



EWI Fellowship Research Programme

**THE REGION'S PEACEBUILDING SECTOR AND THE PLACE AND
IMPACT OF WOMEN'S PEACE ORGANISATIONS WITHIN IT**

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Abstract

The subject of this research paper is an analysis of the recent history of women's activism in the processes of peacebuilding and nonviolence in the countries of the former Yugoslavia and of the activities of women within the civic peace movement since the outbreak of wars in this region (1991-1999) to date. The objective of the research is to acquire knowledge on the gender aspect of war and peace as well as on the potential for strengthening the civic structure of women's and peace activism within the processes of building peace and nonviolence in the region. The conducted research deals with the inclusion and contribution of women in the peace sector of the region. Although women's organisations are perceived as more sensitive and more active with respect to issues of peace than the rest of the civic sector, this hypothesis has not been confirmed within the conducted research. The research also highlights the need for further efforts aimed at peacekeeping and strengthening trust in the region.

Keywords: women's activism, women, peace, security, peace sector of the region, dialogue, civil society organisations

INTRODUCTION

In the whole world and on the territory of the former Yugoslavia alike, wartime and post-conflict peace processes are intrinsically linked to the gender issue. Although the gender issue is also an essential issue of war and peace, violence and nonviolence, this does not mean that women's resistance to war must also be expressed as an "innate" feminine trait (Zilić 2007: 239). Almost the entire history of mankind has been genderised, and issues of war and peace are intertwined with gender relations, while gender stereotypes continue to be justified by cultural and religious traditions (Spahić-Šiljak & Anić 2009: 9). Peace from the male perspective and peace from the female perspective or, figuratively speaking, peace with a woman's face and peace with a man's face have never been the same (Jarić 2013: 58; Džanović 2013: 23).

The 1990s wars on the territory of former Yugoslavia were civil wars as much as military conflicts. The outbreak of war in 1991 launched an avalanche of anti-war civic activism which, for many reasons, largely involved women's peace activism. It initiated the emergence, and in many cases also the unifying, of numerous civil society peace initiatives (Janković 2009: 19; Bilić 2012). In Croatia, a network of civil society, women's and feminist organisations developed under the name of the Croatian Anti-War Campaign (Antiratna kampanja Hrvatske), while the Anti-War Action Centre (Centar za antiratnu akciju) was established in Belgrade. At the same time, the Centre for Peace (Centar za mir) was founded in Sarajevo, and the Peace Institute (Mirovni inštitut) in Ljubljana. Numerous civic associations and a significant number of citizens demonstrated a high level of civic maturity, and the ability to cope, act and remain active in the adverse circumstances of wartime, as well as in the no less difficult aftermath of war. In all these states, both wartime and post-conflict peace processes were marked by an extraordinary mobilisation of women and women's organisations in particular. The scope of their activities was immense, as the results of this research will also demonstrate.

The gender dimension of war and violence as well as the gender dimension of peace building is a complex and socially sensitive issue, which has hardly been addressed within the public-institutional and official political discourse. Existing "knowledge" leaves both war and violence against women, as well as women's peacebuilding engagement, very much in the shade, as women's

narratives have hardly been recorded, other than in fragments. (Spahić-Šiljak 2015: 11, Spahić-Šiljak et al., 2012: 11).

This paper, based on the research entitled "The Peace Sector of the Region and the Place and Impact of Women's Organisations within it", gives a record of past and present peacebuilding activities in the region (in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro), told in the words of the very women who participated in these processes.

The historical context

Different and opposing views exist as to the reasons for the breakup of former Yugoslavia, and the wars which accompanied it. Were these wars for self-determination, secessionist wars, civil wars, or wars over territory...? In an attempt to answer this question, the term "wars for the Yugoslav legacy" has also been coined (Bakić 2011: 20). What were its actual motives and whose interests exactly lay at the root of this war remains difficult to discern through the existing veil of distorted and arbitrary "truths". The political scenes of the newly-formed states on the former Yugoslav territory are still strongly dominated by conservative, nationalist, militant and populist right-wing forces. Numerous warlords, war profiteers and war criminals have not only evaded restorative justice but remain well settled in positions of power in their deeply impoverished and criminalised national communities. Transitional justice has, unfortunately, failed to happen in the former Yugoslavia on a formal, judicial level (Zajović 2007).

