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Summary

The goal of this Programme Handbook is to offer guidance on how to work with programmes from start to finish within the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation – whether you are in the programme department or elsewhere in our organisation. You can also share this handbook with partner organisations, donors or other stakeholders to illustrate how Kvinna till Kvinna works. Simply put, this handbook summarises what we have learned from years of working in different contexts, and what we have found to be the most secure and effective methods to support our partner organisations.

Chapter one introduces The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, including our vision, purpose, mandate and values. We give an overview of our organisational structure, the research we conduct and our communications and advocacy work. We introduce the framework on which Kvinna till Kvinna’s work is based (various UN conventions and resolutions), as well as our Theory of Change. Chapter one also addresses our strategic ambition for 2016-2022, focusing on four areas: gender-based violence, women’s participation in peacebuilding, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and organisational development.

Chapter two elaborates on Kvinna till Kvinna’s approach as a women’s rights organisation that works with human security, peacebuilding, gender-based violence, participation and advocacy. It introduces our partnership principles, as well as key standpoints we integrate into everything we do, including conflict sensitivity, the human rights-based approach and gendered power analysis. We also discuss why and how we work with certain target groups, and who our main target group is (namely the women’s rights organisations, movements and networks we partner with). Therein lies Kvinna till Kvinna’s added value: we exclusively support women’s organisations because we are committed to transforming gender relations and increasing women’s power. We prioritise local ownership and create strong, long-lasting partnerships.

Chapter three describes how we decide to start working in a new country, and offers guidelines on how we develop new programmes (whether in new or old countries). We discuss certain key steps in the process of entering a new country – including an initial in-depth analysis and assessment to get to know the new context and explore
how we could contribute to it. This chapter outlines when and how we decide to enter a new country, and who is part of the different stages of that process. We also talk about donor dialogue and coordination, as well as selection of partner organisations.

**Chapter four** explains how we decide which organisations to partner with and/or offer financial support to. We discuss our routines and provide guidelines and templates for applications, assessments, agreements and reports. We also take a closer look at three of our partnership principles in particular that influence the way we provide financial support.

**Chapter five** is divided into two parts, and explains how Kvinnan till Kvinnna approaches M&E: monitoring (part one) and evaluation (part two). Part one mainly focuses on the way we monitor our own activities and processes. We also show how to link monitoring to Theory of Change, clarify our standard of monitoring, and suggest some concrete tools for dialogue with partner organisations. Part two explains what evaluation is, which kinds of evaluation are relevant for us, how we can learn from our evaluations, and how to take a feminist approach to evaluation. We offer guidance on preparing Terms of Reference and discuss how to include partner organisations in evaluation processes. Finally, we include some links to evaluation resources and questions tailored for Kvinnan till Kvinnna.

**Chapter six** focuses on capacity development and why this is important for a sustainable women’s movement. We present two main types of capacity development: organisational development and thematic strengthening. We present several self-assessment tools to help our partner organisations with organisational development, including a tool we ourselves developed. Chapter six also contains a section on networking, which can be very useful for organisational development and sustainability. We present a range of purposes of networking, not least the purpose of creating safe spaces to counter shrinking space.

Finally, **chapter seven** offers practical guidance on how we phase out our activities in a country/region. We explain our criteria for deciding when and how to phase out, and illustrate how to ensure the sustainability of our partner organisations even after we’ve left the country/region. We describe how to draft an exit strategy, and which principles that strategy should be guided by.
Kvinna till Kvinna’s programme cycle

This Programme Cycle guide is developed to help Kvinna till Kvinna staff navigate the different chapters of the Programme Handbook and what templates and guidelines there are. It is very important to document all the work we are doing. Always save information on SharePoint. This will also help with organisational learning and let your colleagues access your learnings and results. Partner organisations are required to have monitoring, evaluation and learning plans. They will also hand in a timeline of activities which will be the basis of the monitoring Kvinna till Kvinna does in area 3.1. It is good to plan with partner organisations at an early stage when monitoring visits and annual and dialogue meetings will take place.
**Partnership Principles**

1. Shared values and goals
2. Local ownership
3. Predictability and transparency
4. Mutual commitment to learning
5. Defending safe spaces and networking for women human rights’ defenders
6. Mutual accountability and anti-corruption
7. Conflict sensitivity.

**Kvinna till Kvinna Feminist Approaches**

1. The Human Rights Based Approach
2. Conflict Sensitivity
3. Power Analysis
1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. We will highlight our organisational structure, our efforts to promote and conduct research and our communications and advocacy work. We will also explain the framework we base our work on – mainly UN conventions and resolutions. Next, we will introduce Theory of Change, and how this theory strengthens our belief that supporting women’s rights organisations in conflict-affected regions, through capacity building, financial support and networking opportunities, can help achieve the full and effective participation of women in the development of society.

This chapter will also set out Kvinna till Kvinna’s strategic ambition for 2016 to 2022, focusing on four areas: gender-based violence, women’s participation in peacebuilding, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and organisational development. We will discuss some key documents and policies that govern our organisation and zoom in on specific parts of our operations.
**About Kvinna till Kvinna**

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation (or Kvinna till Kvinna, in short) was founded in 1995 by IKFF (the Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom in Sweden) and Svenska Freds- och Skiljedomsföreningen (the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society). We began our work as a non-profit foundation during the 1990s, in the Western Balkans. Since then, we have grown significantly: today, we work in Europe, the MENA region, the South Caucasus and Africa.

1. **Vision and mandate**

Our current vision was adopted by our Board in 2014:

**A world of sustainable peace based on democracy and gender equality and where conflicts are dealt with through non-violent means.**

**A world in which human rights are respected and where all people can feel safe and secure.**

**A world in which women have power and influence over decisions and enjoy full and effective participation in the development of society.**

Our mandate was set when we were founded, in 1995:

**Kvinna till Kvinna strengthens the organisation of women in conflict regions by collaborating with women’s rights organisations and supporting their work to promote women’s rights and peace. The goal is for women’s power and influence to increase:**

1. **To conduct projects in regions of war and conflict that promote women’s self-reliance and self-esteem, women’s psychosocial and/or physical health, or contribute to promoting women's participation in building a democratic civil society.**

2. **To foster studies and research on the effects of war and armed conflict on women.**

3. **To publicise facts and information about the effects of war and build public support for peaceful conflict resolution through civil methods.**

**1.2 Organisation**

Kvinna till Kvinna has four departments: the programme and method department, the finance department, the human resource and security department and the communications department.

Each department is led by a head of department. The secretary-general is Kvinna till Kvinna’s highest executive manager; she is appointed by and reports to the Board. The secretary-general, the deputy secretary-general and the four heads of department together form the senior management team.

- The programme and method department is responsible for programming, method development and support to partner organisations (financial or otherwise) in the conflict-affected areas we work in. The four regional managers lead strategic development and operations. The department contains of the four regions, method and development unit and a grant manager unit.

- The finance department is responsible for financial management and control, as well as administration. The finance department contains three units: finance, IT and office administration.

- The communications department is responsible for advocacy, fundraising and communicating about Kvinna till Kvinna through a range of channels, including printed publications, social media and volunteer activities. The communication department contains four units: volunteers and Gemaket, fundraising, editorial and advocacy.

- The human resource and security department is responsible for human resources and security of staff. The department contains two units.

We are a decentralised organisation: our head office in Stockholm supports and steers our offices abroad, to let our colleagues make effective decisions close to where our programmes and partner organisations are based. Our employees are recruited both locally and internationally. We

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believe decentralisation helps us respect different contexts, remain conflict-sensitive and maintain a close relationship with our local partner organisations. Kvinna till Kvinna has an intranet called Konnect. The aim of Konnect is to promote internal communication within Kvinna till Kvinna and create a space where all staff at Kvinna till Kvinna can access and share information equally. SharePoint is the tool for interactive workspaces and handles and share project specific information for each project and its team. There are guidelines on how and where to save on the platform. Microsoft Teams is used as the communication and collaboration tool. Xledger is the name of our online finance management system.

1.3 Kvinna till Kvinna’s framework
Our work is based on a number of UN conventions on equal rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Much of what we do is also connected to several key resolutions of the UN Security Council, including Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (adopted in 2000) and Resolution 1820 (adopted in 2008), which condemns sexual violence as a weapon of war and declares that rape and other forms of sexual violence can be seen as war crimes.

The final part of the framework upon which our work is based, is the so-called Istanbul Convention: the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.2

We implement this framework by working with local partner organisations in conflict-affected areas and by engaging in advocacy on women’s rights (together with our partner organisations and/or with other like-minded organisations).

We use the word “conflict-affected” for a variety of conflict situations at different stages, with varying degrees and types of violence – from full-blown, large-scale violence to low-level violence in unresolved conflicts or stable, post-conflict situations with ongoing peacebuilding efforts. Regardless of the situation we work in, we always strive for conflict sensitivity. Our presence on the ground helps us do just that, because it allows us to interact closely with various women’s rights organisations across conflict divides.

1.3.1 Theory of Change: the route to achieving our vision
Kvinna till Kvinna’s goal is the full and effective participation of women in the development of society. Why? Because without women’s participation, society can never attain true gender equality. And gender equality is a precondition for full democracy, which in turn is a precondition for sustainable peace. Through our Theory of Change, we explain how we believe we can achieve this vision. Theory of Change is a theoretical tool that allows development cooperation actors (like us) to identify how and why change will take place in a certain context.

We believe in strengthening and supporting the capacity and agency of women’s rights organisations and activists in conflict-affected regions. That is because this kind of support enables them to:

- demand power and a voice in society
- improve their own security
- gain recognition
- transform gender power relations

As a result, their work for women’s rights is strengthened. More women are then able to:

- live their lives free from gender-based violence or threats of violence
- have their rights acknowledged and respected
- participate in and influence change in society
- increase women’s power and agency

In this sense, reducing gender-based violence and strengthening women’s participation are mutually reinforcing. Both help to establish sustainable peace.

1.3.2 Strategic ambition 2016–20223
Our overarching organisational strategy for 2016–2022 is called “Being Better Together.” It guides our work across the globe: all our planning and reporting as an organisation relates to this strategy. “Being Better Together” focuses on four strategic areas – three that we believe we can create the greatest added value in, and a fourth that focuses on our internal development as an organisation. All four areas are split up into more detailed primary and secondary goals.

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ps Herrs/
https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention

3 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic so has the Kvinna till Kvinna board taken the decision to extend the strategy with one year.
STRATEGIC AREA 1: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A future where women are no longer subjected to gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence consists of acts that hurt, threaten, violate, force or restrict a person and that are based in a gendered power structure. Gender-based violence deprives women and girls of their fundamental human rights, prevents them from participating in and benefiting from society on equal terms as men, and hinders their struggle for change.

We have a feminist approach towards survivors/victims of gender-based violence: we do not see them as passive, but rather as resourceful, independent agents with great potential. We believe survivors/victims are capable of taking initiative and finding the strength to reclaim their own lives. Our role is mainly to support them.

In practice, supporting them means partnering with women’s rights organisations that work to end gender-based violence: we financially support what they do, strengthen their capacity, maintain a close dialogue with them and collect data about what they do. We also help them represent victims/survivors in dialogue with public actors, hold social-service providers accountable for protection and prevention and increase their awareness of gender-based violence.

Together with our partner organisations, we also produce research on gender-based violence. One issue in particular we shed light on is the systematic gender-based violence that targets women human rights defenders (WHRDs) because of their activism. This kind of violence is often used to silence and prevent women from advocating for change. It is often rendered invisible, and rarely recognised as politically motivated violence.4 Kvinna till Kvinna has a gender-based violence policy which describes our take on gender based violence in more details.

STRATEGIC AREA 2: ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

A future where women participate fully and effectively in the development of an equal and democratic society.

Without the full and effective economic and political participation5 of women in society, there can be no true gender equality. Focusing on conflict/post-conflict contexts is crucial in this regard, because conflict tends to worsen gender discrimination. When war restricts women’s freedom of movement, for example, they cannot participate equally in society.

Unfortunately, the way conflict disproportionally affects women is often forgotten and not prioritised. That is why we support women’s rights organisations in (post-)conflict settings: to ensure women have a platform to speak up about their priorities and violations of their rights.

We support our partner organisations in their efforts to participate in and influence society. We help them hold diverse actors accountable for women’s participation in society, facilitate contacts with decision-makers and put them in touch with other civil society organisations they might cooperate with.

STRATEGIC AREA 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

A future where global security policy is based on human security and where women’s human rights are respected.

We believe patriarchal structures, masculine ideals and positions of power, and a militarised interpretation of security are obstacles to security, both for women and men. Instead, we want global security policy to start focusing on human security, and prioritise non-military means for conflict resolution and prevention.

We believe WHRDs and women’s organisations are crucial for global security: when they are present, safe and have room for manoeuvre, they can help resist militarisation, provide alternative solutions to conflict, and – in the long run – promote sustainable peace for all.

That is why we support partner organisations that promote women’s meaningful participation in peace/reconstruction processes, that help women gain influence over the peace/reconstruction agenda, and that lobby for women’s experiences of conflict to be acknowledged and valued.

4 See our publication Suffocating the Movement – Shrinking space for women’s rights, 2018.
5 We define political participation in a broad way, including civic participation.
STRATEGIC AREA 4: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Kvinna till Kvinna is a sustainable organisation that is well known in Sweden and abroad for our support of women in conflict-affected areas.

We want to be a dynamic, effective, financially independent organisation. That is why the final focus area of our current strategy is to improve our organisational development, method development and internal structure and systems.

These efforts include offering capacity-development support to our partner organisations: this helps them demand visibility, power and presence in society, gain recognition and improve their security. They then become more relevant, credible and legitimate actors in their communities – which in turn strengthens the work they do. One way in which we develop our partner organisations’ capacity is by offering financial sustainability: long-term financial support helps organisations develop and become strong, vocal experts. (For more on capacity development, see chapter 6.)

1.3.3 Key documents
Apart from our global strategy for 2016-2021, our work at Kvinna till Kvinna is also guided by:

• Governing documents:
  a) An overall organisational strategy, operational plan and budget;
  b) Applied strategies (such as regional/country strategies, a financial strategy, a communications strategy and a fundraising strategy);
  c) Programme policies (such as on Gender-based violence, Advocacy, Peacebuilding and Partnership);
  d) Organisational policies (such as a security policy, and work environment policy)

• Guiding documents (such as handbooks and security guidelines)

• Position papers that clarify our values and opinions on specific issues (such as shrinking space, migration and Swedish right of asylum).

1.4 How we implement our mandate
We implement our mandate by partnering with local women’s rights organisations, promoting relevant research and advocating for women’s full participation in society.

1.4.1 Support to partner organisations
Our partner organisations are women’s rights organisations and WHRDs in conflict-affected regions. We support their efforts to ensure women’s participation in peace processes, end violence against women and fulfil women’s human rights. Our cooperation is based on “conduct projects”: our partner organisations execute projects, while we provide them with the resources they need to do so. Our support consists of 1) financial support, 2) capacity development and 3) networking opportunities. All of what we offer is underpinned by local ownership.

1) FINANCIAL SUPPORT
We offer our partner organisations long-term financial support. As a donor, we commit to certain criteria, routines and practices to make sure our support is sustainable, effective and in line with our partnership principles. We mostly offer financial support to organisations, not individual projects. This is because we know many women’s rights organisations struggle to get funding, as international donors often prioritise other actors. Our long-term support can help organisations survive in harsh times and allows them to expand proactively.

2) CAPACITY-DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT
Besides financial support, we also offer comprehensive support for organisational development. The women’s rights organisations we work with often operate on low budgets and in challenging circumstances: we help them take time to focus on their internal structures and sustainability. In the long run, this makes organisations stronger.

We always base our capacity-development support on a dialogue with our partner organisations about what they need; many of our interventions are tailor-made. Examples of capacity-development support include creating opportunities for partner organisations to share their experiences; improving their internal processes and structure; and helping them become financially more sustainable.

3) NETWORKING SUPPORT
The final type of support we offer is to provide our partner organisations with space and opportunities for networking with a broad spectrum of...
women's rights organisations, civil society actors and relevant stakeholders. We believe networking helps with capacity development, exchange and learning; strengthens advocacy efforts; counteracts shrinking space; and strengthens the women's movement at large. We support networks and exchanges across geographical or political boundaries and conflict divides and encourage regional and international initiatives.

1.4.2 Studies and research
Through academic research, we develop and consolidate our role as an expert, relevant partner and strong actor in the field we work in. In line with our current strategy, these are the issues we are prioritising during 2016-2021:

- Complementing partner organisations' experiences and knowledge with relevant research, to support their arguments on Women, Peace and Security.
- Collaborating with relevant researchers/research institutes to identify gaps in the existing research, enhance their gender awareness and promote exchanges between different research areas.
- Develop ways to collect, store and disseminate knowledge about our partner organisations' work, results and studies, so this can be used as source material in future research.

For recent examples of studies and research by our partner organisations and/or Kvinna till Kvinna, head to our homepage.

1.4.3 Communications and advocacy
The final method we use to implement our mandate is our communications and advocacy work.

We advocate for positive change in support of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, both at the policy level and at grassroots level. Most of this advocacy work is done by supporting our partner organisations' own advocacy efforts.

To make our partner organisations' work and expertise more visible, we communicate through a range of channels – including social media, newspaper articles, press releases, studies and reports, presentations at external meetings and fundraising activities.

Our communications department is always on the lookout for great stories, initiatives and country- or region-based news to communicate. While the communications department sometimes directly contacts specific teams to ask for their input, all colleagues are always encouraged to spontaneously share updates with the communications team.

