



KAIROS Women of Courage: Women, Peace and Security

YEAR THREE AT A GLANCE
April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021



"Wi'am showed me not only that I am worth listening to, but more importantly that I am more than a caregiver and that my thoughts and ideas can actually help lead to change and for a better community, especially for our women and girls." —A mother of three teenagers from Beit Ummar after attending one of Wi'am's mixed gender workshops.

This is one of the many stories of change depicting the positive outcomes of the Women of Courage program, despite the many challenges. While the pandemic overshadowed Year Three of the program, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities, creating new ones, and posing serious challenges to program delivery, partners tirelessly pushed forward to bring about change, creating and amplifying stories of resilience and strength.

KAIROS' Women of Courage: Women Peace and Security (WPS) partners continued to reach vulnerable communities during this critical time, increasing their capacity to respond as local peacebuilders. Not only did their efforts translate into increased autonomy and critical thinking among women in these communities, they also led to greater communication, solidarity and a shared commitment to collective change. These partners are: Organización Femenina Popular, Colombia; Wi'am: the Palestinian Conflict Transformation Centre, West Bank; Héritiers de la Justice, Democratic Republic of the Congo; and, South Sudan Council of Churches – National Women's Programme (SSCC-NWP), South Sudan.

Their efforts paid off. All partners reported that participants felt more empowered than ever before.

Through participant surveys, they learned that their psychosocial and legal support, workshops and trainings contributed to a marked increase in participants' sense of self confidence, autonomy, communication, resilience/strength, connections and critical thinking.

Notably, a sense of individual autonomy, including self esteem, increased significantly from previous years. The program is premised

on this felt autonomy and on evidence that when women are provided with opportunities to heal, restore self-esteem, and claim their rights, they can become key voices in peace building processes.

This theory of change was manifested in Year Three with quantified progress towards greater and more sustained participation in peace processes, including pressuring governments to make changes, advocating for human rights, and seeking elected office.

Partners were also required to adjust, reimagine and pivot WPS program activities in response to repeated COVID-19 waves, lockdowns and changing health regulations. Some strategies included using accessible communication methods such as WhatsApp messaging, digital programming for psychosocial and legal support, setting up COVID-19 taskforces, radio programming and using door-to-door awareness campaigns.

Programming shifted online and some partners worked from home. There was some regional travel and in-person programming and training, with smaller gatherings or hybrid online / in-person activities.

Not everyone had online access, and partners pointed to the digital divide, which highlighted how the pandemic impacted women particularly hard. Despite different contexts, partners also identified a significant increase in gender-based violence, including domestic abuse and increased militarization, a backlash against women's rights and equality, restrictions on the informal economy caused by social distancing and mobility restrictions, stalled peace processes, and increased displacement and food insecurity.

Tellingly, almost double the number of women from Year Two received partner-supported psychosocial, legal, and medical accompaniment after experiencing gender-based violence.

The challenges were acutely felt, but partners – as local, grassroots organizations – were well placed to respond. They reached even the most marginalized populations, including women experiencing gender-based violence, because they are organized, well-trained and part of the fabric of these communities.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA FUNDING

In 2018, Global Affairs Canada approved funding for this program, injecting \$4.5 million over five years to support

the work of grassroots women-focused organizations. This funding is made possible with matching funds from KAIROS member churches and agencies, religious communities, individual donors, labour unions and other supporters.

KAIROS has appreciated the flexibility from Global Affairs that has allowed partners to adjust and pivot activities and timelines, enabling them to implement program outcomes during the pandemic.

YEAR THREE RESULTS

In Year Three, participants received legal support and human rights training. They also used knowledge of national and international human rights frameworks and laws, and applied their resilience and strength to advocate for their rights and the rights of others. The program continued to foster a commitment to collective rights and processes, with over 60% of participants using their knowledge and experience to advocate for the rights of others and their communities. In addition, partners' campaigns and strategic work with key allies and stakeholders, including male allies, are increasing overall capacity to advocate for women's rights and participation.

