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JUST FUTURE

Women's International Peace Centre
Amplifying Women's Voice and Power

ADVANCING WOMEN, BUILDING PEACE:

REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND LESSONS.

Reflection Report, 2021

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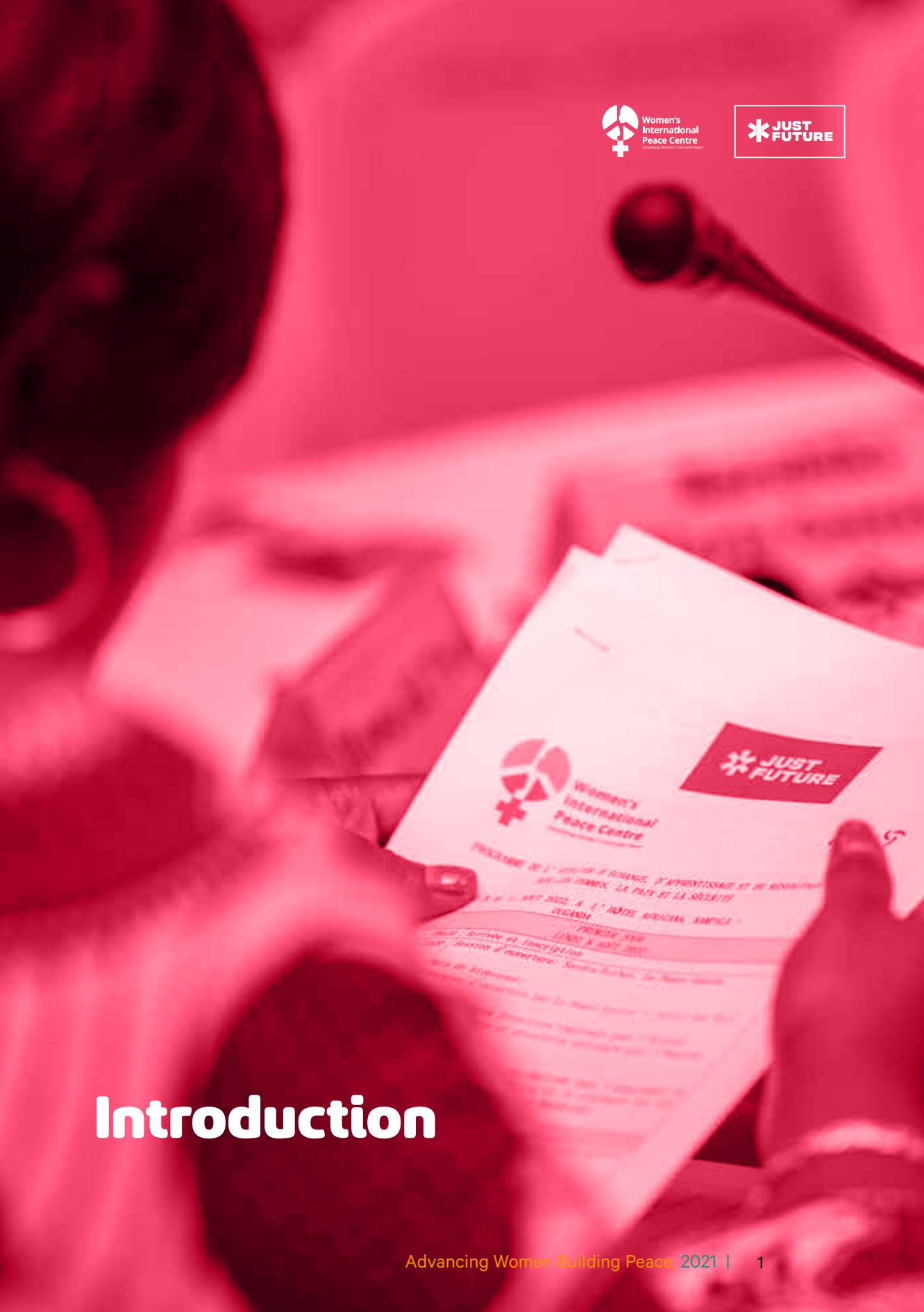


Introduction

Introduction

This report provides a detailed account of the deliberations from the four-day regional learning and networking exchange workshop that took place from September 20th to 23rd, 2021 at Hotel Africana, Kampala. The report offers insights into the expert panel discussions, plenary sessions and reflective spaces that were held during the workshop.

Organised by The Women's International Peace Centre under the Just Futures' programme, the exchange aimed to provide a space for Just Future partners from different countries to exchange learnings and best practices around strategies on civil military relations; building networks in shrinking civic spaces, Security Sector Reform, strengthening access to justice through legal clinics, and advancing the Women Peace and Security agenda in the Great Lakes region as well as provide psychosocial support for development workers

The specific objectives of the Regional Learning and Networking Exchange were:

i. To enhance knowledge and practical skills on civil military relations, the role of women in Security Sector Reforms, access to justice through legal clinics and Women Peace and Security in the Great Lakes region.

ii. To share knowledge and practical experiences on building networks in a shrinking space to improve the effectiveness of tackling national issues.

iii. To increase the exposure of participants to other successful initiatives as well as personal well-being

iv. To increase networking and learning among the CSO partners Participants

The Regional Exchange brought together seventeen (17) representatives from Just Future implementing partners – one (1) from Burundi (Bujumbura), seven (7) DRC (Kinshasa, Bukavu and Goma), five (5) South Sudan (Juba) CSO partners and four (4) from the Peace Centre - Uganda.9 of the participants were female and 8 were male.

About the Just Future Programme.

The Just Future Programme seeks to strengthen the capacity of primary stakeholders for collective action to promote more inclusive, constructive and legitimate power relations. The programme is implemented by two international CSOs (CORDAID and Search for Common Ground); three regional CSOs in Africa (ASSN, WANEP and The Peace Centre), three research partners; (RVI, SIPRI, and the Van Vollenhoven Institute at Leiden University); and a global network partner – CSPPS. Members of the Just Future Alliance collaborate with 27 local implementing partners (national CSOs) in 6 countries (Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, Mali, Niger and South Sudan) to achieve the desired programme outcomes.

One of the main intervention strategies for the Just Futures programme is mutual learning and capacity strengthening at different levels i.e. consortium; national civil society partners; and other stakeholders. This strategy informed the convening of the Regional learn exchange.

Methodology

The learning and exchange workshop adopted a participatory approach. Sharing experience among participants was a key aspect of the meeting. Each participant had the opportunity to discuss and share their experiences from the respective countries, particularly, what has worked, challenges encountered and how they were tackling these challenges at country level.

Key speakers were also invited to share expert knowledge on varied topics such as; Security Sector Reform, Transitional Justice, SGBV in conflict-affected situations, as well as people-centred security in post conflict settings, among others. The invited speakers were from institutions working on peace and security such as: the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) – Regional Training Facility, the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Regional Centre for Human Security, FIDA— Uganda, Africa Leadership Institute, Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, and Refugee Law Project.

Thematic panels were used for reflective spaces to provide an opportunity to government and civil society actors to share on progress, best practices, and lessons learnt in line with their efforts to build access to justice through legal clinics; strengthening partnerships for engaging the WPS Agenda through localising national action plans, civil military relations and building networks in a shrinking civic space.

After each session, plenary discussions were held to provide participants with an opportunity to hold open conversations with the speakers, explore opportunities for deepening engagement and collaborations and seek clarification where needed. The workshop also incorporated a session on psychosocial wellbeing, self-care and safety.

Both English and French were used during the workshop, with translation and simultaneous interpretations services availed in both languages.

The Learning and Networking Exchange Workshop.

The Learning and Networking Exchange Workshop.

Introductions and setting the pace

The workshop began with an introductory session facilitated by Esther Wasagali, from The Peace Centre. Participants introduced themselves, shared their expectations for the workshop and set ground rules that would guide the workshop. Esther provided an overview of the workshop, highlighting its participatory nature with an incorporation of wellness and self-care sessions. She stressed the importance of following COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), such as social distancing, sanitizing and wearing of masks.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

E.D. of the Peace Centre, Helen Kezie-Nwoha.

The welcome and opening remarks were delivered by Helen Kezie-Nwoha, Executive Director who invited Director of the Peace Centre. She welcomed the participants to the workshop and commended them for braving the pandemic to participate in the learning and exchange. Helen provided a synopsis of the Peace Centre, explaining that the Centre started in 1974 as Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), which then acted as a global resource centre for women human rights defenders to document and disseminate women's experiences, concerns and ideas for ending gender inequality.

