

# Intergenerational Peacebuilding Among Women

## Leveraging the Power of Collaboration

### CASE STUDY: EGYPT

*This case study is part of the Intergenerational Peacebuilding Among Women: Leveraging the Power of Collaboration report created by the Women PeaceMakers program.*

### Intergenerational peacebuilding among women

Compounding crises related to inequalities and violence, health, the environment, and food and water insecurity affect people across generations, and solutions to build lasting peace require the involvement and leadership of people of all generations. This case study forms part of the [\*Intergenerational Peacebuilding among Women: Leveraging the Power of Collaboration\*](#) report, focused on understanding how generation and age differences affect peacebuilding work among women by analyzing how women and women's organizations are using intergenerational strategies and partnerships to build peace.

The report argues that women's and women's organizations' intergenerational peacebuilding efforts and potential need to be better recognized, supported, developed, and encouraged at the national and international level alike. Through the case studies, the report shows examples of existing efforts, opportunities, and challenges, with the goal of shaping and influencing how decision-makers and funders approach intergenerational partnerships and strategies as part of peacebuilding work.

The report is co-created as part of the Women PeaceMakers Fellowship, led by the voices and perspectives of the 2021-2022 Women PeaceMaker Fellows. The report drew from the lived realities of women peacebuilders and their partners, and from experts working in the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security spaces. The full report provides both an international analysis and context-specific case studies.

Since 2002, the Kroc IPJ has hosted the Women PeaceMakers Fellowship program. The Fellowship offers a unique opportunity for women peacebuilders to engage in a cycle of learning, practice, research and participation that strengthens peacebuilding partnerships. The Women PeaceMakers Fellowship facilitates impactful collaborations between women peacebuilders from conflict-affected communities and international partner organizations. The Fellows also co-create research intended to shape the peacebuilding field and highlight good practices for peacebuilding design and implementation. This case study was created as part of this process and is also featured in the full *Intergenerational Peacebuilding among Women: Leveraging the Power of Collaboration* report.

In this case study, Woman PeaceMaker Fellow Nermine Mounir explores the state of intergenerational peacebuilding for women in Egypt. Day by day, women peacebuilders are discovering new spaces within which to make themselves heard. The power of these women and their impact can be further magnified by joining efforts and drawing on their diversity. This research demonstrates the deep desire women peacebuilders in Egypt have for intergenerational collaboration but also how rare this sort of intergenerational collaboration currently is in their work.



**Women  
PeaceMakers  
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# Egypt Case Study:

## Egyptian women peacebuilders in search of connection, recognition and space

### CASE STUDY

By Nermine Mounir; co-author: Hassnaa Tamam

*Highlighting the need for connection between women peacebuilders of different ages and backgrounds*



### Context

In October 1999, UN General Assembly Resolution A/53/243 called for a global movement for a culture of peace, which invited all Member States to commit to the fuller development of a culture of peace through values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life conducive to the promotion of peace among individuals, groups and nations.<sup>1</sup> A few years before, the UN also declared the year 2000 to be the International Year for a Culture of Peace and the decade from 2000 to 2010 to be the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.<sup>2</sup>

These efforts had their effect on Egypt, particularly through the efforts of the First Lady at the time, who launched The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement in 2004.<sup>3</sup> Since then, several initiatives focusing on peace education have emerged, mostly led by middle-class, educated young professionals; however, the impact and outreach of these initiatives and the movement itself was mostly confined to the intellectual elite. In fact, the organization led by the author of this case study also started during that time. The agenda of most of the initiatives focused on diversity, dialogue, tolerance and the overall promotion of peace values and related skills. Considering the political situation at that time, many of these initiatives focused on audiences and topics seen as less political and mostly followed the UN agenda within the country.<sup>4</sup> For example, issues of sectarian violence, extremism and security-related issues remained exclusively within the purview of the government and religious institutions. Violations of human rights were also absent from the agenda.

