
Resourcing change:

Supporting women's rights organisations in fragile and conflict-affected states

Policy and learning brief



WOMEN FOR WOMEN
INTERNATIONAL



SAFERWORLD
PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

Background and Introduction

Saferworld, Women for Women International (WfWI), Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), WILPF Nigeria and WILPF Afghanistan received CSSF funding to support women’s rights organisations (WROs) in Yemen, South Sudan, Nigeria and Afghanistan. The objective of this funding was to increase WROs’ independent role in leading programming and advocacy on peacebuilding, gender equality, women’s empowerment and participation, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response, and COVID-19 response and preparedness.

The ‘Resourcing Change’ project¹ has provided 21 WROs in Nigeria (10), South Sudan (5) and Yemen (6) with an average of £35,000 in flexible and core funding. This funding has enabled them to respond to self-identified and community needs to promote the five strategic areas outlined above, strengthened their organisational capacities to lead this work independently, and allowed them to come together, learn from each other and raise needs and concerns related to this work.

This paper will present the main outcomes and learning from this project and set out recommendations for donors and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) seeking to support WROs in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) as part of their women, peace and security (WPS) commitments.

Learning component

Learning was integral to the ‘Resourcing Change’ project – as the design was premised on our analysis that there is insufficient learning and awareness of good practice in supporting WROs to pursue their own priorities; and insufficient evidence of the effectiveness of providing them with core and flexible funding. Our analysis also highlighted the exclusionary nature of relevant national and international debates on aid funding mechanisms, where the voices of civil society, and in particular WROs, are often side-lined.

Saferworld, Women for Women International (WfWI) and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) facilitated a variety of different learning events at different levels, including: three national-level learning events for the WROs in each country; one international-level learning event for WROs and ‘Resourcing Change’ consortium partners; and

one international-level event to share lessons for WROs, consortium partners and the donor. To ensure the learning events had an empirical grounding, we also fed in data and evidence from project monitoring and evaluation activities. This included participatory outcome harvesting sessions held with the WROs to assess the extent of behaviour change among their main stakeholders, and to analyse the significance of these outcomes in relation to their wider objectives.

The first two events were intended to a) serve as learning spaces for WROs to share lessons, establish relationships and work towards common goals, visions and approaches that will strengthen independence and sustainability; and b) help WROs and INGO consortium partners to identify, document and substantiate good practices, benefits, challenges and outcomes related to the project.

The project consortium partners devised a set of learning

questions to structure the project learning efforts:

1. Have these ways of working allowed WROs to work more independently, that is, to better pursue their own priorities as organisations? If yes, why and how? If not, what are the main barriers?
2. Have these ways of working followed feminist principles and approaches?
3. What outcomes and/or impact can be observed so far from this type of funding/partnership?
4. Have the learning event(s), the capacity-strengthening events/initiatives and the other project activities allowed WROs to build movements between the different WROs participating, to connect, organise and build a community? If yes, why and how? If not, why not?
5. What do we need to do to improve in the next phase of this funding?

Feminist principles and approaches

Consortium partners defined and committed to feminist ways of working, and set the following principles to do so. WROs and partners reflected on how these were applied throughout the learning events.

Positive and inclusive use of power:

Creating spaces for WROs to lead on initiatives or processes that they may historically have been excluded from.

Transparency and accountability:

Being clear, timely and transparent in how we make decisions within projects.

Collective decision-making:

Ensuring collective goals are clearly defined and mutually owned. Holding ourselves and others accountable for achieving them.

Gender justice and non-discrimination:

Working towards full equality and equity between women and men in all spheres of life, resulting in women and marginalised groups defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole. Calling out any form of discrimination and abuse of power and ensuring our own conduct is free from any kind of harassment and exploitation.

Intersectionality:

An understanding that multiple oppressions reinforce each other to create new categories of marginalisation, and thus a decision to focus on these categories and listen to the needs and experience of women from ethnic minorities, disabled women and displaced women, among others.

Main findings and recommendations

1. Donors and INGOs should ensure that the core, flexible and accessible funding they provide allows WROs to make allocations for their self-defined priorities, including core organisational costs and essential programmatic work to advance gender equality and WPS priorities strategically, in recognition of their greater knowledge and experience.

Core means that funds:

- can be used to cover a broad range of activities or costs based on the WRO's strategic priorities and on commonly identified gaps, such as core costs (for example, staffing and administration costs), core functions (monitoring, evaluation and learning and financial systems), capacity-strengthening initiatives and/or programming costs

Summary of findings

WROs and consortium partners highlighted various strategic, programmatic, operational and organisational advantages of these flexible and core funds, particularly their having **increased WROs' ability to undertake independent and strategic work, pursuing their own priorities**. Across Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, WROs reported they felt able to develop responsive programmes and work plans that focused on their own and locally identified needs, rather than (as is usual) on donor - or INGO-driven priorities. WROs reported having been able to make the decisions on how, when and where to implement projects, with interventions they considered best for the context. It has also enabled them to fill gaps and meet needs expressed by communities that other donors were not willing to meet, which in turn increased trust between WROs and the conflict-affected communities.

