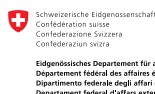


# Centering Care in Women, Peace and Security

Civil society's voice in Switzerland's implementation of the Fourth National Action Plan 1325



Schweizerische Friedensstiftung  
Fondation suisse pour la paix  
Fondazione svizzera per la pace  
Swiss Peace Foundation



Eidgenössisches Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten EDA  
Département fédéral des affaires étrangères DFAE  
Dipartimento federale degli affari esteri DFAE  
Departament federal d'affars exteriors DFAE

**KOFF**

Die Schweizer Plattform für Friedensförderung  
La plateforme suisse de promotion de la paix  
La piattaforma svizzera per la promozione della pace  
The Swiss platform for peacebuilding

## Executive summary

Care work, which is the sum of all relational activities necessary to secure the health and wellbeing of all people, such as the provision of food, clothing, shelter and healthcare, is predominately performed by un(-der)-paid women. Care work helps us survive crises, as the Covid pandemic has amply demonstrated, and it is fundamental to holding the fabric of society together. Thus, care work is peace work. Yet, both the paid and unpaid care work that together form the care economy is not only undervalued by society but is characterised by a lack of economic security, by exposure to violence/harm and by a constant state of crisis. The burdensome conditions under which paid and unpaid care work is performed are also a major obstacle to women's participation in political and peace processes.

This report summarizes the reflections and recommendations of Swiss civil society and its partners on the question of how socio-economic barriers, and the conditions under which care work in particular is performed, hinder women's participation in political and peace processes in Switzerland and abroad. It sheds light on three care-related obstacles to women's participation: the underfunded care economy, the overburdening of women through care work and

gender roles that promote stereotypes that “naturalize” and devalue the provision of care and hence minimise women's predisposition to feel confident enough to participate in political processes. The report further demonstrates how care work and sexualised and gender-based violence are related and why gender-sensitive protection measures are necessary. It furthermore articulates how a feminist view on security provides an alternative understanding of peace and violence and how it would be a path for a more holistic implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and to fostering women's participation.

The report is based on desk-based research, qualitative interviews with Swiss civil society representatives and their partners, and the exchange with an Advisory Group, consisting of civil society and academic experts. It is the result of a two-year project, led by KOFF – the Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding, cfd – the feminist peace organization and PeaceWomen Across the Globe. It is part of civil society's contribution to the Swiss National Action Plan 1325, which is the official policy tool to implement the UN Agenda on Women, Peace and Security.



## Policy context

Resolution 1325, which initiated the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, was unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2000. It is the result of the [world-wide engagement of women peace activists and civil society](#). The WPS Agenda calls for:<sup>1</sup>

1. **Participation of women at all levels of decision making** in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace processes, post-conflict peacebuilding, and governance, including in the UN itself;
2. **Protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence** in conflict settings and in conflict more broadly;
3. **Prevention of violence against women through the promotion of women's rights and gender equality**, accountability, and law enforcement.
4. An inclusion of a gender perspective in post-conflict **relief and recovery**

Switzerland implements the WPS Agenda with National Action Plans and is currently implementing its [Fourth National Action Plan](#) (NAP) 1325 for the period 2018-2023. The [project](#) “Civil Society Contribution to the implementation of the Swiss National Action Plan NAP 1325” narrows the gap between civil society practice and policy. The [Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding KOFF](#), [PeaceWomen Across the Globe](#) and [cfd — the feminist Peace Organization](#), coordinate this continuous policy-dialogue.

This report summarizes the reflections and recommendations Swiss civil society and its partners collected on the question of how **socio-economic barriers, and care work in particular, hinder women's participation in political and peace processes**.

The insights in this project report will prove **useful for the development of the Fifth NAP 1325, starting at the end of 2022**. The report will furthermore be essential as Switzerland is seeking its first non-permanent seat on the UNSC. If successful, the two-year **UN Security Council membership** would be from beginning of 2023 to end of 2024 and thus

coincide with the drafting of the Fifth NAP. The candidacy will at any rate mean increased visibility for Switzerland's implementation of the WPS Agenda, which is an important element of Switzerland's profile at the UN as well as for the membership campaign “[a plus for peace](#)”. Given this vocal commitment, it is critical that civil society perspectives are included in the Fifth NAP.

## Method

The findings presented here are based on extensive **desk research and experience** capitalization on women's participation, feminist peacebuilding and the care economy. The empirical capitalization of experience on the subject was conducted between March 2020 and July 2021. It consisted of qualitative interviews with Swiss civil society organizations (CSOs) and their partners (listed in annex) as well as a close accompaniment by an Advisory Board.

We did not enter the interviews with fixed hypotheses but instead approached the process inductively to remain open for any findings that would come from the field. It should be noted that the civil society representatives from our networks did not have projects related to Track 1<sup>2</sup> peace negotiations. The experience capitalization is therefore anchored in practical experience with peace processes situated at Track 2 and 3 level.

