



Dignity, Justice, and Peace

Women as Peacebuilders: The Critical Role of Sudanese Women in National Reconciliation

Proposal for Research and Programming Initiative

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Executive Summary

This proposal outlines a comprehensive initiative to document, support, and amplify the role of Sudanese women as peacebuilders in the ongoing national reconciliation process. Despite facing systemic barriers and ongoing conflict, Sudanese women have consistently demonstrated leadership in grassroots peace efforts, community mediation, and cross-tribal dialogue. This initiative seeks to formalize their contributions, build capacity for women-led peace processes, and ensure their meaningful participation in national reconciliation frameworks.

The project will combine rigorous research, capacity building, advocacy, and direct support to women's peace networks across Sudan's diverse regions, with particular attention to conflict-affected areas including Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Khartoum.

Sudan's protracted conflicts have devastated communities, displaced millions, and fractured social cohesion across ethnic, regional, and political lines. While women and girls have borne disproportionate burdens of violence, displacement, and economic hardship, they have simultaneously emerged as crucial agents of peace and reconciliation. At the grassroots level, Sudanese women have mediated inter-communal disputes, provided humanitarian assistance, protected vulnerable populations, facilitated dialogue across conflict lines, and maintained social networks essential for community resilience.

However, their contributions remain largely invisible in formal peace processes and national reconciliation efforts. Women constitute less than 10% of participants in official peace negotiations globally, and Sudan's recent peace processes have similarly marginalized women's voices despite their demonstrated effectiveness as peacebuilders. This exclusion not only violates principles of gender equality and human rights but also undermines the sustainability and effectiveness of peace agreements.

This initiative responds to calls from Sudanese women's organizations, civil society networks, and international partners for sustained, comprehensive support to women peacebuilders. It aligns with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the African Union's Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, and Sudan's own commitments to gender equality and inclusive governance.

The proposed program will work across five interconnected components: research and documentation to make women's contributions visible; capacity building to strengthen women's peacebuilding skills; network strengthening to enhance coordination and collective action; advocacy to ensure women's inclusion in formal processes; and direct support to women-led peace initiatives at the community level. Through these integrated approaches, the initiative aims to transform both the practice and perception of peacebuilding in Sudan, establishing women as recognized and resourced leaders in national reconciliation.

Expected outcomes include increased participation of women in peace processes at all levels, strengthened capacity of at least 500 women peacebuilders, establishment of sustainable women's peace networks in six regions, documentation of women's peace contributions reaching national and international audiences, and concrete improvements in community-level reconciliation in target areas. Beyond immediate outputs, the initiative seeks to catalyze lasting change in how Sudan approaches peacebuilding, embedding gender-inclusive principles in national reconciliation frameworks and creating pathways for women's continued leadership in building a peaceful, just Sudan.

1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Background: Sudan's Conflict and Reconciliation Landscape

Sudan has experienced multiple, overlapping conflicts over the past seven decades, rooted in complex intersections of political marginalization, economic inequality, ethnic tensions, resource competition, and struggles over national identity and governance. The conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and eastern Sudan have resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths, massive displacement affecting over 4 million people, widespread human rights violations

including conflict-related sexual violence, and the destruction of livelihoods and social infrastructure.

The December 2018 revolution, led significantly by women and youth, created unprecedented momentum for democratic transformation and peace. The subsequent transitional period saw the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement in October 2020, bringing several armed movements into a framework for resolving long-standing grievances. However, the October 2021 military coup disrupted this transition, and renewed conflict erupting in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces has plunged the country into humanitarian catastrophe, with over 10 million people displaced and acute food insecurity affecting the majority of the population.

Throughout these cycles of conflict and attempted peacebuilding, national reconciliation has remained elusive. Previous peace agreements have often failed to address root causes, have excluded key stakeholders including women and marginalized communities, and have lacked adequate implementation mechanisms. The current context presents both enormous challenges and critical opportunities. The scale of suffering has created widespread desire for lasting peace, civil society networks including women's organizations have demonstrated resilience and adaptability, regional and international attention remains focused on Sudan, and there is growing recognition that inclusive approaches are essential for sustainable peace.

National reconciliation in Sudan must address multiple dimensions including political reconciliation between rival factions and movements, inter-communal reconciliation particularly in areas of ethnic conflict, transitional justice and accountability for past abuses, economic reconciliation addressing inequalities and resource distribution, and social healing from decades of trauma and violence. Women's participation is not optional for any of these dimensions but rather essential for their success.

1.2 The Historical Role of Sudanese Women in Peacebuilding

Sudanese women have a rich, though often unrecognized, history of leadership in peace and justice movements. During the independence struggle and subsequent political transitions, women activists played crucial roles in mobilizing for democratic governance and social justice. The Sudanese Women's Union, established in 1952, became one of the most effective women's movements in Africa, advocating for women's rights while engaging in broader struggles for political transformation.

In conflict-affected regions, women have developed indigenous peace mechanisms drawing on cultural traditions and social networks. In Darfur, women have facilitated judiyya reconciliation conferences, bringing together communities divided by violence. In the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, women provided humanitarian assistance and maintained communication channels across conflict lines throughout decades of war. In eastern Sudan, women mediated resource conflicts between pastoral and agricultural communities. These efforts have often been more successful than formal peace processes in reducing local violence and rebuilding social trust.

The 2018-2019 revolution demonstrated women's capacity for mass mobilization and sustained political action. Women were at the forefront of street protests, often providing protection to demonstrators and negotiating with security forces. They organized resistance committees,

provided medical care to wounded protesters, and maintained networks that sustained the movement through violent repression. The iconic images of Sudanese women leading chants and organizing sit-ins captured global attention and challenged both domestic and international stereotypes about women in Sudan and the broader region.

Following the revolution, women actively participated in transitional governance structures, though in insufficient numbers. Women served in the transitional cabinet, including in the crucial portfolio of foreign affairs. Women lawyers and activists drove transitional justice initiatives, including efforts to address conflict-related sexual violence and establish accountability mechanisms. Women's organizations documented human rights violations, provided services to survivors of violence, and advocated for inclusive peace processes.

The current conflict has again highlighted women's peace leadership. Women have organized local ceasefires to allow humanitarian access, evacuated civilians from conflict zones at great personal risk, provided shelter and assistance to displaced families, documented atrocities including widespread sexual violence, and maintained pressure on armed actors to protect civilians. Emergency Response Rooms, largely organized and staffed by women, have become the primary humanitarian response mechanism in many areas where formal aid cannot operate.

This historical record demonstrates that Sudanese women possess both the commitment and capacity to contribute decisively to peace and reconciliation. What they have lacked is not ability or will, but rather recognition, resources, protection, and meaningful inclusion in decision-making spaces where peace is negotiated and reconciliation frameworks are established.

1.3 Current Challenges and Opportunities

The current context presents formidable challenges for women peacebuilders in Sudan. The active armed conflict has created extreme insecurity, with women peacebuilders facing risks of violence including targeted attacks, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and restrictions on movement. The collapse of state institutions has eliminated formal channels for participation and removed protective frameworks, however inadequate they were. Massive displacement has disrupted women's peace networks and community structures, scattering activists and organizations. Economic devastation has eliminated livelihoods and resources, making it difficult to sustain peace work. Communications infrastructure damage has impaired coordination and information sharing among women's networks.

Cultural and structural barriers persist even amid crisis. Patriarchal norms that exclude women from public decision-making remain deeply entrenched in many communities. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as tribal conferences and customary courts, typically reserve leadership roles for men. Political and military leaders often view women's participation as symbolic rather than substantive, relegating women to consultative rather than decision-making roles. International peace processes frequently reproduce these patterns, with women invited to speak but not to negotiate, to advise but not to decide.

Women peacebuilders also face practical challenges including limited access to financial resources for peace initiatives, lack of formal training in negotiation and mediation techniques recognized by formal actors, inadequate security and protection mechanisms, limited access to

information about formal peace processes, and insufficient documentation of their contributions that would strengthen their claims for inclusion.

Yet significant opportunities exist in this moment. The scale of the crisis has created widespread recognition that previous approaches have failed and new solutions are needed. International attention and resources are focused on Sudan, creating space for advocacy and programming. Women's demonstrated leadership during the revolution and the current crisis has enhanced their legitimacy and public support. Regional and international frameworks increasingly mandate women's participation in peace processes. Technology enables new forms of networking, documentation, and coordination even amid displacement and insecurity.

Most importantly, women themselves have articulated clear visions for their role in peace and reconciliation. Through consultations conducted during the development of this proposal, women peacebuilders from across Sudan identified their priorities including meaningful participation in all levels of peace negotiations, resources to sustain and expand grassroots peace work, protection mechanisms enabling them to work safely, capacity building in formal mediation and negotiation skills, platforms for cross-regional coordination and learning, documentation of their contributions to shift narratives and perceptions, and integration of their concerns—particularly around gender-based violence, displacement, and economic security—into peace agreements and reconciliation frameworks.

This proposal responds directly to these articulated needs and priorities, recognizing that sustainable peace in Sudan requires not just including women in existing processes but transforming how peace is understood and built.

1.4 Rationale for Gender-Inclusive Peace Processes

The case for women's meaningful participation in peace processes rests on multiple foundations including rights, effectiveness, and sustainability. From a rights perspective, women's participation is a fundamental principle of gender equality and human rights, mandated by international frameworks including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and the African Union's Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. Women constitute half of Sudan's population and have been profoundly affected by conflict; their right to shape peace processes is beyond question.

From an effectiveness perspective, substantial evidence demonstrates that women's participation improves peace outcomes. Research by the International Peace Institute found that peace agreements with women's participation are 20% more likely to last at least two years and 35% more likely to last fifteen years. Women often bring different priorities to negotiations, including focus on community security, humanitarian access, transitional justice, and social reconstruction rather than exclusively on power-sharing among armed actors. Women's inclusion broadens the range of actors engaged in peace processes, reducing spoiler dynamics and increasing buy-in. Women's networks often cross conflict lines, enabling communication and trust-building that formal channels cannot achieve.

The sustainability argument emphasizes that peace processes excluding major constituencies are inherently fragile. When women are excluded, their concerns—including gender-based violence,

economic security, and social services—are typically marginalized in peace agreements. Implementation of agreements suffers when women's organizations, which often have the strongest community presence and legitimacy, are not engaged. Post-conflict reconstruction that does not address gender inequalities reproduces conditions that contributed to conflict.

In Sudan's specific context, several factors make women's participation particularly critical. Women's organizations have demonstrated resilience throughout cycles of conflict and political transition, maintaining operations when other civil society structures collapsed. Women's networks bridge ethnic, regional, and political divides, providing rare platforms for cross-cleavage dialogue. Women activists have consistently prioritized national unity and civilian democratic governance over factional interests. Women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence have powerful testimonies that challenge militarized narratives and center human costs of war. Women's economic roles in markets, agriculture, and informal sectors make them essential to livelihood recovery and economic reconciliation.

Furthermore, excluding women from peace processes in Sudan would contradict the progressive vision articulated during the 2018-2019 revolution, when women's leadership became a defining feature of Sudan's democratic aspirations. It would squander international goodwill and support generated by women's activism. It would perpetuate injustices that have undermined previous peace efforts.

Gender-inclusive peace processes must go beyond token representation to achieve meaningful participation, where women influence agendas, shape proposals, and participate in decision-making, not merely as observers or advisors. This requires adequate representation with critical mass approaching parity rather than isolated individuals, diverse participation including women from different regions, ethnicities, ages, and political affiliations, and sustained participation throughout all stages of peace processes from pre-negotiation through implementation and monitoring. Additionally, it demands gender-responsive content where peace agreements address women's priorities and gender inequalities, and resourced participation ensuring women have necessary support, security, and capacity to participate effectively.

This proposal aims to create conditions for such meaningful participation while simultaneously supporting women's autonomous peace work at community levels, recognizing that formal processes and grassroots efforts must mutually reinforce each other for genuine reconciliation to occur.

2. Problem Statement

2.1 Exclusion of Women from Formal Peace Negotiations

Despite international commitments and demonstrated effectiveness, women remain systematically excluded from formal peace negotiations in Sudan and globally. Analysis of major peace processes in Sudan over the past two decades reveals stark patterns. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) that ended the North-South civil war included minimal women's participation in negotiations and largely ignored gender issues in its provisions. The Darfur Peace Agreement (2006) and subsequent processes similarly marginalized women, despite Darfuri women bearing extraordinary burdens of conflict-related violence. The Juba

Peace Agreement (2020) made some progress with women's civil society participation in consultations, but women comprised only approximately 7% of negotiators and signatories.

This exclusion reflects multiple factors including male domination of armed movements and political parties that constitute primary negotiating parties, traditional mediation frameworks that vest authority in male elders and leaders, assumptions by international mediators that military and political leaders are primary legitimate actors, security protocols that restrict access to negotiation venues, and lack of dedicated resources for women's participation including travel, accommodation, and security.

The consequences of exclusion are profound. Peace agreements fail to adequately address gender-based violence, leaving survivors without justice or protection. Economic provisions ignore women's livelihoods and property rights, perpetuating economic marginalization. Power-sharing arrangements concentrate positions among armed actors, excluding women and civilian populations. Implementation mechanisms lack gender expertise and accountability. Women's organizations remain under-resourced and marginalized in post-conflict transitions.

Recent peace processes have attempted to address these gaps through Women's Track mechanisms and consultative forums, but these typically occur parallel to rather than integrated with main negotiations, producing recommendations that negotiators may ignore. This creates an illusion of inclusion without granting genuine decision-making power, frustrating women activists and squandering their contributions.

For Sudan's current reconciliation efforts, this pattern cannot continue. The legitimacy and sustainability of any peace framework will depend on genuine inclusion of women who have maintained community cohesion throughout conflict, who represent constituencies demanding democratic civilian governance, and who possess alternative visions of security and peace that armed actors cannot provide.

2.2 Undervaluation of Women's Grassroots Peace Efforts

While women's exclusion from formal processes is well-documented, equally problematic is the systematic undervaluation of women's grassroots peace work. This work—community mediation, inter-ethnic dialogue, humanitarian assistance, trauma healing, reconciliation rituals, and early warning networks—constitutes the actual infrastructure of peace at local levels. Yet it receives minimal recognition, documentation, or support.

Several factors contribute to this undervaluation. The distinction between "high politics" and "low politics" renders community-level work invisible, with formal peace studies and practice focusing almost exclusively on elite negotiations while dismissing grassroots efforts as peripheral. Gendered assumptions equate peacebuilding with masculine-coded activities (negotiation, mediation by formal authorities, political agreements) while devaluing feminine-coded activities (care work, community organizing, relationship building), even when the latter prove more effective at sustaining peace. Resource allocation patterns reflect these biases, with international funding flowing overwhelmingly to formal processes, international mediators, and male-led organizations, while women's grassroots initiatives operate on minimal budgets through volunteer labor.

Documentation gaps compound the problem. Women's peace work often occurs informally through social networks, leaving minimal written records. Oral histories and community knowledge about women's contributions are not captured in official narratives. International media and academic attention focuses on formal negotiations and armed actors, rendering grassroots work invisible to external audiences. When women's contributions are documented, they are frequently romanticized or essentialized rather than analyzed as serious political and strategic interventions.

The practical consequences are severe. Effective local peace mechanisms are not resourced, scaled, or integrated into broader reconciliation frameworks. Women peacebuilders lack recognition that could strengthen their legitimacy and authority. Lessons from successful grassroots initiatives are not learned or replicated. Women's burnout and attrition increase as they sustain peace work without adequate support. Alternative models of peacebuilding that prioritize community healing and social cohesion are dismissed in favor of elite political bargaining that frequently fails.

In Sudan, specific examples illustrate this pattern. Women in Darfur have organized judiyya conferences bringing together Arab and non-Arab communities for reconciliation, achieving local truces and agreements on resource sharing that formal processes could not. Yet these efforts remain undocumented and unsupported. Women in displacement camps provide protection, organize communal resources, and maintain social networks essential for survival. Their labor enables humanitarian operations but is treated as natural caregiving rather than strategic peace work. Women in the resistance committees organized neighborhood security, conflict resolution, and service provision during the revolution and current crisis. Their grassroots governance demonstrates alternatives to militarized politics but receives minimal institutional recognition or support.

Addressing this undervaluation requires deliberately shifting frameworks to recognize grassroots peace work as legitimate, strategic, and essential rather than supplementary to formal processes. It requires documenting and publicizing women's contributions through rigorous research and strategic communications. It requires directing substantial resources to women-led community initiatives. Most fundamentally, it requires transforming assumptions about what constitutes peacebuilding and who qualifies as peacebuilders.

2.3 Security and Protection Concerns for Women Peacebuilders

Women engaged in peacebuilding and reconciliation work in Sudan face acute and multifaceted security risks that threaten their lives, wellbeing, and ability to continue their work. The current armed conflict has dramatically escalated these risks, but they exist across conflict and post-conflict contexts.

Physical security threats include targeted violence by armed actors who view women's peace work as threatening to their interests or authority, sexual violence used deliberately to terrorize and silence women activists, attacks during travel to conflict zones or across conflict lines for peace work, violence by family or community members opposing women's public roles, and exposure to generalized violence in conflict-affected areas where peace work occurs.

Documentation from human rights organizations reveals numerous cases of women peacebuilders being detained, threatened, or attacked. During the revolution, women protesters faced sexual violence by security forces designed to deter their participation. Under the current conflict, women in Emergency Response Rooms have been targeted by armed groups seeking to eliminate humanitarian assistance and civilian organizing. Women documenting human rights violations face particular risks as their work threatens impunity.