Flexible means that expenditure:

- is based on the WRO's independent strategic assessment of its needs
- can be adjusted based on new learning, community requests/needs or emerging crises or context changes
- supports WROs in their institutional/organisational capacity to thrive as part of a dynamic, mobilised and independent civil society space that is sustainably resourced and equipped to provide meaningful and long-term support for gender equality and WPS

Accessible means that requirements are:

- proportionate to the grants disbursed
- adaptable based on good faith discussion with WROs
- do not cause burdensome administrative processes that delay or hinder urgent projects

Thematic focus of work by WROs per country

WROs in all contexts agreed on the benefits of receiving core funds and being able to dedicate resources to institutional capacity strengthening. WROs and consortium partners agree that core funds:

- contribute to a dynamic, mobilised and independent civil society space that is resourced and equipped to progress women and girls' rights and WPS, and

- increase financial security and sustainability through, for example, further resource mobilisation as a result of strengthened organisational capacity in expert staff, organisational systems and compliance

In **Nigeria**, core funds enabled WROs to undertake accounting audits, take out bank loans, and to develop organisational policies and procedures (for example, on transport, financial controls and an internal gender policy). One partner reported being able to register formally with the Ministry of Women Affairs, something they had never had funds for. In **South Sudan**, WROs shared similar examples of identifying (through joint organisational capacity assessments done with all WROs) and addressing gaps in institutional administration and operations. One partner, Women Advancement Organisation, shared that the ability to dedicate resources to institutional capacity strengthening helped the organisation to obtain missing official documentation that was required from other donors and which allows them to apply for funding in the future. In **Yemen**, WROs welcomed the ability to put the funding towards much-needed team-building activities

“without feeling guilty”, which enabled staff working in dangerous and oppressive conditions to sustain their work on the ground, think of their own well-being (one of the identified feminist principles) and to safely and efficiently support their stakeholders.

WROs in all countries shared learnings on **the practical impact on investing in staffing and staff capacity because of their core funding**. In **Yemen**, partners were able to hire the expert staff that they needed, build stronger teams and plan their work more strategically as a result – leading to greater long-term sustainability, particularly when it comes to being able to more closely identify and align funding opportunities with organisational priorities and plans. Similar examples from partners in **Nigeria** and **South Sudan** included investing in training finance teams to use QuickBooks (an accounting software package), increasing

staff salaries – which improved staff retention, a massive challenge in South Sudan or humanitarian contexts where donors, UN agencies and INGOs pay very high salaries which WROs cannot compete with – and increased staff motivation. They were also able to recruit full-time staff in specialised yet crucial functional areas (such as MEL, financial controls, project management and fundraising) to allow for the clear segregation of duties, meaning that overstretched staff no longer had to fill multiple roles.

By pursuing their own priorities, and now able to strengthen institutional capacity alongside programmatic funding, **all WROs reported strengthened programme impact and reach despite a relatively short implementation period**. Some outcomes harvested in this period include: increased openness to the political participation of women and feminist movements (Yemen);

increased GBV reporting as a result of sensitisation initiatives (Nigeria); the instruction by a clan head to community members to ban female genital mutilation (Nigeria); the establishment of a GBV response centre that conducts community dialogues (Nigeria); increased women's economic independence and access to economic spaces through the entrepreneurship and start-up capital provided (South Sudan); and increased access to sexual and reproductive health services (South Sudan).

In **South Sudan**, WROs reported a cascading effect from capacity-strengthening initiatives conducted by the consortium partners, noting that the staff who participated in these activities were in turn able to train their colleagues on the job.

Finally, WROs in Yemen and South Sudan reported a link between receiving core funds and their ability to strengthen

movement-building, joint work and coordination. In South Sudan, partners reported that, by being a more reliable institution, with a strong staff team that had the capacity to participate, one WRO was able to assume leadership of a women's network

Overall, the examples shared by partners in this section indicate that **when WROs have flexible and core resources to allocate to self-defined priorities including institutional capacity strengthening, it leads to a thriving civic space with more strategic and independent programming that in turn has positive outcomes for women's and girls' needs and rights**. In the future, WROs should be supported to build and strengthen networks and coalitions at higher levels to address the issues that need advocacy with critical actors.

Flexibility had a direct link to increasing community trust, sustainability and WROs' ability to do more sensitive work with conflict-affected communities.