The situation started to change after 2011, following the January 25th revolution.<sup>5</sup> With the expansion of public space and the realization of the need for societal reconciliation, many initiatives were formed that openly called for societal dialogue and for the promotion of nonviolence in all aspects of society.<sup>6</sup> Many of these initiatives were openly political, which constituted a significant transformation in the agenda of civil society in relation to a culture of peace. Their outreach was no longer confined to the intellectual elite but expanded to include more work at the grassroots level, reaching out to more marginalized groups and those further away from the capital.



Unfortunately, this significant opening of the public sphere did not last for long. Since the military intervention in July 2013,<sup>7</sup> the struggle against the Muslim Brotherhood has allowed the government to take several measures aimed at regaining state control over the public sphere. To achieve this aim, the regime has issued several laws and decisions putting strong limitations on social and political activism and on civil society work in general.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, many of the peace education initiatives had to minimize their activities or practice self-censorship by avoiding threatening or controversial topics and target groups. Some ended up shutting down their activities altogether.<sup>9</sup>

Despite that, those who continued are still<sup>10</sup> striving to make an impact and use their creativity to address the continuing challenges facing civil society in Egypt. Many continue to expand beyond the capital, reaching out to new target groups in marginalized areas and communities. This is also a strategy to maneuver around the limitations on civil society. One of these initiatives is the focus of this case study. The initiative is called BH<sup>11</sup> and was founded by a couple living in El-Minya governorate. Minya is one of the poorest cities in Egypt, as the poverty rate is almost 60 percent.<sup>12</sup> The city has a strong presence of militant Islamic groups while also being the home of the second largest Christian population in the country.<sup>13</sup> It has frequently been a flash point for sectarian violence between Muslims and Christians.<sup>14</sup> According to a report by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, Minya has been a center of sectarian violence, often related to the construction of churches, Christian religious services, rumors about romantic affairs between Muslims and Christians, or low-level disputes that quickly turned to mob violence between Muslims and Christians.<sup>15</sup>

Inspired by his previous work in an interreligious dialogue project, and in response to increasing societal tensions, the founder of BH and his wife decided to create spaces for human interaction and dialogue between young people—spaces where they can experience coexistence, appreciate diversity and learn necessary skills to deal with conflicts nonviolently. As he puts it, “growing up in Minya, we never felt the separation between Muslims and Christians, we were one community, all living in peace and harmony. Now it is different, so we decided that we want our children to experience what we had before through building our own community of peace - BH community.”<sup>16</sup> Through their initiative, they play the roles of brokers and translators, utilizing their professional network to invite experienced trainers and practitioners from the capital to come and work with the young people. As trusted members of the community, they have the ability to bring together Muslim and Christian youth who rarely have the opportunity to meet and interact on a deep human level in daily life. The uniqueness of this initiative is that it brings together a diversity of actors across age, religion, social and economic background, and gender. The founders themselves and many of the “experts” belong to a much older generation than the participants, while striving to work together to build a community for peace and coexistence, with the challenges and opportunities that accompany such a dream.

The initiative has been supported by a broader network of peacebuilding practitioners called the Selmiya network, which is a grassroots movement made up of over 40 initiatives working to spread a culture of peace. The founders and participants of these initiatives within the network are primarily youth, providing a unique model for civil society organizations (CSOs) in Egypt, where there are a few movements working together on the ground.<sup>17</sup>

This case study focuses on the nature and dynamics of the relationships that exist between the different generations of women involved in the BH initiative and its surrounding network, and the impact of these relationships on peacebuilding. The aim is to explore how intergenerational linkages and dialogue can take place in a way that is mutually empowering and that strengthens the inclusion and resilience of women in peacebuilding.

## Methodology

The main question motivating this case study was as follows: To what extent have senior and junior women peacebuilders established trusting and meaningful relationships that contribute to their mutual empowerment and to the promotion of peacebuilding in their communities? The case study also examined the following sub-questions:

- What is the relationship between different groups of women working towards peace?
- What strategies have been used when developing these partnerships, and are they effective?
- How does identity affect relationships between these women?
- How does gender affect how women peacebuilders from the capital are perceived and how much impact they are able to have?
- What are the challenges and obstacles to creating effective intergenerational peacebuilding partnerships?