The first anti-war or peacekeeping activities of civil society organisations started while there were still only hints of war in the air on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and its actual outbreak caused a proliferation of peace initiatives and organisations throughout the country (a description of the first organised peace activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina is given by A. Živanović in: Topić et al. 2008: p. 37 and further). The "common" citizens' advocacy of peace, tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflicts was, however, not powerful enough to prevent the then political apparatus of their national communities from developing a cult of the emerging war. It was the first armed conflict after the Second World War, not only in these areas, but also in Europe.

The armed conflicts began in 1991 with a ten-day clash between the Yugoslav National Army and the units of the Slovenian Territorial Protection. What followed were much longer and more devastating wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991 – 1995). After a few years of a relative lull, war flared again in the region in 1999 (between Kosovo and Serbia). The 1990s wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia will remain etched in history and in memories of people as wars that employed extremely destructive strategies and were characterised by massive killings, persecutions, deportations, mass rapes, civilian suffering, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and wide-range destruction of infrastructure and property.

The picture of the period is additionally complicated by the fact that in parallel with the armed conflicts all countries of the region were also involved in processes of post-communist transition. The transition from a socialist model of society to a model governed by market economy and parliamentary democracy was, therefore, all the more difficult in post-Yugoslav countries, and also more exposed to deviations (such as corruptive privatisation) than in most former socialist countries of Europe.

By the end of the wars, the geopolitical scene of the region was drastically different from the one of 1991. Today there are six or seven smaller states on the territory of former Yugoslavia that have not yet resolved all their mutual disputes. Most of these countries are burdened by serious internal problems, typical of transitional societies – fragile economies, unemployment, corruption, etc.

Along with other civil society organisations and the newly emerging peace groups, women's and feminist organisations of the period boldly instigated many informal processes through their first anti-war initiatives, actions and protests (see historical overview in Tešanović 1999, also Perković 2012, Zajović 1996; Popov-Momčinović 2013). Both in wartime circumstances, and in the aftermath of war, strong women's initiatives were launched, such as the peacekeeping education organised simultaneously in 12 cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Tuzla, Bijeljina, Bratunac, Modriča, Višegrad, Zenica, Bosansko Grahovo, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Bosanska Gradiška, Bihać) under guidance of the women's organisations Lara from Bijeljina and HO Horizonti from Tuzla (*Peace with a woman's face* or *Peace caravan 2014* projects (the same)).

Peace-oriented women's and feminist organisations invoked the freedom of ethical choice and action and put up resistance against the warlike ruling institutions, refusing to flow with the tide of war. An example of a wartime peace initiative can be found in the broad coalition of Croatian civil society organisations gathered within the Croatian Anti-War Campaign (ARK), which included numerous women's and feminist groups, such as the Zagreb Women's Lobby, Women's Infoteka and the Centre for Women War Victims.

However, in wartime and in the aftermath of war alike, civil society organisations, and especially women's and feminist organisations as strongest and the most uncompromising in condemning the warmongering ruling elites, were not only excluded from peace processes and negotiations led by their states and governments, but were – much like today – deeply ignored, hidden from the public, pushed aside and suppressed in every possible way.

An event that contributed to the efforts for involvement of women as decision-makers in issues of war and peace was the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (hereafter UNSCR 1325), 31.10.2000. Member states were required to incorporate the UNSCR 1325 into their binding legal frameworks, which are to support the creation of other legal norms concerning women's human rights, gender equality, justice and peace. Women and women's organisations, representatives of the feminist peace movement in the region, were predecessors of the UNSCR 1325 in all the countries of the former Yugoslavia (Mladenović & Branković 2013: 3).