WROs in all countries found that flexible funding allowed them to rapidly adapt programmes to community needs and context changes – and, when doing so, they saw an **increase in the trust and buy-in from communities and stakeholders.** With increased community engagement and trust facilitated by the funds' flexibility and responsiveness, WROs experienced: **greater influence with their main stakeholders and synergies with decision-makers; increased sustainability to conduct more sensitive work; and enhanced coalition/movement-building and collective working.**

In **Nigeria**, partners gave examples of religious leaders who had previously hesitated to engage now requesting information on GBV to make

available in their churches. **Partners in Nigeria also shared that a national reporting dashboard on GBV was commissioned by the Ministry of Women Affairs, demonstrating high-level buy-in to the work of the WROs.**

These opportunities to work with community stakeholders and authorities positively contributed towards conflict resolution initiatives, and strengthened increasing direct relationships with authorities, providing greater autonomy and power to WROs to respond to requests. This approach emphasised the need and importance of working collaboratively with communities to achieve common goals and visions.

Partners in **Nigeria** welcomed the opportunity to develop objectives and carry out activities across a range of thematic areas that “suit us and work for us”. In **Yemen**, partners noted that the flexibility of

the grant was an important feature in easing the transition between projects, and in allowing lessons learnt during implementation to change and shape the project while it was still being implemented. Flexibility also facilitated differences of opinion between consortium partners and WROs, or between WROs themselves at the design and implementation phases, to be addressed based on what was and was not working.

Partners in these three countries also emphasised that the flexibility of the grant **supported them to gain more confidence in their abilities** by taking the responsibility to decide on expenditure and design programmes according to their needs. In **South Sudan**, partners emphasised the importance of being able to determine the exact geographic location of where the intervention should take place. They also agreed that the accessibility of the

grant was higher than that of others, as there were **no strict requirements to use complex and lengthy templates** and there were **fewer restrictions on bank account policies.**

During the course of the project, some partners in other target countries experienced geographic restrictions. In Yemen, working in both the north and south is dangerous. The south is more accessible for project implementers, and while it is also possible to work in the north it is more dangerous and thus takes longer time and more resources to do so. Work related to peace and gender or women's rights is prohibited in the north. No such geographic restrictions were reported in Nigeria, with participating WROs operating across the north, southwest and south of the country.

