CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN BRAZIL

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THINK TWICE
Brasil

Education for peace and human rights

This study was developed by Think Twice Brasil (TTB) with support from the global campaign She Builds Peace, an initiative led by the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) and the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL).

ABOUT TTB

Think Twice Brasil (TTB) is a social impact organization founded in 2013, with the mission of supporting people and organizations to interrupt cycles of violence and inequality through education for peace and human rights. More than 12,000 people have already experienced our learning journeys, both virtually and in person.

For more information about our work, visit www.ttb.org.br or write to contato@ttb.org.br.

SOBRE SHE BUILDS PEACE

She Builds Peace is a global campaign led by the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) and the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL). The campaign aims to ensure that women peacebuilders are safe and protected, that governments fulfil their obligations to include them in peace and security decision-making processes, and that their essential work is valued and adequately funded so that they can continue to act.

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ACRONYMS

- **CONASP -** National Council for Public Security
- **CSOs -** Civil Society Organisations
- **FCAS -** Fragile and conflict-affected settings
- **ICAN -** International Civil Society Action Network
- **NAP -** National Action Plan
- **NAP/WPS -** National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
- **PNPDDH -** National Plan for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- **PPDDH -** Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- **TTB -** Think Twice Brasil
- **UN -** United Nations
- **WASL -** Women's Alliance for Security Leadership
- **WPS -** Women, Peace and Security
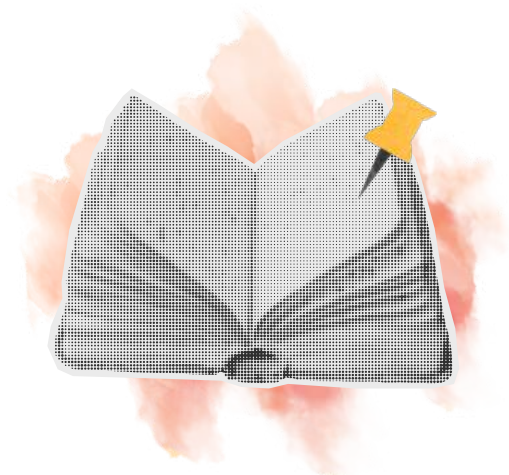
PRESENTATION

It is with great joy and a profound sense of responsibility that I present this report, conceived and developed by **Think Twice Brasil - TTB** in partnership with the global campaign She Builds Peace, an initiative led by the **International Civil Society Action Network - ICAN**. TTB is a Brazilian civil society organisation whose mission is to interrupt cycles of violence and inequality through education, research, and the development of strategies to promote peace and human rights. We have been working for over a decade to strengthen the Women and Youth, Peace and Security agendas in Brazil, from an intersectional approach, sensitive to trauma and prioritising knowledge produced in the Global South.

ICAN is today one of the most relevant international networks in empowering women peacebuilders in contexts of conflict, polarisation, and violence, and is responsible for coordinating the She Builds Peace campaign, which brings together women's organisations and leaders from around the world to promote the recognition, protection, and adequate funding of these women. Within this global ecosystem, TTB is proud to be, to date, the only Brazilian organisation that is a member of **WASL - Women's Alliance for Security Leadership**, a global alliance that brings together women peacebuilders and organisations working in the prevention of violent extremism, community mediation, and peacebuilding and security.

This report embodies this commitment and, in particular, dedicates Chapter 4 to the translation and adaptation to the Brazilian reality of the model developed by ICAN, based on the pillars of recognition, protection, and funding of women peacebuilders. By contextualizing this international model within our social landscape, we seek to offer the country an analytical and practical tool capable of strengthening the Women, Peace and Security agenda ("WPS agenda") in a territory that, although not formally classified as an armed conflict zone, experiences daily multiple forms of violence, structural inequalities, and environmental crises that threaten the lives of women, girls, and entire communities.

We believe that strengthening the WPS agenda in Brazil requires, first and foremost, populating the collective imagination with a politicised, broad, and relational concept of what it means to live in peace and security. This implies reframing violence as a structuring component of our culture, incorporating non-violence as a persistent and continuous practice, until it strengthens as a social force.

It is a joy to conduct pioneering and essential studies like this one, which strengthen the Women Peacebuilders agenda in Brazil and contribute to its consolidation in Latin America. We hope that the report will inspire new research, more integrated public policies, transformative partnerships, and community initiatives that place women peacebuilders at the centre of building safer and more fully human futures.

Finally, I reaffirm TTB's commitment to remaining an organisation open to dialogue, networking, and the promotion of non-violence as a structuring value for cultivating collaborative, inclusive relationships capable of transforming realities. May this work be another step towards a Brazil that chooses peace as a daily practice and a political project for society.

Gabriele Costa B. Garcia

Gabriele Costa B. Garcia
Executive Director of Think Twice Brasil - TTB

CHAPTER 1 – PEACE AND SECURITY IN BRAZIL: BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL IMAGINATION AND COLLECTIVE BUILDING

The idea of peace and security in Brazil is marked by historical tensions, profound inequalities, and a social perception frequently associated with fear and the containment of violence. Although the country is not formally recognised as a zone of armed conflict, millions of people live daily with insecurities that affect their mobility, well-being, and possibilities for full life and participation in public life. This context shapes both the individual imagination about what it means to "feel safe" and the way the State structures its policies in this area.

Currently in Brazil, **there are no broad and structured public policies for peacebuilding**, which allows the debate on public security to consolidate in a way that is detached from the notion of peace and predominantly oriented towards responses based on damage control and the excessive use of force. This approach reinforces the idea that security is the exclusive responsibility of the State, especially of police institutions, which operate under strong centralisation with little openness to social participation in the formulation, implementation, or monitoring of policies. Despite the diversity of territorial realities and the multiplicity of factors that produce violence, the State's responses tend to be generalist and insensitive to the specificities of each community, even more so considering that Brazil has continental dimensions.

The militarised and repressive nature of security policies is reinforced by alarming indicators of police lethality and by institutional structures that prioritise containment and confrontation actions instead of prevention. Furthermore, this is a predominantly male field, both in terms of the composition of institutions and participation in policy formulation. This underrepresentation of women, especially Black women, women from marginalised communities, and women from traditional communities, limits the understanding of the daily impacts of violence and restricts the creation of strategies more sensitive to gender inequalities.

Furthermore, the relationship between civil society and public security is marked by a history of estrangement. After redemocratization, especially in the early 1990s, **human rights organisations acted primarily as whistleblowers of violations committed by state agents**, a direct result of the legacy of repression during the military dictatorship regime.

As Elizabeth Leeds (2013)[1] observes, this distancing was not only strategic, but also emotional and political: many of these actors had been targets of state repression and, therefore, understood their role primarily as whistleblowers of violations, and not as partners in institutional transformation. Attempting an approach or coordinated action with the security forces could represent a threat to the reputation and integrity of leaders and organisations considered progressive.

This disconnection was also reinforced by institutional barriers to social participation. This is because the 1988 Federal Constitution created mechanisms for social control and transparency in various areas of public administration, with the exception of public security. The National Public Security Council (Conasp) remained, for years, restricted to an advisory role, with members exclusively appointed by the government. Significant changes only began to occur in the 2000s, but despite the timid progress, challenges persist: discontinued policies, militarised structures, centralisation of management and governance, and the perception that security is a political issue associated with conservative agendas, a factor that historically continues to distance a significant portion of civil society from this debate.