On the research

The research entitled "The Peace Sector of the Region and the Place and Impact of Women's Organisations within it" was conducted within a Fellowship Programme of the Ecumenical Women's Initiative from Omiš, Croatia (hereinafter referred to as EWI), aimed to support scientific research of women scholars and students in the field of peacebuilding focused on the EWI region (i.e. Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and/or Serbia).¹

1 The information and attitudes within this paper do not necessarily reflect the attitudes of EWI on the issues addressed.

The social objective of this research is to expand knowledge on the contribution of women's organisations in the field of peacebuilding and nonviolence in the region, as well as to give an overview of current circumstances and future trends in building peace and nonviolence within the region's socio-political context.

The main objective of the research is to acquire knowledge on the potential for strengthening the civic structure of women's peace activism.

The conducted research aims to answer the central question: In what way are women's peace organisations agents of peacebuilding processes in the region, and what is the contribution of women to peace and nonviolence?

The research encompassed a total of 30 civil society organisations in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro, all of which display a combination of certain relevant features making them eligible for inclusion in the research. All of them are civil society organisations and all have experience in peacebuilding activities, programs and projects, although they do not declare themselves as peace organisations. Of the total number of organisations, 16 are women's or feminist organisations, while 14 do not have such a character. Also, 16 out of 30 organisations have previously participated as partners in EWI's programmes, while 14 have not, which was one of the sample characteristics related to the specific hypothesis of the research. Organisations that participated in the research answered questions referring to formal and informal processes as well as peacebuilding agents in their local, but also national and regional communities. They also evaluated the place and impact of women and women's peace activism in peacebuilding and peacekeeping processes and compared the impact of their activism to that of other peace agents in the region.

The research was both theoretical and empirical. Theoretical research included an analysis of written sources, i.e. research papers, multimedia content, records of events, activities and agents in building peace and nonviolence in the region. Based on the theoretical research, insight was gained into the context and conditions in which these processes take place, their participants, as well as their effects and ways in which they are interrelated with other social processes and phenomena.

For the purposes of empirical research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used. The quantitative method was applied in the evaluation of the practice and resources of civic, and especially, women's peace activism in peacebuilding processes. The tool of quantitative data collection was a questionnaire designed for the purposes of this research. The qualitative method was applied in one part of the questionnaire as well as in a telephone interview.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions divided into 5 sections:

1. Organisation / identification data
2. Data on the perception of the concept of peace
3. Data on the perception of the peace sector participants
4. Data on practices/activism
5. Activity related to the UNSCR 1325

Open-ended questions, asking respondents to further elaborate on some of their responses in the questionnaire, were aimed at deepening the analysis and the understanding of the historical processes we have gone through, obtaining a more accurate assessment of the current situation, as well as predictions as to future perspectives of peacebuilding. These questions provided space for creativity, by allowing the respondents to broaden their statements and claims to include not only facts, but also theoretical considerations and personal impressions.

1. The problem statement

1.1 Problem hypotheses

The 1990s wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia triggered a proliferation of peace movements and initiatives led by citizen groups and civil society organisations across all the countries involved, while women's and feminist peace organisations had a special place and a historical impact in this context. They established and maintained mutual cooperation and were the first to offer a hand of reconciliation, much before any of the newly-formed states did, thus rising above all ethnic, nationalist, territorial and other boundaries, guided by women's solidarity and the

ethics of care. Women as peacekeepers, activists, initiators, mediators, and leaders take historic credit for a vast array of peace activities. They were the most active in taking a stand against militarism and war, both due to and in spite of the heavy burden of violence against women and violence in general, as one of the essential traits of war. They pointed out the gender-related essence of war. They were the harshest critics of militarism, nationalism, ethnic cleansing, racism, and xenophobia. They were the first, though not the only ones, to provide organised support to war crime victims, to launch public actions for prosecution of crimes, actions against covering up and downplaying crime, as well as to raise the questions of restorative responsibility and transitional justice.