In the semi-structured interviews that would last between 60 and 90 minutes, we covered three broad areas. First, rather than stipulating a definition, we encouraged interviewees to tell us what they understood by “care” and “participation”. Second, we broadly discussed gendered divisions of access, power and roles. And finally, we talked about care-related obstacles to what is commonly understood by “formal” participation and how the different actors have tried to remedy them (some successfully, and others not).

**The Advisory Board accompanied the entire process** with regular quarterly meetings. It gave input for selecting interview partners, framing questions and, once preliminary results were available, discuss and weigh them together and derive recommendations. The Advisory Board was composed of experts and stakeholders from Swiss civil society as well as academia. The Advisory Board played a crucial role in zooming out of the narrow question and reminding us





that we could not address the issue of participation unless we took a transformative and holistic approach to the WPS agenda, as it had been conceptualized in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Through these different forms of exchange and experience capitalization with civil society, this project made sure to better **connect the policy framework to the realities and needs of peacebuilding practitioners**. Vice versa, by anchoring the WPS Agenda and Switzerland's NAP more firmly in practice, the project had the positive effect of giving the policy further **visibility among civil society and political decision-makers** and thus **increased its relevance**.

The culmination of this dialogue was **the thematic conference, entitled "Centering Care in Women, Peace and Security" in September 2021**. It was opened by the Liberian peace activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee and brought together policymakers from the co-funding entities – the Division for Peace and Human Rights and the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency – and representatives from civil society who had been involved in the project to discuss our findings.

We **published a booklet** with our key results and claims, which we launched at the conference and which was also distributed to Swiss Parliamentarians and has since been presented in more detail to the Green and Socio-Democratic Party. The exchange with MPs has led to an increased awareness of the WPS agenda and the NAP 1325 and led to a **parliamentary postulate** on the question of care in international cooperation and peacebuilding and a **parliamentary motion** on gender just foreign policy.

All these methodical elements – the capitalization of experience, the feedback from the expert Advisory Board, the policy-dialogue, the issues raised at the thematic conference as well as the reactions from Members of Parliament – guided this final report.

## Women, Peace and Security, meaningful participation and care

Meaningful participation is a cornerstone of feminist peace and the WPS agenda. But as the current Swiss NAP 1325 recognizes,<sup>3</sup> to enable meaningful participation, appropriate socio-economic conditions must be assured.

Structural discrimination, such as the gender inequitable distribution of un(der)paid care work, sexual and gender-based violence, racism, and exposure to violence of marginalized groups, are pervasive in most societies, including in Switzerland. **Systematic exclusion is a security issue and an invisible form of violence. More still, it is one of the most powerful obstacles to political participation**. Because if one constantly must cope with structural discrimination, (micro) aggressions, institutional barriers, and limited resources and hence critically, also with a lack of time, meaningful participation is impossible.

Across contexts and including in Switzerland, women and marginalized people are the ones most affected by such forms of violence. At the same time, they are also disproportionately represented in the care economy and who therefore provide everyone with the safety net that is necessary to go about their lives in an economic system that neglects care provisions. Without this labor, societies would lack the emotional and social foundation that enables everyone to pursue paid activities.

Our interviews confirmed: women play a critical role in peacebuilding through the sheer amount of care work they provide on a daily basis, except that it is not framed as such. Care work is one of the most fundamental forms of participation in society. Care workers, which are predominantly women, keep the tissues of society together and promote peace daily. To reach a gender just form of peace, we therefore have to **acknowledge care work as peacebuilding and transform the conditions under which it is performed**.

Globally, women do three-quarters of all unpaid care work. This is particularly true for racialized women who comprise two-thirds of the paid – underpaid – care workforce that allows the wealthiest to prosper.<sup>4</sup> Women then disproportionately carry the burden, and this becomes particularly acute in times of conflict and crises as the Covid pandemic blatantly showed. As the UN General Secretary noted: "COVID-19 has





been likened to an x-ray, revealing fractures in the fragile skeleton of the societies we have built. It is exposing fallacies and falsehoods everywhere: The lie that free markets can deliver healthcare for all; The fiction that unpaid care work is not work.”<sup>5</sup>

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*“No one has had the idea to publicly state that whether or not we survive this pandemic is solely dependent on whether women will be able to cope and carry the burden of paid and unpaid care work”*

Elvira Wieggers, health central secretary at VPOD,  
Swiss trade union for the public service

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**We are managing the pandemic because women are still managing.** Women carry us through this crisis, which is hence a contribution to our security that cannot be stressed enough. And yet, women are excluded from and under-represented in the fora where the decisions on how to solve crises, armed conflict, and how to organize our societies altogether are taken and which therefore have an immediate impact on them.

