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# An Analysis of Women's Participation In Peace Negotiations; 1992 - 2010

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AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS;  
1992 - 2010

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A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters of  
Conflict Transformation at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

July 2011

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## Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Introduction	5
UN Security Council Resolution 1325	6
Linkages Between Women’s Participation & Conflict Transformation	7
Why Should Women Be Included?	12
Women in Peace Negotiations through Community-Based Initiatives	18
<i>Examples of Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations</i>	
Northern Ireland	22
Somalia	27
Guatemala	31
Burundi	36
Darfur, Sudan	41
Liberia	45
Conclusion	50
References	52

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper will present an analysis of several women's peacebuilding movements and describe their efforts to participate in formal peace negotiations. This analysis includes the design, development and implementation of the female and community-based initiatives as well as the strategies, tactics and approaches used by these women throughout the peace negotiation process. It is important to consider the central role women's organizations have played in ensuring women's involvement when examining peace negotiations. Despite a lack of formal invitations to participate in negotiations, many female community-based initiatives have gained entry through efforts outside the political realm.

To provide a framework on the current global standards, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is presented in the first pages of this report, demonstrating the UN's acknowledgement and interpretation of the pivotal role women can play in the peacebuilding process. Though several other UN SCR's have been adopted since Resolution 1325 augmenting the UN's position on women's participation, it is imperative that we consider where this issue stands within a conflict transformation discourse? As such an analysis and argument is thus presented through a conflict transformation lens for the inclusion of women in peace processes.

Moving beyond academic deliberation and focusing squarely on the intricacies of peace negotiations, the pragmatic benefits to women's inclusion during this period of the peacebuilding processes are outlined and six case studies of women's participation in peace negotiations are presented. These case studies illustrate the various women's efforts, the pivotal role of civil society organizations and their strategic approaches throughout the peace negotiation process and the development of the peace agreement. Despite the differences in geography and culture these women's initiatives share common trends in their organization and approach to peacebuilding,

specifically as it pertains to the breakdown of social divisions and through their connection to civil society and community. In addition to these significant commonalities across global initiatives, there are also similarities in the strategies the women used throughout the formal peace negotiations, as will be demonstrated.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Why, after so many conflict resolution initiatives have been implemented around the world in so many conflict-affected regions, do cycles of violence on national levels continue? According to a statement by US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in 2010, of the 39 conflicts that have erupted in the past ten years, only eight are entirely new. Many intervening factors contribute to the recurrence of violent conflicts but for the purpose of this research the focus will be on one of the common denominators, the under-utilization of women in the early stages of the peacebuilding process. There are several components to consider within the cultural and/or societal context of a recurring conflict including the economic, religious, political and ethnic divides between warring parties however the additional danger of underutilizing women in the peacebuilding process ensures that the perspectives, experiences and most importantly capabilities of half the population are not accounted for in efforts to effectively and sustainably rebuild a country.

A post conflict, transitional period creates the opportunity for a country to “build back better” (United Nations, 2010) but by discounting the women’s voice an early precedent for inequality is set and the chances of building sustainable peace are decreased by perpetuating future social injustices and discriminations. Peace negotiations specifically are “the pivotal component of a process that addresses all aspects of peace making and provides a platform for negotiating agreements on new legislation, structures of governance and social institutions”

(Anderlini, 2000, p.12). Women's participation is a vital element throughout all stages of the peacebuilding process but most significantly during the peace negotiations.

From the UN to national governments to international NGO's, initiatives worldwide have addressed the under-utilization of women in peace negotiations. Despite these efforts the impact currently within the formal realm of peace processes remains minimal. Since 1992 women have constituted less than 8% of negotiating delegations in UN mediated peace processes (UN, 2010). In addition to the scarcity of women's presence at the table there is a significantly low occurrence of addressing women's needs specifically in peace agreements. A study of 585 peace agreements between 1992-2010 concluded that only 16% contain references to women (Bell and O'Rourke, 2010). Discouraging statistics aside, there continue to be positive steps taken for the overall empowerment of women with each occurrence of a female presence at a formal negotiation table. There are several women, amongst those who have participated in formal peace negotiations, who can serve as inspirational beacons for women suffering from violent conflicts and other forms of social inequality. Several examples are presented in the second half of this report demonstrating the activities, strategies, and approaches used by these women to gain access to their country's formal peace negotiation process. In these examples note the similar strategies implemented by women for inclusion at the formal negotiation as well as their analogous peacebuilding approaches used at the table and throughout the process.

### **UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325**

In October of 2000 the United Nations officially recognized the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution initiatives by adopting UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The unanimous vote by the UN to adopt this was significant as it was the first UN resolution focused primarily on women, peace and security. By recognizing the reality that

women and children are the worst affected by conflict UN SCR 1325 encourages member states to address their specific needs in the post conflict period. Below is an excerpt from UN SCR 1325, which encapsulates this sentiment.

*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and recognizing the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation

In addition to addressing the distinct impact of armed conflict on women, this resolution describes the power and positive impact of women's participation throughout all stages of a country's peacebuilding process and encourages women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives in order to prevent further violent strife. The following sections from UN SCR 1325 demonstrate the significant impact and nature of women's participation.

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,  
*Recognizing* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can **significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.**

Affirming women's potential to contribute at all levels and stages of the peace process, UN SCR 1325 provides a blueprint for more inclusive peacemaking, opening a long awaited door of opportunity for women by asserting their participation as a significant component for sustainable peace (Chowdury, 2010).

## **LINKAGES BETWEEN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION & CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

Though there are several UN SCR's affirming the importance of women's involvement, what is the link between women's participation and effective conflict transformation? There are

countless reports written exemplifying the importance of women's involvement in a country's post-conflict peace process. The primary reason and perhaps the most simple is that women represent half a country's population. A country will have already invalidated their peace process by negating the perspectives and experiences of half of its citizens. Because post-conflict a country is generally at its most destitute, economically and morally, in order to rebuild effectively and sustainably, the efforts of the entire population must be utilized. When women specifically are excluded, especially during the early stages of this process including the peace negotiations and throughout the design of peace agreements and recovery frameworks, the country's efforts to build sustainable peace, or "positive peace" are already at an extreme disadvantage.

Galtung (1975) describes "positive peace" as the absence of all forms of violence, direct, structural and cultural (p.130). In order for a country to create lasting peace an examination of the three types of violence within a society is necessary, according to Galtung. Direct violence is the immediate harm on individuals; structural violence is the denied access of any resources including natural, political, or economic by one group to another, and cultural violence is viewed as the inner motivation or cultural influences that legitimizes the use of violence most often transmitted generationally (Arai, 2009, p.5). Direct violence is the most evident but what must be recognized are the complexities intertwining the three forms of violence. Galtung (1990) describes, "Direct violence is an event; structural violence is a process with ups and downs; cultural violence is an invariant, a 'permeance,' remaining essentially the same for long periods of time, given the slow transformation of basic culture" (p. 43). Direct violence merely constitutes the surface of a country or community's conflict. Below the surface are the underlying root causes for the conflict, the cultural violence that is within individuals and the

structural violence constituting the system within which the individuals are in. All three forms of violence must be addressed in a post-conflict period in order to overcome all forms of violence, both above and below the surface.

In approaching any conflict transformation initiative one cannot merely address the individual acts of violence but must address the influences motivating the perpetrators as well as the context within which the violence occurred. For this reason an all-inclusive approach is necessary to any peacebuilding initiatives, which must include both victims and perpetrators of violence, whether direct, structural or cultural within that societal context. A comprehensive approach thus includes women, for their experiences as victims, their motivations as perpetrators, and their participation within, as well as a deep understanding of their own society.

Galtung (1975) writes that positive peace must also attain social justice, defined as egalitarian distribution of power and resources (p. 130). In this particular essay Galtung does not mention women within this egalitarian distribution nor does he specify the absence of gender inequalities as an essential variable contributing to positive peace. Schirch and Sewak (2005) however draw a connection between women's human rights and obtaining positive peace, elaborating on the effects and subsequent secondary violence that occurs within structural violence, such as domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence.

Peacebuilding includes a much wider agenda than simply preventing or ending civil wars. It needs to address the structural causes of conflict and the interplay between categories of secondary violence. Peacebuilding requires including an agenda to work on violence against women, both in times of national and international destruction such as war, and during times where there may be "peace" at the national level, but unrest in communities that turn the violence inward (Schirch and Sewak, 2005, p. 4).