Before we communicate anything, we analyse the potential risks to staff members, partner organisations and rights holders, this is something which is becoming more and more important in the context of shrinking space. We always aim to uphold the Do-No-Harm principle, use conflict-sensitive language, refrain from bias and avoid reinforcing stereotypes.
This chapter elaborates on our approaches as a women’s rights organisation, our work with partner organisations and the partnership principles behind what we do. We will talk about conflict sensitivity, the human-rights approach and gendered power analysis.

We will dig deeper into our target groups and stakeholders. Our main target group consists of women’s rights organisations, movements and networks in conflict-affected regions. We exclusively support these actors, out of a political commitment to transform gender relations and increase women’s power. Our collaboration with them is rooted in local ownership and long-term partnership.

We will also discuss the implications of working in conflict-affected regions.
2.1 Partnership principles
At the core of Kvinna till Kvinna are our seven partnerships with women's rights organisations. Everything we do, from creating and developing projects/programmes to monitoring, evaluation and learning, is rooted in these collaborations.

Over more than twenty-five years of working with partner organisations, we have developed a set of values and principles to guide our partnerships. These should be mainstreamed throughout our organisation and programming. Our seven partnership principles are:10

1. Shared values and goals
2. Local ownership
3. Predictability and transparency
4. Mutual commitment to learning
5. Defending safe spaces and networking for WHRDs
6. Mutual accountability and anti-corruption
7. Conflict sensitivity

Throughout this handbook, we will regularly refer to these principles, as they tie into everything we do. You will notice how these seven principles will regularly come across – not surprisingly, as they tie into everything we do. The Policy for Sustainable Partnership is one of the annexes attached to the partner organisation agreement. It is a good way to make sure the partner organisations receive our policy and for them to know how we look at our partnership.

2.1.1 Shared values and goals
All our partnerships are anchored in a shared commitment to human rights: we call this the human rights-based approach. The universal human rights are very important to us. We promote all-encompassing rights for all women and girls – as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the global Women, Peace and Security Agenda (including various UN Security Council resolutions). Our human rights-based approach means we see the above human-rights standards as the norm, and use them to analyse inequalities, discrimination and unfair power distribution.

2.1.2 Local ownership
We believe that when civil society organisations are given the opportunity to achieve their own priorities, they become more sustainable and effective. Each of our partner organisations is an expert on its own context and on how to address the concerns of women in that context. That is why we let our partner organisations define their own problems and risks, their own opportunities and priorities, their own solutions and agendas. Whenever we partner with an organisation, we encourage participatory planning and develop a phase-out plan to safeguard the organisation's sustainability. We want our partner organisations to actively participate in programme development, to strengthen their ownership of programmes and make sure their capacities match the targets we set. This increases the chance changes we achieve will be sustainable.

Our partnerships vary in scope, focus, duration and type of support. Often, our partner organisations work with other international donors as well. We always try to coordinate our support with these other donors, to harmonise requirements and expectations. When possible, we encourage other donors to also provide core support to our partner organisations.

2.1.3 Predictability and transparency
We only decide to establish a new partnership after a transparent assessment, based on selection criteria. We always inform potential partner organisations about this process and clearly explain our requirements and decision-making process for financial support. The idea is not to simply have our partner organisations comply; it is to give them the chance to develop their own capacity to meet requirements as a strong, locally owned organisation. This is especially important because many civil society organisations have a whole range of actors (including rights holders) they are accountable to and need to report to, other than just their donors. From the start, we are clear about what would make us decide to end a partnership. When we decide to disengage, we discuss a responsible phase-out early on.

2.1.4 Mutual learning
Over the years, we have gained relevant expertise, practical experience, advocacy skills and networks in our work for women's rights. We are committed to keep building on that know-how and keep learning in the future, by analysing and discussing the results of what we do. This allows both us and our partner organisations to learn.

We strive to create spaces for learning where participants can feel free to openly share their experiences. Failures and challenges can help us...
find new, effective ways to adapt our activities and achieve better results. To create that space for learning, we organise study visits, advocacy trips, networking meetings and capacity-building activities for our partner organisations and for activists in our networks. We support partner organisations’ own evaluations of their work. Finally, we also commission external evaluations, including assessments of our partner organisations’ capacities and work.

2.1.5 Defending safe spaces and networking for WHRDs

Women in conflict-affected areas are often exposed to great insecurity. WHRDs face threats and risks because they speak out on women’s rights and challenge existing structures. That is why we regularly discuss security and risks with our partner organisations and WHRDs, and offer those who need it training and networking opportunities. We want to offer a safe space to meet, exchange experiences and reflect on protection strategies. Allowing WHRDs who are at risk to meet each other, within and across conflict divides, can strengthen their security and well-being, reduce fear and challenge isolationist policies.

2.1.6 Mutual accountability and anti-corruption

Both Kvinna till Kvinnan and our partner organisations genuinely want to create change. Together, we are responsible and accountable for delivering that change to rights holders (the women that our partner organisations represent and whose rights they are working to protect/promote). When we assess our partner organisations’ capacity, systems and routines, we take into account these rights holders and existing accountability mechanisms. We encourage transparency, anti-corruption plans and whistleblowing mechanisms. If we suspect corruption (that is: abuse of trust, power or position that leads to improper gain for an individual or organisation), we immediately take action.

2.1.7 Conflict sensitivity

Wherever we work, we aim for conflict sensitivity: we want to get to know the context we’re working in, understand how our interventions will interact with that context, and then use that knowledge to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts. In practice, we integrate conflict sensitivity into both our operational decisions and the way we implement our programmes. We make a thorough analysis of each context, ensure we are always up to date with what is happening and take diverse groups’ perspectives into account. Conflict sensitivity recognises that people are affected differently by conflict depending on where they live or come from, their ethnicity, gender and religious or political affiliation. That is why we carefully select and impartially work with organisations and individuals that represent diverse groups, perspectives and experiences: supporting only one side could increase tension. We even actively work to mitigate negative perceptions, because perceived positions and perceived bias can play just as important a role as actual positions.

The Do No Harm (DNH) framework is an analytical tool we use to apply conflict sensitivity in our work. DNH helps organisations understand how their intervention will interact with a given context and helps them avoid doing any harm through their actions. Prioritisation is a part of DNH: most conflicts are complicated, and resources are rarely endless, so there is a limit to how many groups and actors we can productively track and incorporate into our planning, implementation and monitoring.

Experience and research show that the effects of conflict are gendered, as are the roles taken by women and men in conflict: gendered power imbalances are often linked to conflict. That is why gender sensitivity is a crucial aspect of conflict sensitivity. Peacebuilding processes can change social contracts, including gender relations. Making a proper gender power analysis and conflict analysis can help us understand conflict and peace processes from a gender perspective, which is the basis for inclusivity.

We have collaborated with CDA to develop a guidance note on how to fully integrate gender perspectives into the DNH approach.

2.2 Feminist approach

Our feminist approach to change and development cooperation is grounded in recognising and analysing power relations, revealing injustices and transforming societies towards gender equality.

The feminist approach stems from the feminist idea that knowledge is power, and that we need inclusivity and multiple stories to paint a true picture of reality. Intersecting power structures (gender, class, race, age, etc.) affect and position women in different ways. Women are not one homoge-

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11 Do No Harm has been developed by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects since 1993.
## CONFLICT SENSITIVITY AND GENDER

### Main aim

Work **IN** the context of conflict, recognising that violence mirrors power dynamics, to minimise negative and maximise positive impacts of programming (on conflict and on other factors).

### Applied to

All programmes, of all types, in all sectors, at all stages of conflict (latent, hot, post-war) must be conflict- and gender-sensitive, including peacebuilding efforts.

### Required Analysis

Requires an adequate understanding of the conflict and its gendered aspects to avoid worsening dividers or weakening connectors; to reduce dividers and support existing connectors. Dividers and connectors analysis (DNH analysis)

### Standard/measure of effectiveness

At a minimum, the programme/project does not make the conflict worse—usually, it also makes a positive contribution.

## WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

### Main aim

Work **ON** conflict, seeking to address key drivers of violent conflict, their gendered aspects, and to contribute to peace clearly and explicitly (the broader societal-level peace).

### Applied to

Peacebuilding engagement deliberately aimed at addressing key drivers of violence and their gendered impact on women.

### Required Analysis

Requires a deeper understanding of the key drivers of conflict and dynamics among factors and key actors, to ensure programme relevance.

### Standard/measure of effectiveness

The programme/project reduces the power of key driving factors of conflict, clearly and explicitly contributing to peace.

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*Photo: Christopher Herwig*

*Photo: Vita W. Kwarbo KtK*

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nous group: they have different socio-economic positions and multiple identities. Relationships between women also reflect any context’s conflict dynamics: at the family level, organisational level, community level and policy level, there may be tensions between women and women’s rights organisation. In our work, we need to acknowledge this and be sensitive to any existing tension. Emphasising transparency, fairness and networking can be one way of overcoming tension and helping our partner organisations collaborate and connect. We adopt the feminist approach to safeguard the
inclusivity\textsuperscript{13} of what we do: we use it whenever we develop methods for our thematic work, our planning, monitoring and evaluation. Together with our partner organisations, the feminist approach helps us achieve structural change where privilege and power are recognised and challenged, and participation is inclusive.

### 2.3 Human rights-based approach

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights spells out four basic human rights (civil, political, economic, and social and cultural) we are all entitled to. These rights are interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law in the form of treaties, international conventions and general principles. International human rights law, for example, obliges governments to act in certain ways or refrain from certain acts.

The human rights discourse has been accused by women’s rights groups and feminist scholars of being gender-blind and of excluding women. At the UN World Conference on Human Rights\textsuperscript{14} in 1993, the women’s movement launched a global campaign under the banner of “Human rights are women’s rights.” The campaign was successful: the discourse on women’s rights was enforced and clearly manifested at the 4th UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. In UN documents, for example, development was infused with a stronger human rights perspective.

A human rights-based approach (also simply called a rights-based approach) to development shifts our understanding from people as passive victims in need to rights holders: active agents who are denied their fundamental and legal rights by duty bearers. Duty bearers – like states, teachers, doctors, parents and community leaders – are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights, in accordance with international law. A rights-based approach focuses on the relation between rights holders and duty bearers, to strengthen the former’s capacity to claim and the latter’s capacity to protect and fulfil these rights. The approach is all about participation, transparency, accountability and non-discrimination.

When we develop programmes, we aim to respect all aspects of human rights, for all people. That means all our programmes should:

- Be based on human rights
- Empower rights holders and duty bearers to participate in shaping and implementing the programme
- Include vulnerable and marginalised groups, to address discrimination
- Be transparent in all steps of the planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle
- Be accountable to rights holders themselves by being participatory and reporting back to rights holders on progress and results

### 2.4 Power, empowerment and collective agency

The concept of “power”\textsuperscript{16} lies at the heart of how structures, agency and relations are constructed. Power creates norms in society. Especially when it is hidden or invisible, power can teach people that the status quo is natural, divinely ordained, positive and certainly unchangeable. This shapes people's perceptions and preferences and prevents them from wanting or demanding change.\textsuperscript{17}

Power is also at the core of feminist analysis. Everything we do as Kvinna till Kvinna is underpinned

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\textsuperscript{13} By inclusivity, we mean giving space to diverse women and treating them fairly, so they can partake in and actively influence decisions that are part of the change process.

\textsuperscript{14} The UN system has two human-rights bodies: the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, established in 1993) and the Human Rights Council (HRC, established in 2006).


\textsuperscript{16} There is an extensive amount of literature on the concept of power. Steven Lukes (1974) Radical View of Power, Blackwell, London

\textsuperscript{17} Lukes 1974: 24.
Power analysis helps us understand (underlying) power dynamics in a context – especially in conflict-affected areas with fragile and emerging power structures. Power analysis can draw our attention to the structures and actors that uphold inequality, and show us how to challenge these.

The so-called “Power cube” \(^{21}\) is a common tool within civil society to develop awareness of different power dimensions. It analyses levels, spaces and forms of powers and the way they are related.\(^{22}\)

### 2.4.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality\(^{23}\) is a common way of looking at complex power relations without reducing power to a one-dimensional aspect like sexuality, ethnicity, social class, age, gender or ability. Instead, intersectionality reminds us to view all these aspects in a holistic, nuanced way that is closer to reality. Intersectionality helps us understand injustice and social inequality. It shows us how different kinds of oppression interrelate to create a complex system of oppression (the “intersection” of different kinds of discrimination).

We believe intersectionality, power analysis and conflict sensitivity are linked. At Kvinna till Kvinna, we take intersectionality into account in our analysis of partner organisations, our internal operations, our networking and the way we facilitate meetings and events.

### 2.4.2 Women’s rights organisations and movements

We support women’s rights organisations in conflict-affected areas. Our definition of a “women’s rights organisation” is that it is led by women and supports women to understand, demand and access their rights. It can work to increase gender awareness and change norms and discriminatory practices by men and boys, and women and girls.

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20 Buvinic and King, 2007, in Cornwall and Edwards, 2010
21 The Power cube was developed by John Gaventa of the Power, Participation and Social Change team at IDS, building on his and others’ work including Steven Lukes, Andrea Cornwall, and Lisa VeneKlæsen and Valerie Miller (Just Associates). Pantazidou, M (2012) ‘What Next for Power Analysis?: A Review of Recent Experience with the Power cube and Related Frameworks’, Institute for Development Studies
22 For more info on the Power cube, see the annexes to this handbook on SharePoint.
23 In the foreground of developing the concept of intersectionality was Kimberlé Crenshaw and her “Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color.”
A women’s rights organisation is part of civil society and relatively free from state influence.

But major changes in favour of gender equality are rarely achieved by single individuals or single organisations. Often, we need the collective power of many women speaking together – a movement. That is why we also support women’s movement (locally, nationally and regionally) and contribute to movement-building.

Different women’s movements may have various ideas of how to transform gender power relations, from more conservative to more radical ideas. Individuals and groups within a women’s movement may not even necessarily call themselves “feminists”. And just like with women’s organisations, there is no single definition of what a “women’s movement” is.24 At Kvinna till Kvinna, however, we define a women’s movement as an organised set of actors pursuing a shared political agenda of change through collective action.

We call women who are active within women’s movements “women human rights defenders” (WHRDs), regardless of what they call themselves. The UN defines WHRDs as follows:

(... WHRDs are) both female human rights defenders, and any other human rights defenders who work in the defence of women’s rights or on gender issues (...). The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) recognizes the important role of HRDs, including women defenders, and outlines relevant rights of all HRDs and obligations of States. Women defenders are subject to the same types of risks as any human rights defender, but as women, they are also targeted for or exposed to gender-specific threats and gender-specific violence. The reasons behind the targeting of WHRDs are multi-faceted and complex, and depend on the specific context in which the individual WHRD is working in. Often, the work of WHRDs is seen as challenging traditional notions of family and gender roles in the society, which can lead to hostility by the general population and authorities. Due to this, WHRDs are subjected to stigmatization and ostracism by community leaders, faith-based groups, families and communities who consider them to be threatening religion, honour or culture through their work.24

Kvinna till Kvinna also sees WHRDs as taking peaceful action and believing in equal rights for everyone.

In line with the Do No Harm approach, power analysis and conflict sensitivity, we always seek to thoroughly understand existing relationships between women’s rights actors in the contexts we work in. The goal is to reinforce their connections and avoid negative impacts (like competition for funding).

2.5 Actors of change

2.5.1 Rights holders

Our partner organisations support rights holders – mostly marginalised women and WHRDs. They enable these rights holders to become agents of change, and influence and hold duty bearers accountable. All programmes should empower rights holders to claim their rights, break the silence on rights violations, question the discrimination they previously took for granted and call for change.

According to the human rights-based approach, dialogue is the best way of providing rights equally to all groups in society, because it allows different groups to influence decision-making and participate equally and transparently in the decision-making process.

2.5.2 Principle duty bearers: state actors

Among duty bearers, state actors hold the ultimate power to realise women’s rights on a structural level. This makes them “principle duty bearers” and core actors of change.

By ratifying various international human rights treaties, states commit to guaranteeing their citizens’ universal human rights. They must take all the necessary measures to fulfil their commitment. They have three obligations in particular:

- **The obligation to respect**: States need to abstain from carrying out, sponsoring or tolerating any practice, policy or legal measure that violates individuals’ integrity or impinges on their freedom to access resources to satisfy their needs. Legislative and administrative codes need to take account of guaranteed rights.

There is a significant amount of literature on the theory and practice of women’s movements. For a good overview, see Horn, Jessica (2013) *Gender and Social Movements – An overview*, Bridge report, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, Brighton.

• **The obligation to protect**: States need to prevent rights violations by other individuals or non-state actors. When violations do occur, states need to guarantee access to legal remedies.

• **The obligation to fulfil**: States need to take active measures to guarantee opportunities to access entitlements. These measures include advocacy, public expenditure, state regulation of the economy, the provision of basic services and related infrastructure and redistribution.

### 2.5.3 Moral duty bearers: non-state actors

Although states are the principal duty bearers, non-state actors too have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. We call these non-state actors “moral duty bearers”:

• **Primary duty bearers** include parents for children, teachers for students, police for crime suspects, doctors/nurses for patients, employers for employees.

• **Secondary duty bearers** include institutions and organisations with immediate jurisdiction over primary duty bearers, such as school principals, community organisations and hospital administrations.

• **Tertiary duty bearers** include institutions and organisations at a higher level / more remote jurisdiction (NGOs, aid agencies, private sector organisations).

• **External duty bearers** include countries, institutions and organisations with no direct involvement, such as the WTO, the UN, international NGOs, the Security Council or the African Union.

### 2.5.4 Supporting stakeholders: men

Men in local communities are a secondary target group for many of our partner organisations. While Kvinna till Kvinna’s core mandate is to support women and their rights, we acknowledge men can play a positive role in combatting gender discrimination and inequality. That is why we also support partner organisations whose target group includes men.