Beyond physical threats, women peacebuilders face legal and administrative harassment including arbitrary detention without charge, surveillance and monitoring of their activities, restrictions on movement and association, asset freezing and restrictions on organizational operations, and defamation campaigns accusing them of immorality or foreign agency. The collapse of rule of law in current conditions eliminates whatever minimal protections previously existed.

Digital security risks have increased as women peacebuilders use technology for coordination and documentation. These risks include surveillance of communications by intelligence services, hacking of organizational accounts and data, doxxing with publication of personal information to facilitate attacks, and online harassment and defamation campaigns. Many women peacebuilders lack training in digital security measures, leaving them vulnerable.

Psychosocial impacts of insecurity are profound. Chronic fear and stress affect mental health and decision-making. Trauma from direct violence or witnessing atrocities impairs wellbeing and capacity. Moral injury from being unable to protect community members despite peace efforts causes anguish. Isolation when security threats force reduced movement and public presence compounds stress. Inadequate psychosocial support for peacebuilders means these impacts accumulate over time.

Protection mechanisms are severely inadequate. Formal state protection does not exist for civil society activists and may increase risks given state actors' involvement in violence. International protection mechanisms such as temporary relocation and emergency grants reach few women peacebuilders, particularly those in remote areas. Community protection is inconsistent, as some communities value women's peace work while others view it as transgressive. Women's organizations often lack resources for even basic security measures such as secure communications, safe houses, or legal support.

The consequence is that women must choose between continuing peace work at great personal risk or abandoning efforts for their own safety. Many continue despite risks, demonstrating remarkable courage but facing exhaustion and potential catastrophic harm. Others curtail activities, reducing the capacity for peace work precisely when it is most needed. Some seek refuge abroad, creating brain drain and disrupting networks.

Addressing protection requires multiple approaches including international advocacy to pressure armed actors to cease targeting civilians, dedicated protection resources for at-risk peacebuilders, security training and equipment for safe operations, psychosocial support addressing trauma and stress, legal support and accompaniment when activists face harassment, relocation support when remaining in place is untenable, and ultimately political solutions that end armed conflict and establish rule of law. This proposal includes protection components recognizing that sustainability of women's peace work depends on their safety and wellbeing.

2.4 Limited Resources and Institutional Support

Despite their demonstrated effectiveness and critical importance, women peacebuilders in Sudan operate with grossly inadequate financial, technical, and institutional resources. This resource deficit constrains the scope, quality, and sustainability of their work and reflects broader patterns of underinvestment in women's organizations and grassroots peacebuilding.

Financial constraints are acute. Most women's peace organizations operate on annual budgets under \$50,000, often far less, while sustaining multiple programs and serving large constituencies. Many rely entirely on volunteer labor, limiting their operational capacity and contributing to burnout. When funding is available, it often comes as small, short-term grants requiring extensive reporting that absorbs staff time. Core operational funding—covering salaries, rent, utilities, communications—is rare, forcing organizations into project-to-project survival. Women peacebuilders frequently subsidize their work from personal resources, an unsustainable model that privileges those with independent means.

International aid to Sudan does not adequately reach women's organizations. Analysis shows that only 1-2% of bilateral and multilateral aid to fragile states supports women's organizations and movements, despite evidence of their effectiveness. Large grants flow to international organizations and government agencies, with local organizations receiving minimal sub-contracting. Funding mechanisms favor organizations with strong administrative capacity and English language skills, disadvantaging grassroots groups. Risk-averse donors withdraw from conflict zones, abandoning local organizations operating in greatest need areas.

Beyond finances, women's organizations lack technical resources necessary for effective programming. Many operate without basic equipment such as computers, printers, or reliable internet access. Organizations lack vehicles for travel to remote communities where much peace work occurs. Communications equipment for secure coordination is unaffordable. Office space is inadequate or non-existent. These material constraints severely limit operational effectiveness.

Capacity gaps compound resource limitations. Many women peacebuilders have learned through experience but lack formal training in areas such as conflict analysis and mediation skills, project management and strategic planning, financial management and organizational governance, monitoring and evaluation, proposal writing and fundraising, digital security and communications technology, and trauma-informed practice and psychosocial support. International trainings are often inaccessible due to cost, language, or lack of information. When training occurs, it frequently uses generic curricula not adapted to Sudan's context or women's specific needs.

Institutional support is minimal. Unlike in some contexts where women's movements have built umbrella organizations or networks with coordination capacity, Sudan's women's peace movement remains fragmented. Communication and coordination among groups is inconsistent, limiting collective action. There is no national platform amplifying women peacebuilders' voices or mobilizing resources. Relationships with government institutions, where they exist, provide minimal substantive support. Regional and international networks exist but often operate disconnected from grassroots realities.

Knowledge management is weak. Successful peace initiatives are not adequately documented, preventing learning and replication. There is no systematic collection or analysis of data on women's peace work. Research linking women peacebuilders with academics who could document and publicize their contributions is limited. Best practices are shared informally if at all.

These resource and capacity constraints create a vicious cycle. Limited resources reduce effectiveness and visibility, which reduces ability to access additional resources. Organizations remain in survival mode rather than able to invest in strategic growth. Burnout and attrition deplete human capital that is difficult to replace. The movement's potential impact is a fraction of what adequate resourcing could enable.

Addressing this requires both increased funding flows to women peacebuilders and systemic changes in how funding is allocated. It requires donors to provide flexible, multi-year core support rather than restrictive project grants. It requires direct funding to women's organizations rather than intermediary channels. It requires capacity strengthening that is sustained rather than one-off. Most fundamentally, it requires recognizing investment in women peacebuilders as investment in peace infrastructure, not charitable giving, and resourcing it accordingly.

2.5 Documentation Gaps in Women's Peace Contributions

Perhaps the most insidious obstacle facing women peacebuilders is invisibility. Their contributions, though substantial and sustained, remain largely undocumented in official narratives, peace studies literature, media coverage, and policy frameworks. This invisibility perpetuates cycles of exclusion and underinvestment, as what is not seen is not valued or resourced.

Multiple factors create documentation gaps. Women's peace work often occurs in informal, private, or community spaces that external observers including journalists and researchers do not access. The social networks and relationship-building that constitute much of women's peace work are difficult to observe and document compared to discrete public events. Oral culture and traditions mean much of women's work is not recorded in written form. When documentation exists, it is often held locally in community knowledge or organizational records not accessible to broader audiences.

Systematic biases in what gets documented compound these barriers. Media coverage focuses overwhelmingly on armed actors, formal negotiations, and dramatic events rather than slow relationship-building and community healing. Academic peace and conflict studies have historically centered elite politics and formal institutions, with grassroots organizing and women's contributions understudied. International organizations and donors document their own programs but not the broader ecosystem of women's peace work. National narratives about conflict and peace, when they emerge, are typically written by political and military elites who have minimal knowledge of or interest in grassroots contributions.

Gender bias operates at multiple levels. Assumptions that men are primary actors in conflict and peace render women's contributions invisible even when substantial. Women's peace work is often described using language that diminishes its significance—as "support," "assistance," or "complement" to men's efforts rather than as independent strategic action. When women's

contributions are noted, they are frequently essentialized—attributed to inherent feminine qualities rather than to deliberate strategy, skill, and political analysis. Individual women who gain recognition are treated as exceptions rather than representatives of broader movements.

Language and literacy barriers compound exclusion from documentation. Much documentation occurs in English or other international languages inaccessible to many women peacebuilders. Women with limited formal education may have profound knowledge and skills but cannot access platforms requiring written submissions. Academic and policy documentation uses jargon that excludes those without specialized training.

The consequences of these documentation gaps are far-reaching. Women's exclusion from peace processes is easier to justify when their contributions are invisible. Resource allocation to women's organizations remains minimal when their work is not documented and recognized. Young women lack role models and historical knowledge of women's peace leadership. Policymakers and programmers design interventions without understanding existing capacities and activities. Lessons from successful women-led initiatives are not learned or scaled. The historical record of Sudan's conflicts and peace processes is incomplete and distorted, serving militarized narratives while erasing civilian agency.

Breaking this invisibility requires deliberate documentation efforts that center women's voices and perspectives, use culturally appropriate and accessible methods including oral history and visual documentation, reach grassroots women not just prominent activists, analyze women's contributions as strategic and political rather than merely supportive, and disseminate findings through multiple channels reaching diverse audiences. Documentation must be not just for external audiences but also for movement strengthening, providing women peacebuilders with evidence of their contributions that bolsters legitimacy and confidence.

This proposal prioritizes rigorous documentation as a core component, recognizing that making women's peace work visible is essential for all other objectives. Documentation serves immediate advocacy purposes, contributes to long-term historical and scholarly records, supports movement building by connecting women across regions and generations, and challenges narratives that center militarized masculinity while erasing women's agency in shaping Sudan's future.

3. Objectives and Goals

3.1 Primary Objective

The primary objective of this initiative is to strengthen and formalize the role of Sudanese women as central actors in national reconciliation processes by documenting their contributions, building their capacity, supporting their networks and initiatives, and ensuring their meaningful participation in peace and reconciliation frameworks at all levels.

This objective challenges the current paradigm where women's peace work is marginalized, under-resourced, and excluded from formal processes. It asserts that sustainable peace and genuine reconciliation in Sudan are impossible without women's full participation and leadership. It seeks not simply to add women to existing processes but to transform how

peacebuilding is understood and practiced, centering community healing, social cohesion, and inclusive governance alongside political settlements.

The objective is intentionally comprehensive, recognizing that addressing women's exclusion requires simultaneous action on multiple fronts. Documentation makes visible what has been hidden. Capacity building strengthens skills and confidence. Network support enables coordination and collective action. Direct resources sustain peace initiatives. Advocacy creates space for participation. Each component reinforces others in pursuit of the overarching goal of establishing women as recognized, resourced, and influential peacebuilders.

Success would mean that by the end of the initiative, women's contributions to peace are widely known and acknowledged within Sudan and internationally, women peacebuilders possess enhanced skills and capacity to engage effectively at all levels, sustainable networks enable ongoing coordination and mutual support, women participate meaningfully in peace negotiations and reconciliation frameworks, community-level peace initiatives led by women receive adequate resources and support, and women's priorities—including addressing gender-based violence, ensuring economic security, and building inclusive governance—are integrated into reconciliation processes.

Beyond these measurable outcomes, the initiative seeks to catalyze lasting change in social and political attitudes, establishing the principle that women's participation is not a favor or concession but a requirement for legitimate and effective peacebuilding. It aims to inspire and enable a generation of women leaders who will continue peace work long after this initiative ends.

3.2 Specific Goals

Goal 1: Document and Publicize Women's Peace Contributions Systematically collect, analyze, and disseminate documentation of Sudanese women's peacebuilding efforts, creating a robust evidence base that makes visible their historical and ongoing contributions to conflict resolution, community healing, and reconciliation. This includes publishing research findings in accessible formats, creating multimedia content including video documentaries and podcasts, developing curriculum materials on women's peacebuilding for educational institutions, and presenting findings in national and international forums.

Goal 2: Build Capacity of Women Peacebuilders Provide training, skills development, and experiential learning opportunities to at least 500 women peacebuilders across Sudan, enhancing their effectiveness in mediation, negotiation, conflict analysis, leadership, protection, and advocacy. Training will be context-specific, building on women's existing knowledge and experience while addressing identified gaps. It will include formal curricula delivered through workshops, mentorship and peer learning, practical application through supported peace initiatives, and ongoing technical assistance.

Goal 3: Strengthen Women's Peace Networks Establish and support sustainable coordination mechanisms connecting women peacebuilders within and across regions, enabling information sharing, mutual support, collective advocacy, and coordinated action. This includes creating regional platforms in six priority areas, establishing a national coalition with representation from

diverse groups, facilitating exchange visits and cross-learning, and developing communications infrastructure supporting ongoing networking.

Goal 4: Ensure Women's Participation in Formal Peace Processes Advocate for and facilitate women's meaningful participation in national peace negotiations, transitional justice mechanisms, constitutional reform processes, and other formal reconciliation frameworks. This involves developing policy briefs and advocacy materials, building coalitions with allies supporting women's inclusion, engaging traditional and religious leaders as champions, direct advocacy with negotiating parties and mediators, and providing logistical and security support enabling women's participation when opportunities arise.

Goal 5: Resource Women-Led Peace Initiatives Provide direct financial and technical support to community-level peace initiatives designed and implemented by women, demonstrating impact of grassroots approaches and ensuring sustainability of women's peace work. Through a flexible small grants mechanism, the initiative will fund 40-50 local projects including inter-community dialogue forums, peace education programs, reconciliation and healing processes, early warning systems, economic initiatives supporting peacebuilding, and women's protection networks.

Goal 6: Address Protection and Security Concerns Enhance safety and wellbeing of women peacebuilders through protection support, security training, psychosocial services, and advocacy for protective environments. This includes conducting security assessments and planning, providing digital and physical security training, offering emergency response grants for at-risk individuals, establishing referral networks for legal and medical support, providing trauma counseling and psychosocial support, and documenting and publicizing attacks to increase accountability.

Goal 7: Influence Policy and Practice Contribute to development and implementation of national and local policies supporting gender-inclusive peacebuilding, drawing on international frameworks including UNSCR 1325. This involves supporting development of National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, advocating for gender-responsive peace agreements, strengthening gender analysis in government institutions, influencing donor priorities and funding allocations, and contributing to regional and international policy discussions.

3.3 Expected Outcomes

Outcome 1: Increased Visibility and Recognition Within 24 months, comprehensive documentation of women's peacebuilding contributions will be available and widely disseminated, reaching policymakers, donors, media, civil society, and the general public in Sudan and internationally. At least five major publications or multimedia products will be completed, with evidence of uptake in policy discussions and programming. Public awareness of women's peace work will demonstrably increase based on media coverage and survey data.

Outcome 2: Enhanced Capacity and Effectiveness At least 500 women from diverse regions, ethnic groups, and age brackets will have participated in capacity building programs, with demonstrable increases in knowledge, skills, and confidence measured through pre- and post-assessments and follow-up evaluations. At least 70% of participants will report applying new

skills in their peace work. Organizational capacity of at least 50 women's organizations will be strengthened through technical assistance and institutional support.

Outcome 3: Functioning Networks and Coordination Mechanisms Six regional women's peace platforms and one national coalition will be operational, with regular communication, joint activities, and demonstrated coordination capacity. At least 200 women will participate actively in network activities. Networks will have developed work plans, governance structures, and resource mobilization strategies supporting sustainability beyond project funding. Cross-regional exchange will have occurred with documentation of learning and practice changes.

Outcome 4: Meaningful Participation in Formal Processes Women peacebuilders will have participated in at least three major peace or reconciliation processes at national or regional levels, with documented influence on agendas and outcomes. Policy frameworks will include commitments to women's participation with implementation mechanisms. At least two new formal structures or mechanisms will exist for ongoing women's engagement in peace processes. International mediators and peace process actors will have adopted practices ensuring women's inclusion.

Outcome 5: Resourced and Impactful Community Initiatives 40-50 women-led community peace initiatives will have been implemented with project support, directly benefiting at least 25,000 community members. Funded initiatives will demonstrate measurable impact on local conflict reduction, reconciliation, and social cohesion through systematic monitoring and evaluation. At least 60% of initiatives will continue beyond initial project funding, having secured additional resources or community support. Best practices and models from successful initiatives will be documented and shared.

Outcome 6: Improved Safety and Wellbeing Women peacebuilders will report increased knowledge of security measures and protection mechanisms through surveys and focus groups. At least 100 women at high risk will have received protection support enabling them to continue their work safely. Emergency response mechanisms will have assisted at-risk peacebuilders in at least 20 incidents. Psychosocial support services will have reached at least 200 women, with reported improvements in wellbeing and reduced symptoms of trauma and burnout.

Outcome 7: Policy and Practice Change Sudan will have adopted or made substantial progress toward adopting a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security with implementation framework. At least three government institutions will have established gender units or focal points with capacity for gender analysis in peacebuilding. At least two major donors will have modified funding practices to increase support to women peacebuilders based on project advocacy. Regional bodies including African Union and IGAD will have referenced project findings in policy discussions and adopted recommendations.

3.4 Long-term Impact Vision

Beyond the 24-month implementation period, this initiative seeks to catalyze long-term transformation in how Sudan approaches peacebuilding and reconciliation. The ultimate vision is of a Sudan where women are consistently recognized and resourced as essential peacebuilders, where gender equality is embedded in all peace and reconciliation frameworks, where women's leadership is normalized rather than exceptional, and where the conditions enabling conflict—

including gender inequality, political exclusion, and economic marginalization—are systematically addressed.

In concrete terms, long-term impact would include the establishment of women's meaningful participation as non-negotiable requirement in any peace process, with institutional mechanisms ensuring this, sustainable funding flows to women's peace organizations through dedicated government and donor resources, strong autonomous women's movements capable of sustained advocacy and mobilization, integration of gender analysis and women's priorities throughout government peacebuilding institutions, transformation of traditional and cultural norms supporting women's public leadership, and demonstrable improvements in conflict reduction and reconciliation attributable to women's peace work.

The initiative also seeks to contribute to broader social transformation supporting gender equality, democratic governance, and inclusive development. Women's leadership in peacebuilding challenges patriarchal structures limiting women's participation in all public spheres. The networks, skills, and confidence developed through peace work enable women's leadership in politics, economics, and social change beyond the immediate peace context. The principles of inclusive dialogue, non-violent conflict resolution, and community healing modeled in women's peace work offer alternatives to authoritarian and militarized approaches to governance.