The research team collected information from diverse sources: mostly women of different generations and backgrounds working in peace education in Egypt and some men also involved in peace education who have direct interaction with these women. Data collection primarily focused on the BH peace education initiative because it involves women from different backgrounds, age groups and experiences as co-founders, leaders, teachers, supporters and participants, but the research also considered other initiatives outside of the capital led by grassroots leaders. Furthermore, the primary researcher previously worked with the BH initiative and has direct experience and knowledge of their work.

In this study, the researchers decided to define a “woman peacebuilder” as any woman who works directly on issues related to peace and who has an interest in building their career in this field. In selecting research participants, the researchers therefore considered these criteria, as well as diversity of age and experience. The researchers conducted interviews and focus groups and used participant observation to gather data. The team interviewed 30 women peace educators and peacebuilders in person and online. These women worked in civil society, in academia or as researchers, or as decision-makers in the public sector, and they ranged from 18 to 45 years old. The researchers also included people who had different levels of experience and divided them into “juniors” (those with up to five years of experience) and “seniors” (those with more than five years of experience). The research focused on three governorates: Cairo, Minya and St. Catherine. The researchers also conducted focus groups in El-Minya governorate with eight participants and Cairo with five participants. The participants were from a range of ages, experiences and backgrounds, but all were leaders, staff or beneficiaries of peacebuilding programs who have an interest in peace education, whether professionally or on a volunteer basis. Finally, the team collected data through participant observation, analyzing the interactions between participants in informal settings and in the community. The team experienced some challenges reaching out to some of the women selected for interviews, due to scheduling difficulties, lack of contact information or distance.

The researchers considered cross-generational issues through not only age but also experience, as some women were taught and mentored by much younger women who have more experience and knowledge in the field. The research team focused on examining whether and how age and/or experience play a role in the formation of relationships between women, the dynamics of these relationships, and the impact these relationships can and do have. The researchers paid attention to differences across generations, without approaching “generation” as a coherent category of analysis, and examined relationships within as well as between generations.



## Intergenerational peacebuilding in the context of this case study

Many participants could not easily define or relate to the concept of intergenerational peacebuilding.<sup>18</sup> Many participants noted that the interview was the first time they had heard or thought about the concept. Further questioning revealed several reasons for this. First, many said that these types of relationships rarely exist and, if they do, they are mostly informal and sporadic. Others explained that since the peacebuilding field is relatively new in Egypt, there are not many generations of people, especially women, working in the field. Some also said that they had never reflected on the concept of “intergenerational peacebuilding” before, so they do not have a clear understanding of the concept and what it means to them. It was interesting to observe that most of the participants emphasized that the parties in intergenerational relationships need to be “equal.” This might indicate the negative experiences the younger participants have had with traditional types of relationships between the different generations. It might also indicate that they realize the difference between intergenerational relationships among women peacebuilders compared to those they experience in other spaces.

Equally important and illuminating, when asked about whether they consider themselves “women peacebuilders,” respondents provided answers that could be grouped into three categories.<sup>19</sup> The first and most dominant — especially among women from outside the capital — included women who were reluctant to identify as peacebuilders and emphasized that they are “striving” to be peacebuilders by practicing peaceful values in their lives. Some preferred to call themselves “lovers of peace” or “peacebuilders but relatively — meaning that they are not always able to do that,” but they hope to be so one day.<sup>20</sup> The second category comprised those who refused to be called peacebuilders. For some, they were worried about the idealist image of the peacebuilder, which they felt they could not maintain most of the time. Others felt that their efforts are so small and cannot accumulate to become an act of peacebuilding. A third group refused to be called peacebuilders although they work on dialogue, anti-terrorism or gender issues. It was not clear why these participants did not see this work as peacebuilding, but it could be connected to the negative connotation associated with the word “peace” in Egypt.<sup>21</sup>