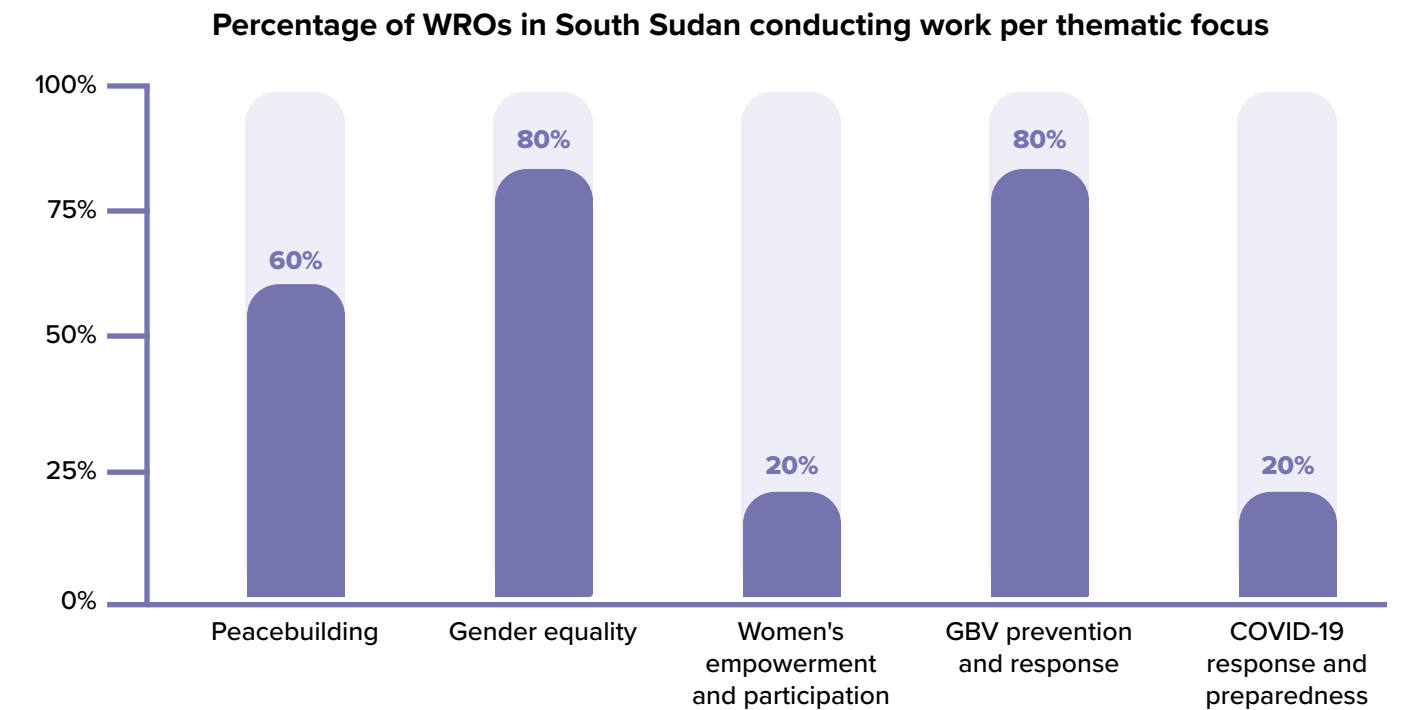
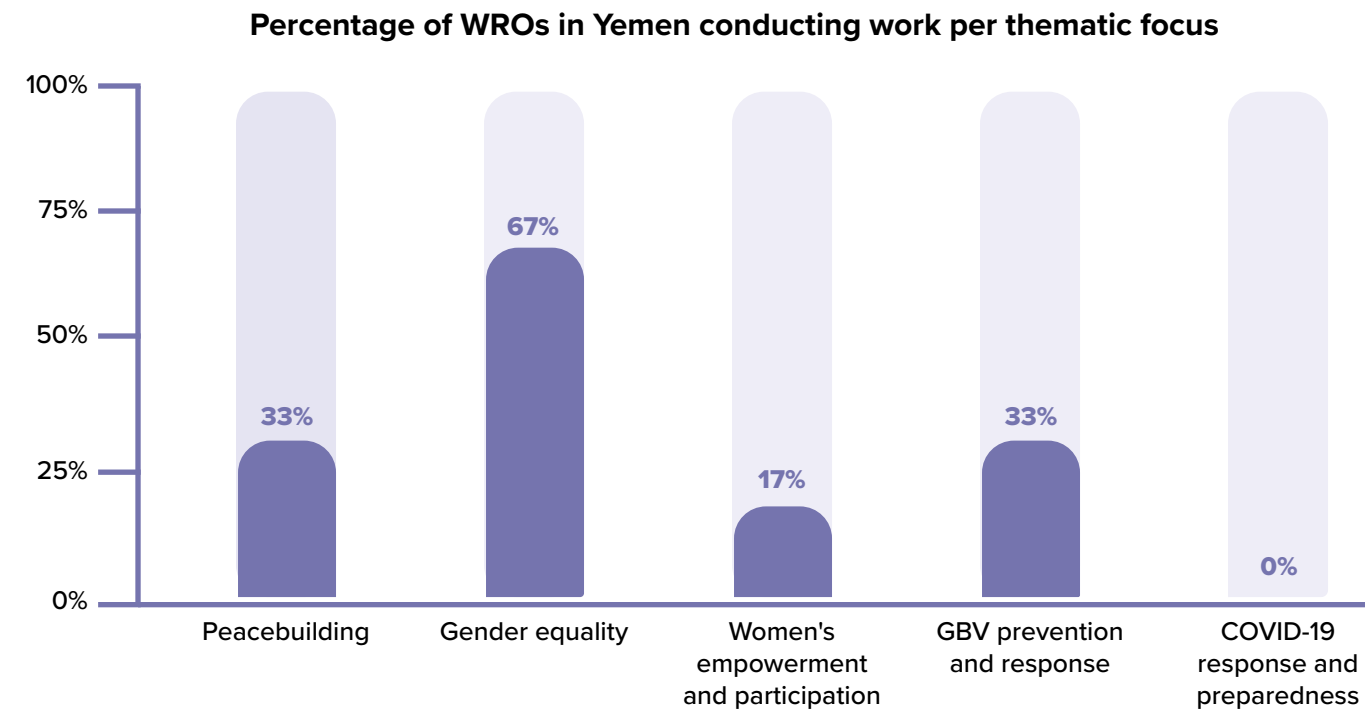
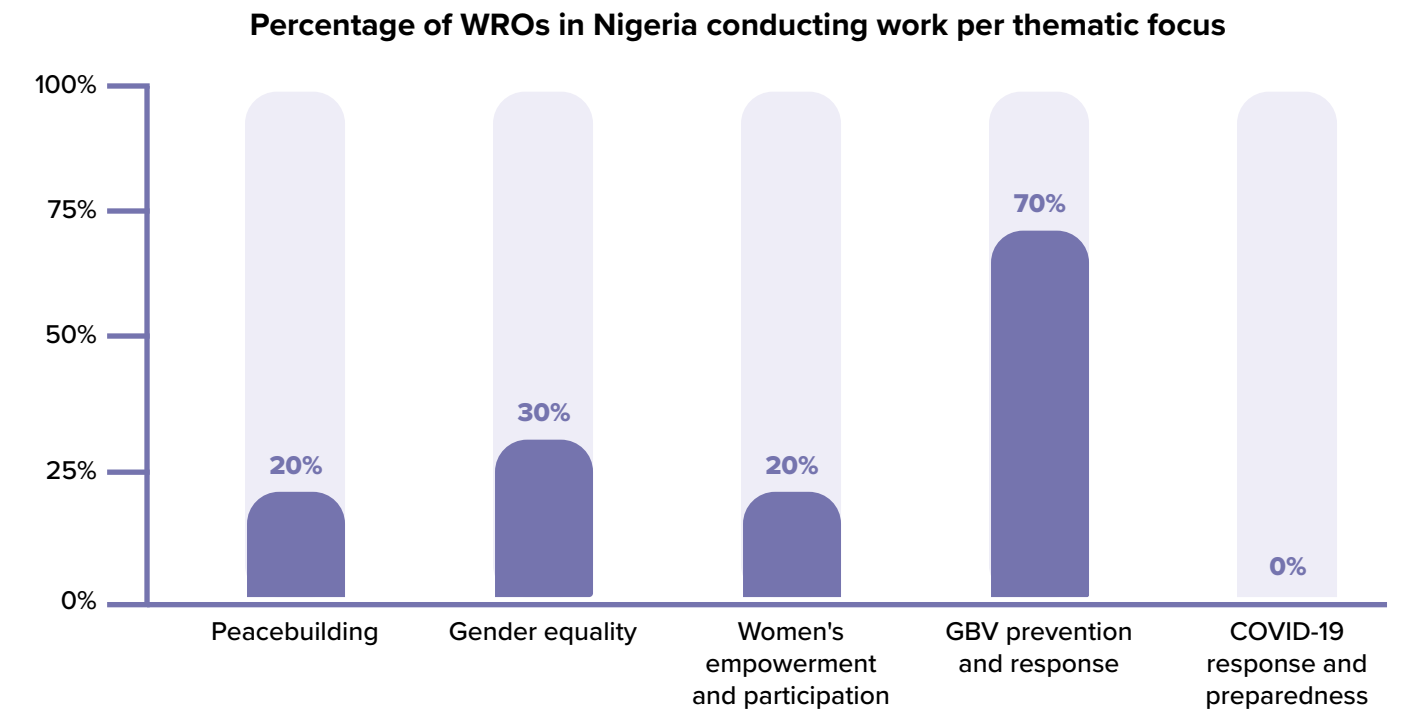
While flexibility was rated as high when compared to traditional funding/projects, WROs gave the following feedback for the design of future initiatives:

