



WOMEN'S SPACES

**Creating platforms to strengthen women's voices
in peacebuilding, civic and political life.**

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Pillars for Peace-building

A DIGITAL TOOLKIT ON WOMEN'S ACTIVISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

It is with great pride and deep conviction that we introduce Pillars for Peace-Building: A Digital Toolkit for Women's Activism in Northern Ireland.

This resource is born from a shared belief that women's voices, leadership, and lived experiences are not just relevant to peace—they are essential. Twenty-seven years after the Good Friday Agreement, the promise of inclusive peace remains incomplete for many women across our communities. While the peace process has made great strides, persistent inequalities, unresolved legacy issues, and ongoing divisions continue to shape the lives of women in Northern Ireland.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, grounded in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, calls for the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peacebuilding.

Yet, Northern Ireland's complex post-conflict context has shown us that this global vision must be interpreted and implemented through local voices and local realities.

That's where this toolkit comes in.

Pillars for Peace-Building is not just a collection of resources—it is a platform for transformation. It provides historical context on the often-overlooked role of women during the conflict and in peace efforts, alongside practical tools for gender-sensitive advocacy, storytelling, and community action. It features stories and insights from women who have shaped—and continue to shape—peace on the ground.

Continued on overleaf...



Sarah Stack, Urban Coordinator
Charmain Jones, Rural Coordinator

LAUNCHING OUR TOOLKIT CONT...

We designed the toolkit to be interactive, mobile-friendly, and accessible to those who need it most, including women in rural and underserved areas. It's structured around four core areas: a timeline of women's contributions to peace; tools for influencing change; blog posts from researchers and grassroots activists; and video interviews highlighting lived experiences.

But more than anything, this toolkit reflects a collective journey. It has been shaped in dialogue with women across Northern Ireland—from young leaders to legacy survivors, from peace practitioners to community workers. Their voices reminded us why this work matters. As one participant said:

"Hearing women's stories reminds me of the importance of using my own voice."

That truth guided this entire project. We are proud to launch this resource with contributions from 25 women, with many more to come as we expand the archive — a tribute to 25 years of UNSCR 1325, told through 25 voices. **As we co-create this evolving space, we invite collaboration from all sectors—civil society, government, academia, and beyond.**

Because peace isn't just a moment. It's a movement.

With the right tools, networks, and stories, women in Northern Ireland can continue to shape that movement as architects of a more just, inclusive, and lasting peace.

CHARMAIN JONES & SARAH STACK CO-DEVELOPERS PILLARS FOR PEACE-BUILDING TOOLKIT

Photo credits: Nicola McKee Photography



Launch of Pillars for Peace-Building Toolkit at Belfast City Hall on 27th May 2025

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit features five key pillars and a timeline, which you can explore as a full resource or dip into as needed. Think of it like a set of colourful post-its on your desk — each one sparking new ideas, prompting reflection, and helping you consider the impact of your work.

Whether you're looking for practical tools, inspiration, or deeper reflection, the toolkit offers a range of resources to support your journey.

- **Interactive Timeline** – Highlights the vital contributions of local and international women's movements to the peace process — helping to reframe the narrative and celebrate women's leadership.
- **Tools for Influencing Change** – A hands-on collection of grassroots-developed resources, with a focus on storytelling and advocacy, to help you spark and sustain change in your community.
- **Community Blog** – Features insights and reflections from both researchers and grassroots women, focusing on the issues that matter most — from gender justice to everyday activism.
- **Video Interviews** – Real voices, real stories. Hear directly from women who share their lived experiences and journeys toward gender equality, peace, and progress.

Local Roots, Global Relevance

While grounded in the lived experiences of women in Northern Ireland, the toolkit was designed to resonate globally. It draws from:

- Local and international case studies
- Guest contributions from activists and researchers
- Regional and global research
- Additional materials for those interested in academic study

Whether you are a community worker, volunteer, practitioner, or researcher, we hope this toolkit supports your work — and opens new conversations on activism, equality, and peace.

Explore the toolkit now

Discover ideas, tools, and stories to inform, inspire, and empower your work: www.pillarsforpeace.org_



Councillor Micky Murray
Lord Mayor of Belfast



Councillor Áine McCabe
BCC Women's Steering Group



Dessie Donnelly
Rabble Coop

25 WOMEN REPRESENTING 25 YEARS OF UNSCR 1325 WOMEN, PEACE & SECURITY

Visit www.pillarsforpeace.org to view.