One of the problems addressed within the study was the marginalisation and exclusion of women's peace work from the public discourse. Although the women's peace movement has made a historical contribution to understanding peace, security and the role of women and was the only one to have continuity in peace processes, its potential and significance have been both neglected and untapped. Within the predominantly patriarchal and militant public discourse, war and violence against women and women's engagement in peacebuilding remain largely invisible and deeply marginalised topics.

1.2 The basic problem

The central issue addressed was:

- In what ways are women's peace organisations agents of peace processes in the region and what is the women's contribution to peace and nonviolence?

This issue is addressed by observing the content and manifestations (both past and current) of peacebuilding and nonviolence work in the region, as well as the context and circumstances in which such activities are or have been conducted, taking into account their time and place, their effects and interrelations with other social processes and phenomena, and their agents i.e. participants.

1.3 Significance of the research

1.3.1 Social objective

To expand knowledge of the contribution of women and women's organisations in the field of peacebuilding and nonviolence in the region and to explain and give a prediction of future trends and perspectives in peacebuilding and nonviolence in the regional socio-political context.

1.4 Previous research results

A majority of studies on peace activism of women, youth and other civilian participants in the war has been conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, less in Montenegro and Macedonia. Significant scientific studies have dealt with the research of peace determination, the review of peace processes, movements and activities (Markešić 2015, Ždralović & Rožajac-Zulčić 2012, 2013, Sejfija et al., 2013), peacekeeping networks and coalitions (Zaharijević 2015), public opinion polls on peace activism (Topić et al. 2008), implementation of a restorative approach and activities in intercultural settings, as well as case studies of real life stories and women peace workers' narratives (Spahić-Šiljak 2015), feminist identities (Zaharijević 2012, Spahić-Šiljak 2012), influences of religion and politics on women (Spahić-Šiljak 2007) etc.

All these sources reveal the unique relevance of women's history for contemporary trends in peace and reconciliation processes, within which gender identity is a powerful political instrument in both positive and negative terms.

Studies have shown that peace work, reconciliation efforts and efforts aimed at facing the past, as well as peace identities of the actual agents of change within the peace sector, have still not received due recognition but continue to face rejection, mistrust and denial by their national communities, whose perceptions have been warped by the learned public patterns imposed through official government rhetoric.

2. Methodology

The main and basic objective of the research was to acquire knowledge on the role of women's peace activism in the field of peacebuilding and nonviolence in the region.

2.1 The research tasks were to:

- examine how women's civil society organisations and other civil society organisations in the region evaluate women's peace activism and work on peacebuilding and nonviolence.
- investigate how women's and other civil society organisations participate in activities and initiatives to build peace and nonviolence in the region.
- explore the most common problems women's and other civil society organisations face in their peacebuilding and nonviolence activities.
- compare a group of women's peace organisations (16) that have been supported by the EWI in their programmes and projects, with a group of organisations that have not (14).

2.2 Hypotheses

2.2.1 Starting hypotheses

- General hypothesis: Women's organisations are more sensitive to the requirements of peacebuilding and nonviolence work in the region than other civil sector participants.
- Specific hypothesis: Participation in EWI's programmes increases the sensitivity and capacity of women's organisations for building peace and nonviolence.
- Individual hypothesis 1: Women have no or little real impact on formal processes of building peace and nonviolence in their local communities and the region.
- Individual hypothesis 2: Women and women's organisations want to increase their participation in processes of peacebuilding and nonviolence.

3. Sample: civil society organisations (30) that can be distinguished by two factors:

- a. women's and/or feminist organisations (16), and those that are not (14);

- b. organisations supported by the EWI in their programmes and projects (16), and those not (14).

4. Method: Theoretical and empirical research

1. Research tools: Questionnaire and telephone interview.
2. The research was conducted in the period from mid-September 2017 to the beginning of December 2017. The research had its time constraints as well as methodological constraints involving a selective and relatively small sample, which makes both the statistical analysis and potential conclusions conditional.