The Peace Centre later moved from Geneva to Uganda in 1994, carving out a niche of women, peace and security, and adopting an innovative WEAVE model to catalyse women's power for peace by integrating research, documentation, holistic healing, movement building and advocacy. The centre also works with partners in conflict-affected settings and with regional institutions in Africa and Asia to ensure that women not only powerfully contribute to peace building processes and results, but transform these spaces to be more gender inclusive and gender responsive.

Helen emphasised the need for deliberate engagement of women in peace-building and peace-making processes, noting that African women have the capacity to make meaningful and lasting contributions to building sustainable peace. She affirmed that the peace centre has invested heavily in gender responsive peace reconstruction processes in Uganda, DRC, South Sudan and Nepal, focusing on influencing policies on peace-building at all levels and pioneering restructuring advocacy on peace and security in Africa and Asia. This, she said has been done through evidence based research, building women's leadership and skills, networking, movement building and building synergies.

Regarding the learning and exchange workshop, Helen underlined its importance in providing a safe space for experiential learning from peers on what has worked in their respective contexts. She acknowledged the challenges faced by civil society organizations in the Great Lakes region due to the shrinking civic space that has been worsened by human rights devoid response to COVID-19, the role of CSOs in democratic oversight is eminent in the great lakes region. She encouraged the Just Future partners to share their knowledge and practical experiences on building networks in a shrinking space to improve their effectiveness of tackling national issues.

In conclusion, she urged the participants and other human rights defenders to prioritize self-care and mental wellbeing in their work amidst the insecurity and pandemic. This, she said would enable them to deliver on building sustainable peace and democracy.

Experience sharing on good practices and lessons learnt in strengthening access to justice for SGBV survivors in DRC.

This presentation was delivered by Generose Wenga from SOS IJM in DRC. SOS IJM is a women's rights organization in DRC whose vision is to build a culture of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms by developing actions that lead to individual, institutional and community change. The presentation focused on the organization's commitment to fight impunity for perpetrators of SGBV, and strengthen access to justice for survivors and victims of SGBV. Interventions adopted by the organization include; providing legal aid to survivors through legal clinics, medical and psychosocial support, and lobbying and advocacy for the implementation of laws addressing SGBV.

Generose noted that good laws targeted at addressing SGBV are in abundance in DRC, however, inconsistencies between policy statements and the actual implementation of laws remain a great impediment to the attainment of gender equality in the country. Challenges notwithstanding, she reflected on some of the progress made in making the justice system more gender responsive, partly as a result of SOS IJM's advocacy and lobbying efforts and multi-sectoral collaboration/ partnerships. Achievements and good practices recorded by SOS IJM included;

i. Establishment of a special police unit for women and children to handle cases of violence against children and women in a gender sensitive and survivor centred manner.

ii. Introduction of a gender department in the justice tribunals to create effective, accountable and gender-responsive justice institutions and judicial decision making processes.

iii. Establishment of legal clinics to bring legal services closer to survivors in remote areas. The legal clinics also provide free legal services for the less privileged survivors. In addition to legal clinics, the organization adopted a multi-sectoral approach to addressing SGBV, introducing holistic service provision, which included legal clinics, psychosocial support and medical aid. The services are all provided in a hospital which has enabled more women to seek justice thanks to the guaranteed privacy that comes with the services being provided in a hospital space.

iv. Other positive initiatives included; a toll free line to report SGBV, the appointment of female magistrates and more women in the police force, and mobile courts bringing justice closer to the people in remote areas.

Generose also presented challenges that SOS IJM has encountered in the bid to strengthen access to justice for survivors of SGBV. They included;

i. Low rates of damage/reparation payment sometimes due to high poverty levels among the perpetrators. She recommended that social funds should be set aside by the government to meet reparations.

ii. Lengthy trials in cases of sexual violence. This was said to have a far-reaching impact on survivors and their families, mentally and financially, fueling increased loss of confidence in the criminal justice process, and forcing most survivors and their families to have a preference for settling SGBV cases privately The lengthy trials are caused in part by the few numbers of magistrates and low political will.

iii. Lenient sentences for perpetrators. Perpetrators were said to be often released back into communities where the survivors stay, much to the dismay of the survivors. As a result, many survivors choose silence to be safe from the wrath of their abusers.

iv. In cases of sexual violence in conflict, the pursuit of justice is often impeded by the lack of evidence as in most instances, the survivors do not know the perpetrators

v. Trivialization of other forms of SGBV remains a hindrance to women's access to justice. For example sexual exploitation of girls and sexual harassment are not recognized by most as grave cases. Only rape is. Also, she said, IPV is often considered an act of expression of love in some communities.

vi. Lack of protection from the government for human rights defenders working on sensitive SGBV cases which exposes them to retaliation and violence from the perpetrators who are sometimes people in power.

Highlights from the Plenary Session

The experience sharing session by Generose was followed by robust plenary discussions where participants reacted to the presentation and shared their own experiences addressing SGBV in their respective countries.

Jasper from South Sudan recommended that to address the lenient sentences, CSOs in DRC have to advocate for a specific amendment of laws and policies on SGBV to address vagueness and ambiguity in the language around penalties which gives room to the courts of law to give light punishments as per their interpretations.

Winnie from DRC noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated SGBV in DRC, and strained the legal justice system, hindering access to justice for survivors. She also restated the high levels of impunity among SGBV perpetrators, noting that cultural norms play a big role in influencing court decisions on sexual violence. She further expressed concern about the fact that funding for legal clinics is not sustainable as it is attached to time bound projects. At the end of the projects, therefore, communities are left without the services when the projects end.

Speaking to good practices, Winnie commended the multi-sectoral GBV clusters in DRC for strengthening community coordination and management of SGBV. She further revealed that DRC recently launched a National zero tolerance policy and roadmap to address SGBV. This, she said provided a key opportunity for scaling–up advocacy efforts to address gaps in access to justice for women. She advised CSOs to intensify advocacy efforts to have the policy and road map implemented.

Bahati Rubango from DRC recommended that SOS IJM and other CSOs addressing SGBV should be deliberate in building bridges with relevant government ministries and

agencies to facilitate effective implementation of legislation and for greater investment in the protection of women's rights and access to justice.

Manasseh from DRC noted the need for networking to manage SGBV for marginalised groups, mostly those in remote areas.

Elizabeth from Adjumani in Uganda recommended the need to work hand in hand with cultural and religious leaders, and to build their capacities and strengthen the gender responsiveness of the informal justice system which is very central in addressing SGBV cases.

Joseph from South Sudan recommended the need to engage men in advancing the rights of women and girls. He noted that attitudinal transformation is very critical in the fight against SGBV

Peter from South Sudan reiterated the need for male engagement in efforts to address SGBV. He shared an example of Adam Groups which his organization started in Yambio, South Sudan, particularly in the SGBV red zones. The groups were made up of model men who were trained to address SGBV and appeal to fellow men to stop SGBV. He said the initiative has been effective in transforming attitudes of men towards SGBV.

To complement the achievements of CSO organising towards addressing SGBV in DRC, Emmanuel from DRC noted that a basket fund to help victims of mass atrocities had been established by government.

Esther shared best practices in addressing SGBV in Uganda. She noted that Uganda has made tremendous progress in enacting laws that deal with various aspects of sexual and gender based violence. Such laws include the Female Genital Mutilation Act, the Gender Based Violence Act, and the Trafficking in Persons Act. She further shared that innovative models of addressing SGBV have been adopted by both government and CSOs in Uganda, for example the SASA approach which focuses on identifying "model men" in communities who are further trained and sensitized to inspire other peers/colleagues to stop SGBV; establishment of Special Courts for handling cases of SGBV and Safe Shelters for victims of SGBV; and training and equipping Uganda Police Force for handling SGBV while government established. She said Toll-free telephone lines were also introduced across the various districts in the country to ease reporting of SGBV.

Prevention and Response to SGBV in the Great Lakes Region ICGLR-RTF Experience from 2014-2021

Mr. Victor Mugaruka the Acting Regional Director of ICGLR-RTF affirmed ICGLR's commitment to combating SGBV. He shared several Declarations the institution has adopted since 2006, such as; the Goma Declaration on Eradicating Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity in the Great Lakes Region; the Declaration of the Heads of State of the ICGLR on SGBV, and the ICGLR Kampala Declaration on SGBV which inter alia expanded the scope of combating SGBV to include youth, persons with disabilities and men.