- Increase the current flexibility afforded to project activities, for example by simplifying processes to respond to urgent and emerging needs during project implementation or to address other external obstacles arising during implementation.
- Approve WROs' ability to purchase large assets and equipment with the project funding, for example vehicles to reach remote and often highly marginalised and vulnerable communities, and increase WROs' staff safety and security.

Thematic focus of work by WROs per country

Below you will find a information of the thematic focus of the work conducted by our partner women's rights organisations (WROs). This data has been displayed as a percentage by country and by thematic focus of work.

Country	Peacebuilding	Gender equality	Women's empowerment and participation	GBV prevention and response	COVID-19 response and preparedness
Yemen (6 WROs)	33%	67%	17%	33%	0%
Nigeria (10 WROs)	20%	30%	20%	70%	0%
South Sudan (5 WROs)	60%	80%	20%	80%	20%



Coalition of WROs in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria: Advancing women's protection against GBV

In Nigeria, the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act was signed into law in 2015, providing progress towards GBV protection in the country. The VAPP law 'prohibits all forms of violence against persons in private and public life, and provides maximum protection and effective remedies for victims and punishment of offenders...in addition the law provides protection against offenses that affect women disproportionately, including a prohibition of female genital mutilation; forceful ejection from home; forced financial dependence or economic abuse; forced isolation; emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; harmful widowhood practices; and spousal battery, among others'.

Since 2015, the various states across Nigeria have been working towards the enforcement of the VAPP, as the act has to be passed into law by regional Houses of Assembly to be effective. However, due to a lack of political attention to it and

donor prioritisation, and thus a lack of funding directed to WROs to conduct advocacy on it, this has not been possible. (Donor interests in Nigeria tend to be related to humanitarian response and countering violent extremism.)

Through the 'Resourcing Change' project, the coalition of WROs in Calabar, Cross River State identified the need to pass this law in order to holistically address GBV and enhance security and protection for women and girls. They focused on advocacy and awareness raising to ensure adoption of the VAPP law by the states. Efforts included: i) a November 2021 joint statement to the Cross River State House of Assembly lobbying for the enforcement of the VAPP Law; ii) advocacy to the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, the Commissioner for Women Affairs and the Speaker of the Cross River State House of Assembly lobbying for the passage of the VAPP into law and iii) advocacy efforts during the 16 days of activism against GBV through media campaigns,

advocacy walks and lobbying for the passage of the VAPP Act into law.

The WRO Coalition was successful and secured the local adoption for Cross River State of the VAPP, which was passed into law by the Cross River State House of Assembly in December 2021 and given assent by the Governor in January 2022. This was a huge outcome in such a short period of time, and proves the impact of providing core funds to WROs to address their own priorities.