The results in Year Three are significant:

- 1,083 women survivors of gender-based violence received psychosocial and medical accompaniment after experiencing gender-based violence.
- 1,126 women and 618 men completed gender awareness training through 51 training sessions.
- 216 human rights defenders (80% women) participated in 14 training of trainers' workshops.
- 129 women used legal services provided by partners.
- Partners participated in 69 campaigns advocating for legislation, law reform and implementation that strengthens women's rights, peace and security.
- Partners initiated 36 advocacy and education initiatives related to the WPS program, involving 53 male allies.

KAIROS' efforts to amplify partners' work resulted in 38 communications and advocacy strategies related to the program including opinion articles, letters to the editor, blogs, and letters to the Canadian government. Digital engagement resulted in 1M Twitter, 741K Facebook and 157K web users.



GATHERINGS AND EXCHANGES

South-South gatherings, which bring together partners to exchange experiences and knowledge, develop strategies and build common cause, as well as participate on the world stage, remain a key pillar of this program.

South-South Gathering

This year, the program's signature South-South Gathering went online, hosting 52 representatives from the four partners over three days in late November during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

The Gathering featured two internal meetings for partners, which renewed and revitalized synergies through knowledge exchanges, sharing and exploration of possible joint actions. It also featured a public event that drew 156 participants, including program staff and beneficiaries, Global Affairs Canada representatives and the KAIROS network. The women beneficiaries shared life-changing experiences and impacts from their engagement in the WPS program.

UN Commission on the Status of Women

A delegation of 23 KAIROS partners attended the online UN Commission on the Status of Women Session 65 (CSW65) in March 2021. The annual UN forum included high level official meetings, CSW65 side events co-hosted by UN member states and the NGO-CSW Forum, and a parallel civil society forum. The CSW65 themes this year focused on women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. These themes clearly resonated with partners and program participants.

Most program delegates had not participated in the CSW before. Despite language and internet challenges, they reported positive experiences, noting that they learned from the diverse topics and speakers as well as from being a part of a global network of empowered women standing up for peace and justice.

STORIES OF CHANGE

Héritiers de la Justice

"Before our collaboration with Héritiers de la Justice in this WPS program, women did not join associations... or participate in security meetings.... Most women did not know how to speak to the authorities. Since Héritiers de la Justice began to carry out its activities in our community, there has been a remarkable change. Women have begun to raise awareness of others to register marriages and births, they began to speak up before the authorities and carry out advocacy actions."—An ally of Héritiers de la Justice.

Organización Femenina Popular

"I do believe that we as women must be part of change, we must position our voice, make ourselves heard, and we must be valued for what we do for our family, in the community, and throughout the territory. Part of peace is that there is equality and that women can exercise our rights, without being mistreated or removed from spaces."—Testimony of a participant from San Pablo, Colombia.

South Sudan Council of Churches – National Women's Programme

"During the 2020-2021 COVID-19 lockdown, there have been conflicts between and within families as women are living with their abusers. Visits by members of the Women Link group to different homes which had conflicts resulted in families being able to resolve their family problem amicably. Traumatized families were able to get counselling.... It is noted and seen that women are now having confidence in reporting gender-based violence cases in the community and in speaking out about the dangers of gender-based violence after having their awareness heightened by the Women Link group."
—Report from SSCC-NWP's Women's Link door-to-door awareness program on gender-based violence initiative.

Wi'am

"Growing up as the younger brother to a sister, I thought I was aware of the dynamics between genders and of the patriarchal system... but now I know better. I know that patriarchy is not about protections, but instead about fear and control, and I also learned that we are better as a community when we are equal, not just in theory, but more so in practice." - A 21-year-old male student at Bethlehem University and participant of Wi'am's university gender-sensitivity training program.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Total Value of Project.....	\$5,782,860.00
Total Global Affairs contribution.....	\$4,456,516.00
KAIROS contribution	\$1,326,344.00
Project start date	April 1, 2018
Project end date.....	September 29, 2023

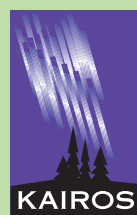
Year Three (2020-2021) financial information

Total project costs	\$778,412
Global Affairs contribution	\$599,877
KAIROS contribution	\$178,535



KAIROS continues to be deeply grateful to its partners for their courage, tenacity and persistent hope, often in the face of extreme risk and adversity. This program would not be possible without the support of member churches, donors and Global Affairs Canada. For this, KAIROS is profoundly thankful.

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives



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