Anne Carr



Anne McVicker



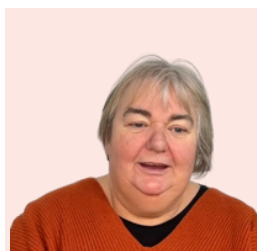
Barbara Boyle



Bronagh Hinds



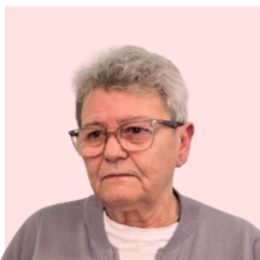
Bronagh McAtasney



Catherine Cooke



Denise Hughes



Eileen Weir



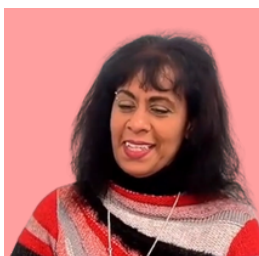
Elaine Crory



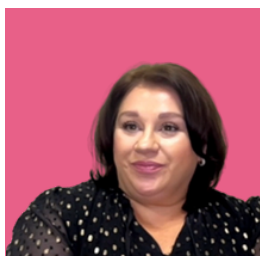
Helen Crickard



Jonna Monaghan



Kristyene Boreland



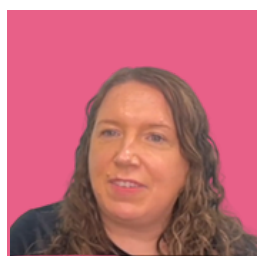
Louise Coyle



Majella Murphy



Martina Byrne



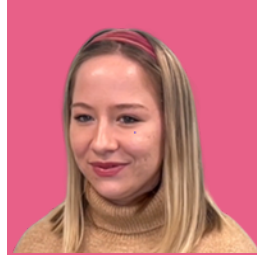
Nuala Toman



Sinéad McLoughlin



Sonya McMullan



Sophie Nelson



Alex Brennan



Alison Black



Avila Kilmurray



Eve Jones



Meghan Hoyt



Siobhán Harding

Video Interviews and Blog Posts

Anne Carr, Community Dialogue	There is no peace without women
Anne McVicker, Women's Resource & Development Agency	Impact of Women in Transforming Society
Barbara Boyle, BME Women's Network	A migrant woman's experience of the NI peace process
Bronagh Hinds, DemocraShe	Building democracy: women's activism
Bronagh McAtasney, NI Screen	Educating & training women in peacebuilding & storytelling
Catherine Cooke, Foyle Women's Information Network	Women finding their voices
Denise Hughes, South Belfast Alternatives	Women in Conflict Transformation
Eileen Weir, Community Activist	Empowering grassroots women in the communities
Elaine Crory, Women's Policy Group NI, WRDA	Campaigning for what matters most to women
Helen Crickard, Reclaim the Agenda	Feminist organising
Jonna Monaghan, Women's Platform	CEDAW, the 'international bill of rights for women'
Kristyene Boreland, BME Women's Network	Importance of racial equality in creating peaceful society
Louise Coyle, NI Rural Women's Network	Empowering Rural Women to be Visible, Influential and Valued
Majella Murphy, NI Rural Women's Network	Women and Border Communities
Martina Byrne, Women of Clonduff	Rural barriers and opportunities for peace
Nuala Toman, Disability Action	Encouraging active participation for disabled women
Sinéad McLoughlin MLA, APG on UNSCR 1325 on WPS	Women, Peace & Security and NI Assembly
Sonya McMullan, Women's Aid Federation NI	Ending Violence against women and girls
Sophie Nelson, HERe NI	Ensuring the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ women in peace-building
Alex Brennan, Women's Budget Group NI	What is Gender Budgeting?
Alison Black, Trans and Disability Rights Activist	Grassroots activism for transgender equality
Avila Kilmurray, Social Change Initiative	Women leading community change
Eve Jones, NI Rural Women's Network	Young women ensuring they have a seat at the table
Meghan Hoyt, Women's Resource & Development Agency	Misogyny, hate crime, and feminist legal theory
Siobhán Harding, Women's Support Network	Cost of Living Crisis on Women

Blog posts coming soon to our living toolkit...

Alex Stevenson, Master of Conflict Studies student

Impact of 'Where are the women?' in the Digital Film Archive Workshops

Clare Anderson, Women's Resource & Development Agency

Trauma informed community based support - the Mas Project

Daniela Tartakova, Disability Rights Activist

Living Out Loud: My Fight for Disability Justice and Mental Health Support

Danielle Roberts, Reclaim the Agenda

Reclaim the Night: Taking Back Our Streets and Our Voices

Dervla O'Neill, Anti-Poverty Activist

Living Library, Living Change: Speaking Up for Women and Poverty at Stormont

Jennifer Wright, Women's Resource & Development Agency

Advocacy and Support for Young Mums - Mas Project

Lynette Glen, Atlas Women's Centre

A Mum's Lived Experience From Rock Bottom to Rising

Majella Murphy, NI Rural Women's Network

The foundation of a rural regional women's network

Megan McClure Botha, Women's Resource & Development Agency

When Home Isn't Safe: Domestic Violence and Homelessness in Northern Ireland

Rachel Franklin, Public health researcher

What Men Learned from the Raise Your Voice Workshops



Alex Stevenson



Clare Anderson



Daniela Tartakova



Danielle Roberts



Dervla O'Neill



Jennifer Wright



Lynette Glen



Majella Murphy



Megan McClure Botha



Rachel Franklin

Call for Evidence on Women, Peace & Security

On 2nd June 2025, the Women's Spaces team led by the Urban Coordinator, submitted a response to the International Development Committee's Call for Evidence on Women, Peace and Security. The submission includes 10 policy recommendations.