It is important to highlight that the effects of the climate crisis, environmental crimes, and natural disasters further amplify the challenges of this context. Floods, landslides, heat waves, deforestation, land grabbing, illegal mining, and environmental collapses exacerbate vulnerabilities and produce new forms of insecurity, especially among girls and women, who face additional risks of violence, abuse, displacement, exploitation, and caregiving burden during crises[2]. Despite the magnitude of these impacts, public security policies in Brazil still incorporate the environmental and gender dimensions in a limited way, leaving gaps in the protection and prevention of socio-environmental risks.

Given this scenario, the WPS agenda represents a unique opportunity to broaden the participation of civil society organisations ("CSOs") in the debate on peace and security. It recognises that girls and women are disproportionately affected by violent conflicts and the effects of the climate crisis, but are also demonstrably effective in creating and implementing peacebuilding and security policies.

The development of the second version of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security ("II NAP/WPS") opens space for a renewed multi-sectoral dialogue, in which TTB acts as an articulator and facilitator, connecting community leaders, social organisations, experts, academics, public authorities, and women peacebuilders throughout the country.

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[1] Leeds, E. (2013). A sociedade civil e a segurança cidadã no Brasil: um relacionamento frágil, mas em evolução. Revista Brasileira de Segurança Pública, 7(2), 134-142.
[2] Yoshida, K., Kezie-Nwoha, H., Holvikivi, A., Nkinzi, S., Sabrie, A., & Tabbasam, E. (2021). Defending the future: gender, conflict, and environmental peace.

What is a NAP, and why is it important?

A National Action Plan (NAP) translates the commitments of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the entire international framework of the WPS agenda to the national level. Without a strong NAP with social participation, the WPS agenda risks remaining marginal, fragmented, and unable to produce a real impact in the territories. The NAP defines, above all:

- national priorities;
- institutional responsibilities;
- concrete actions for prevention, participation and protection;
- governance mechanisms and indicators;
- forms of civil society participation; and
- deadlines, budget and monitoring.

CHAPTER 2 – DEFINING PEACE AND SECURITY

Contemporary understandings of peace and security have undergone profound transformations over the last few decades. For a long time, especially in the context of traditional international relations, peace was defined solely as the absence of war. This understanding restricted the debate to ceasefires, the signing of agreements, and the control of hostilities between states, neglecting the multiple forms of violence that permeate people's daily lives, especially in societies marked by structural inequalities, such as Brazil. However, particularly since 1990, these conceptions have been widely questioned by researchers, social movements, and organisations based in the Global South, who have argued for the need to broaden the understanding of what it truly means to live in peace and security.

According to Igbuzor (2011)[3], peace and security are distinct but interconnected concepts. He argues that peace involves conditions of social harmony, just institutions, and the absence of violent confrontations, but it goes beyond that: it requires the elimination of structural inequalities that generate violence. This perspective broadens the concept of peace and shows that it is not simply the absence of conflict, but rather a proactive stance towards recognising the causes of violent conflicts and restoring patterns of behaviour and relationships that sustain individual and collective suffering. This active construction of peace with critical and political clarity is called **positive peace**. On the other hand, the notion of **negative peace** occurs when there is no direct violence or explicit conflict, but the feeling of insecurity, tensions, and deep inequalities still persist. In this context, it is common for the conflict to be silenced, but for its causes not to be transformed.

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[3] Igbuzor, O. (2011). Peace and security education: A critical factor for sustainable peace and national development. International journal of peace and development studies, 2(1), 1-7.

In parallel, the traditional view of security, focused solely on protecting the State, has become insufficient to explain and respond to the multiple threats affecting people's daily lives. This motivated the introduction of the concept of human security by the UN, which shifts the focus of security policies from the State to the individual, encompassing experiences of food insecurity, institutional violence, discrimination, climate crisis, natural disasters, and gender-based violence, among others, as equally relevant threats.

This expansion is especially relevant for countries that do not experience formal armed conflicts, such as Brazil, but coexist with high rates of violence and inequality. Here, human security allows us to understand that being safe does not only mean being protected from armed attacks, but living free from fear, having access to fundamental rights, the conditions to dream and develop life projects, and being able to fully participate in social life.

Lee, Ginty and Joshi (2016)[4] further this debate by distinguishing between social peace and security peace. Security peace prioritises immediate responses to perceived threats, usually based on a logic of control and repression, such as increased policing and the use of force to contain visible violence. It is more tangible and is usually the priority focus of governments. Social peace, on the other hand, involves building and sustaining relational stability, trust, respect for human rights, and prioritising reconciliation and addressing the root causes of violence.

In the Brazilian context, the absolute prevalence of policies and actions promoting security-based/negative peace explains why, even with increased policing and the implementation of repressive control practices against human rights violations in some regions, tensions, inequalities, and violence continue to reproduce and even increase. This demonstrates that to produce lasting positive transformations, it is necessary to combine security measures with coordinated actions for building positive peace, mobilising all sectors of society and addressing the perspectives and specificities of each territory in strategic actions.

This is because it is in the territory that the difference between "being safe" and "living in peace" becomes evident. The ostentatious presence of policing or the absence of apparent conflict does not, in itself, guarantee an experience of well-being and freedom from fear. Therefore, peacebuilding initiatives need to consider the perceptions and expectations of each territory and, from there, design integrated policies and actions for the prevention of violent conflicts and disasters resulting from the climate crisis or environmental violations.

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[4] Lee, S., Ginty, R. M., & Joshi, M. (2016). Social peace vs. security peace. Global Governance, 491-512.

In this sense, understanding peace and security in a broader and more localised way is one of the foundations for strengthening the WPS agenda, which is not limited to the participation of women in leadership and decision-making positions. Above all, it **represents an alternative approach that shifts the understanding of peace and security from being essentially anchored in the exercise of control to linking them to the exercise of care**, thus enhancing policies and actions that strengthen social cohesion, broaden dialogue between different actors, and develop preventive and coordinated measures to address the various forms of violence.

Why include women in building peace and security?

- Women are more affected simultaneously by direct, structural, and cultural violence.
- Militarised policies alone do not provide a solution to the forms of violence that most affect women (domestic, sexual, psychological, digital); and
- Women play essential roles in building social cohesion, mediating conflicts, and strengthening communities.

2.1 WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY – FROM THE GLOBAL TO THE LOCAL

The WPS agenda, established in 2000 by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and further developed by more than ten subsequent resolutions, proposes a global framework for transforming how we understand and build peace and security policies. While it emerged in the context of traditional armed conflicts, its relevance has expanded to complex realities, such as those of the Global South, where everyday violence, structural inequality, the impacts of the climate crisis, and human rights violations produce insecurity in ways as devastating as formal wars.

The WPS agenda is structured around four pillars — **participation, protection, prevention, and assistance/recovery** — and stems from the recognition that women are not only victims of violent conflict, but also fundamental agents in addressing violence in an intersectional and systemic way. By bringing a gender perspective to the centre of peacebuilding, the understanding of what constitutes security is broadened and deepened.

Thus, applying a feminist approach to peacebuilding and security policies[5] implies revisiting traditional views from a multidimensional and intersectional reality, recognising that gender and race, above all, shape both the risks and access to adequate protection. This approach also proposes thinking about security in an articulated way, capable of recognising and transforming asymmetrical power dynamics and intergenerational cycles of inequality, violence and trauma that perpetuate and sustain contexts of individual and collective insecurity.