It is also worth noting the diversity of answers among women when asked about their own definition of “peace.” Some of the answers included: to be able to express oneself; freedom; acceptance of the other; creativity; inner peace and being gentle with oneself; human rights; nonviolence towards others; positive communication; negotiation; human security; feminism; safe space; and inner peace.<sup>22</sup>

Most of the women from outside the capital focused on inner peace or peace with their personal surroundings, including family and friends.<sup>23</sup> Many of them also focused on the role of women in peacebuilding within the family and the smaller circles around her — the traditional roles of women. Only a few of them focused on the role of women in peacebuilding within the “public sphere.” The exception is the women from St. Catherine, who directly thought of peace in the context of the conflict between Egypt and Israel, which is relevant given the political issues at play in that area. However, after discussions, they started to speak about peace in relation to their personal lives. Many of the women from the capital focused on social peace and, to a lesser extent, peace at the international level.

## Perceived impact of intergenerational peacebuilding among women

Questions about the impact of intergenerational partnerships elicited three kinds of responses.

A common and dominant response came from participants who believe in working across generations but see that these types of relationships are rare in the field in general and between women in particular.<sup>24</sup> Many of the relationships that are formed during peacebuilding programs slowly disappear after the program ends, as many of these programs lack mechanisms for sustaining the communication beyond the duration of the work. In fact, almost 90 percent of interviewees, from different ages and levels of experience, said that none of the programs they were part of had an intergenerational component or resulted in a special program focusing directly on intergenerational partnerships. Many highlighted that since the peacebuilding field is relatively new and fluid, and because there is no platform or structure that brings peacebuilding actors—much less women peacebuilders—together, it is hard for women to develop sustained networks and relationships. Some noted that they had seen attempts to coordinate this type of partnership, but they lacked strategies and tools for implementation. On the other hand, many said that the intergenerational relationships that they are part of are mostly informal, taking the form of friendships developed through individual initiatives on the part of the women involved. Many of these partnerships were formed as a result of taking part in a workshop together, attending forums or gatherings related to peace, or working together. They explained that these types of relationships can be very empowering to both parties, especially considering that the peace education field is relatively new in Egypt. Some also saw that emphasizing the “age factor” in women’s partnerships is important because, according to them, each generation needs to acknowledge the existence of the other generation and that they are different.

A second group of participants did not see the importance or relevance of women’s intergenerational relationships.<sup>25</sup> Some perceived these types of relationships as emphasizing differences over similarities, which they viewed as negative. Others preferred to focus on relationships among women in general without highlighting age, which they think will help make partnerships more inclusive and effective. Some also suggested that it is more useful to focus on experience and qualifications than on age to avoid patronizing or condescending attitudes from the older generation toward the younger generation. Others felt that a focus on relationships across generations without an emphasis on the relationships between women only was more important and inclusive, helping bring more actors into the peacebuilding field.

The third group held a much less common opinion, which is that “healthy” intergenerational relationships are impossible to achieve and that typical intergenerational relationships can have negative consequences, especially on younger people. Some emphasized that, in these relationships, the senior partners will always seek to convince the younger to follow what they see as “right.” For example, one participant said, “Each generation has its own mindset and priorities, and this makes communication challenging.”<sup>26</sup>

Most of the interviewees described the relationships between women peacebuilders of different generations in Egypt as positive and generally supportive.<sup>27</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, many said that the relationships they are involved in are mostly informal, in the form of friendships. Many saw that most of these relationships are collaborative and built on mutual trust, with individuals striving to accept each other’s differences and build common ground. They emphasized that many women seek to continue the relationships informally beyond the duration of the program or work they are involved in and that they are a strong source of support for one another, especially in issues related to gender and women’s rights.