A peace process working to overcome structural violence must then, according to Schirch and Sewak, tackle the issues of gender inequalities that contribute to gender-based violence within

that society. Genuine or positive peace requires not only the absence of war but also the elimination of unjust social and economic relations, including unequal gender relations. The peacebuilding discourse must be transformed to one that promotes the values of pluralism, inclusivity and equity for human beings (Schirch and Sewak, 2005, p. 5).

An all-inclusive approach to peacebuilding is necessary throughout all stages of the peace process but most importantly during the peace negotiations, when peace agreements are designed, developed and mapped to implement peacebuilding initiatives. It is in this period that the initial foundations for conflict resolution and thus sustainable peace are built.

Peace talks have the capacity to become a platform for transforming unjust institutions and structures, opening the door for greater social justice (Anderlini, 2002, p.14). In simpler terms, peace talks offer a rare opportunity for countries to “build back better” (UN, 2010). The design of peace agreements offer a peace process not only the opportunity to prevent further violence but to create a more peaceful, all-inclusive future for a community or country. Youssef Mahmoud, Director of the UN Department of Political Affairs spoke in 2003 on the significance of peace agreements in promoting gender equality. Using a quote by Lederach, Mahmoud said,

Peace accords are often seen as a culminating point of a peace process. In the language of governments and the military, the accords are referred to as an end-game scenario... In reality, the accords are nothing more than opening a door into a whole new labyrinth of rooms that invite us to continue in the process of redefining our relationships.

Indeed as we may see, peace negotiations offer an exceptional chance to begin a process of change by re-adjusting human relationships. Mahmoud (2003) concluded,

Peace agreements are usually intended to lay foundations for rebuilding shattered societies and promoting national healing. This objective cannot be achieved in a sustainable and irreversible fashion unless due consideration is given to address the special needs of those who suffered most from armed conflict, in particular women who represent almost half of the populations in many countries.

In these efforts towards redefinition, the needs of all parties involved must thus be addressed, particularly women. When a human's needs are not met, both physiologically and psychologically, their capacities to contribute to a community are vastly hindered. Consequently both the women and their society suffer.

In 2010 a UN Secretary General report explained the subsequent detriment to a country's sustainable peace initiatives when women's views are negated from the peace process.

The efforts to increase women's participation in the process of preventing, resolving, and recovering from conflict are inextricably linked to the efforts to address the impact of conflict on women and to the need of adopting a gender perspective on women. The exclusion of women from the process of designing peace agreements and recovery frameworks means that often-insufficient attention is paid to redressing gender inequalities and addressing women's insecurity.

The peace process is hindered when the capacities and skills of half the population are not used. The unfortunate result is that, "women's needs go unmet and their capacities remain underutilized" (UN, 2010). Additionally when women's needs are not addressed in peace agreements a precedent is set for future social inequalities.

As illustrated further in this report through the presentation of several case studies, the chances of women's needs being raised as a topic during peace negotiations are increased when women are present at the peace table. This is not a proven case in every instance of women's participation on a formal level but in many occurrences the topics raised at the table from a female gender perspective have addressed women's needs specifically. Thus if women continue to be excluded from peace negotiations, the negative consequences will be two fold. First, women's issues will most likely not be addressed and women will continue to suffer further gender inequalities including limited access to education, resources, and economic opportunities. Second, the society's peace process will suffer as well because the participation and capabilities

of women is left under-utilized.

### **WHY SHOULD WOMEN BE INCLUDED?**

Examined through a moral lens there is an axiomatic argument for the inclusion of women in peace processes, the evident truth that **women constitute half of the human population**. Disregarding political, ethnic, or religious identities, the simple scientific fact that women are roughly equal in population numbers to men is tenable. In addition there is the moral argument that every human being has the innate right to personal autonomy. As such women should be allowed to participate in the process that affects their future livelihoods since the decisions made during the peace negotiations will affect the entire society. Legally and morally this equal right should be granted. Karen Knop (1993) writes, “On the collective autonomy...women should be able to decide at least certain international issues not because they will decide them better than or even differently from men, but because they as a group...should be able to make the decisions that affect their lives” (p. 306). The exclusion of women from the peace process discounts these perspectives, and even more significantly ignores and does not fully evaluate the potential capabilities of half that country or community’s human capital. Under most moral codes this is not fair and pragmatically this does not make sense.

Victims and perpetrators alike, all members of a community must be included in the process and implementation of any peacebuilding initiatives. Faltung and Paes (2005) write, “Building peace is everyone’s job” (p. 614). The likelihood for initiatives to thrive on the ground is increased when civil society gets involved in the process during both development and implementation. The first reason to include women, therefore, is to consider the simple scientific fact that women comprise half the population.

In addition there are several practical reasons for including women in the peace process, specifically during the earlier stages. Compiled, combined and edited from resources including reports by the UN, Peace Research Institute Oslo, and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict as well as resources from the Institute for Inclusive Security, and a paper written by William & Mary College professor Naomi Cahn. The perspectives of Anderlini (2002, 2007) Meintjes (2001), Pillay (2001), Turshen (2001), Suthanthiraraj (2010) and Ayo (2010) were also used as resources for the below list.

The highlighted reasons and subsequent explanations are extracted from examples of actual women's involvement in peace negotiations. The similarities in their peacebuilding tactics and approaches align with the below outline and thus are constituted from specific cases. Several of these examples will be presented in depth later in this report. Of note, these reasons cannot and should not be applied to all women or to their activities and strategies used during peace negotiations. To do so would be to generalize the role of women as heroes in the peacebuilding process. With increased women's participation perhaps these reasons could be applied to more cases lending further legitimacy to the case for women's involvement in peace negotiations.

Second, **women have their fingers on the pulse of a community.** As the central caretakers of families in many cultures, women's centrality to communal life makes their inclusion in peacebuilding essential. In their role as caretakers they are highly invested in preventing, ending, and/or recovering from conflict, as they are motivated to protect their children and ensure security for their families, not by personal gain. This selflessness is not an innate quality in every woman participant in peace negotiations but in several instances this has occurred, as will be demonstrated in the case studies. The women delegates in the Northern Ireland peace negotiations for example were "respected for their commitment to getting to the

peace table, and taking every step necessary to get there regardless of their personal status” (Anderlini, 2007, p. 80).

In addition to their roles as caretakers many women have emerged from periods of conflict as informal leaders. During violent conflict women frequently outnumber men at home affecting the family as well as community dynamics. Codou Bop, an NGO coordinator in Senegal writes of the familial effects of war, “The high mortality rate of men in wars, the displacements and migrations bring profound change in families” (Meintjes, Pillay, and Turshen, 2002, p. 20). As demonstrated in the case studies, the subsequent shift of social roles for women during periods of armed conflict, contributes to the break down of the traditional and cultural barriers set up for women within patriarchal societies.

Many women are forced to step up as heads of households and sometimes even full communities, taking on responsibilities that had previously fallen within a male’s realm including handling finances and ensuring a family’s safety. In addition to the roles they have assumed, when women outnumber men post-conflict they also have the capacity (in sheer numbers) to drive on the ground implementation of peace agreements.

In the role of primary caretaker women’s connection to family and community is significant, even more so during periods of conflict when roles expand by necessity to include additional more male-oriented responsibilities. With these compounding responsibilities many women emerging from violent conflict and considerable deprivation have a solid awareness of their needs as well as the needs of their family and community.

A strong connection to community and the women’s commitment to maintaining this link will surface as a common trend amongst women’s efforts for inclusion in peace negotiations. Through this connection women are able to voice the concerns of society at large, not just

women's issues. For example, in the 2002 Sri Lankan peace negotiations between the government and rebel group LTTE, the women present raised such issues as addressing the people's basic human needs such as access to clean water, food, and fuel (Anderlini, 2007, p. 76).

Third, **women are adept at bridging ethnic, religious, political and cultural divides** because (in the cases examined for this report) they are generally perceived as less threatening within their traditional roles as mothers and caretakers during periods of violence and post-conflict. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan (2005), an advocate for women's inclusion in the peace process has stated, "For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls." In India for example, Neidunuo Angami describes the women's strategic use of their roles as mothers, "Our advantage with the underground troops is that we approach them as mothers, therefore we are trusted by all sides" (Anderlini, 2007, p. 80).

In the cases examined the women's ability to breakdown traditional social barriers, such as religious, ethnic, and/or political differences, will emerge as a common trend amongst women in the development and implementation of their initiatives. Women came together as mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, and most importantly as peacebuilders. Bridging divides occurs through empathy and dialogue, which Tatsushi Arai (2009) describes as a "sustained process of communication in search of mutual understanding." In Chechnya for example, during the conflict with Russia in the mid 1990's women from both sides came together experiencing "instinctual motherhood" as they helped each other search for sons in mine fields (Ayo and Suthanthiraraj, 2010, p. 20). Suthanthiraraj and Ayo (2010) expand on the emotional connection between the women, "Bringing together women from diverse perspectives who have all suffered

losses of children and other relatives as well as experienced the breakdown of their families provides the basis for mutual understanding and a sustainable platform for peacebuilding” (p. 20).