Research results

None of the respondents understand the concept of peace in negative terms (absence of war and conflict), but view it positively, in terms of a condition or process in which normal communication, cooperation, and resolution of problems are accomplished, and which is governed by respect for human rights, the rule of law and a general trust in the system's institutions. An important aspect of such an understanding of peace is facing the past and the prosecution of crimes committed, as indicated in many of the interview responses. The same is also demonstrated by the results of the questionnaire (Table 1), where responses are divided into two groups, none of which, however, includes a negative concept of peace as a mere absence of war.

Table 1.

	Condition of progress, cooperation, tolerance and general security		Continuing process aimed at eradication of war and its causes	
	Fr	%	Fr	%
Wom_Org yes	7	43.8%	9	56.3%
no	9	64.3%	5	35.7%

When assessing the importance of peacebuilding in the region, the respondents are almost unanimous in the opinion that this is still a significant open issue throughout the region. Although it has been some 20 years since the cease of direct hostilities and warfare, the nature of peace remains palpably fragile, as no preconditions for a complete break with the war and the maintenance of a stable peace have been created.

The opinions presented concerning the factors that contribute to or, on the contrary, represent obstacles to peace initiatives are to a certain point expected, so civil society organisations, and women's organisations in particular, as well as individuals who are brave and conscious enough not to fall under the influence of nationalistic, patriarchal and militaristic discourses, are viewed as factors most contributing to peace. Some responses also highlight religious authorities, educators in schools, athletes, artists and other popular public figures as well as the international community as positive factors in this respect.

The respondents' attitudes towards the media and politicians are largely ambivalent, since these are seen both as factors of great influence that can contribute to the development of peace initiatives, but also as factors that can harm them. It is primarily politicians who are often judged as actually representing an obstacle to peace. When referring to obstacles to peace, many responses also include the government and political parties, which suggests that a certain conflict between the state and the society is perceived to exist by the organisations surveyed. In addition, poverty and the bad economic situation in the countries of the region are also understood as hindering factors for peace initiatives.

Nationalist ideologies, which are often articulated in direct association with religious affiliation, are seen as a very disturbing factor. A large majority of respondents set such a concept of collective identity based on national and religious affiliation against a modern concept of identity. According to newer theories there is, namely, no such thing as an unchangeable monolithic identity, but identity is rather perceived as an open-ended "mosaic".

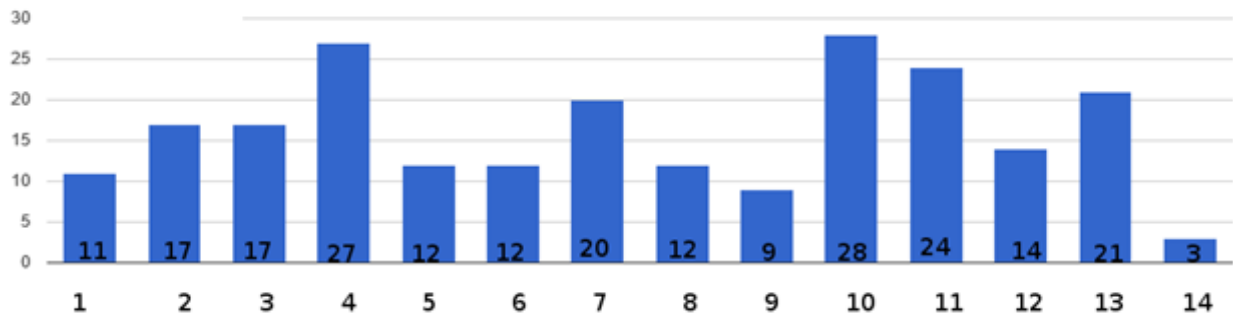
Most respondents tend to point out the unique features of the women's peace movement, rather than considering it equal to other (non-women's) peacekeeping forces. Some underline the historical fact, that it was precisely women's and/or feminist organisations that first stood up against

war throughout the region, emphasising especially the vast array of activities undertaken by the "Women in Black" organisation, as well as the comprehensive theoretical and practical work.