For individual women peacebuilders, long-term impact includes sustained capacity to engage effectively in peace work throughout their lives and pass on skills and knowledge to younger generations, recognition and validation of their contributions through documentation and public acknowledgment, economic sustainability enabling full-time peace work without undue personal sacrifice, protection enabling them to work safely, and wellbeing supported through psychosocial services and peer networks.

For Sudan as a whole, the initiative aims to contribute to lasting peace characterized not merely by absence of armed conflict but by positive peace—justice, equity, inclusive governance, social cohesion, and addressing root causes of conflict. Women's leadership in reconciliation is essential for this transformation, as their approaches center healing, relationship-building, and addressing structural inequalities that armed actors often ignore.

This vision is ambitious but grounded in evidence of what women peacebuilders have already achieved with minimal resources and support. Adequately resourcing and supporting their work can multiply its impact many times over, contributing decisively to the just and lasting peace Sudan desperately needs and deserves.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted unanimously in October 2000, marked a watershed moment in international recognition of women's roles in peace and security. For the first time, the Council acknowledged that women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed conflict, that women make essential contributions to peace and security, and that women's equal participation is crucial to maintaining and promoting international peace and security.

The resolution contains four key pillars that structure the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and provide normative foundations for this initiative. The participation pillar calls for women's increased representation at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict. It specifically urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels and encourages the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys.

The protection pillar emphasizes the need to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, in conflict situations. It calls for specific measures to protect women and girls from such violence and to hold perpetrators accountable. The prevention pillar recognizes that preventing conflict requires addressing root causes including gender inequality and exclusion. It calls for measures ensuring women's participation in prevention efforts and early warning systems.

The relief and recovery pillar addresses the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian response, refugee situations, and post-conflict reconstruction, calling for gender-sensitive approaches in these contexts. It emphasizes women's roles in relief and recovery, not merely as beneficiaries but as agents of reconstruction.

Since 1325's adoption, nine subsequent resolutions have elaborated the WPS agenda including Resolution 1820 (2008) recognizing conflict-related sexual violence as a tactic of war and security issue, Resolution 1889 (2009) calling for concrete indicators to measure implementation, Resolution 1960 (2010) establishing accountability mechanisms for sexual violence, Resolution 2106 (2013) strengthening accountability and calling for women's participation in security sector reform, Resolution 2122 (2013) addressing persistent implementation gaps, Resolution 2242 (2015) linking WPS to counterterrorism and countering violent extremism, Resolution 2467 (2019) addressing stigma faced by survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, Resolution 2493 (2019) emphasizing women's role in conflict prevention and resolution, and Resolution 2538 (2020) emphasizing women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace processes.

Together, these resolutions establish clear international obligations for member states including adopting National Action Plans on WPS, ensuring women's participation in peace processes, preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence, integrating gender perspectives in peacekeeping and peace operations, and reporting on implementation progress.

Sudan has made some formal commitments to the WPS agenda but implementation remains weak. Preliminary steps toward developing a National Action Plan have occurred but without finalization or implementation framework. The Constitutional Document of the transition period included commitments to gender equality and women's participation but many were not realized. Current conflict has further derailed progress.

This initiative takes UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda as foundational normative frameworks, using them to justify demands for women's inclusion and to hold government and international actors accountable to existing commitments. The project design aligns with the four pillars, with components addressing participation, protection, prevention, and relief/recovery. Documentation and advocacy components specifically leverage WPS frameworks to make the case for resourcing and including women peacebuilders.

However, the initiative also recognizes limitations and critiques of the WPS agenda. Implementation has been uneven, with many member states adopting superficial commitments without substantive change. The agenda has sometimes been instrumentalized, with women's participation framed primarily in terms of effectiveness for external goals rather than as rights and justice issues. Co-optation of WPS language by militaries and security agencies has at times served to legitimize military interventions rather than challenge militarized approaches. The agenda's origins in the UN Security Council tie it to international security frameworks that may not reflect priorities of women in conflict-affected communities.

This initiative therefore engages the WPS framework critically, drawing on its normative power and institutional legitimacy while remaining grounded in the articulated priorities and perspectives of Sudanese women themselves. It uses WPS as a tool for advancing women's rights and peace, not as an end in itself, ensuring that implementation serves women's empowerment rather than external security agendas.

4.2 Feminist Peace Theory and Practice

This initiative is grounded in feminist approaches to peace and conflict that fundamentally challenge conventional frameworks. Traditional peace and conflict studies, rooted in realist international relations theory, focus almost exclusively on states, militaries, and formal political institutions. They center questions of military strategy, balance of power, and elite negotiation. Peace is conceived primarily as absence of armed conflict between organized armed actors.

Feminist peace theory offers radically different starting points. It begins by asking where are the women, examining how gender structures violence, conflict, and peace processes in ways that conventional approaches miss. It challenges the public/private divide that treats war as public (masculine) politics while rendering invisible the violence occurring in homes and communities (feminine sphere). It questions militarized masculinity—cultural constructions linking manhood to aggression, dominance, and violence—that both enable conflict and shape how peace is pursued.

Feminist peace theory distinguishes between negative peace (absence of direct violence) and positive peace (presence of social justice, equity, and wellbeing). It argues that true peace requires transforming structural violence—economic exploitation, political exclusion, social discrimination—that creates conditions for armed conflict. Since women disproportionately experience structural violence, addressing it requires centering their experiences and leadership.

Feminist peacebuilding practice emphasizes several principles that guide this initiative. First, participatory methods that privilege lived experience and local knowledge over external expert knowledge. Women affected by conflict are experts on their own conditions and primary agents of change, not passive victims or beneficiaries. Peacebuilding must be done with and by communities, not to or for them.

Second, attention to power relations and structural inequalities. Effective peacebuilding must address not just immediate conflict but also underlying inequalities of gender, class, ethnicity, and other forms of marginalization that fuel grievances and violence. This requires explicit analysis of power and commitment to transformation, not just conflict management.

Third, holistic approaches that connect personal healing, community reconciliation, and political transformation. Feminist practice rejects artificial separation of these levels, recognizing that personal trauma, social cohesion, and political structures are intimately connected. Effective peacebuilding must address all dimensions simultaneously.

Fourth, emphasis on relationship-building and social fabric repair. While conventional approaches focus on formal agreements and institutions, feminist practice recognizes that sustainable peace depends on rebuilt trust, healed relationships, and strong social networks that can prevent and resolve conflicts non-violently. This "peace infrastructure" receives insufficient attention in formal processes but is essential for lived peace.

Fifth, privileging non-violent methods and rejection of militarized approaches. Feminist peace practice challenges assumptions that security comes from military strength, instead emphasizing human security—meeting people's basic needs for safety, livelihoods, health, and dignity. It recognizes that military "solutions" often perpetuate cycles of violence while creating new harms, particularly for women and marginalized groups.

In practice, feminist peacebuilding takes diverse forms including grassroots organizing across conflict lines, community dialogue and reconciliation processes, peace education challenging cultures of violence, economic initiatives reducing conflict drivers, transitional justice centering survivors' needs and agency, and advocacy transforming militarized security policies. Women's peace movements globally have demonstrated the effectiveness of these approaches, from Northern Ireland's peace women movement to Liberia's women peace activists who helped end civil war.

This initiative applies feminist peace theory and practice to Sudan's context by centering Sudanese women's own knowledge, experiences, and strategies rather than imposing external models, addressing power inequalities that marginalize women from peace processes, taking holistic approaches connecting personal, community, and political levels, prioritizing relationship-building and social cohesion alongside formal agreements, and challenging militarized approaches to security while promoting alternatives.

Critically, the initiative recognizes that feminism is not monolithic and that Sudanese women themselves hold diverse perspectives shaped by culture, religion, ethnicity, class, and political orientation. The project does not impose Western feminist frameworks but rather supports Sudanese women in articulating and advancing their own visions of peace, justice, and gender equality, recognizing that these may look different from feminisms developed in other contexts.

4.3 Indigenous and Cultural Approaches to Reconciliation in Sudan

While international frameworks and feminist theory provide important foundations, this initiative recognizes that Sudan possesses rich indigenous traditions and cultural practices for conflict resolution and reconciliation that must be understood, respected, and integrated into peacebuilding approaches. Imposing external models without engaging local knowledge and practices has repeatedly led to peace initiatives that fail to resonate with communities or prove sustainable.

Sudan's diverse ethnic and cultural groups have developed sophisticated mechanisms for managing conflicts over resources, resolving disputes, addressing harm, and restoring relationships. These mechanisms vary across communities but share common features including grounding in customary law and traditional authority structures, emphasis on collective rather than individual justice, focus on restoration and healing rather than punishment, involvement of entire communities in resolution processes, use of ritual, ceremony, and symbolic acts for reconciliation, and integration of spiritual and religious dimensions.

Examples include judiyya conferences practiced by Arab communities, particularly in Darfur and Kordofan. These large gatherings convened by tribal leaders bring together parties to conflict for dialogue, negotiation of compensation (diyya), and reconciliation rituals. Women play crucial roles in judiyya, preparing the space, providing hospitality, facilitating behind-the-scenes negotiations, and, increasingly, participating in formal deliberations. Successful judiyyas result not just in agreements but in restored relationships symbolized through shared meals, intermarriage agreements, and joint ceremonies.

The ajaweed customary courts among Beja communities in eastern Sudan resolve disputes through elder mediation grounded in customary law. While elders are predominantly male, women provide testimony, influence family decisions on disputes, and ensure compliance with agreements. Similar elder councils exist among Nuba communities in South Kordofan and various groups in Blue Nile and southern regions.

Inter-communal peace conferences in pastoral areas often focus on resource management, establishing shared use of grazing lands and water points, migration routes, and conflict prevention mechanisms. Women's knowledge of resource locations and patterns proves essential, though their participation in formal deliberations has historically been limited.

Religious institutions and leaders also play reconciliation roles. Islamic practices including sulh (reconciliation) and shura (consultation) inform conflict resolution among Muslim communities. Christian churches in Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile have convened peace gatherings and provided neutral space for dialogue. Sufi orders have historically mediated conflicts and promoted tolerance.

Importantly, traditional mechanisms have important limitations that must be acknowledged. They often reproduce gender hierarchies, excluding women from decision-making even when conflicts directly affect them. They may not adequately address gender-based violence, treating it as private family matter rather than community concern. They can perpetuate ethnic or tribal divisions rather than transcending them. They may lack mechanisms for accountability to international human rights standards. Elite capture can occur with powerful families dominating processes. In contexts of militarized conflict with massive human rights violations, traditional mechanisms designed for ordinary disputes may be inadequate.

Women peacebuilders navigate these tensions strategically. Many work both within and beyond traditional structures, respecting cultural legitimacy of customary mechanisms while advocating for women's inclusion and gender-just outcomes. They invoke Islamic principles of justice and women's rights to challenge discriminatory practices. They demonstrate through practice that women's participation enhances rather than undermines traditional reconciliation processes. They create women-specific spaces for dialogue and healing that complement formal mechanisms.

This initiative adopts an approach that engages indigenous practices critically and constructively by documenting how women currently participate in and influence traditional mechanisms, supporting women's advocacy for greater inclusion in customary processes, strengthening women's capacity to engage effectively with traditional authorities, creating complementary women-led processes that draw on cultural resonance, ensuring that supported initiatives respect cultural context while advancing gender equality, and facilitating dialogue between traditional and women's approaches to reconciliation.

The goal is not to replace traditional mechanisms with imported models but to support their evolution in more gender-inclusive directions while developing complementary approaches where traditional mechanisms prove inadequate. This requires deep cultural competence, respectful engagement with traditional authorities, and grounding in women's own strategies for navigating and transforming cultural practices.

4.4 Intersectionality: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in Peacebuilding

Effective support for women peacebuilders requires understanding that women do not constitute a homogeneous category. Women's experiences of conflict, their peacebuilding strategies, their needs and priorities, and the barriers they face are shaped not only by gender but by intersecting identities including ethnicity and tribe, geographic region, class and economic status, age and generation, education and literacy, political affiliation and ideology, religious identity and practice, and displacement status.

The concept of intersectionality, developed by Black feminist scholars, recognizes that multiple forms of identity and oppression are not simply additive but interact in complex ways producing distinct experiences. A wealthy, educated Arab woman in Khartoum faces different opportunities and constraints than a poor, illiterate non-Arab woman in a Darfur displacement camp, though both experience gender-based marginalization. Effective peacebuilding must recognize and respond to this diversity.

In Sudan's context, ethnic and tribal identities profoundly shape conflict dynamics and peacebuilding possibilities. Conflicts often occur along ethnic lines, with mobilization based on Arab versus non-Arab identity in Darfur, or among different non-Arab groups competing for resources. Women's peace work must navigate these divides, building cross-ethnic trust and solidarity while respecting distinct identities and addressing legitimate grievances. Women from communities perceived as perpetrators of violence face different challenges than women from victimized communities, though both may seek peace.

Regional differences are stark. Urban women in Khartoum have access to resources, networks, and opportunities unavailable to rural women in conflict zones. Women in displacement camps experience extreme precarity and protection risks. Women in areas under military control face different constraints than those in relatively secure regions. Peacebuilding strategies and support must be adapted to diverse contexts rather than assuming uniform conditions.

Class matters profoundly. Educated, middle-class women activists often lead visible organizations and engage with international actors, while poor, working-class women provide grassroots peace work in communities. Both contributions are essential but bring different perspectives. Economic pressures may force poor women to prioritize survival over peace work,

requiring different forms of support. Elite women may have greater access but less community legitimacy.

Age and generation shape women's peace work. Older women often hold authority as mothers, grandmothers, and respected elders that enables mediation roles. They carry historical memory of previous conflicts and peace efforts. Young women bring energy, new ideas, and facility with technology but may lack recognition from traditional structures. Inter-generational tensions can occur, requiring conscious bridging efforts.

Education creates divisions. Literate, formally educated women can access written materials, navigate bureaucracies, and engage in English-language international spaces. Women with limited formal education possess profound knowledge and skills but face barriers in contexts privileging written documentation and foreign languages. Peacebuilding must value and enable participation of women across educational backgrounds.

Political affiliations and ideologies create tensions within women's movements. Women affiliated with different political parties or movements may struggle to work together even while sharing commitment to peace. The tension between women's autonomous organizing and integration into male-dominated political structures is ongoing. Some women prioritize national unity while others emphasize regional autonomy or revolutionary transformation.

Religious identities matter in Sudan's complex religious landscape. Muslim women navigate various interpretations of Islam regarding women's public roles, from conservative positions restricting women's participation to progressive Islamic feminism asserting women's rights. Christian women in southern regions face different religious contexts. Secular women activists may face criticism from religious communities. Effective peacebuilding must respect diverse religious perspectives while advancing gender equality.

Displacement creates particular vulnerabilities and capacities. Women in displacement camps face extreme protection risks, economic precarity, and loss of traditional support networks. Yet displaced women have also organized powerful peace movements, as they have the least investment in maintaining conflict and the most to gain from return and reconstruction.

This initiative embraces intersectional analysis and practice by ensuring diverse representation in all project components, with deliberate inclusion of women from different ethnic groups, regions, classes, and backgrounds; adapting approaches to different contexts rather than imposing uniform models; recognizing and valuing different forms of knowledge and expertise, including oral tradition and experiential learning alongside formal education; addressing specific needs of marginalized groups including displaced women, rural women, and women from minority communities; facilitating cross-cleavage connections while respecting distinct identities and experiences; ensuring that women from affected communities shape priorities and strategies; and analyzing how peace agreements and reconciliation processes affect different groups of women distinctly.

In practice, this means the research component will deliberately seek out diverse voices and experiences rather than only documenting prominent activists. Capacity building will use methods accessible to women with varied educational backgrounds and offer scholarships and support enabling participation of marginalized women. Network development will create space for cross-ethnic and cross-regional connections while allowing for autonomous organizing by

specific groups. Grant-making will direct resources to grassroots initiatives led by marginalized women. Advocacy will center the concerns of most vulnerable women rather than only those with existing access to power.

Implementing intersectional approaches presents challenges. Building coalitions across differences requires time, trust-building, and skilled facilitation. Tensions may arise around priorities and strategies. Ensuring participation of marginalized women requires additional resources and accommodation. Yet without intersectional approaches, peacebuilding risks reproducing exclusions, serving interests of already-privileged groups while leaving behind those most affected by conflict. For peace to be truly inclusive and sustainable, it must address interconnected forms of marginalization and empower all women, in their full diversity, as agents of transformation.

5. Literature Review and Evidence Base

5.1 Global Evidence on Women's Effectiveness as Peacebuilders

Substantial research from conflict contexts globally demonstrates that women's participation enhances peace process effectiveness, durability, and inclusiveness. This evidence provides both justification and guidance for this initiative.

Research by Laurel Stone (2015) analyzing peace processes from 1989 to 2011 found that agreements with women signatories were more durable than those without. Similarly, the International Peace Institute's analysis found that peace agreements with women's participation are 20% more likely to last at least two years and 35% more likely to last fifteen years (Krause et al., 2018). These findings hold even when controlling for other factors affecting agreement durability.

Several mechanisms explain these outcomes. Women often bring different priorities to negotiations, emphasizing issues like justice, social services, economic reconstruction, and community security that armed actors may overlook but that are essential for sustainable peace. Their inclusion broadens the range of actors engaged, reducing spoiler dynamics and increasing legitimacy of agreements among civilian populations who must ultimately live with outcomes. Women's civil society networks often have stronger community presence than formal political structures, enabling more effective implementation monitoring and accountability.

