

VOICES OF PEACE:

CATALOGUE OF GOOD PRACTICES BY CIVIL
SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON WOMEN, PEACE
AND SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACbit	Asociacion Chega Ba Ita
ACT	Alliance for Conflict Transformation
AJAR	Asia Justice and Rights
AMS	ASEAN Member States
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asia Nations
ASEAN RPA WPS	ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security
AWPR	ASEAN Women for Peace Registry
BfdW	Bread for the World
CAVR	Commission of Reception, Truth and Reconciliation
CCC	Centru Comunitate Covalima
CCCW	Coordination Center for Children and Women
CFGF	Center for Girls Foundation
CFLI	Canadian Fund for Local Initiative
CNC	Chega! National Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EWMI	East-West Management Institute
F-FDTL	Falintil-Defense Force of Timor-Leste
FoRB	Freedom of Religion and Belief
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDSP	Gus Dur School for Peace
GNWP	Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
GPH-MILF	Government of the Philippines–Moro Islamic Liberation Front
GSF	Global Survivors Fund
IRM	Interim Reparative Measurement
JTFCT	Joint Taskforce on Camp Transformation
LGUs	Local Government Units
LPMS	Lembaga Penguatan Masyarakat Sipil
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MIT	Mujahidin Indonesia Timur or East Indonesia Mujahideen
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NAP	National Action Plan
NAP-WPS	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PAOW	Peace Agenda of Women Network
PTMs	Protection Team Members
SBPAC	Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre
Thai PBS	Thai Public Broadcasting Service
THC	The Habibie Center
TIC	Transparency International Cambodia
TLGE	Transformative Leadership and Gender Equality
UFD	Unidade Feto ba Dezenvolvimentu
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WE Center	Women's Empowerment and Learning Center
WISE	Women's Participation for Inclusive Societies
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

ABOUT THIS CATALOGUE

This catalogue was commissioned by UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) under the regional project *Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Preventing Violence and Promoting Social Cohesion in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*, with generous support from the Governments of Canada, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea.

It documents the work that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the ASEAN region have undertaken to promote the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and showcases their critical role in regional WPS implementation. For learning and knowledge management purposes, it captures their successes, challenges, lessons learned and good practices in addressing peace and security issues affecting women and girls.

Further, it aims to contribute to learning for UN Women, government actors, civil society and development partners in other regions.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication reflect information received from the CSOs and do not necessarily represent the views and official policies of UN Women or those of the Governments of Canada, the United Kingdom and Republic of Korea. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UN Women concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UN Women extends its sincere gratitude to the Governments of Canada, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea for their generous contributions to advancing the WPS agenda in the ASEAN region, and for their support in publishing this catalogue.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the CSOs that responded to the call for submissions to the CSO Peace Award and whose work is featured herein. From Indonesia, Wahid Foundation and Lembaga Penguatan Masyarakat Sipil (LPMS) Pososhared their initiatives. In the Philippines, Pakigdait Inc. and the Sinagtala Center for Women and Children in Conflict contributed their experiences. The Network of Civic Women for Peace (Civic Women) and the Center for Girls Foundation from Thailand, Ba Futuru and Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) from Timor-Leste, and the Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT) from Cambodia also generously shared their stories and good practices.

Special thanks are due to Ms. Jennifer Mbithi, international consultant and WPS technical specialist with UN Women, for coordinating with CSOs and leading the drafting of this document. We also acknowledge the strong technical guidance and substantive contributions from the UN Women team, led by Cristina Fernandez Escorza, with valuable input and support from Yoomi Jun.

This knowledge product has greatly benefited from the commitment and contributions of UN Women Country Offices in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Timor-Leste and the Philippines. Particular appreciation is extended to our colleagues for their invaluable assistance, including Naruedee Janthasing, Ayessa Tin, Catherine Rose Torres, Chantevy Khourn, Wai Shan Chan, Jeremias Gomes, Yulies Puspitaningtyas, Siti Hanifah and Hosianna Rugun Anggreni.

The individuals and organizations mentioned above played a central role in the development of this publication, from its inception through to its completion, including stories shared and insights from representatives of UN Women, ASEAN and the broader civil society community.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This catalogue presents nine powerful case studies showcasing how CSOs across Southeast Asia and Timor-Leste are driving meaningful change in advancing the WPS agenda. Developed under the UN Women regional project *Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Preventing Violence and Promoting Social Cohesion in ASEAN*, it documents good practices, highlights community-driven strategies and promotes cross-country learning on inclusive peacebuilding.

Methodology and case studies

The nine case studies were selected through a regional CSO Peace Award competition. They reflect diverse strategies and innovations led by grassroots actors from Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand and Timor-Leste. These initiatives prevent violent extremism, foster women's leadership, advance gender-responsive recovery, engage youth and Indigenous communities and use art and media to transform conflict narratives.

Key themes and innovations

Women's leadership and meaningful participation: Across the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia, women have taken central roles in mediation, local peace initiatives, and reconciliation processes, illustrating the shift from symbolic representation to genuine influence in shaping peace outcomes.

Locally driven planning and participatory research: By involving community members—especially women—from the beginning, these initiatives ensure that actions reflect real needs and priorities. This inclusive approach strengthens local ownership and increases the effectiveness and relevance of peace efforts.

Economic inclusion for women: Supporting women-led enterprises, such as traditional crafts, culinary ventures, and community-based cooperatives has proven effective in rebuilding livelihoods in post-conflict settings. In Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste, development of inclusive financial models tailored to women and establishment of cooperatives and microfinance initiatives have enhanced their independence and ability to contribute meaningfully to peace and development.

Skills development and public engagement: CSOs have invested in enabling women and marginalized groups to participate actively in peace and security discussions through training in legal rights, negotiation, community safety and conflict management—always grounded in local contexts to ensure lasting impact.

Creative platforms for advocacy: Arts and media have emerged as powerful means of advocacy, reaching diverse audiences, especially youth, and helping translate complex policy messages into accessible, engaging content that fosters public dialogue and awareness. CSOs using these methods achieve significant reach and coverage—for instance, Thailand's Citizen Reporters collaboration between Civic Women and Thai Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) reached over 20,000 people through programmes targeting women's security priorities like safe public spaces.

Cross-sector collaboration: Partnerships between CSOs, public institutions, academia and the private sector have amplified impact and allowed for knowledge sharing, resource pooling and coordinated action. These partnerships provide opportunities for shared and complementary experiences and skills.

Impact and lessons learned

The case studies offer valuable lessons and replicable models for ASEAN stakeholders, government actors and development partners. They illustrate the importance of community ownership, cross-sector collaboration and culturally responsive approaches. The catalogue affirms that when women lead, communities become more resilient, inclusive and equipped to navigate conflict peacefully.

This catalogue underscores the indispensable role that CSOs—particularly women-led and community-rooted actors—play in advancing the WPS agenda across Southeast Asia and Timor-Leste. The case studies demonstrate not only innovative and context-specific approaches to peacebuilding but also the power of inclusive leadership, local ownership and cross-sector collaboration in building lasting peace.

Call to action

As ASEAN Member States (AMS) move forward with implementing the Regional Plan of Action on WPS, this publication offers both a blueprint and a call to action: to elevate the leadership of women, invest in grassroots solutions and recognize CSOs as essential partners in shaping peaceful, resilient and equitable societies. The lessons shared here offer globally relevant insights for all who seek to build inclusive peace from the ground up.

This catalogue is both a celebration of achievements and a practical resource to inspire, inform and strengthen future WPS efforts across the region and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

The WPS agenda has long been recognized as essential to achieving sustainable peace and prosperity in the ASEAN region, reflecting a collective commitment to enhancing women's roles in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery. This commitment aligns with global frameworks, notably UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which underscores the importance of women's participation in all facets of peace and security efforts.

Regional progress and milestones

Progress in the region has accelerated since 2017, supported by several key developments: strengthened regional endorsements and frameworks to promote WPS; increased contributions of women troops and police officers by AMS to UN peacekeeping missions, and greater representation of women in law enforcement institutions; development of National Action Plans (NAP) and national policy frameworks on WPS in the Philippines (2010), Indonesia (2014), Timor-Leste (2016) and Vietnam (2024); adoption of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS in 2022, serving as a strategic guide to mainstream gender in peace and security policies; and launch of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry in 2018 to mobilize resources and expertise on WPS across the region.

Persistent challenges

Despite significant strides in advancing the WPS agenda, several challenges continue to hinder its full realization. Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions and peace processes due to persistent political and institutional barriers that limit their meaningful participation. Legal and institutional gaps further complicate progress, with limited implementation of national and regional frameworks resulting in poor enforcement and restricted access to justice for women affected by conflict.

Lack of coordination and regional integration also presents ongoing obstacles, manifesting in fragmented approaches between regional and national efforts and among different stakeholders working on similar goals. Additionally, while digital transformation offers new opportunities to facilitate women's participation in peacebuilding, it simultaneously exposes women to increased risks of targeted cyberviolence, harassment and online exploitation.

The regional project context

As part of efforts to advance the WPS agenda, ASEAN and UN Women are implementing the regional project *"Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: preventing violence and promoting social cohesion in ASEAN."* Generously funded by the Governments of Canada, United Kingdom and Republic of Korea, the project has two primary objectives.

First, it aims to strengthen the capacities of ASEAN institutions and member states on WPS implementation, while simultaneously building the capacity of CSOs and other non-state actors to participate effectively in WPS decision-making processes. The project places particular emphasis on empowering women's organizations and networks to engage meaningfully in peacebuilding initiatives and policy implementation across the region.

The ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS¹ acknowledges the critical contributions of CSOs and emphasizes the need for their engagement, particularly in Priority Actions 1.2.6 and 3.1.4.² In this context, UN Women launched the **CSOs and Social Organizations PEACE Award**—a regional competition to identify and recognize innovative, impactful and replicable CSO-led WPS initiatives. The competition targeted CSOs across ASEAN and Timor-Leste, serving as a platform for sharing good practices and highlighting the role of women and grassroots actors in peacebuilding. Nearly 40 submissions were received and nine stories were selected for in-depth analysis and documentation.

Catalogue objectives

This catalogue captures those nine good practices and aims to celebrate successful grassroots initiatives, demonstrate the benefits of women's leadership and gender-responsive peacebuilding and provide learning and inspiration for policymakers, practitioners and communities across the ASEAN region.

By showcasing these initiatives, this catalogue reflects both the progress made and the ongoing challenges in advancing WPS while offering a practical tool to inform future strategies, encourage replication and build a more inclusive, peaceful and resilient ASEAN.

¹ ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security. (2022). ASEAN. Available at: <https://wps.asean.org/re-sources/asean-rpa-wps/>

² Priority Action 1.2.6 calls for CSO consultation to identify engagement mechanisms and provide inputs into government and ASEAN peace and security initiatives. Priority Action 3.1.4 establishes regular consultations with the ASEAN WPS community of practice to support integration into peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives.



Photo: UN Women/Putra Djohan



Stories *from* Indonesia

- Women's Leadership in Building Sustainable Peace in Indonesia, by Wahid Foundation
- Preventing Violent Extremism in Indonesia, by Poso Civil Society Strengthening Institute

Women's Leadership in Building Sustainable Peace in Indonesia, by Wahid Foundation

Context

During his tenure as Indonesia's 4th President, Gus Dur implemented significant policies emphasizing gender mainstreaming in development through Presidential Instruction No. 20 of 2001. His dedication to advancing gender equality inspired the Wahid Foundation's³ vision and mission.