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[5] Reorientando la seguridad desde el feminismo, ICIP - Instituto Catalán Internacional para la Paz, 2021; Miradas Feministas para transformar la seguridad; Caminos hacia la paz y la seguridad[12] forjados por las mujeres: Uma agenda para las Américas, Comission Inter-americana de Mujeres, 2022

Illustrative image: Think Twice Brasil

- **Physical security:** Protection against violence affecting the body, recognising that gender, race, and territory shape unequal risks. It is based on bodily autonomy and the right to exist and move without fear.
- **Emotional security:** Affective well-being guaranteed by healthy and non-violent relationships with oneself and others, as well as access to community care networks. It values mental health as a structural part of human dignity.
- **Spiritual security:** Valuing self-knowledge and investigative practices into who one is, who one has been, and who one intends to be, which guide meaning and belonging. It affirms the right to a construction that mitigates suffering and promotes individual and collective healing.
- **Economic security:** Guaranteeing fair material conditions to live with dignity, freedom, and autonomy. It recognises that structural inequalities produce economic insecurity.
- **Food security:** Continuous, dignified, and culturally appropriate access to healthy food. This includes food sovereignty and the protection of traditional farming practices.
- **Environmental security:** Guaranteeing a preserved and protected territory against environmental degradation and injustices. It prioritises indigenous peoples, women, and communities disproportionately affected by environmental crimes and the climate crisis.
- **Digital security:** Protection against online violence, surveillance, and algorithmic discrimination. It implies technological autonomy and digital environments that foster interactions based on care and non-violence.
- **Information security:** Access to reliable, understandable, and unmanipulated information. It values a plurality of voices and combats disinformation that reinforces inequalities.
- **Community safety:** Strengthening support networks, non-violent conflict resolution, and collective participation. Recognises local knowledge and community practices as central to peacebuilding.
- **Institutional security:** Trust in institutions that protect, listen to, and serve fairly and equitably. It requires preventative policies, accountability, and the effective inclusion of historically marginalised groups.

In Brazil, discussing security also requires recognising the profound crisis facing the security forces. Police officers and security agents live with high rates of psychological distress[6], suicide rates higher than the national average[7], frequent absences due to illness, inadequate remuneration, long working hours and lack of psychosocial support, constant fear, exposure to risks and lack of training in human rights and peacebuilding. Neglecting this reality means perpetuating a cycle of institutional violence that affects both public agents and individuals and communities.
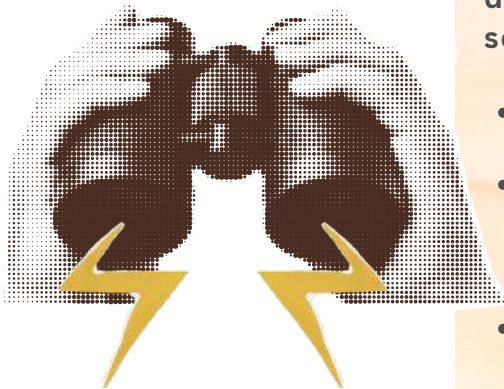
The WPS agenda, **by proposing a logic of care, dialogue, and prevention for building peace and security,** opens space for policies that include:

- Actively listening to the security forces, understanding their challenges and expectations;
- Ongoing training for public officials and civil society leaders in nonviolence, human rights, conflict mediation, restorative justice, and intersectional and trauma-sensitive approaches;
- Mental health and psychosocial support programs for public safety officers;
- institutional harm reduction strategies; and
- Mechanisms for shared governance between public security, CSOs, and communities.

Applying a feminist perspective understands that peace and security must be built on different scales – global, national, regional, local, community, and individual – always starting from the concrete experiences of people and the specific dynamics of their territories. This reorientation allows for the identification of structures that reproduce insecurity and suffering and, at the same time, promotes policies and actions focused on care and the prevention of violent conflicts.

Given this, the strength of the WPS agenda lies precisely in its ability to be localized, that is, translated and applied in a way that is sensitive to the realities, tensions, and potential of each territory. Unlike centralized and generalist security models, the WPS agenda recognizes that conflicts, violence, and threats manifest themselves in different ways in urban, rural, riverside, quilombola, indigenous, or peripheral communities, and that, therefore, the responses also need to be differentiated, built with social participation, and aligned with the cultural, environmental, and political dynamics of each context.

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[6] Castro, M. C., Rocha, R., & Cruz, R. (2019). Mental health of the Brazilian police policy: theoretical-methodological trends. Psicol. Saúde Doença, 20, 525-541.
[7] Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (2024). São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, ano 18, 2024. ISSN 1983-7364.

In this process, **women peacebuilders play a central role: they are simultaneously observers, witnesses, and victims of the violence that permeates their territories, as well as natural mediators of everyday tensions and articulators of community networks that support practices of care, dialogue, prevention, and assistance.** These women identify early signs of conflict, build bridges between polarised groups, protect vulnerable communities, and contribute to the formulation of policies and processes that respond to the real needs of their territories. By integrating their voices and experiences into the implementation of the WPS agenda, a path is opened for peacebuilding that is not abstract, but situated, concrete, and transformative, capable of producing security and well-being from the very roots of the communities.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH "CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN BRAZIL"

With the aim of supporting the development and implementation of the second version of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (II NAP/WPS) in Brazil, the TTB conducted an exploratory survey to understand the level of knowledge, engagement, and implementation of Brazilian CSOs in relation to the WPS agenda. To this end, the TTB developed and applied, between June and September 2025, the survey "**Civil society and the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Brazil**" ("Research") through an online questionnaire organically distributed among networks and organisations during the months of June to September.

Although the form registered 93 participants in total, only 65 people completed all the essential questions. Therefore, for methodological responsibility and analytical consistency, this entire chapter considers only these 65 complete responses, which form the valid basis of the research. The responses represent an initial, albeit non-probabilistic, snapshot of the engagement of CSOs with the WPS agenda in the country.

The findings are relevant and offer a crucial starting point for structuring local and national mobilisation around the agenda. At the same time, they indicate the need for more in-depth future research, segmented by territory, area of activity, and institutional profile.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

1 LOW AWARENESS OF THE NAP/WPS IN BRAZIL

More than half of organisations are **unaware** of the existence of the NAP/WPS, including medium and large institutions, which reveals a structural communication problem regarding the WPS agenda in the country.

54%

2 PERFORMANCE ALIGNED WITH THE AGENDA, BUT WITHOUT FORMAL RECOGNITION.

I don't know.
4.4%

Perhaps
23.9%

Yes
71.7%
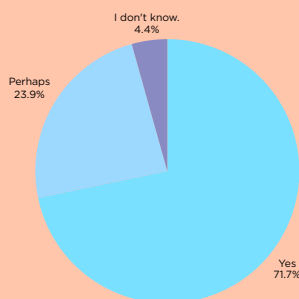
71.7% of organizations say they already operate in areas directly related to the WPS agenda, although they do not yet use that term.

3 INTEREST IN ADOPTING THE AGENDA, BUT LACK OF PRACTICAL CLARITY.

More than 50% of organizations want to incorporate the WPS agenda, but many respond "maybe" or "I don't know," indicating a lack of operational clarity.

4 STRUCTURAL BARRIERS PREVENT INSTITUTIONALIZATION.

The three most frequently cited barriers to incorporating the WPS agenda into their activities were:

- lack of knowledge about the agenda
- lack of financial resources
- small or overworked teams

46.2%
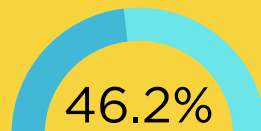
5 HIGH POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION AND MOBILIZATION.

More than half of CSOs recognize that their activities can be connected to the WPS agenda and demonstrate a concrete willingness to adopt it.

