

Research Methodology

COVID-19 and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) database: Mapping the pandemic's gendered impacts and women-led peacebuilding and humanitarian response

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Background and rationale

Across the world, the global COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls. The crisis has worsened gender inequality, further restricted women's access to social and health services, economic and educational opportunities, and increased their vulnerability to violence and security risks.

The pandemic has also impacted the efforts to build and sustain peace. Implementation of peace agreements has been delayed,[1] and communal violence has spiked in some regions.[2] Despite UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' call for a global ceasefire, fighting continues in many contexts, including those that heeded the call,[3] and the "initial gains are fragile and easily reversible." The situation is further aggravated by dwindling resources and shrinking civil society space, which have disrupted the work of many peacebuilding and women's rights organizations working to promote and protect women's rights and build inclusive and sustainable peace.

This underscores the need for gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive responses to the crisis. Such response requires reliable, evidence-based, and locally led research and analysis to provide data and policy recommendations that would inform adequate responses. However, while there has been a recognition of the importance of sex-disaggregated data on the COVID-19 crisis, systematic documentation of the crisis' impact on conflict-affected women, women peacebuilders, and their work, has been missing. This has been compounded by what the UN Secretary-General referred to as the "epidemic of misinformation" that has accompanied the crisis.

[1] For example, according to GNWP partners, in the Philippines, the adoption of the new electoral code – a key component of the peace agreement and of transition to peaceful governance in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao – has been delayed due to the pandemic.

[2] According to information provided by GNWP local partners, there have been spikes of communal violence in Jonglei, Warap and Lake states in South Sudan; as well as increase in farmer-pastoralists clashes in Kitgum, Uganda. These have been attributed to the limited presence of government and the UN due to COVID-19, as well as lowered capacities of peacebuilding organizations who usually work to lower tensions, mediate and address root causes of conflicts.

[3] For example, in Colombia, the unilateral ceasefire by the National Liberation Army (ELN) did not prevent an uptick in violent clashes between armed groups. The attacks are attributed to other armed groups operating in Colombia, as well as dissidents of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). (Information provided by GNWP local partners).



Women and youth peacebuilders are at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis response in local communities. While advocating for the implementation of peace agreements or monitoring the implementation of ceasefire agreements, they make face masks and distribute them along with food packages and hygiene products, to women and girls, elderly, people with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced persons. However, their contributions are not systematically documented, their diverse perspectives are overlooked – and therefore remain unrecognized and unsupported.

In order to close the evidence gap, document and promote the women-led peacebuilding and humanitarian responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and inform gender-responsive and conflict sensitive COVID-19 response and recovery, GNWP is developing a COVID-19 and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) database. The database will include information on: (1) impacts of COVID-19 on women's rights and gender equality; (2) impacts of COVID-19 on peace and security situation, including ceasefires, peace processes and implementation of peace agreements; and (3) initiatives taken by women peacebuilders to address the impacts of COVID-19. The database is an evergreen document, and will continue to be updated according to recent developments, as necessary.

Objectives

The COVID-19 and WPS database has the following objectives:

1. To provide strong evidence and analysis of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality, peace and security, and women-led peacebuilding efforts;
2. To document and showcase women's leadership in COVID-19 response and recovery at all levels and raise awareness of women's roles in crisis response, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and disseminate them among global, regional, and national policymakers;
3. To bring the perspectives of local women, including young women on peacebuilding, conflict prevention, crisis response and post-conflict and post-pandemic recovery in the context of COVID-19 into global policy-making and implementation, including the discussions and outcomes of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the Peacebuilding Architecture Review, and 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action;
4. To encourage and inform the development and implementation of gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive COVID-19 response and recovery strategies.



Methodology

GNWP will use its global network of over 100 organizations around the world to collect accurate and up-to-date information to inform the database.

Research questions

GNWP will collect, process and analyze the information to be included in the database using the following guiding questions:

1. What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on (1) women, women's rights activists, and women's rights organizations in conflict-affected communities, (2) local peacebuilding efforts and the implementation of peace processes (3) implementation of WPS resolutions in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries?
2. How have local women peacebuilders adapted and mitigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic? How have women continued their work for an inclusive and sustainable peace? What challenges and barriers do women's rights and peacebuilding organizations face? What support do they need to overcome them?
3. How have women been involved in official efforts to address COVID-19 and plan for post-pandemic recovery? Are local women meaningfully included in decision-making about crisis response, preventative measures, economic relief packages, and planning for post-COVID recovery? From the perspective of local women peacebuilders, what are their key priorities and recommendations?

Data collection tools

The research will use the following methods to collect qualitative and quantitative data to answer the above questions and triangulate information through a combination of primary and secondary sources.

- Survey: a multi-lingual questionnaire that includes questions on the impacts of COVID-19 on local peacebuilding efforts and implementation of the WPS resolutions, as well as on locally-led responses to the COVID-19 crisis will be distributed to women's rights and peacebuilding organizations and other civil society groups around the world, using GNWP's wide network in over 40 countries.
- Focus group discussions (FDGs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with women and youth peacebuilders, community leaders and other relevant stakeholders. These discussions will complement the survey with more in-depth questions and qualitative analysis of how COVID-19 affects peace and security, women's peacebuilding work, and the implementation of WPS resolutions.

- Review and analysis of existing and emerging relevant documents and data. A research team will perform a systematic literature review to find the relevant or related studies, news articles, policy briefs, and reports; compile the important conclusions; analyze key data; and synthesize the state of knowledge. This is complemented by regular consultations between GNWP and its local partners to identify additional sources of information, strengthen the analysis, and adapt the methodology as needed to make it context-specific.

The research uses the following criteria when selecting data and information sources:

- Secondary sources are closely reviewed for: author's and/or publisher's credentials and affiliations; other sources cited in the report; and endorsements and reviews of the source. Only up-to-date sources are reviewed.
- Primary data is obtained from reputable, trusted local civil society organizations and individual experts.

The iterative research design and analysis allows for flexibility and refinement of research questions and results at various stages of the research and data collection process. Due to the constantly evolving nature and impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the compiled data is regularly revised.

Data visualization and research outputs

The information collected in the database will be made available and automatically translatable online, and data visualizations will also be provided to facilitate analysis and the use of data. The database will serve as a resource for advocacy by civil society; and as a resource by UN, and government policy makers and practitioners. Through active promotion of the database, GNWP also aims to encourage the development of gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive interventions on COVID-19 as well as future humanitarian crises.

The information will be made available and disseminated through the following means:

1. COVID-19 and WPS interactive dashboard. The dashboard will visualize the key information collected in the database. It will allow for easy searching of the database content by country, category of impact, or type of women-led response. It will also provide visualizations of the key trends emerging from the information collected through in the database and analyzed by the GNWP research team, available here: gnwp.org/what-we-do/covid-19-wps-database/

2. Country reports. GNWP uses the information collected in the database, GNWP produces and regularly updates COVID-19 country updates. Updates from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Moldova, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Sudan, Uganda, Ukraine, the United States of America and Yemen, are available here: gnwp.org/covid19-strategy/

3. Policy briefs on relevant thematic areas. They will use the information collected in the database to provide in-depth analysis on topics including women's leadership in COVID-19 response and recovery, and the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of peace agreements.