Since 2008, the Wahid Foundation's Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) reports have shown that religiously motivated social conflicts often intersect with GBV. Over a decade, these reports documented more than 90 discriminatory regulations, corroborated by the National Commission on Violence Against Women's 2009–2016 survey, which identified 421 discriminatory policies that marginalized women.

A 2017 survey on religious tolerance among Indonesian women revealed alarming trends: 57.1 percent of Indonesians (53.3 million people) exhibited intolerance and 10.5 percent of women openly supported radical organizations.

In Indonesia, the WPS approach has not yet been fully adopted to prevent or address social conflicts, particularly those rooted in intolerance, radicalism and violent extremism. This is a missed opportunity, as the WPS framework can enhance inclusive conflict prevention by providing gender-sensitive analysis that strengthens data and informs conflict resolution strategies.

Grassroots dialogues often fail to provide equal roles for women due to patriarchal norms and religious interpretations that favour male leadership. Women are frequently excluded from dialogue and decision-making in religious disputes, while conflict resolution has predominantly relied on state security approaches that tend to favour majority groups.

³ The Wahid Foundation was established on 7 September 2004 when Indonesia faced religious and ethnic conflicts fueling GBV, including discrimination, rape and murder. The Foundation promotes tolerant religious and societal communities, improves welfare, builds democracy and justice, and advocates for nonviolent peace worldwide, realizing the intellectual vision of KH Abdurrahman Wahid.

Reflecting on these challenges, the Wahid Foundation formulated the "Desa Damai" (Peace Village) programme, engaging women as agents of peace by strengthening social cohesion. In 2017, in collaboration with UN Women, the foundation launched the "Women's Participation for Inclusive Societies" (WISE) initiative. Desa Damai integrates global and national WPS commitments from UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 2242 and 2282, localizing them into village-level policies through Village Regulations on Desa Damai Action Plans.

Beneficiaries

As of April 2025, the Peace Villages initiative has reached 40 villages across West Java, Yogyakarta, Central Java, East Java, South Kalimantan, West Nusa Tenggara and Central Sulawesi. Twenty-four villages have declared their commitment, with 18 adopting Desa Damai action plans and 16 in the process of declaring their status. In total, 176,745 women and 173,739 men have directly benefited.

Methodological approach

The Desa Damai approach translates global and national WPS goals into village-level practices through inclusive task forces that bring together women's groups, youth groups, traditional leaders and religious figures. This methodology respects local values while contextualizing peacebuilding to address specific community dynamics.

Key methodologies include:

- **Participatory action research (PAR)**⁴ to conduct baseline conflict assessments, helping communities identify root causes and dynamics of local conflicts. This collaborative approach engages women affected by conflict in identifying, analyzing and formulating actions to address the conflicts.
- **Do No Harm and gender equality approaches** embedded throughout community training modules, ensuring sensitivity to local contexts while promoting inclusive practices.
- **Local working groups (Pokja)** comprising women's groups, youth, traditional and religious leaders to foster inclusive ownership of the peacebuilding agenda.
- **Village-level regulatory advocacy** to institutionalize peace planning through the formulation and adoption of Desa Damai action plans, anchoring peacebuilding into official village governance.
- **Microfinance and cooperative models** developed as peacebuilding tools, where economic interdependence among women from different ethnic and religious groups fosters social cohesion and mutual trust.

⁴ Participatory action research is a collaborative research approach where participants are invited to work together to understand a problem, take action to address it, and reflect on the results. It emphasizes participation, empowerment, and practical change through a cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Impact

Strengthened women's leadership: The programme has enhanced women's roles as peace agents through training 14,381 women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention (mediation, early warning and peace facilitation methods). Among them, 455 women now serve as peace facilitators, while 233 are active Pokja members. These groups successfully drafted and advocated for 18 Desa Damai action plans endorsed by village and local governments.

Women's economic empowerment: Over 89,000 households have accessed revolving funds through cooperative - Koperasi Cinta Damai, distributing approximately IDR 4 billion in microfinance to women-led microenterprises. This economic engagement has improved women's livelihoods and created avenues for social interaction across ethnic and religious lines, reinforcing peacebuilding.

Youth engagement: Over 150 alumni have conducted local campaigns on interfaith harmony and environmental peace through digital storytelling, film, art and education via the Gus Dur School for Peace (GDSP). Alumni networks of Pokja members and GDSP graduates continue to scale peer learning and grassroots advocacy.

Policy mainstreaming: Twenty-two out of 24 declared Peace Villages have formalized their Desa Damai action plans, ensuring institutional sustainability of gender-responsive peacebuilding.

Stories of change



"Five years ago, I never imagined I'd speak at a forum like this. Back then, I often saw women around me suffering from violence during conflict. The Peace Village programme gave me knowledge and confidence to take action. I learned there are real ways to support women affected by conflict. As part of the Pokja team, I now help monitor and respond early to signs of violence. Real change needs a larger, ongoing movement—and now, many women here feel empowered and ready to lead." — **Maria Sedy, Chairperson of the Candirenggo Village Working Group**



I am a survivor of bullying and sexual harassment. I had to find my own strength and rebuild my confidence. Peace Village helped me heal and gave me the power to share that peace with others. Today, I stand as an equal alongside men, an advocate for women's dignity and a voice for diversity and inclusion where every woman's voice matters." — **Qorriatul Azizah, Teacher and Sidomulyo Peace Village Working Group Member**

Challenges and adaptations

Resistance from conservative male leaders: Male village leaders were initially hesitant to allow women to participate in leadership and conflict mediation roles. The programme invested in trust-building through community dialogue, engaging religious leaders and demonstrating early success stories of women-led initiatives. Gradually, perceptions shifted as male leaders recognized the strategic value of women's involvement.

Safety concerns for women peacebuilders: In high-conflict areas like Poso, Central Sulawesi, women peacebuilders faced risks including intimidation and social backlash. The programme developed safety protocols, such as early warning systems, peer-support groups and discreet mediation channels. Collaboration with local authorities and traditional leaders provided additional protection and legitimacy.

Balancing cultural sensitivity with human rights advocacy: Promoting gender equality in culturally conservative settings required delicate negotiation. The Wahid Foundation used contextual and faith-based approaches, framing peacebuilding and gender inclusion within Islamic teachings and local wisdom, supported by respected religious leaders.

Lessons learned

Long-term accompaniment builds trust and sustainability: Sustained engagement over several years was essential for gaining community trust and building local ownership. Investing in regular presence, mentorship and capacity-building—rather than short-term projects—led to deeper impact and community-driven continuity.

Economic empowerment opens space for social inclusion: Linking peacebuilding with economic opportunity proved a powerful entry point for women's inclusion. Women who initially joined cooperatives for income later became peace facilitators and community mediators, building their confidence and influence while reducing prejudice across ethnic and religious lines.

Embedding peace action plans into village law ensures policy continuity: Formalizing peace initiatives through Village Regulations anchored women within governance structures, independent of leadership changes or funding cycles. This legal recognition enabled budget allocation for peacebuilding and GBV prevention programmes while ensuring peace and gender equality became institutional priorities.

Sustainability and future plans

Desa Damai integrates women's empowerment, child protection, social conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction and community economic development into a cohesive framework that fosters resilience and sustainable progress at the village level. Villages declaring themselves as Peace Villages have successfully elevated their Village Development Index, transitioning from underdeveloped to advanced and independent status.

Specific sustainability actions include:

- Formalized village regulations and action plans ensuring budget allocation and institutionalization.
- *Koperasi Cinta Damai* sustaining economic inclusion through revolving funds.
- Alumni networks (GDSP and Pokja) continuing to scale peer learning and advocacy.
- Expansion plans targeting five new villages in Lombok Island⁵ (2025–2027).

Peace Villages demonstrate that women's leadership is the cornerstone of resilient and inclusive communities. Through its comprehensive and locally driven approach, the Wahid Foundation has empowered individuals, strengthened communities and established a sustainable foundation for long-term peace and development.

Recognition and acknowledgment

Women involved in this initiative have been recognized by the government as champions of peace for their critical roles in peacebuilding. Their contributions have been formally acknowledged through awards and appointments that highlight their leadership in advancing community resilience and social cohesion.

Ibu Sri Handayani was appointed to the District Peace and Security Council after leading a community mediation process that resolved a local conflict.

Ibu Dani from Central Java was named "Tokoh Perempuan Inspiratif" (Inspirational Woman Leader) by the local regent for her instrumental role in drafting the village's first regulation on preventing GBV.

Balia, a GDSP Alumni, has since become the chair of the village's business unit and a school peace educator.

⁵ Lombok is an island in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, located east of Bali and west of Sumbawa.



Preventing Violent Extremism in Indonesia, by Poso Civil Society Strengthening Institute

Context

Poso Regency in Central Sulawesi Province experienced violent conflict between religious and ethnic groups from late 1998 through 1999, following the fall of the Suharto government. While the 2000 Malino Declaration ended the initial conflict, peace remained fragile. Between 2007 and 2022, the region faced renewed violence from the East Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT), whose attacks on civilians and security forces reflected the unique shift from inter-community conflict to terrorism.

Field studies by The Habibie Center (THC) and the Poso Civil Society Strengthening Institute (LPMS) identified two urgent concerns: former convicts associated with violent extremism require strong community support during deradicalization and reintegration to prevent return to violence, while significant community sympathy for extremist views creates ongoing risks of radicalization and recruitment. Without addressing these issues, ongoing peacebuilding efforts could be undermined and conflict potentially reignited, prompting government responses through security operations, law enforcement and counter-radicalization initiatives.

Beneficiaries

Between 2022 and 2025, LPMS through the PROPOSOKU (Psychosocial Program for a Stronger Poso) programme has been supporting individuals affected by violent extremism in Poso. The direct beneficiaries include **129 people**: 62 women who are wives of former convicts associated with violent extremism, five women who are both former terrorists and wives of former convicts and 62 male former convicts who are heads of households.

The programme also benefits families of former convicts and the wider community in Poso. Among the families, **79 adults** (53 men and 26 women) and **88 children** (43 boys and 35 girls) receive support.

At the community level, the programme operates in eight sub-districts of Poso Regency, reaching an estimated **34,606 people**. These areas are part of the 19 sub-districts in the regency, which has a total population of approximately 257,653.⁵ The community benefits indirectly through improved security and social cohesion efforts linked to the programme.



Capacity building session with the wives of former Poso convicts. Photo: LPMS

Methodological approach

Since 2000, the Poso Civil Society Strengthening Institute has been dedicated to conflict resolution, peacebuilding and counterterrorism in Poso. Since 2016, its focus has shifted toward preventing violent extremism by supporting the reintegration and rehabilitation of former convicts and fostering social cohesion.

Key methodologies include:

- **Active engagement of wives of former convicts:** Engaging the wives of former convicts has been challenging due to societal stigma and patriarchal views that see women as submissive or complicit. However, these women occupy a unique position—they are able to influence their husbands and act as pioneers of peace within their families and communities. Supporting their role is crucial to preventing relapse into extremism.

- **Mentorship and capacity-building:** The programme incorporates monthly home visits to former convicts' families, enabling direct dialogue by LPMS facilitator teams to learn about progress and changes through daily activities. Women gain practical knowledge in legal rights, psychosocial support and entrepreneurship, boosting confidence and enabling greater independence. Through psychosocial support and mentorship, the programme mends family and community relationships, reducing stigma and building trust.
- **Economic empowerment and skills development:** The programme supports women-led businesses and showcases their products in public events like the Poso City Anniversary exhibition, Poso Lake Festival and government-organized culinary fairs. This gives participants financial autonomy and strengthens their role in household and community decision-making. Many former convicts have launched small businesses, shifting from survival mode to active economic participation and leadership within their communities.
- **Strategic partnerships and collaboration:** A wide network of stakeholders—government, religious leaders, CSOs and youth—ensures shared ownership and long-term impact. The interventions are implemented through the PROPOSOKU Program in collaboration with THC and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, with the Civil Society Empowerment Institute as a local partner (2022-2025). This partnership includes multi-stakeholder participation involving government and CSOs, religious mass organizations, local police, sub-district governments and village governments.

