanda; Serbia; Sweden*) and **harmful stereotypes** (*the Philippines; Sweden*) as obstacles to UNSCR 1325 implementation. Furthermore, the FGDs emphasized the impact of **external events and developments**, such as the financial crisis (*Burundi; Ghana; Nepal*), climate change (*Burundi; Uganda*) and terrorism (*Ghana; Uganda*). The *Ghanaian* FGD stressed the impact of the Ebola outbreak in the West African region on the WPS agenda.

The FGD in the *Philippines* emphasized the need for localization and contextualization of UNSCR 1325 in communities—an initiative taken up by GNWP members in the Philippines to develop Local Action Plans and *Barangay* (community) Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 in some provinces, meant to adequately respond to the local women and peace and security context. FGD participants in *Serbia* observed that most effective actions are taken at the local level. Greater emphasis on developing National

Action Plans (NAPs) and Local Action Plans (LAPs) could be a response to these problems, as will be discussed later in this report.

2. Conflict Prevention

Problem:

2.1. Conflict prevention is a crucial element of WPS work, ensuring a positive impact on women's lives; yet, it is often an overlooked and underfunded element.

FGD participants agreed that conflict prevention should be a priority, as it has **direct positive impact on women's lives** (*Burundi; the Netherlands; Sweden*) and it enables sustainable development and socioeconomic reintegration of women affected by war (*Burundi*) and full implementation of WPS agenda (*the Netherlands*). Participants in *Burundi* stated that it is one of their priorities. Yet, as participants in *Sweden and the UK* observed, as part of the broader WPS agenda, this aspect is often **overlooked and underfunded**.

Underfunding was the **major challenge** mentioned by most FGDs. The FGD in *Guatemala*, for example, pointed to the **need to review** approaches to conflict prevention to include **control of legal and illegal arms trade**, which fuels conflicts.

Possible Solutions:

2.2. Women's leadership plays an important role in conflict prevention. Good practices include community-level engagement, inclusive peacebuilding & early warning systems.

These **good practices** were identified:

- FGD participants in *Burundi* and the *Philippines* stressed the importance of **community-level conflict management through mediation and nonviolence training**. The FGD also stressed the importance of **micro-scale conflict management** (e.g., mediation between a wife and husband).

"Managing community conflicts through mediation is most effective in providing direct beneficial impact on the lives of women"
- FGD in **Burundi**
- FGD participants in *Norway* stressed that **developing women's leadership is a long-term strategy of conflict prevention**.
- FGD participants in the *Netherlands* emphasized the need to include **civil society, women, men, youth, religious leaders and the media** in conflict prevention.
- FGD participants in *Serbia* noted that **women's organizations could serve as excellent early warning** systems partners, since they have close links to local multiethnic communities.

"Women's organizations are the best early warning systems – it is well known that women are the ones that communicate and collaborate the most in multi-ethnic communities"
- FGD in **Serbia**

FGD participants in the *UK* called for **reprioritization of conflict prevention as part of the "prevention" pillar globally**, including through **demilitarization, disarmament and fostering cultures of peace**.

3. Women's Right to Participation and Representation

Why women's participation matters

Political participation and participation in decision-making and peace processes were indicated as some of the major challenges faced by FGDs as well one of their principal foci. FGDs in *Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC and the Philippines* in particular indicated it was their principal area of work and impact. Participants in *Colombia* pointed to women's participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding as one of their specific key focus.

FGD participants in *Uganda* emphasized that participation in decision-making and peacebuilding is crucial, because that dynamic **changes relationships at home and at the community level**, improving women's status overall. On the other hand, FGD participants in *Sweden* pointed out **that increased women's participation is not a guarantee that women's interests will be adequately represented**. Thus, participation should be measured not only by the percentage of women present, but also by the impact of their contributions and the existence of **spaces for women to organize themselves** and identify common objectives.

Problem:

3.1. Women's participation in decision-making directly benefits women and girls; however, their representation in decision-making, security sector and peace processes remains low and is hampered by marginalization of their voices and by discrimination.

Most participants agreed that levels of women's participation in decision-making and peace processes are insufficient. They identified these challenges:

Low levels of women's representation

- FGD participants in *Burundi* pointed out that despite having reached a 30% participation threshold nationally, Burundi still has **less than 5% women's representation at the community level**.
- FGD participants in the *DRC* emphasized **problems with being promoted to senior positions** that women face, particularly in the **security sector**. FGD participants in *Afghanistan and DRC* also stressed that their **representation in peace processes and in the security sector is low**.

Marginalization of women's voices

- FGD participants in *Guatemala* stressed that despite a greater number of women in dialogue spaces at the local and national level, their voices are **often not taken into account**.

Impact of ethnic discrimination and conflict on participation

- FGD participants in *Israel* pointed out that in some cases, women's nationality or ethnicity *deepens the discrimination* they face based on their gender and exemplified such **cross-sectionality** of discrimination by emphasizing **exclusion of Palestinian women from decision-making**.
- FGD participants in *Ghana* emphasized that women are **totally absent in ongoing peacekeeping operations in conflict communities**, including in Bakwu, Alavanyo and Nkoya, despite the grassroots peacebuilding work being done in these communities.

3.2. Women's participation faces cultural, political and security obstacles, including harmful stereotypes, lack of political will and international support and sexual violence and threats.

The FGDs identified a range of **obstacles** to women's participation, including the **image of women as passive victims**, entrenched in patriarchal culture and increased incidence of SGBV; other **harmful stereotypes**, placing women at home; **sexual violence, abuse and threats**, as well as **attacks on women human rights' activists**; underlying **power relations, giving men dominance in decision-making**; and lack of **political will and international support** for women's participation.

Possible Solutions:

3.3. Some good practices in addressing the obstacles to women's participation in decision-making include training for women; advocacy; and awareness-raising and engagement with women and men at grassroots level.

The FGDs also identified **good practices** that resulted in **positive developments** in their countries.

Benefits of leadership and skills training

- FGD participants in *Burundi, Ghana, Guatemala, the Philippines, Sweden* and *Uganda* noted that **leadership and skills training** has yielded positive results. In *Guatemala*, the training provided a **space for dialogue and encounters** between individual women and women's groups, enabling their greater mobilization. In *Uganda*, training and awareness-raising resulted in **60% level of women's participation in decision-making in Teso local council**, and 40% level of women's participation in local councils overall. In the *Philippines*, FGD participants attributed an increase in the participation of women in *Lupong Tagapamayapa* (Peace and Order Councils) to such training.

