

Women's Peace Activism - Organizations

This is not an exhaustive list of women's organisations that have actively engaged in peace activism on the continent. This is a list of institutions that have been integral to either innovative or 'well talked about' peace building efforts by some women's groups and organisations on the continent. For an exhaustive list of organisations visit the following sites:

[Women's International League for Peace and Freedom \(http://www.wilpfinternational.org/\)](http://www.wilpfinternational.org/)
[Women, War, Peace: a portal on women peace and security \(http://www.womenwarpeace.org/\)](http://www.womenwarpeace.org/)
[Peace building Portal \(http://peacebuildingportal.org/\)](http://peacebuildingportal.org/)

African Women's Committee for Peace and Development (AWCPD)

The African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) is an advisory body to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Executive-Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa (UNECA) on issues relating to gender, peace, security, stability and development in Africa. The AWCPD also seeks to enhance the contribution of women to the achievements of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict, Prevention, Management and Resolution.

The committee seeks to support the networking of women peace-building mechanisms in Africa and to identify and seek articulate ways and means of addressing women-specific experiences of conflict. The committee embraces as its guiding principle the view that war cannot be an option for resolving conflict.

See [Peacebuilding Portal \(http://peacebuildingportal.org/\)](http://peacebuildingportal.org/)

Federation of African Women Peace Networks (FERFAP)

FERFAP is currently composed of peace movements and networks from 16 African countries, namely, Angola, Algeria, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Zambia. FERFAP provides an important platform to advocate for gender responsive approaches within the conflict resolution and peace-building agenda of the region. The formation of FERFAP is a major step in the evolution of African women's peace movements. Both the Federation and its member organizations require well coordinated support to enable them to achieve their objectives.

FERFAP calls for women's participation in conflict resolution at the highest levels of decision-making. The federation's main goal is to contribute to the coordination, rationalization and development of activities that support women's full and effective participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa.

FERFAP is active in promoting women's contributions to decision-making processes for peace-building and conflict resolution in Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. FERFAP also plans to collaborate with local institutions, national and international NGOs and governments, on the promotion and support of universal disarmament, adoption and implementation of international laws, conventions and agreements by African governments for the maintenance of peace.

See [Peacebuilding Portal \(http://peacebuildingportal.org/\)](http://peacebuildingportal.org/)

Isis-WICCE, Uganda

From Mexico to Beijing and New York, Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis- WICCE) still carries on the vision of its founders Jane Cottingham and Marilee Karl of communicating ideas, creating solidarity networks and sharing information to overcome gender inequalities. Founded in 1974 in Geneva, Switzerland as an action oriented women's resource centre to meet the need for information by women from various regions of the world, Isis-WICCE has three main programmes: The Exchange Programme, Information and Documentation Programme and the Publication Programme.

The organisation is named after the ancient Egyptian goddess ISIS who symbolises Wisdom, Creativity and Knowledge. Isis-WICCE relocated to Kampala, Uganda at the end of 1993 with an objective of tapping African women's ideas views and problems and share the information with women at the international level. Since the move to Kampala, Isis-WICCE started national -and regional-level programmes to facilitate the flow of information from Uganda to other parts of Africa and the rest of the world, and to contribute towards the strengthening of the Ugandan and African women's movement.

See [Isis WICCE – Uganda website \(http://www.isis.or.ug/\)](http://www.isis.or.ug/)

Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET)

This network of women's organizations from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea was established in May 2000 in response to the deteriorating security situation in the West African region. The network has brought an effective multi-dimensional, coordinated and regional approach to the struggle for human rights to restore peace and to ensure that women's voices are included at all levels of the decision-making process. This is critical given that it is predominantly the rights of women and children that are violated as a consequence of armed conflict. It is therefore no surprise that the Network has won warm praise from the UN Secretary General, the Economic Community of West African States and the Organisation of African Unity, among others.