Many of the participants appreciated the impact of these relationships on their career path and professional learning journey. For example, some junior women mentioned that their entry point into a peacebuilding career was through other, senior women who provided them with the opportunity and resources to engage in the field and take their first steps. This was particularly important for them because educational and professional opportunities in the peacebuilding field in Egypt are limited, and information about these opportunities is often difficult to access. Many also appreciated that these senior women trusted their abilities and potential despite being young and saw in them qualities that sometimes they did not even see in themselves. Many junior peacebuilders struggle with finding opportunities in the peacebuilding field, since most organizations require “experience” that many young people do not have yet.

For many participants, these relationships had a similar impact on their personal life. For example, some of the younger participants shared that they turn to their women friends from the older generation when they face problems with their families or in their personal relationships. They also constitute a strong base of support for each other when facing experiences of gender discrimination or gender-based violence.

## Successes and challenges in intergenerational peacebuilding

Through data found in the interviews, the researchers identified themes related to successes and challenges of intergenerational peacebuilding partnerships among women, as well as themes related to international peacebuilding with its opportunities and limitations.

Many of the junior participants interviewed shared that relationships in which they felt that their ideas and experience were respected and appreciated by their senior partners were most useful.<sup>28</sup> These junior peacebuilders emphasized that it was especially helpful when older peacebuilders were willing to listen, help them reflect and support them in finding their own answers and solutions. Learning happened through day-to-day experiences and through interacting informally outside of work or trainings.

In addition, when asked how the background of those involved in a relationship might affect the level of trust, the quality of the relationship, and its impact, many participants answered that the factor of “identity” does not matter; what matters is the character of the person. They explained that, as long as those who are part of the relationship have a similar mindset, relationship formation will be easy and positive. The research team also observed that many of the participants were able to transcend differences when they connected over shared similarities and mutual respect. For example, one of the women interviewed in St. Catherine said, “With the facilitators, we felt like they are our friends, not our teachers. They respected us and treated us as equals. They were also curious to know about us.”<sup>29</sup> The quality of relationships was also enhanced when peacebuilders felt they could learn something from the other person that would help them build valuable knowledge and experience.

## Successes

Participants highlighted examples of successful strategies for building relationships among women peacebuilders of different generations, including creating informal spaces for friendships, dialogue and support; creating spaces for decentralized learning across generations; senior women acting as coaches and mentors to younger ones; and women forming informal networks of solidarity in addressing experiences of gender-based abuse. This section focuses on one success in particular: women acting as brokers, catalysts, role models, sources of access and legitimizers for other women.

Women's roles as brokers and translators were particularly important in the context of the BH initiative. Women from the older generation, or those who started earlier in BH, served as brokers or translators between the initiative and the community. Senior women played a key role as brokers between the private sphere, which shapes and dominates the reality of the junior women, and the public sphere, where the latter were invited to engage as active agents of change and even leaders. Parents were more willing to send their girls to participate in the activities of BH only because these "older" — and more trusted — women were present. Some of these women were actively engaged in continuous negotiation with the families to convince them to send their girls to attend the program. This was a very important role, considering limitations on women mixing with men or those from different religions. Having the privilege to access private spaces as women, in addition to the trust the community has in them, allowed these older women to open opportunities for more women to play an active role in the public sphere. The ones who later became leaders in the program acted as mobilizers, inviting girls from the community, who were mostly from the same religion as the leaders, to come to these programs. Many of them also acted as "coaches" to these younger girls, especially when they were confused in the beginning and felt threatened by the participants of different genders and religions.

For some of them, these women were also role models, giving them hope that they might also follow their dreams and make their voices heard.<sup>30</sup> Their success encouraged some families to grant their daughters more freedom so that they could become like these women.