Impact of women's empowerment at grassroots level

- FGD participants in *Burundi, Colombia, Ghana, Nepal, Norway and Rwanda* emphasized the importance of working with women at **grassroots level**, empowering them to participate. *Rwandan* participants, for example, noted that the “women can do it” campaign conducted in grassroots communities helped **improve women's visibility** in the community. *Nepalese* participants recognized the positive impact of **women's cooperatives**, which not only provide financial support to local women, but also provide them a **forum to discuss issues and have their views heard**. Participants from *Colombia* noted **increased participation of indigenous women in committees and meetings with indigenous authorities** as a major positive outcome of their work in Choco department.

“Women's cooperatives not only provide financial support to women, but also serve as a common forum to discuss and raise their voice.”

- FGD in Nepal

Impact of advocacy to increase women's participation

- FGD participants in *Afghanistan, Burundi, Ghana, Guatemala, DRC, the Netherlands and Uganda* stressed the importance of **advocacy** in increasing women's participation. In *Ghana*, women-led advocacy in conflict-endemic regions resulted in **an increase in the number of women** participating in the Regional Peace Council from one (the legal minimum requirement) to three (out of 13); advocacy also led some parties to adopt **affirmative action** measures. In *Guatemala*, participants recognized the **creation of “alternative” or shadow reports** and documents, including an Alternative NAP for UNSCR 1325 (which included perspectives of conflict-affected women), as an effective tool to facilitate women's participation in decision-making. In *Uganda*, advocacy efforts resulted in **creating a ministry responsible for women's affairs** in the Uganda Supreme Muslim Council. FGD participants noted that after a meeting they held with local decision-makers in Leskovac, where they requested greater women's participation, the president of the Local Security Council now **attaches a request to send a female representative to all invitations he sends to local bodies**. Given the excellent results yielded by women-led advocacy, the *Netherlands* FGD recommended that **international actors provide technical and financial support (including concrete incentives)** to support continued advocacy efforts.

Results of awareness-raising among women

- FGD participants often mentioned **awareness-raising** alongside advocacy as key to increasing women's participation. In *Ghana*, community sensitization in 2007/2008 emboldened women to **organize a protest march** to end the conflict in Bawku.

Contributions of government

- FGD participants in *Colombia* appreciated the **government's political will** in **creating a subcommittee on gender in peace negotiations**.

The FGD discussions clearly indicated that considerable efforts are already underway to increase women's participation in decision-making and in peacebuilding programs. These efforts signal a strong need for **supporting these local initiatives, protecting women activists and leaders and including women's CSOs in elaborating strategies** to increase women's participation.

4. Protection and Promotion of Rights

Problem:

4.1. Challenges presented by cultural barriers and weak legislative frameworks in protecting and promoting women's rights.

Cultural beliefs undermine women's rights

- FGD participants in *Burundi* indicated that traditional beliefs that do not recognize women's rights lead to a **culture of impunity and trivialization of violence against women**. Similarly, participants in *Colombia* indicated the **culture of "machismo" and misinterpretation of traditional and religious values** as factors **undermining women's dignity**. FGD participants in *Guatemala* also stressed the prominence of **lack of knowledge on women's rights and the undermining of women's rights by some religious institutions aggravate the problem**.

Lack of appropriate legal frameworks

- FGD participants in *Burundi, DRC* and *Serbia* pointed to **lack of appropriate legislation**. Even when laws pertaining to women's rights and protection of women from SGBV do exist, they often lack effective **implementation mechanisms**. Furthermore, other **discriminatory laws**, including inheritance laws, can put women in an underprivileged position, depriving them of their rights.

Insufficient training and expertise

- FGD participants in *Burundi* and *DRC* cited the **lack of appropriate training** for workers providing psychological support for the victims and **no appropriate health infrastructure** as challenges in protecting and promoting women's rights.

Possible Solutions:

4.2. The problems are not new; however, there is now a more urgent need for innovative solutions. Some good practices include awareness-raising, involving men in combating SGBV and comprehensive support for SGBV victims.

The FGD participants also identified numerous **good practices**.

Impact of awareness-raising about legal frameworks

- Most FGDs identified **awareness-raising and information sharing about existing legal frameworks** as key tools in protecting women's rights. In *Ghana*, awareness-raising on their rights and legal protections against domestic violence helped women defend themselves by "threatening" to report their partners to Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit if they use violence against them. In *Colombia*, participants listed awareness-raising **among women and public officials** about the contents of **law 1257, which defined and established sanctions for violence against women** as one of their most effective undertakings. FGD participants in *Norway* emphasized that their **work to raise awareness among men in local communities** in *Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan* and *Sri Lanka* contributed to **increased attention to SGBV** in these communities.

"Working with men, religious communities and local authorities resulted in change of attitudes towards women in local areas, including increased attention to sexual and gender-based violence."
- FGD in **the Netherlands**

Significance of support for SGBV victims

- Almost all FGDs indicated **support for SGBV victims** as their key activity in this matter. Most provided psychosocial and legal support. In *Uganda*, CSOs also organized free **cancer screenings and fistula repairs** for women to increase their health awareness.
- FGDs in *Israel* and the *Philippines* stressed the **importance of research and data collection** in understanding patterns of women's rights violations and in identifying the most successful protection strategies.

4.3. Protection and promotion of rights of women and girls is an area that receives the most interest and funding from international donors. Yet, to increase effectiveness of activities aimed at protecting women's rights, it should be perceived more broadly, beyond SGBV, to include protection of women's human rights activists and access to justice.

Besides the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes, most FGDs indicated that protection and promotion of rights was their principal focus. Importantly, several FGDs (*Burundi; the Philippines; Uganda*) indicated that this area -- and in particular SGBV-related work -- receives the **most interest and funding from international donors**.

Although this area receives the most international attention and funding, the resources could be better allocated. Some key issues identified by participants were:

- Protection of women’s rights should be taken beyond the pure SGBV focus, and **linked to general protection of civil society and human rights activists** (the Netherlands).
- **Facilitating access to justice** and paying attention to **persecution of women activists' raising their voice** is also a crucial element of protecting their rights.
- Finally, as indicated earlier, it is important to ensure that **SGBV focus does not reinforce the image of women as victims**.