Mr. Victor Mugaruka , Regional Director, ICGLR-RTF

These regional policy and legal frameworks bind the member states to take specific steps to address SGBV. For example, the ICGLR Protocol on SGBV obligates Member States to establish a regional mechanism for providing legal, medical, material and social assistance, including counselling and compensation, to women and children who are victims and survivors of sexual violence in the Great Lakes Region. The protocol further enjoins member states to ensure that the victims and survivors of sexual violence are compensated, by perpetrators. It also obligates member states to set up a special regional facility for training and sensitizing judicial officers, police units, social workers, medical officers and other categories of person who handle cases of sexual violence in the Great Lakes Region.

He added that RTF's mandate is to build capacities of the relevant stakeholders with in the ICGLR member states to honour these obligations. The institution does this through; sensitization, training, research, coaching and mentoring. He highlighted some of the good practices and achievements registered over the years, which included;

i. Building a pool of 169 expert trainers who train other professionals to effectively handle and manage cases of SGBV. In total, he said, RTF has 344 professionals' trainers in the region with at least 10 trainers in each country. At a sector level, the ICGLR-RTF has 50 judicial officers, 97 Police officers, 85 psychosocial workers and 57 Medical officers among whom 150 are female and 194 males; (57) media professionals were trained.

ii. Production of information and education materials such as training manuals on the socio-ecological model on SGBV from which all training curricular specific to particular member states' needs is based. The manual, he said, is a living document and is flexible to fit in different training contexts.

iii. Ensuring that victims have access to comprehensive and quality services, including medical care, sexual and reproductive health care, psychosocial support, legal advice and livelihood assistance.

iv. Forensic training and sensitization of Police Officers on the use of emergency contraceptives in responding to SGBV and holistic care of victims/survivors of SGBV in the Region

He concluded by highlighting challenges that ICGLR has encountered in implementing her mandate in addressing SGBV. These challenges included; difficulty in the identification and prosecution of perpetrators mostly in conflict settings, difficulty in identification and access to victims as many chose silence to avoid the stigma associated with SGBV and reporting of the crime, inadequate victim care, and limited resources for the rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors. The lack of political will to implement existing SGBV laws and policies, persistence of insecurity and instability in some Member States, ignorance of existing laws and policies, and a limited number of well-trained and qualified professionals were identified as significant great impediments to addressing SGBV in the Great Lakes region.

Highlights from the Plenary Session

During the plenary session, participants raised concerns about the absence of penalties for non-compliance to ICGLR regional polices by member states. This, some participants felt that this enabled impunity and created space for state parties' negligence in addressing SGBV. Some participants also expressed concern over what they saw as ICGLR taking over the role of civil society organizations in implementing activities at the grassroots level.

Victor responded to the latter concern by saying that ideally, the role of the ICGLR facility is to support civil society through building of their organizational capacities to address SGBV, not to implement particular activities. He affirmed that the facility is committed to strengthening collaborations with the state parties to ensure the implementation of their obligations on addressing SGBV.

With the end of the plenary session, day one ended with a health break.

People-centred Security in Post Conflict Settings in the Great Lakes Region

Day two began with reflections on day one followed by a presentation from Nathan Byamukama, the Executive Director of the Regional Centre for Human Security –Great Lakes Region (RC4HS-GLR).

Nathan emphasized the importance of prioritizing people centred security in post conflict reconstruction. He explained the difference between people – centred security and National security. Stating that people centred security forcuses on human populations while National security which is concerned with protection of the state and its institutions. Nathan also noted that People-centred (human security) and national security are not mutually exclusive and can complement each other. Overall, Nathan's presentation highlighted the importance of considering human security in addition to traditional state security measures.

SN	National security	Human security
1	Concentrates on protecting territorial integrity	Concentrates on protecting people's integrity/individual integrity
2.	Purpose is to maintain the survival of the state through the use of power (military, economic, diplomacy etc.);	It is security in the non- state/military domains. Emphasizing non military dimension of security
3.	The threats include terrorism, foreign power sponsored espionage, proliferation of arms, economic espionage, foreign intelligence;	Threats largely poverty, ethnic violence, infant mortality, climate change/ environmental degradation, disease and ignorance.
4.	State institutions such as military, police are expected to protect people from threats	People are supposed to be empowered to make informed decisions and act on their own behalf and to ensure security for themselves and others -
5.	Always top-down with security leading the process of securitization through militarization bringing together security agencies in a country	Securitization is not necessarily militarization. A more integrated response from communities - bottom up bringing together the agendas of those dealing with security, development and human rights - including civil society, development partners

An illustration by Nathan showing the differences between National Security and People - Centred Security.

Nathan asserted that civil society's contribution is essential to the realization of People-Centered Security. He advised CSOs to work hand in hand with government to support the implementation of commitments towards the process of promoting human rights, sustainable development and human security. He elucidated that CSOs' contributions could be through research and evidence based advocacy for good governance and human rights; early warning and conflict analysis to mitigate violence; Track II diplomacy – where CSOs facilitate official communication and dialogue between armed groups or opponents during and/or after armed conflict; facilitation and mediation; building social cohesion, facilitating conflict-sensitive journalism, capacity-building and education, civil resistance, psycho-social trauma healing and support, strengthening transitional justice, and advocating for security sector reform.

In conclusion Nathan opined that for sustainable stability and development to happen, people must be at the centre of security. He also reiterated the need for CSOs to lead the way in supporting governments to put their commitments under regional and international instruments into praxis (practice). He underlined the need to share best practices, stressing that the collective effort of the state and civil society with the people on the ground can make tremendous strides in achieving freedom from fear, want and indignity.

The Role of Civil Society in the Democratic Oversight of the Security Sector.

This session was moderated by Hon David Pulkol, the Executive Director of the Africa Leadership Institute. The presentation made a case for how civil society can participate in Security Sector Reform (SSR), the challenges faced by civil society in Security Sector Governance (SSG); and provided actionable recommendations for strengthening the role of civil society in security sector governance.

Hon. David Pulkol, ED of the Africa Leadership Institute

On the role of Civil Society in Democratic Security Sector Governance/oversight, Hon. Pulkol opined that the concept of good governance is based upon the existence of legitimacy, accountability and transparency, which he called the cornerstones of any true democracy. He stressed the need for government institutions to be accountable to civilian authorities and citizens through effective oversight and control mechanisms, noting that a strong and vibrant civil society is one of the markers of good governance.

Hon. Pulkol put across ways in which civil society can contribute to democratic security sector oversight. These included; research which creates a basis for action, providing alternative and independent views, deepening understanding of the security sector, multi-media awareness raising, advocacy, and monitoring mechanisms of democratic oversight, competence, violation of the human rights of security sector personnel and the population at large, as well as budget analysis and building organizational credibility.

He added that processes of policy formulation and planning of reforms also provide civil society with opportunities to participate in Security Sector Reform (SSR). Here, he said, CSOs can communicate the security needs expressed by populations so that they are taken into account by decision makers when security policies are drafted, resulting in policies that are more relevant and better adapted to the real needs and concerns of women, men, girls and boys, making

CSOs a valuable link in the governance chain.

Hon. Pulkol further submitted that CSOs can contribute to SSR through strengthening the capacities of security institutions. For example, by providing training which improves the effectiveness and quality of services provided by these institutions. He also suggested that CSOs can bridge gaps in the institutional chain by offering services that are not provided by existing institutions. He cited the example of legal clinics that have been established by women's organizations such as FIDA, providing a valuable complement to the work of the police and the justice system by facilitating access to institutional protection and justice mechanisms for women, girls, boys and men who are victims of gender based violence.

After implementation, he advised that CSOs must make their voices heard in the monitoring and evaluation of public policies and the resulting services. This, he said, may help to better measure the effects of SSR projects and to rework or reformulate them if need be. He emphasized that as groups of citizens, i.e. taxpayers, CSOs are entitled to hold governments accountable for the operational and financial performance of security policies.

He highlighted some of the challenges faced by civil society in Security Sector Governance (SSG). These included:-

The tradition of secrecy surrounding the security

i. sector that makes attempts to regulate or inform the public about its policies and activities difficult;
Prioritization of national security concerns over civil liberties

ii. and human rights means that there is less scope for demanding accountability from the security sector;
The real or assumed lack of capacity among CSOs and/or poor

iii. awareness of their potential contribution, is also a great barrier to their involvement in issues related to the security sector;
Lack of trust and/or transparency between CSOs and the security

iv. sector can make it difficult for CSOs to access key decision-makers and influence security and justice policies and programming. Lack of trust or cooperation amongst CSOs themselves can also be limiting;
Lack of independence of CSOs because they are either funded or co-

v. opted by elements of the security sector.
Limited donor support for transparency and democratic accountability

vi of the security sector in favour of technical assistance and efficiency within the sector, which excludes an emphasis on strengthening civil society oversight;
Fragmented civil society, with organizations failing to collaborate or

v collectively advocate on issues related to security sector oversight.