Through these approaches, the programme challenges traditional gender roles, elevates women as community influencers and leaders, fosters tolerance across religious and ethnic divides and enables participants to become local peace agents working with civic and religious groups to promote coexistence and community resilience.

Impact

Successful programme completion: Three cohorts successfully completed the PROPOSOKU Program, building the capacity of **129 people**: 67 wives of former convicts and 62 male former convicts from both Muslim and Christian groups in Poso. Each benefited through knowledge, social skills, business management training and linkages, to partnerships with relevant government agencies to support micro-enterprise development.



Women during capacity building session. Photo: LPMS

Development of support systems: PROPOSOKU, in collaboration with partners, has incorporated **60 people** into their support network, including Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, village heads, sub-district heads, religious organizations, women's organizations, community and religious leaders and local entrepreneurs. This network supports the smooth reintegration of former Poso convicts into society.

Transformative behavioural changes: Since 2022, none of the former participants have shown indications of returning to extremist groups. Participants have shown clear changes in attitude—from isolation and distrust to openness and collaboration. They have enthusiastically taken part in public exhibitions and community events, proudly presenting their products to audiences across religious and ethnic groups.

Women as agents of peace: Several wives of former convicts are now active in village social events and peacebuilding initiatives, becoming role models and advocates for tolerance in their communities. Formerly excluded women now take part in public life—village governance, peace forums and exhibitions—normalizing women's leadership and participation.

Enhanced community safety: Since the programme began, there has been a decline in violent extremist acts and arrests involving former convicts in Poso, indicating stronger community resilience and disengagement from violence. There is growing recognition among participants of the importance of building business and social networks to support long-term reintegration and peaceful coexistence.

Stories of change



“Before joining PROPOSOKU, I kept to myself, avoided community events and didn't trust outsiders. That began to change after LPMS Poso visited our village in 2019. A few years later, I joined PROPOSOKU without fully knowing what to expect—but it changed everything. Through the programme, I learned how to communicate openly, embrace diversity and prevent the spread of radical ideas within my family. I found confidence, purpose and a new role in my community.

Now, I actively participate in village activities, collaborate with local organizations, and proudly serve as a peace pioneer in Poso. I'm deeply grateful to LPMS, The Habibie Center and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for helping me—and others like me—rebuild from the inside out.” — **Umi Tri Susanti Kadarsih Handayani, Tamanjeka, Masani Village, Coastal Poso**

Sustainability and future plans

LPMS continues its work to ensure consistent monitoring and support of former convicts and their families, preventing them from being influenced by extremist ideology and violent actions again. The wives of former convicts also play an important role in the support system, helping maintain their husbands' social stability and preserving peace within their families and communities.

Looking ahead, LPMS will continue providing mentoring and interventions, particularly for the wives of former convicts, to develop their capacity in social and economic fields and foster their entrepreneurial spirit. This will help them become local entrepreneurs and actively support their husbands' reintegration efforts, transforming their lives into more productive, positive paths while moving them away from past experiences of pain and suffering in prison and detention.



Photo: UN Women/Mailee Osten Tan



Photo: UN Women/Josel Dumbrigue

Stories *from* Philippines

- Weaving Peace and Empowerment in the Philippines, by Sinagtala Center for Children and Women in Conflict
- The Bae of Peace: Women, Conflict and Transformation in Camp Bilal, in the Philippines by Pakigdait Inc

Weaving Peace and Empowerment in the Philippines, by Sinagtala Center for Children and Women in Conflict

Context

The Sinagtala Center for Children and Women in Conflict⁷ is a grassroots organization established during the 2017 Marawi War to address displacement, trauma and exclusion in conflict-affected areas of Southern Philippines, including Marawi, Sulu and nearby provinces in Mindanao. Since then, it has evolved into a long-term initiative that bridges emergency response, psychosocial recovery and sustainable peacebuilding through a gender-responsive and culturally rooted approach.

Beneficiaries

Sinagtala's work supports some of the most vulnerable groups—war widows, wives and daughters of former combatants and internally displaced women and children. These individuals face both visible and hidden conflict impacts: trauma, poverty, social stigma and exclusion from public life. Through its programmes, Sinagtala provides inclusive, healing-centred spaces where women can rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

Since launching in Sulu in 2021, the project has reached **223 women and girls** through its weaving programme. Sinagtala's work is dedicated to supporting some of the most vulnerable and often overlooked groups—including war widows, wives and daughters of former combatants and internally displaced women and children.

Methodological approach

Recognizing that economic insecurity drives many women toward conflict zones, Sinagtala's methodology centres on building sustainable livelihoods as a foundation for peace.

⁷ Sinagtala operates as a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registered organization with institutional legitimacy and commitment to locally-led development.

Key methodologies include:

From emergency relief to long-term empowerment: Sinagtala's initial work during the Marawi siege focused on delivering emergency support—meeting basic needs, providing safe spaces and offering emotional support. However, it soon became evident that beyond immediate relief, there was a pressing need for ongoing interventions that addressed both the psychosocial and economic dimensions of post-conflict recovery.

Weaving emerged as a strategic response to this need. As a traditional practice embedded in the cultural identity of many Muslim and Indigenous communities in Mindanao, weaving was reintroduced not just as a livelihood activity but as a form of therapy. The repetitive, intentional nature of weaving offered women a space to process their grief, rebuild their confidence and reconnect with their heritage.

A trauma-informed and culturally rooted approach: Sinagtala's programme design prioritizes psychosocial support before introducing economic or skills training components. This includes:

- **Women-led safe spaces and counselling** for sharing experiences, building peer support networks and group therapy facilitated by trained local professionals and community elders.
- **Faith-based guidance and cultural healing** incorporating Islamic values, spiritual resilience and traditional weaving as non-verbal emotional expression.

These interventions rebuild trust, reduce internalized stigma and prepare women emotionally to participate in longer-term economic activities.

Community-led planning and economic empowerment: Sinagtala's community engagement begins with listening. Prior to programme implementation, the team conducts participatory assessments involving community elders, local government units (LGUs), women's groups and religious leaders. Household surveys and focus group discussions provide insights into women's lived experiences, economic challenges and aspirations, ensuring interventions are context-specific, demand-driven and community-owned.

With participants' emotional readiness established, Sinagtala transitions to structured skills development. The core intervention is reviving and modernizing traditional weaving through:

- **Training modules** in basic and advanced weaving techniques, product development, entrepreneurship and cooperative formation and financial literacy including Islamic microfinancing options.
- **Starter kits and market access** providing looms, thread and materials while facilitating partnerships with ethical buyers, designers, and government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

- **Product diversification and cooperative building** ranging from traditional textiles to modern home décor, with support for women-led weaving cooperatives that serve as platforms for collective production, resource sharing and advocacy.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration: Sinagtala's impact is made possible through strong institutional partnerships with DTI for branding and market expansion; Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and LGUs for beneficiary identification and post-programme support; UN Habitat for Islamic financing models; and The Asia Foundation and other CSOs for capacity-building in financial literacy, psychosocial support, leadership skills and entrepreneurship.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL): Sinagtala has established a robust MEL framework that includes regular psychosocial assessments to track emotional well-being; income monitoring and livelihood progress tracking; focus group discussions and feedback loops to adapt interventions in real time; and impact narratives to document qualitative outcomes.

Impact

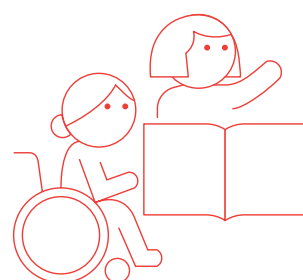
Participation and Training:

207

women trained across Marawi and Sulu, including women with disabilities.

85%

women trained across Marawi and Sulu, including women with disabilities.



Economic Outcomes:

67%

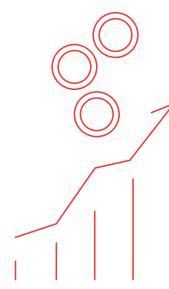
of trained weavers reported sustainable income within six months.

30%

gained access to microfinancing through UN Habitat's implementing partners.

20%

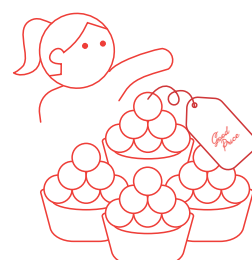
joined or formed cooperatives with formal recognition and market access.



Market Success:

200+

Over 200 products sold in regional markets and trade fairs.



The most powerful change has occurred at the level of identity and self-worth. Women who were once marginalized—economically and socially—have begun to see themselves as contributors to peace and progress. Many now play leadership roles in their cooperatives and communities, serve as mentors to new programme participants, and participate in local governance processes. Their products are displayed at exhibitions, and their voices—once silenced by conflict—are being heard in decision-making spaces.

Challenges and adaptations

Market challenges: Low initial market interest in traditional weaving products posed significant obstacles, as potential buyers were unfamiliar with the cultural significance and quality of the textiles. Sinagtala addressed this through design innovation, working with participants to modernize traditional patterns while implementing demand creation strategies through exhibitions, partnerships with ethical fashion advocates, and targeted marketing campaigns.

Economic pressures: Limited income sources created substantial challenges for participants, as many women struggled with immediate financial needs that made it difficult to focus solely on weaving activities. Sinagtala supported diversification into complementary micro-enterprises, particularly food production and catering services, allowing women to generate multiple income streams while maintaining their connection to the weaving program.

Sustainability concerns: Ensuring program continuity beyond initial donor funding cycles and maintaining long-term market access for participants presented ongoing challenges. Sinagtala mitigated these risks by strategically engaging LGUs to integrate the program into municipal livelihood portfolios and supporting the formation of legally registered cooperatives.

Cultural preservation: Balancing the need to maintain authentic traditional weaving techniques while achieving commercial viability required careful navigation. Sinagtala addressed this by training participants to adapt traditional techniques for modern applications while maintaining cultural integrity and storytelling elements.

Lessons learned

Healing must precede livelihood: Programmes must prioritize psychosocial support and healing processes before introducing economic activities, as participants who have not addressed underlying trauma struggle to engage effectively in skills training and income-generation activities.

Cultural relevance enhances participation: Incorporating culturally significant activities like traditional weaving creates deeper engagement and serves as a pathway to cultural belonging, community connection and restoration of pride in traditional knowledge disrupted by conflict.

Inclusive financing models matter: The introduction of Sharia-compliant financing options demonstrated how addressing religious considerations can remove barriers to participation and build stronger relationships with conservative communities.

Local government ownership ensures continuity: Integrating livelihood programmes into local government structures and municipal development plans is crucial for ensuring sustainability beyond donor funding cycles.

Women are peacebuilders: Empowering women economically and socially creates ripple effects that extend far beyond individual participants, contributing to community stability and conflict prevention.

Sustainability and future plans

Sinagtala's long-term vision focuses on deepening impact within existing communities. The organization aims to support more women in forming legally recognized cooperatives, accessing markets and taking leadership roles in their communities. Current plans include improving raw material access, strengthening financial pathways and documenting the revival of indigenous weaving patterns for generational transfer.