In line with the Do No Harm approach, we and our partner organisations always work to fully understand the meaning of relationships with different stakeholders, and how to engage with diverse actors in a responsible way, without being instrumentalised or without legitimising those who use violence or incite hatred.
This chapter describes our process of entering a new country and/or developing new programmes (including in contexts we already work in). Entry processes are never completely streamlined, but we can still distinguish certain key steps. These include thoroughly analysing and assessing a context to get to know it, and exploring ways in which we could contribute to the context. We will outline who participates in which stages of the process, and when and how we decide to enter a new country. We will also offer guidance on donor dialogue, donor coordination and selection of partner organisations – all from a conflict-sensitive perspective.
Flowchart of the entire entry and programme-development process:

**PRE-PHASE**
- Pilot study (initial analysis)
- Board decision to enter

**SCOPING PHASE**
- In-depth analyses (Context, women's movement, conflict, KTK contribution)
- Security analysis and risk assessment
- Final decision to enter

**PARTNER ORGANISATION SELECTION PROCESS**

**DONOR DIALOGUE AND COORDINATION**

**PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT (new/old country)**

**INCEPTION PHASE**
- Assessment of partner organisations (existing and/or potential)
- Kvinna till Kvinna program ToC
- Revisiting old/making new analyses and risk and security assessment
- Stakeholder meetings
- Kvinna till Kvinna programme indications
- Develop budget, activity plan and monitoring plan

**Flowchart of the partner organisation selection process:**
- Mapping organisations and initiate dialogue
- Dialogue, meetings and document review
- Narrowing down of potential partner organisation
- Assessment of potential partner organisation
- Decision to support (size, length and type)
- Partner organisation application
- Kvinna till Kvinna assessment memo
- Partner organisation agreement
3.1 Pre-phase

3.1.1 Initial assessment and entry criteria
Kvinna till Kvinna only enters a new context once we have decided our engagement will actually be relevant. We make this decision based on a set of entry criteria, after a thorough analysis and assessment. The analysis is made during a pilot study and continued during the inception phase.

These are our criteria for deciding to enter a new context:

- The situation in the context requires operations in line with Kvinna till Kvinna's mandate and global strategy;
- The region/country is affected by conflict;
- We have extensively mapped the existing feminist and WHRD initiatives in the region/country and established relations with these actors;
- We have assessed whether it's realistic to expect the intended results;
- We would have an added value to the women's movement and peacebuilding in the region;
- Funding is available, or likely to be available, for us to remain in the region for at least 5–10 years;
- It is potentially possible to work with organisations from different groups and sides of the conflict.

Any engagement starts with the fact that a certain region/country is affected by conflict. A broad definition of this is that the region/country is currently or has been in armed conflict (within or between states).

We work in a variety of conflict-affected contexts in different stages, experiencing different types of violence (direct, structural or cultural) of different intensity. We always aim to make a long-term commitment and stay by our partner organisations' side throughout changes in the conflict.

The next step towards engagement is conducting a pilot study. It can be hard to make an extensive analysis during a pilot study: resources and time tend to be limited and at this point we do not yet have partner organisations who know the context well. The minimum we do is a desk study, conducted by Kvinna till Kvinna and preferably complemented with interviews with relevant actors/organisations. From the very start, we apply conflict sensitivity: during a desk study, for example, we keep in mind that sources can be biased and make sure to rely on several different sources.

Most important for the pilot study is that it should include a context analysis (in which we identify important actors, or example), a conflict analysis and an analysis of the potential added value and contribution of Kvinna till Kvinna.

We summarise the findings of our pilot study in a report, which then informs our decision of whether or not to enter a country/region. If we do decide to continue, we use the pilot study as the basis for further in-depth, on-site analysis. We then revisit and deepen our initial findings. During a pilot study, we ask similar but fewer questions than during a later in-depth analysis. For sample questions, see section 3.2.1.

This comprehensive conflict analysis guide is mainly for contracted consultants, as it requires specific training. Our goal, however, is to start training all staff to perform advanced conflict analysis. As a first step, we encourage you to use the conflict analysis toolbox.

3.1.2 Decision to enter
We take the decision to enter a new country/region in two steps:

- The formal decision to enter is made by Kvinna till Kvinna's Board. They base their decision on the findings of our pilot study and on our global/regional strategy.
- The final decision to enter is taken by our head of development cooperation, who will once more consider our overall entry criteria. This happens after the in-depth and on-site analyses are completed, but before we plan any new programmes.

3.1.3 Conflict sensitivity during the pre-phase
Whenever we are considering new engagements, we need to understand the motivations, interests and expectations of those who are requesting our engagement. Development cooperation is not always apolitical: a donor can have political priorities that clash with our values.

- When an institutional or private external donor asks us to enter a context, we discuss ownership implications, whether or not local women's rights actors will be on board, and whether we risk legitimising certain actors or acts. We always try...
to have an open dialogue with the interested donor and explain our values, principles and entry criteria.

- When local women’s rights organisations ask us to enter a context, we remind them of our core value of working across conflict divides. In an active conflict, this may not be possible straight from the beginning: we then slowly build cross-conflict cooperation into our programme. In the past, we have often first built strong relationships with partner organisations on either side of the conflict, before bringing them together across conflict divides.

- When we ourselves take the initiative to enter a context, we thoroughly discuss our potential role, added value and programme strategy.

We will repeatedly need to consider the above issues, not just as a one-off during the entry phase, but even up until the phase-out stage.

3.2 Inception phase

The inception phase begins once the Board has decided Kvinna till Kvinna will enter a country. The goal of this phase is to find out if and how we can add value to local women’s rights organisations and rights holders by establishing a programme. We revisit our pilot study’s initial analysis, conduct a context analysis and conflict analysis and assess security risks. We then present the results in an inception report. At the same time, we engage in donor dialogue and coordination and partner organisation dialogue and selection.

3.2.1 Context analysis

An in-depth context analysis requires fact-finding missions on location, to get to know the local women’s rights organisations/movements and their work. Context analyses are important for when we later design programmes: they narrow down which themes to focus on, make our programmes more relevant and ensure we provide added value.

Just as with the pilot study, we try to have our own staff in the country/region conduct the context analysis. During the analysis, Kvinna till Kvinna’s approaches, partnership policy and strategies guide our decisions on what to look into and how to collect and interpret information.

A proper context analysis will investigate power relations in society, at different levels and in various spheres. Power can explain why some development “solutions” are likely to fail; understanding power helps us create lasting change.

3.2.2 Conflict analysis

Another important part of the inception phase is conducting a conflict analysis, which helps us with programming decisions and informs our Do No Harm analysis (see section 3.5.7). The conflict analysis looks into both overarching conflict dynamics and specific dynamics in strategically important locations – most likely the locations we’ll be focusing on. (For an outline of a gender-sensitive conflict analysis, see Full conflict analysis guide).

A conflict analysis is not a simple, one-off desk study: it’s something our programme teams themselves own and continuously conduct. The benefit of this is that it allows us to challenge our assumptions about the conflict, gives colleagues the freedom to have different perspectives, and makes sure the initial analysis remains useful and is integrated into our work. But there are also drawbacks of our local teams owning the conflict analysis: when colleagues themselves are affected by the conflict, analysing it may be painful. Different perspectives can also create discomfort or tension. This is why we need to create a safe space, where everyone feels prepared for the conflict analysis, collaborates, actively listens to each other and agrees to let differences exist.

Sometimes, the mere fact that we are engaging in conflict analysis can be risky or seen in a negative light in conflict settings, for example when the local government is denying that conflict is taking place. This can put the analysis’ participants at risk. We take steps to mitigate these risks: we can make our analysis an internal document only, for example, or adapt how we express ourselves.

When we hire a consultant to conduct a conflict analysis, we always consider potential bias. We clearly define the purpose of the analysis they are hired to do in the Terms of Reference, make sure to involve the team that will be using the analysis, and anchor the main findings in the end so they can be linked to our programming decisions.

3.2.3 Added-value analysis

When the context and conflict analyses are done, we use them to explore what Kvinna till Kvinna’s potential added value and contribution could be in the new context. We always try to have local programme teams conduct this analysis.

Section 2.3 and 3.5 delve deeper into power analysis. See also Kvinna till Kvinna’s earlier publication, Equal Power, Lasting Peace, for an explanation of the power-analysis tool “the Powercube”. See conflict profiles.
The following questions can help us determine our added value:

- What is our relevance in relation to identified gaps and interests?
- What opportunities are there to work with a diverse range of women’s rights organisations/groups/networks?
- Is there scope for local/national/regional networking?
- How would we compete with or complement other actors (Swedish/national/local)?
- How would our contribution relate to our partnership policy?
- What are the important issues to work on and how do they overlap with our global/regional strategy, expertise and approaches?

3.2.4 Security risk assessment

Our security risk assessment contains three steps.

1. **We identify** possible security and safety threats to our staff, programmes or the organisation as a whole (including our reputation). Threats can be direct or indirect (like shrinking space). Examples include criminal acts (burglary, theft, assault, organised crime), surveillance, digital threats, attitudes and beliefs, the legal environment, armed conflict, civil unrest, terrorism, sexual and gender-based violence, traffic, the natural environment, health and infrastructure. We analyse how, when and why each of these threats may occur.

2. **We analyse** our exposure to the threats we identified. We look at the type and location of our programming, the background of our staff (gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, etc) and their capacity, the value and location of our property, and the availability (and reliability) of public services to identify how vulnerable we are. We look at how likely it is that these threats will occur (given the measures we have in place) and what would happen if they did. The final risks are the products of our vulnerabilities and the threats we face.

3. **We evaluate** the risks. We then categorise them as low, medium, high or extreme risk, depending on how likely they are to occur and what their potential consequences are.

After the security risk assessment, we follow up with mitigating measures to treat the risks. We identify what kind of security strategy the new programme will need and how much that will cost. Sometimes, we reassess or adjust the programme we had planned. We make sure our new office has a contextualised safety & security plan.

3.2.5 Methods for collecting information

Whenever we collect data, we do so systematically and document our work. This helps us fully understand our decisions, return to the data when needed and use the data when we develop new programmes. Our data-collection methods include fact-finding missions and document review.

**METHOD 1: FACT-FINDING MISSIONS**

During the inception phase, we go on at least one fact-finding mission to gather data for our analyses and build relationships with potential partner organisations and other relevant actors. A fact-finding mission should include:

- Networking meetings/consultations with WHRDs (activists, organisations and networks)
- Focus group discussions with women’s rights organisations and other civil society organisations
- Focus group discussions with rights holders
- Interviews with national, regional and international actors
- Observation

Fact-finding missions should be carefully planned: we should clarify their purpose, schedule meetings with relevant actors and prepare the necessary questionnaires in advance. Relevant actors include international NGOs, international organisations, ministries responsible for women’s rights and equality and national research institutes or statistical offices. When we are in the country, we need to be flexible; when we need to cancel or set up new activities, we let our original plan guide us. We always make sure to maintain an ongoing dialogue with key donors.

Sometimes, travelling to a country on a fact-finding mission and meeting with local organisations can raise expectations among women rights’ organisations. We need to manage these expectations – and remember that organisations will often feel more comfortable sharing info once they have become our partner organisation, rather than during the inception phase. We should clearly explain the inception phase and be transparent about what it means. We should not send the wrong signal by meeting certain actors but not others. Again, conflict sensitivity approach is essential.

For more information, please see the Risk Management Guide on the Intranet Konnect.

See chapter 5 for more info on these methods.
METHOD 2: DOCUMENT REVIEW

Local women’s rights organisations and movements are our primary source of data. Secondary sources will contain data collected by someone else – such as national/regional/global reports with data from national statistical offices, research institutes, UN agencies, (inter)national NGOs or bilateral donors.

We conduct a literature review of this secondary data and compare it to the primary data we ourselves found during our fact-finding missions. Keep in mind that some secondary data, like reports by small community-based organisations, may only be available in the country itself. A fact-finding mission is a good opportunity to find such data.

3.3 Donor dialogue and coordination

The best time to start a dialogue with potential donors depends on many issues. While dialogue may start in the pre-phase, it should start no later than during the inception phase. We always begin with broad discussions and then become increasingly focused the further we get in our own analyses. The inception phase can be long and complex, but we need to maintain constant donor dialogue.

Our dialogue starts with a discussion of the context, the landscape and role of civil society and the relevance of Kvinna till Kvinna in the new setting. We may meet potential donors face-to-face (in the country or in Sweden), and attend meetings/seminars they arrange on the new context to show our interest and collect info. Trust, informal conversations and contacts are important here. Early on, we explain our approaches and values to pave the way for a realistic partnership.

Apart from donor dialogue, we also map funding opportunities for our new programmes. We explore different funding opportunities and discuss them internally before continuing with donor dialogue. Several questions can help map funding opportunities:

- Which international and other donors are active in the country/region in the field of women, peace and security?
- Which of them have values/principles that correspond to ours? (Long term support, women’s movement, local ownership, rights-based approach, etc.)
- What kind of work do they (not) fund?
- Which types of funding are available for the country/region?
- Do we already receive other funding for our work in the region?
- Which upcoming calls are relevant for us?
- What are the opportunities for long-term funding?
- What funding is relevant from a conflict-sensitivity perspective?

When approaching donors, we try to coordinate with likeminded actors similar to Kvinna till Kvinna. We must make sure our work does not overlap so that what we do stays relevant, while simultaneously searching for synergies. Interacting with similar actors also helps us understand the context better. Joining donor networks in the new country or in Sweden can help us identify similar actors. As always, we take a conflict-sensitive approach and remember that who we cooperate with sends signals, even before we have started working in a country.

A dialogue with the government or state may be useful and/or crucial already in the inception phase. This depends on the context: the government’s role and its relationship to civil society varies a lot from country to country. Sometimes, a dialogue is much-needed and can make our work easier. At other times, it will be difficult. Regardless of what we do, we try to counter shrinking-space tendencies and provide women’s rights organisations with safe spaces.

3.4 Partner-organisation dialogue and selection

We identify and select potential partner organisations in several steps. These steps are not set in stone, but vary depending on the context and circumstances. What all selection of partner organisations has in common, however, is that the process takes time, effort and commitment – both from our side and from potential partner organisations. The two key elements of partner-organisation selection are dialogue and assessment. They allow us to get to know our partner organisation (and they us) and discover whether a partnership will be relevant and feasible.

We have criteria for financially supporting an organisation:

- The organisation is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation

We occasionally support non-profit enterprises, in case there are legal limits to registering an NGO. This may need to be negotiated with the relevant donor then.
The organisation is (willing to be) governed, directed and led by women (legal or self-declared). Women hold all or most of the leadership roles at all decision-making levels, including the most senior levels.

The organisation is (willing to become) financially sustainable and works against corruption.

The organisation has (or is willing to develop) a structure and processes that are characterised by transparency, accountability, participation and non-discrimination.

The organisation’s mandate or one of its core purposes is women’s empowerment and/or the advancement of women’s rights.

The organisation shares Kvinna till Kvinna’s values and is committed to (or willing to learn more about) a human rights-based approach.

The organisation has (or is willing to learn more about) a conflict-sensitivity approach.

The organisation has (or is willing to learn more about) a risk-sensitive approach.

The organisation respects and is willing to actively engage with other Kvinna till Kvinna partner organisations, nationally and internationally.

To check whether these criteria apply, we engage in dialogue with the organisation and with others who know them. We may meet with:

- the potential partner organisation’s board members and staff at all levels (management and operations) and in all organisational units (programme and support) in their offices at least two times;
- different types of rights holders relevant to the organisation, at their site of operations;
- other relevant stakeholders and references indicated by the potential partner organisation, as well as their past and current donors (if any).

We also analyse organisational documents, such as founding and strategic documents (statutes, strategies, annual reports, audited financial reports, etc.).

We try to have a value-based, unhurried selection process, conducted by our own staff, preferably by the colleagues who will be working with the partner organisation. This allows us to establish trust and a meaningful partnership based on shared values. We want a partner organisation to choose us as much as we choose them.

Based on our dialogue and our review of key documents, we narrow down the number of potential partner organisations and assess a few more closely. We use an organisational assessment template for this. The template can guide us in our documentation of findings and help potential partner organisations understand the assessment process. As a responsible partner, we avoid burdening organisations overly much before they have officially been selected.

Keep in mind to document every step, on SharePoint, of this process and make the information accessible to your colleagues. Once the selection process is completed, we get back to all organisations that were considered and provide feedback to those who were not selected.

3.4.1 Partner-organisation dialogue and our role as donor and solidarity partner

When we engage in dialogue, we do so in a non-discriminatory, transparent and accountable way. We explain what kind of partnership and support we provide, and how we select partner organisations. Our selection criteria make the entire process more systematic and transparent. Building a trusting relationship is important for us when considering partner organisations, because it allows us to get to know each other and have strategic and sensitive discussions on values, approaches, priorities, capacities, methods and commitment to goals. Our discussions also allow us to see similarities and differences between potential partner organisations: we always aim for diversity among our partner organisations, so this helps us narrow down our selection.

We document all dialogue (even informal dialogue), so we can return to our conversations, learn from them, and share and reflect among colleagues. There is no format for this documentation, as it is only for internal use. We also document the decisions we take, so we can trace past trade-offs, capture the history of our partnerships and institutionalise our knowledge and experiences.

3.4.2 Selection of partner organisations

When we are entering a new country or region, we start the process of selecting partner organisations during the inception phase, parallel to the different analyses we described above. If we already work in a certain country, selection of partner organisations usually happens while we are planning a new programme.

Before we engage in dialogue, we strategically map potential partner organisations, to get a broad understanding of which organisations could be relevant. The basis for this mapping is our analysis of the
women’s movement and our meetings with women’s rights organisations during the inception phase.