He said there is need for an active involvement of the public in security oversight, using CSOs as a potential platform for debate. He urged civil society to engage in activities such as setting norms and standards to guide government actions and providing protection and relative information. He further advised CSOs to negotiate participation in regional governance issues through already existing regional policy frameworks.

In conclusion, Hon. Pulkol said that the efforts by governments and the international community to strengthen democracy and human security depend heavily on the involvement of and dialogue with citizens who organize themselves in the pursuit of justice and peace, well established non-governmental organizations or community-based alliances. He cautioned that much work remains to be done given the fact that torture and infringements on basic human rights remain widespread. He avowed that there is no country, rich or poor, stable or fragile, in which the security sector is immune to malpractice, saying this means that effective and independent oversight remains a priority everywhere.

The Network for Security

Sector Reform and Justice (RRSSJ) and its role in Security Sector Reform in the DRC

This presentation was delivered by Emmanuel Kabengele representing RRSSJ, DRC. RRSSJ is a consortium of 189 civil society organizations operating in DRC with a focus on Security Sector Reforms (Police, Army, and Intelligence Services) and Justice.

In his presentation, Emmanuel acknowledged the essential role of civil society in security sector reform. He debunked the tendency of considering the security sector or defense to as a static field, separate from general national and international politics. He noted that civil society acts as a channel through which the real security needs expressed by the population reach the security service providers. He added that civil society has the capacity to build positive discourse in order to work on changing civilians' perceptions about the army or the police.

He shared examples of interventions adopted by the RRSSJ in advancing SSR. These included; monitoring the implementation of national policies related to security sector reforms and justice; production of Independent analyses and data collection on the state of implementation of national policies on security; carrying out civil-military reconciliation activities and community building with the National Police; mobilizing local communities through community initiatives to ensure ownership of SSR; and advocacy and mobilization of grassroots communities to support transformational security sector reforms and justice at national, regional and international levels. He further shared that RRSSJ collaborates with the technical ministries of the government such as the Interior and Defence ministry as well as with the Parliamentary Committees on Defence and Security to build consensus on security sector reform priorities.

Emmanuel Kabengele

Highlights from the Plenary Session

The plenary session that followed the presentation by David, Byaruhanga and Emmanuel was laden with passionate deliberations and experience sharing on what had worked in the participant's respective countries as well as recommendations on how to strengthen SSR in the Great Lakes region.

Rubango from DRC expressed concern about the securitization of COVID-19 in Uganda, which has enabled human rights violations. He shared good practices and lessons learned from DRC in this regard where CSOs used evidence based advocacy to call for human rights based response to COVID-19. One key outcome of these advocacy efforts was the reopening of schools following campaigns which highlighted the impact of school closures on adolescent girls.

Mukeba from DRC shared experiences using UNSCR 1325 in advocacy for security sector reform. His organization particularly called for easing of recruitment requirements for joining the police force to enable more women to be admissible into the police. They also advocated for inclusion of female officers in patrol units to mitigate sexual violence during night patrols. He shared further that they advocated for meaningful inclusion of women in decision making with in the police force to ensure gender responsive police policies and programmes. As a result of their advocacy, a women and children's protection unit was established with in the police in several provinces in DRC to handle women and children specific security needs.

Générose decried the increase in militarization of power and leadership structures in DRC. She noted that the government does not show interest in sharing power with civil society. She posed a question on how civil society can work to check and hold to account militarised

governments to account.

In response, Hon. David Pulkol noted that state actors are not homogenous. He advised CSOs to conduct stakeholder mappings to establish the enablers and spoilers of security reform, adding that collaborations should be forged between civil society and the enablers of reform within government. He also reiterated the need for CSOs to work hand in hand with the citizens by building their knowledge to collectively advocate for security sector reforms. This, he said will reduce on the backlash that individual CSOs could face if they carry out the work in isolation. He further advised CSOs to adopt conflict sensitive approaches in advocating for security sector reform, instead of going on the offensive. He encouraged dialogue and working to establish a common ground with government on an ideal way forward. He suggested round table meetings, evidence based advocacy, and Track II diplomacy, or lobbying diplomats as the most ideal approaches to fostering linkages for SSR.

Building strong networks in a shrinking civic space.

This presentation was delivered by Sheila Muwanga from Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives. She provided a six (6) steps approach to building a network in restrictive shrinking civic spaces. The steps as presented by Sheila are elaborated below:

i. Identify the network's goals and objectives. Sheila noted that networks should consider what change they are seeking to see or bring about, and accordingly adopt the strategic priorities/actions that could help advance this change. She advised that networks should set realistic goals based on a practical and realistic period of time, identifying small steps towards the overall goal as opposed to overly ambitious steps which are always bound to miscarry in the context of a shrinking civic space. She further underlined the need to analyze the risks and be realistic in setting goals and objectives, noting that in a constrained civic space, focus should be on the quality of the outcomes, not the quantity. She also proposed identifying a less sensitive issue to mitigate backlash, and aiming for the low hanging fruits.

ii. Define stakeholders, targets, and "asks". She advised networks to map out allies to support in the advancement of the networks' goal. This, she said calls for a stakeholder analysis and working with the diaspora to reduce risks for communities inside the country who would be targeted for their advocacy.

iii. Develop a strategy to create a fundamental framework for making decisions about a campaign's goals, objectives, targets, asks, and messaging. She said the framework should account for the local political context and help minimize risks. She added that a clearly articulated strategy can help a network respond to unpredicted challenges that come up in restrictive and frequently changing political contexts. She suggested some risk mitigation strategies such as using digital platforms, incorporating wellbeing and psychosocial support in the network's programming and work.

iv

Develop a message that will motivate people to join your network. She noted that effective networks speak in a clear way to multiple audiences. To ensure effectual messaging, she asserted the need for networks to know what they want to say (objectives and asks) and who you want to say it to (targets). This is important because the public is often more responsive to stories that describe people like them or issues affecting them. She cautioned that sometimes, audiences may not be moved by hard facts and figures. To address this, she said, networks should deliver evidence with an emotional approach, such as a personal story. She concluded that the more a network can creatively translate its advocacy message for her specific audience, the greater the likelihood of the network's success.

v

Select campaign tactics/strategies to ensure the network's outreach is effective. The tactics should change according to the risks in your environment and reflect the opportunities, challenges, and risks in the particular context of the network.

vi

Implement and evaluate. She noted that successful networking efforts require ongoing planning, evaluation and revision in order to address new challenges that might arise over the course of the campaign.

Sheila concluded her presentation with a caution that change rarely comes from force of logical argument alone or the presentation of irrefutable evidence in support of the changes required, but from the character, approach and credibility of those seeking change and the receptiveness of those they are seeking to persuade.

Highlights from the Plenary Session

There was consensus among most participants that to enable effective organizing and building of networks in a shrinking civic space, donors/development partners should be realistic in their expectations from civil society organizations and networks.

There was also emphasis that advocacy and setting of goals should be guided by realism, with a focus on low hanging fruits.

One participant cautioned that continuous analysis of network members and probable members is important in helping sustain networks in a shrinking space. She noted that networks become very vulnerable in closing spaces and might therefore need to identify some unlikely allies and let go of old members whose interests or reliability could have shifted under the circumstances.

Experience sharing on good practices and lessons learnt working with the security sector to address SGBV and Conflict Related Violence (CSRV)

This presentation was delivered by Peter Lemmy Noka from EVE Organization for Women development, South Sudan. He noted that the full magnitude of SGBV and CSRV in South Sudan is unclear. He cited studies that indicated that around two-thirds of women and girls have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, while approximately half have suffered intimate partner violence, and one-third of women reported having experienced sexual violence from a non-partner, often occurring during attacks or raids.

Peter Lemmy Noka

Peter also shared some of the interventions adopted by his organization to combat SGBV in South Sudan. These included; the establishment of male engage (Adam) groups in Yei, Torit and Yambio where men were trained to campaign against SGBV; giving seed funds to SGBV survivors to start income generating activities to mitigate SGBV which is heightened by economic dependence on men as the sole providers; using radio talk shows and jingles to create awareness around SGBV; training youth (women and men) as ambassadors against SGBV; and forming community Peer Support taskforces on GBV formed

Some of the best practices shared by Peter in addressing SGBV in South Sudan included;

i. Partial implementation of the Conflict Resurgence and the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (A-ARCSS) which has silenced guns in some locations, and reduced conflict related SGBV.

ii. Establishment of socialized courts to handle SGBV cases.

iii. Increase in funding by the donor communities towards programmes addressing SGBV.

iv. Development of NAPs by both the military (SSPDF) and the police (SSNPS) aimed at addressing SGBV. This resulted in the establishment of court Martials to prosecute violations perpetrated by the military.

v. Establishment of SPUs in all ten states by the SSNPS to address issues of SGBV in the country.