6 URGENT NEED FOR TRAINING, FUNDING AND COORDINATION.

The main resources desired by CSOs to strengthen the WPS agenda are:

	0%	20%	40%	60%	
Financial resources or specific calls for proposals					60,98%
Practical and introductory training on the agenda					53,66%
Collaboration with other organizations already working with MPS					51,22%
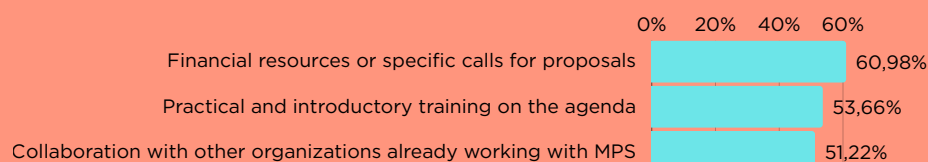
3.1 INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The sample of 65 organisations reveals a significant presence of initiatives with national reach (44.6%), followed by organisations based in the Southeast region (27.7%). This profile suggests good capillarity among organisations with broad reach, but points to the underrepresentation of community and grassroots organizations in regions historically more vulnerable to violence and inequality.

Main region of operation of the organization:
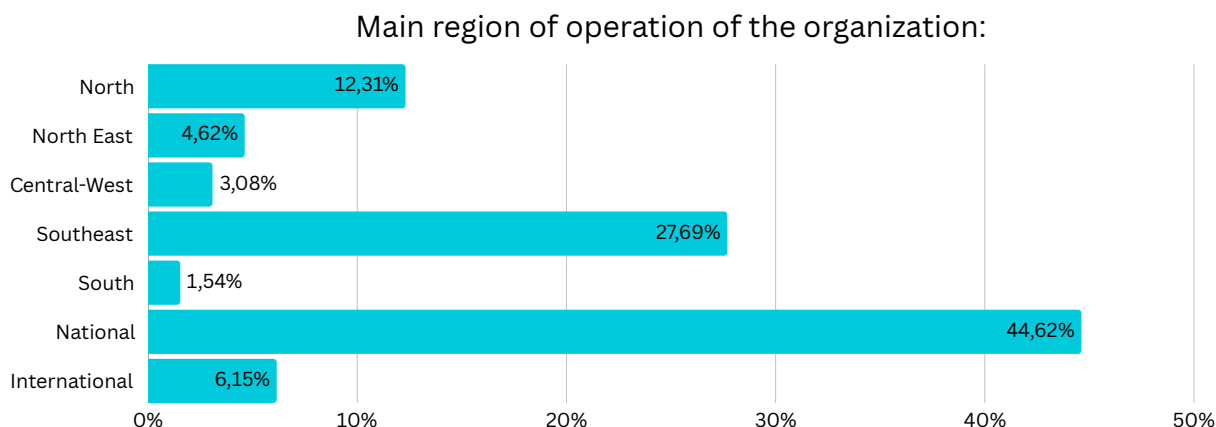
Figure 1. Graph showing the percentage of the organization's operating region.

Regarding the thematic area of activity, the themes most frequently selected by the responding organizations were **women's and girls' rights (30.8%), childhood, adolescence and youth (26.1%) and education (23.1%)**, indicating that Brazilian CSOs are already strongly active in areas intrinsically connected to the pillars of the WPS agenda: prevention, participation and protection.

What is the main field or area of activity of the organization you work for?

Figure 2. Graph showing the percentage of the organization's area of operation.

This data, in particular, reinforces the thesis that **many CSOs are already part of the WPS agenda ecosystem, even if they do not yet recognise themselves in this field,** as will be detailed in the following questions. Similarly, the presence of themes such as culture of peace and advocacy demonstrates programmatic maturity and potential for political influence, even though there is no established tradition of civil participation in the formulation of NAPs in Brazil.

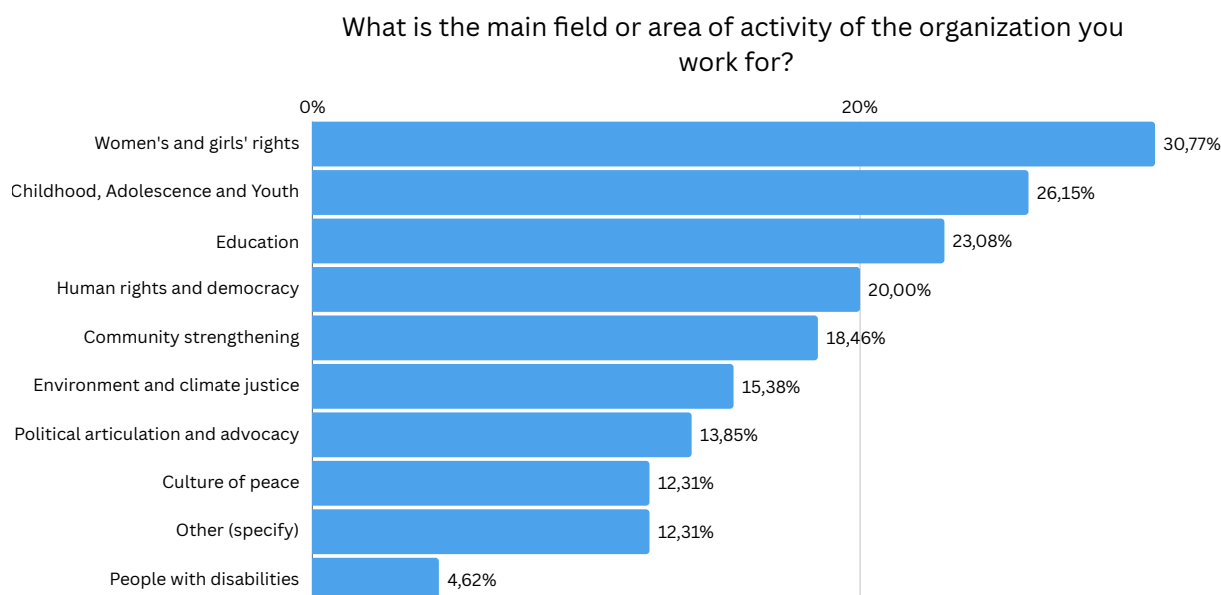One relevant point is the low presence of organisations that work directly with public security, indigenous peoples, and migration/refugees, despite these being critical issues for an intersectional approach to the WPS agenda. This data reinforces the need for targeted coordination actions to broaden the participation of organisations working in the territories most affected by violence and multidimensional insecurity.

Regarding the size of the organisations, most respondents have a medium or large structure, with **organisations with more than 30 employees representing 32% of the responses.**

How many people work at the organization?

Up to 5 people	29,23%
From 6 to 15 people	27,69%
From 16 to 30 people	10,77%
More than 30 people	32,31%
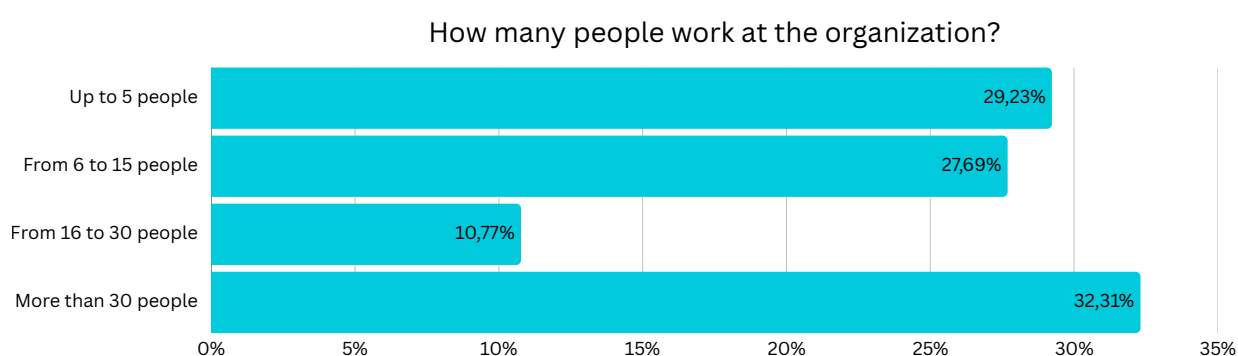
Figure 3. Graph showing the percentage of employees in the organization.