Fourth, **women have different experiences of violence and peace, and can bring unique insights to the peacebuilding process.** As demonstrated through the cases examined, women's participation broadens the peace process to larger constituencies beyond the fighting parties, engaging perpetrators, victims and witnesses of violence. Though women should not always be classified as victims the reality is that in most violent conflicts women and children suffer the most. This is a reality recognized by UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889. Anderlini (2007) expands, “The direct and deliberate targeting of women, the use of their bodies – through rape, forced impregnation, sexual torture – as literally the front lines of the battlefield can not be overlooked” (p. 4). For victims of gender-based violence, the negative physical, psychological and social impacts are immeasurable and must be acknowledged throughout the peace process. If the lens is adjusted however to view women who have suffered from gender-based violence not as victims but as survivors of war, “we cannot overlook or ignore their resilience, sense of self-dignity, desire for survival, and struggle to move beyond passive victimhood” (Anderlini, 2007, p. 4). These psychological traits have the ability to enable women with a distinct perception of conflict and the peacebuilding process. Former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright expanded on this argument, “Because women are often a principle victim of conflict, the women’s perspective can be vital in seeking to prevent or to mitigate the damage caused by conflict. That assertion should not be controversial, it is simply common sense” (Benhold, 2010).

As survivors of war the women, in the studies examined, are invested in peace, and can

ensure broader social acceptance of, and commitment to, the peace deal. A report written by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue on the influence of women at the Indonesian peace talks stated, “many women have a greater awareness of the situation on the ground and are able to raise other issues such as social and economic often ignored in formal peace processes, yet critical in contributing to lasting peace” (2010). Having experienced the dark underbelly of war, the perspectives of these women shed a distinct and necessary light on their country’s peace process.

Finally, the **presence of women at peace tables increases the chances for women’s issues to be raised**. UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet (2011) elaborated on this point in a recent speech.

While opinions differ as to whether women bring a particular quality of consensus-building to peace talks, the one thing women indisputably bring to peace processes, given the chance, is an insistence that their own priorities should be addressed in the governance, justice, security, and recovery aspects of a peace agreement. And these priorities—including quotas for women in post-conflict elections, equal land and property rights, or an end to impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence –can help build a more sustainable peace.

Women's specific concerns, if raised during the peace negotiations have a higher likelihood for inclusion in the peace agreements, than if not raised at all. For the women in the studies examined, the peace table is their chance to address the underlying structural causes of conflict and to pursue a greater goal of social justice, working to extinguish all forms of discrimination (Anderlini, 2007, p. 76). For example the women present at the 2000 Burundi peace negotiations raised the issue of ending impunity against acts of gender-based violence. When perpetrators of gender-based violence are not punished, a criterion is set condoning its use even after conflict, essentially perpetuating this atrocity. This issue of ending impunity was incorporated into Burundi 2000 Peace Agreement.

In addition to the devastation that impunity for perpetrators of gender-based violence ensues on women, a high prevalence of rape and domestic abuse is viewed as an indicator for potential more large-scale violence (UN Women) and its absence could potentially assist in preventing future violent outbreaks on a national level.

Not every woman in every instance during a peace negotiation will behave in a comparable manner but there are indisputable similarities in several of the examples researched for this report. Astrid Heiberg, a Norwegian mediator with experience at negotiations all over the world has discussed women's willingness to view problems collectively, seeking solutions together. She stated, "Female interactions are trans-cultural. What I saw in Sri Lanka is what I saw in Norway twenty years ago. There is female code of behavior" (Anderlini, 2007, p. 81). The similarities will be evident in the women's peacebuilding approaches examined through the case studies. Of note however is that this "female code of behavior" is not an innate female gender quality.

## **WOMEN IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES**

Despite the countless efforts made by the global community to promote women's equal rights and support women's participation in the peacebuilding process, including UN Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889, there continues to be a significant under-representation of women formally at negotiating tables post-conflict.

Societal barriers obstructing women from participating in the peace process vary from country to country. In most instances however, patriarchal cultural norms strengthen these barriers creating a difficult environment for women to engage at any level within the public or political arena. Additional variables capable of contributing to the continued exclusion of women

in the early post-conflict stages and throughout the peacebuilding process include a lack of capacity building, denied access to education, economic dependence on men, and domestic responsibilities at home. Dismantling any of these obstructions to women is a challenging objective, especially when there are patriarchal norms deeply ingrained in a society. The women researched for this report maneuvered their way around these social, political and cultural barriers, which in the past had barred them from any decision-making processes.

Regardless of the continued paucity of women's involvement in the early stages of peace processes, formally at the negotiating tables and in the development of peace agreements, many female community-based initiatives have strived to promote women's participation in these processes. A Peace Research Institute Oslo report states, when examining women's participation in peace negotiations it is important to consider women's participation within the conventional political arena as well as their activities in civil society, which has served in the last several years as an alternative arena for women's influence (Falch, 2010). "Women have utilized creative solutions to provide invaluable contributions to peace processes. These entry points are often developed through informal dialogue, local peace initiatives, community based activism and parallel consultations" (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo, 2010). In their efforts the women exemplified in this report have moved beyond their stereotypical role at home and created a space for women's voices to be acknowledged.

With the assistance of women's civil society organizations, these women worked through informal procedures to ensure that their perspectives be incorporated in the formal procedures. Ayo and Suthanthiraraj (2010) write, "At the informal level, women have been instrumental in building bridges of dialogue and empathy in polarized societies, forming cross community alliances to address core social concerns and initiating movement beyond ethnic, religious and

political stalemates.” Turshen (2001) agrees that central to these efforts are women’s civil society organizations, “Though positioned on the margins, grassroots organizations show their ability to mobilize large numbers of women and to translate individual grievances into legitimate social concerns” (p. 89). Serving as a solid base and powerful constituent these groups have proved to be a pivotal component, cultivating women’s skills and broadening opportunities for women to gain entry to the peace process. As strong coalitions that use gender to bridge political, ethnic and religious divides, women’s organizations have offered an important and complementary strategy for enhancing women’s engagement in the public and political sphere (Falch, 2010).

Working with women’s civil society organizations the women of Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia and Sudan have participated in their country’s peace negotiations. Their stories of working at an informal level throughout the peace process to be included at a formal level will be presented in this next section of this report. Of note however is that with such limited examples of women’s inclusion in peace processes, specifically in peace negotiations it is difficult to gage quantitatively the effects of their presence. “The paucity of women involved in peace processes does not allow for the testing of any hypothesis on way or the other” (Anderlini, 2007, p. 80). Several research reports have made the argument for women’s involvement in the peace process as a necessary variable contributing to the prevention of future violence, yet with so many factors perpetuating the prevalence of direct violence it is difficult from a research/scientific standpoint to prove this statement true with enough empirical evidence. What can be demonstrated are the activities and strategies used by women who have fought to be heard during the post-conflict period and how, in those specific cases, their peacebuilding approaches are quite similar. Additionally demonstrated through the case studies

below is the greater impact of this increased participation on the incorporation of women's issues in the official peace agreement, as a measurable indicator within the peacebuilding context.

The case studies presented offer a varying range of the strategies and tactics used by women and women's groups to secure participation during the peace negotiations. The women's efforts outside the formal political realm ensured that their issues were raised and acknowledged at the negotiating table despite any formal invitation from the first rounds of negotiations. Of the six cases presented below there is only one instance when women were formally invited, at the first round of negotiations, as delegates to the table.

Though the women come from a variety of different cultural backgrounds there are common trends that emerge amongst the development and implementation of their initiatives. These include the breakdown of religious, political, or ethnic divide as well as a commitment to maintaining ties to community and/or civil society organizations. These are outlined in each case study. In addition to the similarities these women share in their tactics to gain entry to the peace negotiations there are several analogous approaches shared by the women at the peace table and throughout the negotiation process. The four prevailing approaches are the women's efforts to expand the peace negotiation agenda, ensuring victim's voices are heard, building consensus and strengthening the foundation by including civil society in the process and finally building trust through communication and efforts to find common ground. These four approaches are not evident in every case study because the women's roles vary from official negotiating delegates to formal and informal observers. With differing roles the levels of influence and access to the formal procedure also vary thus affecting their strategic approaches as will be evident.