ToBe Foundation in Yemen: Flexibility increased community trust and space to do sensitive work in the future

ToBe Foundation for Rights and Freedoms is a WRO in Aden, Yemen. Their initial area of focus was GBV response, including legal aid support to GBV survivors and legal and psychosocial support for women in prison.

During a learning event, ToBe Foundation reflected on how flexibility had had a rapid effect in increasing trust between them and the community. For example, when one of the project participants faced domestic violence from her husband, ToBe foundation was able to shift their planned activities from economic empowerment to medical care and shelter, securing her a safe space from violence. This is not just life-saving in itself: the quick responsiveness triggered a positive shift in attitude from women in the

community towards the WRO, which has increased their ability and space to do other work in the future. In another instance, ToBe was set to provide legal aid to women in prison, when they found that women were facing violence from the prison guards – one woman living with HIV/AIDS had even received death threats. ToBe was able to shift some funds to protect this woman and raise awareness and sensitivity among the prison guards. This flexibility is rarely allowed in traditional projects, they reflected.

Suspending the Afghanistan component of the ‘Resourcing Change’ project: Poor flexibility directly impacted WROs at an urgent and critical time

The ‘Resourcing Change’ project was initially supposed to include work in Afghanistan. However, after the Taliban takeover in August 2021, CSSF had to suspend the Afghanistan component of the project in line with changes in the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) policy on the decision to suspend all non-humanitarian activities in Afghanistan.

This decision directly contradicted the purpose of the project, which is the provision of flexible and core funding to WROs in volatile and complex conflict situations so that they can design, implement and adapt activities according to their self-defined needs and priorities. The current context in Afghanistan is obviously extremely restrictive, particularly for women’s rights. Women’s rights activists and organisations needed this type of funding and support the most during the Taliban takeover and its aftermath, in order to carry out the vital task of keeping the women’s rights movement and its activists safe, alive and working during a difficult transition.

Through programme adaptation, consortium partners are now working on research, mapping, convening and advocacy to enable the Afghan women’s rights movement to identify the best ways for it to be sustained and supported by the UK and other governments. We hope lessons from this first phase and the research findings will enable us to support Afghan women’s rights and women inside Afghanistan, at a moment when they are facing major setbacks. The ‘Resourcing Change’ project is essential to keeping these movements alive in the face of crisis.

Root of Generation (ROG) in South Sudan: A WRO facilitating community peace dialogue

The Buya and Didinga communities in South Sudan have long enjoyed peaceful co-existence. However, due to a change in rainfall patterns there has been an increase in cattle moving in search of pastures during the dry season. This has resulted in cattle raiding and revenge killings, with conflict escalation along the main roads, including killings of community members and aid workers. ROG have been working with both communities in Budi County, Eastern Equatoria state to prevent conflict.

With the coming of the dry season in November 2021, peace committees and the community police force of Buya were alerted that young men were planning to attack the Didinga during the December festive season. Community leaders from Juba, Torit, Kapoeta, along with the County Commissioner, reached out to ROG, asking them to facilitate dialogues before the identified issues escalated. ROG used core funds to address this immediately. It consulted with the two communities separately and facilitated a three-day community peace dialogue bringing together 183 representatives (including 62 women) from both communities. The meeting was chaired by the County Commissioner, who was joined by community leaders, women and young people from both side of the divide. The County Commissioner issued a statement of zero tolerance of revenge fighting, killing and

insecurity along the Chukudum to Camp-15 Road in Budi County.

Following the peace dialogue, Buya and Didinga communities agreed to put their differences aside and restored peaceful co-existence. Since the dialogue in December there have been no reported cases of revenge killing or cattle raiding. The agreements have allowed free movement of people and vehicles with no reported cases of road ambushes or killing.

Following this successful contribution to peace, county authorities granted ROG land to build an office, which is being built with funds from DT-Global. This office space will allow ROG to have a permanent presence to support community peacebuilding initiatives across Budi County.

Main findings and recommendations

2. Donors and INGOs should ensure funds and time for multiple learning and movement-building events throughout the project, to enable WROs to learn from each other, establish strong relationships and work towards common goals, visions and approaches to strengthen their individual and collective work beyond the lifespan of the project.

Summary of findings

Across all contexts, WROs and consortium partners reported positive findings linking the joint project activities, learning events and capacity-strengthening initiatives to increased connection, networking, movement-building and organising between WROs. They asked the donor and consortium partners to:

- scale-up capacity-strengthening and movement-building components, particularly on how to implement these funds using feminist principles and approaches
- increase opportunities for peer exchange with other WROs within and between countries, and ensure convening and learning spaces from project inception

Partners working to address GBV in **Nigeria** shared that the different WROs participating in

the ‘Resourcing Change’ project made contacts and looked for opportunities to plan to work together across different geographies to standardise and merge their referral systems as appropriate. In **South Sudan**, WROs formed a WhatsApp group as platform for communication and information sharing, and some agreed to share office space after being connected through the project, while others reported sharing of project innovations and approaches to strengthen the impact on women’s and girls’ rights.