Advocacy for strengthening the accountability of local justice actors and the quality of services offered to communities.

Godelieve Manirakiza

This presentation was delivered by Godelieve Manirakiza from the Association of Women Returnees in Burundi (AFRABU). AFRABU is a local NGO in Burundi aimed at strengthening access to justice for women, youth and vulnerable groups.

In her presentation, Godelieve highlighted the criticality of multi-sectoral and multi stakeholder collaboration as well as partnerships with Government in addressing SGBV. She said AFRABU adopted this approach, working with government institutions, local government, women's rights organizations, youth, and the minorities groups such as the Batwa, albinos, and those living with disabilities. The result has been better coordination of SGBV services enabling increased access to justice for marginalised groups. The Government also introduced a new law mandating the representation of women in non-elective positions in local government to ensure gender responsive policies and plans in addressing SGBV at the local government level.

Godelieve however underlined the significant gaps that persist in addressing SGBV in Burundi, including; costly legal fees, violation of procedures in managing SGBV cases which affects access to justice, rampant cultural barriers and victim blaming, widespread preference of out of court settlements, and inadequate or lack of psychosocial support for survivors.

She noted that one key learning that she would introduce to the Burundi context from learnings shared by partners from Uganda and Congo is the integration of psychosocial wellbeing in SGBV response and management.

Following the presentations and debrief, the training-workshop was closed for the day.

Access to justice through legal clinics; Best Practices and lessons learnt.

The presentation was made by Elizabeth Kemigisha from FIDA-Uganda. FIDA Uganda is a membership organization of women lawyers whose mission is to elevate the status of women using the law as a tool for social change.

Elizabeth noted that FIDA provides legal aid to indigent women and children, and in some instances, vulnerable men. She mentioned that FIDA also contributes to advocacy efforts to advance economic justice for women in the informal sector through influencing gender responsive budgeting, calling for corporate accountability, and advocating for social protection programmes that cover women in the largely unregulated informal sector. Under economic justice, she added that FIDA also works to protect women's land rights, support women in registering their businesses to benefit from economic programmes, and to defend the rights of women working in markets.

In addition to women's economic justice, Elizabeth informed the participants of FIDA's work to provide free legal services to women and children through legal clinics. The presentation in this regard focused on the challenges of running legal clinics and the best practices adopted to mitigate these challenges. She shared that due to the large number of cases handled by lawyers working in the legal clinics, burnout and fatigue are common. To mitigate this, she mentioned that FIDA provides legal empowerment of women for self-representation. This facilitates sustainability given the lengthy trials and case backlog that is associated with SGBV and land related cases.

She further explained that FIDA invests heavily in building the capacity of law students to run mini legal clinics to provide legal advice and education to people in hard to reach areas. The student run clinics, helping to close the human resource gaps in case management. However, a limitation to this initiative is that students do not have practicing certificates which are required to manage some cases in courts of law.

Another approach adopted by FIDA to manage case backlog is collaborating with magistrates to set aside days to strictly deal with SGBV cases. Elizabeth reported that this approach has reduced the case backlog, increased the number of SGBV cases disposed of, and in some instances restored faith in the justice system.

To address the persisting challenges that come with running legal clinics, Elizabeth recommended that courts of law should provide students with temporary work permits to enable them to provide support in managing SGBV cases. She further urged the Government to invest in gender responsive legal aid, and space for shelters to reduce operation costs incurred by NGOs.

In response to Elizabeth's presentation, Winnie from DRC commended the student led legal clinics as an innovative and sustainable initiative worth adopting by other Just Future partners working to strengthen access to justice for survivors of SGBV.

Transitional Justice and the role of civil society in ensuring accountability on behalf of the most excluded: The case of Uganda: progress, challenges and lessons learned.

This presentation was delivered by Kasande Sarah Kihika of the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICJ). She noted that ***an active and empowered civil society is key to the effectiveness of transitional justice processes.*** She gave examples from Latin America and South Africa where civil society historically played a central role in shaping the field of transitional justice.

She went on to assert that the role of civil society in advancing transitional justice can vary from challenging 'official' versions of history, to documenting terror and repression. She mentioned examples of CSOs that had led the way in the latter, including:- the Cambodian Documentation Center, Iraqi Memory Foundation, Ethiopian Red Terror Documentation and Research Centre, and Nepal documentation program on disappearances. She explained that Civil society can also contribute to shaping the transitional justice agenda in respect of policy and law through; lobbying and advocacy; supporting transitional justice mechanisms to address victim needs; convincing victims to talk and to help the investigators; educating victims on rights: truth, justice and reparations, pressuring the government to act; and pursuing of truth, justice and reparations through advocacy and public interest litigation.

In the Ugandan context, she said, civil society can contribute to the realization of transitional justice by; conducting advocacy and outreaches to educate the public about the TJ process and TJ policy, researching and documentating victims experiences and justice demands; holding consultations with victims

particularly those whose voices may not usually be heard, and conveying victim's justice demands to policy makers, providing interim support to vulnerable victims eg psychosocial support, access to health care livelihood support; mobilizing and supporting victims to participate and influence the different TJ processes:- sustained monitoring of the implementation of the TJ processes under the policy; and advocating for legal, institutional and social reforms that will prevent the recurrence of the past abuses.

To strengthen its role, Sarah said civil society should actively promote the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, advocate for an education system that promotes open and critical thinking, ability to question power, call for removal of the legal obstacles that place heavy burdens of complying with bureaucratic processes for CSOs to operate.

She highlighted some of the challenges civil society in Uganda encounter in the bid to call for accountability for transitional justices. These included; restricted space for civil society engagements in transitional justice processes, lack of political will to genuinely commit to a credible and transparent process in transitional justice, the sluggish process in putting in place the TJ policy; and limited appreciation of TJ concepts and practical approaches to implementing TJ by some of the key JLOS and civil society actors. She avowed that '***the realization of transitional justice will not be possible until the structural issues that enable abuse remain unchallenged.***'

In concluding, Sarah noted that an ideal approach to Transitional justice must include strengthening civil society and creating an enabling environment for civil society to discharge its preventive role by removing legal barriers that limit civic engagement. She called for an education system that promotes free and critical thinking and the ability to analyze and criticize state policies, and emphasized the essentiality of new media (social media) in spreading positive messages and raising awareness to prevent misconceptions and prejudices that fuel violence.

CSO's Role in advocacy and implementation of Transitional Justice Mechanisms

Gasper Amule

This session was led by Gasper Amule from the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS). He acknowledged that civil society has played a significant role in shaping the agenda for Transitional Justice in peace agreements in South Sudan. He said, the role of civil society has spanned from the formation of networks such as Citizens for peace and justice (CPJ) and South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF), which have acted as pressure groups advocating for the pursuit of justice and reconciliation, to leading concerted advocacy efforts for the inclusion of women and youth in the peace talks.

Gasper commended the Civil Society Working Group on Transitional Justice in South Sudan for playing a pivotal role in ensuring the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms in South Sudan through; sensitization on transitional justice, documentation, community empowerment and consultations, providing psycho-social support to survivors and technical support to government, as well as facilitating forums for stakeholders' dialogues.

He shared that as a result of the Civil Society Working Group on Transitional Justice engagements, a citizen-centered transitional justice chapter was included in the South Sudan peace agreement. A transitional justice agenda that guarantees civil society participation and representation in the Technical Committee for the establishment of Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing was also adopted. This agenda meant that civil society had secured representation in the peace implementation mechanisms which provides an opportunity for civil society to influence accountability and impartiality in the transitional justice processes.

Gasper however decried the shrinking civic space, limited resources, mistrust and lack of political will to implement the agenda for transitional justice, which he said threaten to roll back the gains made in advancing the transitional justice in South Sudan.

In presenting the lessons learned, Gasper shared that the road to attaining transitional justice is muddled with numerous setbacks and requires commitment and persistence as loose and flexible networks stand the test of time and challenges. He was of the view that working in collaboration with government institutions is essential as it widens the space for civic engagement on sensitive issues, noting that the 'naming and shaming advocacy' contributes to a shrinking space. He further noted that evidence-based advocacy strengthens the message and saves the messenger, emphasizing the essentiality of local experts are in advocacy efforts. He also encouraged regular context analysis, regular evaluation, learning and strategizing to help civil society in navigating the shrinking civic space.