3.2 LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE NAP

Less than half of the responding organisations, only 46.2% of them, are aware of the existence of the Brazilian NAP/WPS. This data is a direct warning to the State and civil society: without broad dissemination and training, the NAP remains a static document and does not reflect a living process.

Did you know that Brazil has a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security - WPS?

Yes	46,15%
No	53,85%

Figure 4. Graph showing the percentage of organizations aware of the existence of the NAP/WPS.

A relevant finding is that the WPS agenda is not only unknown among small organisations, but also among robust organisations with large teams, greater institutional capacity, and potential for influence in public policy formulation. Among the responding **organisations with more than 16 employees, 57% stated that they were unaware of the existence of the NAP**. This finding reinforces the need for structured training and dissemination actions, including among established CSOs, and not only among grassroots or small organisations.

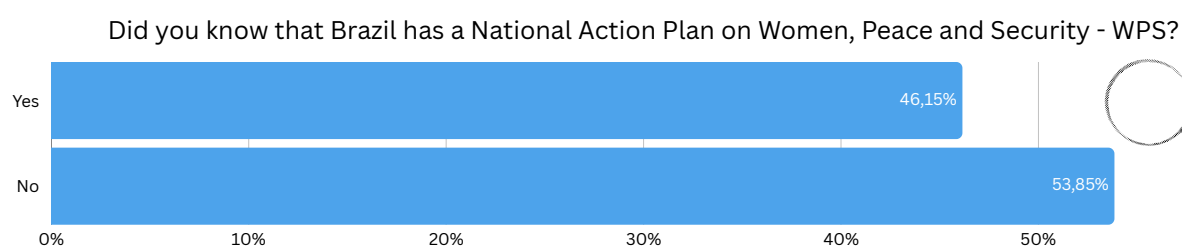**Even among larger organisations, the level of unfamiliarity remains high, and this is important evidence: the NAP has not yet entered the institutional radar of Brazilian CSOs, which contributes to low mobilisation and limited participation around the WPS agenda.**

3.3 INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND AVENUES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The research differentiates between two groups: CSOs that claim to already incorporate the WPS agenda into their strategic activities, and CSOs that do not yet incorporate it but could move closer to it. This distinction is essential for understanding motivations, potential, and barriers.

When asked if they incorporate the WPS agenda into their institutional strategy, out of the 30 responses collected, 14 organisations (46.7%) said yes. However, it was observed that few detailed what actions are being conducted, indicating that engagement tends to be more thematic than strategic.

Does the organization you work for consider the WPS agenda as part of the organizational strategy that guides its activities?

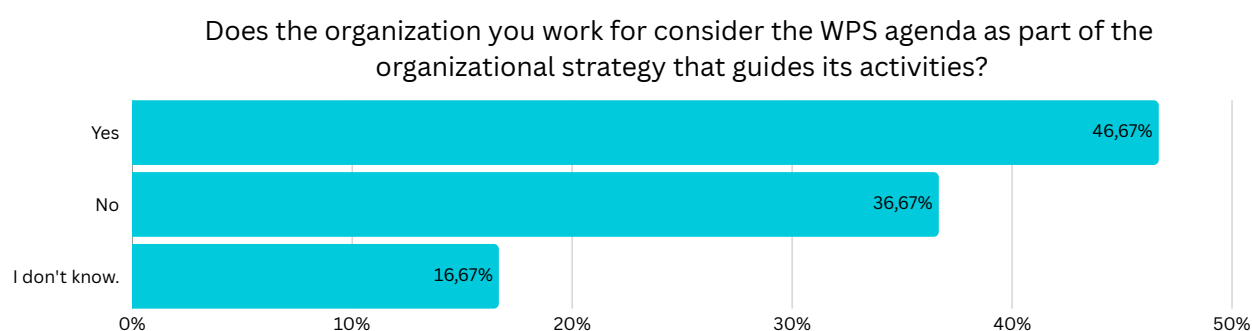|	
Yes	46,67%
No	36,67%
I don't know.	16,67%

Figure 5. Graph showing the percentage of organizations that consider the WPS agenda in their institutional strategy.

Meanwhile, 53.3% of the responding organisations stated that they do not integrate, or do not know if they integrate, the WPS agenda into their strategies. These organisations were asked which themes they would intuitively associate with the WPS agenda.

The results demonstrate that these **organisations still understand the WPS agenda primarily as related to promoting women's rights and addressing domestic violence**, which may compromise engagement with the topic in key areas proposed by the agenda, such as peacebuilding and security, community strengthening, prevention of armed conflict, social and climate justice, and disarmament policies.

Which of these words would you intuitively associate with the idea of "Women, Peace, and Security"?

Category	Percentage
Women's rights	73,91%
Domestic violence	41,30%
Police and public security	13,04%
Armed conflicts	
Female leadership	30,43%
Climate justice	
Social justice	30,43%
Human rights	26,09%
Public policies	10,87%
Women in Politics	26,09%
Disarmament	8,70%
None of the above	

Figure 6. Graph showing intuitive associations made by organizations regarding the WPS agenda.

Subsequently, the organisations were asked whether they understood that they already operate in areas related to the WPS agenda, even if they have never used this terminology, and 71.7% affirmed that they do. **This indicates that even without ever having used the "label" of the WPS agenda, they already act directly or indirectly in promoting related themes.**

Do you believe that your organization's areas of focus may be connected to the MPS agenda, even if you haven't named them that way before?

Category	Percentage
Yes	71,74%
Maybe	23,91%
No	
I don't know.	

Figure 7. Graph showing the percentage of organizations that may be working on the WPS agenda, even without naming it.

Furthermore, **23.9% of organisations indicated that they "maybe" act based on the WPS agenda, which demonstrates the need to broaden CSOs' knowledge of the WPS agenda's conceptual framework**, thus facilitating understanding and identification with the topic through concrete examples. It is important to highlight the total absence of responses, indicating that the areas of activity of the responding organisations are unrelated to the WPS agenda, as this demonstrates that there is no ideological resistance to the agenda, no perception of incompatibility between the WPS agenda and the work of CSOs, and the agenda is not seen as abstract or distant from Brazilian reality.

In parallel, when asked about their interest in incorporating the WPS agenda into the organisation's practices, 52% said yes, demonstrating that the willingness to incorporate the agenda is significant, representing an essential step for potential mobilisation strategies.
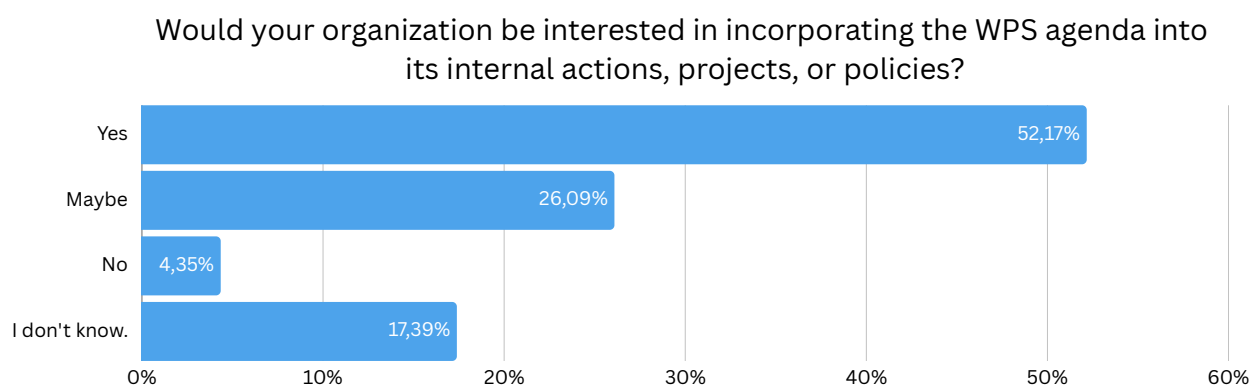
Would your organization be interested in incorporating the WPS agenda into its internal actions, projects, or policies?