Wieggers, a health expert at a Swiss trade union, explains that it is a vicious circle: women are not heard in the national and international handling of the pandemic crisis because they are not represented in these talks in the first place, nor are they then consulted in the implementation of the decided strategies because no one had previously raised the issue in the formal talks. As a result, women’s knowledge and needs as caretakers and primary care workforce are systematically silenced.

The same problem of silencing is as much true in the current pandemic as it is in peace processes, where women are still largely excluded from peace negotiations and talks even though it has been established long ago that their inclusion leads to more sustainable peace agreements and that it is not enough to include them in later stages of the peace process.<sup>6</sup>

We are thus confronted with a **double-bind: care work helps us survive crises, but the care economy is in a constant state of crisis.** This is a fundamental barrier to political participation for anyone active in this economy.

We also know that **women play a vital role for peacebuilding not just through their care work, but also through peacebuilding in informal settings and at the local level** (which some experts actually also define as part of care work because it is part of acting in favour of social cohesion). As Florence Mwikali, a peacebrigades (pbi) program officer in Kenya in charge of a project working with women human rights defenders said: “Women’s contribution to peace work tends to be informal because patriarchy limits women to private spaces”. Still, she emphasized they are valuable local peacebuilders because they are more likely to stay in a locality and therefore to spot early warning signals of a potential conflict.

Mwikali also stressed that women tend to be good negotiators with better soft skills who can influence a process by influencing their husbands and other male members of their family. This was echoed for instance by an interviewed mediation expert, who specializes in capacity-building of local women’s organizations, when she said that women play a fundamental role in negotiating humanitarian access or rebuilding trust across conflict lines at the community level, promoting cultural or sports events. The difference is that most of them, and the organizations they are engaged with, **are not aware that what they do can be framed as actual peacebuilding work.**

Nevertheless, in Wieggers’ view it is not enough to stipulate that women contribute to the collective sense of security: “This is a matter of fact from which a revindication must follow! And that has to be that women must be represented in decision-making. That needs to be said very prominently”. In her recent book on ‘war-time care work and peacebuilding in Africa’, Fatma Osman Ibnouf delivers that revindication. To achieve true equality and participation, she argues, we have to “recognize, reduce and redistribute” the burden of care work.<sup>7</sup>

Socorro Corrales from the Colombian ecofeminist organization Comunitar even cautioned against highlighting women’s care work as a contribution without calling for redistribution and recognition. Otherwise, we would **risk dangerous idealization of women that will only further increase their over-burdening.**





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This idea that women are so peaceful, so negotiating, is very harmful because it suggests that women are the ones who are going to guarantee peace. So we must insist on non-sexist education and institutions and on a state that guarantees women's rights. Women need economic guarantees, health guarantees, fairness in the management of everyday life! Otherwise, it over-burdens and stresses women and we will continue to overload ourselves at home, in the street, in the organisation, in education.

Socorro Corrales, Comunitar

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**Redistribution and the transformation of the conditions under which care work is performed is then the only way to achieve sustainable peace.** This necessitates breaking the vicious cycle of women being systematically silenced and exploited because society places disproportionate expectations on them with reference to their supposed natural dispositions and vocation.

## Care-related obstacles to meaningful participation

Our capitalization of experiences among Swiss civil society and their partners highlights that some of the major structural obstacles to **women's participation are related to care in at least three ways:**

1. the underfunded care economy
2. the overburdening through care work
3. gender roles that promote inhibiting stereotypes that "naturalize" and devalue the provision of care

### What is care-work?

As human beings we are not self-sufficient individuals. It is an intrinsic human need to receive other's attention and care in order to feel nurtured and to fully thrive and to return this attention and care. These interpersonal, relational activities are defined as care-work.

### What is the care economy?

The care economy is where care-work takes places. As mentioned, care-work is relational which means that the time invested in the interpersonal relationship between care-provider and care-receiver is an inseparable part of the service provision. If time is reduced to increase profit, the service automatically deteriorates. There can be neither upscaling nor mass automation. Care-work is therefore per se expensive and appears ever more costly given that technological progress in other sectors have continuously decreased the costs. That is why investment in the care economy does not appear attractive from a purely capitalist logic (unless the focus is shifted to the long-term costs caused if care is not provided). It is, however, a must if one looks at it from the viewpoint of citizens' needs and the obligation to respect human dignity.

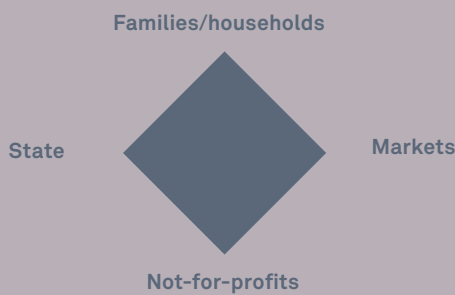




## Invisible care economy

Our economies are essentially organized around four actors: the state, private profit-oriented entities, the non-profit sector, and households (also referred to as a diamond). Policies determine what is considered a public good and what not, and therefore distribute its provision among the different actors.