We aim for diversity among our partner organisations in terms of thematic focus (overlapping with our mandate and strategy), location (different regions, urban and rural), type of actor, language, ethnic and/or religious identity (including minorities), level of capacity (thematic, administrative, financial), etcetera.

As with everything we do, conflict sensitivity is important when selecting partner organisations. What do we signal by (not) initiating a dialogue with certain organisations? What info are we asking for? Will organisations be reluctant to share that info with us when they are not yet our partner organisation or if the context changes?

3.5 Participatory programme design & development

Designing a project/programme is a long process that, in a way, starts during the inception phase, as our selection of partner organisations shapes the design of our project/programme. In that sense, these are parallel processes that affect each other.

Either way, it is important to always maintain a dialogue with our partner organisations and build our work on the principles in our partnership policy. Project/programme development should always be participatory: participation strengthens local ownership and future monitoring, and helps us make sure our approach is viable, conflict-sensitive and does not cause harm.

Participation looks different in different contexts, and depends on whether we’re developing a new programme in a new country or a country we already work in, or whether we’re inviting a new partner organisation into an existing programme.

3.5.1 Frameworks for programme design

When we plan and design projects/programme, we need a framework to structure changes, achievements and results. Different development cooperation actors use different frameworks for this, with constant debate among donors on which works best. But there is no ideal framework: capturing complex realities and power relations in a single framework always reduces complexity and leaves out important aspects.

What we find important in a framework is that it embraces learning, that it is a useful tool for planning and setting goals, and that it is flexible and adaptive (that is: it should allow us to adjust to changes in the context or among stakeholders and our partner organisations.)

FRAMEWORK 1: RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Results-Based Management (RBM) maximises achievements by continuously letting us learn from successes and failures and then making changes based on the lessons we learned. RBM is used throughout the entire project cycle – from planning to implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Key RBM questions are:

- What do we want to achieve?
- How are we going to achieve it?
- For whom will this be achieved?
- Who decides what will be achieved?
- What are the risks of not achieving it?
- How do we know it is achieved?
- Why has it been achieved?
- What do we need to change or do differently?

In RBM, results are divided into outputs, outcomes and impacts.

- Outputs are short-term, immediate results of implemented activities. You measure them by checking what’s been produced within a certain time frame and budget. Outputs are generally within the project’s control, which is why it’s easy to focus on them.
- Outcomes are the results RBM focuses on. They can be individual, organisation or institutional. (Some organisations also divide them into short-, medium- or long-term outcomes). Examples include changes in behaviour, norms and relations and the strengthening of rights holders’ ability to claim their rights.
- Impacts are the highest level of result: they influence social, economic and environmental factors. They are within the sphere of interest of a project, but beyond a project’s control or influence. To achieve this level of results, many sources need to work together – meaning one project usually only contributes to the impact.

In RBM, results are presented as a chain:

- What resources are used? – Inputs
- What is being done? – Activities
- What is produced or delivered? – Outputs
- What is achieved? – Outcomes
- What long-term changes have occurred? – Impacts
FRAMEWORK 2: THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

Theory of Change is another framework and method we use and encourage our partner organisations to use. It helps us understand the dynamics of change: what change needs to happen, for whom, why, how and according to whom.

ToC gives us a narrative of change. It does not predict a change process will go in a certain way, nor does it promise to deliver certain results. But it helps us understand the setting in which change takes place, which in return allows us to support change in a strategic and responsive way. We can use ToC like a red thread throughout our work – from programme development to implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

ToC has many advantages:
- It focuses on how change happens. Often, we and our partner organisations present results by showing the “before and after,” yet struggle to illustrate how the result was actually achieved. ToC does just that, by highlighting the relationship between programme activities, goals and outcomes
- It reveals our assumptions about why a programme should work. When we test whether those assumptions are relevant, we can understand why a programme does (not) work
- It validates local stakeholders’ expertise and lets them (rather than external actors) define what success looks like
- It helps everyone involved understand what is needed to achieve change, which increases shared understanding of how to implement a programme
- It strengthens accountability and transparency
- It uses different methods to reflect local realities and a programme’s real-life impact
- It highlights alternative and unexpected outcomes, so we can learn from our work
- It forces us to reflect critically on our work and learn from it

Kvinna till Kvinna has been part of a method project called “Resultlab” initiated by Sida Civsam. In this project Kvinna till Kvinna worked together with five other Strategic Partner Organisations on learnings about Theory of Change both as an approach as well as in practice. Read the report here. Kvinna till Kvinna has a Theory of Change facilitate guide and a planning document.

FRAMEWORK 3: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is another tool widely used in the development sector for planning, monitoring and evaluation. It can be used as:
- a planning tool;
- a tool for programme management;
- the basis for M&E in a project or programme;
- an accountability mechanism;
- a linear theory of change; or
- a mechanism for seeking funding.

The LFA is an analytical process and set of tools used to support objectives-oriented project planning and management. The LFA should be thought of as an ‘aid to thinking’.

Different organisations use different language for the parts in a LFA. Goal can also be outcome and activities indicators. It can be confusing to navigate in the terminology jungle.

3.5.2 Developing a baseline

At the end of a project, we should be able to see what difference the project made and what result it achieved. With any project, this is difficult if we do not know what the situation was like before the project started. That is where baselines come in: a baseline is the “starting point” for each of the indicators the project is trying to change. It measures what the situation is like before the project starts, and is usually expressed as a numeric value. After a project, we can compare the value at the start and end of the project to see what changed.

Having a baseline helps us set realistic targets for our project, although this is still difficult in a complex reality with constant change. Baselines are crucial the help determine the success of a project and learn from our mistakes and successes.

We usually collect primary baseline data during a formal baseline study as part of our context analysis, and/or by continuously monitoring the situation during a programme. Most commonly, external consultants are the ones who set programme baselines. We help them develop a relevant and reliable baseline by writing clear Terms of Reference (ToR) and having a close dialogue with them. Ideally, our partner organisations are also involved in the process of developing the baseline.

Note: Theory of Change Thinking in Practice is developed by Rao and Kelleher, and often used by women’s rights organisations. It gives you an in-depth introduction to Theory of Change.
3.5.3 Risk analysis and risk management

Because risks affect results, we need to properly understand and manage them. That is why we make a risk analysis: to prevent risks, monitor them, act when they happen and minimise potential damage.

A risk analysis includes three steps:

1. **Identify risks** to the project (internal and external).
2. **Evaluate risks** on a scale of 1-5, depending on how likely the risks are and how much damage they could cause. This determines the overall risk rating.
3. **Identify mitigation activities:** identify actions we can take to eliminate or mitigate the risks with the highest risk rating and minimise damage. These are the five steps to manage and mitigate risks:
   - Accept the risk – no action
   - Limit the risk – include or add more activities
   - Check again whether more control is needed
   - Share the risk with other actors
   - Eliminate the risk – do not do the project/activity or do it in another way

On the next page is an example of a risk-management template applied to our work:

3.5.4 Do No Harm analysis

For all our programmes, we should make a

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**For more guidance see Intranet.**
Do No Harm (DNH) analysis to look at the potential and actual impact the programme may have on conflict dynamics. Impacts can stem from our actions: what we do, like financial support, capacity development and networking, or our behaviour: how our staff, volunteers, consultants and Board members act.

A DNH analysis should already be discussed with potential partner organisations during the partner-organisation identification and selection process, as it can help both us and our partner organisations understand how a partner organisation’s activities interact with the conflict context, and how our partner organisation deals with that.

We have created a Do No Harm analysis guide with five different steps. Ideally, the analysis is made during a team workshop or a workshop with partner organisations:

- **Step 1: Analyse dividers and connectors**
  We look at dividers (factors that risk aggravating a conflict) and connectors (factors that have the power to bridge conflict divides and reduce mistrust). A divider-connector analysis is particularly concerned with group relations within a conflict context.

- **Step 2: Unpack programme details**
  We look into how specific aspects of the programme interact with the context.

- **Step 3: Understand programme impacts**
  Programme impacts can be experienced quite differently by different groups: strengthening women’s rights or minority rights, for example, can create a backlash among men or majority groups.

- **Step 4: Generate options and redesign**
  When unexpected negative impacts occur, we need to identify solutions to achieve our initial goal and maximise positive impacts. Sometimes, solutions can be simple, small changes.

- **Step 5: Monitor and follow up**
  In the beginning of a programme, we do not always understand everything about the context or the programme’s details yet. That is why we need to monitor and follow up what happens.

Depending on the outcome of our analysis, we may need to refine our programme.

We should review and update our DNH analysis at least halfway through the project/programme, as well as when major contextual changes happen.
This chapter explains how we decide which partner organisations to financially support. We will illustrate how several of the partnership principles we introduced in chapter 2 affect our decision-making process, and why it is important to communicate these principles and the values they are based on. We will also discuss our overall routines for making assessments and decisions on financial support. We will share guidelines and templates for applications, assessments, agreements and reports.
4.1 Partnership principles and financial support
As a donor, we have certain responsibilities – and so do our partner organisations. That is why we sign a financial-support agreement with them, stipulating both our obligations. This agreement is always rooted in our seven partnership principles. Three of our partnership principles in particular affect our decisions on financial support: the principles of (1) local ownership; (2) predictability and transparency; and (3) mutual accountability and anti-corruption.

4.1.1 The principle of local ownership
We support women’s rights organisations that act in their own right, according to their own mandate. We want our partner organisations to own the change they bring about. Because of this, we prioritise:

- Financial support that is sensitive to an organisation’s own mandate, activism and rights holders
- Financial support to organisations themselves rather than individual projects
- Financial support to networks of activists and movements (in the case that registering as an organisation is not a legal or safe option)
- Long-term financial support
- Financial support to (the development of) organisations’ own systems and structures for leadership, HR, finance, strategy, budgeting and monitoring & evaluation
- Coordination with other donors, to avoid fragmenting local ownership due to different donor requests
- We avoid open calls, as they often create short-term relationships and increase competition among partner organisations

4.1.2 The principle of predictability and transparency
Many women’s rights organisations are under-funded, which makes long-term, strategic work difficult. That is why we try to offer our partner organisations predictability by clearly communicating our approach to partnerships and our procedures for financial support. We try to be as transparent as possible in what we do, from the moment we start an assessment to the moment we sign an agreement and the moment we later monitor and audit. This makes things more predictable for our partner organisations and facilitates donor coordination. When we communicate, we do so in a formal and documented way:

- We communicate standard guidelines, routines and requirements for financial support
- We communicate assessment and decision-making routines and explain agreements before we and our partner organisation sign them
- We communicate regional, national, strategic, and/or programmatic priorities that influence our financial support, such as Kvinna till Kvinna’s programme direction, context analysis, insights from evaluation and phase-out plans
- We welcome applicants’ feedback on financial support processes

4.1.3 The principle of mutual accountability and anti-corruption
Our back donors – ie. the institutions, agencies, government ministries and other actors that give us funding and support – often require us to comply with certain criteria. While these criteria differ from agreement to agreement, all back donors require that partner organisations have sufficient capacity for reporting and financial management. Annual audits are necessary to prevent corruption.

To comply with back donors’ requirements, we look into partner organisations’ systems for accountability towards their stakeholders and try to reinforce these systems. Our standard is to:

- Assess partner organisations’ compliance and accountability systems with regards to rights holders and national legislation
- Follow anti-corruption policies and guidelines, and communicate those with our partner organisations
- Assess financial capacity and engage in dialogue on partner organisations’ capacity to set up sound, transparent systems for mutual accountability.

4.2 Kvinna till Kvinna staff responsibilities
All Kvinna till Kvinna staff are responsible for following available guidelines and templates (and asking for clarification when anything is unclear). Our method & development unit is responsible for updating guidelines and templates and communicating those changes to colleagues.

4.2.1 Programme and finance officers
Our programme officers and finance officers (including senior officers) are the ones directly

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37 Refer back to chapter 2 for an in-depth exploration of these principles.
communicating with and supporting partner organisations. They are responsible for making and documenting the assessments that help us decide who to offer financial support to. They make recommendations on these decisions; when they disagree, they have a responsibility to inform their line manager.

4.2.2 Grants manager
Our grants managers are responsible for quality assurance. They verify the process of assessment and decision-making on financial support, and assure any support is in line with Kvinn til Kvinnas policies and guidelines, programme relevance and back-donor agreements. If grants managers suspect a recommendation does not comply with any of the above, they have a responsibility to inform the head of office. Grants managers also assure all financial support is documented in our online information system in accordance with back-donor agreements.

4.2.3 Head of office
Our heads of office are the ones making the final decision to support an organisation, enter an agreement or phase out, based on the assessments they receive. They are responsible both for ensuring their teams have made a sufficient assessment and for the financial support itself. The division of responsibility between the programme/finance officers and the head of office keeps our decision-making and assessment independent and professional. If there is no head of office, the regional manager will be the one fulfilling this role.

4.3 Applications from partner organisations
The process of assessing funding applications from our partner organisations begins long before our partner organisations actually submit an application: it starts when we begin to build relationships with potential partner organisations during the inception phase. Any time we meet them, we gain new info to use in our assessments. Financial support from us is long-term: the application itself is often just one part of a long, ongoing collaboration.

4.3.1 Two assessments
When we are considering financially supporting an organisation, our programme officers carry out two assessments: one of the partner organisation itself, and one of their actual application for financial support.\textsuperscript{38} We never outsource these assessments.

The assessment of the organisation (organisational assessment) helps us decide whether and how we will support the organisation. We make a recommendation on the type of financial support (project or core) we will give, the amount, and for how long. We perform this kind of assessment at least once every three years. Sometimes, we decide to phase out our financial support; we may then replace it by a different kind of support, like networking opportunities or training.\textsuperscript{39}

The assessment of the organisation’s application and report and their project budget/outcome helps us decide what to support. When we offer core funding, we assess the organisation’s strategy and strategy report, their organisational budget and outcome. At this point, we verify whether the assessment followed our standards and decide whether to sign a contract or not.

These two assessments are the minimum we do when selecting partner organisations: we may also engage in dialogue and/or assess the organisation’s priorities and activities and how they relate to our own strategies. During the assessment of the organisation we try to meet the organisation at least twice.

4.3.2 Criteria for core support
Our goal is always to support organisations, not individual projects. Sometimes, we offer support to cover overhead costs. Even though we call this kind of support ‘project support’, it does not focus on a single project.\textsuperscript{40} Instead, this kind of support covers costs to support an organisation’s internal capacities, systems, organisational development, institutional costs and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

‘Core support’, on the other hand, is unrestricted funding that is not earmarked for a specific project or a section of a partner organisation’s operations. Instead, it supports a partner organisation’s entire organisational strategy and budget. The benefit of core support is that it increases partner organisations’ financial stability; allows them to make long-term plans and decreases staff turnover. Core support also gives partner organisations the space and resources they need to play a key part in movement-building efforts in their context. We have guidelines for core support.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{38}Our two assessments are always guided by the criteria mentioned in the beginning of section 3.4.

\textsuperscript{39}More information on partner organisation selection is described in chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{40}Other donors might call this institutional funding, but we see this kind of support as project funding that includes costs for organisational capacities and development.
We prefer core support when our partner organisation’s strategic plans are in line with our own, when they have well-functioning financial and administrative systems and when they uphold transparency and accountability. Our partner organisation also needs to fulfill the criteria of having:

- An organisational strategy and an organisational budget
- A system for organisational reporting and auditing, and computerised bookkeeping
- Experience of annual financial and narrative reporting, and audits based on strategic plans and budgets

### 4.3.3 Assessment of application and annual report

After the organisational assessment is done and the decision is taken to financially support the organisation, it is still up to the partner organisation to write an application. Before they do so, we inform them of our decision on the type, size and duration of support we can give, our guidelines for financial support and our recommended application formats.

We assess both the application the potential partner organisation sends in (that is: their proposed plans and changes), as well as their annual report (the plans they have fulfilled and the changes they have achieved). Because capacity development is important for us, we also discuss how the planned activities will lead to sustainable change.

We document our findings in a memorandum (PM). We will often identify specific monitoring needs for the upcoming financial support. These are mentioned in the memorandum and later taken up in an annual meeting with our partner organisation. Annual meetings can be either face-to-face or conducted over Teams or a similar online platform, if necessary.

### 4.3.4 Applying to Kvinna till Kvinna

Usually, we do not work with open calls for proposals. Instead, we directly invite partner organisations who have gone through our selection and the organisational-assessment process to apply for support. We usually offer long-term financial support.

Sometimes, a partner organisation will send us a concept note before actually applying. We do not require this, but it helps to discuss plans and can make the entire process more predictable for everyone involved.

Partner organisations can follow our application guidelines/ template or choose their own format (to facilitate donor coordination, for example). Either way, all application documents should be submitted in English (our guidelines/template can be translated to the local language if needed.) All applications must contain certain information – we specify this in our guidelines.

Here are the application templates we recommend:

- Application form (instructions available)
- Application form annex 1, result framework (optional format)
- Application form annex 2, monitoring, evaluation and learning plan, (optional format, instructions available, available in Word-format and Excel-format)
- Application form annex 3, timeline for activities (optional format)
- Application form annex 4, risk analysis and risk management (optional format)
- Budget form (mandatory format)

For core support, we need:

- The organisational strategy (covering the period of application)
- The organisational budget (covering the period of application)
- A list of other donors and coordination routines (covering the period of application)
- Operational work plan (covering the period of application)
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan
- Organisational capacity development plan

See our core-support application template. The assessment is done using the organisational assessment template. View details in Kvinna till Kvinna’s guidelines for core support.

