Women, Peace and Security

Who we are

The Earth Institute’s Women, Peace and Security (WPS) program, led by Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee, contributes to greater global and regional understanding of the diverse roles women play to successfully influence sustainable peace and promote human security through everyday activism. Through education, public service and research, the WPS program advances the visibility of and knowledge exchange among women changemakers – domestically and internationally – and disseminates lessons learned from their experiences.

Context

Around the globe, women are disproportionately affected by violent conflict, poverty, structural inequalities, and environmental crises. At the same time, women make and sustain peace everyday. In actions large and small, women work tirelessly at the frontlines of the struggles against domestic violence, racial inequality, environmental degradation and violent extremism. But much of this work tends to go undocumented and unnoticed. Overshadowed by ensconced systems of power and governance, the foundations for peace that women establish in their homes, streets and societies are often taken for granted, dismissed or squandered. Moreover, women activists and their efforts are regularly marginalized in political, social and cultural institutions, which inhibit the impact and reach of their efforts.

Core Beliefs and Principles

1) Grassroots women peacebuilders and frontline activists around the globe employ a diverse range of strategies and practices to forward and sustain justice in their communities. Often, such work is not recognized or named as peace work. 

2) Security is more than armed conflict and war. It includes issues of everyday safety like access to clean water, affordable housing, and bodily autonomy.

3) Expanded recognition of peace and security requires that we must not look only to war zones, but also to a range of contexts, places and spaces – including the United States.

4) New analytical tools are needed to understand what “counts” as women’s participation in peace activism across the globe.

This problem exists alongside another related problem, which is that almost twenty years after the unanimously adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which promised to increase women’s participation in all aspects of peacemaking and peacebuilding, women remain strikingly absent in formal roles in peace processes – as negotiators, mediators, signatories or witnesses.

Both of these problems—lack of recognition and lack of representation—reveal the urgent need for new analytical tools and expanded knowledge in the field of women, peace and security.

1 The Women, Peace, and Security team uses the term “woman” to describe any individual that self identifies as a woman, including, but not limited to cisgender and transgender individuals.


**Initiatives and Strategies**

Centered on the knowledge and experiences of grassroots women activists from around the globe, the WPS program:

- **Increases the visibility of grassroots women peacebuilders as experts.**
- **Expands and transforms the field of women, peace and security.**
- **Documents, fosters and forwards innovative and participatory research.**

The WPS program is a premier education research and action hub leading a transformative approach to addressing issues of women, peace and security.

Through fellowship programs, graduate internships, research and public convenings, the WPS program advances the visibility of and knowledge exchange among frontline women changemakers – domestically and internationally – and disseminates lessons learned from their experiences.

1) **Fellowships**

   The Peace and Social Change Fellowship is designed to generate knowledge, build skills, strengthen relationships, and exchange strategies amongst frontline advocates and organizers working on issues of racial and gender justice, social change, and more broadly, genuine security for all people.

2) **Research**

   The WPS program creates, undertakes, and partners on cutting-edge research to support evidence-based knowledge about women’s formal and informal contributions to processes of peacebuilding.

3) **Workshops and Public Convenings**

   The WPS program hosts regular in-person and online forums for engagement amongst a diverse range of interested parties including policymakers and the general public. These forums will foster critical partnerships with appropriate media outlets to disburse new findings, in packaging that is accessible and shareable to the general public.

4) **Graduate Student Internships**

   The WPS program offers graduate student internships to serve as interdisciplinary research and outreach teams for frontline grassroots activists.

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1. Working with internally displaced women in Numbi, South Kivu, DRC. (Photo credit: Aline Mugisho, AC⁴ Visiting Scholar)  
2. A woman vegetable seller in the Comoro district of Dili, Timor-Leste. (Photo credit: Alexandra Tamiko Da Dalt, AC⁴ Fellow)  
3. Mural of an older Timorese tia over a pattern symbolizing the traditional tais (fabric woven by women, pattern and color specific to each district of the country) near Motael Church, Dili, Timor-Leste. (Photo credit: Alexandra Tamiko Da Dalt, AC⁴ Fellow)  
4. A focus group with women community leaders in Minova, Eastern Congo. (Photo credit: Aline Mugisho, AC⁴ Visiting Scholar)  

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**The Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity (AC⁴)** strives to foster sustainable peace through innovation and integration. We work to enable and support integrative research and practice on sustainable peace, constructive conflict engagement, and sustainable development. This is built on an understanding that building peaceful and sustainable societies requires a systemic approach, leveraging the expertise and knowledge of scientists and practitioners from across disciplines and areas of practice. By connecting thought leaders at Columbia University and around the world, AC⁴ works to build opportunities to apply leading-edge science to generate solutions for some of our most pressing social and environmental challenges.

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