The fact that the respondents rate the impact of women's peace initiatives as inadequate and too weak to substantially alter the dominant matrix of public discourse, and thus social behaviour, is only seemingly paradoxical. This imposes the need for such initiatives to be continued and deepened further. An interesting point is also made in two responses stating that more attention should be paid in future peace work to so-called "male" associations, which need to break out of their existing framework of militant-nationalist and patriarchal ideologies.

In conducting their peacekeeping activities, civil society organisations employ different tools (Chart 1), with the most frequent ones being such involving the production and dissemination of knowledge on peacekeeping issues. Such educational activities were conducted by 28 (out of 30) organisations, whereas 24 of them organised and/or participated in conferences, public discussions and round tables, and 21 listed media appearances as a peacekeeping activity. The least frequent activities included the provision of legal aid (9 organisations) and petition launching (11 organisations), but even such activities were carried out by almost one third of the organisations. The list of activities presented indirectly points to the diversity and creativity of approaches to peace work.

What kind of activities has your organisation's peace work included?



Legend: 1: petitions; 2: campaigns, lobbying; 3: street actions and/or protests; 4: peace networks participation; 5: distribution of humanitarian aid; 6: direct individual civic aid; 7: printed materials, publications, books; 8: psycho-social support and trauma assistance; 9: legal aid and representation; 10: training programs, seminars, workshops; 11: organisation of and/or

participation in conferences, public discussions, round tables; 12: organisation of arts and culture events; 13: media appearances; 14: other.

Quantitative research has demonstrated the existence of certain correlations and trends that modify the overall picture of the women's peace movement in the region.

The results show (Table 2) that women's organisations are better acquainted with the UNSCR 1325 than other organisations, as 68% of them claim to be very familiar and 31% to be partly familiar with the Resolution. The necessity of increasing the knowledge of civil society organisations with respect to the Resolution's content is indicated by the fact that no more than 21.4% of them believe they are very familiar with it, while a part of them have either never heard of the Resolution (14%) or have heard of it, but are not familiar with its content (7%). Calculations have shown that there are significant statistical differences between the two groups ($\chi^2 (3.30) = 8.17, p < 0.05$), i.e. that women's organisations are better acquainted with the UNSCR 1325.

Table 2

	We are very familiar with the UNSCR 1325		We are partly familiar with the UNSCR 1325		We have never heard of it		We have heard of it but are not familiar with its content		
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	
Wom_Org	yes	11	68.8%	5	31.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	no	3	21.4%	8	57.1%	2	14.3%	1	7.1%

Differences between women's and other organisations are also manifested (Table 3) with respect to the assessment of the impact of women's peace initiatives on official peace processes and policies. A majority of women's organisations rate this impact as mild/weak (50%) and only 18.8% as strong. On the other hand, most non-women's organisations estimate the level of this impact as moderate, and only 7.1% as strong. The responses of both groups suggest that the impact of women's organisations on official peace processes is perceived as moderate, weak or inadequate,

indicating the need for further efforts to involve women's organisations in formal peace activities. Statistical analysis, however, shows no significant differences here ($\chi^2(3.30) = 3.51, p = 0.32$).

Table 3

		mild/weak impact		moderate impact		strong/high impact		no or insufficient impact	
		Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
Wom_Org	yes	8	50.0%	3	18.8%	3	18.8%	2	12.5%
	no	5	35.7%	7	50.0%	1	7.1%	1	7.1%

The assessment of whether women are more affected by war/conflict than men (Table 4) also differs depending on whether the respondent is a women's organisation or not. A vast majority of women's organisations responded either to "completely agree" (50%) or to "mostly agree" (43.8%), whereas none of the organisations offered a negative response. Other civil society organisations provided a wider range of responses, with a total of affirmative responses amounting to 57.2%. However, no statistically significant difference was established ($\chi^2(4.30) = 6.76, p = 0.15$).