Figure 1: The care diamond



Source: Shahra Razavi, *The Political and Social Economy of Care in a Development Context*, UNRISD, 2007, p.21.

From a human-centred approach, a state should provide all necessary public services that enable a decent life for everyone. This is, however, rarely the case as our economies work along the logic of rentability. To maximize profit, one has to increase either scale or efficiency, which is precisely why the care economy is not attractive.

Given this lack of attraction, most of the care provision is left to the private households and non-profit sector. This is aggravated in times of conflict and crisis.

That is why it is, according to gender and development expert Annemarie Sancar, important to analyze a situation through the care diamond and to not only look at the state, but also at the actions of private companies. For profit-oriented entities conflict may be a lucrative opportunity (opening of new markets like trafficking). At the same time the state is weaker than ever in a crisis or armed conflict and relies on private investment. This can allow private (grey) actors to undermine public institutions.

This economic tension, public good provision for citizens as a state responsibility vs. maximization of profit for private entities, comes at the expense of the care economy.

A genuinely gender-sensitive post-war recovery policy would put the conditions to make the provision of care possible (access to education, health, water, energy, mobility etc.) at its center. **It would not ask ‘can women participate?’**, but rather **‘what conditions have to be in place to allow people to cover their basic and daily needs?’**. And it would no longer exclusively focus on physical reconstruction but acknowledge that the care-economy has to be equally supported to achieve genuine security. As various feminist CSOs have argued in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, effective conflict prevention would mean to prioritize investing in economies of care.<sup>8</sup>

## Overburdening care work

The result of the current economic logic which does not invest in the care economy, be it in post-war or seemingly peaceful contexts, is that private households become the last refuge for people to cover their basic needs. This leads to a huge burden for women who disproportionately provide care work and who, in times of crisis and conflict, provide it in extremely adverse conditions.

“The central question is ‘what happens with public services which have citizens as their stakeholders?’. In conflict they are either destroyed or did not exist beforehand. In the post-war reconstruction economy, we have to look which actors are engaged in the public service provision and according to what logic. Is it primarily about guaranteeing primary care in line with human rights, or is it rather about productivity and hence about the distribution of profit?”

Annemarie Sancar, WIDE Switzerland





“When we look at the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya, a lot of women and children were raped, and a lot of husbands killed. So you’re left with the economic burden on top of your normal burden plus the psychosocial stress and the care of the wounded and the sick. In addition, when there’s violence the food supply is interrupted but you still need to care for your children. You cannot walk out to get food, your income is very limited, because you are not employed. And even the toilets are far from your house and the people who own them charge for the use. So women are vulnerable and exposed to harassment outside their home and all of this is why it’s harder for women during a conflict or a pandemic.”

Florence Mwikali, pbi Kenya

It is little surprising that under these circumstances women simply lack the time and resources to participate in political processes be it in zones of conflict or in Switzerland. This structural reason is the same and it is only a matter of scale. A peace process thus has to come to the women and ensure it reaches them also at the grassroots level. Mwikali is convinced that the provision of child day-care would have a beneficial effect.

Accordingly, several experts said peacebuilding project budgets should foresee assistance for children, elderly, and other dependents. This would enable women to travel to participate in a peacebuilding process or ensure people in their care can travel with the woman participant.

## Harmful gender roles and stereotypes

Finally, the interviews brought to the fore that the distribution of care, and the inability to engage in other forms of participation, is also connected to entrenched gender roles and expectations. Several interlocutors, most notably those from Fondation Hirondelle and their partner Studio Tamani in Mali, cfd and their partner organization in Bosnia Herzegovina as well as pbi Kenya and the trade union VPOD, emphasized that a lot of groundwork has to be done before more public participation can be reasonably expected from women.

There was an overall agreement among these interviewees that there is **lack of acknowledgment of the worth of care work and therefore of those providing it, too**. As a result, there can be an important **lack of confidence that inhibits participation** and the expression of needs. This, they all agreed, was mainly due to women’s care work having been completely naturalized and therefore made “taken for granted” even when it is done for money as in the health industry. The health trade unionist summarized it as follows:

“What’s fascinating for example in the 24h care provision at home is that when a man does it there is no question that he has a right to breaks and that he will be paid decently. But when a woman is involved the majority says ‘well she doesn’t mind not having privacy, she does it also for the company’, as if it was more a natural disposition and not a professional service she was delivering!”