5. Peacekeeping and Security Forces

Problem:

5.1. Militarized responses to conflict pose a challenge to WPS implementation, as securitization of societies poses a threat to women and girls and limits democratic space for civil society.

In general, militarized responses to conflict and securitization of societies were perceived as a **challenge** in implementing the WPS agenda. In particular, the recognized problems included:

- **Militarization of the society**, affecting girls who are often “lured” to work in security forces for lack of other opportunities (*Israel*); militarization is often linked to the **illegal spread of light firearms** and security forces **arming themselves with heavier weapons in response to “threats”** (*Sweden*).
- **Security sector brutality and impunity**, posing a threat to women’s activists and negatively affecting their ability to advocate for change (*Uganda*).

“Police brutality and impunity (undressing women, pulling women’s beards during riots) has negatively affected advocacy efforts.”

- FGD in **Uganda**
- **Security sector failure to protect women’s activists** from death, rape and threats related to their work (*Colombia*).
- **Lack of cooperation and communication** between security forces and CSOs (*Afghanistan; Sweden*).
- **Lack of a gender perspective and under-representation of women** in the security sector (*Afghanistan, Guatemala; DRC; the Netherlands*).

“Government reflects a military and discriminatory perspective that is more concerned with defending private interests than protecting women’s rights.”

- FGD in **Guatemala**

Possible Solutions:

5.2. More attention and resources should be devoted to peacebuilding and conflict prevention and less to militarized responses. Gender perspective and human security should be incorporated into security sector policies.

- In *Israel*, a Women’s Security Index attempted to **promote a positive feminist vision of human security** as going beyond military response and addressing **economic security, protection from prejudice and discrimination, among other areas.**
- FGD participants in the *Netherlands* suggested **building grassroots capacity vis-à-vis the security sector** as a response to militarization of societies.
- FGD participants in the *Netherlands* also suggested **imposing accountability for WPS implementation on a senior level of security institutions and incorporating gender perspectives into recruitment and retention mechanisms**, such as job descriptions and performance evaluation procedures.

“There is a need for a broad and positive feminist vision of human security, such as economic security, protection from domestic, sexual and institutional violence, protection against prejudice and discrimination, health concerns and more”

- FGD in *Israel*

6. Justice and Accountability

Problem:

6.1. Lack of access to justice and impunity can hinder realization of the WPS agenda. Weak judicial institutions, cultures of impunity and disconnects between local communities and international justice institutions pose a challenge in this regard.

FGD participants in *Burundi, DRC* and *Norway* recognized lack of effective access to justice and accountability as **a major obstacle in realizing the WPS agenda.**

The **challenges** include:

- The persisting **culture of impunity** (*Burundi*).
- **Weakness and unreliability of domestic judicial institutions** (*DRC, Guatemala*).
- The fact that international judicial institutions, including the **ICC**, are considered or perceived as **illegitimate**, in particular in *Africa (Norway)*; this is fueled by the fact that the institutions are **too far away, take too long to produce results and mostly do not prosecute use of rape as a weapon in conflict and post-conflict contexts.**

“Justice operators are sometimes unaware of community and local context, culture and language; they are also not well-trained to follow up on cases of violence against women and girls.”

- FGD in *Guatemala*

Possible Solutions:

6.2. Access to justice can be improved by strengthening national and regional legal tools and providing legal assistance to women to empower them to seek justice.

Possible **solutions** to these challenges identified by FGDs include:

- **Strengthening national and regional tools.** In *Guatemala*, participants mentioned their **advocacy to create femicide courts** as a key activity in this area. *Norwegian* FGD participants pointed to the African Court of Human and People's Rights as a possible alternative to the ICC. *Rwandan* FGD participants praised the ***gacaca* courts and committees of local mediators** as good practices for providing justice and accountability.
- **Providing legal assistance** to give women confidence to seek justice; this is related to the points raised above, as to protection of women's rights. Women in *Burundi, Nepal, Rwanda and Uganda* in particular pointed to this as one of their central activities aimed at fighting impunity.

Ensuring justice and accountability was recognized by most FGDs as a crucial factor in protecting women's rights. In the more specific issue of post-conflict justice and accountability, the FGD participants pointed in particular to the need to **strengthen domestic legal institutions and structures** and to **empower women** to make use of them.

7. Peacebuilding and Recovery

Problem:

7.1. Peacebuilding offers the opportunity to recast women as agents of change, rather than as victims. Yet, women's participation in peacebuilding and recovery is hindered by a lack of gender-sensitive planning and evaluation.

Many of the FGDs saw peacebuilding as central to realizing the WPS agenda. FGD participants in *Burundi* indicated "conflict prevention and communal recovery" as a key priority of many Burundian NGOs. This aspect of the WPS agenda is particularly relevant to conflict-affected communities. It also provides the **opportunity to re-imagine women's roles as peacebuilders and agents of change.**

However, several major **challenges to women's participation in peacebuilding** were identified:

- **Failing to factor gender into humanitarian planning and responses** (*Norway*) and emergency work more generally.
- **Failing to focus on root causes of conflict and women's role in peacebuilding** (*Norway*).
- **Lack of trained staff capable of setting baselines and measuring impact of women's peacebuilding initiatives** (*Colombia*).

Possible Solutions:

7.2. Economic empowerment and transforming power relations are key elements in rebuilding societies after peace. Women's participation in these processes should be ensured by a strong Sustainable Development Goal on peace.

Despite these challenges noted by Norwegian FGD participants, several other FGDs discussed their peacebuilding work and **good practices** at the local level. These include:

- Use of **revenue generation** and **socioeconomic reintegration** as means of recovery and peacebuilding. This is done through **community loans** (*Burundi*) and setting up **cooperatives to generate revenue** (*Burundi; Rwanda*).
- Targeting **domestic labor division** to enable women to engage in revenue-generating activities (*DRC*), as well as **literacy and skills training** for women (*DRC*).
- Several FGDs (*Burundi; DRC; Uganda*) saw peacebuilding as an opportunity to **transform society** and change power relations. They also saw the need for **comprehensive peacebuilding**, which targets problems such as **growing population** or **lack of infrastructure**.