### 4.4 Agreement with a partner organisation

Once we have approved a partner organisation’s application for financial support, we sign a written agreement with them. This is a legal contract, in which Kvinna till Kvinna and the partner organisation commit to a set of actions, responsibilities and conditions. The agreement stipulates the different parties, the budget and scope of the project/acti-
vities/results, reporting periods, reporting requirements and payment details. We always try to provide as long agreement as possible, usually several years.

A grants manager prepares the agreement and checks whether the reporting process and the deadlines for submission/payment follow our own guidelines and our back-donor agreement(s). A controller checks whether:

• All parties are identifiable and acceptable
• The project number corresponds to a project number created in Xledger
• The project period is in sync with the grant period
• The budgeted amount is reasonable in relation to the grant budget and other partner budgets
• The reporting dates are reasonable and well-aligned with grant deadlines
• The audit requirements are included and correct
• Kvinna till Kvinna’s bank account is correct
• The specified payments add up to the correct total amount

We have agreement templates for project support and core support. If we need to make any changes to Kvinna till Kvinna’s standard agreement, the grants manager will write a motivation for the head of finance, who will then make a decision. This ensures we follow a certain standard, with all exceptions assessed and documented.

The agreement should be signed by one manager and one programme officer from Kvinna till Kvinna.

In exceptional cases, we may need to enter several concurrent agreements with one and the same partner organisation, as a short-term solution. This can be because of the partner organisation’s many agreements and/or a clash with back-donor requirements. For partner organisations, this is challenging and not very efficient. In cases like this, a programme officer will present our partner organisation with the benefits and drawbacks of entering into several agreements. A supplement agreement can be added to the original agreement if needed. Supplement agreements have to be included in the annual audit.

4.5 Reports from partner organisations

We want our partner organisations to own their agendas and strategies – including strategies and systems for monitoring & evaluation (M&E). In the case of core support, our reporting requirements rely on our partner organisations’ own annual reports and audits. In the case of project support, reporting should match the application and can rely on our partner organisations' preferred layout of reports. Either way, when partner organisations report to us they have to reflect on the change and the budget we agreed upon.

Each year, we ask our partner organisations to submit a financial and narrative annual report. When we have a multi-year agreement with a partner organisation, the last year’s report will be a final report (instead of an annual report).

Whenever we sign a new agreement with a partner organisation (or update our guidelines), we send our reporting guidelines and requirements to our partner organisation. While the guidelines can be translated into the local language, all reports (including auditor reports) have to be submitted in English. The deadline for annual reports is February 1, if there is a calendar annual cycle.

We recommend the following reporting templates:

• Narrative annual report format (instructions are available)
• Narrative final report format (instructions are available)
• Annex 1, result framework (as submitted with the application)
• Annex 2, MEL plan (as submitted with the application)
• Annex 3, timeline and job descriptions (as submitted with the application)
• Annex 4, risk analysis and risk management (as submitted with the application)
• Financial report format
  For core support, we need (see core support agreement template):
  • An annual narrative report
  • Consolidated annual financial statements (subject to audit and audit response)
  • Financial report (unaudited)
  • Institutional audit report

Sometimes, we ask for interim reports about a part of the year. This can be because of specific conditions in our agreement with a partner organisation or back donor, when a partner organisation is new or has weak financial systems, or to conduct distance monitoring. However, we try to avoid interim reports. If we do require one, we regulate it in
the agreement (including whether we require the interim report to be financial or narrative).

Our financial, and programme officers assess all reports and document this in memos/PMs. Our grants managers assure the quality of the process. After the reports have been assessed, we draw conclusions: these can be relevant for our dialogue with partner organisations, for future applications, and for the head of office – who is responsible for the final approval of the reports. Our partner organisations get feedback on their reports during our annual meeting with them. Before the annual meeting, we share our assessment of the reports. The assessment is the proof of an approved application or report. The partner organisations might share the assessment with an auditor or anyone who wants to see it. It is the same for Kvinna till Kvinna. We also need the evidence documented for approval.

4.6 Short-term support

A short-term agreement solution might be when we want to support a study, workshop, campaign, or a short humanitarian project under exceptional circumstances (this is not an extensive list), which a current partner organisation cannot do. Suppose you have funding on the budget line, which is for the direct support to partner organisations, which your partner organisations cannot utilise. In that case, you can sign a short-term agreement with an organisation. It should be with an organisation in which you have no other financial cooperation. This kind of agreement should only be in exceptional cases. Kvinna till Kvinna is always trying to support organisations long-term and believe in the sustainability it gives to the organisation. A short-term contract cannot be renewed and not given more than once in a five-year time frame to the same organisation.

4.6.1 Criteria for short-term support:

- The maximum amount is 100 000 SEK.
- The maximum length is one calendar year (January-December). The organisation needs to have the mandatory financial criteria which are underlined in the organisational assessment.

The minimum mandatory financial criteria:

- Documented basic financial management structures and procedures;
- Delegation of authority/duty;
- Document detailing bank payments and receipts;
- Document detailing every cash transaction;
- A valid supporting document for every transaction.

**ASSESSMENT, APPLICATION AND REPORTING**

The organisation needs to respond to the matrixes at the beginning of the application template, sections 3.2 and 3.6, and a budget. These are the minimum standards, but you can ask for more if you want. You need to assess the application.

A narrative report and a financial report need to be submitted after the implementation period. In the narrative reporting template, section 3 has to be answered. You must assess the narrative report together with the financial report.

You can do other parts of the organisational assessment if you want to gather more information about the organisation. The programme officer assesses as usual and consults the head of office on what she feels is enough information to make an informed decision. Grants managers verify the process of assessment and decision-making on financial support and assure any support is in line with Kvinna till Kvinna’s policies and guidelines, programme relevance and back-donor agreements. The head of office is deciding on short-term support in consultation with the regional manager.

If another option is coming up for long-term support, you can continue to work on the organisational assessment you have started. Section 10 of the organisational assessment assesses the organisation’s risks on different levels.

4.6.2 Financial reporting and audit short-term agreement

Kvinna till Kvinna recommends including short-term agreements to the partner organisation audit in the audit contract for the countries where Kvinna till Kvinna contracts an audit firm. Another option is not doing an audit of the short-term agreements.

This option is not recommended since it would mean that Kvinna till Kvinna staff (programme officer and finance officer) would have to go through all the financial documentation reported in the partner organisation’s financial report and write a report on all the issues found in the financial report and the supporting documentation. As this is very time-consuming, we should opt to have a regular project audit and use this option only for short-term agreements under 25 000 SEK.
The financial report should be submitted to Kvinna till Kvinna at the latest one month after the project end date in all cases. In those cases where an audit company does the audit, the audit can be done together with other partner organisation audits. But it can also be done earlier if the project ends earlier. In those cases where Kvinna till Kvinna does the review of financial reports and supporting documentation, the management response to the review findings is to be submitted to Kvinna till Kvinna at the latest one and a half month after the report deadline. The audit remedy memo at the latest three months after the report deadline.

There is a template for a short-term contract.

4.7 Audit arrangements

Kvinna till Kvinna requires that every project is audit annually. If a partner organisation receives core support, it is then required to do an annual organisational audit and send it to Kvinna till Kvinna.

The auditor must be external and independent from the partner organisation in accordance with internationally accepted auditing standards and Terms of reference for Annual Audits. Essentially, projects audits are used to verify the correctness of financial reports, to make sure local legal, administrative, and fiscal (tax) rules are followed, and to make sure Kvinna till Kvinna's applicable contractual terms and conditions are met. Audits are typically required by back donors to ensure quality in the aid process and to minimise the risk for corruption.

It is preferred that Kvinna till Kvinna engages a common auditor for all partner organisations in a country as the local officers have good local knowledge and good knowledge of requirements for the audits. In exception to that, the partner organisations have a responsibility to engage an auditor who is a Chartered Accountant in accordance with the internationally accepted auditing standards. The auditor must be approved by Kvinna till Kvinna prior to being engaged for the audit.

When Kvinna till Kvinna engages the auditor, it is the responsibility of Kvinna till Kvinna's Finance officer to collect at least three offers from audit companies. The finance officer is also responsible for coordinating the audit process with the audit company. Finance officer is responsible for checking that all necessary documents are include in the audit package.

4.7.1 Partner organisation's responsibilities

- In those cases when it is a partner organisation who engage the auditor, the partner organisations have a responsibility to engage an auditor who is a Chartered Accountant in accordance with the internationally accepted auditing standards. The auditor must be approved by Kvinna till Kvinna prior to being engaged for the audit.

- The partner organisation is therefore required to submit the CV of the proposed auditor to Kvinna till Kvinna. The CV should include the auditor’s education, license, experience, membership in professional organisations and membership in international networks.

- Partner organisation is required to submit a Management Response to the Management Letter to Kvinna till Kvinna even if there are no comments, observations, or recommendations in either audit report or management letter.

- All partner organisations that have comments, observations, or recommendations in either audit report or management letter, are required to submit Audit Remedy Memo.

- To negotiate a reasonable fee that is in proportion to the work required, which also means inviting a number of auditors, normally three, to tender for the task.

4.7.2 Requirements for auditor

- The auditor shall be external and independent from the partner organisation.

- The engaged auditor must sign and follow the Terms of Reference for Annual Audits.

- Auditing costs must be included in the budget under the item ‘office costs’, if Kvinna till Kvinna is not engaging and paying for the audit.

- All auditors must sign the Independent Auditors’ Report. The Auditors’ Report is to be submitted to Kvinna till Kvinna together with the Annual Project Report.

- Auditors shall sign the “Audit confirmation” form.

Please see further information on the financial issues:

The Financial guidelines outline the financial processes of Kvinna till Kvinna for external use. The Financial manual outlines the internal rules to clarify the financial processes of Kvinna till Kvinna is for internal use. In those documents, you can find detailed information and deadlines.
4.7.3 Audit schedule for partner organisations’ financial reporting

Time Schedule:

1 MONTH
Final audited financial documents with audited report to programme office from partner organisation, 1 month after closing date (if closing date is 31 of Dec, 31 of January). Programme office checks the documents, and sends them to the controller for the project as soon as possible. Controller double checks the documents. If needed the documents will be sent back to the PO for correction.

2 MONTH
Final financial report together with PO Management letter and PO Management response to

Controller latest 2 months after Closing Date (CD) (If closing date 31 of Dec, 28 of February).

4 MONTH
If findings are reported in the audit (Management Letter), finance officer gives the partner(s) in question a deadline for Audit Remedy Memo. PO Audit Remedy Memo to HQ, latest 4 months after closing day of books. (If closing date 31 December, 30 April).

9 MONTH
Programme office shall follow up findings in Audit, at the latest 9 months after closing date and report to HQ. (If closing date December 31, then September 30).
Chapter five focuses on how Kvinna till Kvinna approaches monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) from a feminist perspective. The chapter is divided into two parts: monitoring (part one) and evaluation (part two). Learning is an important aspect of both monitoring and evaluation and will be discussed throughout. While there are several levels of monitoring, part one focuses on the way we monitor our own activities and processes. We will link monitoring to Theory of Change (ToC) and clarify Kvinna till Kvinna’s standards of monitoring. We will also offer some concrete tools and questions for dialogue with partner organisations. Part two will explain what evaluation is, which types of evaluation exist and what feminist evaluation looks like.

MEL is often taken for granted and rarely discussed other than as a “donor demand.” But we believe MEL is important for several reasons, because it:

- Documents women’s history, stories, and struggles;
- Demonstrates the quality and impact of the work we and our partner organisations do;
- Provides valuable lessons on how change happens, including which strategies and interventions did (not) work, which helps us refine our policies, strategies and interventions;
- Strengthens our advocacy work by demonstrating how change has advanced women’s rights and by mobilising broader support for our agenda;
- Improves accountability to donors and thereby attracts more funding and support;
- Gives us the opportunity to learn and reflect on our ongoing work and adapt our operations to make sure we always respond to WHRDs’ needs.
MONITORING

5.1 The purpose of monitoring
To remain a relevant women’s rights actor, Kvinna till Kvinna needs to be able to present results and stories of change: these results help highlight the valuable work our partner organisations do, which in turn helps drive the struggle for women’s rights forwards. Monitoring allows us to find and present these much-needed results.

We believe monitoring serves different purposes. It allows us to:

• Continuously and systematically assess our programmes and context analyses over time;
• Follow up our operations, see their results and reflect on changes or challenges for learning and reporting;
• Manage our programmes and, when needed, methodically readjust things;
• Check whether everything is going as planned and discuss risks;
• Comply with our agreements with partner organisations, for accountability’s sake;
• Deepen our understanding and analysis of the wider context of societal changes in the country/region;
• Relate back to our Theory of Change analysis or other learning/planning tools, as well as any assumptions we made.

Kvinna till Kvinna conducts monitoring on several levels, based on the different roles we fulfil. As a solidarity partner and advocacy actor within the global women’s rights movement, we monitor our own results/activities and those of our partner organisations, to learn from these. As a donor providing financial support, we monitor our agreements with partner organisations and report the results to back donors.

Monitoring is not a mystical process: it is simply a matter of systematically and continuously documenting our work by asking relevant questions, analysing the answers and then reflecting on them, to understand and improve what we do. In this, motivation is key – without motivation, even the best tools and techniques will not help. That said, monitoring does require human and financial resources – and these should be calculated into funding applications.

5.2 Feminist approach to monitoring
At Kvinna till Kvinna, we focus on what we like to call “feminist monitoring”. Our feminist approach to monitoring directly influences how we create systems, routines and “do” monitoring.

As a feminist organisation, we know lasting structural change does not happen in a linear way. Our work is complex, takes time and often creates resistance. The change we strive for is especially difficult to predict in conflict-affected areas, which constantly change and where a great deal of flexibility is needed. Or, in the words of Batliwala (2011):

... both donors and women’s rights organisations need a paradigm shift in our approach to monitoring and evaluation. Because social power structures and the injustices they create are both resilient and powerful, and it is very difficult indeed to achieve lasting changes in gender relations; because any kind of social change is unpredictable, and the pathways to it are constantly shifting; and above all, because every social change intervention – especially on behalf of women – is an uneven contrast between meagrely-resourced change activists and powerfully entrenched interests.

Our feminist approach to monitoring is rooted in our partnership policy, which emphasises feminist principles like local ownership. Translated to monitoring, this means we listen to and have a dialogue with our partner organisations about their monitoring systems, without imposing specific tools. We do not see our partner organisations as “working for us”: instead, we encourage them to follow their own priorities. Locally-owned, participatory monitoring equals more sustainable monitoring. But there is a fine balance between our partner organisations owning their own monitoring systems versus us supporting their development of these systems. Some partner organisations may need help to strengthen their monitoring systems; that is usually where our capacity-development support comes in.

In our feminist monitoring, we also take a holistic approach – we look at all of our partner organisation’s activities, not just one single project, even when we are reporting on that one project. We particularly make sure to do this when we are thin-
king of increasing core support. Taking a holistic approach also means trying to limit the monitoring requirements we place on our partner organisation: often, our partner organisations cooperate with several donors. Limiting and/or harmonising different donors’ demands helps our partner organisations grow and focus on what they do best.

Another key principle of our partnership policy is mutual learning. We always approach monitoring from the perspective of learning: both we and our partner organisations can learn a great deal by following up projects, monitoring our work and tracking changes that occur (including challenges and negative trends). Documenting what we monitor allows us to revisit our decisions and adapt them if needed. To properly learn from our monitoring, we need to create time and space for reflection and discussion.

How Kvinna till Kvinna works to strengthen a feminist approach to monitoring:
- We put women’s voices and perspectives in focus
- We understand knowledge is subjective, with women’s narratives embodying their specific realities
- We are all subjective when we collect information and analyse data/experiences
- We try to be more aware of whose voice is heard and who sets the agenda. (Intersectionality is key.)
- Qualitative data results are significant when we analyse change like social norms, values and behaviour.

5.3 Monitoring contexts
Many monitoring tools do not track broader impacts on the women’s movement at large. Nor are many monitoring tools able to track negative change, reversals and backlash that delay or derail positive change.

But negative events often do happen in our work: when we challenge patriarchal, entrenched power structures, we are often faced with intense reactions and setbacks. Shrinking space is just one example. Having realistic tools that take negative effects (or the preservation of the status quo) into account is important: they can completely change whether a programme is seen as a “success” or “failure”.

Making a proper context analysis can be a solution to this problem. A context analysis lets us revisit original contexts and shows whether they have gotten worse or not (shrinking space, decreasing safety, etc). When an already restrictive context has not become more restrictive, that can actually be a positive outcome! A context analysis will tell us which monitoring tools and data we need to be able to track changes like these.

When we include contextual monitoring in our monitoring tools and build in learning opportunities to reflect on the context, we can track processes and developments that do not necessarily create change, but that still prevent past gains from being reversed (like preventing a freedom-of-abortion law from being repealed). One way we do this is through our MEL template.

5.3.1 Theory of Change and monitoring
A Theory of Change requires regular monitoring. This because the context in which we work change and therefore also how the pathway to change looks like. If you have developed a Theory of Change with your partners for a specific programme one way to monitor the Theory of Chang and keep it alive, is to re-visit it together annually. This will also be a way to test the assumptions and see if they are still valid.

If you want to connect your monitoring and evaluation system (results framework) then you can set indicators at different change levels and assess these changes annually. Assumptions can also be made into indicators in your result framework and monitored that way. Sudden contextual changes, stakeholder shifts, operational problems or invalid assumptions can all be a sign we need to change our initial ToC analysis and adapt our result framework.41

We believe in local ownership and flexibility: when we revisit our Theory of Change analysis together with our partner organisations and/or our programme team, we truly allow ourselves to adapt to the actual context.