Elvira Wiegers, VPOD

Civil society has tried different practices to overcome this challenge. These are a few examples from our interlocutors:

» Radio Studio Tamani in Mali, partner of Fondation Hirondelle:

The aim of the project is to broadcast a diverse array of voices and to push for women’s representation in public discourses in particular in order to strengthen social cohesion. However, Radio Studio Tamani soon realised that journalists would venture out and come back, saying they had not found any suitable female speaker. As a result, they started by raising awareness among their own employees so they can check their own biases. With an internal gender advisor, a concrete action plan, strict quotas for their programs as well as training of female journalists they changed the way they approached women.

For their Grand Debates they nowadays always feature at least one woman among the three guest speakers. In other programs, they make sure to interview ordinary women. They, however, also realised that given the taboo of women speaking out in public or even in front of their husbands, they also had to create safe





spaces. As a result, they established different WhatsApp groups where women can speak more freely about certain issues and in anonymity. In addition, this allows also illiterate women to participate. That way Studio Tamani created a channel for women to raise their voice without necessarily exposing themselves.

» **pbi Kenya:**

Aim of the project is to increase the capacity of women human rights defenders. pbi Kenya approach this on three different levels: with an empowerment program, peer exchange and with raising awareness among men. The empowerment program uses a 4-phase model to empower women (originally developed in Uganda). The model starts with raising their awareness of the “power within them”, then moves on to highlighting that there is a “negative power over them”, which is used as a springboard for the third point of realizing that there is “power with” when they collaborate and finishes with their ability and readiness for action for “now they have power”. That way pbi Kenya tries to demonstrate to women that they have been oppressed for so long that they no longer realise that they have agency and can take up space. But through the community and the peer exchange in a safe setting they realise that they have all the necessary skills, that they have the right to speak up and they start to exercise in taking the floor. Once this reflection over their own inner power is there, more public participation becomes possible for some of them.

A pre-condition for all of this to work is a safe space for peer-to-peer exchange. The women can turn to each other, talk about risks, how to best protect themselves or how to collectively share a care burden.

Lastly, pbi Kenya has also successfully involved men. In role plays they have made men realize how time-consuming and tiring care work is to overcome the naturalising and devaluing of women’s care work. In the project “a mile in her shoes”, men are given high heels and are then asked to carry a baby,

go to the market, do the cleaning so that they grow aware of the amount of work. Another approach has been to make care work visible through a small theatre play. The audience sees a house and a woman getting up at 5am, preparing breakfast, taking care of the baby and a husband who leaves for work. They see all the tasks the woman does throughout the day so that when the husband comes back in the evening and says to the wife she has been sitting around all day, the audience now realises the discrepancy to reality. The audience is then invited to discuss the role distribution and the fairness of it. This allows to make care work more visible and appreciated.

» **Amica Educa, partner of cfd:**

This project was particularly interesting because it highlighted the scope of the obstacles and is actually one where the conclusion was that it had to stop and target a new group. Originally, it was developed to reach and empower women in a small town in Bosnia Herzegovina. It offered empowerment and did advocacy to strengthen women’s participation in local government and administration but it also aimed at supporting women in small business and providing them with psychosocial support.

However, despite incredible awareness raising efforts, the main challenge remained: not enough women were ready to participate. Especially the older generation was not willing to question certain roles or violence in the family and possible relations to war traumas. According to the project leader in Bosnia Herzegovina, the patriarchal tradition was too strong and questioning certain roles and behaviour was met with fear, both from participants and from women outside the project who projected the fear onto participants. They attempted to deconstruct patriarchal power and relations by talking about control over resources, whether they can decide over them, who does household chores, how girls and boys are educated differently, about their own body and the ability to say ‘no’ and whether







their work is valued. And even if the project was partially successful in bringing a number of women to the local government and accompanying others in leaving violent relationships, the necessary efforts ultimately seemed disproportionate.

They decided to focus again on a larger city and on youth which will likely be more open and receptive to these kinds of challenging questions.

These different projects show that in order for women to participate publicly a lot of groundwork on breaking gender stereotypes and roles is necessary. This work also needs to involve men and encourage them to look at their images of masculinity and how they try to assert it. Importantly, this kind of work should not happen at the cost of focus and resources for the ongoing work with women and girls. In the current NAP 1325 men are only mentioned in relation to sexual violence.<sup>9</sup>

**Good practice: The current Irish NAP recognises that “there are multiple forms of masculinities within every society, some of which are harmful and are a part of discriminatory gender norms.” As a result, one strategic objective is to address “the effects and drivers of harmful masculinities and discriminatory gender norms, including support for the engagement of men and boys as advocates and stakeholders in WPS”.**<sup>10</sup>

## Care & SGBV

Lastly, care also relates to SGBV in three ways. First of all, Socorro Corrales from the Columbian ecofeminist organization Comunitar stressed that the important role women play in the care economy is also what makes them particularly vulnerable to violence:

“Women’s bodies are attacked within a certain context. They are seen like a bridge to their husbands and their territories. And because they are considered to be the protectors of the families and the care of the community and they know many things about the territories, attacking them will have a greater impact.”

