

WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING: SHARING THE LEARNING – THE METHODOLOGY



One of the important learning points from this EU PEACE 111 supported project was the need to make the details of UN Security Council Resolution accessible to women in local communities. All too often the terminology used in international resolutions can be off-putting. It is maybe, in part, for this reason that few of the 700 plus women involved in the project had ever heard of either the Resolution concerning Women, Peace and Security. In addition to this some of the fine distinctions around terminology that may well be so important to policy makers merely serve to confuse people that are not intimately involved in decision-making processes.

The methodology adopted by the Women and Peacebuilding Project was to –

- i) Turn the core concerns of the main pillars of the UNSCR 1325 into a series of simple questions – such as ‘Have things improved in your life since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998?’ – that women could easily respond to.
- ii) Ensure that the terminology used in the questions – e.g. ‘Belfast’ and ‘Good Friday’ Agreement – spoke to the wording used by the various communities in Northern Ireland/Ireland.
- iii) Start the seminars with an input from an invited guest speaker on the specific issue under discussion but then leave much of the time for facilitated table discussions by the participants.
- iv) Use trained facilitators to help the discussion along as well as having a note taker at each table.
- v) Set aside time for discussion feedback and general discussion.
- vi) Draw out the main points of the discussion and record them for the purposes of sharing and learning.

- vii) Organise both a separate Northern Ireland and a Southern Ireland seminar on each of the main topics, and then bring together the participants in a cross-Border gathering, with the invited input being provided by an international speaker (through the Foundations for Peace Network) in order to widen perspectives.
- viii) Ensure that there was a mixing of participants at each of the table discussions during the cross-Border gathering, in order to ensure that those women from a specific area did not cluster together but could meet with women from different backgrounds.
- ix) Place all the seminar feedback reports on the Women and Peacebuilding: Sharing the Learning webpage for broader consideration.

Many thanks to the staff of the WRDA (particularly Kelli Boyles, Lynn Carville, Geraldine Burns and Margaret Ward) and Sinead Lynch (Ireland) for organising the seminar series.

Alongside the seminars series an Expert Panel guided the work of the project. This consisted of:

- Professor Monica McWilliams (Chairperson)
- Ann Hope
- Yvonne Galligan
- Carmel Roulston
- Margaret Ward
- Eithne McNulty
- Monina O'Prey
- Rachel Doyle
- Dawn Purvis
- Anne McVicker
- Lynn Carvill

As part of the project three pieces of work were commissioned. Thanks are due to the authors.

- i) A Baseline of Understanding of UNSCR 1325 – K. McMinn & C. O'Rourke (2012)
- ii) A Survey of Statutory Responses to UNSCR 1325 – B. Hinds & D. Donnelly (2014)
- iii) A Guide for Statutory Use to the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 – B. Hinds & D. Donnelly (2014)

(Available on the Women and Peacebuilding: Sharing the Learning webpage on www.communityfoundationni.org).

We hope that the publication will be useful and that the discussions initiated will be taken forward at the community level.

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