"Women do not eat peace': women want programs that integrate peacebuilding initiatives with economic empowerment."

- FGD in **Uganda**

The FGD in *Norway* indicated that to ensure the inclusion of women and gender in peacebuilding, there must be a **strong Sustainable Development Goal on peace**, emphasizing the role of women. The **proposed target for the goal** (currently goal 16 of the OWG draft) would read: "Ensure equal participation of women at all decision-making levels for peace building and the prevention and resolution of armed conflict" (*Norway*).

8. Key Actors on WPS, Collaboration and Coordination

8.1. There exists a multiplicity of actors involved in the realization of the WPS agenda and therefore participants stressed the importance of effective communication, cooperation and coordination among the actors.

8.1 Some UN offices demonstrate a lack of cultural sensitivity and are inaccessible to grassroots women's organizations. They also run their own projects, duplicate civil society efforts and sometimes compete with them for funding.

8.2. National governments are important actors in implementing the WPS agenda since they have the mandate to create and implement laws and policies, such as National Action Plans. They should therefore ensure good coordination of WPS efforts and work in close collaboration with civil society.

8.3. National governments often show lack of political will and limit the democratic space for civil society.

8.4. Civil society collaboration with the UN has been particularly challenging due to bureaucracy, lack of accessibility and cumbersome procedures.

Civil Society

Since FGD participants are representatives of civil society, they could attest to the importance of its efforts, as exemplified by many of the best-case practices mentioned above.

FGD participants from *Burundi* stressed the importance of **better coordination and harmonization of efforts** among civil society groups. FGD participants in *DRC* and *Guatemala* also stressed the importance of **capacity building**. It was recognized by most FGDs that **international actors should support local civil society efforts**.

International NGOs

International NGOs were recognized as important partners and donors, key to facilitating civil society's efforts. FGD participants also recognized the importance of international partners' support in training of staff and improving technical capabilities. FGD participants in *Afghanistan* noted that at the moment collaboration between national and international NGOs is limited, so it should be encouraged.

Media

Media was recognized as an important actor by the FGD participants in *Ghana*, who pointed out the press's role in **changing the image of women and highlighting WPS issues**. However, participants also recognized that media outlets are often not interested in WPS issues, as they pursue more lucrative topics. Participants in *Serbia* also highlighted the role of the media and recognized **lack of media attention as one of the challenges** facing the WPS agenda.

National Governments

FGD participants noted that governments' commitment to UNSCR 1325 (or lack thereof) weighs heavily on the success of its implementation.

Positive examples of government involvement were provided by:

- FGD participants in *Colombia*, where government's political will played a role in **creating a subcommittee on gender in ongoing peace negotiations and including two women in the process.**
- FGD participants in *Ghana*, where the **Ghana National Peace Council** was recognized as an effective initiative in improving women's lives,
- FGD participants in *Guatemala*, who pointed to the creation of numerous mechanisms, including **Femicide Courts**, a State Secretary for Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking and protocols to investigate crimes committed during armed conflict in the Public Prosecutors' Office as positive development,
- FGD participants in *Nepal* and the *Philippines*, where **government collaboration with CSOs was indicated as a major enabling factor.**
- FGD participants in *Sweden*, where initiatives such as **"gender coaches" (often recruited from the civil society) and "consultation reports"** were provided as examples of successful government-civil society cooperation.

Negative examples of government impact on WPS agenda were given by:

- FGD participants in *Guatemala*, who emphasized that the state has not taken initiatives to ensure the positive developments for UNSCR 1325 implementation, **nor does it does have a clear vision** on how to do so. They also remarked that a **civil society perspective was not taken into account** in writing the official report for the Beijing +20 conference.
- FGD participants in *Israel*, who noted that **lack of internationally imposed sanctions for non-implementation of WPS agenda results in lack of political will** and government's commitment, hindering efforts at UNSCR 1325 implementation.
- FGD participants in *Serbia* noted that state institutions **address WPS issues only when pressured by civil society.**
- FGD participants in *Uganda*, where **restrictive laws limiting democratic space for civil society** engagement make it more difficult to pursue WPS agenda.
- FGD participants in *Ghana* where **government and international support is limited to large urban areas**, neglecting UNSCR 1325 implementation in rural communities.
- FGD participants in the *Philippines*, where elections often undermine or reverse progress because newly elected officials do not want to support programs started by their predecessors, especially those from opposition political parties, pointing to the **need for a more systematic, deeper commitment.**
- FGD participants in *Serbia* highlighted the need for a unified approach and the **creation of national and regional platforms** for WPS implementation.

On the role of national governments, several FGDs (*Afghanistan; Colombia; Guatemala; Israel; Netherland; Nepal; Norway; Sweden; Uganda*) pointed to the **importance of National Action Plans (NAPs)**. They stressed that they need to:

- **Include perspectives of women**, especially those affected by conflict (*Guatemala*).
- **Include effective and practical implementation mechanisms and deadlines** (*the Netherlands; Sweden; Uganda*); participants from the *UK* suggested **the requirement to submit an annual report on the NAP to the Parliament** as an example of a good practice.
- Be regularly **reviewed and renewed** (*the Netherlands*).
- Be **in line with core peace and security policies and reflected in domestic policies** (*the Netherlands; Sweden*).

The **Nepalese NAP** was provided as a positive example (*Nepal; Sweden*) of a comprehensive document, developed through **collaboration between government and civil society**.

On the contrary, participants from *Serbia* indicated that the **Serbian NAP excluded civil society voices**, which made it less successful.

FGD participants in *Israel* pointed to the fact that **politicization of the NAP process** can be detrimental to UNSCR 1325 implementation, as is the case with **Israeli NAP, which has been boycotted by Palestinian women's CSOs**.

The United Nations

The UN was recognized as a key actor. Participants saw both great potential and many challenges posed by UN involvement.

They **appreciated**:

- UN support for civil society activities (*DRC; Guatemala; the Philippines*), as well as civil society-government initiatives (*Ghana; Guatemala*).
- UN role in training and skills-transfer, monitoring and help in dismantling militia groups (*DRC*).

They **saw potential** for the UN to support:

- CSO advocacy (*DRC; Guatemala*), in particular through **imposing sanctions on national governments for not respecting quota** for women's participation in peace processes (*Ghana*).
- **Monitoring of implementation** of WPS agenda (*Afghanistan*).
- **Implementation and contextualization** of other provisions of UNSCR 1325 (*Israel*).