The Sinagtala Center for Children and Women in Conflict offers a clear, replicable model of grassroots peacebuilding. By placing healing, heritage and economic empowerment at the centre of its work, it transforms women from victims of conflict into leaders of resilience and recovery.

Through a humble but determined approach, Sinagtala continues to demonstrate that meaningful change begins in the hands of women—and that sustainable peace is possible when built thread by thread, community by community.



Sinagtala Core Weavers in Malawi. Photo: Wiza Cruz Bacani



Photo: UN Women/Joser Dumbrique

The Bae of Peace: Women, Conflict and Transformation in Camp Bilal, in the Philippines

by Pakigdait Inc

Context

The Mindanao region in the Philippines has long been affected by armed conflict, including decades of struggle and deep-rooted social issues like clan feuds (rido). These conflicts disproportionately impact women, who often bear the brunt of violence and displacement. Six out of the 10 rido cases documented within the Camp Bilal communities have direct and indirect narratives about women—mothers, widows and singles. These cycles of violence often stem from perceived injustices, honour killings and land disputes, with women frequently becoming victims or catalysts of these conflicts.

Women in Mindanao have historically been marginalized and excluded from decision-making processes, including those related to peace and security. However, their unique perspectives, resilience and deep-rooted connections within their communities make them invaluable assets in conflict resolution. The Bae⁸ Mediators initiative represents a groundbreaking approach to peacebuilding in Mindanao, drawing upon the experiences of former women combatants to leverage their unique skills and understanding of conflict dynamics in addressing local grievances.

Beneficiaries

Pakigdait Inc.,⁹ an interfaith peacebuilding CSO that has worked in the area for almost 25 years, trained the women who formed the Bae Mediators. The initiative incorporates 30 former women combatants of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front¹⁰ (MILF) and the Bangsa Bae from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The Bae Mediators are a testament to the transformative power of women in conflict resolution and community healing.

8 "Bae" means "women" in the M'ranaw dialect

9 Bae Mediators is entirely owned by ex-combatants, with Pakigdait Inc. acting as a facilitator only.

10 Members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Women's Brigade (BIWAB) Northeastern Mindanao front, known as Camp Bilal under BARMM Member Parliament Abdullah "Commander Bravo" G. Macapaar.

Methodological approach

To address the ongoing impacts of conflict on young people and communities, Bae mediators combine creative methodologies with traditional conflict resolution practices.

Key methodologies include:

Women-centred conflict resolution: The Bae Mediators prioritize conflicts where women are directly involved as victims, perpetrators or key stakeholders, including cases of domestic violence, sexual assault and economic exploitation. This focus recognizes women's unique challenges and vulnerabilities in conflict situations.

Community-based approach and trust-building: Operations are within the seven base camps of Camp Bilal, one of the six recognized camps of the Government of the Philippines-Moro Islamic Liberation Front (GPH-MILF) peace process under the Normalization Program. Bae Mediators work closely with community members to understand the root causes of conflict and develop sustainable solutions, utilizing traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as dialogue, mediation and restorative justice practices adapted to address contemporary challenges.

As former women combatants, the Bae Mediators have built trust within their communities, not only among women but also with their male counterparts—husbands and commanders. This trust facilitates open communication and encourages community members to participate in the peacebuilding process.

Capacity-building and empowerment: The initiative provides ongoing training and support to the Bae Mediators, enhancing their skills in conflict analysis, communication, negotiation and trauma-informed care. This includes training on GBV, human rights and international humanitarian law, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to effectively address the specific needs of women and girls in conflict.

Listening sessions and meaningful participation: Bae Mediators conduct listening sessions inside Camp Bilal, gathering testimonies from women about their experiences of violence and discrimination, which are then used to inform their mediation strategies. This contributes not only to conflict mediation and reconciliation but to meaningful participation of women in the Camp Transformation at Camp Bilal.

Impact

Effective conflict resolution:

- Successfully mediated **five major conflicts**, including two land disputes, one intergenerational family feud and two cases of domestic violence.
- **60 percent** of resolved cases involved women as signatories to peace agreements.
- **No retaliatory killings** reported post mediation as of November 2024.

Enhanced community cohesion: By fostering dialogue¹¹ and understanding between conflicting parties, the Bae Mediators have contributed to improved community cohesion and social harmony. This includes sacred agreements,¹² finding practical compromises between rival clans, and implementing women-led monitoring and early warning systems and helping defuse tensions within Camp Bilal over frustration with the camp's transformation.

Women's empowerment and institutional integration: The initiative has empowered women as peacebuilders, providing them with a platform to contribute to their communities and challenge traditional gender roles. The Joint Taskforce on Camp Transformation (JTFCT) has integrated Bae Mediators into camp normalization discussions, and the mediators have become respected leaders within their communities, serving as role models for other women and inspiring a new generation of women peacebuilders.

Prevention of violence: By addressing conflicts at the local level, the Bae Mediators have contributed to preventing the escalation of violence and promoting a culture of peace, helping to de-escalate tensions, prevent potential outbreaks of violence, and create safer and more inclusive communities for women and girls.

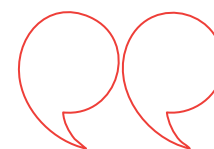


Coordination meeting at JTFCT with Bae Mediators, MILF and GPH. Photo: Pakigdait

¹¹ Shuttle mediation involves Bae mediators conducting secret talks with rival clans via trusted female relatives (e.g., sisters married into opposing clans), focusing on practical compromises such as "split the harvest, not the land."

¹² Quran oaths are witnessed by women, relatives and leaders, sealed with a Kanduri (peace feast) cooked by women, symbolizing communal accountability.

Stories of change



"For decades, our families fought over land—land soaked in blood, not rice. When Pakigdait Inc. came, they didn't take sides; they formed Bae Mediators. I told the elders: 'Enough. If men cannot share dirt, let women divide it.' With Pakigdait, we gathered mothers and widows. We mapped boundaries through stories, not bullets—who nursed the sick here, who buried kin there. Now, the fields are green again. Let the earth heal what pride destroyed." — **Jamilah A. Salindawan, 102nd MILF Command, Madamba, Lanao del Sur and the Morshidat -BIWAB & Secretary, Bae Mediators**

Lessons learned

Documentation and dissemination: Documenting the successes and challenges of the initiative is essential for learning and sharing best practices with other peacebuilding actors. This includes collecting data on the impact of the initiative, publishing case studies, and organizing workshops and conferences to share lessons learned with other practitioners.

Policy and legal framework: A supportive policy and legal framework are crucial to ensure the recognition and protection of women's roles in peacebuilding. This includes enacting legislation that guarantees women's equal participation in peace processes and provides legal protection for women human rights defenders.

Sustainability and future plans

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the initiative requires continued investment in training, capacity building and support for the Bae Mediators. This includes providing financial and logistical support, as well as access to mentorship and networking opportunities.

The success of the Bae Mediators initiative can be replicated and scaled up in other conflict-affected areas, both within Mindanao and beyond. This requires sharing good practices, providing technical assistance, and building the capacity of other women's organizations to implement similar initiatives.



Photo: UN Women/Fatumporn Thongking

Stories *from* Thailand



- Empowering Women to Promote Meaningful Participation in Peacebuilding in Thailand, by Network of Civic Women for Peace
- Empowering Women and Communities to Prevent Human Trafficking in Border Districts of Chiang Rai Province, Thailand by Center for Girls Foundation

Empowering Women to Promote Meaningful Participation in Peacebuilding in Thailand, by Network of Civic Women for Peace

Context

The conflict in Thailand's Deep South, which began in 2004, has left most families in the region in a poor state. The loss of family breadwinners, arrests under special laws or detentions linked to security cases have further exacerbated their vulnerabilities. These families encounter obstacles in accessing state compensation, unlike other cases, due to the perception that they were associated with individuals opposing the state.

Children of affected families, especially those who dropped out of school after losing their fathers, face a high risk of being recruited into armed groups and may seek revenge using violent methods. Neglect and abandonment will further deepen their sense of loss, fostering resentment, emotional distress and social exclusion. This situation clearly highlighted the critical role of women in preventing violence, leading to the formation of the Network of Civic Women for Peace (Civic Women) with the objective to empower women and promote women's meaningful participation as a pathway for peacebuilding.

Beneficiaries

Civic Women engaged both Muslims and Buddhists living in poverty in the Deep South, one of the most impoverished regions in Thailand. Since 2004, Civic Women, in collaboration with other CSOs in Bangkok, supported youth from vulnerable families by providing scholarships. The objective was to keep them in the education system for as long as possible, preventing them from being recruited into violent groups while empowering these youth to become key contributors to improving their families' futures and overall quality of life.



A representative of Civic Women presenting women's peace proposals to stakeholders at the Patani Southern Border Peace Assembly. Photo: Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand

Methodological approach

Civic Women believes in assistance based on humanitarian principles and that this must be delivered without discrimination.

Key methodologies include:

Direct support and policy advocacy: The network initiated its work by conducting home visits to victims who had lost family members in tragic incidents such as Krue-Se Mosque, Tak Bai events and daily shootings. During these visits they provided psychological support and delivered humanitarian aid, including scholarships, work equipment for mothers and infant formula for newborns. Civic women also conducted policy advocacy, achieving a significant milestone in 2012 when the government issued regulations enabling compensation for those detained under the Martial Law Act and the Emergency Decree.

Public campaigns and advocacy: The women conducted campaigns during significant occasions, such as International Women's Day (8 March) and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (25 November–10 December). A particularly meaningful event was 1 September 2016, when Muslim and Buddhist women marched through downtown Pattani to Pattani Central Mosque where

they delivered a statement demanding safe public spaces. This coincided with the scheduled resumption of peace dialogues on 2 September 2016, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Collaborative network building: Between 2015 and 2017, during a period of high violence in public spaces, Civic Women initiated a collaborative effort by inviting women leaders from 23 CSOs to form the Peace Agenda of Women (PAOW) network. This network aimed to rally women to advocate for public spaces—where women, children and civilians engage in daily economic, social and religious activities—to be declared safe zones.

Capacity-building and dialogue facilitation: Civic Women and PAOW provided training to affected women to enhance their facilitation skills and organize deliberative dialogue platforms. Through these dialogues, they collected opinions of over 500 women, both Muslim and Buddhist, from high violence "red zones." These insights were compiled into a Peace Proposal titled Safe Public Spaces, which was presented to parties engaged in peace dialogue in Malaysia.

Media engagement and citizen journalism: Civic Women collaborated with Thai PBS to publicize their developments and achievements. The issue received widespread coverage, with a Peace Survey conducted seven times by academic networks across five provinces consistently showing that the public's priority aligned with the women's demands.

Impact

Conflict transformation: Following advocacy efforts, there was a noticeable shift in conflict dynamics. The opposing party, particularly Party B (the group dissenting from the state), showed increased concern and began avoiding violent incidents in public spaces and against civilians. Over time, violence in these areas gradually declined, with attacks becoming more targeted and limited to hard targets.