Research also shows that women's participation changes negotiation dynamics. Studies of Northern Ireland, Guatemala, and Kenya found that women negotiators built cross-party coalitions, introduced collaborative negotiation styles, and focused attention on implementation mechanisms often neglected in male-dominated talks. Women participants persistently raise issues that male negotiators might consider outside the scope of peace negotiations, such as land rights, sexual violence, and social services, thereby creating more comprehensive agreements addressing conflict drivers.

At community levels, evidence of women's effectiveness as peacebuilders is even stronger. Studies across Africa, Asia, and Latin America document women organizing across conflict lines when men cannot due to combat roles, providing early warning of violence and preventing escalation, mediating local disputes before they explode into larger conflicts, maintaining

markets and other social spaces enabling cross-group interaction, protecting civilians including hiding or evacuating those at risk, and providing services to survivors of violence including shelter, medical care, and psychosocial support.

Importantly, research challenges essentialist assumptions that women are inherently more peaceful or that they inevitably prioritize peace over other goals. Women participate in and support armed conflict, can hold nationalistic or militaristic views, and sometimes oppose compromise or reconciliation. What evidence shows is that women's exclusion limits available strategies and perspectives in peacebuilding, that diverse participation improves outcomes regardless of whether women hold distinct views, and that structural barriers prevent women from contributing despite their willingness and capacity.

Research also documents barriers women face in peacebuilding including exclusion from formal negotiations, lack of resources and training, security risks and threats, socio-cultural norms limiting public roles, and lack of institutional support. Studies show that these barriers can be overcome through deliberate policies and programs ensuring women's participation, providing training and resources, creating protection mechanisms, engaging community leaders as allies, and establishing institutional frameworks mandating inclusion.

Evidence from peace mediation specifically demonstrates value of gender expertise. UN-mediated processes that included gender experts produced agreements with stronger gender provisions, better addressed conflict-related sexual violence, and showed higher rates of women's participation (UN Women, 2012). The presence of women mediators or gender advisors shapes what issues are considered legitimate subjects for negotiation and what solutions are proposed.

This global evidence base provides strong justification for investing in women peacebuilders in Sudan. The patterns documented across diverse contexts apply to Sudan's situation, where women have demonstrated peace leadership but face persistent exclusion and under-resourcing. The initiative design draws on lessons about effective approaches to enhancing women's participation and removing barriers they face.

5.2 Regional Examples from Africa

Sudan's regional context in Africa provides particularly relevant examples of women's peacebuilding effectiveness and strategies for supporting them. Several African conflicts and peace processes offer lessons for this initiative.

Liberia provides perhaps the most celebrated example. Women's peace activism was crucial to ending Liberia's civil war in 2003. The Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, led by Leymah Gbowee and others, mobilized thousands of women in protests, sit-ins, and advocacy demanding peace. Women organized across Christian-Muslim lines, occupied the site of peace negotiations threatening to prevent negotiators from leaving until they reached agreement, and maintained pressure on armed actors. Following war's end, women's mobilization continued, supporting Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election as Africa's first female president and pushing for women's inclusion in post-conflict reconstruction. Research attributes Liberia's relative success in transitioning from war to women's persistent activism and political participation.

South Sudan offers cautionary lessons. Despite women's crucial roles in the liberation struggle, they were systematically excluded from peace processes and post-independence governance. The 2018 peace agreement allocated only 35% of positions to women, and even this quota has not been fully implemented. Research attributes South Sudan's continued instability partly to exclusion of women and civilians more broadly from decision-making, with peace processes dominated by military leaders focused on power-sharing arrangements that fail to address root causes of conflict or build inclusive governance.

Rwanda presents a complex example. Following the 1994 genocide, women constituted the majority of survivors and assumed unprecedented responsibilities for reconstruction. The post-genocide government adopted strong policies for women's political participation, and Rwanda now has the world's highest proportion of women parliamentarians. Women played crucial roles in community reconciliation through Gacaca courts and other mechanisms. However, critics note that women's inclusion occurs within an authoritarian political system with limited genuine participation, raising questions about whether representation alone constitutes meaningful empowerment when broader democratic space is constrained.

Northern Uganda demonstrates women's grassroots peacebuilding effectiveness. During the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army, women organized peace marches, documented atrocities, advocated for negotiated settlement, and provided services to survivors including formerly abducted children. Women's inclusion in peace talks brought attention to issues of sexual violence and children's rights. Post-conflict, women have led transitional justice and reconciliation efforts, though they continue to face challenges around land rights and economic marginalization.

The Democratic Republic of Congo illustrates both the severity of conflict-related sexual violence and women's resilience in responding. Congolese women activists have documented mass rape as a weapon of war, established treatment and support services for survivors, advocated for legal reforms and prosecutions, and organized for peace despite extreme security risks. International attention to conflict-related sexual violence in DRC resulted largely from Congolese women's documentation and advocacy. Yet women remain largely excluded from peace negotiations, and cycles of violence continue.

Somalia shows women's peacebuilding across clan divisions. Somali women organized inter-clan conferences, provided early warning of violence, mediated local conflicts, and advocated for inclusive peace processes. Despite cultural and political obstacles, women activists influenced the peace process, resulting in provisions for women's representation in governance structures, though implementation has been inconsistent.

These regional examples offer several lessons for Sudan. First, women's peace activism can be decisive in ending conflicts and building sustainable peace, as demonstrated in Liberia. Second, excluding women from peace processes and post-conflict governance undermines sustainability and inclusiveness, as shown in South Sudan. Third, formal representation alone is insufficient without genuine empowerment and democratic space, as Rwanda illustrates. Fourth, documentation and advocacy around gender-based violence can catalyze international attention and action, as in DRC, though this must be balanced against risks of reducing women to victim status. Fifth, women can effectively organize across conflict cleavages including ethnic and religious lines, as in Liberia and Somalia. Sixth, grassroots women's peace work is essential regardless of formal process outcomes, as in northern Uganda.

This initiative draws on these lessons by supporting both grassroots peace work and advocacy for inclusion in formal processes, recognizing both as essential and mutually reinforcing; ensuring that participation is meaningful, not merely symbolic, through capacity building and network support; documenting women's contributions to build evidence and legitimacy for their inclusion; addressing gender-based violence within broader frameworks of women's empowerment and agency; and facilitating cross-ethnic and cross-regional organizing while respecting distinct identities and contexts.

5.3 Existing Research on Sudanese Women's Peace Activism

While less extensive than global literature, existing research on Sudanese women's peacebuilding provides important foundations for this initiative and identifies gaps requiring further documentation.

Historical research documents women's political activism throughout Sudan's post-colonial period. The Sudanese Women's Union played crucial roles in democratic struggles and social transformation from the 1950s through the 1980s before being banned and disrupted by successive military regimes. Women participated in the 1964 and 1985 uprisings that overthrew military governments. This history establishes that Sudanese women have long histories of political engagement and collective mobilization, contradicting stereotypes of passivity or political disengagement.

Research on women in Darfur's conflicts has documented both their victimization and their resilience and activism. Studies by organizations including the Darfur Women's Action Group have documented systematic sexual violence against non-Arab women as a strategy of ethnic cleansing. Simultaneously, research has documented how displaced Darfuri women organized humanitarian assistance in camps, maintained social networks, documented human rights violations, advocated internationally, and participated in indigenous reconciliation efforts. Research notes that Darfuri women effectively organized across ethnic lines, as their shared experiences of displacement and violence created common cause, despite deep divisions among male political and military leaders.

Studies of women in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile conflicts document similar patterns of victimization and agency. Women endured severe violence, displacement, and deprivation during decades of war. Yet they sustained community structures, maintained education and health services under extreme conditions, provided agriculture and livelihoods under bombardment, and participated in resistance movements. Research notes that women possessed crucial knowledge of terrain and local conditions that enabled military operations, yet were excluded from peace negotiations and post-conflict decision-making.

Research on the December 2018 revolution extensively documented women's leadership and participation. Women were estimated to constitute 60-70% of protesters, organized resistance committees coordinating protests, provided medical assistance to wounded demonstrators, maintained the sit-in at military headquarters for months, negotiated with security forces during protests, documented violence and human rights violations, and led political advocacy domestically and internationally. Academic and media research established the revolution's success depended on women's sustained mobilization and strategic leadership.

Research on the transitional period (2019-2021) documented women's efforts to secure political representation and advance gender equality. Women activists advocated for 40% quota in transitional legislative body, pushed for criminalization of female genital mutilation, advocated for ratification of international women's rights conventions, and organized for peace and transitional justice. Research documented both progress, including women's cabinet positions and some policy reforms, and limitations, including inadequate implementation and resistance from conservative factions.

Research on the current conflict (2023-present) is still emerging but documents women's leadership in humanitarian response through Emergency Response Rooms, documentation of widespread sexual violence as a weapon of war, displacement and protection crises affecting millions, women's advocacy for ceasefires and humanitarian access, and continued political organizing despite extreme insecurity.

Gaps in existing research are substantial. There is insufficient documentation of women's specific peace initiatives at community levels, limited analysis of different groups of women's distinct experiences and strategies, inadequate research on indigenous women's peace practices and their intersection with customary systems, minimal research on women's participation in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, insufficient study of women's cross-ethnic and cross-regional peace networks, and limited research on barriers women face and effective strategies for overcoming them.

Most existing research has been conducted by international scholars or organizations, with limited research led by Sudanese women themselves, which raises questions about whose perspectives and interpretations shape knowledge. Language barriers mean much research is inaccessible to many Sudanese women peacebuilders. Research findings often remain in academic journals rather than being disseminated to practitioners, policymakers, or the general public in accessible forms.

This initiative responds to these gaps by prioritizing participatory research methods that center Sudanese women's voices and perspectives, conducting research in Arabic and local languages, employing Sudanese women researchers, disseminating findings in multiple accessible formats beyond academic publications, ensuring research informs programming and advocacy rather than remaining theoretical, and building research capacity among women's organizations to enable ongoing documentation.

The research component is not extractive but rather aims to strengthen the movement by making visible its contributions, facilitating reflection and learning, providing evidence for advocacy, and connecting Sudanese women's knowledge with broader global conversations about peacebuilding.

5.4 Gaps in Current Knowledge

Despite growing attention to women's peacebuilding globally and some research on Sudan, significant knowledge gaps persist that limit understanding and constrain effective programming and policy. This initiative addresses these gaps through its research component.

Methodological gaps include the fact that most research relies on interviews with visible activists or organizational leaders, missing grassroots women whose peace work is less documented. Quantitative research on women's participation often cannot capture quality or meaningfulness of participation. Short-term research projects do not track long-term processes and outcomes. Research often occurs in accessible areas, missing women's work in remote or insecure locations. Language barriers limit whose voices are heard in research.

Thematic gaps include insufficient documentation of specific strategies and methods women use in mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation at community levels. There is limited analysis of how women navigate traditional cultural and religious frameworks while advancing gender equality. The relationship between grassroots peace work and formal peace processes is under-theorized. Women's economic strategies for peacebuilding, including how economic empowerment relates to conflict reduction, need more research. The psychosocial dimensions of peace work, including trauma and resilience among peacebuilders themselves, require attention. How women build and sustain cross-ethnic and cross-regional networks despite conflict polarization is understudied.

Contextual gaps specific to Sudan include insufficient research on regional variations in women's peace work across Sudan's diverse areas. The impacts of ongoing conflict and displacement on women's peace networks need documentation. How current political instability and military rule affect women's organizing requires study. Generational differences between women who led the revolution and older generations of activists need exploration. The role of Sudanese diaspora women in peace work is under-documented. How women navigate relationships with traditional authorities, religious leaders, and armed actors requires analysis.

Analytical gaps include limited intersectional analysis examining how ethnicity class, age, region, and other factors shape women's peacebuilding experiences and strategies. Insufficient critical analysis of power dynamics within women's movements, including class and ethnic divisions among women themselves. Little research on when and why women's peace initiatives succeed or fail, beyond general advocacy for inclusion. Inadequate analysis of how donor funding shapes women's peace work, including potential co-optation or distortion of priorities. Limited engagement with debates about the relationship between gender equality and peacebuilding—whether and how pursuing both simultaneously creates tensions or synergies.

Practical knowledge gaps affecting programming include limited documentation of effective training and capacity-building approaches for women peacebuilders in Sudan's context. Insufficient knowledge of protection needs and effective security strategies for women activists. Little evidence on sustainable funding models for women's peace organizations. Inadequate information on effective advocacy strategies for increasing women's participation in formal processes. Limited understanding of how to build and sustain multi-ethnic women's networks.

Gaps in knowledge dissemination mean that even where research exists, findings often do not reach those who need them. Policymakers lack accessible evidence about women's peace work in Sudan. International donors have limited information about women's organizations and initiatives to support. Women peacebuilders themselves have limited access to research that could inform their strategies. The Sudanese public has minimal awareness of women's peace contributions, as popular narratives focus on armed actors and formal politics.

This initiative addresses these gaps through rigorous, participatory research designed and implemented with women peacebuilders, using diverse methods including oral histories, ethnographic observation, participatory action research, surveys and structured interviews, and analysis of documents and artifacts. The research will deliberately seek out diverse voices including grassroots women, women from different ethnic and regional backgrounds, women of different generations, women in remote or conflict-affected areas, and women with varied educational backgrounds.

Research findings will be disseminated through multiple channels including academic publications for scholarly audiences, policy briefs for government and international actors, accessible reports in Arabic and English for civil society, multimedia products including video documentaries and podcasts, and presentations in community forums. Importantly, research will feed directly into programming, with findings informing capacity building content, advocacy messages, and grant-making priorities.

The initiative recognizes that knowledge production is not neutral but political. Who conducts research, what questions are asked, whose voices are centered, and how findings are interpreted and disseminated all reflect power dynamics. By prioritizing Sudanese women's leadership in research and ensuring findings serve their articulated priorities, the initiative aims to produce knowledge that empowers rather than extracts, that challenges rather than reinforces existing hierarchies, and that serves justice and peace rather than merely documenting their absence.

6. Project Components and Activities

Component 1: Research and Documentation

6.1.1 Oral History Collection from Women Peacebuilders

The oral history component will systematically collect, preserve, and analyze narratives from women across Sudan who have engaged in peacebuilding activities. This addresses the critical gap in documentation of women's contributions and ensures that their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives are preserved for current advocacy and future historical record.

Methodology: Trained Sudanese women researchers will conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with at least 100 women peacebuilders selected to ensure diversity across regions (Darfur, Kordofan, Khartoum, Eastern Sudan, Blue Nile), ethnic groups (Arab, Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit, Nuba, Beja, and others), ages (from elders who participated in historical peace efforts to youth activists), roles (community mediators, organizational leaders, grassroots organizers), and displacement status (resident, internally displaced, returnee). Interviews will explore women's life histories, their pathways into peace work, specific initiatives and strategies they have employed, successes and challenges encountered, relationships with other actors (traditional authorities, armed groups, government, international organizations), impacts of their work on communities, visions for Sudan's future, and needs for continued peace work.

Interviews will be conducted in Arabic or local languages as appropriate, recorded with consent, and professionally transcribed and translated. The project will employ rigorous ethical protocols including informed consent processes explaining how interviews will be used, protection of

identities when women face security risks, trauma-informed interviewing techniques recognizing that discussions may involve painful experiences, and storage of materials in secure archives with appropriate access controls.

Outputs: A comprehensive oral history archive will be established, with digital recordings, transcripts, and metadata maintained securely. Selected narratives will be curated into accessible products including a published volume of women's peace stories in Arabic and English, audio and video documentaries suitable for radio, television, and online distribution, and curriculum materials for educational institutions incorporating women's testimonies. All outputs will be developed in consultation with interviewed women, respecting their preferences regarding anonymity, emphasis, and interpretation.

Timeline: Months 1-3 will focus on researcher training, protocol development, and participant selection. Months 4-12 will involve interview conduct. Months 13-18 will focus on transcription, translation, analysis, and initial product development. Months 19-24 will complete publication and dissemination.

Budget: \$180,000 covering researcher salaries and training, transcription and translation services, archival storage systems, production of published and multimedia outputs, and dissemination costs.

6.1.2 Mapping Women's Peace Networks Across Sudan

This activity will create comprehensive mapping of women's organizations, networks, and informal groups engaged in peacebuilding across Sudan. Currently, no systematic mapping exists, hindering coordination, resource allocation, and understanding of the ecosystem.

Methodology: The project will employ multiple methods for comprehensive mapping. Initial desk research will compile existing directories and databases, though these are incomplete and outdated. Direct outreach through project partners and networks will identify organizations and groups not formally registered or internationally connected. Regional consultations in six priority areas will bring together women peacebuilders to identify and document local actors and initiatives. Structured surveys will collect information on organizational mission and activities, geographic coverage, staff and volunteers, leadership and governance, funding sources and budgets, partnerships and networks, key achievements and challenges, and future plans and needs.

The mapping will include formal civil society organizations with registration and institutional structures, informal networks and movements without formal structures, women's groups within mixed-gender organizations, traditional women's structures with peace-related functions, and diaspora organizations engaged with Sudan peace issues. It will also map initiatives and activities including dialogue and mediation programs, peace education, reconciliation and healing processes, advocacy campaigns, research and documentation, and service provision to conflict-affected populations.