The Mano River Women's Peace Network has been active at the grass roots level, initiating projects for the mobilization and reintegration of child soldiers; organizing peace marches and public demonstrations; visiting refugee camps to distribute basic provisions and advocate for their special needs; and participating in programmes to destroy small arms. At the same time, the Network has also been an effective advocate at the highest levels of government, successfully bringing the Heads of State of their three countries back to the negotiating table in 2001, and as a delegate, mediator and signatory to the Liberian peace talks in August 2003. Its work to ensure gender equality in all spheres of nation building and to teach conflict resolution and negotiation techniques is likely to pay long-term dividends to future generations in the Mano River Region.

For more information see [MARWOPNET website \(http://www.marwopnet.org/welcome.htm\)](http://www.marwopnet.org/welcome.htm)

For information about MARWOPNET's and its involvement in supporting the Liberian Mass Action for Peace [click here](#)

Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET)

WIPNET was established four years ago to mobilize women, build their capacity and encourage collaboration among them to build lasting peace and promote human security in West Africa. WIPNET's challenge remains the integration of women's concerns and their participation in policy formulation and implementation in peace and security issues in the sub-region. To ensure the mainstreaming of gender in peace building, in 2005 the WIPNET program began the process of forging partnerships with policy makers and technocrats using its wide grassroots network to advocate for the mainstreaming of women's issues in policy formulation in peace and security.

Objectives:

- Develop policy recommendations for mainstreaming women's issues in peace and security
- Strengthen the nexus between policy makers, technocrats and women's groups
- Sustain women's participation in formal peacebuilding in West Africa
- Strengthen capacity of rural/grassroots women in peacebuilding at community and national levels
- Build strategic partnerships with women's networks in other regions

See [West Africa Network for Peacebuilding website \(http://www.wanep.org/wanep/\)](http://www.wanep.org/wanep/)

Femme Afrique Solidarite

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) is a non-governmental organization (NGO), created by African women leaders that uses international instruments such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 as its main conceptual framework for guiding its programmes. FAS establishes and supports a wide range of networks on women and peace across the continent. Its peacebuilding programme seeks to strengthen women's peace initiatives and to increase their visibility as well as to advocate women's effective participation in peace processes at all levels. FAS has supported women's groups across West, East and Southern Africa.

For more information see [FAS's website \(http://www.fasngo.org/\)](http://www.fasngo.org/)

South African Women in Dialogue

SAWID is an independent South African Women's Platform committed to hearing the voice of every woman and to improving the status of women by engaging national government, the private sector, civil society, (including non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations and donors) in partnership to shape community, provincial and continental agendas. The SAWID forum is impartial and not-for profit and is tied to no party-political interests.

South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) was founded by a forum of around 1000 women, drawn from all sectors of South African society, who met at the University of Pretoria in July 2003. They had been convened by a Steering Committee of volunteers, facilitated by Mrs. Zanele Mbeki, spouse of the former President of the Republic of South Africa. The convenors had been inspired by the outcomes of a Peace and Reconciliation Dialogue with women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which had taken place in March 2003. During three national conferences in 2003, 2004 and 2005, and a Youth Conference in Saldanha in December 2004, South African women, united in their diversity, came together to agree on a Plan of Action for the development of their communities and to find ways to engage with their sisters in South Africa and on the continent on similar issues. In addition to the Peace Dialogue with women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo hosted in March 2003, a further Peace Dialogue took place in July 2004 with women from Burundi.

For more on SAWID visit their [website \(http://www.sawid.co.za/\)](http://www.sawid.co.za/)

Sudanese Women's Empowerment Network (SuWEP)

SuWEP is an umbrella for five women's organizations, including those in the Nuba Mountains and the South. They have actively engaged in feeding into the Sudanese peace process and efforts to rebuilding South Sudan after the signing of the peace agreement. Angnes Nyoka, Coordinator of SuWEP stated that "Dialogue is very important to resolve and prevent conflict in Sudan. As women, decisions are being made for us. The GoS [Government of South Sudan] and SPLM [Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement] are using arms, and we carry UNSC 1325 as our arms to promote inclusion".

