

***Appetite for Risk or Investing in Trust?
Lessons and Best Practices from ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund (IPF)
in Supporting Local Women-led Organizations'
Peace, Security and P/CVE Work***

19-20 February 2019
London, United Kingdom

Concept Note

Summary

On 19-20 February 2019, the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) will convene an expert working group meeting on the experiences, lessons and good practices in grantmaking to local women-led civil society organizations (CSOs) active in promoting peace, security and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). Reflecting on ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund (IPF) model¹, the purpose of the meeting is to hear the direct experiences of all stakeholders, namely grantees and partners, donors, and other international organizations engaged in grassroots P/CVE and peacebuilding grantmaking, to inform current and future development of peace/security policies and financing approaches.

The meeting will be the fifth thematic Global Solutions Exchange (GSX)² event to take place. The event is made possible by the kind support of Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which will also host the event in London.

Key Objectives

- 1) To identify entry points and opportunities for shifting current practices of grantmaking to women-led organizations in the peace and security field so that funding is more widely available and reaches those organizations with the most impact in their local communities.
- 2) To develop guidance and recommendations for donors and international organizations interested in supporting and safeguarding the existing work of women peacebuilders and women-led CSOs.
- 3) To showcase the impact of funding local women-led organizations directly involved in implementing innovative solutions for engaging in P/CVE work and playing leadership roles in peace processes, with special emphasis on the impact of small to medium-sized grants.
- 4) To share best practices and lessons learned on peacebuilding and P/CVE from women peacebuilders active in their local communities

¹ Through the IPF, ICAN has disbursed over \$2.3 million through 90 grants in 23 countries.

² The Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) was launched in 2016 as a platform for enabling systematic and structured engagement between ICAN's civil society partners and governmental and multilateral entities responsible for peace, security and P/CVE.

Context

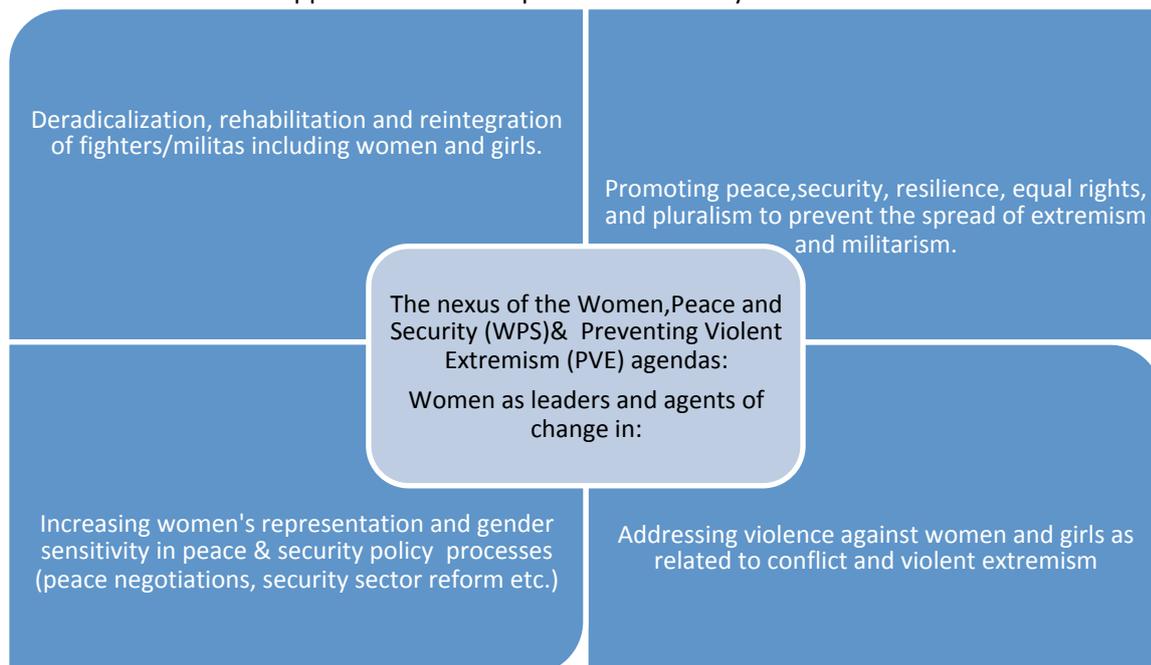
Among the international community it is increasingly acknowledged that funding local organizations involved in peacebuilding and P/CVE is a necessary and efficient means of promoting sustainable peace. But due to lack of effective documentation or evidence gathering, there is still much wariness among international donors. This is exacerbated by the fact that channeling resources to grassroots organizations can be cumbersome given the financial oversight and reporting required. Donors often assume that such grantmaking is too risky because they are not as familiar with the local, particularly smaller, organizations. This risk is defined in various ways. For some donors, it denotes the potential lack of competence or the vulnerability to corruption on the part of local organizations. For many it is also the fear and risk of funding local actors that may have ties to terror or violent extremist groups. Finally, directing resources to local civil society entities, particularly new organizations or those run by women and youth, requires changes in policies and institutional procedures. Fostering this systemic shift requires political will, leadership and a change in institutions' cultures and attitudes towards grassroots and local civil society groups. Inevitably, inertia and vested interests in current practices dominate.