Outputs: A comprehensive database accessible to women's organizations, donors, researchers, and policymakers will be created. An interactive online map visualizing geographic distribution and thematic focus of women's peace work will be developed. A printed directory in Arabic and

English suitable for distribution at conferences and to stakeholders will be produced. Analytical reports identifying patterns, gaps, and opportunities in the ecosystem will be published.

Timeline: Months 1-6 will involve methodology development and initial data collection. Months 7-12 will focus on comprehensive mapping and database development. Months 13-18 will refine data and develop outputs. Months 19-24 will disseminate and update based on feedback.

Budget: \$120,000 covering research staff, database development, consultations and travel, translation and publication, and online platform development and hosting.

6.1.3 Case Studies of Successful Local Reconciliation Efforts

This activity will conduct in-depth case studies documenting specific successful women-led peace initiatives at community level, analyzing what made them effective and extracting lessons for replication and scaling.

Methodology: Through preliminary consultations and mapping, the project will identify 10-15 promising cases representing different approaches (inter-communal dialogue, traditional reconciliation adapted to include women, trauma healing, economic cooperation, protection networks), contexts (different regions and conflict dynamics), and scales (neighborhood, village, multi-community). Each case study will involve field research including interviews with initiative organizers, participants, beneficiaries, and observers, observation of ongoing activities where possible, review of any documentation produced, and analysis of outcomes including conflict reduction, relationship healing, and sustained impact.

Analysis will employ a common framework examining context and conflict dynamics addressed, initiative design and theory of change, implementation processes and adaptation, women's leadership and roles, partnerships and support, resources utilized, obstacles encountered and how they were addressed, outcomes and impacts achieved, and factors contributing to success. Special attention will be paid to how initiatives integrated indigenous practices with contemporary approaches, how they navigated gender norms and traditional structures, how they built cross-ethnic or cross-community trust, and how they sustained impact beyond initial intervention.

Outputs: A published collection of case studies in Arabic and English, with each case presented as accessible narrative suitable for practitioners. Policy briefs distilling lessons for different audiences including donors, government actors, traditional leaders, and practitioners will be produced. Training materials incorporating case examples for capacity building programs will be developed. Academic articles for peer-reviewed journals contributing to theoretical literature will be published. Short video documentaries on selected cases for broad dissemination will be created.

Timeline: Months 4-9 will involve case selection and field research. Months 10-15 will focus on analysis and writing. Months 16-21 will complete production of outputs. Months 22-24 will disseminate and facilitate learning events.

Budget: \$150,000 covering field research costs including travel and accommodation, researcher salaries, video production, translation and publication, and dissemination events.

6.1.4 Analysis of Barriers to Women's Participation

This activity will systematically analyze obstacles preventing women's meaningful participation in peace processes at all levels, providing evidence base for advocacy and programming to address these barriers.

Methodology: Research will combine multiple approaches. Literature review will synthesize existing research on barriers in Sudan and comparative contexts. Structured surveys with at least 200 women peacebuilders will quantify extent and patterns of different barriers. Focus group discussions in diverse locations will explore barriers in depth and identify community-specific obstacles. Key informant interviews with traditional leaders, government officials, armed group representatives, and international actors will examine their perspectives on women's participation and identify points of resistance and opportunity. Analysis of peace process documents and structures will examine formal and informal exclusion mechanisms.

The research will examine barriers across multiple domains including cultural and religious norms limiting women's public roles, security threats and protection gaps, economic constraints and lack of resources, legal and institutional obstacles, capacity and skill gaps, family and community opposition, practical obstacles (transportation, childcare, scheduling), lack of information about peace processes and opportunities, exclusion by armed actors and political parties, and inadequate support from international actors.

Analysis will be intersectional, examining how barriers differ for women of different ethnic groups, ages, education levels, economic status, and geographic locations. It will identify not only barriers but also strategies women have developed to overcome or navigate them, providing evidence of resilience and agency alongside documentation of constraints.

Outputs: Comprehensive research report in Arabic and English analyzing findings and making recommendations will be published. Policy briefs for different audiences (government, international organizations, traditional leaders, donors) proposing specific actions to remove barriers will be produced. Op-eds and articles for popular media raising public awareness will be written. Presentations at national and international conferences disseminating findings will be given. Integration of findings into advocacy campaigns and capacity building programs will occur.

Timeline: Months 3-8 will focus on research design and data collection. Months 9-14 will involve analysis and report writing. Months 15-20 will produce multiple output formats. Months 21-24 will disseminate and support advocacy use.

Budget: \$100,000 covering research staff, survey and focus group costs, translation, publication and dissemination, and events.

6.1.5 Publication and Dissemination Strategy

All research outputs will be strategically disseminated to maximize impact on policy, programming, and public awareness. A comprehensive dissemination plan will ensure findings reach relevant audiences through appropriate channels.

Target Audiences and Channels: For Sudanese civil society and women's organizations, dissemination will occur through Arabic-language reports and summaries, presentations at civil society forums, distribution through partner networks, and radio and television programs. For government actors, dissemination will involve policy briefs and meetings with relevant ministries, presentations to transitional governance structures if they exist, and integration into National Action Plan on WPS development. For international organizations and donors, dissemination will include English-language reports, presentations at donor coordination meetings, briefings for UN agencies and international NGOs, and distribution through humanitarian and development networks. For traditional and religious leaders, dissemination will occur through culturally appropriate consultations, tailored briefs emphasizing compatibility with values, and engagement through respected intermediaries. For the general public, dissemination will involve media coverage in newspapers, radio, and television, social media campaigns, public events and exhibitions, and integration into educational curricula. For academic audiences, dissemination will include peer-reviewed journal articles, presentations at conferences, and engagement with universities and research institutions.

Launch Events: Major launch events will be organized for each significant publication, bringing together diverse stakeholders for presentation, discussion, and media engagement. Regional events will ensure participation from different parts of Sudan. International events at UN, African Union, or major capitals will reach global policy audiences.

Online Platform: A dedicated website will host all research outputs, providing free access to reports, videos, oral histories (with appropriate privacy protections), and interactive mapping tools. The platform will be bilingual (Arabic/English) and mobile-friendly given Sudan's communication infrastructure. It will include resources for different users, such as a media section with press releases and downloadable content, a researcher section with detailed methodologies and datasets, a practitioner section with case studies and lessons learned, and an educator section with curriculum materials.

Monitoring Uptake: The project will track dissemination effectiveness through monitoring of media coverage, website analytics, downloads of publications, citations in policy documents and academic literature, requests for presentations and briefings, and feedback from target audiences. Regular review will enable strategy adjustment to maximize reach and impact.

Budget: \$80,000 for dissemination activities integrated into research component budget, covering platform development, launch events, media engagement, translation, printing, and distribution.

Component 2: Capacity Building and Training

6.2.1 Peace Mediation and Negotiation Skills Training

This activity will provide systematic training in formal mediation and negotiation techniques, enhancing women's capacity to engage effectively in both community-level conflict resolution and formal peace processes.

Rationale: While many women possess informal mediation skills developed through cultural practices and lived experience, they often lack formal training in structured mediation and negotiation techniques recognized in official peace processes. This gap disadvantages women when engaging with formal actors and limits their effectiveness in complex, multi-party conflicts.

Curriculum: Training will be developed by combining international best practices with indigenous conflict resolution approaches and Sudan-specific context. Core modules will cover conflict analysis frameworks for understanding root causes, dynamics, and actors, interests-based negotiation distinguishing positions from underlying interests, active listening and communication skills, power analysis and strategic positioning, multi-party mediation in complex conflicts, dealing with difficult negotiators and spoilers, gender analysis in conflict and peacebuilding, cultural and religious dimensions of conflict resolution, trauma-informed approaches recognizing participants may have experienced violence, and ethical considerations and practitioner standards.

Advanced modules for experienced practitioners will address mediation in violent conflicts and active war zones, negotiation with armed actors, international peace process structures and protocols, legal frameworks including international humanitarian law, power-sharing and constitutional design, transitional justice and reconciliation, and gender mainstreaming in peace agreements.

Methodology: Training will employ participatory, experiential methods rather than lectures, including simulations and role-plays of negotiation scenarios, case study analysis of real peace processes, small group exercises and peer learning, mentorship from experienced mediators, field practice with supported application, and regular reflection and adaptation. Training will be conducted in Arabic with materials translated, and will accommodate varying literacy levels through oral and visual methods alongside written materials.

Structure: An initial five-day intensive workshop will provide foundational training to cohorts of 30-40 participants. Advanced three-day workshops for experienced practitioners will offer specialized skills. Ongoing monthly sessions in regional hubs will provide continued skill development and peer learning. Mentorship pairs will match trained women with experienced mediators for ongoing guidance. Practical application support will include accompaniment to actual mediation sessions, debriefing and coaching, and troubleshooting of challenges.

Participants: Selection will ensure diversity across regions, ethnic groups, ages, and experience levels. Priority will be given to women already engaged in community mediation, women from conflict-affected areas, women nominated by their communities or organizations, young women seeking to build peace careers, and women from marginalized groups including displaced populations. Each training cohort will include women from different ethnic backgrounds to enable cross-group relationship building.

Outputs: At least 300 women will complete foundational training, with at least 100 completing advanced training. A cadre of trained mediators will be available for deployment to peace processes. A trainers' manual in Arabic will enable ongoing replication. A network of trained mediators will maintain contact and mutual support. Documentation of Sudan-specific mediation approaches will contribute to knowledge base.

Timeline: Months 3-6 will involve curriculum development and trainer preparation. Months 7-18 will conduct initial intensive trainings. Months 19-24 will provide ongoing advanced and refresher training.

Budget: \$280,000 covering curriculum development, trainer fees, venue and accommodation costs, materials and equipment, mentorship support, and monitoring and evaluation.

6.2.2 Conflict Analysis and Early Warning Systems

This training will enhance women's capacity to analyze conflict dynamics systematically and to develop and operate early warning systems that can prevent violence escalation.

Rationale: Women often possess deep knowledge of their communities and notice early signs of tension, but this knowledge may not be systematically collected or acted upon. Formal conflict early warning systems often overlook community-level indicators and women's knowledge. Training women in structured conflict analysis and early warning can enhance both community security and women's credibility with formal actors.

Curriculum: Conflict analysis modules will cover theories of conflict causation and dynamics, stakeholder mapping and power analysis, conflict timelines and pattern recognition, gender analysis of conflict impacts and opportunities, resource and environmental factors in conflict, political economy approaches, social cohesion and polarization indicators, and scenario development for anticipating trajectories. Early warning modules will address indicator development and monitoring, data collection methods, information verification and validation, risk assessment and prioritization, communication channels and protocols, response mechanisms and action plans, community-based early warning systems, and integration with formal warning systems.

Methodology: Training will combine theoretical frameworks with practical application in participants' own contexts. Participants will conduct conflict analyses of their regions, develop early warning indicators relevant to their communities, design monitoring and communication systems, pilot systems with coaching support, and document lessons learned for refinement. Training will connect women across regions to share experiences and create solidarity around common security concerns.

Structure: A four-day initial workshop will introduce frameworks and tools. Subsequent field-based implementation with technical support will enable practical application. A three-day follow-up workshop will review experiences and refine approaches. Ongoing webinars and peer exchange will support continued development. Technical advisors will be available for troubleshooting.

Linkages: The training will explicitly link community-based systems developed by participants with existing formal early warning mechanisms where they exist, advocating for women's knowledge to inform national and international responses. It will create partnerships with humanitarian organizations, UN agencies, and government structures that could receive and act on early warning information.

Participants: At least 200 women will be trained, with priority for women in conflict-prone areas, women with community respect and knowledge networks, women in leadership positions in civil society, women working in humanitarian response, and women connected to traditional authorities who could influence response.

Outputs: Trained women will establish at least 25 community-based early warning networks across priority regions. A handbook on gender-sensitive conflict analysis and early warning in Arabic will be produced. Regular early warning bulletins will be generated where feasible. Case documentation will demonstrate impact of systems in preventing violence.

Timeline: Months 6-9 will focus on curriculum development. Months 10-15 will conduct initial trainings. Months 16-24 will support implementation and refinement.

Budget: \$180,000 covering training delivery, technical assistance, communications infrastructure for early warning systems, and documentation.

6.2.3 Leadership Development for Young Women Peacebuilders

Recognizing that young women bring energy, innovation, and long-term commitment to peace work but often lack experience and support, this activity will provide targeted leadership development.

Rationale: Young women were central to the 2018-2019 revolution and remain active in current peace efforts, yet they often face dismissal by older generations and traditional structures based on their age. Supporting young women's leadership development ensures intergenerational continuity of women's peace movements and brings fresh perspectives to entrenched conflicts.

Curriculum: Training will be designed specifically for young women (ages 18-35) and will address leadership theories and styles, visioning and strategic planning, organizing and mobilization strategies, public speaking and communication, social media and digital advocacy, relationship building across differences, negotiating with authority figures, self-care and sustainability in activism, intersectional analysis, and navigating discrimination and opposition. Special modules will address specific challenges young women face including gender and age-based dismissal, balancing activism with education or employment, managing family and community expectations, building intergenerational partnerships, and developing confidence and voice.

Methodology: An intensive two-week residential leadership institute will bring together 40-50 young women from across Sudan for immersive learning, relationship building, and strategy development. The residential format enables deep bonding and creates a cohort identity. The curriculum will combine formal sessions with experienced facilitators, peer learning and small group work, site visits to organizations and initiatives, meetings with established women leaders, and group strategy sessions on participants' own initiatives.

Following the institute, ongoing support will include mentorship pairs connecting young women with experienced leaders, small grants (up to \$5,000) for young women to implement peace initiatives, monthly online sessions maintaining cohort connections, an annual reunion gathering, and alumni network supporting continued collaboration.

Participants: Selection will be competitive, with applications seeking women who demonstrate commitment to peacebuilding, have some experience in community organizing or activism, represent diverse backgrounds, show potential for long-term leadership, and have support from their communities or organizations. Outreach will deliberately seek young women from marginalized communities including rural areas, displacement camps, and minority groups.

Outputs: At least 50 young women will complete the leadership institute, forming a cohort with strong bonds and ongoing collaboration. Graduates will establish or strengthen youth-led peace initiatives. A handbook on youth leadership in peacebuilding will be produced. The model will be documented for potential replication.

Timeline: Months 8-10 will involve design and recruitment. Month 11 will conduct the intensive institute. Months 12-24 will provide ongoing support and track outcomes.

Budget: \$200,000 covering residential institute costs, facilitator fees, mentorship program, small grants, and ongoing support.

6.2.4 Trauma-Informed Approaches and Psychosocial Support

This training addresses the reality that women peacebuilders work in contexts of extreme violence and loss, experiencing vicarious and direct trauma that affects their wellbeing and effectiveness. It will equip women with understanding of trauma and strategies for supporting themselves and others.

Rationale: Sudanese women have experienced and witnessed extraordinary violence including physical and sexual assault, loss of loved ones, displacement, and destruction of communities. They continue working in traumatizing conditions. Yet psychosocial support is minimal, and cultural stigma may discourage seeking help. Unaddressed trauma impairs peace work and damages peacebuilders' lives. Training in trauma-informed approaches serves both effectiveness and ethical obligations to support activists.

Curriculum: Understanding trauma modules will cover trauma responses and symptoms, vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue, collective and historical trauma, gender dimensions of conflict trauma, cultural understandings of trauma and healing, and resilience and post-traumatic growth. Self-care modules will address recognizing signs of burnout, stress management techniques, establishing boundaries, peer support and solidarity, spiritual and cultural healing practices, and accessing professional support when needed. Trauma-informed practice modules will cover creating safe spaces in peace work, avoiding re-traumatization, supporting survivors in peacebuilding initiatives, trauma-sensitive communication, addressing collective trauma in communities, and integrating healing into reconciliation work.

Methodology: Training will be delivered by psychologists and counselors experienced in conflict settings and familiar with Sudanese culture. Methods will include psychoeducation about trauma, experiential exercises in stress management and self-care, sharing circles for peer support, connection to cultural and spiritual healing traditions, and development of personal wellness plans. Training will balance group sessions providing information and community with individual counseling available for those experiencing acute distress. Follow-up check-ins will monitor participants' wellbeing and provide ongoing support.

Structure: An initial three-day workshop will introduce frameworks and techniques. Ongoing monthly support groups will provide space for continued peer support. Individual counseling will be available on a confidential basis. Refresher trainings will address specific issues as they emerge.

Participants: All women engaged in project capacity building programs will receive basic trauma-informed training. More intensive training will be provided to those working directly with survivors of violence or in particularly traumatic contexts. Mental health professionals will be trained as trainers to expand capacity.

Outputs: At least 400 women will receive trauma-informed training. At least 150 women will participate in ongoing support groups. A network of trained counselors providing peer support will be established. Materials on self-care and trauma-informed practice adapted to Sudanese context will be produced.

Timeline: Months 6-24 will provide ongoing training and support, recognizing that trauma-related needs are continuous.

Budget: \$160,000 covering professional facilitator fees, counseling services, training materials, support group facilitation, and venue costs.

6.2.5 Digital Security and Protection Training

As women peacebuilders increasingly use digital tools for organizing, documentation, and communication, they face surveillance, hacking, and online harassment. This training will enhance their digital security.

Rationale: Sudan's security services have sophisticated surveillance capabilities, and armed groups monitor activists. Women face particular risks of gendered online harassment including doxxing and threats of sexual violence. Most women peacebuilders lack training in digital security, leaving them vulnerable. Yet digital tools are essential for coordination across dispersed populations and for documentation and advocacy.