They pointed to problems and challenges, including:

- **Lack of cultural sensitivity and a tendency by the UN to run its own projects, rather than supporting local initiatives** (*Nepal; the Philippines; Sweden*). In *Colombia*, participants remarked that there was no technical and strategic coordination among the UN, civil society and the government. In *Guatemala*, FGD participants suggested that the UN should focus more on processes and less on projects, and provide long-term support for local organizations.
- FGD participants in *Afghanistan* pointed to a **disconnect between the UN and small community-based organizations**. In numerous cases in different countries, the UN even duplicates civil society efforts.

“There is a disconnect between UN and small community-based organizations and structures.”

- FGD in **Afghanistan**
- **Failure to pressure governments** (*Israel; Serbia*).
- **Limited information provided by the UN** on its Resolutions, related activities, funding opportunities and other work (*DRC; Israel; Norway; Sweden; UK*).
- **Bureaucratic and cumbersome procedures** in contacting and working with the UN (*DRC; Ghana; the Philippines; Serbia; Sweden; Uganda*).

In this context, the FGD in *Sweden* remarked that finding relevant information or **getting in touch with relevant people in UN missions is often difficult**, even for those European and American civil society actors that are proficient in English and have good knowledge of how to promote their case.

The FGD in the *Philippines* remarked that the bureaucracy also results in **slow disbursement of funding**.

The FGD in *Ghana* called on UN Women to be **more proactive** in reaching out to grassroots organizations.

The FGD in *Serbia* remarked that **other intergovernmental organizations**, such as the European Union, often face the same problem.
- **Language barriers** caused by lack of knowledge of indigenous languages within the UN as well as “UN speak” or jargon (*the Philippines; Sweden*).

Given the multiplicity of the actors, several FGDs pointed to the **importance of determining ownership over the WPS agenda** (*the Philippines; South Sudan; Sweden*). Although support from international partners and the UN is crucial, it is **key to ensure local ownership** (*Sweden*) by **handing responsibility for projects to local actors as soon as possible**.

9. Emerging Issues Affecting WPS

9.1. The changing global landscape has affected women's situations and efforts to implement WPS agenda globally. The global financial crisis, terrorism and counterterrorism and health pandemics have affected work on WPS.

These impacts have been recognized by several of the Focus Group Discussions. In particular, participants referred to the **global financial crisis** (*Burundi; Ghana; Nepal*), **climate change** (*Burundi; Uganda*), **terrorism and counterterrorism** (*Ghana; the Netherlands; Uganda*) and **political instability** as **emerging issues affecting their work**. The impact of **health pandemics** on WPS agenda was recognized by *Ghanaian* FGD participants, who stressed the impact of the Ebola outbreak in their region on their work.

Global Financial Crisis

Participants in *Burundi* and *Ghana* remarked that the financial crisis has profoundly affected actions of the local and international civil society organizations, since it led to a **reduction of already scarce funding**. Participants in *Nepal* also noted that **financial support from donors** decreased after the financial crunch of 2008.

Climate Change

Participants in *Burundi* noted that climate change has particularly **affected women in rural areas, who depend on agriculture to survive**. Participants in *Sweden* and *Uganda* listed climate change as one of the emerging issues affecting work on WPS.

Terrorism and Counterterrorism

FGD participants in *Ghana* and *Uganda* listed terrorism as one issue impacting their WPS work. FGD participants in *Sweden* also recognized violent extremism as a challenge, in particular in Nigeria and Libya.

FGD participants in *the Netherlands* remarked that counterterrorism measures are sometimes used to silence critical voices, including that of women. In a similar vein, FGD participants in *Sweden* noted that the use of drones (often in counterterrorism operations) can induce insecurity among activists, as well as increased militarization in response to terrorist attacks, as was the case in Sweden after recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen.

Political Instability, Electoral Violence

FGD participants in *Burundi* and *Ghana* remarked that **political instability, frequent political changes and tensions and violence surrounding elections** in many African countries hinder WPS work. There is a need, then, to examine further how women's

participation in electoral processes can act as a safeguard against future conflicts, and in turn, how the absence of women from these key political and decision-making processes can represent a potential threat to the peace and security of a state. GNWP has undertaken plans to conduct research on this subject.

Health Pandemics

FGD participants in Ghana commented that the recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa has affected WPS work in their country. Related feedback from GNWP's 2014 civil society monitoring reports on implementation of UNSCR 1325 recommends that national governments systematize training on gender and SGBV for all security sector actors, so that they can adequately respond to cases of SGBV and medical emergencies such as the Ebola outbreak.

Notes on FGDs Methodology and Outcomes

Methodology

The organizers of FGDs were provided with Guidelines and a PowerPoint presentation (available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic) to facilitate the organization of the discussion.

The Guidelines, prepared by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, included a **list of Focus Group questions** for participants. The following questions were suggested:

1. Which of your organization's areas of work do you think has been the **most effective** in providing a **direct beneficial impact** on the lives of women and girls in the communities where you work?
2. What barriers/problems have you encountered in achieving your programmatic goals?
3. Based on your experience, what WPS initiative led by other actors do you believe has been **most effective** in providing a **direct beneficial impact** on the lives of women and girls in the communities where you work? Which actors had the most impact and what were the benefits for the community?
4. What are the top key constraints for effective implementation in your country?
5. How effective do you think UNSCR 1325 and the supporting resolutions have been in making a difference to the situation of women in conflict-affected communities?
6. What particular thematic and/or programmatic areas of your work on women and peace and security receive the most funding and which organizations provide funding?
7. What are your greatest challenges and/or concerns in raising funds for WPS activities?

8. Which concrete models of collaboration between civil society, government and UN Agencies do you find successful?
9. Which concrete models of collaboration between civil society, government and UN Agencies, in your view, has been the least successful on UNSCR 1325 implementation?
10. Which of the UN agencies have been most supportive of your work on WPS initiatives?
11. What are the biggest challenges CSOs face in engaging UN agencies?
12. What emerging global issues have affected your work on women, peace and security the most?
13. What message, if any, do you want to send to the United Nations, the Security Council, and other policy makers about women, peace and security/1325 implementation in the post 2015 period?