5.4 Planning monitoring42
Already when we design a project/programme, we plan what kind of change we want to achieve and at which level. This information informs the kind of results framework we will choose (see section 3.5.1). At this stage, we also start planning how

41 See section 3.5.1 for more information on Theory of Change.
42 There are a lot of resources available on monitoring, both concrete tools as well as reports on how monitoring has been conducted and whether it’s been useful or not in different contexts. Here are some webpages with more in-depth considerations: https://www.intrac.org/resources/page/1/terms= https://www.bond.org.uk/monitoring-and-evaluation/monitoring-and-evaluation-tools
we will monitor the changes we hope to achieve. We may begin to develop monitoring indicators, pathways of change (if we are working with Theory of Change) and measurement scales and start thinking about what to include in a baseline.

We also need to take our partner organisations’ monitoring systems into account from an early stage: this too will affect our monitoring plans and programme design. Having a dialogue with our partner organisations at an early stage helps secure the ownership of everyone involved in the programme and makes sure everyone understands what we are planning to achieve. This makes it easier to decide together which monitoring tools to use and when to collect data.

When we plan the monitoring framework for a project/programme, we focus on questions like:

- Who defines and participates in the monitoring? Are we using an intersectional approach when we decide who can participate? Can we influence back donors to incorporate our approach into their monitoring demands?
- Who defines what kind of information on results is meaningful (and for whom)? Are we keeping power hierarchies in mind when deciding this?
- What do we see as relevant signs of change?

When planning monitoring, it is crucial to remember that monitoring (and evaluation) takes time, skills and human/financial resources – both at Kvinna till Kvinna and among our partner organisations. We need to focus on making these resources available: setting aside time, developing capacity, making room in our budget and incorporating monitoring (and evaluation) into donor applications (both our own and our partner organisations).

### 5.5 Monitoring standard

At Kvinna till Kvinna, we have monitoring standards both for our own operations and results, and for our partner organisations’ organisational growth, operations and results. We want all our monitoring to be in line with our approaches and in compliance with our agreements (with back donors and partner organisations).

#### 5.5.1 Minimum monitoring standard

**BASELINE**

In chapter 3, we discussed baselines and organisational assessments. We will indicate the baseline in the log frame and revisit it for annual reporting. As we mentioned before, baselines are crucial to be able to adequately track results and achievements. In exceptional cases, however, we may need to be flexible when it comes to baselines, for example when a conflict context makes it very difficult to establish a baseline or when we engage in hard-to-trace advocacy work.

**PROGRAMME AND CONTEXT MEL PLAN FOR OUR OPERATIONS**

Once we have finished planning a programme, we create a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan. It is mandatory for all our projects/programmes to have a MEL plan, it is also mandatory for partner organisations! A narrative text should always follow your MEL plan where the different sections are explained more in detail. This is also important when new staff come to see how the thinking behind the plan is structured.

The MEL plan gives an overview of the monitoring we will be doing during the year. It shows:

- What to monitor (e.g. outcomes, outputs and indicators)
- How to monitor it (method of data collection)
- This is where you choose which tools to use. For example: Activity logs, Statistics, Pre-post questionnaires, After Action Reviews, Scales of measurement, Case study, Most Significant Change, the method for data collection (particularly in terms of risks and access)
- How to monitor the context (including “holding the line” results)
- This is not a context analysis, but rather a frame to monitor how the context interact with or programme/project negatively or positively and thus the results. For example, if a new law on GBV has passed within a significantly shorter period than anticipated and that has been an outcome/output, then this output is no longer relevant.
- Which colleagues are responsible for what
- It is always good to state who is responsible for doing what monitoring. When collecting data for monitoring always consider power relations and dynamics especially when doing it in a group.
- How often and when we collect and analyse data
- Planning ahead when doing monitoring will also decrease the risk of it becoming a burden. Make sure to consider events or other changes in the context that can affect your data collection. This can be religious holidays, relocation of target group and also what time during the day they can be contacted.
• What the available resources are (HR, budget, training)

• How and to whom we will communicate what we monitor

How you choose to communicate your findings and to whom can also determine how you collect it. If it is for communication purposes, you might also want to collect stories.

• How we will make room for learning

Learning and reflecting is a central part in any monitoring. This to see if the programme/project is on track but also a chance to reflect on results with partner organisations. There are many ways this could happen in dialogue with partners or doing a learning workshop once a year with partners or the target group you are working with.

This Excel sheet can be used to help create your MEL plan. Ideally, the plan includes a narrative text that describes the project/programme’s key MEL processes.

It is important to remember that often, things do not go according to plan – especially when working with long-term change processes. A plan is only a guide and cannot dictate events. Still, a good MEL system will encourage you to test the assumptions behind your MEL plan and constantly review the plan as circumstances change. The idea is to return to the MEL plan throughout the year, to check whether all monitoring aspects are up and running. This can be done through annual meetings, dialogue meetings and/or learning workshops.

5.6 Kvinna till Kvinna’s monitoring methods

There are many monitoring tools developed for development organisations that can fit Kvinna till Kvinna’s operations. We have taken several of them and adapted them to fit our needs. We advise against using a single, generic monitoring tool, as this goes against our feminist approach to monitoring. Regardless of which tool we use, we should always keep our stated approach in mind and where relevant include it in the monitoring tool.

METHOD 1: AFTER-ACTION REVIEWS (AAR)

One way to monitor and evaluate what we do, is to review an activity (like a capacity-development training or advocacy event) after it is over. We call this an after-action review (AAR). As a team, we then discuss the activity and reflect on what we expected would happen and what actually happened, what went well and why, what we would do differently next time and what lessons we can learn. After-action reviews strengthen teams and help us improve our performance in the future. We should always document these reviews.

METHOD 2: PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

After an activity, we can also ask the activity’s participants what they learned. We can do this by having participants fill in this evaluation template, discuss in groups or openly share their reflections. Which type of evaluation works best depends on the kind of activity we did as well as the context. To facilitate participant evaluations, have developed a set of capacity-development monitoring guidelines, which can of course be adapted to local contexts. Just like after-action reviews, evaluations should be documented.

METHOD 3: RESULT ANALYSES AND LEARNING WORKSHOPS

We can also reflect on results and discuss lessons learned by making an internal programme analysis or organising a one-day learning workshop for the programme team. These workshops can be organised in conjunction with partner-organisation planning meetings or other analysis workshops at the head office.

METHOD 4: THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE APPROACH

The “Most Significant Change” approach is a participatory, qualitative form of monitoring and evaluation that allows project stakeholders to decide which change they think is most relevant to record and analyse. Throughout the programme cycle, stakeholders look for “change stories” from individuals who take part in our activities. They regularly read through these stories and discuss which of them capture the most significant change.

The advantage of the Most Significant Change approach is that it shows change over time and creates a deep and complex picture, recorded in women’s own voices. During the evaluation phase, these stories also help us understand and assess the programme’s success.

We should not only look at stories of positive change, though: especially in today’s context of shrinking space, discussing “failures”, difficulties and disappointments also helps us learn – sometimes even more than by focusing on successes.

METHOD 5: MONITORING VISITS

At least twice a year, our programme officers monitor our partner organisations’ operations during monitoring visits. The purpose is to observe partner

organisations' work, meet rights holders and duty bearers, and maintain an ongoing dialogue and close relationship with our partner organisations. Monitoring visits allow us to discuss achievements in relation to indicators, and challenges or risks in relation to the project/programme. The visits also help with quality assurance: we can collect more data than what we would otherwise gain from our partner organisations' reports. Often, these visits also allow our partner organisations to talk to us about their struggles and re-energise.

To be a transparent donor, we make sure to clarify for our partner organisations what we ourselves will be monitoring, what we expect them to monitor and why this monitoring is important. We also always explain the aim, and later the outcome, of our monitoring visits.44

To avoid monitoring in too much detail what our partner organisations do and to preserve local ownership, the monitoring process needs to be in line with the process we described in chapter 4. When we plan monitoring, we actively draw on our agreements with partner organisations and our memorandums from report/application assessments and organisational assessments. These documents help us prioritise what to monitor.

**METHOD 6: PARTNER ORGANISATIONS REPORTS**

An important tool for Kvinna till Kvinna to monitor the activities our partner organisations are doing is the annual report. These narrative reports that our partner organisations write each year help us monitor changes: we assess these reports (in dialogue with our partner organisations) and give feedback on them.

**METHOD 7: ANNUAL MEETINGS AND DIALOGUE MEETINGS**

Annual meetings and dialogue meetings (which both take place once a year) are important events, as they allow us to interact with our partner organisations and follow up projects/programmes.

During the annual meeting, we follow up and discuss issues related to our partner agreement. This discussion is based on three memorandums: the memorandums of the application, report and organisational assessment. All annual meetings are documented, after which we send the notes to our partner organisation. Sometimes, conversations at the annual meeting can be difficult, for example when there are problems with compliance. Still, these problems need to be solved – not least for our own accountability to back donors and for our partner organisations' accountability to rights holders. Sharing the meeting's agenda in advance can help make these discussions a bit easier. We take part in the annual meeting in our capacity as donor.

The dialogue meeting focuses on the changes the project/programme has contributed to, as well as lessons learned and reflection. During this meeting, we discuss the wider context and revisit our Theory of Change, if applicable. What does the context look like now, has it changed? Are there specific challenges and new risks? How is the staff doing? We attend the dialogue meeting in our capacity as solidarity partner rather than donor.

**METHOD 8: PARTICIPATING IN PARTNER ORGANISATIONS’ ACTIVITIES**

By taking part in our partner organisations’ activities and events while visiting them, we build trust, share experiences and maintain our relevance as a women's rights organisation. We get to see how our partner organisations directly work with rights holders (or other target groups) and what their capacity to do so is. Attending partner organisations’ activities also lets us interact with and listen to rights holders ourselves. This helps us understand the local context and its gender power relations, as well as how to challenge and change these relations.

**5.7 Monitoring in practice**

After we have planned our monitoring, written a MEL plan and chosen our monitoring methods, the actual work of monitoring our programme begins. The programme staff are the ones who monitor programme results and partner organisations’ results. Our colleagues at the field offices have the best insight into the contexts they work in; they take the lead in planning, monitoring and evaluating what we do.

Our monitoring work consists of several steps. First, we decide what data to be collected. Next, we collect data and document our findings. Then, we analyse and report on the data. Finally, we use our analysis to develop/adjust our project/programme, with the goal of improving it. Learning is a key part of this process. In particular, we strive to let any lessons we learn benefit all of Kvinna till Kvinna as an organisation.

**5.7.1 Data collection**

When monitoring and evaluating projects/pro-
grammes, we need to first collect data to support our claim that change has happened. In the MEL plan, we describe which tools we will be using to collect data. We mainly collect data from activities we ourselves influence or have ownership over.

We use both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, to make sure the information we gather has sufficient breadth and depth. Quantitative data is data in the form of numbers and statistics; it can be captured through questionnaires or attendance records, for example. It provides information on the extent and reach of a certain change. Qualitative data, on the other hand, can be data from interviews, consensus workshops, Most Significant Change workshops, diaries or focus groups. It serves to describe and explain processes and different positions.

Here are some examples of data-collection tools we commonly use:

- **Pre- and post-intervention surveys**
- **Training evaluations**
- **Administrative/project documents**
- **Official statistics**
- **Expert assessments**
- **Qualitative interviews**
  We interview key actors like donors, (inter)national organisations and women's rights organisations in a semi-structured way. Asking all interviewees the same questions helps us compare interview data afterwards and get a nuanced picture. Sometimes, interviews offer up names of other actors that would be interesting to interview.
- **Focus groups**
  We conduct focus group discussions with women’s rights organisations, other civil society organisations and rights holders. Gathering people in smaller groups allows them to talk more openly and discuss very specific issues (context, themes, certain groups’ concerns). We let the open-ended questions we select in advance guide these discussions, but remain flexible and open to what participants have to say. Ideally, one person leads the discussion while another takes notes.
- **Network meetings**
  We meet women’s rights activists/organisations/networks to get their perspectives and analysis of a context, including the challenges, opportunities and needs of the women’s movement in the country/region. Meetings like this can even help us identify potential partner organisations.

- **Observation**
  Some of our data comes from informal conversations and observation. We mostly use this data in comparison with other sources.

- **Secondary sources**
  Sometimes, certain data is only available inside a particular country. Examples include studies from local/national research institutes or reports from community-based organisations and NGOs.

- **Remote collection**
  In some cases, we need to monitor and collect data remotely: the conflict-affected areas we work in can be difficult to access, especially during a short field visit. Technical tools (like data collection through smartphones) make remote monitoring easier.

When determining which type of data and which data-collection tool would be most appropriate, you can consider the following questions:

- What information are you looking for? Can it be expressed in numbers or not? Is it sensitive? Is it about changes in knowledge, attitudes, practice?
- Who may have this information (women, children, excluded or marginalised groups, …)?
- Where can the information be found? Will it be easy to collect?
- When can you find the information? Can it only be collected at certain times? What timeframes/deadlines are you working with?
- Why are you using a certain data-collection tool? Is it the most appropriate/cost-effective/time-effective tool?

5.7.2 Data analysis

After we have collected data, the second step of our monitoring process is to analyse and reflect on the data. Data analysis does not have to be hard: it is simply about digging deeper to try and understand the meaning of results.

Questions to consider when doing your data analysis:

- Read about a situation and find out whether a result could be part of a bigger change/ development/context.
- Are there any emerging trends/clusters/patterns in the data? If so, why?
- Ask our partner organisations how they interpret the findings. What is the reason behind them? Is there a bigger picture behind the numbers and stories?
• Ask other actors in the context whether they have found similar findings.
• Compare your results with results from another data source: do they tell the same story?
• Any additional information or analysis required?

Data analysis takes a while, so it is important to set aside time for this. Have a dialogue within your programme team, and look at both financial and programme aspects.

Sometimes, our partner organisations are not the best at analysis. This is rarely because they do not understand the change that has happened. Instead, it can be because they simply do not have the time, because they see data analysis as an abstract scientific exercise, or because the analysis has been done by a single person instead of the entire team. Our partner organisations may be tempted to ask an external consultant to analyse their data; we always try to encourage our partner organisations to do the analysis themselves, however. This increases their ownership of results and strengthens their skills as an organisation.

RESULT ANALYSES, LEARNING WORKSHOPS AND REVIEWS

Through result analyses, learning workshops and reviews (internal as well as with partner organisations), we look at the changes that have or have not happened and ask ourselves how they occurred. In this, we focus on outcomes (rather than outputs and activities). We also revisit our assumptions/initial ideas about the change we wanted to see, about a programme: did any of them prove to be wrong? Can we adjust our assumptions and incorporate them into this programme or the next? Can we learn anything?

Result analyses and learning workshops can be done together with our partner organisations. A learning workshop may focus on one specific theme or process of a programme. It can also focus on general results/changes or sustainability. All workshops are about mutual learning: they allow us to share, reflect over and document results in a wider context.

We organise an annual result analysis and learning workshop – allowing the entire organisation to learn together across regions, as “one Kvinna till Kvinna”. We are continuously developing these workshops and improving the way we give feedback between the head office and our country/regional offices, as well as among country/regional offices. This is especially important in our process of decentralisation and learning.

NARRATIVE REPORTING

We ask our partner organisations to write narrative annual progress reports and final reports when the project is over. Partner organisations can, but do not have to, use our templates: we want them to own the process and harmonise it with other donors’ requirements.

These narrative reports help us get data on the progress of projects/programmes and the capacity of our partner organisations. Because a lot of effort goes into writing narrative reports, we try to use them as broadly as possible – including for learning purposes and to document women’s history and struggle. Sometimes, we also share reports between partner organisations, to encourage them to learn from each other. This can be, at a learning workshop. The better we make use of these reports, the more we hope our partner organisations will see reporting as a useful endeavour rather than a tiresome demand.

NARRATIVE REPORTING THROUGH STORYTELLING

Telling stories can be a great way of communicating and reporting results. Stories link change in society to personal change, give change a “face” and help readers relate. Through stories, abstract and complex messages suddenly become much more captivating.

A good story is usually both “personalised” and relevant/useful to the reader. It is moving and creates an emotional connection (often by involving an aspect of “drama”). Good stories are credible, and often link the story’s theme or moral to certain core values.

When we monitor, and especially when we meet our partner organisations, there are often great opportunities to collect stories. We also ask our partner organisations to include stories in their reports to us. We then use these stories in our own communication and advocacy work and when we report to our back donors.

5.7.3 Monitoring of capacity-development and networking activities

As networking and capacity development are two important parts of what we do at Kvinna till Kvinna, we make sure to monitor the results these activities achieve.

NETWORKING

When we organise a networking meeting, our goal is to not only spend time planning and conducting the meetings, but also documenting and reflecting on it afterwards. In general, we see positive results
from our networking efforts: networking makes advocacy work more efficient, strengthens WHRDs’ voices, builds capacity, helps women’s organisations learn from each other and creates closer ties. We try to regularly report on these results, including by asking our partner organisations about our networking efforts and what our networking support has meant for them. Still, we have not really managed to systematically monitor networking results in a streamlined way. Some results have been particularly difficult to capture, including results like trust- and confidence-building, the creation of safe spaces, and the continued networking that happens after a networking event (including through social media). We currently do not yet have a baseline for networking. This will be no easy task, but the plan is to develop better tools to monitor networking results.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Another big part of our work is capacity development with partner organisations, such as trainings and workshops. We should monitor what this capacity development leads to, not just by reporting on the capacity-development activities themselves but also on the effects they have. Do partner organisations learn something? Do they go on to use that knowledge? Does it improve their work? What result does that have? Can we improve our capacity-development support? Just as with networking, we need to get better at systematically monitoring the result of our capacity-development efforts. Having a capacity-development baseline would help us and our partner organisations track partner organisations’ capacity over time. When monitoring capacity development, it is good to keep in mind we are often not the only ones supporting our partner organisations: we cannot claim all capacity results as “ours.” Instead, we should see capacity development as a general, ongoing contribution to our partner organisation’s overall capacity and sustainability.