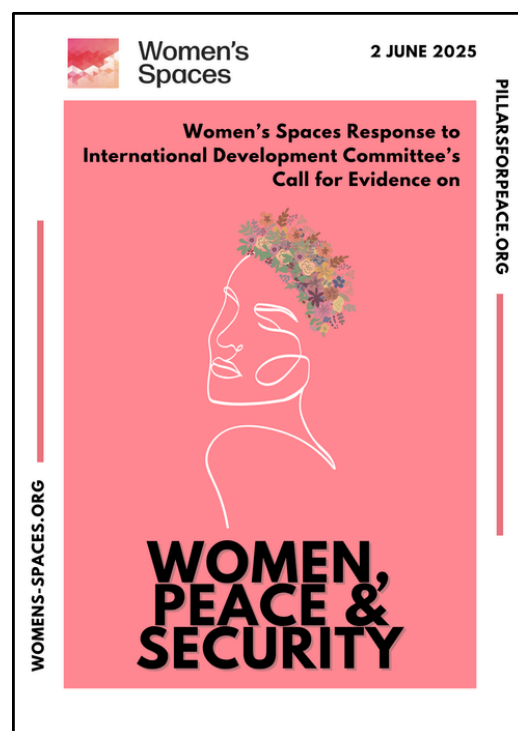
The UK's 2023–2027 National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) outlines important strategic ambitions, but currently falls short of delivering substantive, measurable outcomes—especially for women and girls from conflict-affected and marginalised communities in Northern Ireland. Funding reductions, weak monitoring mechanisms, and limited domestic implementation, particularly in Northern Ireland, undermine the UK's credibility and effectiveness in advancing the WPS agenda.

This submission offers a response to the Committee's inquiry questions, grounded in policy analysis and lived experience evidence, and includes 10 key recommendations to strengthen the UK's WPS commitments, particularly in line with local implementation of WPS.

As part of this submission, Women's Spaces consulted with the Women's Regional Consortium NI and the Law Centre NI over their research findings. Finally, the Women's Spaces Consortium fully supports the Women's Policy Group NI's response to the call for evidence.

Summary Recommendations

1. Strengthen implementation, monitoring, and accountability frameworks
2. Increase sustainable funding for local women's groups
3. Ensure transparency in WPS investment and resource allocation
4. Adopt an intersectional approach
5. Prioritise full implementation in Northern Ireland
6. Broaden definitions of security and armed conflict
7. Embed co-design and public participation models
8. Promote whole-of-government action including in justice and education sectors
9. Enhance international collaboration and networking
10. Address online and digital violence against women



To read the full report, visit: womens-spaces.org.

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our strategic leadership team, whose guidance and vision have helped shape this project:

- Jonna Monaghan, former Director of Women's Platform
- Dr Anne McVicker, Director of WRDA
- Louise Coyle, Director of NIRWN
- Karen Sweeney, Director of WSN
- Deirdre Quinn, Training and Development Manager at WRDA

Sincere thanks to all those who piloted the toolkit and shared their insights to ensure its relevance and impact:

- Women's Platform Board
- Women's Policy Group NI
- Women's Centres across Northern Ireland
- Peace practitioners and grassroots women leaders

We are especially grateful to our project evaluators, whose contributions strengthened both the learning and legacy of the Women's Spaces programme:

- Aoife Mallon
- Siobhán Harding

To Alan in Belfast, thank you so much for editing our video interviews and helping us improve our filming practice!

To our funder, Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs, we express deep appreciation for your support through the Reconciliation Fund, and your commitment to inclusive peace and gender justice.

A special thanks goes to the team at Rabble Coop, whose insight, creativity, and technical expertise brought this digital toolkit to life. Their ability to translate our work into an accessible and interactive online resource has been invaluable. Without their dedication and collaborative spirit, this toolkit would not have the reach or impact it holds today.

We are particularly grateful for our partnership with NI Screen and the Digital Film Archive through Bronagh McAtasney. Thank you so much for your work to integrate the video interviews into the archive to ensure women's voices having a lasting place in history.

Finally, we extend our deepest gratitude to the women who contributed and continue to contribute their stories, voices, research, and visions to this toolkit. Your courage, insight, activism, and leadership form the foundation of this work and will inspire generations to come.



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An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs
RECONCILIATION FUND



Women's Spaces seeks to strengthen the voices of all women and girls in peacebuilding and decision making, delivered by a consortium involving Women's Platform, NIRWN, WRDA and WSN.