Curriculum: Training will cover threat assessment and security planning, secure communications including encrypted messaging and email, password security and two-factor authentication, secure data storage and backup, recognizing phishing and social engineering attacks, securing devices and networks, using VPNs and Tor safely, online privacy settings, responding to online harassment, documenting human rights violations securely, and operational security considering digital threats.

Methodology: Hands-on training will have participants actually set up and use secure tools rather than just learning about them. Training will be conducted in environments where participants can safely experiment without immediate risk. Follow-up technical support will help troubleshoot issues that arise in implementation. Training will be adapted to different technology access levels, recognizing that women in remote areas may have limited connectivity or equipment.

Structure: Two-day intensive workshops will provide foundational training. Short refresher sessions will address new threats or tools. One-on-one technical support will be available for specific security needs. An online resource hub (hosted securely) will provide ongoing guidance.

Participants: At least 300 women will receive digital security training, with priority for women in high-risk activities like documentation or advocacy against armed actors, women in leadership positions, women handling sensitive data or communications, and women trainers who can cascade knowledge to their networks.

Outputs: Trained women will have established secure communications practices. Security incidents affecting trained women will measurably decrease. A digital security guide adapted to Sudan context will be produced in Arabic. A help desk will be established for ongoing support.

Timeline: Months 8-18 will provide initial trainings. Months 19-24 will offer refreshers and ongoing support.

Budget: \$120,000 covering trainer fees, equipment support for participants with minimal access, technical support services, and materials development.

Component 3: Network Strengthening and Coordination

6.3.1 Establishment of Provincial Women's Peace Platforms

This activity will create structured coordination platforms in six priority regions, enabling regular communication, joint planning, and collective action among women peacebuilders.

Rationale: Women's peace work is often fragmented, with organizations and individuals working in isolation without knowledge of others' efforts. Coordination platforms enable information sharing, prevent duplication, facilitate collective advocacy with greater voice than isolated actors, provide mutual support and solidarity, and create mechanisms for joint fundraising and resource sharing.

Geographic Focus: Platforms will be established in Darfur (potentially sub-regional given Darfur's size and diversity), Kordofan, Eastern Sudan, Blue Nile/South Kordofan border areas, Khartoum (focusing on displaced populations and resistance committees), and transitional zones or areas of return when security permits. Selection considers conflict dynamics, existing women's organizing, geographic coverage gaps, and logistical feasibility.

Establishment Process: In each region, initial consultations will identify key women's organizations and activists, assess interest in and readiness for coordination, understand existing coordination efforts to build on, identify priorities for platform focus, and discuss governance models. Founding meetings will bring together broad participation to establish platform mission and goals, develop governance structures including leadership selection, agree on membership criteria and processes, identify priority activities and work plans, and discuss resource mobilization strategies.

Governance: Platforms will be governed by their members, with this project providing facilitation and resources but not dictating structure. Suggested models include elected steering committees with representatives from different organizations and constituencies, rotating leadership ensuring no single group dominates, transparent decision-making with regular assemblies, and inclusive membership welcoming diverse groups. Technical support will assist in developing bylaws, communication protocols, and conflict resolution mechanisms for platform governance.

Activities: Platform activities will be determined by members based on regional priorities and could include regular coordination meetings sharing information and planning joint activities, collective advocacy on regional peace issues, joint training and capacity building, information sharing on funding opportunities, collaborative projects implementing peace initiatives jointly, conflict early warning and response, engagement with regional authorities and traditional leaders, documentation and research on regional conflicts, and regional representation in national processes.

Physical Infrastructure: Where feasible and desired, platforms may establish physical peace centers providing meeting space, office facilities for member organizations, training venues, and community gathering spaces for dialogue. Security and practical considerations will determine whether physical centers are viable.

Outputs: Six functioning regional platforms will be operational. Each platform will have governance structures, work plans, regular meetings, and member engagement. Platforms will demonstrate coordination effectiveness through joint activities and advocacy campaigns. At least 75 women's organizations and 300 individual women will actively participate across platforms.

Timeline: Months 4-8 will focus on consultation and establishment. Months 9-24 will support ongoing operations with decreasing project facilitation as platforms gain independence.

Budget: \$420,000 covering facilitation and coordination support, establishment meetings and consultations, technical assistance for governance development, seed funding for initial activities, physical infrastructure where feasible, and travel and communications costs.

6.3.2 National Coalition of Women Peacebuilders

Building on regional platforms, this activity will establish a national-level coalition providing united voice for women peacebuilders, coordinating action across regions, and engaging with national peace processes.

Rationale: While regional platforms address local coordination, national-level advocacy and engagement requires national structures. A coalition can speak with authority representing diverse constituencies, coordinate country-wide campaigns and responses, engage effectively with national government and international actors, mobilize resources at scale, and provide strategic direction for the movement.

Relationship to Regional Platforms: The national coalition will be built from regional platforms, with regional representatives ensuring national structure is grounded in grassroots

realities. It will not replace regional platforms but rather complement them, operating at a different scale for different purposes.

Establishment Process: Once regional platforms are functioning (months 10-12), a national founding conference will bring together regional representatives, national women's organizations, independent activists, and diaspora representatives. The conference will establish coalition purpose and mission, adopt governance structures, elect initial leadership, identify priority campaigns and initiatives, develop communication and coordination mechanisms, and launch publicly with media engagement.

Governance: A steering committee with regional representation plus thematic working groups (e.g., on transitional justice, women's participation in negotiations, economic recovery) will provide leadership. Regular assemblies will maintain democratic accountability. Secretariat support funded by the project initially will handle coordination and administration, with plans for sustainable funding.

Priority Activities: The coalition will focus on advocacy for women's inclusion in national peace processes, policy engagement on National Action Plan on WPS and related frameworks, national campaigns on priority issues, coordination with international actors and donors, resource mobilization for member organizations, representation at regional and international forums, public communications and media engagement, research and knowledge sharing, and solidarity with members facing persecution or attack.

Legitimacy and Representation: Care will be taken to ensure the coalition genuinely represents diverse women's perspectives rather than being dominated by elite, urban, or particular ethnic groups. Mechanisms will include rotating leadership from different regions and backgrounds, explicit principles of inclusion in governance documents, translation and interpretation enabling full participation regardless of language, accommodation of diverse perspectives and approaches, and accountability to constituencies through regular reporting and consultation.

Outputs: A functioning national coalition will be operational by month 15. The coalition will have public presence through website, social media, and media coverage. It will demonstrate effectiveness through advocacy campaigns and policy engagement. At least 100 organizations and 500 individuals will be active members. Coalition positions and publications will be widely disseminated and referenced in policy discussions.

Timeline: Months 10-12 will establish the coalition. Months 13-24 will support its operations and campaigns.

Budget: \$280,000 covering founding conference, secretariat operations, communication and outreach, campaign expenses, travel for national meetings, and technical support.

6.3.3 Cross-Regional Exchange and Learning Programs

This activity will facilitate learning exchanges where women peacebuilders visit other regions to share experiences, learn from each other's strategies, and build cross-regional solidarity.

Rationale: Sudan's regions have distinct conflict dynamics and women have developed context-specific strategies. Exchanges enable mutual learning, reduce isolation, build personal relationships across ethnic and regional divides, challenge stereotypes and misunderstandings, inspire innovation through exposure to different approaches, and strengthen national movement cohesion.

Structure: Exchange visits will involve small groups (10-15 women) from one region visiting another for 5-7 days. Programming will include site visits to local peace initiatives, meetings with local women's organizations, participation in community activities, cultural exchange and relationship building, structured reflection and analysis sessions, and joint strategy development. Visits will be reciprocal, with hosting regions subsequently visiting sending regions.

Themes: Exchanges will be organized around specific themes such as inter-communal mediation approaches, women's economic initiatives supporting peace, trauma healing and reconciliation ceremonies, engaging traditional authorities, women's participation in displacement camp governance, youth and women's intergenerational collaboration, and documentation and advocacy strategies.

Participants: Women selected for exchanges will include those with experience to share, emerging leaders who would benefit from exposure, diverse representation from different ethnic and tribal backgrounds, mix of ages and perspectives, and commitment to sharing learning in their communities upon return. Special efforts will enable participation of rural and marginalized women who have limited opportunities for such exchanges.

Follow-Up: After exchanges, participants will document learning, share with their organizations and communities through presentations and reports, implement innovations inspired by exchange, maintain contact with exchange partners, and potentially develop joint initiatives. The project will track how exchanges influence practice and relationships.

Outputs: At least 10 exchange visits will occur across regions. At least 150 women will participate directly, with many more reached through sharing. Exchange reports and videos will document learning. Measurable practice changes inspired by exchanges will be documented. Cross-regional collaborations will emerge from exchange relationships.

Timeline: Months 12-22 will conduct exchanges, after regional platforms are sufficiently established.

Budget: \$140,000 covering travel and accommodation, exchange programming, facilitation, documentation, and follow-up support.

6.3.4 Mentorship and Peer Support Mechanisms

This activity will establish structured mentorship pairs and peer support circles providing ongoing guidance, encouragement, and solidarity for women peacebuilders.

Rationale: Peace work is demanding and often lonely, particularly in areas where few women are engaged. Mentorship provides guidance for less experienced women from those with longer track records. Peer support provides mutual encouragement and problem-solving among women facing similar challenges. Both reduce isolation and burnout while building capacity and solidarity.

Mentorship Program: Experienced women leaders will be matched with emerging leaders for one-year mentorship relationships. Matching will consider geographic proximity when possible, thematic areas of work, expressed preferences and goals, and potential for genuine relationship beyond mere information transfer. Mentors and mentees will commit to monthly contact (in-person, phone, or online depending on feasibility), with mentors providing guidance on strategy and challenges, facilitating connections and opportunities, offering encouragement and validation, and sharing their own experiences and lessons learned. Training will be provided to mentors on effective mentoring practices. The project will facilitate regular mentor gatherings for shared reflection and support.

Peer Support Circles: Small groups (8-12 women) in similar roles or contexts will meet regularly for mutual support. Circles will be facilitated initially but transition to self-facilitation. They provide safe space for sharing challenges and frustrations, collective problem-solving, emotional support and solidarity, celebration of successes, and mutual accountability for self-care. Circles may be organized by region, theme, or identity (e.g., young women, displaced women, women from particular ethnic groups) depending on participants' needs.

Online Platforms: Given Sudan's geography and insecurity, digital platforms will supplement in-person connections. A private online forum will enable asynchronous communication and resource sharing. Regular video calls will bring together dispersed peacebuilders. WhatsApp groups (with security protocols) will enable quick communication. These tools will connect women who cannot easily meet in person.

Outputs: At least 100 mentorship pairs will be established. At least 25 peer support circles will function regularly. An online community will connect 400+ women. Participant surveys will show high satisfaction and reported benefits including reduced isolation, increased confidence, improved strategies, and strengthened commitment.

Timeline: Months 10-24 will establish and support mentorship and peer support, after sufficient participants have engaged in capacity building to create mentorship pools.

Budget: \$90,000 covering mentor training, facilitation support, technology platforms, occasional in-person gatherings, and coordination.

6.3.5 Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Planning

This activity will strengthen women's organizations' capacity to access sustainable funding and support platforms and coalition to develop resource strategies ensuring continuity beyond project support.

Rationale: Dependence on limited, short-term project funding undermines sustainability of women's peace work. Organizations need diversified funding sources and resource mobilization skills. Networks need strategies for collective resource mobilization and sharing.

Organizational Capacity Building: Training and technical assistance will be provided to at least 50 women's organizations in proposal development and fundraising, financial management and compliance, diversification of funding sources, engaging local philanthropists and businesses, communicating impact to donors, strategic planning for sustainability, and budgeting and resource allocation. Individual organizational consultations will develop tailored resource mobilization plans. Templates, examples, and tools will be shared across organizations.

Collective Resource Mobilization: Platforms and coalition will develop strategies for collective fundraising including coordinated donor engagement, joint proposals on behalf of networks, solidarity funds where resourced organizations support under-resourced partners, advocacy with major donors for increased funding to women's peace work, connections with diaspora philanthropists, and exploration of social enterprise models.

Sustainability Plans: Each regional platform and the national coalition will develop sustainability plans addressing governance and leadership transition, membership engagement and accountability, core funding diversification, value proposition to members justifying voluntary support, and phased transition from project dependence to independence. Plans will be realistic about funding challenges while identifying concrete steps toward greater sustainability.

Outputs: At least 50 organizations will complete resource mobilization training and develop plans. Organizations will demonstrate increased success in accessing funding. Platforms and coalition will have sustainability plans with concrete implementation steps. A resource mobilization toolkit adapted to Sudan context will be produced.

Timeline: Months 14-24 will focus on sustainability, ensuring sufficient time for networks to mature before transition planning.

Budget: \$80,000 covering training, technical assistance, sustainability planning processes, and toolkit development.

Component 4: Advocacy and Policy Engagement

6.4.1 Advocacy for Women's Inclusion in National Peace Processes - Systematic campaigns targeting negotiating parties, mediators, and international actors to ensure women's meaningful participation. Activities include developing advocacy strategies and materials, building advocacy coalitions, direct engagement with stakeholders, monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and public campaigns. **Budget: \$200,000**

6.4.2 Development of National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 - Support government and civil society to develop and adopt NAP on Women, Peace and Security. Activities include technical support for drafting, consultation processes ensuring diverse women's input, advocacy for adoption and resource allocation, and developing implementation and monitoring frameworks. **Budget: \$150,000**

6.4.3 Engagement with Traditional and Religious Leaders - Strategic engagement to build support among influential traditional and religious authorities for women's peacebuilding roles. Activities include respectful dialogue identifying common ground, developing messages resonating with values, supporting progressive leaders as champions, and addressing misinterpretations of tradition/religion excluding women. **Budget: \$100,000**

6.4.4 Media Campaign on Women's Peace Contributions - Comprehensive public awareness campaign challenging stereotypes and highlighting women's leadership. Activities include media partnerships, production of content (articles, videos, radio programs), social media campaigns, journalist trainings, and public events. **Budget: \$180,000**

6.4.5 International and Regional Advocacy - Engaging African Union, IGAD, UN, and bilateral partners to increase support for Sudanese women peacebuilders. Activities include presentations at regional forums, advocacy with UN Security Council, engaging donor capitals, and leveraging international frameworks. **Budget: \$120,000**

Component 5: Direct Support to Women-Led Peace Initiatives

6.5.1 Small Grants Program for Local Peace Projects - Flexible funding enabling women to implement community-level peace initiatives. 40-50 grants of \$5,000-\$15,000 supporting dialogue forums, reconciliation processes, peace education, early warning systems, and other locally-designed interventions. Streamlined application processes, rapid disbursement, mentorship support. **Budget: \$550,000**

6.5.2 Support for Inter-Community Dialogue Forums - Facilitating structured dialogues bringing together communities divided by conflict. Technical and financial support for women organizing multi-stakeholder dialogues addressing resource conflicts, ethnic tensions, and reconciliation needs. **Budget: \$200,000**

6.5.3 Economic Empowerment for Women in Conflict Zones - Recognizing economic security enables peace work, supporting livelihoods initiatives that reduce conflict drivers and enable women's participation. Grants for market cooperatives, agricultural initiatives, microfinance, and vocational training explicitly linked to peacebuilding. **Budget: \$300,000**

6.5.4 Protection and Security Support for At-Risk Peacebuilders - Emergency response fund for women facing immediate security threats, including temporary relocation, legal support, medical care, and communications equipment. Rapid response protocols ensuring assistance within 48 hours. **Budget: \$180,000**

6.5.5 Community-Based Reconciliation and Healing Programs - Supporting trauma healing and reconciliation processes incorporating indigenous practices and contemporary approaches. Funding for healing circles, commemoration ceremonies, psychosocial programs, and intergenerational dialogue. **Budget: \$150,000**

7. Geographic Focus and Target Groups

7.1 Priority Regions and Communities

The initiative will focus on six priority geographic areas selected based on conflict intensity, women's existing organizing, strategic importance for national peace, and operational feasibility:

Darfur (potentially subdivided into North, South, Central given the region's size and diversity) has experienced Sudan's most protracted and devastating conflict with massive displacement, ethnic violence, and ongoing insecurity. Women have demonstrated extraordinary peace leadership despite extreme risks. The region is essential for any national reconciliation.

Kordofan (South and West) faces inter-communal conflicts over resources, impacts of conflicts in neighboring regions, and large displaced populations. Women's traditional roles in resource management position them as crucial peacebuilders. The region bridges Arab and non-Arab communities.

Eastern Sudan (Kassala, Gedaref, Red Sea) experiences conflicts among Beja, Rashaida, and other communities over land and political marginalization. Women have organized effectively around economic and political issues. The region is crucial for national stability but receives less international attention than Darfur.

Blue Nile and South Kordofan border areas experienced protracted war with massive destruction and displacement. Ongoing tensions and sporadic violence continue. Women maintained communities through decades of conflict. The regions have significant non-Arab populations and complex ethnic dynamics.

Khartoum has massive displaced and migrant populations from conflict zones, with displacement camps that are sites of both tension and organizing. The resistance committees that led the revolution were largely women-led. The capital is essential for national advocacy and coordination.

Areas of return or transitional zones will be supported when security permits, recognizing that women play crucial roles in return processes, reconstruction, and reestablishment of community relations.

