

Incorporating local perspectives into the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Great Lakes Region (iWPS)

The Challenge

Since the early 1990s, the Great Lakes Region in Africa has grappled with persistent armed violence and political instability. The origins of these conflicts can be traced back to regional and national power struggles, ethnic tensions, and competition over resources. Despite national, regional and international efforts, over 40% of countries in the region continue to exhibit low or very low states of peace.

Against this background, women’s participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is pivotal and constitutes one pillar of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Nonetheless, due to unequal power dynamics and harmful gender norms, women remain severely underrepresented in peace missions and peace negotiations in the Great Lakes Region. The same root causes lead to women and girls being disproportionately affected by conflict-related violence, including sexual violence.

Numerous local women’s rights organizations advocate for the protection of women in conflict and their participation in peacebuilding. However, they struggle with financial constraints and shrinking spaces for civil society to contribute to national and regional policy-making. This means that the peacebuilding needs of a large portion of the population are not incorporated into peacebuilding measures and processes which prevents long-term, gender-just peace.

The Objective

This regional project supports the incorporation of local perspectives as well as strengthening accountability for the WPS implementation at regional level of the Great Lakes Region.

Project Name	Incorporating local perspectives into the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Great Lakes Region (iWPS)
Commissioned by	The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project Budget	6.500.000 Euro
Project Region	Great Lakes Region
Lead Executing Agency	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)
Duration	January 2024 – December 2026

Our Approach

The project approach is founded on the understanding that peace processes are more successful if they are inclusive. To empower local grassroots voices, the project focuses its interventions in three main areas: enhancing the organizational capacity of grassroots organisations, strengthening civil society networks and their access to regional decision-making spaces. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen accountability through the use of data-based local knowledge in the implementation of the WPS agenda.

The reference point for all project activities is the WPS agenda with its four pillars: (1) Participation, (2) Prevention, (3) Protection and (4) Relief and Recovery.



L. to R.: SGBV training and stakeholders’ meeting, DRC & Registration and access to healthcare services, Tanzania.

Focus Areas

Output 1: Building Capacities of Grassroots Organizations

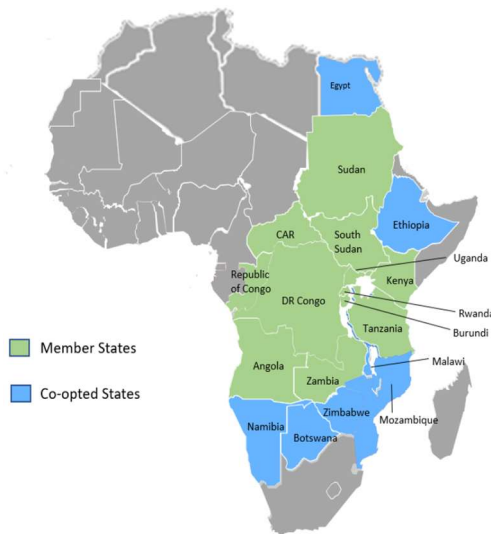
Building the capacities of selected grassroots organizations working on the local implementation of the WPS agenda will improve their technical, organizational, and administrative skills. This will empower grassroots organizations in planning and implementing gender-responsive and human rights-based peacebuilding initiatives.

Output 2: Regional Dialogue and Networking

Supporting networks of civil society stakeholders amongst each other and with the ICGLR helps to create solutions which take into account local realities. This makes interventions and policies more responsive to the needs of target groups, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and gender-just peace in the African Great Lakes Region.

Output 3: Sharing Data-Based Knowledge on WPS Agenda Implementation

Increasing the use of data-based local knowledge to inform regional policies in the context of the WPS agenda ensures they are more inclusive by taking the realities of the target groups into account. This supports the ICGLR in increasing the relevance, sustainability and effectiveness of their contribution implementing the WPS agenda regionally.



Project Indicators



Indicator 1

800 individuals,

50% of them women and girls, have been supported by 12 gender-responsive and human rights-based peacebuilding initiatives implemented by grassroots organisations in line with the WPS agenda.



Indicator 2

ICGLR has included the results of the consultations with civil society stakeholders on incorporating local perspectives into the implementation of the WPS agenda in **3 regional agenda-setting processes**.



Indicator 3

3 good practices

for integrated implementation of the WPS agenda in the region have been officially recognized by ICGLR.

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