Highlights from the Plenary Session

In response to Sarah's presentation, concern was raised on how reconciliation is sometimes used to cover up and to avoid addressing structural problems that give power to certain groups and allow for abuse of power. The need to build trust with communities, mostly those historically excluded, addressing historical exclusion were therefore stressed as important steps in establishing transitional justice processes.

Generose advised that partners working on transitional justice should collectively develop a risk matrix for all their planned interventions to assess the level of risk and to work on mitigating them.

There was also consensus among the participants that resources from the different Just Future partners should be translated in both English and French to enable learning from the different best practices in the different countries. This followed acknowledgement among the participants that a lot of resources are available between the partners, but they remain unexplored. There was similarly a suggestion that a group email serve should be developed for easy communication among the partners.

A multi-stakeholder approach to defining a UNSCR 1325 plan, implementation and reporting: success strategies and key lessons.

The session was delivered by Angela Nakafeero, the Commissioner of Gender and Women Affairs at the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. In her presentation, she gave an overview of the process of developing the third generation National Action Plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325 ON WPS, mentioning that the NAP was developed through an inclusive and participatory process involving all the key stakeholders from grassroots to the national level. Participants included representatives from civil society organizations, including religious and faith based organizations, the media, women's rights organizations, government ministries and departments, and minority groups.

Angela affirmed that the development and implementation of NAP III has been informed by lessons learned from developing and implementing NAP I (2008–2010) and NAPII (2011–2015). The overall goal of NAP III, she said, is to ensure sustained peace and security through enhanced meaningful participation of women in peace and development processes. The specific objectives are to; prevent all forms of violence and promote peace within families, communities and the nation; promote meaningful participation of women in leadership and governance at all levels; strengthen the capacity of women to mitigate and prevent natural and human made disasters and conflicts; and strengthen the Institutional and coordination mechanism for WPS agenda at all levels.

Uganda's NAP III has 4 priority outcomes, which are that;

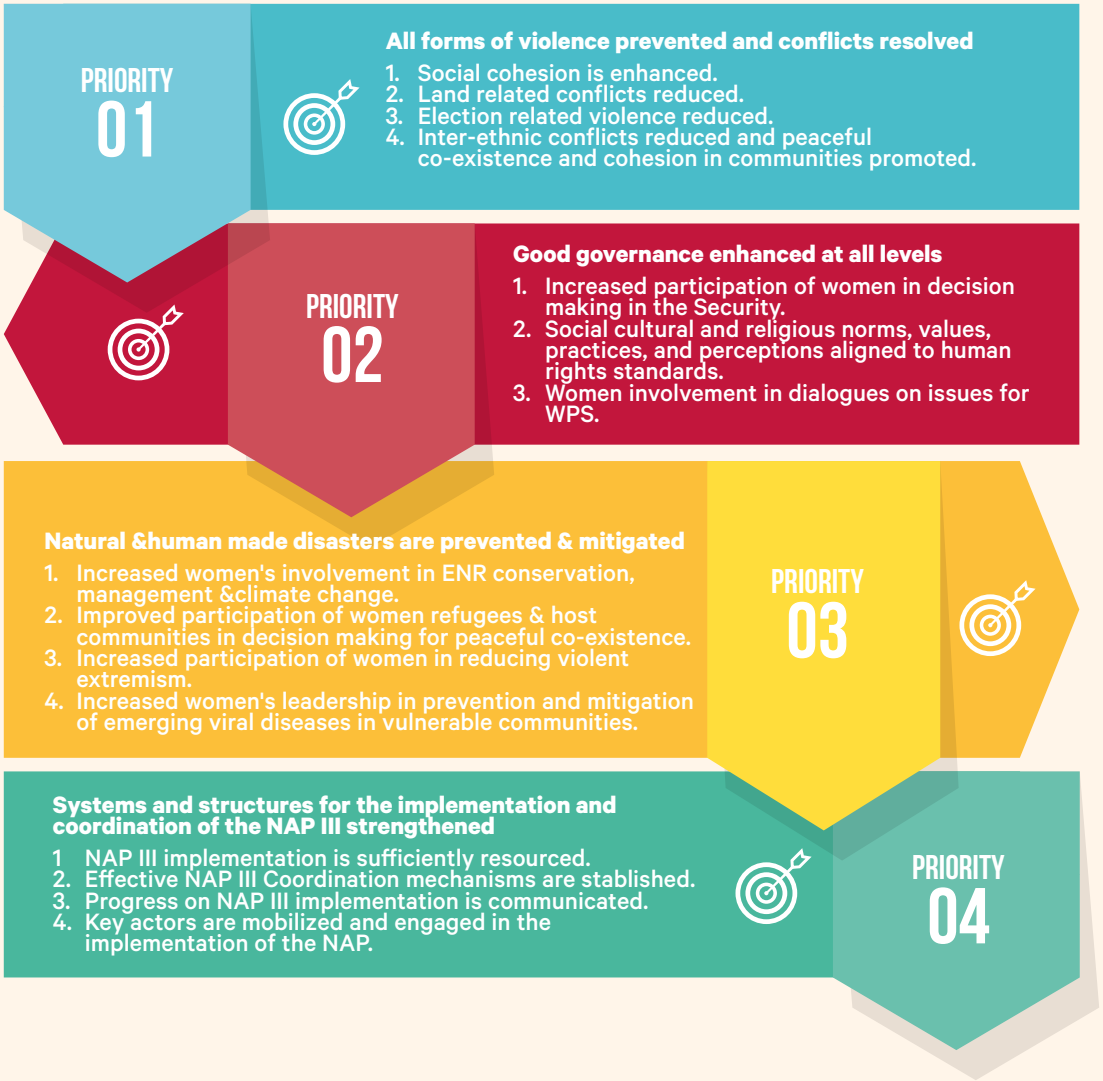
GOAL 01 — All forms of violence prevented, and conflicts resolved

GOAL 02 — Good Governance enhanced at all levels

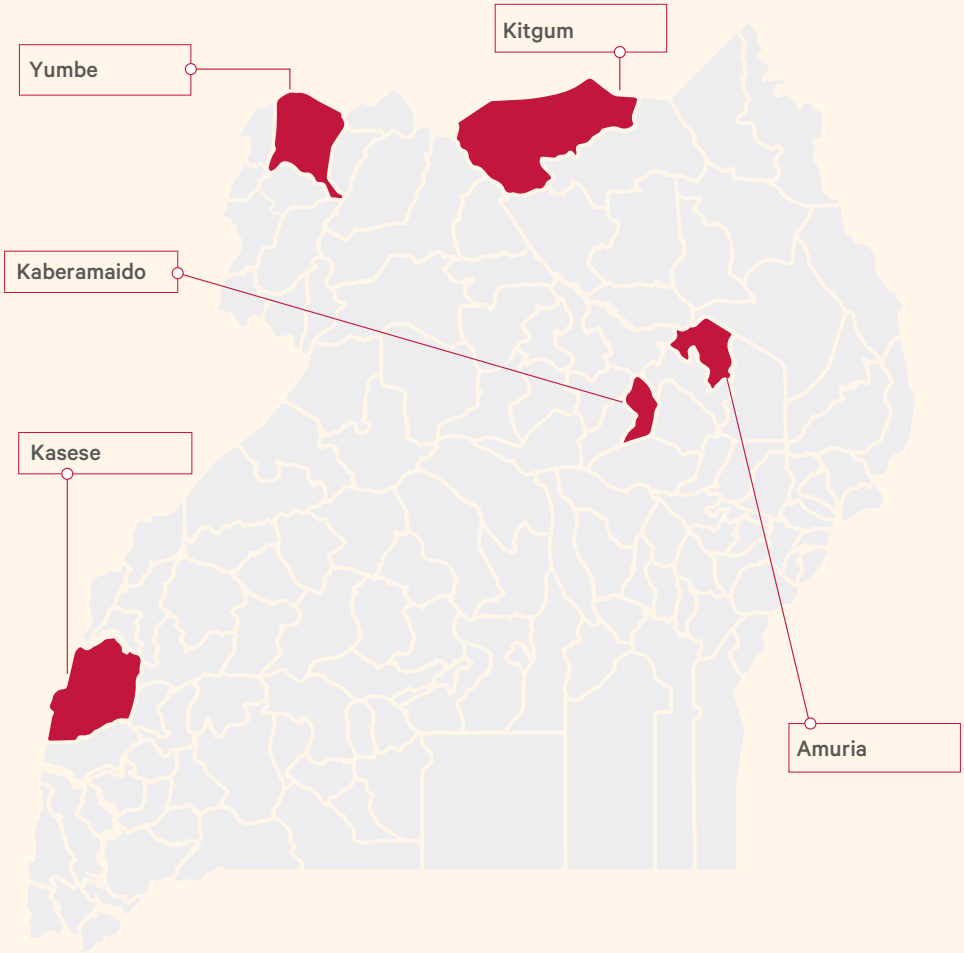
GOAL 03 — Natural and human-made disasters mitigated and prevented

GOAL 04 — Systems and structures for the implementation and coordination of the NAP III strengthened.