The peace agreements are resourced from the Transitional Justice Institute's Peace Agreement Online Database (<http://www.peaceagreements.ulster.ac.uk/>).

## *NORTHERN IRELAND*

In the late 1990's the conflict in Northern Ireland appeared to be an irrevocable situation. With political and religious divides dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century the violence between Irish Catholic rebels and British Protestant loyalist began in 1969 and would continue through the late 1990's, resulting in the death of thousands of civilians and military. The past peace negotiation failures had thoroughly disheartened many citizens in this seemingly un-resolvable conflict.

The peace talks, which began in 1997, offered Northern Ireland a new hope for reaching a peaceful resolution. The structure within which the peace talks developed welcomed the involvement of civil society representatives. Prior to the 1997 talks, peace agreements had always been conducted behind close doors including only the highest level of political officials. In order to ensure the involvement of various political parties, the British government developed an electoral system for admission to the talks (Institute for Inclusive Security, 2009). Outlined below is an explanation of the process from the Institute of Inclusive Security (2009).

Guidelines created by the British government allowed political parties to win seats at the Forum based on relatively few votes. Delegates were elected from 18 electoral districts, with 5 seats allotted per district. Voters within each district selected one of several closed-party lists. The remaining 20 at large seats were allocated to the 10 parties that received the most votes overall. Each party elected to the Peace Forum designated two representatives to the negotiating table. Parties with many delegates in the Forum most often appointed their party leaders to the negotiating table. Parties with fewer elected members had the same members representing them at the Peace Forum and the negotiating table (p. 12).

The 20 seats designated for negotiators guaranteed any valid political party two representatives at the table. The unique way in which the 2007 peace talks was created opened a door for any representatives of the Northern Ireland community to walk right through with enough votes to ensure their party had a seat at the negotiating table. Monica McWilliams, an Irish Catholic and May Blood, a British Protestant took advantage of this opportunity by successfully gathering

10,000 signatories to create the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, campaigning not only for the concerns of women but for the community as a whole (IIS, 2009). The NIWC was a political party that united women from Protestant and Catholic communities under a common platform. Convincing women to get involved was not difficult. As one woman said, "As soon as I heard about the Coalition I had a gut feeling that I would want to belong to it. We've always had men telling us how to run the country, and getting it wrong. We need women's voices of reason in Northern Ireland politics" (Fearon, 1999). Finally here was an opportunity for the women of Northern Ireland to have some level of influence on the peace process. Two delegates from the NIWC were granted seats at the peace negotiation.

Anderlini (2007) writes that amongst its many unique qualities as a political party, such as its efforts to develop across political and religious divides, the NIWC delegates maintained their impartiality stance throughout the peace negotiation process in their efforts "to speak to all sides, extremists among Catholic and Protestants" (p. 80). The NIWC built trust "through a combination of neutrality, a willingness to engage with all sides, and honesty" (p. 80). They brought a unique bilateral perspective to the table, as a result of their efforts to build trust with the other political party representatives. Throughout the peace negotiation process the NIWC emerged as the unofficial facilitators bridging communication gaps between the rival political parties (IIS, 2009, p. 15). NIWC delegates applied principles of inclusion, equality, and respect for human rights when developing positions and argued that a workable solution needed to be based on values and common ground, not fixed positions (p. 15).

In addition to their roles as informal facilitators working closely with the political parties involved, the delegate's presence served the additional purpose of reminding everyone what was at stake. Helen Jackson, a member of British Parliament and observer at the negotiations said,

“They gave a human face to the conflict, and highlighted the personal consequences of war”  
(Anderlini, 2007, p. 78).

The NIWC maintained their connection to their constituency in order to ensure that all needs were being addressed during the peace negotiations. In her opening statement at the negotiations, McWilliams presented the NIWC’s view that the peace process should include actors from many levels of society, both within and outside of the political arena.

It is crucial that we identify mechanisms that will enable and encourage local communities and various interests to participate in this process of peace building, and to feel a share of responsibility for the future of this society, rather than leaving this task exclusively to the owners of this negotiating table... We need to examine how we can bring all sectors of our society to a point where they feel that they are respected, and that they can associate themselves with the peace-building process (Fearon, 1999).

The NIWC led demands for the creation of a civic forum where representatives of civil society organizations such as trade unions, NGO's and others, could provide input into the negotiations and stay updated on the process (Anderlini, 2007, p. 74). Women from various levels of community rallied to support their new political party, and worked diligently to assist their NIWC representatives. Numerous women’s organizations and networks provided meeting places for the NIWC while the party itself organized “talk teams” of about a dozen women meeting several time a week to discuss certain issues and strategize approaches for their representatives to use during the formal peace talks (Anderlini, 2007, p. 79).

The topics raised by the two female negotiators during the peace talks assisted in establishing structures and mechanisms designed to promote inclusiveness and tolerance. The women introduced such topics as integrated education, social inclusion and community development (IIS, 2009). In their arguments the NIWC delegates included human rights issues and the need for social equality, not just for women but all groups traditionally marginalized,

such as victims of violence, political prisoners and former soldiers (Fearon, 1999). The women emphasized the need for proper psychological reconciliation for victims of violence. In addition to their determination to give a voice to the victims, the NIWC delegates also spoke out for the former soldiers in the conflict by raising the issues of skill building and the challenges of reintegration (IIS, 2009).

Several of the issues raised by the women were included in the Belfast Agreement, or more commonly known as the Good Friday Agreement signed in 1998. For example, the agreement includes an article on the rights of victims, committing government “to adequately resourcing the provision of services for victims of the conflict.” Civil society issues were also incorporated into the agreement with a “consultative Civic Forum to be established comprising representatives of the business, trade union, voluntary sectors, and other such agreed sectors.” In addition to the issues mentioned above the NIWC and their delegates also worked to promote the rights of women, which were also incorporated in the peace agreement as outlined below.

**1998 BELFAST AGREEMENT (GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT)**

<b>Women's Equal Rights / Social Development</b>	Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity: Economic, Social and Cultural Issues paragraph 1 commits the British government to pursuing the advancement of women in public life pending devolution.
<b>Supporting Women's Political Participation</b>	Rights, Safeguard and Equality of Opportunity: Human Rights paragraph 1. Parties affirmed the rights of women to full and equal political participation.

**Common Trends in the Development and Implementation of Women’s Initiatives**

- **Breakdown of social (political, ethnic, or religious) divides.** Despite their religious and political divides, Monica McWilliams an Irish Catholic and May Blood a British Protestant

united to form the NIWC. Nearly 10,000 women from diverging backgrounds, Irish, British, Catholic and Protestant supported the coalition throughout the negotiation process.

- **Maintaining a tight connection to community.** Blood and McWilliams would not have been granted official seats at the table were it not for their constituency. Throughout the process they relied on the NIWC network for support in sharing ideas and developing tactics.

### **Women's Strategic Approaches During the Peace Negotiations**

The NIWC used this unique opportunity to voice the needs of women in addition to several marginalized groups within their society, such as former soldiers and political prisoners.

- **Expanding the agenda.** In addition to addressing the needs of women and encouraging equal political participation, the NIWC representatives raised such issues as integrated education, political prisoner's rights, victim reconciliation and former combat reintegration.
- **Ensuring victim's voices are heard, humanizing the process.** By openly discussing their own personal losses from the war the women brought to the table an underlying emotional factor. As Jackson describes, "The women would come and talk about their loved ones, their bereavement, their children and their hopes for the future" (Anderlini, 2007, p. 79).
- **Building consensus and strengthening the foundation by including civil society in the process.** Women led demands for the creation of a civic forum where representatives of civil society organizations (trade unions, NGO's and others) could provide input into the negotiations and stay updated on the process. McWilliams stated in the NIWC opening statement at the negotiations, "We believe that people cannot be expected to vote in a referendum without an understanding of how, and why, we arrived at our eventual conclusions" (Fearon, 1999).

- **Building trust through communication and efforts to find common ground.** The NIWC delegates gained trust from other delegates through their willingness to speak to opposing political parties.

### **SOMALIA**

For the last fifty years the country of Somalia has faced countless economic, political and social challenges. Economically destitute the humanitarian crisis has reached many levels of Somali society with one third of its population surviving on food aid, according to the BBC. Socially there are acute divides amongst the five traditional clans as well as a current violent conflict between Islamist militia and a UN backed transitional government. In addition, the continued absence of an official authority has enabled Somali pirates to pose a considerable threat to any ships off the coast of East Africa. In spite of all the negative circumstances surrounding Somalia, this country continues to serve as a unique example of women's push to enter the formal peace negotiations of 2004.