One of the senior peace activists said, "When I first joined the program, I was assigned to be a leader to a group of Muslims and Christians who are much younger than me. I remember the first day when I introduced myself to them, they were very astonished, and I faced a lot of resistance, because they thought I must be a fundamentalist. I believe this was because I am fully covered [wearing niqab/burqa]. But after we spent time together, we became very close and they call me mama, both Muslims and Christians. These four years we spent together were the best days of my life."<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, some participants emphasized that relationships among women peacebuilders and the solidarity between them had an impact on consolidating the struggle for women rights and freedom in society.<sup>32</sup> For example, one of the interviewees who is a well-known feminist emphasized that the recent laws (most importantly Article 306 [paragraphs A & B] of the *1937 Penal Code*, amended on June 21, 2021)<sup>33</sup> that criminalized harassment in Egypt were the result of the accumulated struggle of different generations of women feminists who use one another's support to persist despite continuous attacks and stigmatization.<sup>34</sup>

These women also act as translators. Many of the concepts and methods used in BH's workshops are not familiar to people in Minya, and most of the trainers and facilitators are middle-class professionals from the capital whose language and perspectives often differ from those in Minya. Therefore, senior women who had greater experience in the peacebuilding field played a significant role in translating the words and ideas into a language that people in Minya could relate to, in order to understand the importance of the work being done and then disseminate this knowledge among their communities.





## Challenges

Women's intergenerational peacebuilding partnerships confront a range of challenges, whether structural, cultural or normative, potentially hindering their impact. Structural challenges include the limited opportunities for learning and employment in the peacebuilding field, which sometimes creates competition between actors; the separation between women who work in civil society, the public sector and academia; local peacebuilding programs lacking mechanisms for intergenerational dialogue and instead focusing on age-restricted groups; and overall restrictions on civil society in Egypt. Another significant challenge was the strong dependence in the peacebuilding field on "women from the capital" as program staff and trainers at the expense of local women who might have similar capacity or strong potential.

Cultural challenges include the prevailing gender norms that restrict women's freedom and mobility to meet and interact with other women in the peacebuilding field, and social norms of leadership in Egypt that make it a challenge to establish positive relationships across generations. Leaders can easily, intentionally or unintentionally, fall into the trap of abusing their power and suppressing the autonomy of those they are leading. On the other hand, the younger generation sometimes idealize leaders, positioning them as saviors who do not make mistakes or who do not act in a way that hinders peace. If those being idealized make mistakes, young peacebuilders can lose faith in the cause of peacebuilding altogether.

Finally, some participants were unable to identify any impact that resulted from intergenerational peacebuilding. Some said that it is too early to see an impact, and others said that there might be an impact, but it is hard for them to identify since it is usually personal and related to change in attitudes, which are difficult to assess.<sup>35</sup>

## The impact of intergenerational peacebuilding among women

Based on these findings, there are several reasons why intergenerational peacebuilding among women is important not just to women peacebuilders but also to the wider peacebuilding community. First, the research showed the role intergenerational women's peacebuilding efforts played in the integration of young people, and young women in particular, into the peacebuilding field in Egypt. This took place through improving access to knowledge and resources for women who were interested in pursuing a career in peacebuilding work and through the roles senior women played as coaches and mentors to emerging young women peacebuilders.

Second, working across generations improves the sustainability of peacebuilding programs and the resilience of women involved in these programs. As in the case of BH, the informal relationships that were built during the peacebuilding programs allowed for the continuation of the impact even after the program ended through mutual support, mutual learning and solidarity between the women involved in these relationships. This is particularly important in conservative communities, where older women tend to have more power and legitimacy; they can act as brokers between younger women and their community, supporting them in their negotiation for their rights. Older women also act as role models to the younger ones, inspiring them to continue their struggle for freedom and rights.

Furthermore, intergenerational peacebuilding among women holds great potential for enabling the women involved to learn and co-create new approaches to leadership and collective action and collaboration across generations. They have the opportunity to reshape the traditional forms of leadership and create new ones based on the values of equality, collectivity, freedom and autonomy.