5.8 Partner organisations’ own monitoring

Our partner organisations are responsible for monitoring the results of their own work, the changes our projects/programmes bring about and the challenges they face. They are also required to always have their own MEL plan when applying to Kvinna till Kvinna.

We support our partner organisations and strengthen their monitoring systems, processes and routines. Because we work with a range of diverse partner organisations, they do not all have the same knowledge, skills and resources. Some of them have extensive MEL systems and staff working only with MEL, while others have only a very basic understanding of MEL. We make sure to identify what kind of support our partner organisations are already getting (from other donors, for example) and what additional support we can offer them. Our staff and/or external consultants can train our partner organisations in monitoring methods. During a project cycle, we maintain a close dialogue with partner organisations about monitoring: we give them advice on the results frameworks in their applications, define indicators together, and sometimes support them to develop a Theory of Change analysis. We also regularly remind our partner organisations of the importance of monitoring, evaluating and learning.

Aspects to consider when working with partner organisations’ monitoring:

• Share the Programme Handbook with partner organisations so they can familiarise themselves with Kvinna till Kvinna’s approaches
• Analyse partner organisations’ capacity-development needs. When needed, support programme staff in setting up monitoring systems
• Work with partner organisations to share approaches and MEL action plans for their particular field
• Support partner organisations to make MEL part of their organisational culture, and to make reporting easier and less time-consuming

If a partner organisation is working in a local community, one interesting participatory monitoring method is “community monitoring” – that is, getting the whole community involved in monitoring. While this can be tricky because of a lack of time, resources and interest from the community, it has a lot of advantages: it empowers women and develops their skills, allows partner organisations to get help from volunteers with the collection and analysis of data, and makes monitoring a more independent, locally-owned process.

EVALUATION

In this section, we will explain the difference between monitoring and evaluation and discuss how to carry out feminist evaluations and learn from them. We will look at different types of evaluations that are relevant for Kvinna till Kvinna, discuss what to think of when preparing Terms of Reference for an evaluation and how to include partner organisations in the evaluation processes. Finally, we will link to some evaluation resources, tailored specifically to Kvinna till Kvinna.
5.9 The definition and purpose of evaluation

Evaluation is a periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency and impact of a piece of work in relation to its stated objectives. We regularly evaluate the impact of our projects/programmes and check whether we achieved our objectives. We ask ourselves whether there have been any changes as a result of the programme, and how these changes came about. Evaluations are usually done at important moments in the project/programme cycle, including at the end of a project, halfway through it, or when entering a new phase.

Evaluations can be done for many reasons:
- to learn more
- to build a partner organisation’s capacity
- to support decision-making
- to improve accountability
- to assess what does or does not work in an ongoing programme
- to discover why a certain outcome did or did not occur
- to inform the development, planning and implementation of a new programme
- to question the objectives of a project/programme
- to help us understand how a project relates to a context

The difference between monitoring and evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONITORING</th>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing</strong></td>
<td>Continuous throughout the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Activities, outputs, indicators of progress and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main participants</strong></td>
<td>Project staff, project participants (partner organisations, rights holders, duty bearers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td>Regular meetings, field visits, surveys, interviews, monthly / quarterly reviews, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written output</strong></td>
<td>Regular reports, studies and updates to project participants, management and donors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.1 Evaluation criteria

The OECD has developed 6 general evaluation criteria for actors within the field of development cooperation:45

1. **Relevance** – Is this intervention doing the right thing? Evaluate the extent to which the project/program suits the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.

2. **Coherence** – How well does the intervention fit? Evaluate the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

3. **Effectiveness** – Is the intervention achieving its objectives? Evaluate the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, including any differential results across groups.

4. **Efficiency** – How well are resources being used? Assess outputs in relation to inputs. Efficiency signifies that the project/programme uses the least costly resources possible to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieve the same outputs.

5. **Impact** – What differences does the intervention make? Assess positive and negative changes achieved by a project/program (directly or indirectly, intended or unintended). This involves the main impacts within the local, social, economic, political and environmental sphere.

6. **Sustainability** – Will the benefits last? Assess whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.
5.10 Types of evaluation

There are many types of evaluations; your goal and intended audience will guide your choice of evaluation type.

TYPE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

If we made a Theory of Change analysis for a project/programme, we can use it during an evaluation. An evaluation halfway through a programme should check whether the programme is contributing to the change we were aiming for, in line with our underlying ToC analysis. If the programme is not doing that, we may have to revise our ToC analysis. During an evaluation at the end of a programme, we can refer to our ToC analysis to see whether we can learn anything about how change was achieved. ToC can also help us design evaluations for programmes that are more complex, because it helps us understand why we believe change will take place, even in complex contexts. ToC highlights the main cause-effect relation we should look at. If no ToC analysis was made at the start, the evaluation team can help make one at a later point for an ongoing programme.

TYPE 2: RESULT/OUTCOME EVALUATION

Result/outcome evaluations measure programme results/outcomes, whether short- or long-term. That means they mostly evaluate how effective a programme has been at creating change. We try to understand how results/outcomes relate to our initial expectations. We ask ourselves what change we witnessed because of the programme, how big that change is (i.e. how much of a difference it made for programme participants) and how the change occurred.

TYPE 3: PROCESS EVALUATION

Process evaluations focus on how a programme result/outcome was achieved. We try to improve our programme management by looking at our operations and programme implementation. Were there any problems with implementation? What were these problems related to (leadership, human resources, performance)? How did we solve them? Process evaluations can also look at programme development, management and internal systems (to evaluate an organisation's capacity to achieve the outcomes we defined), or at specific themes (like advocacy or learning processes). With process evaluations, the idea is to learn from our past experiences to ensure the quality of future implementation.

TYPE 4: IMPACT EVALUATION

Impact evaluations measure the difference between what happened with the programme and what would have happened without it. It investigates to what extent change occurred because of our specific programme. We look at the effects of results, and the causal link between programmes and impacts. Impact evaluations are the most complex and intensive type of evaluation, incorporating methods like random selection and control and comparison groups. This type of evaluation is best suited for larger interventions that aim for results on the impact level. Because of our long-term presence in partner countries, we often procure impact evaluations. To do an impact evaluation, you need to collect comprehensive baseline data per country/programme.

TYPE 5: ONGOING EVALUATION

Ongoing evaluations help us learn not just after, but also during a programme. In this type of evaluation, we use scientific methods to assess a programme with the people involved in it or affected by it, and provide programme staff with ongoing feedback. This constant learning and feedback help programme staff achieve the programme's goals. Ongoing evaluations are most commonly used in larger, long-term programmes. They require resources, time and commitment from programme management. With this type of evaluation, it is important to clearly define the role of the evaluator and the principles for collecting/using data. Ongoing evaluation does not necessarily fit all programmes, because it can take a lot of time and affect partner organisations' integrity. Given the right conditions, however, it can be a great way of learning.

TYPE 6: PARTNER-OWNED EVALUATION

Finally, partner organisations can also conduct an external evaluation of their own work, based on their own priorities. This can strengthen local ownership, build partner organisations' capacity, improve learning and help our partner organisations “own their knowledge”. We can assist our partner organisations with writing Terms of Reference, procuring a consultant and writing a management response, for example. If they want, our partner organisations can include this type of evaluation in their budget proposals and get funding and in-house support. A partner-owned evaluation may conclude with a result analysis and learning workshop, during which several partner organisations come together to share their experiences, reflect on the evaluation and come up with recommendations.

45 Developed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee. Note that not all criteria may be relevant for all evaluations: some evaluations may focus on just one or two of them.
**TYPE 7: NETWORK EVALUATION**

Sometimes, we evaluate entire networks of women's rights actors – which is more complex than evaluating a single programme/project/organisation, because networks operate in dynamic, changing environments in which the group and its members often need to change course at very short notice.

One useful framework\(^46\) for a network evaluation looks at four qualities: democracy, diversity, dynamism and performance and puts them against three operational dimensions: political purpose and strategies, organisation and management, and leadership and participation. Ideally, a network evaluation looks at all these different aspects. At Kvinna till Kvinna, our ability and need to do so can vary, though, because we fulfil different roles in different networks – from initiator or facilitator to door-opener or donor.

### 5.11 Evaluation at Kvinna till Kvinna

Kvinna till Kvinna commissions and participates in all kinds of evaluations, with different scopes, focuses and purposes\(^47\) – from evaluations of single Kvinna till Kvinna projects to major evaluations of ourselves as an organisation. Most evaluations of our work are initiated by donors and carried out by external evaluators. Over the years, we have also commissioned our own programme evaluations or carried out studies with similar purposes.

#### 5.11.1 Feminist evaluation

Feminist evaluation is not the same as evaluation with a gender approach. The latter is mostly about identifying the differences between men and women in different ways, while feminist evaluation looks at why these differences exist and how they can be challenged (instead of simply recorded.)

We adopt a feminist approach to evaluation, meaning our evaluations do not just measure programmes' effectiveness, relevance or sustainability: they also aim to address social injustice. Feminist evaluations take into account aspects like:

- **Participation:** Evaluations need to value women's experiences just as much as men's experiences. They should be inclusive and reflect multiple voices of women from different social and political contexts, especially from marginalised groups. Ideally, evaluation participants should co-own the process and findings, and benefit from the evaluation in some way (for example by gaining knowledge or having their agency strengthened.)

- **Intersectionality:** Women experience oppression differently according to their intersecting identities (race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, etc). Evaluations should acknowledge and value these differences and recognise that what works for one group of women does not necessarily work for another. Intersectionality should already be kept in mind when planning evaluations, for example when selecting interview participants.

- **Reflexivity:** Evaluators should be aware of the experiences, emotions, perspectives, power and privilege they themselves are bringing to an evaluation, and acknowledge that these may lead to particular standpoints which in turn affect the evaluation and how the evaluator will interpret its findings.

- **Knowledge is power:** Evaluations should recognise and value that there are different ways of knowing (including reason, emotion and experience). All knowledge is a powerful resource and can potentially be (mis)used: the findings of an evaluation can have negative/positive effects on its participants.

- **Research is political:** In a way, evaluation is a political activity because it takes place in politicised contexts. This is especially true for feminist evaluation, which tries to actively address and transform social injustice. Evaluations should be conflict sensitive, and contextualise their research socially and politically, with an emphasis on how gender and other discourses influences each person’s experience.

Because of feminist evaluation’s clear links to feminist theory and practice, this kind of evaluation is very relevant for us at Kvinna till Kvinna. When we select evaluators, we try to work with those with knowledge of feminist theory/evaluation and skills in our particular field.

#### 5.11.2 Participation of partner organisations

We are always eager to have our partner organisations participate in our evaluations. Ideally, this happens from the very start of a project/programme. Having partner organisations participate has many advantages. First of all, it strengthens partner organisations’ ownership of their own work and results. Second, their participation makes


\(^47\) We’ve seen that evaluations with a combined purpose risk having too vast a scope and superficial findings – this can be good to keep in mind when planning an evaluation.
evaluation findings more relevant, because multiple voices are included. Third, mutual learning becomes easier when both we and our partner organisations participate in an evaluation, or when we share evaluations with our partner organisations and discuss any lessons learned.

For our partner organisations to be able to smoothly participate in evaluations, we need to talk with them about the goal of the evaluation, the type of evaluation and the steps along the way. If partner organisations actively contribute to the evaluation (for example by being interviewed), they should be involved in the planning the evaluation: they can then influence the Terms of Reference (especially the evaluation questions) and decide together with us what we want to learn from the evaluation.

5.11.3 Terms of Reference
Kvinna till Kvinna does not have any standard criteria for selecting external evaluators: usually, we choose on the basis of qualifications, price and the evaluation method the evaluator suggests.48

We guide and influence the evaluator's work in the Terms of Reference we give them. These allow us to require a certain focus/approach for the evaluation, provide quality assurance, specify how our partner organisations should be included in the evaluation and set the evaluation questions.

Qualitative and future-focused questions help move the evaluation beyond simply focusing on results and make sure it also looks at processes, learning and diverse kinds of knowledge. When selecting evaluation questions, we keep in mind the project's background, the evaluation's timeline and budget, ask ourselves what we're trying to learn, remember who will be conducting the evaluation and think about efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability.

5.11.4 Using and learning from evaluations
Evaluations can be a great opportunity for learning. When done properly, they can strengthen and develop both our own capacity and our partner organisations' capacity. To make sure this happens, all participating individuals and organisations (including our partner organisations) should get feedback, and there should be space and time to discuss the evaluation's process and findings.

Here are a few examples of questions that can be discussed:

- What does the evaluation say?
- Are the findings (un)expected?
- Are the findings relevant?
- Do we agree with the interpretation of results and process?
- Were relevant and multiple voices heard?
- How can the findings inform and improve our programme management, programme setup or partnership?

When possible, project staff and partner organisations should discuss a draft of the evaluation report, so they can provide the evaluator with additional voices and suggestions and help interpret the findings. This can make the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations more relevant and useful in the end.

Once the final evaluation report has been delivered, the project staff and relevant manager(s) should consider its recommendations and discuss which of these they will act upon. The manager will then write a management response, with an action plan that specifies who will be doing what (and when) in terms of follow-up. The action plan should be followed up as part of our monitoring work.

Evaluation reports should normally be shared with partner organisations and external stakeholders, for transparency's sake.

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48 Kvinna till Kvinna’s HR unit offers a table with variables for comparison. We allow the evaluator to pick the evaluation method to guarantee a certain independence.
This chapter will look at capacity development and its importance for a sustainable women’s movement. We will discuss the definition of capacity development and look at two main types of capacity development: organisational development and thematic strengthening. For organisational development, we will present several possible tools our partner organisations can use to assess their own capacities, including two tools we have developed ourselves. Thematic strengthening is about identifying specific areas that are most relevant for an organisation to develop.

This chapter also contains a section on networking. We look at why networking is important for organisational development and sustainability and introduce Kvinna till Kvinna’s approach to networking. Finally, we present different purposes of networking, including the purpose of creating safe spaces to mitigate shrinking space.
6.1 Capacity development
When we talk about capacity development,49 we talk about the act of sharing knowledge and skills among Kvinna till Kvinna and our partner organisations, to strengthen our partner organisations and their ability to change, influence and achieve sustainable results. Capacity development improves partner organisations’ ability to articulate a clear vision, define goals, plan and implement programmes in line with that vision, and locally own results. In a sense, proper capacity development is a way of preparing for an eventual phase-out. Both organisations themselves, related individuals (staff, WHRDs), rights holders and the women’s movement as a whole can benefit from capacity development.

Our partner organisations themselves are the ones who identify and express their capacity-development needs. In close dialogue with them, we then offer capacity-development activities through trainings and workshops, trainings of trainers, mentoring, study visits, exchanges and networking opportunities.50 Sometimes, our support is tailor-made for a single organisation. At other times, we offer capacity-development support to multiple partner organisations at once, for example at collective networking meetings (nationally, regionally or cross-regionally). We try to invite different organisations and different categories of staff to these meetings to enrich discussions and reduce tension. Whenever we offer capacity development, we always keep in mind conflict sensitivity, human rights and power analysis.

Capacity development can be divided into two main types: organisational development and thematic strengthening.

Organisational development helps an entire organisation grow and develop. It focuses on capacities related to an organisation’s internal structures. One particular aspect of organisational development we try to support is planning, monitoring & evaluation, because this is so important for an organisation’s sustainability. We want organisations to be able to articulate a clear vision, define what change they want to see and then plan/implement programmes in line with that vision. We offer planning, monitoring & evaluation support in those areas our partner organisations have told us they need support with, and/or in relation to project cycles.

Thematic strengthening focuses on a specific aspect of a partner organisation’s capacity, like gender-based violence, peacebuilding or security of WHRDs. Usually, our partner organisation will already be working on that aspect or will be looking to expand the scope of their work. Kvinna till Kvinna has several advisors who can assist with thematic strengthening; we try to have all the capacity-building competence we need available internally, to avoid involving external consultants.51

6.2 Gendered organisational development
When we work with organisation development at Kvinna till Kvinna, we make sure to incorporate gender in our efforts. Gendered organisational development is the process of consciously strengthening organisations through a gendered analytic approach. It helps organisations become/remain relevant actors in their field, so both rights holders and other stakeholders see them as legitimate and credible.

The first step of gendered organisational development is having partner organisations do a gendered assessment of their capacities, to identify areas they need to work on or things they need support with.52 A gendered capacity-assessment is based on the idea of gender mainstreaming. It analyses whether or not the entire culture/structure of an organisation – from its approaches and management values down to its decision-making structures – reflects gender equality and gender awareness.

This kind of capacity-assessment is based on mutual trust and local ownership which is enshrined in our partnership principles. Our partner organisations are the ones who own the process. They decide, for example, at which level to conduct the assessment – i.e. whether to include only their management or whether to focus on rights holders as well. In dialogue with us, they decide what kind of assessment to do and how to share the result with us.

The better we understand our partner organisations’ needs, the better we can plan capacity-development support and create capacity-development plans for our partner organisations. This kind of tailored support is one of Kvinna till Kvinna’s added values.


50 Ironically, donors often require that organisations already “have systems in place” (financial systems, monitoring skills, routines, etc). This can clash with the need for local ownership and the importance of listening to and being receptive of partners’ needs for development.

51 We ourselves are currently building our internal capacity to monitor capacity development (both our own and our partners’). For more on this, see the following paper by INTRAC: Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is it really that difficult?