Category	Percentage
Yes	52,17%
Maybe	26,09%
No	4,35%
I don't know.	17,39%

Figure 8. Graph demonstrating organizations' interest in incorporating the WPS agenda.

A significant number of organisations responded "maybe" (26%) and "I don't know" (17.4%), reinforcing a potential institutional insecurity or lack of knowledge about what it means, in practice, to integrate the WPS agenda into their activities. Almost no organisation stated that they had no interest in incorporating the WPS agenda, signalling that the field is open and receptive and that the main obstacle is one of technical and financial capacity, not structural.

Next, the organisations were asked about the main barriers to incorporating the WPS agenda into their activities, **and the three challenges cited by 46.2% of respondents were lack of knowledge or understanding of the agenda, lack of specific financial resources for the topic, and a small or overburdened team.**

What are the main challenges that would hinder this process?

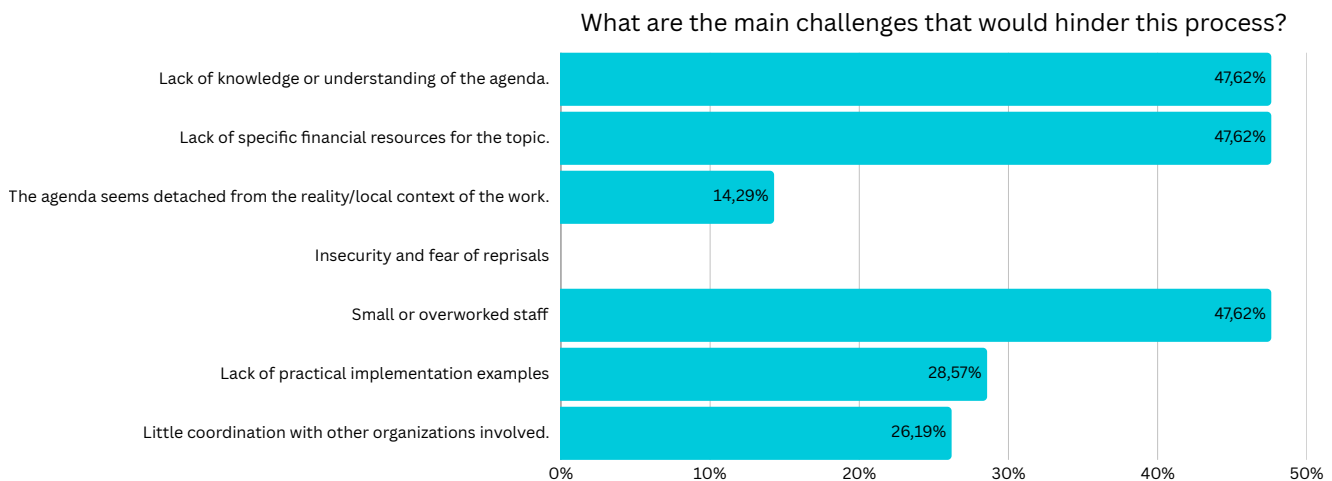| Challenge	Percentage
Lack of knowledge or understanding of the agenda.	47,62%
Lack of specific financial resources for the topic.	47,62%
The agenda seems detached from the reality/local context of the work.	14,29%
Insecurity and fear of reprisals	
Small or overworked staff	47,62%
Lack of practical implementation examples	28,57%
Little coordination with other organizations involved.	26,19%

Figure 9. Graph demonstrating the main challenges for organizations in incorporating the WPS agenda.

Other barriers were also cited, such as a **lack of practical examples for implementation (28%), little coordination with other CSOs (26%),** and the agenda seeming distant from the reality or locality of operation (14%). These data suggest that there is interest from organisations in promoting the WPS agenda, but effective progress is compromised by a lack of structural elements, such as financial and institutional resources, time and availability for further in-depth studies, the need to expand knowledge, and the need to coordinate with other organisations.

Finally, we asked organisations what type of support or resource would facilitate the incorporation of the WPS agenda into their activities, and access to **financial resources emerged as the greatest facilitator (61%), followed by practical and introductory training on the WPS agenda (53.7%) and collaboration with other organizations already working in the field (51%).**

What benefits could encourage your organization to engage with the WPS agenda?

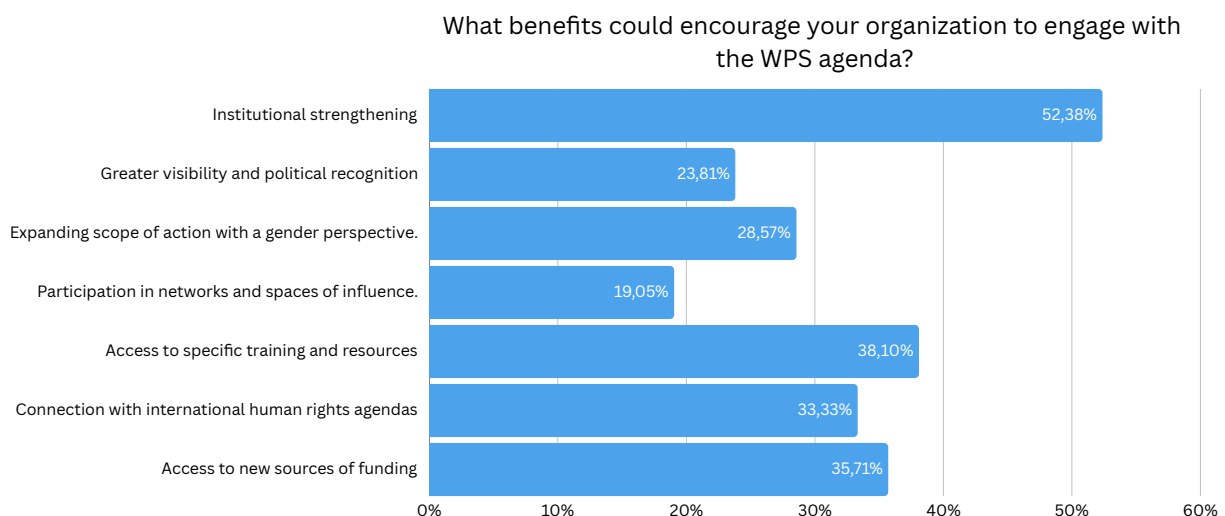| Benefit	Percentage
Institutional strengthening	52,38%
Greater visibility and political recognition	23,81%
Expanding scope of action with a gender perspective.	28,57%
Participation in networks and spaces of influence.	19,05%
Access to specific training and resources	38,10%
Connection with international human rights agendas	33,33%
Access to new sources of funding	35,71%

Figure 10. Graph demonstrating the main benefits that would encourage organizations to incorporate the WPS agenda.