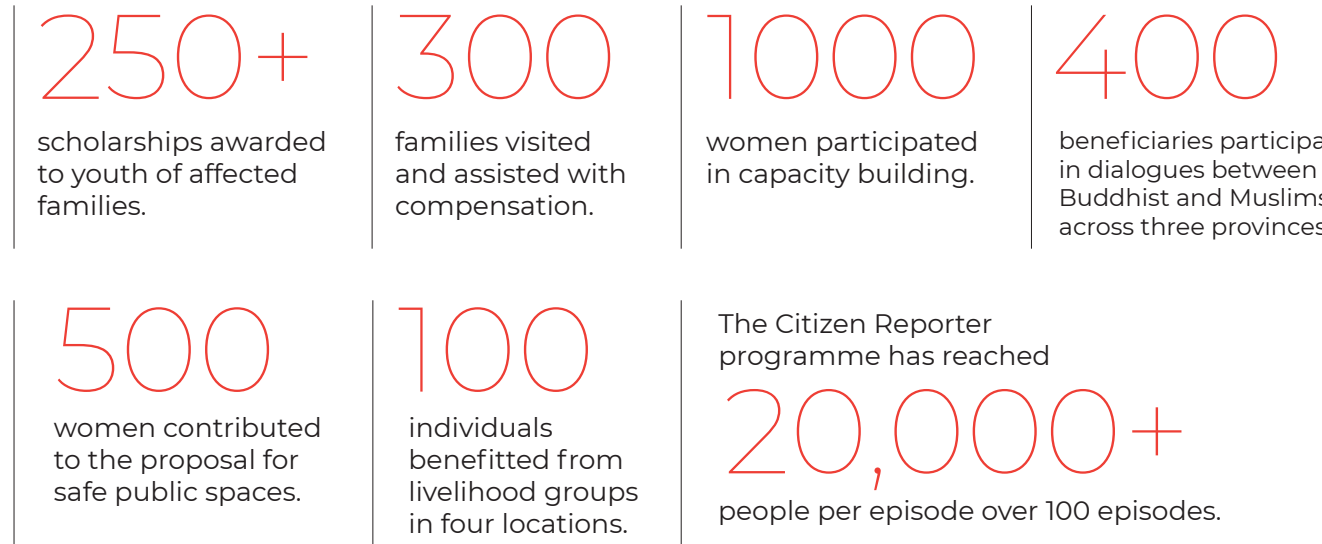
Peace dialogue integration: Remarkably, after the September 2016 round of dialogues, the two opposing parties issued a joint statement agreeing to bring the women's agenda on safe public spaces to the table in the next round of discussions. Although political changes caused the talks to be suspended, the women's demand had gained significant traction, becoming a recognized public agenda both locally and nationally.

Track 3¹³ peacebuilding and community reconciliation: In addition to Track 1¹⁴ discussions, Civic Women organized training programmes for 250 women leaders from red-zone communities in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces. These women were equipped with skills to facilitate peace democratic dialogues within their communities to foster reconciliation among various groups. The outcome of these dialogues has been significant, with women gaining capacity to act as facilitators and some advancing to community or provincial mediator levels.

Access to justice and compensation: Peace democratic dialogues played a pivotal role in fostering understanding and reducing mistrust, particularly between security officials and Malay Muslim villagers. Women who were marginalized or excluded were able to access justice and state compensation. Eighteen women were removed from government blacklists, allowing them greater freedom and safety in their daily lives, including freedom to travel for religious pilgrimages or work in Malaysia.

WPS agenda institutionalization: In 2012, Soraya Jamjuree, President of Civic Women, was appointed to the Sub-Committee on Women, Peace and Security under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, contributing to drafting the Measure and Guidelines on WPS. The establishment of the Coordination Center for Children and Women (CCCW)¹⁵ on 10 June 2019 was a major achievement, with the President of Civic Women serving as chairperson of the 28-member committee. A major success in 2019 was securing a 10-million-baht budget to fund 40 CSO-led projects aligned with the WPS Guideline.

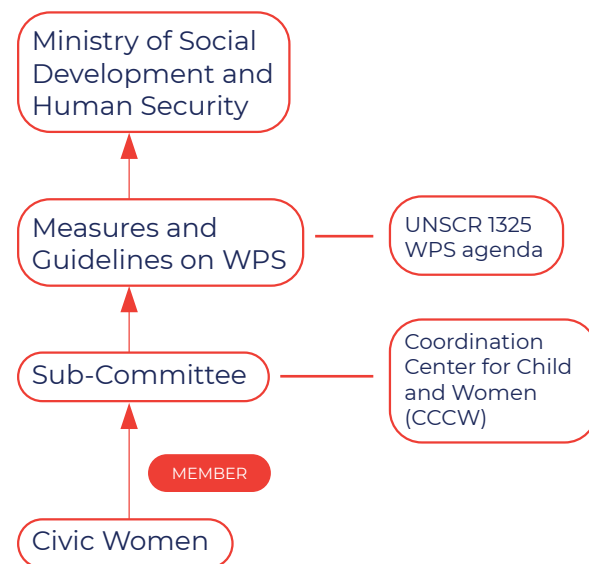
Direct beneficiary outcomes:



13 Track 3 initiatives are grassroots peacebuilding and community-level efforts focusing on community-based peace, conflict prevention and social cohesion.

14 Track 1 represents official, high-level diplomacy and negotiations focused on advocating for women's direct participation in peace talks and gender-sensitive agreements.

15 Targeted municipalities include Covalima; Maneo in Oecusse; and Unidade Feto ba Dezenvolvimentu (UFD) in Baucau.



Role between Civic Women, CSOs, government and policymakers

Stories of change

In 2004, Yaena's son was arrested in connection with the Tak Bai incident, which resulted in 85 deaths and 58 arrests. As a mother, she fought tirelessly for justice, proving her son's innocence along with 57 others, ultimately leading to the Attorney General's decision to withdraw the charges. Later in 2007, her husband was shot.

However, this tragedy did not deter Yaena's activism. Using her experience, she began visiting and supporting other women who had lost loved ones in the conflict. She courageously defended the rights of those seeking justice and acted as a mediator between affected villagers and authorities in situations where mutual distrust and tensions ran high.

Her dedication earned her the Women Human Rights Defender Award from the National Human Rights Commission in 2012, along with several other national accolades. Civic Women has empowered her since the beginning of these events, supporting her through healing processes, capacity building, mentorship, counselling and collaborative advocacy. She is now a human rights defender and mediator between government officials and affected families, playing a key leadership role within Civic Women.

Challenges and adaptations

Community resistance and cultural barriers: In some communities, women's leadership in peace and security is still met with resistance due to traditional gender roles. Civic Women uses a community-led approach and engages male allies and religious leaders to shift mindsets and foster acceptance of women's leadership.

Political and security sensitivities: Working in the Deep South involves engaging with various stakeholders with different interests and concerns. To maintain partnerships and continued collaboration, Civic Women builds trust-based relationships through dialogues, mediation efforts and confidence-building activities.

Risk and neutrality concerns: In a conflict zone with opposing parties, there is always a risk of being misunderstood and perceived as aligned with one side. Civic Women demonstrates its commitment to neutrality through public statements, media policies and content production that consistently communicate its stance on peace and neutrality.

Resource sustainability: Limited funding for grassroots women-led initiatives remains a challenge. Civic Women has focused on diversifying funding resources by strengthening regional and international partnerships.

Sustainability and future plans

Civic Women's plan for long-term sustainability centres on building stronger partnerships and expanding networks both within Thailand's Deep South and internationally. The organization recognizes the critical importance of engaging Islamic religious leaders, and has begun organizing dialogues to enhance their understanding of women's roles in the community while seeking their support for advancing the mission.

In collaboration with the Fa Sai Association, Civic Women has established the Women's Empowerment and Learning Center (WE Center), bringing together approximately 20 women-led CSOs working on the WPS agenda. They are now building connections with other regions to form a comprehensive WPS Network and establish WPS Focal Points, positioning themselves to play a critical role in implementing Thailand's forthcoming NAP on WPS, expected to launch in 2026.

Throughout its years of advocacy, Civic Women has also served as citizen journalists, partnering with Thai PBS television to highlight the role of women in conflict zones as agents of change. Over 100 episodes have been produced and aired continuously since 2014, amplifying unheard voices and inspiring audiences within and beyond the region. This sustained media work earned Civic Women the Citizen Journalist Award 2023 for peacebuilding from Thai PBS.

The organization has further empowered women affected by conflict by developing their storytelling skills, enabling them to transition from victims to peace advocates. These narratives have been documented in three published books: *Voices of Hope* (2012), *Behind the Smiles* (2017), and *In Search of Justice in Thailand's Deep South: Malay Muslim and Thai Buddhist Women's Narratives* (2023), published by the University of Virginia Press. This latest publication has reintroduced forgotten voices from Thailand's Deep South to a global audience, ensuring their stories reach beyond regional boundaries.



Yaena during an advocacy campaign.
Photo: Civic Women



Public march by Muslim and Buddhist women in Pattani.
Photo: Civic Women



Photo: UN Women/Satu Bumi Jaya

Empowering Women and Communities to Prevent Human Trafficking in Border Districts of Chiang Rai Province, Thailand by Center for Girls Foundation

Context

The Center for Girls Foundation (CFGF) in Chiang Rai, Thailand, plays a pivotal role in addressing one of the region's most pressing issues: human trafficking. CFGF's initiative, "Empowering Women and Communities to Prevent Human Trafficking in Border Districts of Chiang Rai Province," directly aligns with the WPS agenda by empowering women and communities to combat human trafficking, prevent GBV, and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations in the border areas of northern Thailand, particularly along the Thailand-Myanmar and Thailand-Myanmar Lao PDR borders.

This project, implemented from September 2024 to March 2025, reflects the critical importance of grassroots initiatives in ensuring that women are active participants in peacebuilding processes. CFGF aims to prevent and reduce human trafficking while empowering women through active participation in their communities' efforts to combat trafficking.

Beneficiaries

CFGF targets women and communities prone to human trafficking, especially those in border areas of northern Thailand, and reached over 1,061 individuals in 2024, including women, men and youth across Chiang Rai Province.



Photo: Center for Girls Foundation

Methodological approach

CFGF employs a comprehensive prevention strategy that combines community education, leadership development and direct intervention services.

Key methodologies include:

Community engagement and meaningful participation: CFGF operates on a core principle of meaningful community participation in every phase of the project cycle. Building trust is the first step, followed by the design and facilitation of activities that enable inclusive engagement. Key strategies include organizing initial consultations with community leaders, women and youth to identify pressing issues and collective needs; conducting activities focused on learning and personal storytelling; and utilizing diverse communication tools and media formats to ensure outreach to various ethnic groups and women living in remote areas. These processes are intentionally designed to position the community as the owner of the initiatives, fostering self-driven change.

Capacity-building and awareness-raising: CFGF promotes inclusive and equitable participation of women leaders and community members in all decision-making processes. It does this through establishing women leader networks as core mechanisms for community engagement and collaborative decision-making; encouraging women's active involvement in project planning and implementation monitoring; facilitating focus group discussions and public forums where women can voice concerns and propose solutions; and involving women leaders in joint problem-solving alongside local authorities and partner organizations when issues arise.

Training modules and awareness campaigns: CFGF conducts joint situational analyses with communities to understand risk patterns and contextual dynamics; designs training content that is culturally relevant and accessible; promotes knowledge on human rights through interactive learning sessions; integrates gender perspective discussions into training; and equips participants with life skills, self-protection strategies, and communication skills with service providers.

Impact

Community outreach and empowerment: The project conducted outreach activities in Mae Ngern Sub-District, Pa Sak Sub-District and Wiang Kaen District, where **300 individuals** participated in sessions aimed at educating community members on recognizing and avoiding human trafficking traps. Thai-Lao market events in Wiang Kaen District attracted **1,000 participants**, where individuals shared personal experiences related to scams and exchanged tips on protecting themselves from trafficking.