The Focus Group reports provided by organizers indicate that most of the FGDs followed the suggested questions, except for the Netherlands and South Sudan, whose reports were based on discussions held during different events on UNSCR 1325. United Kingdom FGD focused on the country's donor perspective and thus used some, but not all, suggested questions.

Focus Group Discussions were organized by one lead organization, most often with support from an international partner, such as GNWP or Cordaid. In most cases, **invitations were sent by email** with follow-ups by email and/or phone. In Serbia, the event was also advertised via Facebook.

FGDs had **5 to 19 participants**, and lasted **2.5 to 9 hours**. In addition to discussing the questions, organizers also requested that the participants complete the CSO Survey and submit to GNWP.

Participant Demographics

A total of **424 participants** from **17 countries** participated in the focus group discussions.

The participants were overwhelmingly representatives of civil society organizations. However, in Ghana, government representatives (from the Ministry of Defense and from the Gender Department) also took part in the FGD; in Guatemala, UN Women representatives participated in the FGD; and in Afghanistan, a representative from the Supreme Court participated.

FGD participants came from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from WPS/women's rights focus to sexual minority, indigenous groups, grassroots and community support organizations as well as aid, sustainable development, conflict and human rights-focused

NGOs. More details on the participants and their background are provided in the table attached in Annex 1.

Although most FGD participants were women, men took part in the discussions in Guatemala, Rwanda and Sweden. In Sweden, a man facilitated the FGD.

Outcome of the FGDs

In addition to the provision of inputs for the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security, the FGDs provided a useful space for women's CSOs to engage in dialogue and exchange experiences related to UNSCR 1325 implementation.

Provision of such spaces is crucial to guaranteeing effective collaboration and implementation of the Resolution, as will be discussed later on. The Focus Group Discussions allowed the CSOs to strengthen their relationship, find out more about each other's work and the challenges and initiate collaboration.

Several FGDs recognized the positive outcome of this activity. For example, participants in *Ghana* described the FGD as a "wonderful learning and sharing opportunity," while participants in *Guatemala* said it helped to "improve models of collaboration and channels of communication and interaction" and allowed CSOs to "know each other better and to learn about the various initiatives we have undertaken." In *Colombia*, indigenous women said it was "very productive," and that it allowed them to share achievements in peacebuilding and to discuss questions they had regarding implementation of UNSCR 1325 and different kinds of conflict in their department, including armed and environmental conflicts. According to the FGD organizer in Norway, "Those who attended had a very lively debate, and we want to thank GNWP and your co-organizers for coordinating this global initiative."

Appendix 1 – Table 1: Information about FGDs

Table 1: Information about Focus Group Discussions

Country	FGD organizer	Date/time and place of FGD	No. of participants	No. of orgs	Area of participants' work	Comments
Afghanistan	Afghan Women's Network (AWN)	April 15, 2015	18	13	Women's NGOs working to empower Afghan women and ensure their equal participation in Afghan society, and one representative from the Supreme Court	
Burundi	Cordaid	March 5, 2015; Bujumbura	13	12	Women-led peacebuilding Women's organizations collectives, SGBV/SGBV victim support Women's professional associations (journalists and jurists)	Participants responded to the invitation despite the ongoing strike, and trade union's call not to leave home as a sign of protest.
Colombia	Coalición 1325	March 20, 2015 Quibdó, Chocó, Colombia	10	10	Indigenous women's issues, Women led peacebuilding, UNSCR 1325 implementation, capacity building for women in decision-making, advocacy on gender based violence	Members of Coalición 1325 in Choco participated, particularly indigenous women's groups. Given that many do not have access to Internet or computer skills, Coalición 1325 had a discussion on the entire survey and filled out one collective CSO survey for them, reflecting their discussion.
DRC (1)*	Cadre Permanent de Concertation des Femmes Congolaises	Feb. 19, 2015, 10:30-19:30; Kinshasa	22 (divided into 4 groups)	22	Women peacebuilding, UNSCR 1325 implementation, education, human rights, justice, aids, union of media, development, women's rights, nonviolence against women, union parliamentarians.	Each group answered 4 questions.

	(CAFCO), GNWP					
DRC (2)*	Cordaid	Feb. 27, 2015 Bukavu	14	12	Women, Peace and Security Women's organizations collectives HIV support Democracy/political change	
Ghana	African Women's Active Nonviolence Initiatives for Social Change, (AWANICH)	April 4, 2015, 9:00-14:00; Abelempke (WANEP office)	10	9	Women, Peace and Security Women's rights Public affairs (Ministry of Defense and Gender Department) Peace and Security/Peacekeeping	Ministry of Defense and Gender Department participated.
Guatemala	Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES)	March 26, 2015, 9:00 – 16:30; Guatemala City	51	15	Peace and Security Studies Grassroots/Indigenous rights Sustainable Development Research SGBV/SGBV victim support Democracy/political change Women's rights (UN Women)	Two men participated; UN Women participated.
Israel	Kayan Feminist Organization/ Cordaid	Feb. 26, 2015, 10:00 – 12:00; Haifa	7	7	Women's rights Sexual minorities/Sexual rights Research Women's professional associations (lawyers)	17 women's organizations within Cordaid's wider network of women's organizations in Israel invited.
The Netherlands	WO=MEN	Feb. 16 – 17, 2015; Amsterdam	150 - international	N/A	N/A	Report written based on discussions during 1325 Expert Conference and Netherlands' Civil Society Monitoring Report 2014.
Nepal	Saathi	Feb. 8, 2015; Kathmandu	16	16	Women's rights Grassroots/community support SGBV/SGBV victim support Media/Media advocacy Human rights and justice	