In light of this, the answers to the last question reinforce the data collected in the previous questions, confirming that access to **funding is the most relevant resource for strengthening the WPS agenda in organisations**. Furthermore, the **strong interest in practical training demonstrates that CSOs are not only seeking theoretical content, but also applied learning tools on how to territorialise the WPS agenda,** connect its principles to existing organisational strategies, create indicators, monitor results, and translate the agenda to local challenges. Finally, the need for inter-organisational articulation indicates a strong desire to belong to a community of practice, as well as participation in networks, forums, and permanent spaces for dialogue, so that the implementation of the WPS agenda is sustainable and continuously improved.

3.4 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Based on the responses gathered, **the Research presents an unprecedented overview of CSOs' perception of the meaning and implementation of the WPS agenda in Brazil**, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for collectively strengthening the topic. The results point, firstly, to the **low visibility of the agenda and the NAP itself**, since even medium and large organisations with robust structures are unaware of its existence, evidencing a structural problem of institutional communication. Despite this, a strong thematic adherence is observed: most CSOs already operate in central areas of the WPS agenda, such as participation, prevention, and protection, albeit without formal framing, which compromises access to funding, the capacity for political influence, and the construction of coordinated practices.

There is also clear potential for expansion, given that **more than half of the organisations recognise that their activities can connect to the WPS agenda and demonstrate interest in adopting it, lacking only direction, resources, and opportunities.** The identified barriers are recurring and reflect global trends: lack of financial resources, lack of knowledge and time, and absence of practical examples, which limit the institutionalisation of the WPS agenda. Finally, the need to promote technical training on the WPS agenda and facilitate access to financial resources to strengthen the topic is highlighted, at the risk of the WPS agenda remaining restricted to a few organisations, reinforcing inequalities and fragilities already existing in the peace and security ecosystem in Brazil.

Implications of the Research for the II NAP/WPS:

The data presented above reinforces the need for:

- Include civil society from the very beginning of the formulation of the NAP, or at least in the process of its completion and implementation;
- regionalise listening and participation strategies;
- Create training programs on the WPS agenda aimed at public authorities and CSOs;
- Establish flexible and ongoing microfinance and financing lines for the implementation of the WPS agenda;
- create clear indicators to monitor engagement and territorialization; and
- To foster networks and collaborative spaces between the State, CSOs, academia, and women peacebuilders.

CHAPTER 4 – THE WPS AGENDA ON THE RADAR OF THE CSOS

The effective implementation of the WPS agenda has the II NAP/WPS as a temporal landmark for strengthening the theme, but above all, it requires that different sectors of society recognise that peacebuilding is a daily, territorial process, profoundly influenced by structural inequalities, local political dynamics, and the challenges of financing and protection faced by those working on the front lines. Inspired by international recommendations and diagnoses presented by the **International Civil Society Action Network - ICAN**, three pillars become essential to guide the involvement of civil society organisations and broaden the impact of the II NAP/WPS in the country: **recognising, protecting, and funding.**

RECOGNISING

PROTECTING

WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS

FUNDING

4.1 RECOGNISING

Recognition is the first step towards consolidating and strengthening the WPS agenda in Brazil and is not limited to naming the importance of women in peacebuilding processes, but, above all, to formally recognising who these women are, what they do, what risks they face, and the transformative impact of the work they carry out.

In the Brazilian context, where the national territory is not formally classified as an armed conflict zone but presents levels of lethality similar to those of war zones, this recognition becomes even more urgent. Without it, women who work in rebuilding the social fabric, strengthening community initiatives, and building local peace and security policies remain invisible, without legal support, and with reduced access to resources and protection mechanisms.

Who are the women peacebuilders?

Women peacebuilders, usually driven by personal experiences, work to prevent, mitigate, and transform the roots of violent conflicts, aiming above all to build a shared solution. They are willing to engage in dialogue with all parties involved, always available for attentive listening, capable of capturing both what is said and what is left unsaid. They maintain an attitude of humility and moral integrity, which allows them to navigate different relationships and perspectives without judgment. They also possess knowledge of the territory in which they are located and how the dynamics of control and power operate, and thus are able to maintain a commitment to a construction that transcends their personal agendas.

According to the report *Recognizing Women Peacebuilders*[8], women peacebuilders share fundamental characteristics such as:

- Moral courage and integrity allow them to navigate between warring groups.
- Deep listening skills, able to pick up on nuances, silent tensions, and unspoken needs.
- Territorial belonging, which guarantees them community legitimacy and an understanding of local power dynamics.
- A transformative vision, guided by social justice, human rights, and the prevention of violence.
- A strategic approach that connects cultural practices, local knowledge, formal policies, and national and international networks to promote sustainable peace.

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[8] Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, (2020), "Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking," International Civil Society Action Network, October 2020

This is a distinct, though complementary, role to that of human rights defenders. While human rights defenders focus on denouncing violations and promoting rights, peacebuilders work directly in mediating and transforming conflicts, **establishing spaces for unlikely dialogues to disseminate non-violence as a collective value.**

Therefore, recognising women peacebuilders is crucial to strengthening their legitimacy in decision-making spaces, increasing the safety and protection of these leaders, and enhancing the effectiveness of peace processes, as they represent communities and articulate concrete demands. Furthermore, it constitutes a necessary preliminary step for their inclusion in negotiations, consultations, and peace and security governance mechanisms.

The absence of this recognition keeps these leaders in institutional limbo, without specific policies that ensure authority, protection, or continuous funding. In Brazil, although the country has the **National Plan for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders ("PNPDDH"), this instrument does not explicitly include the category of "peacebuilders,"** creating a vacuum that weakens the protection of women who work precisely in the prevention and mediation of violent conflicts and in building peace and security.

In this context, CSOs are indispensable for:

- to map local leaders;
- To conduct specialised training on the topic;
- to document the trajectories and impact of women peacebuilders;
- to push for normative recognition;
- to formally integrate them into the processes foreseen in the II NAP/WPS; and
- To build multi-sectoral networks that support its performance.
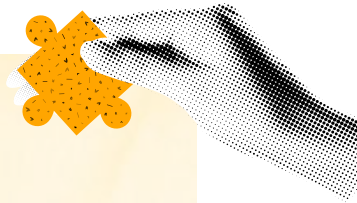
4.2 PROTECTING

Ensuring the protection of women peacebuilders is an indispensable condition for the advancement and consolidation of the WPS agenda in Brazil. Although these leaders play essential roles in preventing and confronting violent conflicts, they do so in contexts marked by high levels of armed violence, political polarisation, digital attacks, and institutional fragility—factors that significantly increase their risks.

Women working in peacebuilding face a complex risk architecture, comprised of direct and indirect threats that permeate their physical, emotional, political, economic, and community security. As highlighted in the report *Protecting Women Peacebuilders*[9], these women deal with direct violence, including murder, kidnapping, enforced disappearances, and sexual violence deliberately used as a tool of intimidation, while also being targeted by digital harassment and coordinated online attacks. They are also persecuted by state and non-state actors, which may include armed forces, criminal groups, militias, or religious fundamentalists, and often face retaliation within their own communities, especially when their actions challenge patriarchal norms or established local interests.

Added to this are constant psychological pressures, such as trauma, anxiety, burnout, and family breakdowns, as well as mobility restrictions that prevent them from moving safely within the territories where they live and work. **The economic impacts are also significant, manifesting as financial unsustainability and intentional material damage.** It is important to emphasise that such attacks are not neutral: they exploit gender norms to discredit, sexualize, or punish women who assume public roles of mediation, influence, and authority in building peace and security.