Collaborative network development: A robust community network for trafficking prevention has been established, including local women leaders, village heads and other key stakeholders. The network focuses on improving local mechanisms for reporting and assistance, ensuring that cases are reported promptly and victims receive needed support. Discussions within the network resulted in the development of unified guidelines by women leaders for handling cases of human trafficking and domestic violence, shared across multiple sub-districts.

Media campaigns and awareness creation: In November 2024, CFGF alongside Mae Fah Luang University reached **443 individuals**, including 219 male and 224 female students, empowering them with skills to communicate critical anti-trafficking messages through digital platforms. Radio programmes aired in multiple local languages, including Hmong, Lau and Tai Lue, ensure that messages are accessible to diverse communities. CFGF is also developing a **mobile application** to enhance accessibility for reporting trafficking and seeking help.

Training outcomes: The project has trained **2,165 women** on child rights, women's rights and skills for protecting women and children from violence and human trafficking, significantly enhancing awareness and understanding of these critical issues. This comprehensive training has contributed to a **noticeable decrease** in incidents of violence and trafficking within target communities.

A total of **402 community women leaders** from eight districts in Chiang Rai Province, along with **25 female leaders** from Chiang Khong district, have been empowered with leadership skills and now actively participate in decision-making processes while promoting peacebuilding in their local communities. The programme has also addressed **30 cases** of human trafficking and domestic violence, providing survivors with counselling and assistance.

Challenges

During implementation, several challenges were encountered that affected operations at the grassroots level:

Management and technology: Lack of knowledge and experience in developing and managing mobile applications resulted in delays in design and information dissemination, making it difficult to reach target audiences effectively.

Language and access to ethnic groups: Some communities were unable to communicate fluently in Thai, leading to difficulties in transmitting information or conducting activities. This highlighted the need for local language interpreters and community leaders who can communicate effectively with ethnic groups.

Community understanding and trust: In some cases, the community was hesitant or distrustful of the project, particularly when initiated by an external organization, as this might have been perceived as an attempt to exploit rather than contribute to sustainable development. This challenge reflects the importance of building trust through continuous engagement and participatory approaches.

Lessons learned

Community engagement and ownership is key to sustainability: Community involvement in all phases of an intervention creates a sense of ownership. Interventions must be transparent, open and respectful of the local context, including language, culture and traditional power structures.

Developing internal team skills: Training in technology and creating communication tools appropriate for the target audience was an important lesson that helped increase the organization's long-term capacity.

Sustainability and future plans

To ensure sustained impact, CFGF has implemented comprehensive sustainability strategies. These include continued training and mentoring programs for local women leaders, provision of educational materials and community-based manuals, and strengthening local structures by formalizing networks and partnerships with existing governmental and non-governmental bodies. CFGF encourages local ownership by integrating activities into community development plans and promoting active participation from all sectors in the community.

CFGF is also committed to assessing the long-term effectiveness of its programmes through robust monitoring mechanisms. This includes developing outcome-based

indicators and follow-up surveys to measure behavioural changes, community safety and leadership empowerment. Regular check-ins and feedback loops with established women's networks ensure continuity and strengthen their roles over time, while continued development of the mobile application serves as a tool for knowledge dissemination and incident reporting. Additionally, CFGF trains community members to serve as peer educators and local communicators, ensuring that awareness-raising efforts become embedded in local culture.

To broaden the reach and amplify success, CFGF has outlined a multi-phase expansion plan. This includes identifying high-risk areas in other provinces or border regions to implement proven programme models tailored to local contexts, and documenting best practices and lessons learned to support replication in new areas through potential partnerships with other organizations. CFGF is also engaging with policymakers and government institutions to influence local and national strategies on trafficking prevention, while exploring opportunities to expand through partnerships with regional networks and international organizations, particularly in neighbouring countries facing similar challenges.



Photo: UN Women/Pathumporn Thongking



Photo: UN Women/Betsy Davis

Stories *from* Timor-Leste

- Women's Participation in the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Timor-Leste, by Ba Futuru
- Supporting Survivors of Sexual and Gender- Based Violence in Timor-Leste, by Asia Justice and Rights

Women's Participation in the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Timor-Leste, by Ba Futuru

Context

The role of women in peacebuilding and security is pivotal, and their involvement is crucial for fostering sustainable peace and inclusive societies. As a recently independent, post-conflict nation, the women of Timor-Leste have been at the forefront of rebuilding efforts, advocating for justice, and addressing the gendered impacts of conflict. The path for Timorese women and girls is fraught with challenges, including persistent patriarchal systems, prevalence of domestic violence, and economic hardship stemming from poverty. Despite these significant hurdles, Timor-Leste continuously strives to empower women and integrate gender perspectives into peace processes, aiming to transform its post-conflict society.

Ba Futuru is a national women-led, independent, not-for-profit organization that has been operating for over 20 years. Based in Dili, it has over 40 staff and volunteers. Ba Futuru's mission is to build a peaceful, positive and productive nation through innovative approaches that protect children, reduce violence, empower women and inspire young learners, with a vision to create a Timor-Leste free of violence where all citizens can engage meaningfully in the country's development.

Beneficiaries

Ba Futuru has impacted the lives of more than 100,000 individuals across all 13 municipalities in Timor-Leste. Through WPS-related projects specifically, the organization has directly engaged over 1,200 participants in training programmes, dialogues, and capacity-building initiatives, with a particular focus on women leaders, community facilitators, government officials and security sector personnel.

Methodological approach

Ba Futuru employs interactive, collaborative human-rights based approaches to encourage communities to engage meaningfully in Timor-Leste's peaceful development.

Key methodologies include:

Arts as a tool of engagement: Ba Futuru stands out for its use of arts as a tool for engagement and transformation, encompassing visual arts, drama, theatre performances and film. Over the years, Ba Futuru has released impactful media content including the short-film series "Feto Fantastiku" (*Women Superhero*) and "Domin Nakloke" (*Unlocking Love*), alongside numerous other educational and informative content that have inspired communities, garnering over one million views and engagements on their YouTube channel.

Ba Futuru also partnered with Marie Stopes and musical group The KRAKEN to create Futuru Furak (*Beautiful Future*), a production addressing family planning and healthy relationships. Developed in partnership with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health and supported by the Australian Government, this innovative approach combined film with music video—a strategy tested for the first time in Timor-Leste. The production's impact was recognized when Futuru Furak won first place for best public service announcement at the 2019 Dili International Film Festival.

Capacity-building and community training: Ba Futuru has developed knowledge products, including capacity development manuals, and provided extensive training for local communities, particularly women and girls. The training covers a wide range of topics including WPS; Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality; public speaking; economic empowerment; leadership; community-level peacebuilding; conflict resolution; GBV prevention; legal frameworks and women's rights in political participation; and protection. This has led to the production of transformative capacity development manuals to help women throughout Timor-Leste.

Impact

Women's political participation: In partnership with UN Women in 2023, Ba Futuru conducted 12 three-day capacity development workshops and four two-day dialogues on women's participation in elections. As a result, **375 women, youth and people with disabilities** increased their knowledge of equal rights in electoral participation at national and sub-national levels. These **375 community leaders** enhanced their leadership skills, including communication, network building, conflict resolution and advocacy. Participants reported increased knowledge and motivation to address gender biases and social norms that prevent women from participating in public life.

Local governance and civic engagement: In collaboration with Canadian Fund for Local Initiative (CFLI), Ba Futuru conducted leadership training and theatre performances on "the importance of women's role in local governance" in Ermera and Covalima municipalities. The programme reached **150 women and girls** in both municipalities, providing training on women's role in leadership, governance, local laws, transparency and accountability. Follow-up theatre activities reached **2,900 community members**, with viewers reporting increased understanding and demonstrating positive shifts in attitude, including male partners becoming more supportive of women's participation in local governance.

Economic empowerment and peacebuilding: Through the "Women as agents of peace through economic empowerment" project in collaboration with Misereor and KinderMission,¹⁶ the programme enhanced women's capacities in conflict resolution, decision-making, GBV prevention, budget planning and business promotion. As a result, **five women** were inspired to run in village (suco) elections, while participants, including female veterans and survivors of violence, created and enhanced their own businesses and learned better income management while becoming agents of peace.

NAP on WPS implementation: Ba Futuru has been instrumental in implementing both the first and second NAPs on WPS in Timor-Leste:

- **First NAP implementation:** Working with UN Women, Ba Futuru created strong partnerships in three target municipalities and provided Training of Trainers to **20 women** with strong leadership potential in NAP WPS, advocacy, leadership and conflict transformation. Additionally, **268 participants** received training on conflict resolution, GBV, human rights and child protection.
- **Second NAP implementation:** In collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and UN Women, Ba Futuru facilitated Training of Trainers sessions and coaching sessions to relevant line ministries and defence sectors. By the end of the training, **151 participants** deepened their knowledge of the NAP on WPS. Ba Futuru also organized workshops for **21 representatives from 12 local CSOs** to develop a joint CSO workplan 2025 for WPS implementation.

Transformative Leadership and Gender Equality (TLGE): Ba Futuru carried out five TLGE workshops to increase the capacity of local women leaders in promoting the national WPS agenda, reaching 214 officers from the security and defence sectors including the National Police and the Falintil-Defense Force.

¹⁶ Track 3 initiatives are grassroots peacebuilding and community-level efforts focusing on community-based peace, conflict prevention and social cohesion.

Protection networks and survivor support: Through the Empowering Women and Establishing "Grassroots Protection Networks" project, Ba Futuru trained **15 local women** as protection team members (PTMs) to refer cases of violence from their communities to legal and assistance services. In Dili, the PTMs have referred **more than 20 cases** with two processed in court. Additionally, **19 women** received high-level mentoring through the Advanced Track Leadership Program on topics including advocacy, decision-making, GBV prevention, community activism, and skills to enhance peace and security at the local level.

Stories of change



"After participating in the training session, I feel proud because the training has increased my knowledge about leadership, social inclusion and local governance. Once I participated in the three-month training, I gained confidence and took the initiative to lead other women in our area to organize a loan group. With the skills and knowledge, I have learned, I am ready to lead others." — **Maria, Cassabauc village participant**



"Sometimes they [victims] just need someone to talk to, but we PTMs believe in taking domestic violence to court. Violence is wrong, and it's against the law." — **Protection Team Member and GBV survivor**

Sustainability and future plans

Ba Futuru's sustainability approach focuses on building local capacity, creating lasting partnerships, and developing replicable models. The organization continues to work with government institutions, including the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, National Police Force and Defence Force, ensuring that WPS principles are embedded within state structures.

Through its extensive network of trained women leaders, protection team members, and community facilitators, Ba Futuru has created a sustainable foundation for ongoing WPS implementation. The organization's arts-based approaches and capacity development manuals provide lasting resources that communities can continue to use independently.

Looking ahead, Ba Futuru aims to expand its reach while deepening its impact, particularly in remote areas of Timor-Leste. The organization plans to continue supporting the implementation of the national WPS agenda while fostering the next generation of women leaders who will carry forward the vision of a peaceful, inclusive Timor-Leste.



Ba Futuru's "Domin Nakloke" received the billion acts 2018 Hero Award in Monaco.
Photo: Billion Acts



Training session
Photo : Ba Futuru



Domin Nakloke film premiere, Timor-Leste. Photo: Ba Futuru



Photo: UN Women

Supporting Survivors of Sexual and Gender- Based Violence in Timor-Leste, by Asia Justice and Rights

Context

Timor-Leste restored its independence in 2002. Twenty-three years later, women survivors of sexual violations from past conflicts continue to face a range of challenges, including continued discrimination and stigma in society. Many victims live in poverty and suffer from depression, psychological trauma, mental illness, physical injury and homelessness, while some have no family recognition. Survivors feel that the state has disregarded and ignored their right for reparation and recognition, while perpetrators continue to live freely.