In **Yemen**, partners pointed to the learning events as important opportunities for WROs to build networks, strengthen relationships, introduce each other to their work, and discuss challenges, opening up possibilities for collaboration to expand their work and achieve shared goals. While partners welcomed the opportunity to share lessons learnt and challenges faced,

they noted the need for more funds for learning events and convening spaces; as such the national learning event (held six months after inception) was the first time the WROs had the opportunity to meet and coordinate. While some country budgets and conditions allowed for joint inception workshops (such as in South Sudan) and face-to-face national learning events, this was not the case in Yemen, where the security situation was too challenging.

Multiple opportunities for convening, including learning events, were built into the design for this project and were vital for ensuring increased coordination, shared learning and movement building, and sustained impact of peer learning events, including at the level of movement- and community-building. In **Yemen**, one partner shared the impact of the core grant in bringing WRO members together with a common purpose, thereby contributing to the revival and

building the feminist movement. In the future, aside from technical support, peer-to-peer learning should be encouraged and include physical experiential visits between WROs to learn from each other and promote real-time learnings on the implementation of projects. Similarly, there should be exchange visits between WROs and consortium partners.

Peace Track Initiative (PTI) and Wogood for Human Security in Yemen: Supporting the Yemeni Feminist movement

PTI used the flexible funds to provide training to Yemeni women to strengthen their leadership skills and decision-making abilities. PTI works towards ensuring more women can meaningfully participate at political negotiations, to be able to partake in decision-making processes that impact women's lives politically and economically.

As a result of the project, PTI has noticed that the Southern Transitional Council is more open to the feminist movement, and specifically to women's participation in the council.

Wogood used the funds to advance the development of a strategy for a grassroots Yemeni feminist movement to support and build a strong foundation for feminist partnerships. While a National Action Plan for WPS was drafted for Yemen in December 2019, it has received heavy criticism for not consulting community-level activists and Yemeni CSOs, and thus failing to respond to the needs and realities of many women and girls. There is a pressing need for a bottom-up approach to WPS in Yemen, one which advances women's participation in political decision-making and peacebuilding. Wogood funded a strategic planning training and

a feminist summit through their flexible grant, which are integral parts to advance women's empowerment as a basis for the feminist movement, and lays the foundation for a bottom-up approach to WPS in Yemen. Such pioneering work in Aden requires is hard to fund, as its not considered a priority for most humanitarian actors in Yemen, yet it needs continued and long-term support. The movement has already gained considerable traction among power holders and is seeking to expand outreach, build momentum, and affect change at the sub-national level.

Jonglei Women Empowerment Programme (JWEP) in South Sudan: Creating space for WROs networking and convening in Bor do sensitive work in the future

In South Sudan most WROs lack access to funding for institutional growth and development, in particular organisations based and operating outside of Juba.

In Bor, JWEP received core and flexible funds in November 2021 and prioritised installing internet access, procuring furniture for their office and creating a meeting space. They did this with two goals in mind: strengthening their own institutional capacity and convening WROs in the region. Their meeting space now serves as a safe space for WROs to meet and network in Bor, and in 2021 it was the venue for events during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, attended by many WROs in the region and INGOs such as CARE and NRC. It was here they planned joint action, agreed on activities and coordinated advocacy efforts. The office is currently serving as a meeting centre for WRO networks in the state. This is crucial in coordinating safety for WROs and activists and will increase their ability to work

collaboratively in advancing women's and girls' rights in Jonglei state and South Sudan in general. Furthermore, JWEP and Women Advancement Organisation (WAO), both recipients of CSSF core funding, agreed to co-host each other at their respective offices – in Bor, JWEP has provided a space to WAO staff and WAO has done the same in Juba. This reflects how flexible funds have connected WROs.

Main findings and recommendations

3. Donors and INGOs should ensure core and flexible funds are long term, and prioritise work on feminist movement-building and gender-transformative approaches, through stronger capacity-strengthening and movement-building components.

WROs gave the following recommendations to donor and consortium partners when reflecting on the whole intervention and next steps:

- Funding should be longer term to ensure the sustainability of the current project and to strengthen WROs' ability to collect and gather valuable MEL data, thus strengthening the evidence base for donors providing flexible and core funding to WROs in other contexts.
- Funding should be aligned with gender-transformative approaches and guided by feminist principles to deconstruct the causes of gender inequality that prevent women from accessing resources and exercising decision making. Partnership should be promoted between WROs, CSOs and the private sector to support the feminist agenda and movement. There should be continued emphasis and implementation of feminist approaches that make projects unique in their objectives and impact.

