

## ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund (IPF)

### About ICAN

ICAN's mission is to elevate and amplify the voice and impact of women peacebuilders and independent women-led civil society organizations promoting rights, peace and security in countries affected by violence, extremism and closing political space. To this end, ICAN offers thought leadership, gendered analyses and partnerships that globally connect locally-rooted women-led organizations. ICAN facilitates its partners' access to international arenas in order to inform and influence peace and security policies; provides resources to enable their impact in their communities; and supports their connectivity to enhance knowledge exchange, story telling and collective action.

### IPF in Numbers (2015-2018)

**21**

countries

**77**

grants

**\$2.1 million**

disbursed

**\$27,708**

average grant size

In 2015, after five years of grant making experience, ICAN launched the *Innovative Peace Fund (IPF)*, a multi-donor facility that provides timely small and medium grants to support women-led organizations preventing and countering violent extremism, and promoting peace, resilience, equal rights, and pluralism (PREP). The fund puts the word and spirit of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda (UNSC Resolution 1325) into practice.

### Why create the IPF?

The UN, the OECD and governments have repeatedly stated the importance of women's civil society organizations (CSOs) in peacebuilding and preventing violent extremism. Research also shows that women's organizations are the primary engine of change for promoting gender equality. However, the resources do not match the rhetoric. Women's CSOs are still underfunded and overburdened.

### Funding Gap Statistics

- Less than 1% of funds marked for gender equality reach women's organizations in conflict and fragile settings (OECD 2015).
- Only 0.12% of that 1% is allocated to women's CSOs working on peace & security work (US Peace & Security Funders Group).
- Lack of funds or resources are the biggest challenges to sustaining peace (International Peace Institute 2017).

The IPF addresses these persistent funding gaps and related political, logistical and programmatic obstacles by:

- Getting funding to women's organizations in a timely and safe manner;
- Reducing the prohibitive application and financial reporting procedures for grantees;
- Offering a solution to donors that cannot oversee small/medium grants; and
- Enabling local actors to determine priorities and design solutions, and not be donor-driven.

## Invest in Trusting Women, Get Extraordinary Returns



*My ICAN-supported interventions earned me this [award for women's contribution to development], otherwise it may not have been possible!"*

-Hamsatu Allamin,  
Recipient of Islamic  
Development Bank's prize  
on women's contribution to  
development



*In 13 years of working in this field, the partnership with ICAN has been the best we have experienced. IPF is truly a model for best practice implementation."*

-IPF Grantee

ICAN's guiding principle in designing and implementing the IPF is investing in trust:

- We trust in our partners' wisdom, judgment and assessment of the needs in their communities, and the interventions that would have the greatest impact;
- We recognize that the access and trust they have in their communities is an invaluable asset and resource;
- We support institutional strengthening so they can be more sustainable and access resources directly;
- We also support both urgent and strategic activities that can have quick and long-term impacts;
- We have a curated approach of identifying women-led organizations that are committed to promoting peace, equality and security based on in-country mappings and/or recommendations from current partners; and
- We *solicit proposals* from organizations that fit the criteria of being women-led and involved in addressing preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE), peace, rights and security issues. We do not have an open call for proposals.

ICAN's assistance comprises:

- Strategic advice and ongoing accompaniment to encourage innovation and adaptation of good practices;
- Technical support in project design, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation.



*The issue is not just how much money is provided, it is about the quality of the partnerships. If you empower people from the field and listen to them and support them, so much gets done."*

-IPF Grantee



### What kind of work does the IPF support?

ICAN's partners participated in determining the type of work the IPF would support. Together we identified 4 inter-related thematic areas in which the IPF supports women-led peace and security activities.

Deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration of fighters/militias including women and girls.

Promoting peace, security, resilience, equal rights, and pluralism to prevent the spread of extremism and militarism.

The nexus of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) agendas:  
Women as leaders and agents of change in:

Increasing women's representation and gender sensitivity in peace & security policy processes (peace negotiations, security sector reform, etc.)

Addressing violence against women and girls as related to conflict and violent extremism.

## Examples of IPF-funded initiatives between 2015-2017

Nov. 2015 - Feb. 2016

### Iraq (Basra)

Partnered with: **Al Firdaws Foundation**

Conducted outreach to young men recruited into militias or vulnerable to radicalization by conducting workshops on alternative religious narratives and providing community service work to foster belonging and sense of purpose; Organized 4 sessions with 200 tribal leaders to discuss violence against women and women's rights.

**Impact:** Demobilized 150 young men; Local leaders formally pledged to stop using women and girls in forced marriages as payment to settle inter-tribal disputes.

Nov. 2015 - Feb. 2016

### Northern Nigeria

Partnered with: **FOMWAN**

Launched 15 call-in radio shows to counter extremist narratives on education; Led 25 community dialogues in communities where Boko Haram had heavily recruited men, women and youth, as well as between the communities and service providers, including security agencies.

**Impact:** 40% increase in school enrollment and partnership with Islamiya schools and scholars to promote nonviolence and challenge the Boko Haram narrative; Demand for schooling outstripping supply; Increased trust between former Boko Haram captives/members and local communities.

Jan. - Apr. 2017

### Kenya

Partnered with: **Advocacy for Women in Peace & Security in Africa (AWAPSA)**

Created 'Police Cafes' which provide a formal platform for women affected by violent extremism to meet with police to discuss a variety of issues affecting their local communities; Conducted 8 cafes and reached 180 women and girls.

**Impact:** Strengthened partnerships and cooperation between law enforcement and women and girls in Mombasa County; Women now feel more comfortable talking to the police and approaching them with sensitive information, which can be used to help identify potential threats or acts of violent extremism in the community.

### Afghanistan (Herat)

Nov. 2015 - Feb. 2016;

Nov. 2016 - Feb. 2017

Partnered with: **Afghan Women's Organization for Equality (AWOE)**

Hosted workshops with 40 men from 8 villages addressing private/public violence, masculinity and leadership, peacebuilding/mediation, justice mechanisms and dispute resolution skills.

**Impact:** Men's network committed to violence prevention intervened in 72 incidences in just 2 months after workshops; The work is expanding to other villages.

### Syria

Trained women activists in peacebuilding efforts and to help community-based women peacebuilders understand the links between their work and the formal peace talks.

**Impact:** 5 national campaigns launched and network of grassroots women peacebuilders mobilized to engage with the UN-led peace process.

### Pakistan

Nov. 2015 - Feb. 2016;

Nov. 2016 - Feb. 2017

Partnered with: **Paiman Trust**

Provided small grants to deradicalized women and youth peace groups using arts and culture to raise communities' awareness of extremism and to prevent, counter and deradicalize extremists; Identified, deradicalized and reintegrated women and youth into holistic rehabilitation programs.

**Impact:** 75 extremist or vulnerable youth deradicalized; Increased community awareness and resilience against extremism; Women who sewed suicide belts rehabilitated as peace advocates and trained in new skills such as fabric dyers, beauticians, cooks and embroiderers earning higher incomes.

Interested in  
supporting the IPF?

Email [info@icanpeacework.org](mailto:info@icanpeacework.org)