The peace negotiations beginning 2000 were bound to be challenging since the country had endured lawlessness since 1991. The war up until then had claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands and displaced even more Somali's. The years of violence between the clans had perpetuated the already well-defined divides amongst these groups

During the civil war several humanitarian organizations had set up programs in Somalia but there was a considerable lack of grassroots civil society organizations formed and run locally by Somali's. It is against this backdrop in 1997 that Asha Hagi Elmi formed a women's organization named Save the Somali Women and Children in an effort to build peace amongst the clans. Elmi made sure to include women from many clans in the formation of this organization to ensure a cross clan representation.

This was the first organization of its kind to cross clan lines, as women were able to do this much easier than men. Men were always associated with their father's clan and would, for the most part, remain in their one clan their entire lives. Many women at the time represented two or more clans; the clan they were born into, the clans their mother and father belonged to and finally, the clan they married into. As a result of this ability to identify with several clans women could cross clan lines with relatively more ease than men. However this ability to cross clan lines came at the price of distrust from the clans they moved freely amongst. For women marrying outside their clan there was considerable difficulty to identifying with just one clan. As Asha Hagi Elmi said, "I found out the only full identity I can have is the womanhood identity" following with the powerful idea, "my only clan was womanhood" (IIS, 2009).

To develop the SSWC organization's peacebuilding efforts, Elmi met with UN envoys and petitioned heads of state, like US President Bill Clinton to be included in the peace talks. When the formal peace negotiations began in 2000 the five clans nominated their own representatives, none of which were female. As a tactic to ensure the representation of women at the peace talks, the SSWC led by Elmi formed their own clan of women from cross clan marriages, essentially creating a network for their women's peacebuilding movement. The creation of this clan was exceptional to the Somali traditional social identity as clan lines were one of the defining ethnic characteristics. Putting their ideology into action one Somali woman said, "We knew that peace in our country would come from cross- clan reconciliation, not official negotiations among warlords and faction leaders, so we cared for the wounded, and built schools in communities regardless of clan, ethnic and political affiliations" (Timmons, 2004).

Representing the "Sixth Clan" Elmi and 100 other women were present at negotiations by 2002. Elmi explained their progress was "through well-directed, daring struggles, carried out in

phases, spearheaded by conscious women leaders in cooperation with the enlightened segments of civil society and the international community” (Tongerren, 2005). She continued that the women’s main agenda was “to vote for participatory peace and change as the basis of a new Somalia. We wanted to facilitate the creation of a stable, democratic, and competitive state in which respect for human rights was preserved” (Tongerren, 2005).

The women took advantage of their opportunity to cross clan lines to negotiate amongst leaders and to implement their overall objective of building peace. “As the negotiations progressed, and participants cemented mutual trust, their role evolved. They were no longer viewed as a special-interest group but respected participants. On occasion, the women were even called on to resolve disputes between the traditional clans” (Tongerren, 2005). Elmi explained, “We used the women to be a bridge among the warring clans; to promote a culture of peace and a spirit of reconciliation” (Fisher-Thompson, 2006).

In one tactic to give a human face to the conflict and exposing the dark underbelly of war Elmi describes the women’s use of traditional Somali poetry at the negotiations, “In Arta, we presented *buranbur*—a special poetic verse sung by women—to show the suffering of women and children during 10 years of civil war” (Timmons, 2004). The emotional aspect they brought to the table reminded the delegates that the future livelihood of their country, their communities, and their families was at stake in this process.

Maintaining tight ties to the women in their clan, the Sixth Clan representatives raised such topics as affirmative action, women’s control over economic and natural resources, and the impact of war on women and children (IIS, 2009). The women raised the issue of the necessity of their participation in all post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives including representation in the transitional government as well as laws established to protect the rights of women, children and

other minority groups (IIS, 2009).

In January of 2004, Elmi became the first Somali woman signatory of a peace accord and was shortly after elected to parliament. The 2004 peace accord supported women’s political participation by setting a minimum quota and by ensuring a “positive environment for women to participate.” The agreement also called for the government to support civil society organizations, including women’s institutions. Several gender sensitive clauses are evident throughout the agreement as outlined below.

**2004 SOMALIA PEACE AGREEMENT**

<b>Women's Equal Rights / Social Development</b>	Article 26. Social Welfare, c) Government shall encourage the establishment of the civil society and social development institutions for the public, including women.
<b>Supporting Women's Political Participation</b>	The government shall create a positive environment for women to participate effectively in economic, social and political life of the society.
	Article 2. Composition of Parliament- to consist of 275 members of whom at least 12% shall be women.

**Common Trends in Development and Implementation of Women’s Initiatives**

- **Breakdown of social (political, ethnic, or religious) divides.** The “Sixth Clan” was comprised of women from several Somali clans. Prior to the formation of the “Sixth Clan” there had never been an organized cross clan group formation.
- **Maintaining tight connection to community.** The “Sixth Clan” maintained tight ties to its grassroots constituencies by using the network to share ideas and concerns the Somali women had throughout the peace negotiations.

## **Women's Strategic Approaches During the Peace Negotiations**

Though the 2004 Peace Agreement failed to resolve the conflict in Somalia, the negotiation process and language used in the peace agreement serve as an example of women's strategic approaches to peacebuilding. The efforts of the Sixth Clan had created a space for Somali women to be heard and acknowledged as respected participants within the peacebuilding process. "They all agreed that had it not been for our role, that agreement wouldn't have been reached. Somali women crossed a bridge and there is no turning back. We are full partners in the process," Elmi said shortly after her election into parliament (IIS, 2009).

- **Expanding the agenda.** The women raised such issues as equal access to natural resources, affirmative action and the psychological impact of war on children and women. They affirmed the necessity of their full participation in all post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives including representation in the transitional government as well as laws protecting the rights of women, children and other minority groups.
- **Ensuring victim's voices are heard, humanizing the process.** The women used traditional Somali poetry to acknowledge the long-standing suffering of victims from the war, notably women and children.

## **GUATEMALA**

With a current population of just over 14 million Guatemala is one of Central America's smallest countries with an ethnic population comprised of about half indigenous groups and half American-Hispanics (BBC). Beginning in 1954, the anti-Communist military forces that had seized control of the government in a violent a coup d'état would fight the leftist, mostly Mayan indigenous, rebel groups of Guatemala for the next four decades. During the 36 years of violence over 200,000 civilians were killed in addition to the disappearance of countless civilians.

Military death squads were mostly responsible for these atrocities including the displacement of over 1 million Guatemalans from their native lands, perpetuating a deep-rooted mistrust of government. The strong social/ethnic divides between the indigenous Guatemalans, mostly Mayans, and the military security forces provoked the longevity of this civil war and created a very difficult scenario for open dialogue and peaceful resolve to incur during any peace negotiations. The peace negotiations beginning in 1991 were stalled briefly but regained momentum in 1994.

What distinguishes Guatemala from other case studies presented in this report is that women were chosen as formal participants in the peace negotiations. From the first rounds of negotiations, Luz Mendez was a chosen delegate for the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (UNRG) negotiation team and Raquel Zelaya Rosales was a chosen delegate on the Guatemalan government's negotiation team.

These two women will present an interesting juxtaposition throughout the process. In their formal presence on the negotiation teams, both women were placed in roles of tremendous opportunity to steer negotiations towards topics and issues important to them and to their constituents. In the research completed for this specific case study however there was minimal mention of Rosales, her participation at the peace talks, or her tactical approaches during the negotiations. In sharp contrast, Mendez has been noted by many researchers for her activities to ensure that the needs of Guatemalan society at large, including indigenous Mayans, as well as the needs of women were incorporated into the peace accord. Rosales proved that just having a woman present at the peace negotiations does not ensure that women's needs will be addressed while Mendez proved that a female delegate can speak on behalf of her political party in addition to raising issues for women (UNIFEM, 2010).

Mendez's participation was not an individual endeavor but rather a collaborative process with civil society groups. Her tight connection to the women's sector within the Assembly of Civil Society enabled her with the skills and necessary knowledge to raise such topics as women's equal rights, minimum electoral quotas and indigenous rights. The ACS was a network of civil society groups organized under one large umbrella. The organization included civil society groups from 11 sectors, such as political parties, indigenous groups, human rights organizations and women's groups. The women civil society leaders would assist Mendez during the course of the peace negotiations. They also ensured that the peace talks addressed the needs of civil society at large presenting recommendations to the negotiating teams throughout the process (IIS, 2009).