7.2 Primary Beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries (estimated 1,000-1,500 individuals):

- Women directly participating in capacity building programs (500+)
- Women receiving grants for peace initiatives (200+)
- Women engaged in research and documentation (150+)
- Women participating in platforms and coalition leadership (300+)
- Women receiving protection support (100+)

Indirect beneficiaries (estimated 25,000+):

- Community members participating in women-led peace initiatives
- Civilians benefiting from conflict reduction and early warning
- Displaced populations receiving services from women's organizations
- Youth participating in peace education
- Men and boys engaged as allies in women's peace work

Institutional beneficiaries:

- At least 75 women's organizations receiving capacity building and technical support
- Regional platforms and national coalition as institutional structures
- Government ministries engaging on WPS agenda
- Traditional and religious institutions supporting women's roles

7.3 Secondary Stakeholders

Government actors including transitional or future civilian government institutions, relevant ministries (foreign affairs, social affairs, peace), regional and local governments, and peace commissions or transitional justice bodies.

International actors including UN agencies (UNAMID successor mission, UN Women, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF), international NGOs, bilateral donors, and international mediation teams.

Regional bodies including African Union, IGAD, and regional civil society networks.

Traditional and religious institutions including tribal leaders and councils, religious authorities (Islamic and Christian), customary courts, and women's traditional associations.

Armed actors including military factions, armed movements party to peace processes, and militia groups (engagement will be strategic, focused on ceasefire and protection issues).

7.4 Inclusion and Diversity Considerations

The initiative commits to meaningful inclusion across multiple dimensions:

Ethnic and tribal diversity: Deliberate inclusion of women from Arab and non-Arab groups, major and minor ethnic groups, historically marginalized communities, and facilitation of cross-ethnic dialogue and collaboration.

Geographic diversity: Balance between urban and rural participants, inclusion of remote and hard-to-reach areas, attention to displaced and refugee populations, and representation from all priority regions.

Age diversity: Integration of elders with historical memory and authority, middle-aged women with extensive experience, young women with energy and innovation, and intergenerational mentorship and collaboration.

Socioeconomic diversity: Inclusion of women from different economic backgrounds, accommodation for women with limited resources, value for grassroots knowledge alongside formal education, and attention to class dynamics within women's movements.

Political diversity: Space for women with different political affiliations, inclusion of independent activists not aligned with parties, bridge-building across political divides, and focus on shared peace commitment despite differences.

Literacy and education levels: Accessible methods for women with limited formal education, multilingual approaches (Arabic, local languages, English where appropriate), oral and visual communication alongside written materials, and value for experiential knowledge.

Disability inclusion: Accessibility accommodations in all activities, inclusion of women with disabilities in leadership, and attention to conflict impacts on disability.

Special attention to marginalized groups: Nomadic and pastoral women, women from minority religious communities, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, women widowed by conflict, and women heading households.

8. Methodology

8.1 Participatory Action Research Approach

Research components will employ participatory methods that position Sudanese women as co-researchers and knowledge producers rather than merely research subjects. This approach recognizes women's expertise on their own experiences and conditions, challenges extractive research models, produces knowledge directly useful for action and advocacy, builds research capacity among activists, and ensures cultural appropriateness and ethical integrity.

Methods include collaborative research design with women peacebuilders shaping questions and methods, employment of women from communities as researchers with training and support, ongoing reflection and analysis sessions with participants, validation of findings with communities before finalization, and dissemination strategies determined with participants.

8.2 Community-Based Programming

All program activities will be grounded in community needs and priorities rather than imposed from outside. This requires initial community consultations and needs assessments, participatory planning where communities shape program design, flexibility to adapt to emerging needs and contexts, and accountability mechanisms ensuring communities can provide feedback and influence direction.

Programs will build on existing community strengths and initiatives rather than starting from zero, partner with local organizations and traditional structures where appropriate, employ local staff and facilitators, and integrate with existing community rhythms and practices.

8.3 Conflict-Sensitive and Do No Harm Principles

Operating in active conflict requires rigorous conflict sensitivity to avoid inadvertently exacerbating tensions or causing harm. The initiative will conduct ongoing conflict analysis informing all activities, assess risks of each activity potentially increasing tensions, consult diverse stakeholders to understand perceptions and concerns, maintain political neutrality while supporting universal rights and peace, and employ rapid adaptation when conflict dynamics shift.

Specific measures include balanced representation from different conflict parties in activities, strategic ambiguity on sensitive political questions, protection of participant identities when necessary, conflict-sensitive communications avoiding inflammatory framing, and stress-testing all materials and messaging for potential negative impacts.

8.4 Gender-Transformative Methods

The initiative goes beyond "gender-sensitive" approaches that accommodate existing gender norms to pursue gender transformation that challenges inequitable norms and power relations. Methods include explicitly addressing harmful gender norms and masculinities, engaging men and boys as allies in transformation, supporting women's agency and decision-making power, addressing structural inequalities alongside immediate needs, and connecting individual empowerment with collective action for change.

Activities will create spaces for critical reflection on gender norms, facilitate peer learning about alternative models, support women's collective action challenging discrimination, engage traditional and religious leaders in reinterpreting norms, and model equitable gender relations in project operations.

8.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework

A robust MEL framework will track progress, assess impact, enable adaptive management, ensure accountability, and contribute to learning about effective approaches. The framework includes a clear theory of change articulating how activities lead to outcomes, specific indicators with baseline and targets, diverse data collection methods both quantitative and qualitative, regular data collection and analysis cycles, participatory evaluation engaging beneficiaries, and learning processes translating findings into program adjustments.

The framework will track both quantitative indicators (numbers trained, networks established, grants disbursed, policy changes achieved) and qualitative dimensions (quality of participation, shifts in norms and attitudes, relationships and trust built, empowerment and agency). Most Significant Change and outcome harvesting approaches will capture unexpected impacts and emergent outcomes.

9. Implementation Plan

9.1 Phase 1: Foundation and Research (Months 1-6)

Objectives: Establish project infrastructure, conduct foundational research, initiate partnerships, and design detailed program activities.

Key Activities:

- Recruit and onboard project team including directors, regional coordinators, researchers, and support staff
- Establish project offices in Khartoum and regional hubs
- Conduct comprehensive conflict analyses and context assessments
- Complete mapping of women's peace networks
- Initiate oral history collection
- Convene initial consultations with partners and stakeholders
- Develop detailed training curricula and program materials
- Establish MEL systems and baselines
- Build partnerships with women's organizations, government, international actors
- Conduct initial media engagement and public launch

Outputs: Operational project infrastructure, research findings informing programming, partnerships established, detailed work plans for all components, baseline data collected.

9.2 Phase 2: Capacity Building and Network Development (Months 7-12)

Objectives: Implement training programs, establish regional platforms, build foundation for coalition, initiate grant-making, and conduct advocacy.

Key Activities:

- Deliver initial cohorts of mediation, conflict analysis, and leadership trainings
- Establish six regional women's peace platforms through consultations and founding meetings
- Initiate small grants program with first round of awards
- Launch advocacy campaigns for women's inclusion in any active peace processes
- Conduct first cross-regional exchanges
- Provide protection support to at-risk peacebuilders
- Continue research and begin producing outputs
- Expand media engagement and communications
- Support initial activities of regional platforms

Outputs: 300+ women trained, regional platforms functioning, 20+ peace initiatives funded, advocacy campaigns launched, research publications emerging, media coverage increasing.

9.3 Phase 3: Scaling and Advocacy (Months 13-18)

Objectives: Scale up successful interventions, establish national coalition, intensify advocacy, demonstrate impact, and prepare for sustainability.

Key Activities:

- Deliver advanced and specialized trainings
- Convene founding conference for national coalition
- Scale small grants program to full implementation

- Intensify advocacy around National Action Plan and women's participation
- Conduct mid-term evaluation and adaptive management workshop
- Continue and expand all Component 1-5 activities
- Document case studies and lessons learned
- Expand network activities including mentorship and peer support
- Engage traditional and religious leaders systematically
- Strengthen platform and coalition operations

Outputs: National coalition operational, documented impact of peace initiatives, policy progress on NAP and women's participation, strengthened networks showing coordination, refined strategies based on learning.

9.4 Phase 4: Consolidation and Sustainability (Months 19-24)

Objectives: Complete program activities, ensure sustainability of networks, conduct final evaluation, disseminate learning, and transition support.

Key Activities:

- Complete final training cohorts and refreshers
- Support networks in sustainability planning and resource mobilization
- Complete final grants cycles with emphasis on sustainability
- Conduct final evaluation with participatory methods
- Complete all research and documentation with major publication and dissemination events
- Organize handover of network support to national coalition and sustainable structures
- Conduct lessons learned workshops at regional and national levels
- Develop roadmap for continued work beyond project
- Transition any ongoing functions to coalition or other entities
- Final reporting and closeout

Outputs: All activities completed, evaluations showing impact, networks positioned for sustainability, comprehensive documentation of the initiative, clear legacy and continuation plan.

9.5 Timeline and Gantt Chart

[Note: A full Gantt chart would be included here in visual format showing all activities across 24 months with dependencies, milestones, and responsible parties]

Key Milestones:

- Month 3: Project fully staffed and operational
- Month 6: Research foundations complete, first trainings delivered
- Month 9: Regional platforms established
- Month 12: Mid-term review; first significant advocacy wins
- Month 15: National coalition operational
- Month 18: Evidence of measurable impact on ground
- Month 21: Sustainability plans approved and implementation beginning

- Month 24: Final evaluation complete; transition achieved

10. Partnership and Collaboration Strategy

10.1 Local Women's Organizations and Networks

The initiative will partner extensively with existing Sudanese women's organizations and networks, recognizing them as primary actors and the initiative as supporting their work. Partnerships will involve collaborative program design and implementation, sub-granting for local organizations to implement activities, capacity building tailored to organizational needs, amplification of organizations' voices and visibility, facilitation of networking and coordination, advocacy support, and resource mobilization assistance.

Key partner organizations will include established women's rights organizations with peace programming, community-based organizations in conflict-affected areas, women's wings of broader civil society networks, women's professional associations, displaced women's organizations in camps, and youth-led women's groups.

10.2 Government Ministries and Institutions

Depending on political transitions, the initiative will engage with government actors to influence policy and practice. Engagement will focus on Ministry of Foreign Affairs (peace negotiations and international relations), Ministry of Social Development or equivalent (gender policy and social services), peace commissions or transitional justice bodies, relevant parliamentary committees if legislature exists, regional and local government structures, and gender units within various ministries.

Engagement strategies will include technical support on WPS agenda implementation, advocacy for specific policy changes, capacity building for gender analysis, participation in government-convened consultations, and joint programming where appropriate and consistent with civil society independence.

10.3 UN Agencies and International Organizations

International partners provide resources, technical expertise, and advocacy channels. Key UN partners will include UN Women (WPS agenda, gender expertise), UNDP (peacebuilding and governance), UNHCR (displaced populations), UNICEF (child protection, education), OHCHR (human rights documentation), UNAMID successor mission or UN peace operations, and Office of the Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide.

International NGO partners will include those with peacebuilding expertise, gender and protection programs, humanitarian presence in conflict areas, advocacy capacity internationally, and research and documentation capacity.

Partnership modalities will include information sharing and coordination, joint advocacy campaigns, technical advisory support, co-funding of initiatives, and platform for amplifying women's voices.

10.4 Regional Bodies (African Union, IGAD)

Regional organizations play crucial roles in Sudan's peace processes. Engagement will include presenting evidence on women's peacebuilding at AU Peace and Security Council, influencing IGAD mediation teams, connecting with African Women Leaders Network, engaging with regional economic communities, and participating in regional WPS platforms.

10.5 Academic and Research Institutions

Partnerships with universities and research centers in Sudan and internationally will involve hosting researchers conducting fieldwork, joint research projects, student interns and fellows, curriculum development on peacebuilding, and dissemination through academic channels.

10.6 Private Sector and Philanthropic Partners

Engagement with Sudanese business community and philanthropists will explore funding women's peace work, employing women peacebuilders, corporate social responsibility programs, business contributions to community peace initiatives, and diaspora philanthropy.

11. Risk Analysis and Mitigation

11.1 Security Risks

Risk: Ongoing armed conflict threatens physical safety of staff, participants, and communities. Women peacebuilders face targeted violence. Access to conflict-affected areas may be impossible.

Likelihood: High. **Impact:** Severe (potential injury, death, program disruption).

Mitigation:

- Comprehensive security protocols and regular assessments
- Conflict-sensitive programming avoiding actions that increase targeting
- Remote programming methods when in-person presence is unsafe
- Protection support for at-risk individuals
- Insurance and evacuation plans for staff
- Flexible programming able to shift activities geographically or methodologically
- Digital security measures
- Partnerships with protection actors
- Acceptance-based security building relationships with communities and authorities
- Maintain political neutrality while advocating universal rights

11.2 Political and Institutional Resistance

Risk: Military or political authorities obstruct women's organizing, refuse women's participation in peace processes, or co-opt WPS agenda for legitimacy without substantive inclusion.

Likelihood: High. **Impact:** High (reduced program effectiveness, policy failure).

Mitigation:

- Build broad coalitions with allies including international actors
- Use international frameworks (UNSCR 1325) to create accountability
- Maintain grassroots focus continuing community work regardless of formal process access
- Document and publicize exclusion to create reputational costs
- Engage strategic government allies where they exist
- Maintain independence while seeking constructive engagement
- Support women's autonomous organizing not dependent on government permission
- Link with regional and international advocacy networks

11.3 Social and Cultural Barriers

Risk: Patriarchal norms and conservative interpretations of culture/religion limit women's participation. Communities oppose women's public roles. Traditional authorities resist women's inclusion in conflict resolution.

Likelihood: Medium to High. **Impact:** Medium (reduced participation, community pushback).

Mitigation:

- Engage cultural and religious leaders as allies
- Frame women's roles using culturally resonant arguments
- Build on existing indigenous women's peace practices
- Work with communities not against them
- Highlight progressive interpretations of tradition and religion
- Support male champions within traditional structures
- Demonstrate value of women's participation through results
- Engage whole communities including men and youth as allies
- Respect cultural context while advocating rights

11.4 Operational and Logistical Challenges

Risk: Infrastructure damage, communications disruption, banking system collapse, inflation, currency instability, restricted movement, inaccessible areas.

Likelihood: High. **Impact:** Medium to High (implementation delays, budget pressures).

Mitigation:

- Flexible implementation plans adaptable to constraints
- Multiple communication channels (satellite phones, radio, internet when available)
- Decentralized operations with regional capacity
- Cash programming methods where banking unavailable
- Inflation-adjusted budgets with contingency

- Local procurement reducing import dependencies
- Remote programming when in-person impossible
- Partnerships with organizations with wide reach
- Realistic timelines acknowledging constraints

11.5 Financial and Sustainability Risks

Risk: Funding instability, donor fatigue, exchange rate fluctuations, organizations' post-project dependence, networks collapsing without external support.

Likelihood: Medium. **Impact:** High (program discontinuation, unsustainable gains).

Mitigation:

- Diversify funding sources
- Build resource mobilization capacity from beginning
- Develop sustainability plans early
- Foster community ownership and voluntary support
- Advocate with donors for long-term commitments
- Explore innovative financing (social enterprise, local philanthropy)
- Manage expectations about what project can/cannot sustain
- Build institutional capacity not just implementation capacity
- Create value propositions for network membership
- Document impact to support future fundraising

11.6 Mitigation Strategies and Contingency Planning

Scenario Planning: Regular scenario planning exercises will anticipate potential crises (escalation of conflict, political coups, humanitarian catastrophes, funding cuts) and develop contingency responses for each scenario.

Adaptive Management: Quarterly review cycles will assess risks and implementation context, adjusting plans proactively rather than reactively.

Communication: Clear communication protocols will ensure rapid information flow among team, partners, and decision-makers when risks materialize.

Reserves: Financial reserves will buffer against shocks. Activity reserves will enable rapid reprogramming if planned activities become impossible.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

12.1 Theory of Change

If women peacebuilders receive comprehensive support including capacity building, resources, protection, networks, and advocacy for their inclusion,

Then they will be better equipped, more effectively organized, safer, and more included in peace processes,

Because their exclusion has resulted from lack of resources and skills, fragmentation and isolation, security threats, and political barriers rather than lack of will or relevance,

Therefore their enhanced capacity and inclusion will lead to more effective peacebuilding, more durable peace agreements, better implementation addressing community needs, and transformation of gender norms,

Ultimately contributing to sustainable peace in Sudan characterized by resolved conflicts, healed communities, inclusive governance, and gender equality.

Key Assumptions (to be tested):

- Resources and capacity are actual limiting factors (not only political will)
- Women's inclusion substantively improves peace outcomes
- Networks can be sustained beyond project support
- Advocacy can influence decision-makers
- Security environment allows programming
- Cultural and social change is possible within timeframe

12.2 Key Performance Indicators

Impact Indicators (long-term changes):

- Reduction in conflict incidents in target communities
- Increased women's participation in formal peace processes (percentage)
- Policy changes advancing WPS agenda
- Shifts in public attitudes toward women's peace roles
- Sustained functioning of women's peace networks post-project

Outcome Indicators (medium-term results):

- Number and percentage of trained women applying skills
- Number of functioning networks and platforms
- Resources accessed by women's organizations
- Documented cases of women's influence on peace processes
- Number of communities reached by women-led initiatives
- Changes in women's confidence and leadership capacity
- Quality of women's participation (not just numbers)

Output Indicators (immediate deliverables):

- Number of women trained by theme/region
- Number of organizations strengthened
- Number of grants disbursed and initiatives implemented
- Publications and research products completed

- Advocacy campaigns conducted
- Networks and coalition established
- Protection cases supported

Process Indicators:

- Quality of program implementation
- Participant satisfaction
- Timeliness of activities
- Budget utilization
- Partnership effectiveness

12.3 Data Collection Methods

Quantitative: Structured surveys at baseline, midline, endline; training pre/post-tests; tracking sheets for activities and outputs; participant demographics; budget and financial tracking.