There are many unrealized opportunities for intergenerational peacebuilding that can have positive effects not just on the parties in the relationship but also on their surroundings and on the community at large. New perspectives are needed on both sides: The older generation must be aware that new generations of peacebuilders are emerging, and that change is inevitable, while the younger generation must recognize that communication with the older generation is valuable for their own learning journey and career. Both generations need to learn how to establish a balanced relationship that brings together the wisdom and experience of the older generation and the energy and creativity of the younger one; both need to acknowledge the relative advantages that the other party has and what they have to offer in return. Many of the participants saw strong potential in intergenerational partnerships for opening more spaces for women to play an active role in peacebuilding efforts. Some saw this potential in civil society or academia, while others had high aspirations for the integration of women into security-related efforts, such as addressing violence in border areas like Sinai.

The field of peace education in Egypt is growing and more people are becoming interested in the field. There is an opportunity for peacebuilders to work in the world of business, media and journalism, cyberspace, and the judiciary, including through professional mediation. Furthermore, there is untapped potential for dialogue and collaboration between civil society, academia, and new platforms and institutions in the government in advancing the agenda of peace and coexistence.

There is also a huge opportunity for intergenerational peacebuilding in Egypt to contribute to creating and disseminating local knowledge around the values and skills of peace and nonviolence in society.

Finally, perhaps one of the biggest opportunities of intergenerational peacebuilding is the potential it holds for consolidating the inclusion and engagement of young people in peace education as a form of civic engagement.

## Conclusion and recommendations

Perhaps the biggest discovery of this research was identifying the deep desire women peacebuilders in Egypt have for intergenerational collaboration but also how rare this sort of intergenerational collaboration currently is in their work. When the researchers approached women to invite them for the interviews, the team received praise for the topic and research questions. As the process unfolded, many even offered to help in the different efforts needed to conduct the research. This need for connection might be motivated by the shared experiences of discrimination, which many women, regardless of background, raised in their interviews. It may also come from a place of growing confidence. Day by day, women peacebuilders from different generations and backgrounds are winning small victories here and there, in both the private and the public space. In essence, they are practicing what Assef Bayat called “the art of presence,” practiced by citizens who have the courage and creativity, in spite of all odds, to circumvent constraints, utilizing what is available and discovering new spaces within which to make oneself heard, seen, felt and realized.<sup>36</sup>

The power and impact of these women can be further magnified if they join efforts and utilize their diversity to support each other’s learning journey and struggle. Other actors also have a role to play to enable a positive environment for peacebuilding work in general and for women’s intergenerational peacebuilding in particular. The following recommendations were identified because the researchers believe that they are realistic, feasible and likely to yield very positive results.



## Recommendations for women peacebuilders:

It is very important for women peacebuilders in Egypt to jointly establish a structure that brings them together to network, exchange knowledge and co-learn. This can take place in the form of a network or a platform co-led by a group of women or organizations who have the interest and the resources to coordinate this structure. It is also important that these relationships be created across sectors—civil society, academia and the public sector.

## Recommendations for the designers and leaders of peacebuilding programs:

- Prioritize and fund peacebuilding efforts in Egypt. Although Egypt is not experiencing widespread violent conflict, there are many latent conflicts that could eventually lead to large-scale violence.
- Ensure that peacebuilding programs allow for meaningful dialogue across different generations of peacebuilders. This can take place in the form of workshops, forums or even dialogue sessions.
- Integrate mechanisms for continuous communication between the different generations beyond the duration of peacebuilding programs.
- Design peacebuilding programs that consider the gendered social norms that impact women's access to these programs and encourage senior women peacebuilders in the community to play a role in addressing these social norms and in improving access for junior peacebuilders to the peacebuilding field.
- Recognize the professional capacity of senior "local" women who can play an active role in empowering junior women peacebuilders in their communities rather than relying on women from the capital.
- Develop professional mentorship programs that provide the opportunity for senior women peacebuilders to support junior women to build their career path in the peacebuilding field.
- Design intergenerational peacebuilding programs that allow for mutual learning, dialogue and experience-sharing between junior and senior women peacebuilders and that support them to learn how to establish and maintain healthy relationships based on equality, mutual learning and collaboration.

## Endnotes

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