Priorities for NAP III: priority and medium-term outcomes



Angella explained that in the implementation of NAP III, partnerships across sectors and various stakeholders, as well as localization have been prioritized. She said, districts including; Amuria, Kasese, Yumbe Kaberamaido and Kitgum have already localized the NAP, enabling ownership of the plan at the local government level. Operational plans were also developed by relevant government Ministries, departments and agencies, including; UPDF, MIA, MoH, OPM and the Electoral Commission.



The Commissioner noted the following lessons from the development and implementation of NAP III process:

i That Intergenerational and real change lies in transforming social norms that drive violence against women and girls, and embracing values, perceptions and practices that embrace gender equality and women's empowerment.

ii That the resurgence of coups (as seen in Myanmar, Haiti, Chad, Mali and Guinea), violent electoral processes (as seen in the 2021 elections in Uganda), violent demonstrations (as in South Africa), and terrorism are a threat to democratic processes and WPS. She emphasized the need for the WPS Agenda to take into consideration these emerging challenges and prepare accordingly.

iii That emerging biological warfare is a big threat to humanity. She stressed the need to prioritize gender and equity responsive plans and strategies for response and recovery i.e. prevention and response to the emerging trends of GBV, Women's Economic Empowerment which are a result of pandemics such as COVID-19.

iv That linkages at national, regional and international levels, as well as multi sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaborations are essential for the attainment of the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Localizing UNSCR 1325 in partnership with communities, women's groups, and local governments; the case of women mediators in Yumbe, Adjumani and Kotido.

This presentation was delivered by Oroma Diana, from the Peace Centre, and Elizabeth Yuol a Peace Mediator from Adjumani. The presentation focused on key learnings from implementing a project aimed at promoting women's effective participation in peace building in the districts of Yumbe, Adjumani, and Kotido.

Diana noted that the project had registered notable outcomes which included;

i. Strengthening the capacity of relevant actors (CEWERU, OPM, CSOs, and Peace Committees) to mainstream gender perspectives and promote the rights of women and girls in conflict, post conflict and other crisis situations.

ii. Increased women's representation and meaningful engagement in formal and informal peace negotiations and recovery planning including in the refugee context.

iii. Enhanced capacity of 563 key structures on peace building (conflict monitoring, mediation, conflict analysis and reporting, conflict early warning and response)

Elizabeth spoke to the impact of the project in Nyumanzi refugee settlement in Adjumani District. She shared that Nyumanzi was a conflict hot spot before deliberate efforts were made to involve women in leadership and peace-building. However, thanks to the project, women in the settlement have been empowered to influence change and mediate conflicts. Women's engagement in peace-building for example was

reported to have strengthened social cohesion within the settlement reducing violent conflicts in communities and between refugees and host communities. It has also increased awareness around the dangers of teenage pregnancy and forced marriages.

Beyond Nyumanzi, Diana noted that the project has facilitated the establishment of a functional National Steering Committee for Peace. The committee is leading advocacy efforts for the adoption of a National Peace Policy. She further shared that the project had seen the establishment of functional and gender responsive District Peace Committees, taking up gender consideration in peace building. For example, she said the disarmament programmes in Karamoja has embraced and supported the role of women in early warning and preventing violent conflicts in the region.

From the implementation of the project Diana asserted that several lessons were learned.

i. That voices of women affected by conflicts matter in weaving sustainable peace; that change is possible and that it begins at the individual level.

ii. That peace building is a process, not an event. This, she said means that peace-building requires long term, collaborative and holistic interventions.

iii. That effective communication is crucial for preventing violent conflicts and building sustainable peace.

iv. That there is need to build resilient communities to reduce vulnerability to shocks associated with food insecurity and climate change.

v. That Trauma is a huge problem for refugee and host communities who are exposed to myriads of challenges and shocks. Investment is needed to deal with war trauma if communities are to effectively participate in development.; and

v. That effort must be made to integrate economic empowerment in peace-building activities. Poverty increases crime, trafficking, prostitution and vulnerability to HIV/AIDs.

Diana concluded the presentation by asserting that Peace-building requires collaborative efforts with different actors at International, National, District, grass root and deliberate involvement of women in peace processes.

Highlights from the Plenary Session

In the plenary session, admiration was expressed for Uganda for having a third generation action plan for implementation of the women peace and security agenda. The DRC participants agreed that there are many lessons to learn from Uganda in its journey of developing and implementing the action plans.

A suggestion of the need for the women peace and security agenda to build linkages with the youth peace and security agenda was also put forward by one of the participants who felt that both agendas were mutually reinforcing. The participant also underlined that the WPS agenda should prioritise the meaningful participation of young women.

Mental Health and psychosocial wellbeing for development practitioners in post conflict affected countries: Lessons learned as a mental health worker at Refugee Law Project

This session was delivered by Kampogo Mary a mental health expert from Refugee Law Project. In her presentation, she reflected on what mental health is, the key facts about mental health, the impact of conflict on mental health and wellbeing and the need for self-care among human rights defenders.

She started by unpacking the meaning of mental health and mental wellbeing, providing several definitions. First, she noted that mental health is a cocktail of physical, social and behavioural aspects – the feelings, thoughts, memory, decisions, beliefs, values, attitudes of individuals. She explained further that mental wellbeing is 'how good a person feels about him/herself and life, adding that mental health is made up of our emotional, cognitive and social aspect of life, and that it determines our feelings, thoughts and relation towards self and others. She also likened mental Wellbeing to our sense of self and our ability to live our lives as close as possible to the way we want to, stressing that a flourishing mental wellbeing is associated with meeting our full potential, developing strong relationships and doing things that we consider important and worthwhile.

Kampogo Mary

She divulged that there is no health without mental health, and that good physical health leads to good mental health and the reverse is true, further noting that mental disorders make up 30% of non-fatal disease burden and the global economy loses about $1trillion per year in productivity due to depression and anxiety. She also noted that conflict, wars and insecurity present a major risk to mental health problems, sharing that about 1 in 9 people in settings affected by conflict have a moderate to severe mental disorder.

She advised human rights defenders to recognize their own humanity while working in conflict affected settings to reduce the possibility of burn out. She warned that working in post-conflict areas can cause human rights defenders vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burn out, unfortunately, when programming, mental health is often overlooked.

She therefore recommended that self-care for human rights defenders should be deliberately/intentionally planned for and incorporated in peace building programming. She also put emphasis on the need for human rights defenders to take proper care of themselves and to treat themselves as kindly as they treat others. She said the target self-care is to enhance and maintain individual wellbeing and bolster functioning.

In concluding, she asked participants to reflect on four questions;

- What mental health programmes do you have in your organization and how important are they?
- How important are mental health programmes in your country?
- Does your country have a mental health policy? Do you know what it entails?
- Do you know the mental health budget of your country?

She closed with a caution that ***when we cease to care for ourselves, we also can't care for others.***

Highlights from the Plenary Session

The participants expressed an overall appreciation for the session, sharing that African culture extols resilience which is sometimes used interchangeably to mean suffering and working without caring for one's wellbeing. The proposition of integrating self-care in peace-building programming was therefore collectively welcomed by the participants.

One participant requested that information on funding for self-care of human rights defenders is shared with the Just Future partners as most development partners/donors do not allow for funds to be used on self-care activities. The participant also called for flexibility of donors to allow for funding of wellbeing activities for human rights defenders.

In response, Urgent Action Fund was mentioned among the flexible funders for activities aimed at promoting self-care and mental wellbeing of human rights defenders.

Fundraising for inclusive peace and security

This session was led by Jean Kemintare from UAF-AFRICA. She briefly shared about UAF, explaining that Urgent Action Fund partners with women's movements worldwide to support women's human rights defenders striving to create cultures of justice, equality and peace. She said the organization is committed to catalyzing change, strengthening feminist movements and grassroots organizing through rapid response grant making, advocacy and alliance-building.

She shared that UAF's grant-making focuses on sustaining women human rights defenders, addressing SRHR/GBV, bolstering Economic Justice, for example, access to productive resources (land), addressing the burden of care, advocating for reform of macro-economic policy and building safe work for women, as well as supporting Climate action and environmental justice.