The women within the ACS played an important role in strengthening its network by co-organizing national and international forums to determine which additional sectors needed representation (IIS, 2009). In addition to their push to include minority groups, the women civil society leaders worked to secure the representation in their sector of women from distinct levels of Guatemalan life, advocating for a broader participatory process to select sectors for dialogue. The women's sector alone "included 32 women's groups representing trade unions, academia, feminists, human rights activists, and indigenous peoples; it broadened its reach and mainstreamed its agenda by creating alliances with women who had varied political and ideological views in other ACS sector groups" (IIS, 2009). This largely inclusive approach was necessary in any attempts to build positive peace for a country torn apart by civil war with deeply stratified social and economic layers.

Anderlini (2007) describes the ACS's effective approach to ensuring that the needs of civil society were addressed during the peace talks, "The ACS maintained its tight links to the

formal peace process. The involvement of non-state actors with significant constituencies in the process is an effective means of taking society along at the pace of the talks.” This tactic reinforced civil society’s dedication to the peace process, deepening “understanding of the difficulties that negotiations entail and broadened the sense of ownership and most importantly, their [civil society] commitment to the actual process” (Anderlini, p. 79).

Throughout the process Mendez’s tight connection to these women’s groups within the ACS proved indispensable to her efforts in bringing women’s needs, as well as the rights of minority groups, to the peace table. Mendez stated, “While I was sensitive to women’s issues, the ACS provided me with concrete recommendations to present at the negotiations,” enabling her to “contribute to the incorporation of specific commitments for women’s equity in the accords” (IIS, 2009). Mendez proposed women’s equality and the necessity of a more civil society participatory approach to peacebuilding initiatives. In addition to topics focused on women’s needs Mendez also raised such issues as the balance of police and civilian power, labor rights and indigenous rights (IIS, 2009).

Several peace accords were agreed upon and signed in 1996. The peace agreements supported women’s rights to land ownership, access to credit and healthcare, as well as participation in the political process. Below is the breakdown of the peace agreement’s relevance to women’s issues.

**1996 GUATEMALA PEACE AGREEMENT**

<p><b>Women's Equal Rights / Social Development</b></p>	<p>Participation of women in economic and social development: government commits to gender-sensitive planning, and to guarantee the rights of women in the home, the workplace, production sector, social and political life, access to credit, land ownership, productive and technological resources, including by legislative change, giving effect to ratification of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).</p>
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	The Role of Women in Strengthening Civilian Power: Government commits to nationwide awareness-raising campaigns and educational programs; respect, promote, support and institutionalize women's orgs in rural and urban areas.
<b>Special Needs of Former Female Combatants</b>	Reintegration program will treat women- amongst others- as requiring specific priority attention.
<b>Supporting Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Initiatives</b>	Encourages national women's organizations to support implementation of the agreements on a firm and lasting peace.

### **Common Trends in Developing and Implementing Women's Initiatives**

- **Breakdown of social (political, ethnic, or religious) divides.** The women civil society leaders within the ACS worked to incorporate the voices of women from diverse backgrounds, including in their efforts representatives from trade unions, academia, feminists groups, human rights activists, and indigenous peoples.
- **Maintaining a tight connection to community.** Luz Mendez, the female representative on the rebel's negotiating team worked closely with women from the ACS throughout the negotiating process. The ACS kept Mendez informed on the needs of civil society and enabled her with the necessary knowledge and skills to raise such topics during the negotiations.

### **Women's Strategic Approaches During the Peace Negotiations**

The peace negotiation process in Guatemala demonstrates that the mere presence of a woman at the peace table does not always ensure that the needs of women will be addressed. Raquel Rosales was the only woman on the government's negotiating team yet there is very little written on her contributions in an official capacity. Luz Mendez, in sharp contrast was the only woman on the rebel's negotiating team and continues to be noted by researchers for her efforts to ensure that gender sensitive proposals were incorporated into the peace agreement. Many factors

contribute to a woman's influence on peace talks but what has been demonstrated in this instance is that when women work closely with civil society their effects can be considerably more significant.

- **Expanding the agenda.** Women brought up issues such as access to land, health programs, equal access to education, penalties for sexual harassment, mechanisms to promote political participation of women, and institutions for the defense of the rights of indigenous people.
- **Ensuring victim's voices are heard, humanizing the process.** Mendez spoke out for the needs of victims during the peace negotiations.
- **Building consensus and strengthening the foundation by including civil society.** In addition to their push to include minority groups in the ACS, the women civil society leaders worked to ensure that women, representing a broad range of social spectrums were included in their sector. The women of the ACS used their tight links to civil society to ensure that their needs were being addressed during the process and to keep them informed on the development of the peace agreement.

### **BURUNDI**

Burundi is a landlocked country in East Africa with an ethnic population composed mostly of two main ethnic groups, Tutsi and Hutu. Since 1994 there had been a constant struggle between the Tutsi dominated Burundian government army and the Hutu dominated rebel groups. With no official government protection the civilians of Burundi suffered for over ten years in this civil war. An estimated 300,000 Burundians were killed while over 1.1 million were displaced. Gender-based violence was frequently used a war tactic in this ethnic battle as women especially were targeted for their roles in reproduction (UNIFEM, 2010).

Burundi is a prime example of a conflict affecting its society at large and more importantly the roles civilians, mostly women, played throughout the conflict. With so many men involved in the violence women, as is the case in most conflicts were forced to step out of their traditional roles as subservient housewives and into more autonomous positions, suddenly in charge of families, households and even full communities. This set of circumstances, though tragic can create scenarios where women recognized their own power, resilience, and intelligence. Demonstrating these traits to the fullest the Burundian women played vital roles in peacebuilding initiatives during and after the conflict.

The peace talks in 2000 marked the beginning of Burundi's efforts to create lasting peace. Though the negotiating parties initially barred women from the peace talks, the women were adamant that their voices and perspectives were heard to ensure that their needs were addressed. Joining together Hutu and Tutsi women from across the social and political spectrum protested this exclusion, demanding representation at the negotiating table, and adopting a strategy to seek support from regional heads of state (Anderlini, 2000). In a bold move the women stood in the corridors outside the negotiation room and lobbied negotiators as they passed, demanding that they be allowed entrance (Falch, 2010). Imelda Nzirorera, one of the Burundian women involved said, "Women represent 52 percent of the population in our country, so how could the problems of our country be discussed when our presence and opinions were being neglected? We told [the negotiators] that we wanted to present our point of view on peace, because when there is a crisis, we as the women, pick up the pieces" (Anderlini, 2000).

With this consistent pressure from women's organizations, the negotiators eventually granted several women access as observers. Emilliene Minani, another observer at the negotiations said, "Burundi women have continuously demanded inclusion in the peace talks.

We have been jointly fighting for our right to be included, irrespective of our ethnicity, political affiliations and geographic diversities. We, as women, want to make sure that the rights of all Burundian women are protected in all aspects of political, social and economic spheres” (Zoll, 2010). Though not allowed to voice their opinions during the official negotiations these women were able to follow the process and report back to their civil society organizations.

Alice Ntwarante, one of the women observers said, “We are very conscious about the fact that we want to ensure that the grassroots women are able to contribute effectively to the success of these negotiations” (Anderlini, 2000). The women observers were conscientious of the role they filled as representatives of civil society as well as the voices for women’s equal rights.

In order to ensure that their needs were addressed, the women continued to lobby the negotiators and political leaders in the hallways. Two women’s civil society organizations, CAFOB and Dushirehamwe, gathered women with diverse backgrounds to unite for a collective women’s agenda, and organized workshops, conferences, demonstrations and radio broadcasts in an attempt to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict (Falch, 2010).

In July of 2000, with assistance from UNIFEM the women’s organizations came together for a four-day multi-party women’s peace conference. The conference consisted of 50 female participants, from diverse backgrounds including women from political parties, women’s groups, refugees and IDP’s. A declaration was written in August of 2000 as a result of this conference entitled the “All Party Burundi Women’s Peace Agreement” and was presented to the chief mediator who happened to be Nelson Mandela at the time (Falch, 2010). This declaration urged negotiating parties to embrace a gender perspective on all issues discussed and to include a 30% minimum quota for women’s representation in government.

When negotiators originally rejected the 30% minimum quota arguing that women in Burundi were not qualified, CAFOB compiled and presented a list of women with the education and expertise to work for the government. A smaller percentage was eventually agreed upon to be included in the Interim Constitution. Several of the women's recommendations were incorporated into the peace agreement such as an elimination of laws discriminating against women, an end to impunity for gender-based violence, recognition of women's rights to own land and equal access to education for girls.