For more information on efforts by other Sudanese women's organisations see:

ISIS WICCE, *Women's Experiences in Armed Conflict in Southern Sudan, 1983-2005: The Case of Juba County, Central Equatorial State*. September 2007: ISIS WICCE, [click here Sudanese Women's Priorities and Recommendations to Oslo Donors Conference](#), 11-15 April 2005

Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines du Burundi (CAFOB)

CAFOB is a network of associations that regroups 52 organizations and gender-related NGOs in Burundi. It functions as an NGO network with the vision of contributing to the improvement of socio-economic conditions and legal representation of women. CAFOB works toward achieving a more advanced economic status for women.

CAFOB works to improve the operational capacities of member associations and to promote the role of Burundian women in peace-building, national reconciliation, and development. The goals of CAFOB are to ensure that gender-focused NGOs in Burundi strive for improvements in peace, gender, development, and all issues concerning women. Furthermore, CAFOB works to develop inter-association activities, which ensure participation for women in political and civil matters. Another goal of CAFOB is to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding women's rights and the improvement in the condition of women.

CAFOB has worked in the field of rapprochement, uniting displaced women and those who have stayed in their villages. Visits to and meetings with the Burundian diaspora have been organised. CAFOB has advocated for women to participate in the Burundian peace process. Women in conflict utilize the services of CAFOB by searching for legal clinics and arranging for legal representation.

See [Peacebuilding Portal \(http://peacebuildingportal.org/\)](http://peacebuildingportal.org/)

Women as Partners for Peace in Africa DRC chapter (WOPPA-DRC)

WOPPA encourages women's participation at the political level, with the specific task of stressing conflict prevention and resolution programs aiming to peace-build within Africa. WOPPA strengthens organizations that support women's participation in peace-building by networking, and also transforms conflict not only through non-violence, but also by promoting peaceful solutions. WOPPA implements the actions of the government by serving as the direct representative to the citizens

See [Peacebuilding Portal \(http://peacebuildingportal.org/\)](http://peacebuildingportal.org/)

Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)

Women of Zimbabwe Arise is a civic action pressure group made up of community women suffering under the current socio-economic and political crisis. The mission of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) is to empower Zimbabwean women with knowledge and skills

designed to stimulate courageous activities within the community.

The vision of the organization is to enable Zimbabwean women to make independent decisions and actively participate in their community's development. The objectives of Women of Zimbabwe Arise are the following:

- To impart knowledge and skills enabling women to make informed decisions;
- To build strength of character that demonstrates courage and leadership qualities;
- To increase participation in spiritual fellowship and love for thy neighbor;
- To teach women communication skills that will help bridge social and economic challenges;
- To facilitate the networking of expertise and skills between women;
- To teach women to defend themselves against violence; and to work towards elevating the standing of women in society.

The organization has attempted to give women a voice to protest Zimbabwe's political crisis. "Woza" means "come forward" in the Zulu language of South Africa. WOZA leads a civil defiance of women (and men) in South Africa, the UK and around the world.

In 2008, WOZA published a report titled 'Counting the Cost of Courage: Trauma Experiences of women in Human Rights Defenders in Zimbabwe'.

For a review of the report see [Mugo and Ail in *Feminist Africa 10*](#)

For more information see [Peacebuilding Portal \(http://peacebuildingportal.org/\)](http://peacebuildingportal.org/)

Dushirehamwe, Burundi

Dushirehamwe is a network of women peace activists that started as an International Alert training project and is now an independent local association. Dushirehamwe has around 125 members who have all been trained as trainers in strategies for addressing conflict and gender relations – skills that they have put into practice in working with female leaders all over the country. It is estimated that the network reaches out to over 7 000 women at the community level. It is gaining increasing national recognition and is often asked to defuse tensions in the community. Women in the network come from a variety of backgrounds including social and community workers, nurses, church members, women working with grass-roots NGOs and teachers – all providing strong linkages with local structures and people.

Current and proposed work by Dushirehamwe includes: assisting the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and displaced people; training women on their rights and responsibilities and on political participation; enabling better linkages to be created between women at the grass-roots level and women decision-makers through regular exchange meetings; identifying critical advocacy issues regarding women's roles in a post conflict society, and developing an advocacy and monitoring strategy around these issues.

For more information see International Alert, "Integrating Women into Peacebuilding Processes", Workshop Report, 2008. [click here](#)