52 Note that a capacity-development-related organisational assessment is not the same as the organisational assessment conducted in relation to entering a partnership, prior to writing an agreement. This is explained in chapter 3.
6.2.1 Kvinna till Kvinna’s capacity-assessment tool

To make capacity-assessment easier, we have created a capacity-assessment tool for our partner organisations, it is a self assessment tool. The tool was developed in 2014 and updated in 2017 to put a greater focus on gendered organisational development. It includes a range of questions and examines eight dimensions of an organisation:

1. Overall vision, structure and operational/strategic routines
2. Leadership and culture
3. Project/programme management
4. Achieving change for the rights holders as target group
5. Interacting with networks and duty bearers (indirect/supporting target groups)
6. Managing security and work environment
7. Staff/skills development through an information- and knowledge-generated management
8. Human resources and administration

While we recommend our partner organisations use this tool, all partner organisations are free to choose a capacity-assessment tool that suits their own needs or adapt our tool to their own context. The advantage of this tool over other tools is that it highlights and facilitates discussions about gendered aspects of organisational development, and that it was developed specifically for our partner organisations and women’s movements.

We always consider our partner organisations’ history of similar assessments and their processes with other donors: we want to avoid repeating assessments or overburdening our partner organisations. That is why we are open to adjusting our tool to other donors’ tools, and coordinating assessment processes with other donors.

HOW TO USE OUR CAPACITY-ASSESSMENT TOOL

This tool is interactive. During a workshop, partner organisations assess their current capacities and their capacity-development needs. For each of the tool’s eight dimensions, they indicate what level they believe they are at on a scale from 1 to 12. The tool includes a terminology dictionary, a draft workshop agenda, scoring guidelines and a document to summarise the outcome of the workshop. It is crucial that all participants feel safe enough to freely express their opinion during the workshop, it can be difficult to assure if this has happened if we are not participating. The more comprehensive the assessment, the better. Still, the tool is ambitious: it is likely partner organisations will focus on a few aspects of the tool that are most relevant to them.

WHO CONDUCTS THE SELF-ASSESSMENT?

The self-assessment should be participatory, with as many staff members, management and board members as possible participating to get an adequate picture of the organisation’s performance, strengths, weaknesses and priorities.

Partner organisations can conduct the self-assessment by themselves (with some instructions/guidance from Kvinna till Kvinna) or with the support of an external consultant. From Kvinna till Kvinna’s side, we try to avoid participating in the actual assessment itself, as our participation as a donor can skew power relations. Instead, we can engage in preparatory work with the external consultant who will be supporting the assessment, to help safeguard or approach, maintain trust and assure results will be shared with us after the assessment is done.

We have also developed a second tool to assess our partner organisations’ capacities and needs in terms of the security of WHRDs. This security-assessment can help partner organisations understand how to improve their own security efforts and increase WHRDs’ well-being. It can also help us at Kvinna till Kvinna better understand our partner organisations’ security needs, which we can then help meet.

6.2.2 Other self-assessment tools

There are several other tools apart from our own to help organisations assess themselves. Many donor organisations have developed their own tool or modified an existing one. Which tool to pick depends on the purpose of the self-assessment, the phase a programme is in, the needs and size of the organisation, and the financial resources and staff available.

In the past, our partner organisations have found a SWOT analysis and the Octagon tool useful. SWOT is easy to use and doesn’t take up as much time or as many resources as the Octagon tool. It does, however, provide a lot less detail.

A SWOT analysis looks at an organisation’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We ourselves have used SWOT analysis in our planning processes and monitoring. The Octagon...
tool assesses several dimensions, including identity (has the organisation articulated its core values, mission and purpose?); structure (is there a clear, transparent governance structure?); capacity for programme implementation; programmatic relevance; the competency of volunteers, staff and management; the organisation’s economic resources and administrative routines; whether the organisation is supported by society; and the extent to which target groups legitimise the organisation.

Both tools are generic and do not include a gender perspective: we recommend adding that perspective when using these tools with partner organisations.

6.2.3 Feminist Treasure Chest
The Feminist Treasure Chest is a project at Kvinna till Kvinna where we are trying to find the answer to the question: What is the Kvinna till Kvinna way when it comes to combining our thematic knowledge and our methods used in facilitating and coaching?

All the information collected through interviews and sharing of different resources, primarily manuals, reports, and guidelines, are available at SharePoint, in what we are calling a Feminist toolbox. This resource can be as capacity building both for our partner organisations and for us. In the toolbox, you can find inspiration while planning, facilitate, execute or follow-up a workshop or how to coach a partner organisation.

6.3 Networking
A central part of what we offer our partner organisations is the space and opportunity to network with other women’s rights organisations, civil society actors and activists. We create networking spaces in different ways, including through study visits, advocacy trips, networking meetings and capacity-building activities for our partner organisations or WHRDs. Our networking support is multifaceted: we initiate, facilitate, open doors, give travel grants and provide opportunities to interact. For us, networking is both a means and an end. We believe networking can have a number of purposes:

1. **Exchange and learning**
   Our networking meetings allow partner organisations to meet, share experiences, build capacity and strengthen links to colleagues that may support them in the future (either face-to-face or virtually). Networking often leads to partner organisations cooperating; we finance a lot of collaborative activities that our partner organisations arrange. Networking also helps us at Kvinna till Kvinna learn: the more we engage in dialogue with different partner organisations, the better we get to understand the situation of the women’s movement in specific regions and countries. This in turn helps us better support our partner organisations.

2. **Stronger national and regional advocacy**
   Networking provides women’s rights organisations with a platform to discuss their advocacy strategies, coordinate their advocacy activities and plan joint initiatives. We also connect our partner organisations to decision-makers and open doors to (inter)national actors.

3. **Stronger women’s movement**
   Networking increases solidarity between women’s rights activists and organisations and strengthens them individually and/or as part of the larger women’s movement. The less fragmented a movement is, the louder its voice can sound.

4. **Greater trust**
   While we do not push for meetings between partner organisations across conflict divides, we do expect our partner organisations to eventually be able to interact with each other. We believe building relationships across borders and conflicts increases trust and cooperation and is a key step to achieving peace. It is important to keep in mind, however, that this is not done with one meeting: trust-building takes time and a lot of resources. To diffuse tensions from the start, meetings intended to build trust should take place outside of the conflict context.

5. **Safe spaces**
   Networking creates safe spaces in which our partner organisations can trust each other and openly engage in dialogue. In the context of shrinking space, these safe meeting places strengthen the security and well-being of exposed activists. Safe spaces challenge fear and isolationism. Bringing together activists from different regions/countries also allows participants to see how similar the challenges they face are. This can boost their courage and strengthen their work in difficult, dangerous contexts. In today’s hostile world, meeting like this become ever more important.
In most contexts, the women’s movement gets very little funding – we can then step in and financially support networking efforts. In other places, strong and strategic networks already exist, so financial support may be needed less, or perhaps offering direct financial support can be difficult. In those contexts, our main contribution to networking can consist of institutional support, or opening doors to decision-makers and raising awareness of shrinking space.

6.3.1 Planning networking activities

Carrying out a successful networking activity requires a great deal of thought, communication and coordination. Here are some tips to consider when planning activities:

- Always consider the added value of a meeting, to avoid taking up partner organisations’ space. Instead, complement their own needs.
- Carefully consider what the most efficient networking platform would be to achieve your goal. Should you focus on the national, regional or cross-regional level?
- In some contexts, it can be better to have a partner organisation itself (rather than Kvinna till Kvinna) invite participants to the activity.
- Consider integrating cross-regional events with national/regional ones, to avoid planning one-off events.
- Make sure to invite partner organisations’ most relevant representatives, i.e. those who know most about the topic that will be discussed or those who specifically work with that topic. Usually, we try to invite two employees/members per organisation, as this helps institutionalise new knowledge. It can be a good idea to invite one long-time employee/member and one newer employee/member.
- Apart from our partner organisations, consider inviting other relevant stakeholders we cooperate with.
- Think about how to facilitate networking for partner organisations who are unable to travel.
- If possible, ensure there is space for individual activists at your networking event. Networking events can offer a great opportunity for mutual learning.

- Set aside time in the programme for partner organisations to have their own strategic discussions. We do not need to be present for this.
- Spend energy on monitoring the result of the networking event. Plan how you will follow up results, including results that go beyond the formal event.
This chapter discusses the process of phasing out from a country/region. To the extent possible, a proper phase-out safeguards partner organisations’ sustainability after we have left. We will talk about how and when we decide to phase out. We will also explain why it is important to create a phase-out strategy well ahead of the actual phase-out, and which principles to base that strategy on. Because no two contexts are the same, this chapter is more of a guide than a strict manual: phase-out strategies will differ from context to context.
7.1 Phase-out

A phase-out refers to the termination of regular, funded activities in a programme country or region. While no two phase-out processes are the same, all phase-outs should be properly planned to enhance the sustainability of our partner organisations and programmes after we have left. A well-managed phase-out includes careful consultation with partner organisations and relevant stakeholders, long-term planning, flexibility and proper monitoring of results.

At Kvinna till Kvinna, we began exploring the practice of phasing out when we phased out our programme in Croatia and later also left other countries in the Western Balkans. Each time, the phase-out process was different. In Croatia, for example, we did not run any more activities after closing our office in Zagreb in 2006. In the other countries, we still ran regional activities after leaving the country. In all cases, we actively searched for ways to help our partner organisations continue their work after we had left.

Sustainability of our partner organisations' work is important for us. In a way, we begin ensuring local ownership and sustainability long before a phase-out, from the moment we start working in a country. That is because we always base our programmes not just on our own analyses, but also on our partner organisations' analyses and suggestions on how to address challenges; our partner organisations understand they have a responsibility over a programme from day one. We also always explain that our programmes have a time limit, to avoid misunderstandings about future dependency.

7.2 Developing a phase-out strategy

A phase-out strategy is a plan that describes how we intend to phase out from a country/region, including how we will make sure progress continues and results are not jeopardised. Phase-out strategies increase the likelihood of sustainability if they are planned together with partner organisations, well ahead of the actual phase-out. A phase-out strategy should include:

- Phase-out criteria
- Measurable indicators of progress on these criteria (set in each regional programme)
- A timeline for the phase-out process
- Planned actions and a division of responsibilities
- Monitoring mechanisms to assess progress

Phase-out criteria

Phasing out is a strategic, political decision that Kvinna till Kvinna's management is responsible for. The decision of when/how to phase out is based on our phase-out criteria:

- **Goal achievement**: Even though it is not easy to achieve all intended outcomes in a certain country/region within a limited time frame, measuring indicators of the outcomes we want to achieve and sustain can help us decide when to phase out.
- **Funding**: Having a phase-out strategy in place allows us to plan ahead and find alternative funding for our programme. If we cannot find sufficient funding, we sometimes have to phase out earlier than planned. Either way, we always try to open doors for our partner organisations and connect them to other donors.
- **Risk assessment**: When we enter a country, we make a risk assessment of our ability to achieve our goals during the last phase of our presence in the country. We also look at the risks of a phase-out (both for ourselves and our partner organisations) and may take steps to prevent or limit these risks.
- **Our added value**: We always follow up whether it is still helpful/necessary for Kvinna till Kvinna to offer financial support or capacity-development support to achieve the (regional) strategy's goals.

Kvinna till Kvinna's senior management group will inform both Kvinna till Kvinna's own staff and our partner organisations of their phase-out decision.

7.3 Phase-out manual

This manual can serve as a guide when planning to phase out from a country/region. Ideally, all the steps described below will be completed; in many cases however, there will only be time or resources to fulfil parts of them. Either way, the key thing to remember when phasing out is to base everything we do on the needs of our partner organisations, and to continuously communicate with them.

1 Timeline

The overall time between the moment we enter

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54 For inspiration, lessons learned and examples of specific phase-out activities, see “Lessons learned from phase-out in the Western Balkans”.

55 Phasing out usually comes on top of ongoing “regular” work, so you may need extra support/resources during the process.

56 For more guidance on how to make a risk assessment, see our Risk Management Guide.
and the moment we phase out from a country is not set in stone, but will be guided by Kvinna till Kvinna's programme goals, funding possibilities, a risk management plan and our added value. We should, however, have a timeline for the actual phase-out process. Preferably, this timeline is 5 years; at minimum, it should be 2-3 years. We inform our partner organisations of the timeline as soon as possible.

2 Documenting the process
We should systematically document the entire phase-out process, to give ourselves the opportunity to learn from it. When we conduct an evaluation or meet a partner organisation to discuss our phase-out, for example, we document that. The documentation must be saved at a place where all colleagues can access it. The head of office oversees documenting the process. It is also important to make a list of the contact details of key partner organisations and other stakeholders in the country.

3 Flexible funding
During a phase-out, we try to reduce our funding in steps: this sends partner organisations a clear message that time is running out. But phasing out does not necessarily mean funding will automatically decrease for all partner organisations: during this time, we are flexible in the way we offer funding. In some cases, we may temporarily increase funding for one programme or one individual organisation, or support temporary initiatives or new organisations. We always decide this strategically (by focusing on sustainability) and tailor our decisions to the local context.

4 Communication
With partner organisations: We always have an open, transparent dialogue with our partner organisations about a potential phase-out (including what we as Kvinna till Kvinna are or are not responsible for). Especially during the final years of our support to an organisation, we need to talk with them about what their needs are at that point in time, and how we can support them as efficiently as possible before leaving. As soon as we have decided to exit a country, we inform our partner organisations of our exit date and plans. Our exit strategy should include a communications plan. The earlier and in greater detail we inform our partner organisations of our plans, the better they can prepare. Ideally, breaking the news of a phase-out happens at a network meeting, so we can inform all partner organisations at the same time. This set-up also gives partner organisations the opportunity to ask questions and discuss their needs together.

Internally: Already at an early stage, we need to communicate our plans to all Kvinna till Kvinna colleagues. This ensures our external communication on our work in that country remains relevant, and makes it easier to mobilise extra staff resources during the phase-out.

With stakeholders: We also inform relevant stakeholders who may be affected by the phase-out (EU, Sida, other international organisations, domestic institutions, …) of our plans. By recapping our work with partner organisations for them, our partner organisations may be able to access new funding and/or gain recognition for what they do.

5 Capacity development and outreach
Any capacity-development investments we made during a partnership (in areas like HR, project management, programme development, networking, risk management, fundraising or advocacy) will hopefully contribute to our partner organisations' sustainability after we have left the country. Ideally, our partner organisations will have developed all the skills they need. If they have not, we can make an extra effort to address their most pressing needs before our exit. In our last few years in a country, we often focus on strengthening our partner organisations' outreach skills (communication, advocacy and networking) or their financial-management skills (as this increases their chances of getting funding from other sources).

6 Security
During a phase-out, security can be an issue. We need to analyse the risks our partner organisations and national staff may face after we have left the country, for example, and make sure they are prepared to handle these. Changes in the political climate, for example, may affect national staff members' security after our exit. Our risk management plan for the country will help us determine which measures we need to take. We should also assess our partner organisations' security situation and their ability to work with risk management and threat analysis.

7 Fundraising
During a phase-out, we can help our partner organisations find alternative sources of funding by mapping potential donors, organising fundraising trainings, assisting our partner organisations in writing applications, introducing them to new donors and encouraging them to make strategic fundraising plans. We can consider bringing in a local expert who knows the context well to help our partner organisations with these strategic plans. While we are still present in the country, our
partner organisations can get smaller amounts of funding from us for specific initiatives.

Sometimes, we consider co-funding with other donors, as this can make it easier for our partner organisations to find new funding. Co-funding can lead to cooperation in the future. We can also co-apply for funding together with our partner organisations, to access funding from larger donors like the EU. Another option is helping organisations start a network (like a women’s fund) that can distribute funds to grassroots organisations or strengthen similar existing networks.

It remains important to emphasise that, in the end, it is not Kvinna till Kvinnas responsibility to secure funding for our partner organisations. Instead, we provide them with the tools they need to do it themselves.

8 Networking
During a phase-out, we make an extra effort to help our partner organisations come into contact with similar organisations (within/outside of the country) they could work with. We share invitations, look for relevant networking events or financially support travel. All of this can help inspire our partner organisations to continue their important work even after we have left.

9 Consolidating results
Before exiting a country, we need to evaluate what we have achieved together with our partner organisations. We can invite our partner organisations and experts to an evaluation seminar to look at results and remaining challenges. It can also be a good idea to invite key donors and stakeholders to that seminar.

Around two years after the phase-out we also evaluate the phase-out itself, to draw lessons from it. This can be a good time to follow up on the progress and achievements our partner organisations have made since we left, to see how sustainable our work together has been.

10 Staff exit and office closure
Eventually, we will downsize and close our country office. We need to let our partner organisations know about this, and tell them how they can contact Kvinna till Kvinnna after local staff have stopped working. If international staff are leaving before the office is closed, local staff need to be prepared to take on any remaining tasks. Keep in mind that closing an office is a major task that should not be left until the last minute.

11 Celebrating mutual achievements
Before the final phase-out, we host an event to celebrate our partnership with local organisations and look back on the results we achieved together. It can be a good idea to invite other stakeholders to this event as well.

12 After the phase-out
During the phase-out, we talk with our partner organisations to decide what will happen after our final exit – that is, if and how we will continue communicating or cooperating. After we have ended regular support, we sometimes maintain some kind of role in the country to help sustain our partner organisations and/or add to the results we’ve already achieved. Past experience, for example, has shown us that few other donors want to fund networking activities among women’s rights organisations: this is something we can consider funding after our phase-out, because networking helps make local women’s movements and their work more sustainable.

See also our “Shortlist when preparing for phase-out.”
FOR ALL WOMEN’S RIGHTS, IN EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD
## List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNH</td>
<td>Do No Harm</td>
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<tr>
<td>IKFF</td>
<td>Women's International League for Peace &amp; Freedom in Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEL</td>
<td>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Partner organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RBM</td>
<td>Results-Based Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHRD</td>
<td>Women human rights defender(s)</td>
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