Norway	Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS)	March 3, 2015; Oslo	8	5	Women, Peace and Security (WILPF) Women's organizations collectives Humanitarian aid Human rights and justice	Organizers took the liberty to identify some discussion points on their own that they found relevant to discuss as a group, in addition to sample focus group questions provided.
The Philippines	The Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE Act 1325)	Jan 19-20 2015; Davao City	26	26	Women, Peace and Security Women's rights Grassroots organizations Peacebuilding/conflict mediation Research International justice	
Rwanda	Rwanda Women's Network	March 4 2015; Kigali	14	11	Women's organizations collectives Women's rights Humanitarian aid Human rights and justice	4 men participated in the FGD
Serbia	Dea Dia	March 31, 2015, 12:00-16:00; Belgrade	8	5	Women's rights	
South Sudan	Cordaid-South Sudan	Feb. 24-26, 2015; Kigali (Rwanda)	29	15	Women's rights Access to law SGBV/SGBV victim support Youth Peacebuilding	Report based on discussions with South Sudanese women during an event in Kigali; Representatives of the government and UNMISS took part in the event.
Sweden	1325 Policy Group	Feb. 18, 2015, 14:30-17:30; Stockholm	9	4	Women, Peace and Security (1325 Policy Group, WILPF, Operation 1325) Humanitarian aid (Swedish Committee for Afghanistan)	Discussion led by a man (Valter Vilkkö). 18 Swedish organizations were invited; however, the majority of these organizations only sporadically do any work distinctly on 1325; they have their other thematic focuses.
Uganda	Coalition for Action 1325 (CoAct 1325)	Feb. 13, 2015, 9:00 -13:00; Kampala	19	16	Women's organizations collectives Grassroots organizations	

					SGBV/SGBV victim support Religious organizations	
United Kingdom	Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)	March, 4, 2015; London	No data	No data	NGOs in the field of development, human rights, humanitarian aid and peace-building.	FGD focused on the donor perspective, did not answer some of the questions.

* Two separate focus group discussions were organized in the DRC

Appendix 2 – Focus Group Discussions Guidelines

Civil Society Organization (CSO) Survey Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 Focus Group Discussion Guidelines

Objectives

The purpose of this focus group discussion (FGD) is to:

- Raise awareness of the High-Level Review on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Global Study and CSO Survey.
- Support the completion of the CSO Survey.
- Support a safe and collaborative learning experience among CSO representatives.
- Facilitate exchange among CSO representatives to identify similarities, differences and common themes related to their answers in the CSO Survey.
- Expand upon answers not fully captured by the CSO Survey.

GNWP will collate and analyze completed online surveys as well as focus group discussion notes. Results will feed into the Global Study to ensure that CSO voices and priorities are accurately reflected in the Global Study.

Requirements

Materials: • CSO Survey (digital and/or print copies), Power Point, LCD Projector and screen, Flipchart and flipchart stand/chalkboard, markers/chalk, index cards, USB drives.

Room: • For completion of the online survey, gather participants in a room preferably with computers and Internet so that CSO representatives can fill out the survey through sogosurvey.com.
• For the focus group discussion, if possible, have participants seated in a circle with moveable seating for maximum interaction.

Time: • Welcome and Introductions, 5 – 15 minutes

- Objectives and overview: 15 minutes
- Completion of the CSO Survey: typically at least 1 hour (*depending on how much time the facilitator allows for discussion and questions about the surveys as CSO representatives are completing it*)
- Ground Rules/Icebreaker: 15 minutes (*time permitting*)
- Focus Group Discussion: approximately 1 – 1.5 hours

Sample Focus Group Discussion Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

- Focus Group Discussion Objectives
- Overview of High-level Review, Global Study and CSO Survey
- Completion of the CSO Survey
- Ground Rules for Discussion
- Icebreaker Exercise (*optional*)
- Facilitated Focus Group Discussion on CSO Survey
- Group Closing (*optional*)

Instructions

Welcome and Introductions:

- Please thank participants for their time and valuable contributions to the CSO Survey, on behalf of Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), the NGO Working Group on Women Peace & Security (NGOWG) and Cordaid.
- Briefly review the FGD agenda. (*slide 2 of the Power Point Presentation*)
- Briefly review FGD objectives. (*slide 3*)
- *Time permitting, invite participants to share their name, organization/title, where they are from, one interesting thing you wouldn't know about them just by looking at them, and why they are attending this focus group discussion. (slide 4)*

Overview of High-level Review, Global Study and CSO Survey:

- Provide an overview of the High Level Review, Global Study and CSO Survey. (slides 5 – 15 of the Power Point presentation)

Completion of the CSO Survey:

- Ideally, please provide each participant access to a computer with Internet to access the CSO survey on sogosurvey.com. *(If Internet is not available, participants can download the survey as a document to USB drives to complete manually, and someone on your team can input their survey answers for them later on sogosurvey.com).*
- Introduce the CSO Survey. (slide 16 of the Power Point presentation)
- Inform participants that given our shared goals of maximizing CSO voices on a global scale, this is a very detailed survey, and will likely take a minimum of 45 minutes to complete. If need be, they may wish to complete it in multiple sessions. If they are unable to complete the survey during the focus group discussion, they can save their work and return to it later by clicking on the "Save & Continue Later" button at the bottom of the page to save their previous answers and return to their saved work at any time from any computer. The system will create a NEW URL link, which is necessary to re-enter the survey where you left off. They can copy this URL or enter an email address to which the system will send it.
- Note that the survey software autosaves each completed page in case of Internet interruptions or other technical difficulties. However, unless they have used the "Save & Continue Later" option, they can only return to the autosaved work within 24 hours and on the same computer (using the original URL). Please also note that if they leave your computer INACTIVE for 60 minutes (without saving), their information will be lost.
- We highly encourage everyone to submit their answers via [sogosurvey](http://sogosurvey.com); however, should they be unable to complete the survey online due to internet connectivity problems, you may fill out the Word document, and submit it to GNWP at CSOSurvey.gnwp@gmail.com.
- Please ask participants to use the "back" and "next" tabs at the bottom of each page to move around the survey. If they use the browser back button at the top of the screen, they may lose their work on that page.
- Move around the room to answer participants' questions.

Ground Rules for Discussion

- Please see suggested Activity 1 below (slide 17). As an alternative, facilitators can simply lead a short discussion asking for suggested ground rules for discussion.

Icebreaker

- Please see suggested Activity 2 below.

Facilitated Focus Group Discussion on CSO Survey

- Display and review guiding questions for the Power Point or flipchart/blackboard. (See facilitator questions below and slides 18-21). Depending on the time you have, and the interests of your participants, you may wish to select only certain questions to focus on during the discussion.
- Remind participants that there is no right answer to these questions. We are interested in getting a picture of the diverse range of perspectives and experience among their organizations.
- Participants should discuss their impressions of the survey in small groups.
- As participants share their answers, please identify similarities, differences and other common themes throughout the discussion and write it up on the board.
- Someone should be responsible for note taking for the final report of key issues. When preparing your report to GNWP, please follow the report guidelines outlines on page 8.