Table 4

		completely agree		mostly agree		undecided		completely disagree		mostly disagree	
		Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
Women's Org.	yes	8	50.0%	7	43.8%	1	6.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	no	6	42.9%	2	14.3%	4	28.6%	1	7.1%	1	7.1%

At first glance, the observed differences in the responses of women's and other organisations suggested that the general hypothesis was justified, i.e. that female organisations indeed are more sensitive to the requirements of peacebuilding and nonviolence work in the region than other civil sector participants. The difference, however, turned out not to be statistically significant except

concerning the level of familiarity with the UNSCR 1325, which leads us to conclude that the hypothesis is not confirmed.

The answers provided in the interview, and commented on earlier in the text, confirm the individual hypothesis 1, i.e. that women have no or little real impact on formal processes of building peace and nonviolence in their local communities and the region.

Responses in the qualitative part of the survey (interview) indicate that the individual hypothesis 2 has also been confirmed, i.e. that women and women's organisations indeed want to increase their participation in processes of peacebuilding and nonviolence. Suggestions to this end include forming of national and regional alliances and organisation networks, as well as the promotion of peace initiatives, especially among young people living in ethnically homogenised communities and lacking any real-life experience of coexistence with members of other ethnic groups.

The research also aimed to test the specific hypothesis that participation in EWI's programmes increases the sensitivity and capacity of women's organisations for building peace and nonviolence. The results of the quantitative part of the research indicate that there is indeed a tendency among organisations involved in EWI's programmes to display increased sensitivity towards gender-based violence issues, as demonstrated in Tables No. 5, 6, 7 and 8. Their involvement in such programs does not, however, necessarily guarantee an increased peacekeeping capacity of the organisation, as can be concluded from the data concerning their familiarity with the UNSCR 1325 (Table 9).

Table 5

		mild/weak impact		no/insufficient impact		strong/high impact		moderate impact	
		Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
Cooperation with EWI	YES	6	37.5%	0	0.0%	3	18.8%	7	43.8%
	NO	7	50.0%	3	21.4%	1	7.1%	3	21.4%

Table 5 shows the difference in responses to the question on the impact of women's organisations on official peace processes in the region. As we can see, none of the organisations cooperating with EWI rate this impact as inadequate or non-existent, while other organisations view it as such in 21.4% of cases. The difference is also reflected in other ratings, in the sense that EWI's partner organisations tend to rate the impact of women's organisations higher.

Table 6

		undecided		completely agree		completely disagree		mostly disagree	
		Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
		Cooperation with EWI	YES	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	75.0%
	NO	1	7.1%	1	7.1%	8	57.1%	4	28.6%

Table 6 shows the respondents' views with respect to the following statement: "Sustainable peace is possible without achieving gender equality". EWI's partner organisations fully reject this claim in 75% of cases, and mostly reject it in 25% of cases. Other organisations fully reject the claim in 57.1% and mostly reject it in 28.6% of cases. This leads us to conclude that organisations involved in EWI's programmes show a greater tendency to associate the issue of peace with gender issues than other organisations.

Table 7

		undecided		completely agree		completely disagree		mostly agree		mostly disagree	
		Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
		Cooperation with EWI	YES	2	12.5%	8	50.0%	1	6.3%	5	31.3%
	NO	3	21.4%	6	42.9%	0	0.0%	4	28.6%	1	7.1%

This table shows the views on the statement: "War affects the lives of women more gravely than those of men." Although a difference in attitudes may be observed between the two groups of organisations surveyed, it is, however, not as great as in the previous two questions.

Table 8

	undecided		completely agree		mostly agree	
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
Cooperation with EWI	2	12.5%	10	62.5%	4	25.0%
	3	21.4%	5	35.7%	6	42.9%

The respondents' attitudes concerning the claim: "War is associated with gender-based violence" show a marked difference between the two groups. Organisations that cooperate with the EWI fully agree with the statement in 62.5% of cases, and those that do not, agree with it by 35.7%. In the previous four tables, we have noted the existence of major or minor differences in the views of civil society organisations, depending on whether they are involved in EWI's programmes or not. All these differences point to the conclusion that participation in these programmes does increase the sensitivity towards gender-based violence issues, which would be in line with the specific hypothesis of the research. However, evidence to the contrary is given by the results concerning the familiarity with the UNSCR 1325 (table 9), which demonstrate that the level of familiarity with this Resolution is lower in those groups of organisations that cooperate with EWI than in others. Only 31.3% of EWI's partner organisations claim to be very familiar with the content of the Resolution, as compared to 64.3% of other organisations. This brings us to the conclusion that the specific hypothesis has not been confirmed. Such results may well suggest that previous EWI programmes have not focused on the UNSCR 1325 and its content sufficiently and provide the grounds for a recommendation to do so in their future work.