#### **2001 BURUNDI PEACE AGREEMENT**

<b>Women's Equal Rights / Social Development</b>	Protocol 1, Article 5 'General Political Measures' mentions equality between men and women.
	Article 7 lists gender balance as a principle and measure relating to <i>public administration</i> (paragraph 5), <i>girls and primary education</i> (paragraphs 11 &12), correcting gender imbalance in judicial machinery (paragraph 18b).
	Article 3.19 guarantees women equal property rights with men.
<b>Supporting Women's Political Participation</b>	Ch.2, Article 20(8) electoral quotas.
	Protocol 4, Ch.3, Article 13 (d) 'initiation of tangible actions for the advancement of women' as a principle of political reconstruction.
<b>End to Impunity for Gender-Based Violence</b>	Article 6 'Principles and measures relating to genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity' includes gender-based human rights violations.
<b>Supporting Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Initiatives</b>	Article 8, paragraph 2 provides for women's organizations (amongst others) to put forward candidates for membership of the National TRC
	Protocol IV, Ch.3, Article 16 calls for the promotion of women in development.

#### **Common Trends in the Development and Implementation of Women's Initiatives**

- **Breakdown of social (political, ethnic, or religious) divide.** Despite ethnic divisions, Hutu and Tutsi women united in their efforts to build peace. One woman involved in the process

said, “We have been jointly fighting for our right to be included, irrespective of our ethnicity, political, affiliations and geographic diversities” (Zoll, 2010).

- **Maintaining a tight connection to community.** The women granted observer status checked in frequently with the women’s civil society groups to keep them informed on the process.

### **Women’s Strategic Approaches During the Peace Negotiations**

Several specific needs of women were addressed in the peace agreement, due largely to the efforts of the Burundian women in ensuring their issues were addressed during the peace negotiations.

- **Expanding the agenda.** The women raised such issues as an elimination of laws discriminating against women, an end to impunity for gender-based violence, recognition of women’s rights to own land and equal access to education for girls.
- **Ensuring victim’s voices are heard, humanizing the process.** As a constant presence outside the negotiation room the women served as a reminder to delegates of the tragedies suffered at home.
- **Building consensus and strengthening foundation by including civil society.** Working closely with the women’s organizations the women stayed in tight contact with their constituents, ensuring that their needs were addressed during the peace negotiations. The four-day multi-party women’s peace conference organized by the women’s organizations consisted of 50 female participants, from diverse backgrounds including women from political parties, women’s groups, refugees and IDP’s.

- **Building trust through communication and efforts to find common ground.** Working with leaders from opposing sides of the conflict, the women worked to find practical solutions to the issues at hand.

### *DARFUR, SUDAN*

The conflict in Sudan is one that has gained considerable global media attention over the years. The mass killings in Darfur were a tragic humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 300,000 civilians killed by armed militants known as the Janjaweed and the displacement of over 2 million Sudanese, primarily women and children. Several problematic issues had converged in this region including religious and political divide as well as a fight over Sudan's vast quantities of natural resources. The region of Darfur in Sudan has all the components of deep-rooted conflict seemingly impossible to resolve.

Sudanese women's experiences from this conflict and their efforts to sustain their families enabled them with a deep insight into the challenges of building sustainable peace in the region. Their distinct perspective was evident during the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks beginning in July of 2004. Bringing together the three major formal parties, including the government of Sudan and the two largest rebel groups, Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement through seven rounds of talks, the delegates struggled to resolve this conflict.

Initially the presence of women during the peace talks was scarce however by the sixth and seventh rounds of negotiations, female representation had increased considerably with all parties including women in the peace negotiations. An African Union gender advisor present during the seventh round of talks assisted in the women's inclusion but fundamental to this shift was the formation of the Gender Expert Support Team (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo, 2010, p. 14).

With assistance from UNIFEM the GEST was formed by women's organizations, most notably the Community Development Association.

The GEST was a non-partisan group of Sudanese women representing non-government organizations, academia, the government, and rebel movements acting as a technical resource to the women on the formal negotiating teams as well as working to bring the voices of women in civil society to the talks (UNIFEM, 2010). The team was developed in order to provide advice to the mediation teams and worked closely with civil society leaders to ensure that their needs be addressed during the formal peace talks.

Composed of women from across various political and religious divides the GEST maintained their neutrality throughout the peace negotiations (UNIFEM, 2010). Safaa Elagib Adam, the secretary general of the Community Development Association at the time stated, "We women, we are one tribe. We have no other tribes" (IIS, 2009). With such diverse background the ideological differences amongst the women were substantial. Despite these social divides the women focused on working together to build peace. Adam explained, "We just forgot about who we are, except that we are neighbors, we are sisters, we are colleagues, we are together. We are all from Darfur" (IIS, 2009). The women's display of solidarity had the potential to serve as an example of Sudanese unity for the various negotiating parties (UNIFEM, 2010). Their presence eased tensions at the negotiating table, as noted by Senator Jaffer, one of the mediators at the negotiations who claimed that the women shifted the dynamic at the peace table (IIS, 2009).

Working closely with the women delegates at the negotiating table as well as with their civil society organizations, the GEST presented a document entitled, "Women's Priorities for Peace and Reconstruction in Darfur," to the negotiating teams. Addressing issues that had previously been exempt from the peace negotiations the document includes basic human needs

of the Sudanese people such as humanitarian and economic assistance as well as protection and physical security for IDP's and refugees. The document also asserted the importance of women's participation in peace negotiations in addition to women's participation in DDR, and the need for affirmative action. Several of these recommendations were included in the Darfur Peace Agreement signed in 2005 as outlined below.

#### **2005 DARFUR PEACE AGREEMENT**

<b>Supporting Women's Political Participation</b>	In making appointments to the Darfur representation in the Executive Branch of the GoS, special effort shall be made to ensure that women are represented in the nominations.
	Also in making further appointments the President shall take appropriate steps to ensure the fair representation of Darfurians including an equitable share for women.
	Ensure the representation of Darfurians, including SLMA/ and JEM with prescribed numbers, provision is also make that 'it is highly recommended that some of the nominees be women.
<b>Special Needs of Former Female Combatants</b>	The parties shall release all boys and girls associated with armed forces and groups, with assistance of UNICEF, UNHCR and ICRC.
<b>End to Impunity for Gender Based Violence</b>	Police will investigate crimes against women and establish separate police counters for reporting of crimes committed against women, with women police personnel.
	Policing plans to include 'strategies to deal with the problem of violence against women and children (art 25 (321 (c))).
<b>Supporting Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Initiatives</b>	Provision for women to be fairly represented on DSAIC and any subsidiary bodies it establishes with bodies to develop mechanisms to ensure that their work incorporates appropriate input from women on issues of special concern to women and children.

#### **Common Trends in the Development and Implementation of Women's Initiatives**

- **Breakdown of social (political, ethnic, or religious) divides.** The GEST was composed of women from various religious and political affiliations.
- **Maintaining tight connection to community.** The GEST worked as a bridge between the female delegates at the negotiating table and the Sudanese civil society, enabling the women

with the necessary knowledge and skills while also ensuring that the needs of civil society were addressed during the negotiations.

### **Women's Strategic Approaches During the Peace Negotiations**

The women's involvement in the process, from the GEST to the women delegates to the female civil society leaders, assisted in the development of the DPA. The approaches, activities and tactics used by the women in this case are a noteworthy demonstration of strategic maneuvering to ensure the acknowledgment of their voices and the address of their needs. Though the DPA failed to resolve the conflict in Darfur, it continues to stand as one of the most gender-sensitive peace agreements developed. The women's contribution to its creation and its gender provisions offer numerous lessons for improving women's participation in negotiations (UNIFEM, 2010).

According to Safaa Elagib Adam, the women served as an inspiration to Sudanese women who continue to suffer from the violence in the country (Suthanthiraraj and Ayo, 2010, p. 14). She said, "Other women from Sudan have started to learn from [our] experience...we have made a breakthrough and we need to keep the movement accountable. There is an opportunity and it should be used for greater inclusion of women and civil society groups" (p. 14).

- **Expanding the agenda.** The women raised such issues as the gender responsive provisions on wealth sharing and land rights, affirmative action as well as women's participation in the DDR process. An additional issue raised by the women was a demand for justice against perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- **Ensuring victim's voices are heard, humanizing the process.** Women raised the issue of providing physical security and protection for IDP's and refugees.

- **Building consensus and strengthening the foundation by including civil society in the process.** The GEST worked closely with civil society organizations throughout the negotiation process.
- **Building trust through communication and efforts to find common ground.** Tensions amongst parties eased as Senator Jaffer claimed that the women's presence shifted the dynamics at the peace table (IIS, 2009).

### **LIBERIA**

Located on the Western coast of Africa, Liberia is a large country with valuable natural resources including diamonds and rubber. The late 1980's marked the beginning of Liberia's civil war, when a military coup resulted in the assassination of President Samuel Doe. Despite considerable efforts made by women to end the war in 1997, the violence had re-escalated in 2001 when rebel forces, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), advanced on the capital city of Monrovia in an attempt to overthrow the current regime of President Charles Taylor. The second half of the Liberian civil war brought severe devastation to its civilian population, including the death of hundreds of thousands, the use of 20,000 child soldiers, and the displacement of almost 1,000,000 Liberians, as well as the frequent use of gender-based violence as a tactic of war on women and girls.

Liberia presents an interesting case study of women's involvement in peace negotiations because the women's civil society organization, whose efforts are presented in this report, never officially secured representation at the peace table. It was in their activities outside the negotiating room, which forced the delegates to listen and consider their issues in the write up of the peace agreement.

Although the Liberian Women's Initiative in the mid 1990's failed to end the violence, the LWI had created a space for women to engage in the peace process by crossing enemy lines attempting to mediate for a ceasefire, collecting weapons, and even attending the peace talks of 1997 (Tongerren, 2005). Drawing on the LWI experiences a few years later Muslim and Christian women would unite in a new effort to build peace creating a new group called the Women in Peacebuilding (Tongerren, 2005).

The Women in Peacebuilding (WIPNET) initially took their stand by demanding peace through sit-ins of large numbers purposely in direct view of a regime notorious for its violence as well as quick assassinations of individuals opposed to them (Ekiyor and Gbowee, 2005, p. 135). By using their strength in numbers, WIPNET put pressure on Taylor's regime and rebel forces to attend peace talks eventually convincing both sides to comply (Tongerren, 2005).

Several of the women attended the peace talks in Ghana in an effort to ensure that their needs would be addressed during the negotiations and to provide a human face to the tragedies endured at home in Liberia. The WIPNET women called upon Liberian women living in Ghana and Liberian refugees at a nearby camp to support them and to ensure that their presence grew. Lehma Gbowee (2005), one the main WIPNET organizers described the women's growing presence on the first day of the peace talks.

By 5 a.m., five women had arrived at the regional office of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), where logistical arrangements were being made...Preparation continued until 10 a.m. when about 300 women arrived from the Buduburam Liberian refugee camp in Ghana. By 2 p.m. there were over 500 Liberian and 20-plus Ghanaian women witnessing to their hopes for peace and demanding an end to violence at the Liberian peace talks in Ghana.

Barred from physically sit in the room the women stood by the doors of the negotiating room every single day, for six weeks, lobbying the delegates as they entered and exited to reach some consensus to end the violence. Chanting Liberian songs and waving signs for peace, their

constant presence served as a reminder to the delegates of the suffering endured during the conflict (Disney, 2008).

With no political affiliations, the Liberian women present at the peace talks were able to approach delegates outside the negotiating room (Disney, 2008). Using this access to propel the negotiations the women became unofficial mediators speaking with rebels, political leaders and mediators, working to find common ground amongst them in order to reach a comprehensive agreement. (Tongerren, 2005). Relentless in their efforts, in one instance, they physically blocked official delegates from leaving the negotiating room demanding that they would not allow anyone out until a consensus was reached (Disney, 2008). Gbowee (2005) described the scene that day, “The women sent a letter to the chief mediator telling him that they were not allowing Liberian delegates to leave the room and no food would enter the room until the warlords sent a message to their people to respect the cease-fire. As the mediators came out, the women blocked the entrance and exit.” This particular tactic drew considerable media attention. One week later the delegates reached an agreement.

While the WIPNET women’s main focus during the peace negotiations was to push the delegates to reach a comprehensive agreement they also did their part to ensure that women’s needs were addressed during the negotiations. Calling upon their women’s network and tight ties to various other Liberian women’s organizations, the WIPNET women came together to write a declaration, known as the Golden Tulip Declaration (named after the hotel Golden Tulip where the negotiations were taking place). This declaration, which was presented to mediators and delegates from negotiating parties, called for governmental support of women’s groups and minority groups, including victims and former combatants, as well as the necessity of women’s involvement in any peacebuilding initiatives (Tongerren, 2005). Several of the recommendations

in the Golden Tulip Declaration were incorporated into the official peace agreement as outlined below.

### 2003 LIBERIA PEACE AGREEMENT

<b>Supporting Women's Political Participation</b>	Art. XVI establishment of Governance Reform Commission, membership to include women.
	Judiciary to remain unchanged, but all members of the Supreme Court to be deemed to have resigned, all new appointments to be approved by the legislative assembly, based on shortlist of candidates from National Bar Association, including female lawyers.
	The parties shall reflect national and gender balance in all elective and non-elective appointments within the transitional government.
<b>Addressing Women's Specific Needs as Victims of War including Gender Based Violence</b>	Transitional government to accord particular attention to rehabilitation of vulnerable groups (including women) within Liberia.
	The NTGL, in formulating and implementing programs for national <i>rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, for the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Liberia in the post-conflict period, shall ensure that the needs and potentials of the war victims are taken into account</i> and that gender balance is maintained in apportioning responsibilities for program implementation
<b>Supporting Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Initiatives</b>	The NTGL, in formulating and implementing programs for national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, for the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Liberia in the post-conflict period, shall ensure that the needs and potentials of the war victims are taken into account and that <i>gender balance is maintained in apportioning responsibilities for program implementation</i>

### Common Trends in the Development and Implementation of Women's Initiatives

- **Breakdown of social (political, ethnic, or religious) divides.** Christian and Muslim women came together under the common platform of ending the violence.

- **Maintaining tight connection to community.** WIPNET women attending the talks in Ghana maintained tight communication with their female counterparts at home, providing negotiation progress reports, and developing further tactics with the organization assisted the women present at the talks to strategize and implement their plans for action.

### **Women's Strategic Approaches During the Peace Negotiations**

Though never granted formal access to the negotiating table, the women of WIPNET made their presence well known and their voices well heard throughout the peace process in Ghana. Building on the tactics of the women's movement just a few years prior the WIPNET women negotiated for peace outside the official political realm gaining access to both warring factions by remaining impartial focusing primarily on ending the violence.

- **Expanding the agenda.** In their Golden Tulip Declaration the women called for governmental support of women's groups and minority groups, micro-credit programs, and capacity building as well as the necessity of women's involvement in any peacebuilding initiatives. The women also raised the issue of addressing victim's needs especially in rehabilitation efforts.
- **Ensuring victim's voices are heard, humanizing the process.** Sitting outside the negotiating room in a display of solidarity the women of WIPNET chanted for peace and sang traditional Liberian songs to remind the delegates of the suffering occurring at home (Tongerren, 2005).
- **Building consensus and strengthening the foundation by including civil society.** WIPNET was organized and implemented by women from various factions and levels of society. The women at the peace talks in Ghana remained in close communication with their

constituents at home, keeping them abreast of the process while also strategizing on additional tactics that could be used.

- **Building trust through communication and efforts to find common ground.** With no political affiliations, the women became unofficial mediators, using their access to both sides to find commonalities amongst the opposing parties (Tongeren, 2005).

## CONCLUSION

There is no concrete, empirical evidence to suggest that women at peace tables are more committed than men to promoting the greater good (Anderlini, 2000, p. 34). With such limited examples of women's participation in peace negotiations it is impossible to state axiomatically that women's presence at a peace table will always affect the process in a positive way. What can be demonstrated are the efforts women have made to be involved in the peacebuilding process and the strategies they have used at the negotiating table.

Often having suffered considerable trauma in violent conflict, women are able to see more clearly the continuum of conflict that stretches from the beating at home to the rape on the street to the killing on the battlefield, enabling women with a distinct perception of conflict, its prevention and its indicators (Anderlini, 2000). They are more likely to have arrived at the peace talks via civil activism, often with first hand experiences of the brutal consequences of war (Anderlini, 2000). Because of their experiences as victims as well as perpetrators of violence, women's perceptions can shed new and necessary light on peace negotiations.

As presented in the case studies, the ranges of activities women have used to gain access to the negotiating tables are wide and diverse however in each example women's civil society organizations have offered significant and complementary strategies for enhancing the women's engagement (Falch, 2010). In addition to the pivotal role women's organizations played in each

of these women's initiatives, there are several commonalities in the design, development and implementation of their effort as well as their strategic approaches to peacebuilding at the negotiating tables.

In time with greater occurrences of women's involvement these strategies will eventually serve as tenable reasons for women's inclusion in peace negotiations as a significant and necessary component to building sustainable peace.

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