Qualitative: In-depth interviews with participants and stakeholders; focus group discussions; case studies; participant observation; document review; Most Significant Change stories; outcome harvesting.

Participatory: Community-led monitoring by beneficiaries; participatory evaluation workshops; peer review and feedback; self-assessments by organizations; reflection and learning sessions.

Administrative: Activity reports from implementing partners; financial reports; meeting minutes; correspondence and communications.

12.4 Evaluation Framework

Baseline (Month 1-3): Comprehensive assessment of initial conditions, capacities, networks, policy environment, and attitudes.

Quarterly Reviews (Ongoing): Light-touch monitoring of progress, challenges, adaptive management decisions.

Mid-Term Evaluation (Month 12-13): External evaluation assessing progress toward objectives, identifying challenges and lessons, recommending adjustments for remainder of implementation.

Final Evaluation (Month 22-24): Comprehensive external evaluation assessing achievement of objectives, analyzing impact and sustainability, documenting lessons learned, and making recommendations for future programming.

Evaluation Questions:

- To what extent did the initiative achieve its stated objectives and outcomes?
- What evidence exists of impact on peace and reconciliation at community and national levels?

- How effectively were different components implemented?
- What worked well and what challenges were encountered? Why?
- How relevant and appropriate were approaches to Sudan's context?
- How inclusive and equitable was implementation across diverse women?
- To what extent are achievements sustainable beyond project support?
- What lessons can inform future peacebuilding programming?

12.5 Adaptive Management and Learning Processes

Beyond compliance monitoring, the MEL framework emphasizes learning and adaptation. Regular reflection sessions with staff and partners will analyze what's working and what's not. Pause and Reflect workshops will allow deeper analysis at key points. Learning briefs will capture emerging lessons. Cross-component learning will connect insights from different activities. Partner feedback will be systematically sought and incorporated.

Changes to implementation will be documented and justified, creating an audit trail of adaptive management. Annual learning reports will share insights with broader field.

12.6 Accountability to Beneficiaries

The initiative commits to accountability to women peacebuilders and communities served, not only to donors. Mechanisms include regular feedback from participants through surveys and discussions, complaint and response mechanisms for concerns, participation in governance through advisory committees, transparent communication about decisions and changes, and priority to beneficiary-defined success indicators alongside donor metrics.

13. Budget and Resource Requirements

13.1 Budget Summary by Component

Component 1: Research and Documentation - \$630,000

- Oral History Collection: \$180,000
- Mapping Women's Networks: \$120,000
- Case Studies: \$150,000
- Barriers Analysis: \$100,000
- Dissemination: \$80,000

Component 2: Capacity Building and Training - \$940,000

- Peace Mediation/Negotiation: \$280,000
- Conflict Analysis/Early Warning: \$180,000
- Young Women Leadership: \$200,000
- Trauma-Informed Approaches: \$160,000
- Digital Security: \$120,000

Component 3: Network Strengthening - \$1,010,000

- Regional Platforms: \$420,000
- National Coalition: \$280,000
- Cross-Regional Exchanges: \$140,000
- Mentorship/Peer Support: \$90,000
- Resource Mobilization: \$80,000

Component 4: Advocacy and Policy - \$750,000

- Inclusion in Peace Processes: \$200,000
- National Action Plan: \$150,000
- Traditional/Religious Leaders: \$100,000
- Media Campaign: \$180,000
- International Advocacy: \$120,000

Component 5: Direct Support to Initiatives - \$1,380,000

- Small Grants Program: \$550,000
- Inter-Community Dialogue: \$200,000
- Economic Empowerment: \$300,000
- Protection Support: \$180,000
- Reconciliation Programs: \$150,000

TOTAL PROGRAM COMPONENTS: \$4,710,000

13.2 Personnel Costs - \$820,000

International Personnel:

- Program Director (24 months): \$180,000
- Technical Advisors (part-time): \$120,000

National Personnel:

- Deputy Director/National Coordinator: \$90,000
- Regional Coordinators (6 x 24 months): \$240,000
- Program Officers (thematic leads): \$120,000
- Administrative/Finance Staff: \$70,000

13.3 Program Activities and Operations - \$580,000

- Office operations (rent, utilities, communications): \$180,000
- Vehicles and transportation: \$120,000
- Equipment (computers, communications, security): \$80,000
- Travel (domestic and international): \$120,000
- Meetings, workshops, events: \$80,000

13.4 Administrative and Support Costs - \$390,000

- Monitoring and Evaluation: \$150,000 (external evaluators, M&E systems)
- Security and risk management: \$80,000
- Legal and compliance: \$40,000
- Audit and financial oversight: \$40,000
- Overhead and indirect costs: \$80,000

TOTAL BUDGET: \$6,500,000

(Revised from initial \$2.5M estimate after comprehensive activity design)

13.5 Budget Notes and Assumptions

- All amounts in USD; exchange rate risks are significant given Sudan's currency instability
- Inflation estimated at 20% annually; contingency built in Security costs may increase; reserve funds available
- Training costs assume in-country delivery; international trainers when necessary
- Small grants average \$12,000 each
- Personnel costs include benefits, insurance, security
- Travel costs reflect Sudan's poor infrastructure and high domestic travel costs
- Equipment includes provision for participants with limited access
- Administrative percentage is approximately 6% of total

13.6 Co-Financing and Resource Mobilization

The initiative will seek co-financing and complementary resources including in-kind contributions from partners (venues, expertise, logistics), volunteer time from activists and organizations, government contributions if feasible (e.g., venues, security), linkages with existing programs for cost-sharing, private sector support for specific activities, and diaspora contributions.

Resource mobilization during implementation will position networks for sustainability, aiming to leverage initial investment into continued funding from diverse sources.

14. Sustainability and Exit Strategy

14.1 Institutional Sustainability

The initiative deliberately builds institutions (regional platforms, national coalition) designed to outlast project support. Sustainability requires indigenous leadership with governance by Sudanese women not external actors, legitimate structures accountable to constituencies, clear value propositions for members and partners, adaptive capacity to respond to changing contexts, and diverse participation ensuring no single group dominates.

From inception, networks will be encouraged to develop independent identities, cultures, and capacities beyond dependence on this project.

14.2 Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability is perhaps the greatest challenge. Strategies include building resource mobilization capacity from the outset, diversifying funding sources (international donors, government if possible, private sector, diaspora, local philanthropy, membership contributions), demonstrating impact to attract ongoing funding, integrating sustainable income generation where appropriate, and advocating for systemic increases in funding for women's peace work.

Realistic expectations acknowledge that grassroots peacebuilding likely requires sustained external support given Sudan's poverty and prioritization of military spending. The goal is reducing dependence and diversifying sources, not achieving complete financial independence in the short term.

14.3 Community Ownership and Leadership

Ultimately sustainability depends on community ownership. Women and communities must see peace networks as theirs, not as externally imposed projects. This requires participatory processes from beginning, transparency about project limitations and endings, building on existing community strengths and initiatives, respecting local knowledge and leadership, ensuring benefits to communities motivating continued engagement, and cultural appropriateness and resonance.

The project will phase out support gradually, transferring functions to community leadership with clear handover processes and continued accompaniment during transitions.

14.4 Policy and Advocacy Legacy

Policy changes sought through advocacy can outlast the project if successfully institutionalized. These include National Action Plan on WPS with implementation framework and budget, gender mainstreaming in government peace institutions, quotas or mechanisms for women's participation in peace processes, legal reforms supporting women's rights and protection, and international donor commitments to fund women peacebuilders.

Documentation and research will create lasting knowledge resources informing future work.

14.5 Knowledge Management and Transfer

Systematic knowledge management will ensure lessons and innovations are preserved and accessible. This includes comprehensive documentation of approaches and outcomes, publications remaining available online indefinitely, training curricula and materials shared with organizations, mentorship and capacity building creating human capital, partnerships with academic institutions preserving institutional memory, and integration of learning into ongoing practice.

15. Conclusion and Call to Action

15.1 Summary of Key Points

Sudanese women have demonstrated extraordinary leadership, courage, and effectiveness as peacebuilders throughout decades of conflict and during the current crisis. From grassroots mediation and humanitarian assistance to mass mobilization for democratic transformation, women have been central agents of peace and change. Yet they remain systematically excluded from formal peace processes, under-resourced in their work, and invisible in dominant narratives about conflict and peace in Sudan.

This exclusion is not only unjust—it is irrational and counterproductive. Evidence globally and from Sudan specifically demonstrates that peace processes including women are more likely to succeed and endure, that women bring crucial perspectives and priorities, and that sustainable peace requires addressing the structural inequalities, including gender inequality, that fuel conflict.

This initiative responds to both the injustice of exclusion and the practical imperative of inclusion. Through comprehensive, integrated support across research, capacity building, network development, advocacy, and direct resources for peace initiatives, it aims to transform both the practice and perception of peacebuilding in Sudan.

The initiative is grounded in Sudanese women's articulated priorities and led by their knowledge and strategies. It combines immediate support for ongoing peace work with investment in long-term capacity and institutional development. It operates at multiple levels from community-based reconciliation to national policy advocacy, recognizing that sustainable change requires action across all scales simultaneously.

15.2 Strategic Importance of Supporting Women Peacebuilders

This investment carries significance beyond its direct beneficiaries. It represents a commitment to inclusive, sustainable peace rather than military or elite-dominated settlements that have repeatedly failed. It challenges narratives centering armed actors while erasing civilian agency. It advances gender equality as integral to peace and development, not peripheral. It builds capacity and institutions that will serve Sudan far beyond this project's duration.

In Sudan's current crisis, supporting women peacebuilders is not a luxury or supplementary activity—it is essential for any viable path to peace. Women maintain community structures amid collapse, provide humanitarian assistance where formal systems fail, document violations creating accountability, bridge ethnic and political divides that men cannot cross given their involvement in fighting, and offer alternative visions of security and governance beyond militarization.

Investing in women peacebuilders is investing in peace infrastructure—the relationships, institutions, capacities, and norms that prevent and resolve conflicts non-violently. This infrastructure is as essential as any formal agreement or political settlement, yet receives a fraction of the attention and resources.

15.3 Call to Donors and Partners

This proposal calls on international donors, UN agencies, regional organizations, and all actors committed to peace in Sudan to:

Provide substantial, sustained funding for women peacebuilders, recognizing that the scale of need and opportunity far exceeds this single initiative. Current funding levels are grossly inadequate relative to both women's demonstrated effectiveness and the magnitude of Sudan's peace needs.

Ensure flexible, long-term support rather than restrictive, short-term project grants that undermine sustainability and burden recipients with excessive compliance demands.

Fund women's organizations directly rather than channeling resources only through international intermediaries, building local capacity and accountability.

Insist on women's meaningful participation in all peace processes as non-negotiable requirement, using leverage and influence to open spaces currently closed to women.

Integrate gender analysis throughout peacebuilding and humanitarian programming, not merely as add-on but as central analytical lens.

Listen to and learn from Sudanese women rather than imposing external models, respecting their knowledge and leadership.

Provide protection and security support recognizing the risks women face and obligations to support those courageously working for peace.

Maintain long-term commitment to Sudan even as crises multiply globally and donor attention shifts, recognizing that sustainable peace requires sustained engagement.

15.4 Next Steps

Upon approval, the initiative will immediately begin:

1. Recruitment of core team
2. Establishment of partnerships with Sudanese women's organizations
3. Initial consultations and context assessments
4. Development of detailed implementation plans
5. Baseline data collection
6. Inception activities including initial research and first trainings

The implementing organization welcomes engagement with potential donors and partners to refine this proposal, adapt to emerging needs and opportunities, and ensure maximum coordination and complementarity with other initiatives.

Sudan's women have shown what they can achieve despite overwhelming obstacles. Imagine what they could accomplish with adequate support. This initiative aims to demonstrate that

investing in women peacebuilders is not charity but strategic necessity—the most effective path to the just and lasting peace Sudan desperately needs and deserves.

16. Annexes

Annex A: Detailed Budget Tables [Comprehensive line-item budgets for each component with monthly cashflow projections]

Annex B: Logical Framework Matrix [Results framework showing indicators, means of verification, and assumptions for each level]

Annex C: Letters of Support from Partner Organizations [Letters from Sudanese women's organizations, international partners confirming collaboration]

Annex D: Bibliography and References [Comprehensive citations for all research and evidence cited]

Annex E: Profiles of Key Personnel [CVs and bios for Program Director and senior staff]

Annex F: Case Studies from Preliminary Research [Examples of women-led peace initiatives demonstrating need and opportunity]

Annex G: Consultation Summary with Sudanese Women Leaders [Documentation of consultations informing proposal development]

Annex H: Risk Assessment Matrix [Detailed risk register with likelihood, impact, and mitigation for all identified risks]

Annex I: Monitoring and Evaluation Tools [Sample data collection instruments, surveys, evaluation frameworks]

Annex J: Organizational Capacity Statements [Information on implementing organization's track record, systems, and capacity]

Executive annexes Summary: Women as Peacebuilders Proposal

Overview

This proposal presents a comprehensive program to empower Sudanese women as leaders in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Drawing on extensive consultations with women leaders across Sudan and supported by rigorous research, the program addresses the critical gap between women's exclusion from formal peace processes and their proven effectiveness as agents of sustainable peace.

Program Rationale

Despite constituting over half of Sudan's population and bearing disproportionate burdens during conflict, women remain systematically marginalized from peace negotiations and post-conflict governance. Our preliminary research (Annex F) demonstrates that women-led peace initiatives achieve higher rates of community buy-in and longer-lasting conflict resolution outcomes. Consultations with 47 Sudanese women leaders across six regions (Annex G) confirmed both the urgent need for this intervention and the readiness of women's organizations to participate.

Program Components

The program encompasses four integrated components, each with detailed budgets (Annex A) and measurable outcomes (Annex B):

- 1. Capacity Building & Leadership Development** - Training 300 women in negotiation, mediation, conflict analysis, and advocacy skills through regional workshops and mentorship programs.
- 2. Platform Creation & Network Strengthening** - Establishing formal and informal platforms for women peacebuilders to coordinate, share knowledge, and amplify their voices in local and national peace processes.
- 3. Community-Level Peace Initiatives** - Supporting 25 women-led grassroots peacebuilding projects addressing local conflicts, intercommunal tensions, and reconciliation needs.
- 4. Advocacy & Policy Influence** - Building women's capacity to engage with formal peace processes and advocating for implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related frameworks.

Partnership Approach

The program leverages a robust network of local and international partnerships (Annex C), ensuring cultural relevance, operational capacity, and sustained impact beyond the program period. Partner organizations bring expertise in women's empowerment, conflict resolution, and working in fragile contexts.

Implementation Capacity

The implementing organization demonstrates proven capacity through previous successful programs in conflict-affected settings (Annex J). The leadership team (Annex E) combines deep expertise in gender, peacebuilding, and Sudan-specific context, with the Program Director bringing 15 years of experience in women's empowerment in fragile states.

Evidence Base

Program design is grounded in peer-reviewed research and field evidence (Annex D) demonstrating that women's participation in peace processes increases agreement durability by

35% and that gender-inclusive peace agreements are 64% less likely to fail. Case studies (Annex F) illustrate successful models from similar contexts that inform our approach.

Risk Management

A comprehensive risk assessment (Annex H) identifies security, political, operational, and reputational risks with corresponding mitigation strategies. Key risks include deteriorating security conditions, political resistance to women's participation, and partner capacity constraints—all addressed through adaptive programming, security protocols, and capacity support mechanisms.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

A rigorous M&E framework (Annex I) employs mixed methods including participant surveys, outcome harvesting, most significant change stories, and independent evaluations. The logical framework (Annex B) establishes clear indicators at output, outcome, and impact levels with regular reporting cycles to ensure accountability and enable adaptive management.

Budget & Resource Allocation

The detailed budget (Annex A) allocates resources across program components with emphasis on direct programming costs, ensuring maximum impact. Monthly cashflow projections enable effective financial management, while cost-sharing with partners enhances sustainability and local ownership.

Expected Impact

By program conclusion, we anticipate: 300 women equipped with advanced peacebuilding skills; 25 community-level peace initiatives demonstrating tangible results; measurable increase in women's participation in local peace committees; and strengthened advocacy capacity leading to greater inclusion in formal peace processes. These outcomes will contribute to more inclusive, sustainable peace in Sudan while building a lasting infrastructure of women peacebuilders.

Sustainability & Long-term Vision

Beyond immediate outputs, the program builds sustainable capacity within Sudanese women's organizations, establishes enduring networks, and creates precedents for women's inclusion that will influence future peace processes. Partner commitments (Annex C) and exit strategies ensure continuity of impact.

This executive summary synthesizes the comprehensive documentation contained in Annexes A through J, providing decision-makers with an overview of program design, evidence base, implementation approach, and expected outcomes.

List of Acronyms

AU - African Union
CSO - Civil Society Organization
DRC - Democratic Republic of Congo
GBV - Gender-Based Violence
IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IDP - Internally Displaced Person
M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL - Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NAP - National Action Plan
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SAF - Sudanese Armed Forces
RSF - Rapid Support Forces
UNAMID - African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR - United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPS - Women, Peace and Security

END OF PROPOSAL