Although international and national instruments exist to protect women human rights defenders, these mechanisms are still insufficient to protect women peacebuilders, who are not fully recognised as a specific group within these initiatives. This gap generates serious consequences, such as failures in risk assessment, a lack of protocols adapted to the dynamics of peacebuilding and security, inadequate responses to gender-based threats, and low prioritisation in gender-informed security and justice policies.

In the Brazilian case, the challenges are even deeper. **Mechanisms such as the National Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (PNPDDH) and the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (PPDDH) constitute important foundations, but they still do not formally recognise women peacebuilders as a distinct group with their own vulnerabilities.** In practice, this means that their specific risks are not properly assessed; threats, defamation, and gender-based political violence continue to be underestimated; and existing protection measures do not fully encompass the territorial and community dynamics in which these women operate. It is important to highlight that leaders working in indigenous, quilombola, rural, and peripheral territories are especially exposed, since their contexts present additional risks that have not yet found adequate institutionalised responses.

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[9] Melinda Holmes, Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Stacey Schamber, "Protecting Women Peacebuilders: The Front Lines of Sustainable Peace," International Civil Society Action Network, October 2020.

Furthermore, **digital protection and online security strategies remain insufficient,** even in the face of the rapid growth of disinformation campaigns, coordinated online attacks, and the dissemination of extremist discourse. These elements reveal that, in Brazil, the protection of women peacebuilders is still fragmented and insufficient, requiring structured, integrated, and gender-sensitive responses. Only with formal recognition, specific policies, and mechanisms that connect physical, digital, psychosocial, and community security will it be possible to ensure that these women can continue working in violence prevention and peacebuilding.

Given this, CSOs can fulfil strategic functions, such as:

- to document threats and produce evidence about the actions and challenges faced by women peacebuilders;
- to support contextualised risk assessments;
- to serve as support networks and provide a rapid response in case of rights violations;
- To promote training for leaders in peacebuilding and security who are gender-sensitive and informed about trauma;
- to establish connections with international mechanisms;
- to push for specific legal frameworks and public policies; and
- Create community monitoring and strengthening systems.

4.3 FUNDING

Despite international recognition of the effectiveness and impact of women peacebuilders, funding for their work remains insufficient, centralised, and inconsistent with the nature of the conflicts and challenges they face. This problem is extensively documented by the *Funding Women Peacebuilders* report[10], which demonstrates how women-led organisations, especially small and community-based organisations, receive only a tiny fraction of global resources allocated to gender equality and violence prevention, despite demonstrating consistent, sustainable, and effective results.

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[10] France Bognon and Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, "Funding Women Peacebuilders: Dismantling Barriers to Peace," International Civil Society Action Network, October 2020.

In Brazil, although the lethality rates are equivalent to those observed in war zones, the lack of formal recognition of this context of systematic violence creates a structural obstacle to accessing international resources destined for peacebuilding and security. **Everyday violence is normalised, reducing the perception of urgency on the part of national and international donors**, and at the same time, organisations working on the peace and security agenda in these territories are unable to access resources destined for areas of formal conflict, as they are outside the classification of fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS).

Thus, even facing profound challenges related to armed violence, the expansion of organised crime, territorial conflicts, gender-based political violence, and humanitarian crises stemming from environmental disasters, Brazil remains outside the traditional radar of peace funding. This exclusion disregards the reality of Brazilian territories where women build peace daily under high-risk conditions, but without the necessary material support.

This mismatch between the severity of the violence and the lack of adequate funding deepens existing vulnerabilities and limits the ability of women-led organisations to operate safely, continuously, and expansively. The lack of resources not only compromises the continuity of their work but also increases insecurity, as it restricts protection strategies, limits emergency responses, and prevents investments in mental health, training, and institutional infrastructure.

Recent studies and monitoring[11] show that only 2% of funding allocated to peacebuilding and security interventions in fragile contexts had gender equality as a primary objective. Furthermore, between 2017 and 2018, only 0.4% of bilateral aid to conflict-affected contexts was channeled directly to local organizations led by women.

Women-led organisations face obstacles that stem not from a lack of competence or impact, but rather from structural inequalities reproduced by traditional funding systems. Among the main challenges are the absence or insufficiency of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating results, as well as the lack of documentation of implemented activities. Many grassroots organisations are unable to adequately record their impact due to a lack of resources, staff, or time, which generates a perception of low effectiveness and, consequently, reduces access to new funding.

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[11]A Missing Brick For Sustaining Women's Movements (2021), The Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF); Financing Of The Women, Peace And Security Agenda; A Blueprint For Feminist Crisis Response

Added to this is the excessive bureaucracy imposed by traditional calls for proposals, with short deadlines, rigid requirements and little flexibility, which tends to penalise small organisations, which often operate in volatile contexts and need to adapt their strategies quickly. The *Funding Women Peacebuilders* report[12] highlights that traditional models not only ignore the dynamic nature of peacebuilding work but also create disproportionate barriers for organisations situated in contexts of violence with low international visibility.

Traditional funding models are inadequate for women-led peacebuilding organisations for three main reasons:

1. **Immediate results:** most funders demand quick and tangible impacts, which are incompatible with trust-building processes, conflict mediation, and community transformation, processes that take time and require continuity.
2. **Simplified indicators:** many changes produced by women peacebuilders are subjective or relational, such as increased trust, reduced tension, and community strengthening, and therefore are not captured by conventional metrics.
3. **Lack of flexibility:** In contexts of volatile violence, strategies need to change rapidly; however, rigid regulations do not allow for adaptations, creating risks for organisations and limiting their impact.

Furthermore, international funders must include countries like Brazil in global debates on financing for peace, recognising that insecurity is not limited to formal war scenarios and that processes of chronic violence also demand structured responses and continuous investment.

To address the funding shortfall, CSOs can collaborate with donors and funders to promote:

- The creation of specific funding lines for peacebuilding, integrated into the WPS agenda;
- Formal recognition of women-led peacebuilding organisations within national regulatory frameworks;
- Direct and streamlined funding for grassroots organisations;
- Investments in institutional strengthening (audits, management, governance, training, digital security and psychosocial support);
- Multi-year funding cycles, consistent with the timelines of peacebuilding;
- Flexibility to adapt to changing contexts; and
- Resources allocated to documentation, participatory monitoring, and the production of qualitative evidence.

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[12] France Bognon and Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, "Funding Women Peacebuilders: Dismantling Barriers to Peace," International Civil Society Action Network, October 2020.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

Research conducted by TTB shows that CSOs are already widely active in the central areas of the WPS agenda, even when they don't use that terminology. However, the limited knowledge about the NAP in Brazil and the absence of structured mechanisms for social participation reveal significant challenges to institutionalising the agenda in the country. The high level of interest from CSOs in incorporating the WPS agenda, coupled with the need for funding, practical training, and networking, demonstrates that the field is ripe for advancement.

By adapting the international framework for recognising, protecting, and funding peacebuilding organisations and women peacebuilders, this report points to concrete ways to strengthen the peacebuilding agenda in Brazil. Recognising the actions of women peacebuilders, protecting them from multidimensional risks, and ensuring continuous and flexible resources are essential conditions for consolidating policies that prevent violence, increase social cohesion, and strengthen democratic processes.

Finally, we reaffirm that peacebuilding is a collective project, not an isolated task for the State, CSOs, or the women themselves who work on this agenda. It requires continuous dialogue, active listening, democratic commitment, and political and financial investment. The second version of the NAP/WPS represents a historic opportunity for Brazil to align itself with international best practices, strengthen its civil society, and build a more just, secure, and humane future. May this report contribute to inspiring decisions, opening pathways, and consolidating, in the Brazilian imagination, the real possibility of living in peace. Not as a privilege, but as a right.

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