Table 9

	We have never heard of it		We are very familiar with the UNSCR 1325		We are partly familiar with it		We have heard of it but are not familiar with its content		
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	
	Cooperation with EWI	YES	1	6.3%	5	31.3%	9	56.3%	1
	NO	1	7.1%	9	64.3%	4	28.6%	0	0.0%

Conclusion

The presented paper included the experiences and assessments of 30 civil society organisations that have been active in peace work, regardless of whether they primarily declare themselves as women's, feminist, peacemaking or other types of organisations.

Regardless of the existing particularities of the organisations themselves and the diversity of socio-political milieus of all former Yugoslav countries in which the mentioned organisations are active, it was possible to integrate all the opinions, assessments and experiences of peace work into this paper.

According to the opinions of the research participants, the full consequences of these wars remain unknown and unacknowledged even today. In this context, a special area of interest lies in the impact and consequences of war on the lives of women of this area. As reported by survey respondents, there is not enough willingness to face the past in any of the individual national state frameworks of the newly-established states. There is also not enough willingness to recognise the contribution of civil society organisations, of women's and feminist organisations in particular, either in wartime circumstances, or even at the present moment.

Starting hypotheses:

- Women's organisations are more sensitive to the requirements of peacebuilding and nonviolence work in the region than other civil sector participants (the general hypothesis) has not been confirmed.
- The specific hypothesis that participation in EWI's programmes increases the sensitivity and capacity of women's organisations for building peace and nonviolence has not been confirmed.
- The individual hypothesis 1, that women have no or little real impact on formal processes of building peace and nonviolence in their local communities and the region, has been confirmed.
- The individual hypothesis 2, that women and women's organisations want to increase their participation in processes of peacebuilding and nonviolence, has been confirmed.

The research has confirmed that the central target group of the study, consisting of women's and female organisations, has played an undisputable role in war-time and post-conflict peace processes in all newly-formed states of the former Yugoslavia.

However, despite the harmonious unison of the individual countries' national legislation on the equality of social actors and social partnership within the peace sector, a "Berlin Wall" of sorts is still standing between government structures and civic, and especially women's, peace activism. Much like at the beginning of the 1990s wars, the state and women's and feminist organisations still seem to be firing at each other from opposite trenches. The civil society's position has not improved much. Civil society organisations are still not recognised, let alone (potentially) equal social actors. Although incorporated in national legislation, they have not been, nor are they now included in negotiating teams, or seem to stand any chance of being included in the near future (for example in Serbia, in the current team for Kosovo negotiations). The views expressed by respondents within this research show that not even two decades after the cessation of direct hostilities and warfare has an appropriate framework for peaceful and nonviolent communication been established, either in the region or in the countries constituting it. Processes of building peace and trust in the region are thus still open and very much necessary. The survey results indicate that the respondents highly value the anti-war and peacemaking initiatives of women's and feminist organisations. However, despite the international reputation of these organisations and the peace

movement at large, their work remains pretty much invisible in the society or in the media, which reduces their potential impact on politics and future legislation.

The process of peacebuilding and reconciliation / restoration of trust in the region is therefore an ongoing process, whose actors have to face many obstacles, most often imposed by governments and policies still dominated by the narrow-minded nationalist discourse.

The two wings of peace (Spahić-Šiljak 2015: 201), institutional and non-governmental, have not been able to work together to create a stable and sustainable peace.

Nevertheless, let our peace work be guided by the views of the participants of this research:

Peace depends upon me, upon you, upon all of us!

If you want peace, make peace!

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