Activity 1: Ground Rules for Discussion: Building a Safe Community

Purpose:

- To build group consensus on what is needed to develop a safe and collaborative learning community.
- To create an energized atmosphere of fun and creativity.

Materials: Pens, markers, flip chart paper, index cards.

Time: 15 – 25 minutes

Procedure:

- Divide participants into small groups. Ask each group to consider the characteristics of a safe and collaborative learning community (e.g. understanding, trust, transparency, etc.).
- Invite a reporter from each group to share their reflections and make note on chart paper their answers.
- Ask them to also consider: “In order to develop a safe and collaborative learning community, what are important ground rules of behavior we can agree upon?”
- Distribute index cards. Ask participants to write down a word or statement that reflects what agreements they believe are necessary to create a positive environment for the focus group discussion (e.g., cooperation, respect, good communication, confidentiality). Give everyone a minute or two to write down their responses.
- Ask people to move around the room, introduce themselves to someone and read and explain what they have written on their note cards. Participants should share their card with several people before they reassemble into a circle.
- Go around the circle and have each person read what their card says, noting it on the chart paper. Ask for clarification as necessary to ensure shared understanding. For example, if someone writes, “respect others,” ask, what it means to you to be respected?
- Invite participants to add ground rules they think are missing.
- Ask participants to raise their hands if they agree with all the ground rules and will do their best to follow them during the workshop.
- Hang the chart paper in a prominent place to remind people of these agreements whenever needed.

Discussion:

- Why is it important to agree on how we are going to communicate and interact in creating a safe and collaborative learning community?
- Is it important for women to have a space where they can share and learn together? If so, why?

Activity 2: Have you Ever...?

Purpose: To find common experiences in the group.

Materials: None.

Time: 10 - 15 minutes.

Procedure:

- Have participants form a standing circle. Explain that you will make a series of statements. If it is something that the participant has done, she should move to new place on the other side of the circle.
- Starting with some funny experiences can help lighten up the group atmosphere. You can also add some serious experiences relevant to the objectives of the course.

For example: Have you ever...

- Overslept and been late to an important event?
- Broken a bone?
- Called a member of the family by another name?
- Performed in front of an audience?
- Laughed so hard you cried?
- Stayed up to see the sunrise?
- Danced as if no one was watching?
- Fallen off a bicycle?
- Put something in the oven to bake and forgot about it?
- Cut your own hair?
- Given someone a second chance?
- Been made fun of?
- Regretted saying something to someone when you were mad?
- Taken care of and protected someone older than you?
- Overheard a joke that made fun of a person's ethnic background, religion, disability or appearance?
- Made assumptions about someone without really knowing them?
- Felt insulted by a stereotype about a group to which you belong?
- Been told you couldn't do something you wanted to do because you're a woman?

- Stood up for a friend who was treated unfairly?
 - Felt like an outsider in a group?
 - Wished you could take a more active role in building peace in your community?
- Once you've shared enough statements to get them started, you can invite participants to share statements of their own.

Sample Focus Group Questions for Participants:

1. Which of your organization's areas of work do you think has been the **most effective** in providing a **direct beneficial impact** on the lives of women and girls in the communities where you work?
2. What barriers/problems have you encountered in achieving your programmatic goals?
3. Based on your experience, what WPS initiative led by other actors do you think has been **most effective** in providing a **direct beneficial impact** on women and girls in the communities where you work? Which actors had the most impact and what were the benefits for the community?
4. What are the top key constraints for effective implementation in your country?
5. How effective do you think UNSCR 1325 and the supporting resolutions have been in making a difference to women in conflict-affected communities?
6. What particular thematic and/or programmatic areas of your work on women and peace and security receive the most funding and which organizations provide funding?
7. What are your greatest challenges and/or concerns in raising funds for WPS activities?
8. Which concrete models of collaboration between civil society, government and UN agencies do you find successful?
9. Which concrete models of collaboration between civil society, government and UN agencies, in your view, have been the least successful on UNSCR 1325 implementation?
10. Which UN agencies have been most supportive of your work on WPS initiatives?
11. What are the biggest challenges CSOs face in engaging UN agencies?
12. What emerging global issues have affected your work on women, peace and security the most?
13. What message, if any, do you want to send to the United Nations, the Security Council and other policy makers about women, peace and security/1325 implementation in the post 2015 period?

Activity 4: Closing Circle

Purpose: To provide closure to the day, reflect upon lessons learned and what people will take away from the experience.

Materials: None.

Time: 10 – 20 minutes.

Procedure:

- Have the group assemble in a circle, if not already in one.
- Thank participants for taking the survey and engaging in the Focus Group Discussion.
- Ask if participants have remaining questions or comments related to survey or focus group. This feedback assists us in making useful changes with future groups around the world.
- Inform participants that everyone will now have an opportunity to share closing thoughts about their experience in the discussion. Give them the option to express appreciation for a particular experience or person, particular things they learned, a commitment they will adopt as a result of their participation as well as general feelings. The facilitator can start by modeling.

Alternate Options:

- If time is short, participants can share one word that describes how they felt coming into the Focus Group Discussion and one word that describes how they feel now that it is ending.

Civil Society Organization (CSO) Survey

Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325

Focus Group Discussion Report

Note: Please assign someone from your host organization to be responsible for note-taking for the final report of key issues. When preparing your report to GNWP, please provide the following information:

- Date of the Focus Group Discussion:
- Location of the Event/Host Organization:
- Participant List:
- Agenda (time frame of the discussion, goals and objectives):
- Summary of key points discussed during the Focus Group Discussion (similarities and differences among the experiences and perceptions of participants, any best practices identified, key gaps in implementation identified; please include speaker or organization if possible):
- Recommendations and Follow-up Actions shared on how to improve implementation of UNSCR 1325 (please include speaker or organization if possible):

Appendix 3 – Photo Gallery

Participants from FGD in Burundi, 5th March 2015



Participants from FGD in Guatemala, 15th April 2015



Participants from FGD in Ghana, 14th April 2015



Participants from FGD in Serbia, 31st March 2015



Participants from FGD in Rwanda, 4th March 2015