Summary of findings

Across all contexts, partners shared that the **timeframe of the current project was too short and should be extended to support the effective and sustainable impact and delivery of project activities, amplify the reach of project activities, and scale up the strengthening of institutional capacities.** An extension of the project timeframe to longer and more predictable periods would also enable further time for implementation to see more outcomes/impact and for the documentation of lessons learnt, creating a more comprehensive evidence base for providing WROs with core and flexible funding to strengthen UK WPS policy and practice, as well as that of other donors and INGOs.

WROs in all countries expressed an interest in **more capacity-strengthening initiatives**, with partners in **South Sudan** expressing a particular interest in capacity-strengthening on **feminist principles and approaches**

to strengthen the WROs' movement-building.

The model adopted for partners in **Yemen** slightly differed compared with that for other country partners, in that the consortium partners devised a tailored technical support plan for the six Yemeni WROs. Based on individual capacity and needs assessments held with each of the partners, the consortium partners designed a plan to meet the partners' technical needs. The support plan consisted of a training programme on financial systems management, as well as a series of sessions on feminist thinking and practice, feminist governance, and feminist leadership. This technical support plan was very well-received by partners, who emphasised the feminist governance sessions as being of particular added value to WROs, especially since the consultants providing the trainings were Arabic-speakers from the region with extensive knowledge and sensitivity to the context. Moreover, the technical support plan was also

seen as a space for shared learning and networking between the partners.

Partners in **Yemen** expressed an interest in the **creation of thematic spaces for WROs to meet regularly and discuss learnings at the national levels and across different national contexts.** Partners in **South Sudan** suggested the possibility of **exchange visits between WROs and partners, as well as the formation of online groups to share learnings regularly.** They also raised the question of whether joint proposals from WROs could be submitted to collectively meet different needs in the community.

Child Bride Solidarity (CBS)

in South Sudan:

Transforming gender norms by engaging boys in menstrual hygiene management and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

In South Sudan sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) have been identified as key gaps and priority areas by the women's movement.

CBS had been implementing MHM activities designed to provide sanitary pads, dignity kits, soap and SRHR training to girls, with the aim of empowering them, building their self-confidence, improving school attendance and equipping them with the skills and knowledge to combat sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and uphold their sexual rights.

Throughout their interaction with other WRO within this programme, CBS decided to trial boy engagement and gender-transformative approaches learned from another South Sudanese WRO, Women for Change; the assumption being that prevention of transmission of STIs must involve both boys and girls, and therefore both equally need knowledge and skills to prevent the spread.

CBS has procured and distributed MHM kits to 500 schoolchildren from ten different primary and secondary schools in Bor town and trained boys and girls on SRHR to empower them with knowledge, build their confidence, prevent STIs and increase girls' access to their SRHR. CBS looks forward to seeing the results and impacts as the project continues.

Conclusion and next steps

Through a combination of flexible funding, tailored technical support and a range of networking, learning and coordination opportunities that follow feminist principles and approaches¹, WROs will be better equipped to increase their independent roles in leading programming and advocacy on peacebuilding, gender equality, women's empowerment and participation, GBV prevention and response, and COVID-19 response and preparedness.

Throughout the duration of this project, reflections from consortium partners and WROs have been facilitated and welcomed – particularly to understand WROs' needs, priorities and reflections on what went well and what needs to be adjusted for future programming. The potential of such funding to allow WROs to strengthen their organisations, build trust with and responsiveness to the communities in which they work, and to strategise

effectively to pursue their agendas for peace and gender equality can already be seen through this grant. Longer-term funding of this nature, which prioritises capacity-strengthening, feminist accompaniment models and movement-building, has been proven to further enrich these organisations' work and impact.

Donors and INGOs supporting WROs to allow them to focus on strategic, sustainable and long-term planning, and to make progress towards realising their feminist visions, must reduce the pressure on them when it comes to fundraising to secure projectised funds by providing core, flexible and accessible funding based on partners' needs. Yet core and flexible funding alone is not the only thing that is needed; WROs in the project have clearly voiced their need to increase support with institutional strengthening, movement-building and learning, particularly through feminist and gender-transformative approaches.

¹ Positive and inclusive use of power, transparency and accountability, collective decision-making, gender justice and non-discrimination, and intersectionality.

Women for Women International (WfWI) supports women who live in some of the world's most dangerous places. Women enrol on the charity's year long training programme, where they learn how to earn and save money, improve their family's health and make their voices heard at home and in their community. Since 1993, the charity has helped almost half a million marginalised women survivors of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Sudan. helped almost half a million marginalised women survivors of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Sudan.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is a non-profit non-governmental organization working to bring together women of different political views and philosophical and religious backgrounds determined to study and make known the causes of war and work for a permanent peace and to unite women worldwide who oppose oppression and exploitation. WILPF has national sections in 37 countries.

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe in a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity. We are a not-for-profit organisation working in 12 countries and territories across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.