Jean shared a few tips with participants to ensure successful resource mobilization. She said there is need for clarity of values, goals, constituency, and specific change that the interventions being fundraized for seeks to attain. She also advised the participants to know their audience and pitch in the right way. She recommended that message should be clear, concise and straight to the point.

Participants were further advised to invest heavily in relationship building, which she called building social capital. She further emphasized professionalism – for example, reporting in time, communicating when one encounters challenges, and asking for capacity support for systems where need be. As part of building relationships, she also encouraged donor education which could entail setting up meetings to update your donors even when not required. She highlighted the need to build visibility as this attracts donors.

The second presentation on resource mobilization was delivered by Lisa Dardis from UN Women. Her presentation covered the definition and types of resource mobilization, things to know in proposal preparation, understanding donor needs and priorities; realities and strategies in resource mobilization; and examples of grants.

Lisa explained that resource mobilization refers to all activities undertaken by an organization to secure new and additional financial, human and material resources to advance its mission. She stressed that a good resource mobilization strategy should seek to create different streams of funding, as over dependence on donors/grants from one source are risky and should be avoided. She challenged the Just Future partners to have diversified funding streams, reiterating the importance of engaging different 'types' of donors. She also advised them to develop a contingency plan in the event that a donor pulled out.

Linda also identified a list of key requirements for resource mobilization. It included; (i) a Strategic Plan/Vision for the organization; (ii) Financial and administrative management capacity (accounting system, procurement, internal controls). This she said

includes; reports/strategies for sustainability of results, Code of conduct, Anti-fraud framework, SEA framework, Organogram and CVs of key staff, and References – people/donors who can vouch for the organization's performance.

She submitted that staff and organizational capacity development are essential for successful resource mobilization. On this, she noted the need for a SWOT analysis of an organization and staff to establish the strengths and the gaps that call for capacity development (i.e. Communication and visibility, M&E, Report writing etc.). Linda also underlined the need for Donor intelligence which could include analysis of the environment, donor landscape, donor priorities, available grants in a particular country, and the private sector landscape in a given country. She said this can be attained through networking, engaging with potential donors, building rapport with local government leaders who act as a reference for your work and assure donors. She also advised participants to consider networking with other NGOs as a strategy to learn from them but also tap into opportunities for joint proposals.

When preparing to submit a proposal, Linda advised participants to do research the grant progamme and donor and to always tailor applications accordingly. She said proposals should include a clear budget, delegation of responsibilities, M&E plan, sustainability, references, and demonstration of organizations results.

She further elaborated on the need to understanding Donor's needs, advising that NGOs should build rapport with donors, do research on donor strategies/plans, acquaint themselves with expectations for grant management and show their Organization's preparedness, demonstrate results of their work and reports to donors, demonstrate willingness to learn/evolve and work with other organizations, be responsive and accessible – if there is an issue/delay in the programme etc, maintain credibility, acknowledge support, inviting donors to visit programmes and events, personalized events such as 'power breakfasts', and writing thank you notes.

Speaking on resource mobilization, Linda noted the need to acknowledge the realities on ground and devise strategies to manage them. For example, she shared that is easier to get money for one event than for a sustained long-term programme. She therefore advised partners to develop a comprehensive long-term programme, but to break it into smaller chunk sized bits to seek funding for each part, from the same or sometimes different sources.

Another reality was that there are many conditions and terms imposed on funds provided by most donors that may restrict its use. To manage this, she advised partners to understand the need for these conditions by looking at them from the donors' perspective. She asked them to always communicate their needs very clearly and where necessary to find a middle ground in negotiating with the donor to meet them 'halfway.'

The third reality was that Misdeeds and fraud by some NGOs taint the sector as a whole, creating mistrust and misunderstanding. She therefore advised partners to develop clear professionalism among the staff members and have policies in place to mitigate fraud and other challenges such as SEA.

The last reality shared by Linda was that Donors based in high-income, OECD

countries cannot, and will not, provide funds to smaller NGOs. To mitigate this, she recommended that where possible, local NGOs should bring together a coalition of partners, including other NGOs, universities, research institutions, etc. who contribute different expertise and knowledge, and larger target areas and beneficiary communities.

Other tips for resource mobilization shared by Linda were;

i. That all staff members of an NGO should spend part of their time in fund raising, each catering to different aspects of the process - writing proposals, finding and networking with donors, negotiating, writing reports etc.

ii. To beat competition, she advised NGOs to find the differences and uniqueness of their own programme/projects, new approaches they have used, carry out a SWOT analysis of their organizations and develop a 'bigger picture' with other NGOs that illustrates comprehensive and diverse package of services and projects.

In concluding, she advised local NGOs to diversify their funds so as not to be seen as an 'agent' of one donor, also maintain a healthy and balanced relationship with donors, and being strategic when to highlight their support. She further emphasized the need to maintain good relationships with local authorities and communities – so they can 'defend' any misunderstanding

She ended her presentation by sharing examples of Grants that can be explored by the Just Future participants. They included;

1. Small Grants Programme by the World Bank
2. EU – support to CSOs, including now core funding. Currently developing next funding cycle - https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders_en
3. Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) - https://wphfund.org/
4. Grants from bilateral partners – i.e. GIZ, Netherlands, USAID
5. Grants from foundations – Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, good resource OECD report on Insights on Philanthropy for Gender Equality https://www.oecd.org/development/networks/Final_Gender_WG_Policy_Note_7319.pdf
6. Private Sector

Highlights from Plenary Session

The participants thanked the presenters for the insightful presentations and there was a collective agreement on the relevance of the sessions to the participants.

One participant however expressed concern about the culture of staff from donor organizations expecting 'kick backs' from local NGOs who receive grants from them. There was also concern that International Organizations and UN agencies are implementing activities instead of support local NGOs to do so. This, the participants felt has altered the funding landscape, shrinking the resource available for local organizations.

In response, Linda explained that 'kick backs' are illegal and considered a crime. She however cautioned NGOs to be careful in reporting such acts so as to avoid backlash. She also acknowledged the concerns about International organizations entering the implementation space and recommended a conversation between international organizations and national organizations to address the issue.

Key recommendations from the Workshop.

i. **Leverage top-down and bottom-up approaches in peace building**: Peace practitioners should build and strengthen collaboration with different actors at International, National, District and grass root levels in peace-building contexts. For example, working hand in hand with women's rights organizations and groups, cultural and religious leaders was cited as key to strengthening gender responsiveness of the informal justice system which is very central in addressing SGBV cases. Similarly working with government ministries and agencies was seen as key to bridging the gaps in service provision and access to justice for SGBV survivors.

ii. **Adopt gender transformative approaches:** Participants were encouraged to adopt approaches that sought to transform negative social norms that perpetrate inequalities in power and privilege between women, men, girls and boys to address the scourge of SGBV.

iii. **Adopt conflict sensitive approaches in advocacy, humanitarian assistance and peace building:** Participants were cautioned against always using confrontational approaches in advocacy and encouraged to explore conflict-sensitive approaches to minimize the risk that their interventions would exacerbate conflict dynamics or endanger their survival and safety of their staff in fragile and conflict affected context.

iv **Integrate self-care in programming:** it was recommended that human rights defenders should intentionally plan for and incorporate self-care in peace-building programming to reduce the possibility of burn out. Participants agreed that self-care is a crucial element in making activism sustainable and called for flexibility of donors/development partners to make provision for funding of wellbeing activities for human rights defenders.

v **Develop a risk matrix:** peace practitioners working conflict contexts were cautioned to prioritise development of risk matrix for their planned interventions to identify the potential risks associated with social conflicts, and to develop adequate mitigation measures. The matrix would also create a foundation for continuous context monitoring and preparation of necessary response strategies.

vi **Resources from the different Just Future partners should be translated** in both English and French to facilitate access to important information and learning from the different best practices in the different countries.

Closing remarks

The learning and exchange workshop ended with a vote of thanks from Proscovia Nakaye of the Peace Centre and Winnie from CORDAID. They thanked the participants for taking part in the workshop and openly sharing their experiences. They encouraged the Just Future partners to adopt and put into practice the lessons learned from the workshop in their respective countries to build on the achievements registered so far, but also to further the vision of the Just Future Programme.

Women's International Peace Centre

Amplifying Women's Voice and Power

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The Executive Director
Women's International Peace Centre
Plot 1467, Church Road, Bulindo, Wakiso
P. O. BOX 4924, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256-414-698684
Email: program@wipc.org
Web: www.wipc.org

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