Socorro Corrales, Comunitar

Secondly, because of their caring roles, women are also less likely to respond to protecting measures that entail temporary departure from their community. More **gender-specific protection measures must therefore be in place to allow for women human rights defenders’ (WHRDs) safe participation avoiding relocating them.**

Thirdly and lastly, precisely because women who speak up publicly do not comply with the expected roles associated to reproductive work, they face particular violence.

That is why Corrales also stresses that the support from international observers has helped to attract attention to gender-specific protection needs and thus increase safety. This is a path Switzerland should continue and specifically extend to women peacebuilders. The 2019 follow-up resolution UNSCR 2493 acknowledges this need in that it: “strongly encourages Member States to create safe and enabling environments for civil society, including formal and informal community women leaders, women peacebuilders, political actors and those who protect and promote human rights, to carry out their work independently and without due interference, including in situations of armed conflict, and to address threats, harassment, violence and hate speech against them”.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from this there is, however, no existing international and legal mechanisms for women peacebuilders’ protection.<sup>12</sup> This is also true for Switzerland’s implementation of the WPS agenda. So far Switzerland only has guidelines for the protection of WHRDs. While women peacebuilders may also identify as WHRDs, there are important distinctions and different needs between them based on the nature of their work. A fundamental difference is that WHRDs tend to call out perpetrators, while women peacebuilders often seek them out and engage in dialogue, which may make them a target precisely because they reach across dividing lines. So what may protect the one, may actually harm the other.<sup>13</sup>





Good practice example: the United Kingdom is the first country to have funded and adopted a Women Peace-builders Protection Framework.<sup>14</sup>

## Feminist peace vision at the origin of Women, Peace and Security

Throughout our capitalization process we were regularly reminded that women participation could not be brought about in a vacuum. Unless there is also an effort to transform the structures and tackle root causes of conflict, there is little hope that women’s participation will go beyond the “add and stir method”.

As such, the Advisory Board made a point in referring us back to the feminist origins behind the WPS Agenda. UNSCR 1325 starts by “recalling the commitments of the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**” (BDPA), made just five years before the adoption of the historic resolution. The goals of UNSCR 1325 can therefore be neither understood nor reached, independently from the BDPA. We must in particular bear in mind the **BDPA Chapter on women and armed conflict**. It sets out:

- » “An environment that maintains world peace and promotes and protects human rights, democracy and the peaceful settlement of disputes, is an important factor for the advancement of women.”<sup>15</sup>
- » “Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men.”<sup>16</sup>
- » “Gross and systematic violations and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights continue to occur.”<sup>17</sup><sup>18</sup>
- » “Those particularly affected by conflict and excessive military spending are people living in poverty, who are deprived because of the lack of investment in basic services. Women living in poverty, particularly rural women, also suffer because of the use of arms that are particularly injurious or have indiscriminate effects.”<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, the General Recommendation 30 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 2013, established a link between CEDAW and the implementation of the WPS agenda. CEDAW requires states parties to focus on the prevention of conflict and gender-based violence, which must include taking into account the negative impact of weapons and arms and countering it. Additionally, two WPS resolutions (2106 and 2467) acknowledge the importance of the ATT (Arms Trade Treaty) in relation to gender-based violence and hence as an important element of prevention.<sup>20</sup>

That is why UNSCR 1325 commitment to violence prevention has to be read as: **prevention through the reduction of military expenditure, through the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality and through the protection of fundamental human rights**.

For feminist peace advocates this has always meant to strive to overcome “negative peace”, by **redefining what we mean by security and how, and where, we should thus allocate funding for it**.

**Violence** also exists in the form of sexual and gender-based violence and human rights violations and as such operates on a **peacetime-wartime continuum**.<sup>21</sup> Security (or lack thereof) expands into various realms of the private and public spheres and includes access to food, labor rights, social securities, healthcare, reproductive rights, domestic and sexual violence, punitive measures, and access to justice.<sup>22</sup> **All of these issues also exist in Switzerland and the NAP 1325 should therefore not be a foreign policy strategy only but also include domestic policy**.

Doing so would be in line with the UN definition of sustainable peace<sup>23</sup>, with CEDAW and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose implementation Switzerland has linked with the WPS agenda and SDG 5 (achieving gender equality) in particular.

Good practice example: In its NAP, Canada argues that UNSCR 1325 bears relevance for national politics too. It stipulates that women in Canada, and indigenous women in particu-





lar, face various challenges, including gender-based violence and intersecting discrimination based on gender, race, socioeconomic status and other identity factors, as well as underlying historic causes, especially the legacy of colonialism.<sup>24</sup>

## Recommendations

### Meaningful participation

- » Recognize the expertise and agency of women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, and generally women who are directly affected by the decisions taken in peace processes, by taking their claims into account exactly how they formulate them and by paying for their services
- » Recognize, redistribute, and reduce the care burden and allocate budget to provide financial and logistical support to caretakers participating in peace processes, including childcare provisions, all while mitigating the risk of essentializing and/or idealizing
- » Increase the visibility of women’s contribution to peace and security in informal spaces, and link it to formal peace processes
- » Continue support for projects that strengthen women civil society’s peacebuilding capacities so that they can better claim their space in formal settings

### Care economy and care work

- » Encourage all public stakeholders, the private sector, trade unions, and other relevant actors to include the care-economy in their analyses, policies, and programming
- » Conduct thorough analysis on how the care-economy is organized, what people’s

needs are in terms of care in each context and orient peace processes and peacebuilding programs accordingly

- » Raise awareness on the role of the care economy in peace and security with all stakeholders engaging in peacebuilding initiatives
- » Consult regularly with the actors who predominantly provide care work and include their needs in the budget of any given project
- » Develop creative and participatory solutions to address the lack of social security that characterizes most conflict-affected countries<sup>25</sup>
- » Use consistent gender-budgeting in all public finances, analyzing not only the effects of policies on women, but on the whole care-economy, and defining its bolstering as a benchmark
- » Invest in research on the care economy both, in non-war situations and particularly on how it works and is impacted in armed conflict and post-conflict societies

### Gender roles & stereotypes

- » Engage in a concerted effort to combat stereotypical and harmful gender roles, as both, CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention prescribe it
- » Include both, harmful masculinities as drivers of violence and discrimination, and positive masculinities, engaging men and boys as advocates for WPS, in alignment with the Irish NAP
- » Integrate the necessary groundwork in project budgets and timelines so that partners have the adequate resources to tackle root causes of lack of participation
- » Support initiatives that focus on awareness raising on equal gender roles through education and media





## Sexual and gender-based violence

- » Increase the awareness of authorities that women are at very high risk because they are women and that activism and participation in peace processes even exposes them further
- » Establish guidelines for the protection of women peacebuilders and make it a strategic priority, including separate budget allocation, in the Fifth NAP 1325<sup>26</sup>
- » Ensure secure transport and communication for women peacebuilders who partake in peace processes, and plan for the emergency relocation of women peacebuilders when their lives may be endangered, including flexible grants to pay for transport and accommodation, and psychological support
- » Support community-based training to establish mechanisms for early warnings
- » Train local police and judiciary on how to better respond to the specific threats women peacebuilders and woman human rights defenders face

## Feminist peace origins

- » Re-evaluate militarized understandings of peace and security. Interpret the term 'peace' in its broadest sense – corresponding to the absence of physical, structural, and cultural violence.
- » Refer to existing domestic policies aiming at gender equality and SGBV to demonstrate that Switzerland is aware of WPS issues in the Swiss context

## Annex: interview partners

### cfed - the feminist peace organization, implementing partner of the NAP 1325 project

- » Lea Breitner, program officer South Eastern Europe
- » Theodora Leite, program officer migration policy

### Comunitar, ecofeminist organization, member of the network Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres in Colombia

- » Socorro Corrales, advisor

### PeaceWomen across the Globe, implementing partner of the NAP 1325 project

- » Mithra Akhbari, Senior Program Manager

### Amica Educa, partner organization of cfed in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- » Ivona Erdeljac, director, in charge of Promjena project

### Fondation Hirondelle, member of the KOFF – Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding

- » Mai Groth, program manager

### A mediation specialist from Switzerland

### PBI – Peace Brigades International Kenya, referred to by PBI Switzerland, member of the KOFF – Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding

- » Florence Mwikali, program officer

### Studio Tamani, radio studio in Mali, created by Fondation Hirondelle

- » Martin Faye, director

### VPOD, Swiss trade union for the public service

- » Elvira Wieggers, health central secretary and responsible for the network respect that represents care workers in the 24h domestic care (for elderly) industry

### WIDE Women in Development Switzerland

- » Annemarie Sancar, gender and migration expert and network and program manager at PWAG

### Zurich City Card

- » Bea Schwager, president and director of SPAZ, contact point for sans papiers in Zurich





[1] Since adoption in 2000 more than ten follow-up resolutions followed. Among them, UNSCR 1820 (2009), UNSCR 1888 (2009), UNSCR 1960 (2011), UNSCR 2106 (2013) and UNSCR 2467 (2019) on conflict-related sexual violence, UNSCR 1889 (2009) on barriers to women's political participation, UNSCR 2122 (2013) and UNSCR 2493 (2019) on the need to implement previous resolutions, UNSCR 2242 (2015) on the need to link the WPS and the counterterrorism agenda and UNSCR 2467 (2019) on recognizing male survivors.

[2] The **three peace Tracks**: Track 1 refers to processes in which top leaderships of the conflict parties are engaged with each other, i.e. representatives of the government and the leadership of armed non-state actors. In track 1.5 processes, the top leadership of one or both conflict parties are engaged in the peace process, but in an informal setting and/or in their personal capacity. In Track 2 activities, elites and decision-makers (e.g. civil society representatives, religious leaders, business leaders etc.) are involved, but not the top leadership of the conflict parties. In Track 3 activities, grassroots actors are involved.

[3] Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Women, Peace and Security, Switzerland's Fourth National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2018 – 22), p.9.

[4] L. Addati, U. Cattaneo, V. Esquivel and I. Valarino (2018). Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work. Geneva: International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_633135/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_633135/lang--en/index.htm).

[5] UN. (2020). Tackling the Inequality Pandemic: A New Social Contract for a New Era. UN Secretary-General's Lecture for Nelson Mandela's International Day. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-07-18/secretary-generals-nelson-mandela-lecture-%E2%80%9Ctackling-the-inequality-pandemic-new-social-contract-for-new-era%E2%80%9D-delivered>.

[6] Bell, C., & McNicholl, K. (2019). Principled Pragmatism and the 'Inclusion Project': Implementing a Gender Perspective in Peace Agreements. *Feminists @ Law*, 9(1).

[7] Ibnouf, F.O. War-Time Care Work and Peacebuilding in Africa: The Forgotten One, Palgrave Macmillan, Switzerland, 2020 p.152.

[8] CFFP and WILPF. 2020. Policy Brief: A Feminist Foreign Policy Response to COVID-19. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57cd7cd9d482e9784e4ccc34/t/5f034a694227530712b1b4f6/1594051182529/Policy+Brief\\_+A+Feminist+Foreign+Policy+Response+to+COVID-19.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57cd7cd9d482e9784e4ccc34/t/5f034a694227530712b1b4f6/1594051182529/Policy+Brief_+A+Feminist+Foreign+Policy+Response+to+COVID-19.pdf) ; Feminist Impact for Rights and Equality (FIRE) Consortium. 2020. Feminist Principles for an International Post-COVID-19 Settlement. <http://konfliktbearbeitung.net/sites/default/files/feministprinciples-for-a-post-covid-19-settlement-b.pdf> ; NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. 2020. "Why Women's Rights Must be Central to the UN Security Council's Response to COVID-19." <https://www.womenpeaceandsecurity.org/womens-rights-securitycouncils-response-to-covid-19/>.

[9] Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, "Women, Peace and Security, Switzerland's Fourth National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2018 – 22)", Sub-goal: "The situation of men and boys as victims or perpetrators of sexual violence is taken into account." p.18.

[10] Government of Ireland, Women, Peace and Security: Ireland's Third National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions 2019–2024, 2019, <https://dfa.ie/media/dfa/ourrolepolicies/womenpeaceandsecurity/Third-National-Action-Plan.pdf>, pp.15 & 29.

[11] UN Security Council, Security Council Resolution 2493 (2019) [reaffirming commitment on women and peace and security], 29 October 2019, S/RES/2493 (2000), [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2493\(2019\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2493(2019)).

[12] Holmes, Melinda, Protecting Women Peacebuilders: The frontlines of sustainable peace, 2020, [https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ICAN\\_ProtectingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf](https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ICAN_ProtectingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf), p.13.

[13] Holmes, Melinda, Protecting Women Peacebuilders: The frontlines of sustainable peace, 2020, [https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ICAN\\_ProtectingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf](https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ICAN_ProtectingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf) p.13.

[14] FCDO, UK warns that peace talks 'fail without women', <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-warns-that-peace-talks-fail-without-women>.

[15] UN Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome, p.87.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Such violations and obstacles include, as well as torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, summary and arbitrary executions, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, foreign occupation and alien domination, xenophobia, poverty, hunger and other denials of economic, social and cultural rights, religious intolerance, terrorism, discrimination against women and lack of the rule of law.

[19] UN Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome, p.92.

[20] Chinkin, Christine (2019), "Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda", United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, <https://unidir.org/commentary/arms-control-disarmament-and-women-peace-and-security-agenda>.

[21] WILPF, UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years: Perspectives from Feminist Peace Activists and Civil Society, p. 15.

[22] WILPF, UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years: Perspectives from Feminist Peace Activists and Civil Society, p. 15.

[23] UN Security Council, UNSCR 2286 (2016), 27. April 2016.

[24] Global Affairs Canada, Canada's National Action Plan 2017-2022 For the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, pp.4-5.

[25] An option could be that a minimum percentage (5%) of all money invested in a post-war economy, including that of private companies, is automatically redirected for investments to improve the conditions of providing care work. Another possibility could be a profits tax on everyone benefitting in a post-war economy or a dividend for the local community.

[26] based on the recommendations developed by the International Civil Action Network

Picture: City of Nobody, 2020. Ximena Lama