This situation affects not only the survivors but also their children who were born during the war as a result of these sexual offences. These children are often denied access to education, health care, and employment opportunities due to a lack of legal documents. As a result, they are unable to secure land, build homes, or obtain formal recognition as Timorese citizens. Most women survivors are also ageing, and some have died while fighting for justice and recognition from the state.

Beneficiaries

Based on the Commission of Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) report, there are 853 documented cases of sexual violence from past conflicts between 1975-1999. The most frequent forms of sexual violence are rape (46.1 percent), other forms of sexual violence (27.11 percent), and sexual slavery (26.8 percent). Indonesian military forces committed 92.7 percent of these cases.

The State has not yet agreed to provide reparation and recognition to these survivors due to the absence of a Reparation Law and the government's lack of political will. However, some progress has been made with the adoption of the first and second NAPs on WPS.

Methodological approach

To address past human rights violations and their ongoing impact on communities, AJAR employs a survivor-centred approach that amplifies marginalized voices through documentation, storytelling and advocacy for transitional justice.

Key methodologies include:

Strategic partnerships and WPS integration: Asia Justice and Rights Timor-Leste (AJAR-TL) is part of a NAP WPS working group with other CSOs and government line ministries, led by the Ministry of the Interior. This engagement has strengthened AJAR's commitment to WPS as a basis for their initiatives to support survivors of sexual violence, focusing on the peacebuilding and recovery pillar of WPS.

Interim Reparative Measures (IRM): In collaboration with Associacaon Chega Ba Ita (ACbit), AJAR provides support to survivors through the project Bukae ba Sobrevivente (Supplies or Provision for Survivors), supported by the Global Survivor Fund (GSF). This IRM aims to strengthen transformative and co-creative approaches to reparation for survivors and their children due to sexual violence from past conflict, while encouraging the government to fulfil its responsibilities in establishing survivor-centred comprehensive reparation programmes.

The project engages facilitators of Pirilampu, as well as focal points from seven local NGO partners in the municipalities. These NGOs act as coordinators in their own municipalities, with AJAR and ACbit working with other service providers such as ALFela, SABEH and PRADET to meet specific needs of survivors.

Recognition and support services: A collective Bukae is planned with actions including offering letters or certificates of recognition to survivors acknowledging their contribution to Timor-Leste's struggle for independence and creating a Transit House for survivors. This facility will serve as a shelter for training and empowerment, as well as provide accommodation for survivors traveling to Dili for health care. The Bukae programme focuses not only on women survivors but also male survivors who experienced sexual violence during past conflicts, including LGBTQI+ communities.

PAR: Through the Bukae programme, AJAR and ACbit identified and collected data on 455 survivors from 104 villages in 13 municipalities in Timor-Leste. This survey encouraged many survivors and victims to come forward.

Impact

Survivor identification and support:

455

survivors identified from 13 municipalities including **335 survivors** of sexual violence and **87 children** born during the war.

101

survivors received additional support including construction or rehabilitation of **70 survivors' homes**, **seven scholarships** for children of survivors, and provision of basic needs for **24 survivors**.



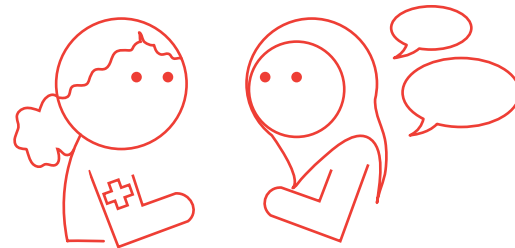
Medical and psychological assistance:

250

women survivors out of 455 identified received medical assistance through home health check-ups and outreach for psychological support.

25

survivors received direct medical assistance, with three recovering from serious illness after treatment.



Legal support:

8

survivors facing new sexual violations received legal assistance through collaboration with ALFeLa.

Cases have been brought before the court and are awaiting next steps.

Policy advocacy:

A draft law on reparation has been prepared by AJAR and National Center of Chega! (CNC), considering the initiative of the Bukae programme.



Stories of change



"The Bukae is such a meaningful programme for me and my family. During the years I felt unrecognized and ignored in this country, but with the presence of AJAR-ACbit, this programme has made me feel valued."— **GBV survivor, Municipality of Covalima**



"We, the survivors have the right to reparation for sexual violation and torture we faced in the conflict. It is not our fault, but it was because our struggle for the Independence of Timor-Leste."
— **Pirilampu member**

Sustainability and future plans

AJAR and their partners will continue to implement the Bukae for survivors and add more 'individual Bukae' to support survivors with small business activities. Implementation of collective Bukae for survivors, such as letters or certificates of recognition and building Transit Houses will also continue. The draft law on reparation will be presented to the Council of Ministers of Timor-Leste.

AJAR is committed to continuing to fight for survivors through advocacy and the Bukae programme, working with the government and other relevant institutions to implement true reparation measures that help survivors achieve full recovery and wellbeing. This commitment is strengthened by AJAR's participation as a key implementing partner of the NAP on WPS in Timor-Leste.



Photo: UN Women/Betsy Davis



Photo: UN Women/Betsy Davis

Stories *from* Cambodia

- Building Media and Communities Toward a Culture of Peace and Inclusion in Cambodia, by Srey Sotheavy, Alliance for Conflict Transformation

Building Media and Communities Toward a Culture of Peace and Inclusion in Cambodia, by Srey Sotheavy, Alliance for Conflict Transformation

Context

Cambodia has made remarkable progress¹⁸ building a peaceful nation and reducing poverty over the last three decades. Yet many communities still face challenges, including insecure land tenure, land conflicts, deforestation, illegal fisheries, gender inequality, drug trafficking and domestic violence affecting their rights and livelihood opportunities.

Journalists are often faced with unnecessary restrictions, censorship, threats, and even violence, despite Cambodia's ratification of core human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 2012, the Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)¹⁹ started the "Build Media and Community Towards a Culture of Peace and Inclusion in Cambodia" project with support from Bread for the World (BfDW). The project runs until 2027 and focuses on engaging media and journalists, including social influencers, to promote peace in Cambodia.

Beneficiaries

ACT targets media professionals, journalists, community-based organizations, religious communities, ethnic/Indigenous communities, and local authorities across conflict-affected areas of Cambodia. From 2012–2024, the initiative reached a total of **93,361 people** across 10 provinces in Cambodia, including **2,921 media communities and journalists** and **39,787 women** from various communities.

¹⁸ Cambodia's Vision 2050 aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Pentagonal Strategy Phase 1 (2024–2028) includes "continued strengthening of peace, political stability, security and public order" among its five strategic goals. Pentagonal Strategy – Phase 1 for Growth, Employment, Equity, Efficiency and Sustainability: Building the Foundation Towards Realizing the Cambodia Vision 2050, pp. 18–19. Royal Government of Cambodia. (2023).

¹⁹ <https://act-kh.org/peacejournalis-media4peace/>

The programme focuses on marginalized groups, including Indigenous communities in remote areas like Monduliri Province, where residents have limited communication skills in Cambodian and face barriers to participating in public discourse about issues affecting their rights and livelihoods.

Methodological approach

To bridge divisions and mistrust between religious and ethnic groups, ACT focuses on creating safe spaces for meaningful dialogue and collaborative problem-solving at the community level.

Key methodologies include:

Capacity-building and knowledge sharing: The programme developed peacebuilding skills and promoted productive dialogue to address community issues including GBV, freedom of expression, land and natural resources management, and fisheries.

Media as a platform for peace advocacy: Community journalism plays a vital role in ensuring residents stay informed about local issues, government decisions, and social movements while providing a platform for people to voice concerns often overlooked by larger news organizations. Further, responsible journalism helps societies heal after conflict, prevents future tensions, shapes public discourse, fosters civic engagement, and promotes transparency.

Impact

Community outreach and engagement: Between 2012 and 2024, ACT reached **2,921 media communities and journalists** and a total of **93,361 persons** across 10 provinces in Cambodia, including youth and local authorities, with **39,787 of these being women**.

Trust building and institutional connections: The initiative increased the level of trust between media, journalists and communities while building close connections among media communities, journalists, local authorities and the Department of Information.

Women's empowerment in journalism: One of Sotheavy's proudest accomplishments is work with Bounong Indigenous communities in Monduliri Province, a remote southeastern area where residents have limited communication skills in Cambodian and low literacy levels. Through continuous capacity-building and engagement efforts, women now have the courage to raise their voices in their community on issues related to conflict and peace.

Professional transformation: The programme improved media and journalist understanding of peace and its application in their work context for individual and societal change. Journalists shifted from contributing to war narratives to framing stories around reconciliation and dialogue.

Stories of change



"I observed that it changed for me related to self-development, such as bravery, good communication with people and local authorities in target areas during data collection. During this time I applied the peace knowledge in regard to my speech and attitude. In our social context, I believe a female journalist is less valued." — **Sron Sros, Journalist**



"Before I attended ACT peace journalist training, I contributed more to war narratives in my media work; but now I have made many improvements." — **Mr. Roun Ratana, Journalist**

Sustainability and future plans

ACT's sustainability strategy focuses on strengthening community ownership and expanding networks through multiple interconnected approaches. The organization maintains frequent monthly meetings with village chiefs and organizes public forums at municipal and provincial levels to ensure project alignment with community needs while promoting participation from diverse stakeholders. ACT also works to improve dialogue between media, journalists, and the Ministry and Department of Information, addressing media-related concerns while promoting constructive community dialogue with local authorities.

The organization strengthens its impact by partnering with community and citizen media activists to help incorporate community concerns into the Commune Investment Plan, enhancing its effectiveness and ensuring grassroots voices are heard in formal planning processes. This collaborative approach helps bridge the gap between community needs and institutional responses.

Central to ACT's long-term vision is developing the next generation of leaders. The organization strengthens community leaders, media activists, journalists, women and youth leaders, empowering them as agents of change within their communities. ACT particularly focuses on working with media professionals, community leaders, and young women with leadership potential, training them alongside established community members. This approach ensures that future leaders will be prepared to champion the needs of women, youth, ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups, creating sustainable change that extends beyond any single project cycle.



Srey Soveathy speaking on World Press Freedom Day 2022.
Photo: ACT



UN Women/Satu Bumi Jaya

CONCLUSION

This catalogue reflects the diversity, innovation and commitment across the ASEAN region to advancing the WPS agenda. Through CSO leadership, community dedication, and institutional support, meaningful steps are being taken to promote gender equality, inclusive peacebuilding and sustainable security.

CSOs as strategic partners in peacebuilding

CSOs play a pivotal role in transforming the WPS agenda into tangible grassroots action. With strong community presence and trusted relationships, CSOs reach marginalized groups, especially women affected by conflict. Their contextual expertise and culturally grounded approaches reflect community realities while providing innovative, adaptable strategies tailored to local peace and security challenges.

CSOs amplify local voices—particularly those of women peacebuilders—helping shape national and regional strategies. They provide direct support to women leaders, advocate for gender-responsive peacebuilding, monitor human rights, and hold duty-bearers accountable. By transforming attitudes, fostering dialogue and promoting inclusive participation, CSOs become strategic partners whose local knowledge, flexibility, and long-term commitment make them indispensable in building inclusive and lasting peace.