Nowhere are these dichotomies more evident than in the international community's assertions about women's equality and leadership in peace and security issues. On the one hand, the UN, the OECD and governments have repeatedly stated the importance of women's civil CSOs in peacebuilding and preventing violent extremism. Research shows that women's organizations are the primary engine of change for promoting gender equality. On the other hand, despite 18 years of the women, peace and security agenda, 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).

In response to this perennial challenge of channeling resources in a timely manner to women's peace organizations in crisis and conflict affected settings, ICAN started providing small grants to its partners in 2010. In 2015, ICAN established the Innovative Peace Fund (IPF) as an independent multi-donor grantmaking and technical support mechanism. The IPF's grantmaking approaches and priorities were determined through participatory design involving ICAN's partners and members of the global Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL). Together we identified the following four inter-related thematic areas in which the IPF supports women-led peace and security activities:



Through the IPF, ICAN provides grants ranging from \$3,000 to \$100,000 to women-led organizations in countries affected by conflict, fragility and rising extremism. Our support includes technical assistance, including project design, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as strategic advice and ongoing accompaniment to encourage innovation and adaptation of good practice.

Program

The event will showcase the lessons and impact of the IPF funded activities and programs of women-led peacebuilding organizations, notably members of WASL, to peace and security including P/CVE efforts. The GSX model provides a platform for enabling systematic and structured engagement between our civil society partners and governmental and multilateral entities responsible for peace, security and P/CVE. This roundtable will provide participants an opportunity to hear directly from our partners about their experiences and lessons-learned in this field. It will connect local women's organizations to international practitioners, government actors and academics, and ensure that the international community learns from locally rooted experiences, solutions and lessons.

In enabling the exchange of experiences and solutions, a key purpose of the workshop will be to enable a frank and in-depth discussion between civil society organizations and multilaterals to raise awareness of the obstacles each face and to identify solutions to build greater trust, continue collaboration and improve practices.

A detailed agenda will be provided to attendees in advance of the meeting.

Participants

Roundtable participants will be WASL members and IPF grantees with demonstrable expertise in innovative practices, activism advocacy and thought leadership in the realm of women's rights, peace, security and C/PVE. Representing over 10 conflict and fragility affected countries worldwide, participants are locally-rooted and globally connected, trusted in their communities, and key influencers in their societies. They have much to teach and learn from each other to broaden their own national reach.

Sponsorship

As the organizer of the event, ICAN, with the generous support of Global Affairs Canada and the UK's FCO, will cover the cost of participation of all grantees and partners, as well as costs related to the convening of this event. Representatives of international non-governmental organizations, governments and donor institutions are expected to cover their own travel and lodging costs. ICAN is grateful to the UK government for hosting the event at the FCO.