Evidence of transformative change

The examples featured demonstrate that transformative change is not only possible but already underway. From grassroots capacity building and creative advocacy through art and media, to community-based conflict resolution and participatory research, these initiatives offer valuable lessons, practical tools and replicable models that can inform ongoing and future efforts within and beyond the region. The experiences captured underscore that with the right support, locally led peace initiatives can grow and thrive. Investing in the capacity, visibility, and networks of grassroots actors is key to ensuring that women's leadership in peacebuilding becomes the norm—not the exception.

A call to action for sustainable partnerships

To fully harness CSO potential, governments, donors, and regional institutions must recognize CSOs as equal and essential partners through:

- Institutionalizing engagement in national WPS strategies and regional dialogues.
- Providing sustained, flexible funding for grassroots peacebuilding and women's leadership programmes.
- Facilitating access to policymaking spaces where CSO voices can influence decisions.
- Strengthening collaboration between CSOs, local authorities, and regional institutions to build inclusive peace ecosystems.

CSOs complement state-led efforts by bringing grounded experience, early warning insights, and deep contextual understanding. Their proximity to affected populations allows them to surface early warning signs, mediate local tensions, and ensure that peacebuilding processes are inclusive and gender responsive. As AMS continue strengthening their WPS commitments, forging structured and sustained partnerships with CSOs will be essential to achieving lasting peace.

This catalogue serves not only as a resource but as a call to action: sustainable peace in ASEAN is only possible through the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the recognition that local voices and leadership—especially those of women—are not peripheral, but pivotal to long-term stability.

Annex 1: Knowledge Products

Wahid Foundation – Indonesia

Online resources:

- Peace Village [website: https://peacevillage.id](https://peacevillage.id)
- Wahid Foundation [website: https://wahidfoundation.org](https://wahidfoundation.org)

Video documentation:

- Peace Village video profile: <https://youtu.be/vnflI7D4ksk?feature=shared>
- 18 Peace Village profile: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6ExfNmahhs>
- Peace Village Declaration in Barurejo Village: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOOGlJn9njI>

Publications:

- Peace Village Action to Preventing Gender-Based Violence in Surakarta: <https://diskominfo.surakarta.go.id/aksi-desa-kelurahan-damai-cegah-kekerasan-berbasis-gender-dan-komunitas/>
- Peace Village to Preventing Social Conflict: <https://mediaindonesia.com/humaniora/424490/desa-damai-rancang-rencana-aksi-cegah-kekerasan-dan-konflik>
- The collaboration among Wahid Foundation and University to empowering Peace Village in Banyuwangi: <https://uimsya.ac.id/perkuat-tri-dharma-perguruan-tinggi-uimsya-blokagung-dan-wahid-foundation-bangun-sinergi-melalui-deklarasi-desa-damai/>

Social media content:

- Nur Hayati (Village Facilitator, Tingkir Lor Peace Village) initiated safe space for women in village: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DC4KThjP4ol/?igsh=am5mNTlq3c3eHc4>
- Berlian Bernice: youth from Nglinggi Peace Village, promoting peace value through film documentary campaign: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C-r6FCqvMTv/?igsh=dGdlcTB6YjdiaWtp>
- Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia visit Peace Village: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CWo8bpuv0F5/?igsh=M2NjeGNjdGRkcWxt>

Network of Civic Women – Thailand

Radio programming:

Radio programme "Voices of Women in the Deep South," broadcast in the local Malayu dialect across numerous radio stations in the region. This initiative specifically targets Malayu Muslim women, many of whom still prefer radio.

Television and digital content:

Civic Women engages nationwide audiences by collaborating with Thai PBS to produce reports highlighting the role of women in conflict zones as agents of change. Examples of citizen reporter productions include:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lkGLGdO>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETqkXn9oZFY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wGierM2Zzk>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq4iLvBWx8w>

Published documentation:

These narratives have been documented and published in three books:

1. Voices of Hope (2012)
2. After the Smile (2017)
3. In Search of Justice in Thailand's Deep South: Malay Muslim and Thai Buddhist Women's Narratives (2022) published by University of Virginia Press

This book is a translated compilation of the first two Thai books and is available on Amazon.com.

Training materials:

Curriculum on hate speech: **TOT Hate Speech - Curricular.pdf**.

This equips women with communication skills to counter hate speech on social media and promote a more respectful and inclusive digital environment. As cybersecurity threats continue to rise in Thailand, particularly in the Deep South, this initiative is increasingly important. The curriculum is available in Thai only.

Ba Futuru – Timor-Leste

Feto Fantastiku (Women Superhero) series (2014-2019):

Ba Futuru produced this short-film series with a main character ready to assist the community in solving various issues including:

Television and digital content:

Civic Women engages nationwide audiences by collaborating with Thai PBS to produce reports highlighting the role of women in conflict zones as agents of change. Examples of citizen reporter productions include:

- Stopping violence in the family:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zc67O8S0gLQ>
- Stopping GBV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R09pxQnqSul>
- Helping to create peace in the family:
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1MrYTkHPqc/>

Recognition and training materials:

Ba Futuru training modules and its Feto Fantastiku film series were selected by UN Women for inclusion in the 2014 Women's Peace and Security Toolkit.

Additional productions:

- 2016: Film on Women's Economic Empowerment through community theatre:
<https://youtu.be/8CRHne0FM5I?si=TAPPi0yK3i2x9u6C>
- 2017: Short video demonstrating women's leadership and advocacy: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1J5q6j8MSC/>

Domin Nakloke (Unlocking Love) series (2017-2023):

This film series centres around the trials and tribulations of a group of female best friends. Seven episodes were produced:

- **Episode 1:** Selfie:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v&v=465574273821645>
- **Episode 2:** Shout it Out:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MnvwVCyVfA&list=PLgmTAZ3NIN9ftlg9Gf4rWckapxc3gNQXX&index=3>
- **Episode 3:** No means No:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j50fwlN3RNY&list=PLgmTAZ3NIN9ftlg9Gf4rWckapxc3gNQXX&index=2>
- **Episode 4:** Love is Respect:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-3Fdn5rzVY&list=PLgmTAZ3NIN9ftlg9Gf4rWckapxc3gNQXX&index=5>
- **Episode 5:** Darkness and Light:
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/16Wmwej73i/>
- **Episode 6:** The Family Network: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15MG4yveoM/>

Sinagtala – The Philippines

More information on Sinagtala's work in the Philippines can be found in the following resources:

[From war, better lives with clothes](#)
[How the women of Marawi weave hope through textiles](#)
[For Sulu women, weaving heals | Inquirer News](#)

Annex 2:

Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations

Wahid Foundation – Indonesia

Government partners:

Ministry of Villages, Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, BNPT, local governments, and village apparatus.

CSOs:

Libu Perempuan (Poso), La Rimpu (Bima), LKKK, LBH APIK Semarang, LRC KJHAM Semarang.

UN partners:

UN Women, UNODC, UNDP.

Academic institutions:

Universitas Brawijaya, Universitas Islam Malang, Universitas Annuqayah and Deakin University.

The Wahid Foundation provides programme design, capacity building and facilitation, while partners contribute to policy advocacy, community organizing and implementation.

PROPOSOKU LPMS – Indonesia

During the PROPOSOKU Program, LPMS collaborated with the following partners:

Primary partner:

The Habibie Center as the main partner and supporter of the programme.

Government partners:

Poso Regional Government working intensively with Kesbangpol Poso, cooperatives and industry service, health service, education service, social service, Ministry of Religion of Poso Regency, and sub-district and village governments.

Religious and community organizations:

Muhammadiyah Regional Management, Alkhairaat Komda, NU branches, Central Sulawesi Christian Church Synod Organization Amanah Ummah Foundation, women's organizations (PD. 'Aisyiyah Poso, Alkhairaat Islamic Women, Classical Women, PKK Movement Team, Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah, Fatayat NU, TK 'Aisyiyah), religious figures, government and young entrepreneurs, and social media activists.

Network of Civic Women – Thailand

Civic Women works with diverse partners including government agencies, local authorities, universities, CSOs, community organizations, media and UN agencies to empower women, promote peacebuilding and address social and economic vulnerabilities in Thailand's Deep South.

Government partners:

SBPAC advocates for gender-sensitive resource allocation to ensure adequate support for women and marginalized communities; CCCW engages in child protection and women's rights advocacy, ensuring policies address vulnerable women and children's needs in the Deep South; Ministry of Social Development and Human Security supports strengthening social welfare for women and children; and Pattani Municipality provides infrastructure support including space for mushroom farms as part of WE Center's vocational training.

Academic institutions:

Office of Academic Promotion and Service, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus: Co-organizes training workshops on women's leadership and economic empowerment.

CSOs:

Local CSOs include Pituk Prachachart Foundation and Family Network Foundation provide scholarships for affected youths and families. Bangkok-based PAOW and Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand serve as partners in policy and peace advocacy.

Media and international partners:

Thai PBS provides broadcasting channels for stories of women in the Deep South; and international agencies including UN Women, UNDEF, USAID, UNICEF, GNWP and Canada Fund provide financial and technical support.

Civic Women also serves as a bridge between affected individuals and government agencies, facilitating case management and ensuring appropriate support for those in need.

Center for Girls Foundation – Thailand

CFGF builds strong partnerships with government agencies, CSOs and academic institutions, emphasizing integrated and participatory approaches to enhance responses to human trafficking and GBV across all levels.

Local authorities and government agencies:

CFGF works closely with local administrative organizations, police departments, public health agencies and women's groups through regular coordination meetings, joint trainings and awareness campaigns.

Civil society and international organizations:

Sustained collaboration with CSOs, community-based organizations and United Nations agencies provides essential support contributing to long-term success and sustainability of CFGF's initiatives.

Academic institutions:

Partnership with Mae Fah Luang University engages youth in creative media production, fostering experiential learning while amplifying youth voices in public education efforts. Products are used within communities to promote awareness in accessible and engaging ways, especially for women and marginalized groups.

Media partnerships:

Continuous partnerships with local radio stations and utilization of own media channels to disseminate information and campaign messages against human trafficking and GBV. Media content tailored to each target audience based on local language, culture and context, ensuring messages are easily understood and relatable.

Ba Futuru – Timor-Leste

Ba Futuru has collaborated extensively with multiple local and international organizations in pursuit of building a peaceful, positive and productive Timor-Leste with focus on women, children and youth.

Donors:

European Union (EU), CFLI, Misereor, KinderMission, Child Fund, UN Women, Women's Campaign International, Australian Government, and UNICEF. With this support, Ba Futuru has implemented projects throughout all 13 municipalities in Timor-Leste, including RAEOA/Oecusse.

Government partners:

Women parliamentarians, National Police Force and Defence Force, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Ministry of Interior, Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economical Promotion of Women, and Secretary of Youth and Sport.

Impact:

Over the last 20 years, Ba Futuru has overseen over US\$10 million in project funding to engage communities on women's participation in politics and elections, peacebuilding, civic education, GBV prevention, protection and conflict resolution.

ACT – Cambodia

Government partners:

Royal Cambodia Government, specifically Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Information/Department of Information at provincial level, Ministry of Women Affairs/Department of Women Affairs at commune level.

Non-governmental organizations:

CARE-Cambodia, CCC, UN Women Cambodia, The Asia Foundation and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

Donors:

BfdW, Danmission, CARE Cambodia, Misereor, American Friends Service Committee, Gender and Development for Cambodia (USAID), East-West Management Institute (USAID), Transparency International Cambodia (USAID), German Agency for International Cooperation, IREX-Youth Council Cambodia.



VOICES OF PEACE:

CATALOGUE OF
GOOD PRACTICES
BY CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS
ON WOMEN, PEACE
AND SECURITY IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA