UNIVERSITY OF BANGUI

**Laboratory of Rural Economy
And Food Safety
(LERSA)**

KMF

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE PEACEBUILDING PROCESS WITHIN COMMUNITIES IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: A CASE STUDY OF BATANGAFO, BRIA, BANGUI-BEGOUA AND PAOUA.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AFL   : Association of Women Leaders
AGR   : Income-Generating Activity
APRD   : The People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy
ECCAS   : Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS   : Economic Community of West African States
CEMAC   : Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States
CPC   : Community Protection Committee
CPJP   : Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace
FOMAC   : Peacekeeping force in Central Africa
FPRC   : Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic
JAD   : Youth in Action for Development)
LERSA   : Laboratory of Rural Economy and Food Security
LRA   : Lord's Resistance Army
MINUSCA   : United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
OFCA   : Organization of Central African Women
NGO   : Non-Governmental Organisation
OSC   : Organization of Civil Societies
UNDP   : United Nations Development Programme
CAR   : Central African Republic
RCPCA   : The National Recovery and Peace Consolidation Plan in the Central African Republic
RPRC   : Rassemblement Patriotique pour le Renouveau de Centrafrique (Patriotic Rally for Central African Renewal)
UNSCR   : United Nations Security Council Resolution
AU   : The African Union
UFDR   : Union of Democratic Forces for Unity
UPC   : Union for peace in the Central African Republic

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Executive summary

In the Central African Republic, the context of fragility that exacerbates the vulnerability of women has led them to commit themselves to peace building processes, particularly at the community level. This role of activist for peace is strongly anchored in women schemes because as men stir up conflict, women, through their interventions, fundamentally struggle to find solutions that promote peace. This quest for peace can be explained by the fact that women, as mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of combatants, are the ones who bear the full brunt of the harmful effects of armed conflicts. Actually, they wish to preserve their own lives and those of their families.

This qualitative study was funded by the KPSRL. It is the result of a partnership between the University of Bangui and the INGO Oxfam. It was carried out between December 2017 and February 2018. It primarily targeted key informants and women in organized groups. The study focused on 689 people in four urban and rural sites in Bangui-Bégoua, Batangafo, Bria, Paoua, including 486 women and 203 men.

In terms of results, the study showed that women who are involved in peace building processes, are rather young, educated, married or common law partners and belong to all socio-professional categories. They perceive peace not as the absence of war, but rather as a peaceful environment that protects people´s rights, enables them to carry out their economic activities and is conducive to the fulfilment of human rights. Activities women are engaged in include advocacy, awareness raising, prevention and mediation. Sometimes, they are also involved in charitable and social activities.

Women are motivated by both individual interests, such as the need for social empowerment and collective interests, like addressing threats to their communities. They sometimes receive support from their husbands and are encouraged by their families. When organized in associations, they often get technical and financial support from international organizations. Although their work is essential for peace building, its scope is unfortunately limited to their immediate environment, because the linkage is not yet firmly established between women activists at community level and those who perform at a national level.

In addition, women's interventions for peace face both endogenous and exogenous barriers, including socio-cultural values, the geostrategic and legal contexts that is favorable but not always operational, and the economic context.

The study concludes with a number of strategic and practical recommendations to overcome the barriers to women's participation in the peace building process. If implemented, they will undoubtedly and efficiently contribute to strengthening women's contribution to peace processes and to promoting greater women empowerment.

I-General introduction

I-1-Context and justification

In the prevailing context of fragility of the Central African people, women are determined to bring peace. In some localities, because they are mothers, spouses or sisters of combatants, they brought the belligerents to lay down weapons.

While men are the main actors of armed conflicts and are at the front-line, women pay the heaviest tribute to armed conflicts. Their life has been torn because their husbands and children were killed. They witnessed violence and successive internal displacements and they have lost all their livelihoods to the conflict.

In fact, the Central African society is aware of the crucial role women play as the main factors of stabilization. This was acknowledged during the *Forum de Bangui*[1] that laid the foundation of the current constitutional order and triggered the adoption of The National Recovery and Peace Consolidation Plan for the Central African Republic (RCPCA, 2017-2021). This plan strongly recommends the involvement of women in the consolidation of peace processes at the local and national levels.

This recognition of women's role by the government is sign for foreseeable changes in long standing roles that have been vested in them. Indeed, for many reasons women are no more only occupying the domestic sphere. Some are enrolled in armed groups, some others are displaced or kidnapped for humiliation of losers; some others turned into heads of families because their husbands are fleeing fighters or were simply killed. As they are confronted to family and social duties and the instinctive need for survival, they invest themselves and without reserve, in building peace. Therefore, understanding better their actions and motivations towards peace for themselves and their families, is critical.

While the official fora where discussions on peace agreements are taking place in CAR, exclude women, local initiatives put the woman at the core of informal peace building processes. One concrete example is the fact there is no woman within the ongoing mediation team for the African Union initiative for Peace. This duality illustrates the social role of Central African women as mothers, wives and guardians of traditions and their leading role in advocacy, prevention, awareness and mediation for peace, at the community level.

It is worth noting that in CAR, women occupy very little political space, even though they represent 50.2% of the population and the law of number favors them. In the current government, there are only four ministries headed by women out of 23 (17.4%)[2]. In the National Assembly, there are 12 women out of 140 parliamentarians (8.57%). In the regions, there are two (2) women sub-divisional officers out of 15. At the local level, 20 women hold positions as mayors out of 176[3] that is 11 %. Moreover, among the eight institutions of the Republic that are operational[4], only women head two. In addition, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) that stands at 0.768 shows that there is still much work to be done to achieve equality (World Bank, 2016).

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[1] https://jfakiblog.com/2016/05/23/le-forum-national-de-bangui-en-documents-enfin-ca-memories/
[2] According to Article 7 of Law 16.004 establishing parity between women and men in the Central African Republic, a minimum quota of 35% of women is required based on their competence in decision-making bodies as far as appointments and elections are concerned.
[3] Decree No. 15/364 appointing members of special delegations to municipalities.
[4] The Constitutional Court (Mrs. Darlan), the National Agency for Elections (Mrs. Nkouet), the Parliament, the High Court of Justice, the High Authority for Good Governance, the Economic and Social Council, the National Council of Mediation and the High Authority of Communication.

The reason given to justify this situation is that "many Central African women are not educated or trained ... »[5], which does not allow them to master and fulfill their rights. This assertion could exemplify the lack of political will for gender equality.

Moreover, in CAR, the pervasive poverty heavily weighs on women, thus hindering their financial autonomy. In addition, the lack of efficient policies and strategies to strengthen their participation in public affairs, despite a favorable legal framework, continues to marginalize them.

Indeed, a number of political instruments show evidence of the state interest to empower women. In its Article 5, the Constitution of the CAR underlines the principle of equality between men and women. The RCPCA recalls the crucial role of women in reconciliation and peace building processes, while emphasizing their vulnerability in a context where various structural weaknesses coexist. In addition, the law on parity voted in November 2016 is a step forward for the promotion of women's rights.

In the humanitarian bulletin published by OCHA[6] in March 2018, more than half of the Central African population (2.5 million) are in need of humanitarian assistance. Two million are food insecure and the number of internally displaced people and refugees keeps increasing (14% increase compared to April 2017 figures); this vulnerable population consists mainly of women and children.

Women are key components of the stabilization of the Central African Republic. As a result, the CAR government has reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of equity and equality between men and women. At the international level, the CAR endorsed global frameworks for the protection of women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and the Sustainable Development Goals (article 5) or more specifically the Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons and Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. These commitments are also integrated within national strategic frameworks such as the RCPCA, which underline the critical role of women in promoting peace, security and reconciliation.

What is the role of women in peace building processes? What is the impact of their activities at community level? What barriers (social, structural, legal, etc.) prevent them from acting in this field? How can women contribute sustainably to conflict resolution or peace building at all levels? How do these grassroots women influence decisions on peace talks? What supports do they receive? What do they need to be more assertive in their peace building efforts? Thus, a new field of studies that could be examined is linked to type of female organizations that should be promoted. What are their profiles? How are they organize? How can we build on their members abilities to sustain their values for peace? Moreover, how their economic power looks like to reinforce their work and contribute to sustainable development?

Thus, this monograph on women involved in peace building process at community level fills an unmet demand and lack of knowledge on women's actions and role in promoting peace.

At the global level, the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 has provided the impetus to better take into account the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, including in peace talks. At the country level, this field of study has recently attracted more attention, particularly in long-term situations or acute crises. As a result, development policies and strategies are gradually integrating women's perspectives in the development of conflict responses.

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[5] Dixit the Prime Minister Simplice Mathieu SARANDJI, on September 13, 2017, qualifying his government as competent

[6] https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/rca_ocha_032018_bulletin_humanitaire2.pdf

Documenting women's participation in community-based peace building processes in CAR is therefore an innovation in the political landscape. For Oxfam, which put women at the heart of the fight against injustices and poverty, it is a step further to acquire a better knowledge of women´s contributions to peace in conflict and post conflict settings.

I-2-Objectives and expectations

I-2-1-Objectives of the study

I-2-1-1-General objective

The objectives are twofold:

- To analyse the experience of women's participation in peace building process and especially the way they are involved at the community level;
- To analyse the legal framework for women's participation in peace building in CAR.

I-2-1-2-Specific objectives

The aim of the study is to:

1- Highlight the contributions of women to the community-based peace building process in the Central African Republic including best practices and success stories, after the multiple military-political crises experienced by the country;

2- Highlight the profiles of Central African women involved in this peace building process;

3- Bring out the impact of this contribution and the support women receive from their immediate environment;

4- Identify the legal limitations and constraints that women face in this process;

5- Identify strategies adopted by women in their efforts to consolidate peace;

6- Document the existing legal framework and analyze possible gaps between national legislation and international legal instruments ratified by the CAR;

7- Formulate recommendations on how women can play a more active role in local peace building and especially how to improve gender integration in the public arena in CAR.

I-2-2-Expected results of the study

This study is a research-action approach that may be of interest to many development actors and donors. Thus, the following expectations should be met:

- ➢ Profiles of women involved in peace building in CAR are known;
- ➢ Women's knowledge of peace building is assessed;
- ➢ The type of activities initiated for peace building is identified;
- ➢ The obstacles and difficulties faced by women are highlighted;
- ➢ The main actors who support women at community, local, national and international levels are identified;
- ➢ Documents on the existing legal framework are analyzed; the gaps between the national legislation and the international legal instruments ratified by the CAR are underlined;
- ➢ Recommendations focusing on strategies to promote women's participation in peace building processes are formulated.

This study should contribute to strengthen women´s initiatives at the community, national and regional levels (CEMAC, the AU) and provide evidence for multiform support to sustain their interventions such as training or provision of IGA.

More specifically, the results of this study will offer a strong background for policy-makers to develop inclusive peace building strategies that focus on women's participation at the community and possibly national and regional levels. These may include training or advocacy strategies for a better integration of women into formal peace building structures such as local peace committees, or even other forums for discussions on peace.

This study will also avail relevant recommendations for the strengthening of gender integration in the implementation of peace building programs and projects, including the implementation of the first pillar of the RPCPA and the CAR national gender strategy. These results will be disseminated through OXFAM networks Rights in Crisis, Women, Peace and Security). At the national level, OXFAM in CAR will develop an advocacy and programming strategy focused on the training of women in line with the results of this study.

Finally, these results will reinforce the implementation of the RCPCA, in particular in its Pillar 1 related to the promotion of peace and social cohesion.

II-Methodology of the study

This study was made possible thanks to the close collaboration between the INGO Oxfam and the University of Bangui. To this end, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with LERSA to make relations between the two partners more fluid. Thus, two researchers took part in the various activities of collection, analysis and writing of the report, in collaboration with the international consultant. Specifically, the University of Bangui has developed collection tools, processed them, verified data, carried out the triangulation of collected information and supervised all collection activities on different sites. The consultant focused on the analysis of the legal framework and the production of the final documents: Final report and the advocacy paper.

II-1- Approach: method and sampling
II-1-1- Method

This study relies on a combined approach of quantitative and qualitative methods. A mix of data collection techniques was used, including a literature review, administration of a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with key informants, focus groups and individual meetings. After the collection, the data were processed and the report was drafted.

- *Tools for data collection*

a) **Primary data**

These data are collected directly on the field from the various actors identified using the tools mentioned above, including meetings with the local administrative authorities, religious authorities, community leaders, CSO leaders, national and international organizations.

b) Secondary data

This section mainly deals with the desk document review. Consultation of peace building policies and strategy documents, administrative acts (decrees and ministerial orders) and books provided a set of information necessary for a better understanding and analysis of data collected on women's participation in peace building processes. Based on the literature review, we had in-depth knowledge of the topics already developed. Secondary data also helped to cross profiles of women activists in peace building activities.

II-1-2-Means of verification and data processing

a) Verification tools

The reliability and validation of the information stemming from this research are based on the designed research protocol. The researchers took into account existing studies, thus avoiding certain biases and discrepancies and thus, corroborating evidence. A pre-test of the collection tools was organized on a control sample. Collecting tools were then revised and validated. These two phases were critical for data verification.

b) Analysis tools

The analysis tool for this report is the XLSTAT software, which analyses descriptive statistics by highlighting the key elements for a better interpretation of the results. This tool also helps to draw the various graphs (histograms, circulars, etc.).

II-2-Sampling

This study is based on a non-random sampling process; thus, it cannot be representative of the women population of the sites. Researchers have deliberately targeted women in organized groups such as women's groups and associations, to understand group´s dynamics. Complementary information was gathered through key informants who do not necessarily belong to these women's groups. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be extrapolated to the entire population of women.

To ensure the quality of information, data were collected from different categories of women, both urban and rural, in the selected localities. Alongside these women who belong to structured groups (networks and associations), other categories of people were interviewed. Among them were groups of young women and men's groups. Other categories included decision-makers or executive, legislative and judicial staff, church leaders, leaders of civil society organizations, individuals, researchers, opinion leaders and civil bodies in the community both at the national and local levels, representatives of international organizations, representatives of youth and women's organizations (Annex II). In the localities of Bria and Paoua, ex-combatants were also approached.

The focus groups generally involved fifteen participants (exclusively female, male or mixed groups). The field team organized at least three (3) focus groups per site[7]. In each field, at least 45 people were interviewed, in addition to specific groups (ex-combatants) and individuals. The figure below illustrates the number of respondents per site

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[7] In Bria, for example, we had four (4) study sites: Gobolo, Mandé, PK3 et Bornou

Figure 1: Statistics of respondents.
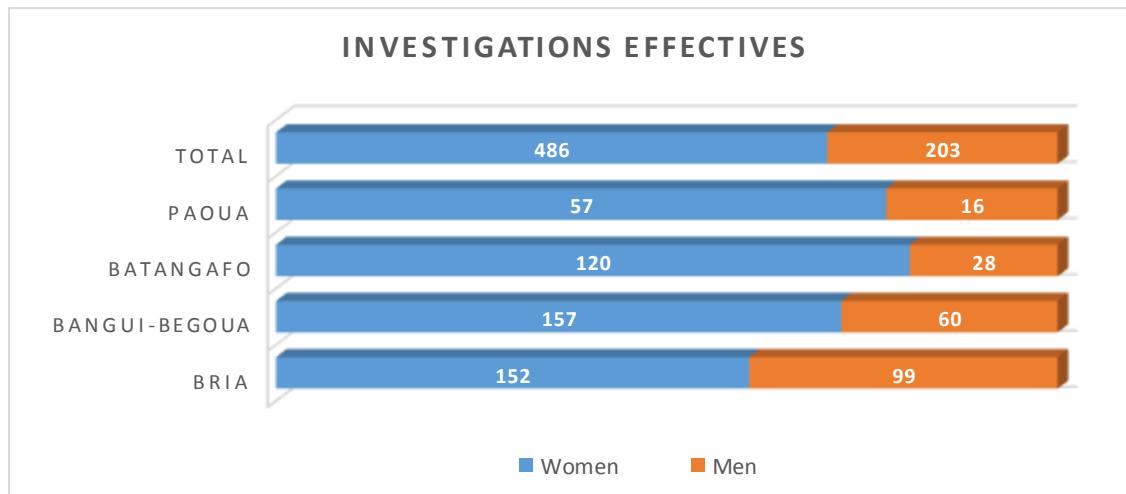
Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

II-3-Research sites

Each selected site is specific in terms of socio-culture, religion and population setting. Some localities included the sites of internally displaced persons.

a) The town of Bria

The town of Bria covers four (4) neighborhoods namely the PK 3 site, the Bornou neighborhood, the Mandé neighborhood and the Gobolo neighborhood. After many crises, each neighborhood relies on ethnic and religious affiliations. Thus, the PK 3 site is a venue for Christians from all social strata and the Banda Togbo people; Bornou neighborhood includes Goulas, Rougas and some members of other ethnic groups. The Mandé neighborhood, where the inhabitants are predominantly Chadians and Sudanese, have long settled with the Saara. Finally, Peulhs mainly occupy the Gobolo neighbourhood. The last two sites are home to Muslim communities.

b) The town of Bangui-Bégoua

The fifth sub-division of the town of Bangui is located next to the third sub-division, which remains the main neighborhood with a strong concentration of the Muslim community of any strain. It also hosts Christians converted to Islam. Some Christians who have been displaced by conflicts live there. The Antibalakas groups surround this neighborhood to prevent unintentional attacks by Km5 armed groups.

The township of Bégoua, located at the northern exit of Bangui, is known to be a place of high concentration of Christians. However, some Muslims converted to Christianity begin to reside there.

c) The town of Batangafo

Unconventional armed groups (Antibalakas and Ex-Séléka) control this land. Thus, two IDPs´ sites have been created, the Parish site mainly accommodates Christians and on the site of Lakouanga, Muslims of all kinds live. The last site hosts some converted Christians and girls married to Muslims.

d) The town of Paoua

When we conducted the study, armed groups occupying axes and seeking to paralyse the centre of the town controlled this area. Thus, we find a mass of internally displaced people from

surrounding villages fleeing assassinations and the fighting between the various unconventional armed groups.

Table 1: Areas selected for the study

	Bria	Bangui-Bégoua	Batangafo	Paoua
Sites[8]	-PK3 -Bornou -Mandé -Gobolo	-5th sub-division -Bégoua	-Site of displaced people -Lakouanga	-Rural training center

Source: OXFAM/LERSA 2018

II-4-Criteria of selection of field areas

The following four criteria motivated the choice of our field areas: The vulnerability to the armed conflict, the cultural diversity of targeted populations, the presence of national CSOs and the presence of Oxfam.

The recent history of selected sites made of armed conflicts, infiltrations and mass displacements that have deeply affected these areas, provides fertile ground for the implementation of peace building activities. Thus, during and after the conflict, several women and community initiatives were set up for the restoration of peace. These activities were led by local NGOs in targeted areas. In addition, Oxfam has four main areas of intervention within its Humanitarian Program namely Bangui-Bégoua, Batangafo, Bria and Paoua. Consequently, the study will help strengthen synergies between the two Oxfam's supported Programs, which are the Governance Program, and the Humanitarian Program.

Finally, there is also a diversity of cultural traits (sharing the border with Chad and Sudan or with Chad and Cameroon) that does not facilitate social cohesion, due to the cohabitation of people of warlike tradition and sedentary people, hence the seriousness and persistence of conflicts.

II-5-Difficulties encountered and limitations of the study

This study was conducted without major difficulty. However, it should be mentioned that some administrative and security constraints were reported. The absence of administrative authorities in areas other than Bangui prevented us to provide a full picture of official lines of conduct and authorities' perceptions on women's participation in peace building processes.

On security issues, due to the absence of police forces, and to restrictions of movements on the ground, the research team could not go down the roads axes. Thus, the team geographically stuck to urban settings and only covered areas around these cities.

Concerning other limitations, it should be noted that the study focused on women belonging to structured groups. Therefore, the results cannot be applied to the entire female population.

In addition, the study examined the interventions of women at the community level both in Bangui and in regional urban sites. However, it could not examine the relationships between women at the community level and women at the national level. This aspect may inspire further research.

Finally, the study, which focuses on women, did not aim at highlighting the weight of youth (teenagers and young women), which could be the topic of a specific study in CAR.

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[8] The sites selected for the study include sites of internally displaced persons or other localities close to the town. Some sites include a community and other sites include mixed communities.

II-6- The Literature Review

This research is part of the continuum of studies published on the role of women in peace building in contexts of armed conflict.

It reinforces *Rehn E and Sirleaf EJ's discourse* (2000) [9]which put emphasis on women's commitment as activists. In this capacity, women organize communities and guide them in peace building processes to put an end to armed conflicts. This key role impacts on and interacts with women's rights, gender justice and their participation in democratic processes, particularly in rural areas. Unfortunately, in CAR, this participation is neither formally recognized nor valued.

In the same line, *Sanam Naraghi* (2007)[10] stresses the centrality of the work of ordinary women affected by the conflict who strive hard to transform it within their communities of life, for their own sake and the survival of their families. These women participate in dialogue, negotiation and mediation activities with armed groups and intervene in the prevention and protection of vulnerable persons, particularly women and girls. This activism can lead to changes in gender norms either temporally (at the individual level) or lasting, within the structured groups.

This study also reinforces the findings of *Suzan Mc Kay*, (2004)[11] on the socio-economic and cultural determinants of women's participation in peace building and the power that influences women´s insecurity. Indeed, the low status of women in CAR, their low literacy level in rural areas, the lack of economic opportunities and the lingering gender inequalities, accentuate their fragility and vulnerability to any form of violence that could be exacerbated in a context of armed conflict such as rape, sexual exploitation and abuse, kidnapping and mutilation.

Moreover, this research gets in tune with Joyce *P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams's research (2013)[12]* on the evolution of gender norms in conflict contexts. Indeed, women's roles and attitudes change according to their political commitment and activism for peace. As women develop negative coping strategies such as enlisting in armed groups, commit in violent and non-violent activism or encourage their sons, husbands and brothers to engage in combat, they deliberately take out their traditional roles in the private sphere and invest in the public domain reserved for men.

Finally, echoing the research of Elisabeth Porter (2003)[13] , this study highlights the need to popularize UN Resolution 1325 aiming at creating spaces and putting in place appropriate strategies that promote gender-specific approaches in peace building processes in post-conflict contexts.

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[9] Rehn E; Sirleaf EJ (2000,) Women, War and peace: Rehn E; Sirleaf EJ (2000) Women, war and peace: The independent experts' assessment on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in Peace building.

[10] Sanam Naraghi Anderlini (2007,) Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters,

[11] Susan Mac Key (2004,) Women, Human Security and peace building, a feminist analysis, in Conflict and Human Security: A Search for New Approaches of Peace---building. IPSHU English Research Report Series No.19

[12] Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams (2013,) Women at War, Women Building Peace: Challenging Gender Norms Women At War, Women Building Peace: Challenging Gender Norms

[13] Elisabeth Porter (2003,) "Women, Political Decision-Making, and Peace-Building», Global Change, Peace and Security.

III-Overview of Women's Profiles

Today, in CAR and around the world, there is a dynamic trend aiming at greater participation of women in the consolidation of peace. This seems more visible in political and public decision-making processes, which is a democratic reference criterion for a society. Who are these women? What do they do? What are their motivations? Who support them? Moreover, what is the impact of their activities?

III-1-Analysis of women's profiles

In recent years, progress has certainly been recorded on the participation of women in politics and public decision-making, particularly after the transition managed by a woman and the implementation of some clauses of the 4th Beijing Conference on women. The CAR population consists of 50.2% women versus 49.6% men (RCPCA). They come from various social strata and religious denominations with a variety of socio-economic profiles. An in-depth analysis of these profiles is useful to better understand what underpins their commitment in the process of peace building and conflict resolution.

> ➤ **Age and gender**

Based on the results of this study, gender and age are the first determining factors in conducting a peace building activity led by women in CAR. The average age of women involved in peace building is 33 years old. However, each field allows appreciating the different age groups. Indeed, women are involved in peace building processes, while men are more at the front. Although the maturity of the woman is an important factor in these peace processes, young women (minors) are also committed to promoting peace at operational positions (household helpers, scouts, etc.). However, the majority of female activists who are over 18 years old are members of associations; and many of them hold positions of authority within these women's associations. Older women, who have a life experience that allows them to conduct sensitive activities, usually run these associations. They also do so, because belligerents can only be hospitable and docile with people they consider as mothers and not young people. As age is the catalyst for all women's initiatives in this type of activity, the case of the Mayor of Paoua or chairladies of the Bria, Batangafo and Bangui-Bégoua associations, all aged over 40, confirms the hypothesis of the importance of this criterion.

Figure 2: Age statistics of the[14] women surveyed
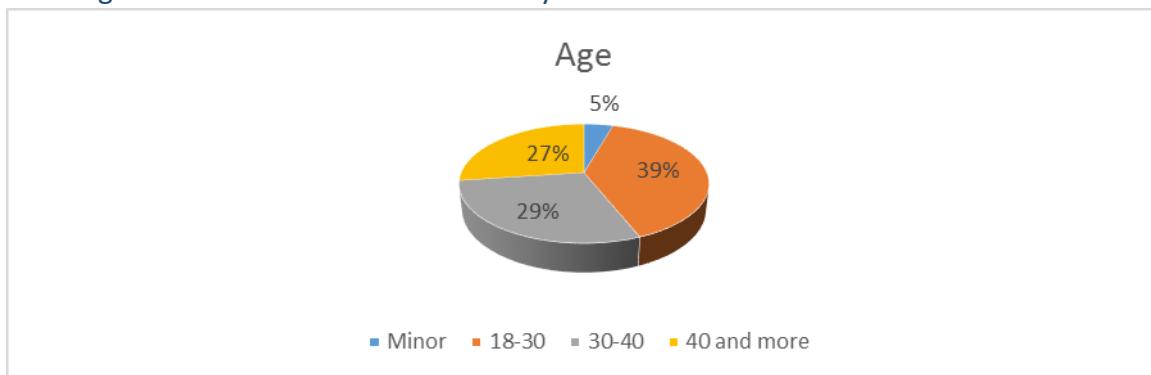
Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

> ➤ **The level of education**

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[14] Age refers to the UN convention

The level of education is the second pillar of this peace building activity. It helps to assess the level of understanding of women on their interventions. The literacy rate of women varies from one town to another. Women leaders of associations are usually educated.[15] They have often had professional careers that required education at a certain level (civil servants, teachers, NGO members, etc.), but most of their members are less advanced in their studies. Some members are illiterate because they have never had the opportunity to go to school. Thus, they can become mobilizing agents once they are trained. In fact, illiteracy is not a major constraint for women committed in the peace building process. At this level, women rely on their traditional role as mothers, counsellors and educators.

The literacy rate[16] of women surveyed is around 74%[17]. However, there are many disparities between Batangafo (46%), Bria (77%), Paoua (72%) and Bangui-Bégoua (93%). The diagram below shows the education level of women interviewed.

The diagram below shows the education level of these women.

Figure 3: General educational profile of the women surveyed
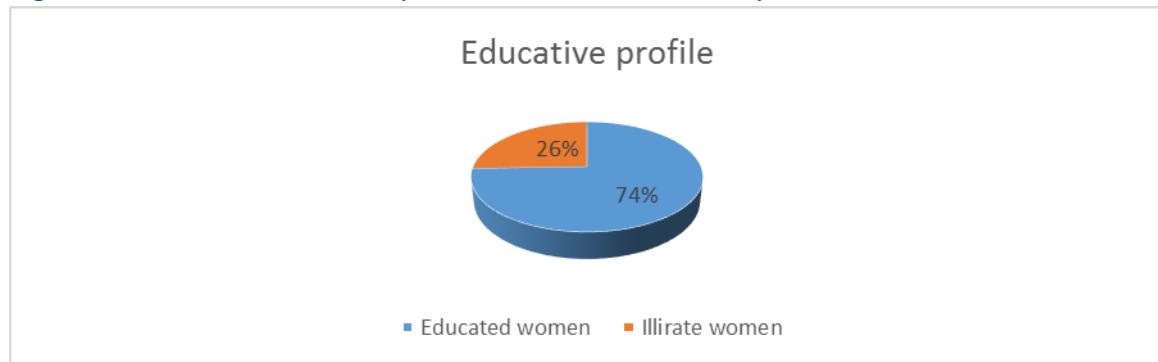
Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

➢ **Socio-professional category**

The study also examined the socio-professional categories of these women activists to refine their profiles. The categories are similar in all towns, but some areas favor some economic activities to the detriment of others. The diagram below illustrates the distribution of these women according to their socio-professional activities. Three major categories emerge namely housewives, shopkeepers and civil servants. However, religious, local and CSO leaders remain influential in decision-making.

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[15] In Bria, the percentage of women enrolled in this population surveyed is 76.97%, while the percentage of illiterates is 13.03%. This shows that women who have the will to restore and consolidate peace in Bria are mostly women who can read and write.

[16] Education level = Women having completed primary school. National average

[17] They have a high level of education because the study targeted women who are members of structured groups. The net schooling rate of 72% for the whole population in 2015/2016, sources Statistics Yearbook, https://www.globalpartnership.org/fr/country/republique-centrafricaine

Figure 4: CSP statistics of the women surveyed
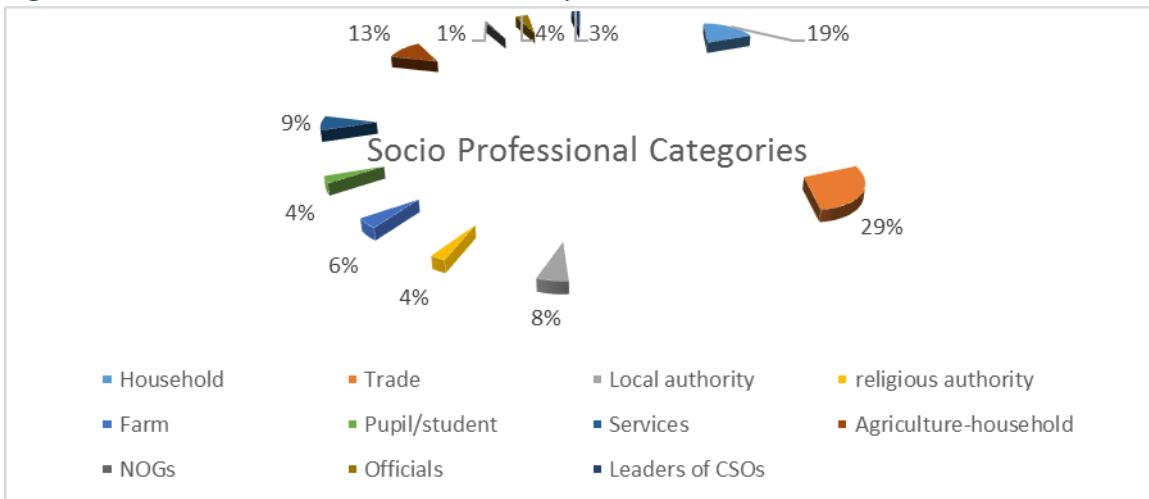
Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

Socio Professional categories:

- Menage = household

- Agriculture-household

➢ **Marital status of women**

The variable "marital status" has highlighted the marital relationships of women activists. For example, single, monogamous, polygamous, and women living in consensual union are committed to the promotion of peace. However, at the decision-making level, married women or widows play an important role.

Figure 5: Marital status
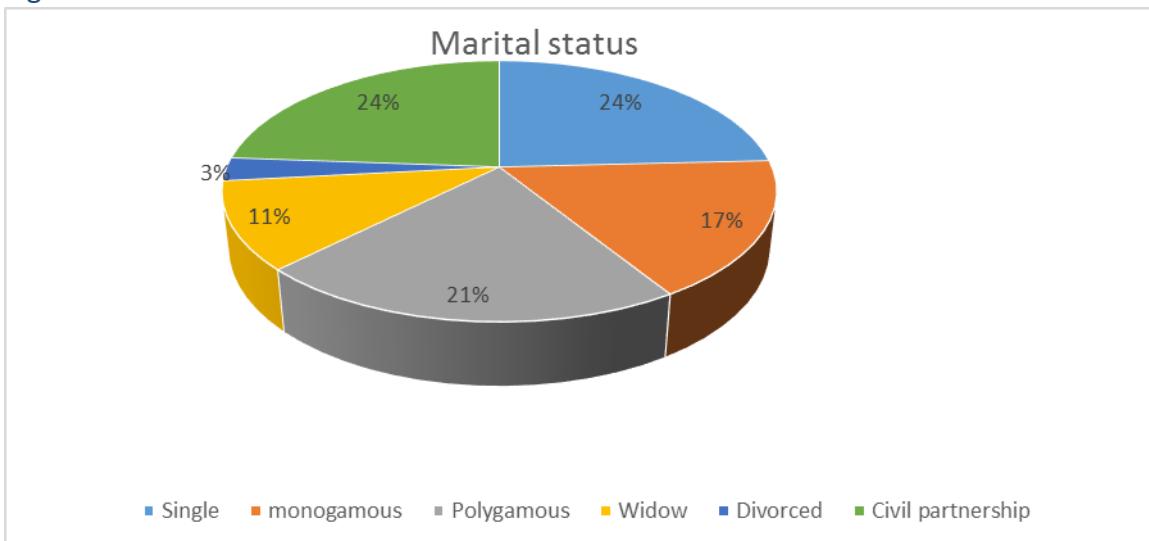
Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

For the most part, women participating in this study are young, educated, are involved in non-formal activities and are committed to peace building activities no matter their marital status.

III-2-Women leadership

In this study, women themselves mentioned the critical role of women leadership (table 2.) According to them, leadership goes hand in hand with the credibility of their activities and initiatives for peace, because it determines a woman's ability to control the adversity, to improve on her power relationships with men and to be heard.

Table 2: Leadership criteria according to women

Leadership	Values
-Assurance -Authority -Strictness -Charisma, sociability and openness -Competence with regards to the position held -Listening and increased availability for collaborators -Balance and concern for the correctness of actions and decisions - The sense of responsibility and the ability to take risks	-Autonomy -Availability -Listening -Respect -Responsibility

Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

Les informations recueillies au cours de cette enquête montrent que des efforts ont été faits par ces femmes engagées dans la consolidation de la paix.

III-3-Conceptual approach and transversal vision of peace

The information gathered shows determination of women in their endeavor to bring peace. But what does *Peace* means to them?

III-3-1-The definition of peace and its connections

In general, peace is, from the point of view of women, the objective requirement to return to values that are more human and more respectful of life and human dignity. This vision of peace allows all human beings, without distinction of race and religion, to live in balance and in perfect harmony with themselves and with others, on or outside their territories. To understand this, one needs to analyze the two visions of peace:

III-3-1-1-The normative conception of peace

Most of people surveyed and men in particular, define peace as "the absence of war". This approach is linked to the old conception of the Central African people who assert not to be in open war against a part of themselves, nor against another country. However, in the course of this study, the majority of respondents believe that peace is not synonymous with "the absence of war" and is not achieved solely by the arms race.

Men insist that peace means the freedom to freely see to one own's affairs without any obstacle. Some of them talk about moving around until the early morning without worrying about anything.

For most of women, peace is the "health" of a country that is not ill. Peace means for each of them the ability to carry out, without difficulty, their commercial, agricultural, domestic, and private activities. This trend aligns with those who believe that peace is synonymous with development.

Finally, some women define peace in connection with the schooling of children and the freedom of children to enjoy their prerogatives.

III-3-1-2-The Human centred vision of peace

In connection with the context, for the majority of men, women and leaders surveyed, achieving peace is not only an individual goal. Peace also incorporates the social level with whom the individual interacts such as the family, the neighborhood, which involves neighbors, collaborators and hierarchies. But "Peace starts at home", said a women leader in Bangui.

This assertive definition from one Imam in Bangui summarizes many says: "Peace is the freedom of movement between individuals, the respect of rights and norms of society; communion and living together without divisions."

Many women connect the notion of peace with Human rights. For them, peace is the absence of violations of Human rights. It is the protection of each individual´s natural and social privileges. This definition also entails a combination of life, freedom and women's property.

By relating peace to Human rights (collective and individual rights), respondents underline some pre requirements for peace such as the absence of any harmful act, night dim, fires of weapons, or other disruptive element, etc. This objectively goes in line with the definition of the Truth-Justice and Reconciliation Commission which states that "a genuine peace is not the absence of certain negative forces: tensions, confusions, belligerence, it supposes the presence of some positive forces: justice, goodwill and fraternity ».

The diagram below depicts the raw answers of women, men and opinion leaders.

Figure 6: General perception of peace by respondents
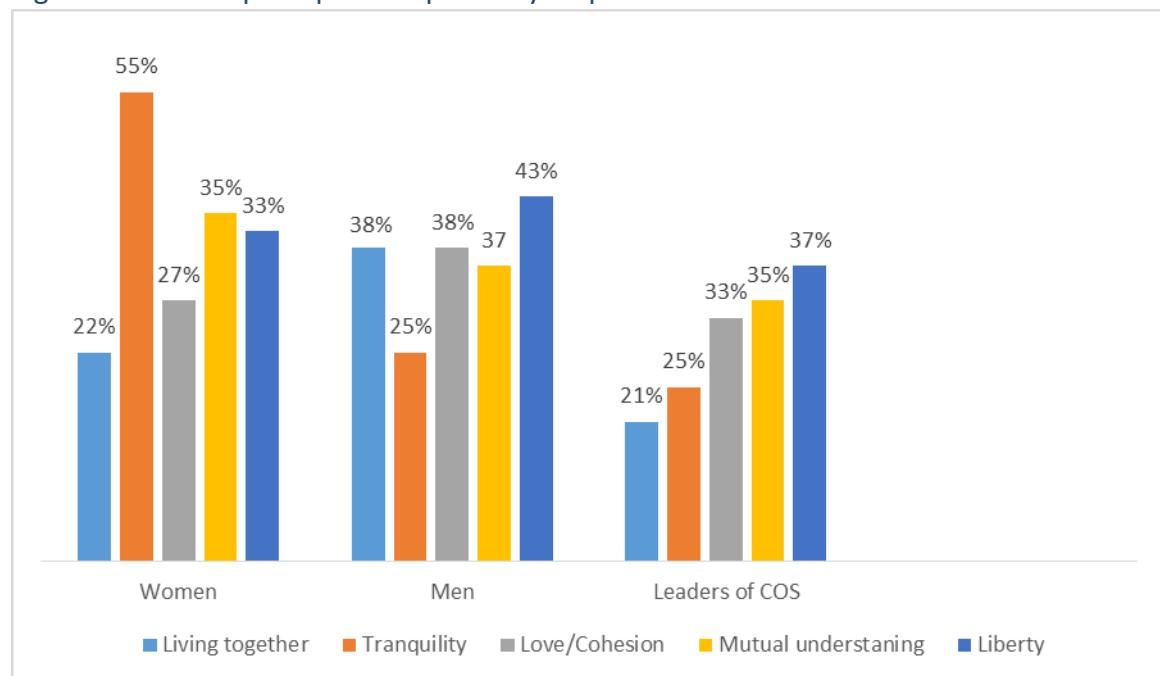
Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

The diagram above illustrates the key words associated with the definition of peace. The percentages also showcases the relations established by these women, men and opinion leaders for the consolidation of peace which associate tranquility, freedom, cohesion and understanding.

Globally, for men and women, peace is not only about the absence of war, but it is clearly defined as the absence of restrictions on individual freedoms and privileges.

The clear vision of peace is that peace also means access to basic social services in a secure and human-rights-protected way.

Who are those peace agents?

At the family and community level, the respondents underline the role of the father and the mother as guarantors of peace. They describe the agents of peace as follows: "It is the father first, then the mother; the woman must be a counsellor at home; she must advise her husband and bring him to reason; the father is the advisor and in case he is absent, the woman can take over ".

In all this research fields, the woman is perceived as being the mother, the brain of the family because she is the one who educates and takes care of the family, consequently her preponderant role in the preservation of Peace is recognized. "If a woman tells you that if you do not give up your actions, I will abandon you, the man obeys; it is true that the man commands everything, but the woman orders it, even the president obeys his wife "rightly emphasizes a community leader in Bria during a focus group. As a result, women remain the genuine peace officers on all fronts.

However, conflict actors are also those who can easily transform them, asserted leaders of NGOs in Paoua.

IV-The involvement of women in peace building mechanisms

In 2017, State-run Local Peace and Reconciliation Committees (LPRC) are structures embedded within the communities. There are assigned to conflict prevention and management, peace seeking and reconciliation through mediation and dialogue. They were set up only in 14 sites, including Paoua and the third sub-division of Bangui. They are intended to be rooms for dialogue and problem solving dealing with awareness and promotion of peace, peaceful resolution and prevention of conflicts, the fight against acts of discrimination based on ethnicity, regional, religious and gender. They also deal with civic culture and local development based on diversity. Each of them is composed of seven (07) mediators including one (01) female representative. Until now, these committees have not yet produced the expected results. For example, in the 3rd sub-division of Bangui, the peace committee did not act in the recent riot between armed groups and conventional forces, but the Committee of Wise Men that interacted with traders and local authorities for the reconstruction of the police station of the 3rd sub-division destroyed by the raging populations.

In all the towns visited, there are other mechanisms for peace consolidation and mediation. Thus, one can mention actors like the Local Protection Committees (LPC) set up by OXFAM and other international NGOs in their areas of intervention that usually observe parity (5 women for 5 men.) These community structures are focused on the fight against domestic and community violence and are active in the referral of cases of GBV. In addition, there are many other conventional structures in investigated areas, who are actively engaged in mediation and sensitization of populations and armed groups. Among them are: Youth committees, the OFCA (the leading central organization for women in the CAR), the heads of blocks on IDPs sites, the chiefs of neighborhood, the committee of

cohesion, the Elderly Committee or the Wise Men committee. In Bangui, many leaders also stressed the value added by some international organizations (IOM) or INGOs in peacebuilding.

➢ In Bria: there are local initiatives, the Local Protection Committee, the Divisional Youth Committee, the Awareness Committee and the Community Protection Committee that have been created;
➢ In Batangafo: the Wise Men Committee, the Youth Committee, the Peace Committee set up DRC (Danish Refugee Council) and the Peace and Cohesion Committee;
➢ IN Paoua: It should be mentioned that this town also has a local peace committee: Community protection committee;
➢ In Bangui-Bégoua: In these towns, all conventional structured listed above exist. Initiatives of the State through the Local Peace and Protection Committee are still in their beginning but the Youth Local Committee is functional.

In addition, it is important to underline the primary role of the religious authorities (Women and men and especially pastors, deacons, abbots and imams even religious associations). In Paoua, these authorities united in a single association (CASAL). This grouping makes it possible to pray for peace first, then raise awareness, mediate and finally facilitate charitable activities (distribution of food on a small scale, clothing to the displaced, etc.).

IV-1-Type of activities carried out

The activities carried out highlight the major role of women activists and their responsibilities in consolidating peace at the local level. These activities are as follows:

a- Advocacy

Advocacy was the first activity undertaken by women. Indeed, as the conflict was escalating, women began to approach belligerents, asking for their common sense to respect basic Human rights. On both sides, they called on the Ex-Séléka and Antibalakas armed groups to observe truces, then to facilitate the free movement of people and called for the stopping of GBV. Because of this plea, some women activists have experienced abuses such as acts of violence committed by armed groups (cases of women victims of Saara or Chadians or women molested by armed fighters in Bangui). The main purpose of their advocacy is often to end hostilities and violence against civilian populations.

In Bria, for example, women organized the peaceful march for peace to ask armed groups to lay down their arms; they have advised while intimidating their husbands; they even ask them to abandon some actions, love dominates everything, gives up everything, believe in everything and give everything ", Woman leader, Bria.

In Bangui, women from the Km5 neighborhood faced the Antibalakas to avoid an attack on their borough. As a result, hundreds of lives were saved.

b- Awareness

All the women surveyed focused on awareness raising. They have understood that sensitization is critical to inform ignorant people on the realities and origins of conflicts. This has proved to be already a step in the quest for solutions. For example, some women risked their lives by engaging in door-to-door sensitization activities and others lost one or more of their family members to this activity. Nevertheless, they remained committed.

In Paoua, a young woman ex-combatant, sensitized the youths who intended to attack the MINUSCA base and lynch the Peulh fighters who were in jail there before their transfer to Bangui. Thanks to her intervention, the base was not attacked.

In some localities of Bria, women revealed that they used the technique of "weeping". This also drew the attention of their belligerent husbands who then complied with their demands.

This awareness was globally meant to stop the fighting.

c- The mediation

Women were the first initiators of informal mediation between conflicting actors. They first confronted fighters and pleaded with the armed groups, showing each party the suffering they experienced as "mothers" in the conflict. Then, they encouraged them to sit around a table of negotiation. This mediation is the result of the search for social cohesion.

In addition, some women leaders have been facilitators for peace by acting as mediators between the belligerents, MINUSCA and the State. Thus, in Paoua, the Mayor was in charge of facilitating meetings between the armed groups, MINUSCA and the populations. In Batangafo, Muslim women have been on the sites of displaced people occupied in majority by Christians to ask their Christian sisters to ask their husbands, fathers or brothers, to stop hostilities and facilitate the living together.

In Paoua, the ex-combatants played the role of mediators between two factions of the Revolution and Justice Group to bring them to cease hostilities and to unite.

d- Prevention

Women are always the first to know about armed group movements because of their intimacy with fighters. Some of them touch upon a conjugal bond; others allude to trade or family ties. Therefore, they can discreetly inform the authorities before the weapons can crackle and they do so. In this role, it should be noted that MINUSCA also liaise with them for early warnings because in the event of a planned disturbance, they will inform MINUSCA, which finds the best way to prevent an escalation of violence. This activity is always discreet to avoid retaliation. (Key informants, Bria NGOs, Batangafo and Paoua).

E) Charitable acts

During the successive Central African conflicts, women initiated food collection to feed some neighborhoods including in Bria and Bangui (Km5 being the food supply center) at a critical moment when the inhabitants of these neighborhoods were completely isolated. In Bangui, they also cleaned the school of the area (Koudoukou) to trigger back to school for children.

F) The common meal

Although initiated in Bangui by NGOs to bring together both Christian and Muslim communities around a table, the common meal tradition was continued by women and young people. While the men from the two rival groups were still preoccupied with their arguments and competition and could not stand one another, women and then the young people of the Pk5 sub-division integrated the common meal strategy. Then men from both rival groups capitulated to cooperate and share the common meal at the fifth sub-division of Bangui. This facilitated the resumption of the dialogue between the communities for a better living together.

IV-2-Main thematic for peace building

Key messages are related working together to promote equality based on cultural values

a- Promoting equality

Taking into account the rights of women, the Constitution of the Central African Republic stipulates the equality of all citizens before the law. However, this research shows that men in rural areas have difficulty in accepting women's leadership because this touches on the profound values of the society, particularly women's status. To facilitate this acceptance, for example, in Bria, women solicited the Sultan and sensitized their peers on the importance of the principles of equity in Human rights. (Appendix IV).

The thematic of human rights equity was the foundation of their joint initiatives for peace building because they realized that they could work together and achieve greater results.

b- Working together

The frame of reference is the respect of cultural African values of solidarity considered as infallible through family ties, clan and age.

Women have all understood that the individual alone is vulnerable to society because a text can decide his or her fate. While in community governance, the individual is an integral part of a group and it is this group, which allows him or her to play the role of "collegiate" active citizen especially in the field of prevention and management of conflicts. The choice for group solidarity is therefore privileged to the detriment of individual actions.

In the same vein, structured groups offer some advantages that an individual could not easily access. Women, within their groups, have benefited from rudimentary notions of peaceful conflict resolution techniques, gender-based violence (GBV) and social cohesion, initiated by INGOs including DRC. The setting up of Local Protection Committees enabled them to acquire awareness-raising techniques, thanks to the support of the INGO Oxfam. Most of the women surveyed recognize that they now know the value of a woman leader in society. Indeed, she has the power to intervene in conflict prevention, which gives her recognition, and a social position established during her intervention period. This social position provides access to financial and material resources allocated by development partners with specific tasks to be performed (apolitical role).

IV-3-Motivations of women

Various reasons motivate women for acting but briefly, they are the first victims of these military-political crises. They are the one who bear their consequences (rape, physical and verbal torture, poor living conditions, atrocious deliveries in the bush, loss of their children, husbands and their parents who were their main support, the rise of children in delinquency in the absence of educational and economic opportunities, etc.). Moreover, they emphasized that all their financial savings had been either looted or squandered, which made them vulnerable today and dependent from support from foreign partners. Therefore, they are committed to:

- Advocate for respect for state institutions and the laws that govern them;

- Participate in the promotion of true democracy;

- Change the mentality of the people for a righteous cause;

- Internalise the motto and virtues of the country: unity-dignity-work and Zo kwe zo, so Zo la;

- Ban any attitude or behaviour that may incite hatred and division;

- Scrupulously respect every human being;

- Foster love, mutual help and promote living together as factors of social cohesion and peace.

Beyond women's motivations, a thorough analysis makes it possible to raise a number of catalysts for change that resolutely pave women's way towards a trajectory of development:

- The loss of all their economic opportunities has completely destroyed their hope to build a better future based on their socio-professional activities;
- The changing working landscape (especially on IDPs sites) in which men are no longer productive and are now attracted by women who can support them. As a result, IDPs sites become rooms of double desolation (poor living conditions and negative social changes);
- The drastic drop out of schoolchildren, because today, there are no schools worthy of the name.

For these women, today more than before, they must definitely commit themselves to the consolidation of peace, a guarantee of individual and community development. They affirm that with peace, they can restart their IGA, win the trust of their husbands and ensure the schooling of their children. Peace becomes a lever for the consolidation of the family, the education of children and the development of populations.

IV-3-Level of women's involvement in peace building

According to this study, women's participation stand at two levels: the individual and the collective. The choice depends on women's interests.

At the individual level, their commitment is motivated by a need for autonomy within the family unit or the will to access a better social position (Case of Esther in Paoua).

Collectively, women networks (sometimes under the pressure of international organizations) have enabled their members to show their determination and commitment to peace, albeit facing various threats in their communities. The study shows that within networks, trust, solidarity and the interplay of common economic interests facilitate collaboration between women and consolidate the group. For groups to be sustained, their members have to adhere to ground rules such as the respect of each another, the principles of transparency, the practice of accountability, etc. Moreover, members clearly integrate that their own survival rely on the solidity of the group they belong to. As the result, today, the lack of technical and financial support has not prevented them from investing in this quest for peace.

As a matter of facts, this research finding reveal a positive impact of women's action in the peace building process in the selected study areas at the community level. They were the first to undertake peace initiatives or to decry the living conditions of the people. The various activities carried out by women, even if they are not taken into account at the national level (in peace negotiation fora and at the institutional level,) have nevertheless made it possible to:

- Cool down some hot spots of tension in conflict zones;
- Promote the status of women (some rural women emancipate themselves as compared to the past);
- Integrate the practical interests of women into actions that promote peace, with a view to take into account their strategic interests (women need to come together to support each other in their interventions for peace, which leads to the creation of associations that will help them to be economically and socially stronger).

A strong impact of their activities is visible at the double human and societal level.

At the human level, one of the key anchors for socialization resulting from interviews with women is their ability to build trust and confidence in family, friends but also in institutions. Instinctively, thanks to peace building activities, women have created strong networks with family and friends in which trust is natural and important and lays the foundation of other interactions.

In addition, during conflict, according to men on the one hand, women are fully empowered to assume the role and responsibilities of the head of the family and the keeping of social order. Therefore, women replace men who can no longer temporarily exercise their traditional roles. On the other hand, some women have really emancipated themselves. They opposed their husbands at the cost of their lives because they were violently beaten, however, that did not stop them from continuing their actions.

At the societal level, the will to build strong relationships that strengthen the bonds of solidarity is also one of the social realities that stems from women's interventions for peace. Many formal and / or informal associations have been created in the various areas after conflicts. By relying on the bonds of solidarity, women have shown not only their hostility to conflict but especially affirm the need to continue to sustain life during these dark times and to support each other. They are thus involved in the dynamics of Resolution 1325 (point 15), which they know little about, and which clearly states the need to protect the rights of women and to support the work of women's organizations for the promotion of peace.

With regard to social integration after conflict, women stress the importance of networks and organizations that enable them to connect with each other and share common experiences and conditions. Such networks can improve on the life of women in many ways: security, negotiation power, respect, self-confidence, etc. For example, the "OFCA" and "AFL" associations set up "women's peace activities beyond the borders" which gives their members the opportunity to face the reality of wars, to reflect on the issue of accountability and work together against patriarchal and community pressures.

The development of women's associations is an important part of their mobilization, especially when they are supported by international NGOs. These local associations receive support from donors who provide funds for some actions, including local campaigns and training programs. Some women benefited from training in agriculture, crafts (case of ex-combatants met in Bria), soap production and shea oil (Paoua). Some local associations mobilize funds to allow girls and boys who remained dependent to them, to continue their studies. All the actions initiated by women are usually appreciated and are efficient when they rely on formal networks such as tontine. In this way, women can mobilize very quickly and strengthen their confidence in these institutions.

a- Evaluation of women's contributions
In post-war or conflict settings in CAR, women are committed to promoting peace and rebuilding the social fabric. However, men and the various actors at the central level often ignore their contributions and interests.

Generally, women give great importance to the restoration and development of essential social services: reopening of schools (nursery and primary school), setting up primary health care services, and assisting victims of violence and people with disabilities and people who need psychological or social support from their associations. They are also involved in community work such as cleanliness of places of life, etc. Since they invest more in community activities, they often take initiatives to improve existing structures.

Men support these activities for a variety of reasons: They contribute to household expenses, offer school children the opportunity to go back to school, allow the provision of health care, all that contribute to the well-being of the family.

It should also be noted that men do not really accept this new status of women. Some assume that in the future, women will oppose them and may no longer obey if they believe that the man

does not bring them anything. Therefore, they propose that women's roles be taught to these women based on holy books such as the Koran and / or the Bible. Men also feel insecure as one pointed in Bangui-Bégoua for example, "as soon as a woman suffers GBV, women promptly denounce the case to women lawyers." In Paoua, Batangafo and Bria, these women were trained on GBV and gender equality do not hesitate to denounce them, even in the presence of their husbands who they no longer fear.

On the other hand, the study shows that on all the fields of survey, women must be efficient in discretion.

This ability of humanity and simplicity enables them to play the role of warnings to better prevent and manage violence peaks. Indeed, when they are aware of the possible attacks of the armed groups, they ring alarm bells to the competent authorities and forces to avoid violence. As they are often set aside, women move around without drawing the attention of men or boys who are often informers of armed groups.

b- Supports

It is necessary to analyse both the individual and collective supports women receive via women's associations and networks.

According to the women interviewed in Bria, men's support is somehow mitigate are not supported because if the men had supported them, peace would have returned for a long time But generally, at the individual level, some men encouraged and gave advice to their wives. Women pointed out that they have been threatened and suffered physical violence to stop their activities. Nevertheless, they continued their fight, often with the support of families.

For the men interviewed in Bria, during the march for peace, women benefited from their full support through the committee led by the acting sub-divisional officer; men advised and channeled women; some men, suggested them to tie their loincloth down to prove that everyone came out of a mother's womb.

On the other sites, families gave moral support to women through advice or suggestions. International organizations such as MINUSCA, OXFAM, DRC or COOPI organize training (conflict analysis and management, peaceful conflict resolution, etc.) and assist women in monitoring their activities.

With regard to structured groups, the lack of funding is an obstacle to the functioning of women's associations. Most of the associations only benefit from the moral support of parents. In addition, the low mobilization of their internal resources (membership fees, contribution for a specific activity) enabled them to carry out only minor activities planned.

It is worth mentioning that many ONGs[18]have substituted to the State to support the associations financially and technically, train them on human resources, support in logistics, infrastructure, monitor activities or provide care for female victims of GBV. But, in most cases, these multiform supports were limited to a part of the rural and urban population because of e insufficient funding.

c- Endogenous capacities specific to women: family solidarity

Solidarity stems from family ties and in particular from filial and marital bonds. Thus, women who belong to endogenous groups could intertwine within the following set of people:

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[18] OXFAM, DRC, COOPI, etc.

- Initiatory age groups allowing a strong power of mobilization and information;
- Ethnic groups facilitating a power of control and supervision;
- Local groups leading to firm positions in the exercise of power and in the implementation of decisions;
- Other groups such as cultural associations especially fraternity groups (at the religious level).

Belonging to these groups strengthens the commitment of women and their decisions that are no longer individual but collective.

V-Mechanism for the sustainability of women's involvement in the peace process

To ensure the sustainability of women's associations, they should be equipped with sufficient technical and human capital. They should belong to organized and financially viable associations equipped with solid infrastructures.

V-1-Organizational capacities

Leaders of women's associations are highly educated. This enables them to fully understand all the rationale of structuring and fundraising. This also means that they have a good idea on what sustainable women groups' structures should be. They all state that globally, the sustainability of women's commitment in the peace building process can be strengthened through associations. Based on opinions of leaders of associations, sustainability is also related to structures well organized, that carry out concrete actions, where periodic meetings are organized and who try to be transparent in their operating procedures.

Thus, the questions asked to the leaders of the women's groups about specific benchmarks to appreciate sustainability of their associations, the answers collected are as follows:
- ❖ Women's associations can be clearly identified as they actively seek to form constituent bodies (executive board, general assembly) to manage their initiatives;
- ❖ They succeed in the activities undertaken;
- ❖ They can clearly define the missions to which they adhere;
- ❖ They can develop and implement action plans and incorporate strategic planning techniques into their decision-making processes;
- ❖ They have a clearly defined management structure, and can articulate the responsibilities of both office members and members;
- ❖ They have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of their human resources, they can specify job profiles by clearly identifying the roles assigned to each, etc.

Although women leaders have a good command of what a viable association should be, in reality, the way is still long to meet these expectations. Maybe a pipe dream.

V-2-Financial viability

Women's associations must be financially viable to support activities of their members. However, for many of them, financial sustainability depends on their ability to grab the funds allocated by international donors.

To lift the veil on these critical financial issues, respondents provided the following insights:
- ❖ Associations collect a significant percentage of their funds from local sources;

- ❖ Associations, which fulfil the prerequisites, often have access to various sources of international funding;
- ❖ Most associations have insufficient resources and can only remain viable in the short term;
- ❖ Sound financial management systems should be put in place;
- ❖ The largest associations operate in a transparent manner, including conducting independent financial audits and publishing their annual reports and financial statements within their organizations.

V-3-Infrastructure

Strong infrastructure is required to give broad access to local support services to associations. Associations must be able to inform, train, counsel all women and to share information and address issues of common interest with all networks and coalitions of associations.

The interviewees highlighted the following:
- ❖ Associations should have a minimum of resource centres or other means for women to access relevant information, training and technical assistance throughout the community.
- ❖ Most of the resources received in areas surveyed come from international partners such as Oxfam, DRC or MINUSCA;
- ❖ There are competent local trainers specialized in association management;
- ❖ Basic training in association management is available in Bangui, the capital and in secondary towns. Advanced specialized training is also available in strategic management, accounting, financial management, fundraising, volunteer management and board development. Existing training offer could meet the needs of local associations.

VI- Obstacles faced and strategies implemented by women

Central African women who are involved in the consolidation of peace process at the local level are highly motivated in their daily approach. However, they face many obstacles, which hamper their work. These obstacles exist in all the areas studied, and must be analyzed to find ways to overcome them, in the future.

VI-1- Endogenous Obstacles

Endogenous obstacles are intrinsic to the Central African society. They are sociocultural, environmental, political and legal.

a) The Sociocultural influence

Unfortunately, the survey made clear that the culture of the Central African people, which essentially encourages discriminatory practices towards women, is an obstacle to their emancipation (Table 4). In fact, the traditional Central African society considers women as inferior beings, destined to accomplish households and agropastoral tasks to ensure the family stability.

Those cultural values play a fundamental role in the balance of social relationships and power relation between men and women. The Social Construction of Gender is a key factor to women access (or not) to the political and public arena. It becomes an obstacle to women's participation once rules, customs and religious beliefs limit the fulfilment of women rights.

This survey also points out the contrasting trait of women who participate in the consolidation of peace process, which is palpable at various levels. Some respondents asserted that in their perception, there is an ambivalence embedded in women participation. The following statements summarizes this opinion:

- There is a combination of duty and fear of joining a cause;
- Driven by poverty and not only by ideology, some women commit themselves by interest, hoping to earn something to live;
- Changes are occurring in the management family expenses because men no longer solely handle heavy responsibilities. Women are now contributing to costly expenses.
- Communication between women, which is supposed to be fluid, is slimy because they remain distrustful and protect from each other's;
- Risks for life are high;
- Consequences on professional and personal life are very serious;
- Activists are strongly criticized and subject to fake accusations.

One can also mention the impact of social stereotypes, marital status and religion on women's opportunities to involve themselves in political life. Social norms that govern gender relationships are in general very restrictive, as far as women's rights and participation to community life are concerned.

b) Geopolitical influence

CAR is part of a geopolitical group, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, which has a strong and daily influence on this country. All the surrounding countries have suffered the plague of armed conflicts and their bitter results (insecurity, instability, population displacement, serious poverty, highly economic dependency from abroad, etc.)

c) Political and Legal Influence

At the political level, mainstreaming the gender approach is still difficult to implement, though the public authorities promote it through policies, strategies, institutional mechanisms, legal texts, including the adoption of law on women and men equality. In fact, national stakeholders, who hesitate to facilitate its implementation, do not unanimously accept major decisions in favor of gender equality and equity. For example, the law on parity was adopted in 2016, but concrete measures to trigger its full implementation are still weak.

VI-2-Exogenous Obstacles

In Central African Republic, women, which are activists for peace also face obstacles which do not depend of their own society, but derive from history and global economy hazards.

a) Historical Influence

The history of African peoples in sub-Sahara has strongly influenced the sociocultural evolution of nations, which compose it. The black African tradition destined women to minor role and very delicate tasks. In order to throw off this position, women struggle every day in various domains through remarkable actions, which as days go on, give them a peculiar position equal to men.

b) Economic Influence

The global economic landscape is currently featured by a scarcity of resources and all types of economic tensions. This hinders women's action in Central African Republic. The role of associations, which could capture necessary funds to ensure the family's survival, is clearly visible. Therefore, joining an association is no more a matter of choice for women, but a major economic necessity.

Table 3: Women's blocking factors

Factors	Explanation
Custom	In the Peuhls' society, women are relegated to household tasks; In other ethnic groups, these obstacles are minor;
Religious	- The Muslim religion remains a blocking point for many women due to existing dogmas; - Christians and animists are less subject to religious dogmas;
Illiteracy	Generally, Peuhl women are educated in Koranic school; -Other women are victims of difficult financial conditions;
Prejudice	- Some prejudice constitute a serious obstacle for all women (women should stay at home, they cannot replace men, some activities are gendered)
Civil Status	- Endogenous text continue to limit women's access to a civil status.
Society	- Women's low status limits their action.

Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

VI-3- Women´s strategies to cross obstacles

In order to overcome obstacles and difficulties faced, women fine-tuned informal strategies such as introducing a briefing on conflict dynamics during their regular meetings. To address heightening in the conflict they asserted that: "we must not wait for a fixed date, procedures or mandates. There is always a way to set informal means to reduce tension."

According to women, useful factors of success to cross obstacles are the following:
- Having a clear vision of constraints;
- Mastering the cause you are fighting for and getting strong and clear arguments;
- Having the minimum of financial, transport and communication means;
- Being available to reach the targeted objectives;
- Endurance;
- Giving more than you receive;
- Learning to listen and having more than a single option, depending of the context;
-Avoiding angriness;
- Not being hungry;
-Being courageous and ready for all types of risks;
- Trusting others;
- Maintaining a certain vigilance within the negotiation process.

VI-4-Successful Strategies for activities achieved

To achieve expected results, women implemented many strategies, which took them through various stages:

➢ **Priority to participative processes:**

At the one hand, community participation was critical at the various steps of women's interventions especially during the development of the conflict analysis, the definition of activities to prioritize, the selection of the targeted population, and the management of key activities. This ensured adequacy with the realities and facts locally experienced. On the second hand, community participation enabled a better communication and transparency in the conflict management. Finally, it enabled communities to understand why lay emphasis on a certain category of people and not on some others.

Community participation is fundamental. To prevent tension, the involvement of local population in conflict transformation activities is instrumental. First, local communities do not have the same understanding on vulnerability or dividers. This is why associating representative from all layers of the society, influential members from these layers or people considered as neutral and impartial; in conflict management helps achieve endogenous and consensual solutions. Second, participation legitimates decisions, and ensure the population needs are given due consideration and that decisions made are fair. Finally, an inclusive decision reinforces collaboration and democratic process within a community. However, one can notice that sensitivity to conflict could be uneven within members of a community, so could be their interest for impartiality and equality.

➢ **Stakeholders' inclusion issues**

Inclusion is of chiefly importance. Each category of persons (minors and adults) including minorities, representatives of various ethnic or religious groups, women and youths must take part in the peace reconstruction and in decision-making processes. All perceptions and feelings should be considered.

➢ **Impartiality in the relationship amongst stakeholders**

The observance of strict impartiality of individuals or structure groups is paramount when addressing conflict-sensitive programming.

➢ **Transparency and accountability:**

These two principles require the setting of clear criterion when selecting zones, determining and sharing information on period and areas of intervention. The principle of accountability requires that the population be informed on choices made, activities carried out and their impact. This includes for example, the systematic restitution of evaluations organized by organizations.

In general, accountability consists in communicating with the whole community, particularly with conflicts stakeholders and members of structured groups, to explain choices made and ensure the spreading of messages adopted.

➢ **Respect**

To ease populations´ ownership of conflict and consider their pain, one should pay total respect to conflict stakeholders and consider their political waves. In Paoua, women recalled the importance of taking note that armed groups are first soldiers, who meet some behavioral standards and respect a structure of commandment. Observing these primary rules is necessary.

➢ **Partnership and coordination**

The coordination of activities between various organizations operating in the same zone enables the sharing of the context analysis and reinforces mutual understanding of conflict sensitivity. It reduces the risks of duplication, competition or missed opportunities.

➢ **Training**

Women engaged in the consolidation of peace process asserted that training their organizations personnel and their members on the notion of "conflict sensitivity" makes a fundamental difference in the way their activities are implemented. This enables women to identify conflicts around and to understand their link and impact on these conflicts. Capacity building of communities also help them understand the rationality of a project and the motives behind each action performed.

To summarize, this study provides an in depth analysis on women's place in the peace building process and shades light on their personal and community positioning. Through the various actions they undertake (individually or collectively,) women ensure the survival and contribute to development of their families and communities. These women live in an environment where rules and regulations determine their participation in public and political life. Therefore, questioning the legal context surrounding them becomes critical.

VII-Analysis of the Women's Legal and Regulatory Framework in CAR
VII-1-The Central African Positive Law

This section begins with an appraisal of the legal framework, which guides actions of influence that empower women's participation to the peace building process. Then, it tackles the integration of international instruments in the in country bill of rights and the application of existing legal framework.

- Positive Law Overview

In every single country which is not caught by autarky and which cares about its image on the world stage, the legal framework is made up of a number of texts coming from various domains. They are classified into two main categories: the borrowing sources (colonial and /or international) and national sources (customary and modern). The structure of legal framework in CAR relating to the participation of women to the peace consolidation process obey to this pluralistic model. A non-exhaustive and selective list is figuring in annex.

With regard to the international sources, it is therefore visible that there is a lot of tools (conventions, agreements and resolutions) either from UN or AU which firstly concern human rights, before having a direct impact on women's participation to the peace process.

The Central African legal framework also extends to structures like the Constitutional Court (the law determining the organization and functioning of this court adopted on 19 December 2005). There is also the memorandum on the creation of an African Court on Human and People's Rights adopted on O4 March 2002. A Special Criminal Court is set up as well as the National Commission on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. There is also an act authorizing the ratification of the agreement on extradition between State members of CEMAC of 14 April 2007. The Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code were adopted on 06 January 2006.

As regard to these remarkable legal dispositions and to the context, CAR seems to be a model and a pioneer in some aspects, within its geographical zone (Central Africa). Nevertheless, in

practice, this modern "storefront" for the international marketing of the country is not profitable to women, who are the most in need.

a) VII- 2- CRITICAL EXAMINATION AND SUGGESTIONS

First, it may be noticed that authorities in CAR are ready to ratify the main instrument, the convention or agreement but not the related protocol. This remarks stands for the following instruments: Protocols of Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Civil and Political Rights, the protocol of CEDEF, the protocol on the convention against torture and other pain, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatments. We also seize this opportunity to deplore the absence (non-ratification) of some major instruments like the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 13 December 2006. In addition, everything seems to show that the Act on the status, protection and advancement of old persons (August 2009) has been kept aside, whereas it is today that it should really protect these vulnerable persons, especially old women who, are commonly in prey to violence or lethal violence, after being accused of witchcraft.

However, CAR is a monistic country, this means that as opposed to countries with a dual international law system, its ratification of an international norm is equal to the incorporation of this norm in the domestic legal order of the country; but this is not what happens on the field. As an example, the letter of the Collective of Women of the Central African Civil Society (COFEM) to the Right Honorable President of the National Assembly on 13 June 2016 had the following object: "Strong protests against the low representativeness of women in the Government and the President's Cabinet, justified by the lack of women who are capable". Of course, this incident occurred before the act on parity, but even after it was promulgated, we cannot expect substantial changes in the way of improvement because the Enforcement Decree of this Act is still awaited. But, the application scope is clearly stated in three paragraphs of the Section 1 of this Act of 2016.

It should also be noted that the insufficient follow up of ratified instruments highly demonstrates the real attitude of stagnation we should denounce. Indeed, the periodical reports needed to evaluate the evolution of the implementation of integrated instruments, are almost nonexistent up to now. Some of them are still being awaited since 1980s.

In addition, the permanent absence of administrative structures and representatives of states namely in rural areas, due to armed conflicts is to blame seriously, given that they play a key role. The State is the one to provide and set the tone with all the necessary resources and make sure that everything moves on smoothly as well as sanctioning where necessary. At the community level, the absence of the Mayor and the Subdivision Officer, the poor functioning of the legal system and the closure of detention houses reveal a considerable failure of the State authority, which makes the complementary interventions of the civil society ridiculous. Some trainings are being initiated or supported by national and international NGOs and some donors (MINUSCA, OXFAM, the Association of Women's lawyers, DRC, etc.) on the reference text which is the resolution 1325, completed by the resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960. However, such discontinuous tentative looks like spreading thinly far away from the critical people targeted, indispensable among beneficiaries to expect an efficient impact.

With a closer observation, one notices that the access to these trainings is shadowed either by the level of instruction, or by the lack of learning opportunities for the majority of women concerned. In such conditions, it is a pure and simple illusion to expect the people targeted to seize the contents of the trainings.

In fact, vulgarizing texts on women's rights and which can obviously be considered as reference becomes a necessity after a former massive education. These are CEDEF, the Protocol of Maputo and UN resolutions aforementioned.

With the benefit of hindsight, this consists in merging gender transversely with the efficient implementation of law, through knowledge and mastery of peace and gender based conflicts. Therefore, these are two assets well used: effective available texts and gender consideration in their implementation, given that due to events experienced, women's might have been psychologically ahead. They are in serious need and chances for them to be receptive are high. However, we should not forget that the sustainability of peace relies on an inclusive approach.

VIII-Analysis of opportunities to improving participation of women in the peace consolidation process in CAR

To consider long lasting answers to the issue of Peacebuilding in CAR, it is necessary to analyze the opportunities that this study offers. This analysis enables us to consider the drawing up of targeted programs that fit to the situation by relying on these opportunities.

VIII-1- Democracy

Democracy is a form of government that consecrates rights and individual freedoms. It is through it that laws on different freedoms are adopted in the society. Since the last Presidential and legislative elections, the situation of women in CAR seems to improve more and more.   The CAR is doing progress on mainstreaming the gender approach by associating more women in the decision-making processes at all spheres, in a participatory manner with the support of the International Community.   The reinforcement of that democracy through the strengthening of capacities of public powers and local elected officials can help women in their development and peace consolidation activities.

VIII-2-The government's political will

The current government, under the supervision of its President, H.E Faustin Archange TOUADERA, makes proof of clear desire to establish the balance between men and women and to take into consideration the role of women in the consolidation of peace. This is done by enforcing one of the resolutions of the Bangui National Forum (BNF), which requested the inclusion of women in all the activities of peace consolidation.   Despite post-war difficulties, the government attempts to get back on his feet.   However, to restore the State's authority all over the rest of the country remains a great challenge, guarantee of a sustainable peace and free movement of persons and goods.   As such, it is urgent that the reconstruction process of the rule of law be fostered.

The Central African Republic National Recovery and Peace building Plan 2017–21 (RCPCA) initiated by this government, considers the situation of woman as a priority. This plan integrates cross dimensions of which gender equality.   The review is irrevocable and requires urgent measures: ***"More women are affected by poverty, violations of human rights and lack of political, economic and development outlooks. Violence based on gender is generalized, and about one third of women are affected by female genital mutilation.   In rural milieu, 81 per cent of women life in poverty, compared with 61 per cent of men. Gender equality is not only a fundamental right, but also a necessary foundation for peace and sustainable development.   Women are already working actively to prevent conflicts and to promote social cohesion at the local and national levels. To guarantee women and girls access to education, health care, descent employment and to their representation in the process of political and economic decision-making is essential to ensure peace and a sustainable recovery. Interventions should equally include preventive, protection and response measures to human right violations and to gender-based violence. The***

collection and analysis of disbanded RCPCA data, pages 19 and 20, per age and sex will permit to measure the accomplished progress on the gender issue. Societies founded on gender equality are more stable are more resistant to conflicts. In the CAR context, this must be assimilated from the youngest age. » [19]

VIII-3- Women awareness and commitment

The women of the Central African Republic are committed to the process of peace in CAR. Their awareness is a reality and they are not hiding their desire to throw off traditional barriers and yoke that the society imposes them. They are committed activists, despite the precariousness of their living conditions and the insecurity to which they are exposed. These women need multi-faceted support for the visibility and the effectiveness of their actions and for their economic empowerment. The Education of girl and adults' literacy are urgent, as well as community sensitization on the fundamental role of woman the Central African society.

VIII-4-International conventions on gender issues ratified by the CAR

Those conventions were subject to an analysis in the examination of legal and regulation aspect of the study. It is necessary to reiterate them here to show the authorities' will to improve on women conditions in the country. One can notably name a few of them:

- **The UN's Conventions and Treaties:**

  - ✓ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), New-York, 16 December 1966;
  - ✓ The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New York, 16 December 1966
  - ✓ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), New York, 18 December 1979;
  - ✓ The Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, New York, 10 December 1984;
  - ✓ The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), New York, 20 November 1989;
  - ✓ The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, New York, 25 May 2000;
  - ✓ The UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000);
  - ✓ The UNSCR 1820 on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2008);
  - ✓ The UNSCR 1889 on Women's participation in peace processes (2009);
  - ✓ UNSCR 1888 to End Sexual violence in armed conflict (2009);
  - ✓ UNSCR 1960 on requesting detailed information on suspected preparators of sexual violence during Armed conflict (2010)

- **African Union's Conventions and Treaties**

  - ✓ African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, Kampala, 22-23 October 2009;
  - ✓ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Nairobi, Kenya, 1981;
  - ✓ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, Ouagadougou, June 1998;
  - ✓ OAU convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, Addis-Ababa, 10 September 1969.

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[19]

All these texts aimed at a best involvement of women in the in-country process of peace consolidation. They also reinforce their involvement and insertion within the decision-making spheres.

VIII-5 National opportunities

They concern:

✓ A favourable national legal framework suitable for woman's development through the legal arsenal available;
✓ A Constitution which sections 6, 80 and 144 are explicitly in favour of gender equality;
✓ The recently adopted law on gender parity and multiple laws that protect women's rights;

At the institutional level, a High Committee of Governance has recently been put in place. Amongst its mission is to ensure the law enforcement.

Moreover, the Ministry of Woman, Family and Child Protection was created, and a General Direction for gender empowerment exists within the aforementioned Ministry. This Ministry also have Regional Delegations, which are not functioning because of the security context. Finally, the existence of an action plan of the Ministry of Family in favor of gender empowerment shows that this issue is a governmental priority.

VIII-6- International Solidarity

The international solidarity in the context of this study refers to the international organization's synergistic actions in favor of woman implication in the peace process in CAR. The MINUSCA's gender division, the UN Women mandate in CAR and the dedication of humanitarian INGOs in the peace and reconstruction process, show evidence on this strong commitment for gender issues in the field. The initiative of this study by OXFAM bureau of Bangui is a clear illustration.

In August 2016, the Central African Republic government and the UN have agreed on a 5 years common project to support the creation of the Special Penal Court, which aims to contribute to fighting against impunity, restoring the rule of law and social cohesion as well as supporting the process of national reconciliation.

In the same vein, UN Women provided technical support to the PACEC (Support Project to the Electoral Cycle in the CAR) under the leadership of UNDP, in order to reinforce women access to elective positions and to consolidate their abilities to influence the decision-making process during elections. The UNDP relied on UN Women's expertise in order to empower women to reinforce their participation to the electoral process and to integrate the gender in a transversal manner within the following components of the PACEC:

✓ Support to electoral operations
✓ Support to civic education and to communication
✓ Reinforcement of capacity building of the Elections National Authority (ANE) (See the report of activities, July 2015- April 2016)

IX-CONCLUSION

In CAR, women represent slightly more than half of the population. Because of the lasting conflict, they engage themselves in conflict transformation, peace consolidation and social cohesion activities. Early activists, their priority were advocacy activities, sensitization, mediation and prevention that see eye to eye with the words of Rehn E and Sirleaf EJ. Thus, with the support of their husbands, brothers and fathers, they are performing in spheres of activities that were only occupied by men, out of home (Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams.) Their motivation, first of

all individual (followed by the family) turned into collective motivations thanks to the support of structured groups. Through this, they succeed in obtaining financial allowance that lead to their empowerment, and progressively to a change in the gender norms, embracing that way Sanam Naraghi's conclusion. Supported by international partners who advocate gender equality, thanks to trainings and development support of IGA, they will be therefore better equipped and acquire a new legitimacy to advocate peace. This legitimacy leads them to occupy positions of power and to establish their influence in families and communities, what reinforces their social status. However, those women face obstacles simultaneously endogenous and exogenous in an avant-gardist judicial environment, which the enforcement remains a great challenge. The current research is therefore an opportunity to spotlight the better use of the legal framework already favorable to gender empowerment. It is also call for the development of strategies and modus operandi that encourage women participation in the reconstruction and reconciliation process, while giving them a definite access to dialogue, and to decision-making spheres, on issues of peace, both at the local and national level.

X-Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned observations, we make the following recommendations to improve on the situation; they are seven (07):

- To carry out monographs on women's involvement in peacebuilding activities in others Regions of the CAR to assess the exact situation in order to develop relevant national policies and strategies which are inclusive and sensitive to gender;
- To encourage the conduct of a study that takes into consideration the relationship between women leaders at the national level and those of the local level. This will help assess if this informal channel is relevant to allow local voices to be heard at the national level;
- To train and provide financial and technical support to women local organisations so that they should better organise their activities in favour of peace with designed and implemented action plans;
- To define and to put in place channels that permit to women voice at the local level to be heard and to re-examine the number of seats attributed to women within local peace committees;
- To put into practice the government political will by adopting the provision texts of promulgated law, ratified pacts, treaties and conventions;
- To ensure the implementation by the State of its legal duties and political commitment on women's rights and to their full participation to the peace process (update national plan of the UN resolution 1325 and the dissemination of resolutions 1325 and 1820, production of periodic monitoring reports of international conventions, etc.);
- To develop popular education programme (with the involvement of thought leads, radios, etc.) which valued the participation of women in politics, notably at the local level;
- To prioritize formal education of CAR's girls and encourage functional literacy and non-formal education programmes to give to CAR's women individual empowerment opportunities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Legal framework and instruments

- **United Nations Instruments:**

  ✓ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), New-York, 16 December 1966;
  ✓ Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New York, 16 December 1966
  ✓ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), New York, 18 December 1979;
  ✓ Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, New York, 10 December 1984;
  ✓ Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), New York, 20 November 1989;
  ✓ Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, New York, 25 May 2000;
  ✓ UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000);
  ✓ UNSCR 1820 on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2008);
  ✓ UNSCR 1889 on Women's participation in peace processes (2009);
  ✓ UNSCR 1888 to End Sexual violence in armed conflict (2009).

- **African Union Instruments:**

  ✓ African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, Kampala, 22-23 October 2009;
  ✓ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Nairobi, Kenya, 1981;
  ✓ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, Ouagadougou, June 1998;
  ✓ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; Maputo, July 2003.

  - **National Instruments**

    ✓ The Constitution;
    ✓ Le Code de la Famille ;

- ✓ La loi Bangayassi N° 06.032 du 27 décembre 2006, portant protection de la femme contre la violence en République Centrafricaine ;
- ✓ La loi portant Statut, Protection et promotion de la personne âgée, août 2009.
- ✓ La loi sur la parité Hommes/Femmes (2016).

Now more than ever, this last law should serve as an efficient shield to those vulnerable persons subject to frequent violence, sometime fatal on the pretext of witchcraft.

The Central African legal framework also extends to structures like the Constitutional Court (the law determining the organization and functioning of this court adopted on 19 December 2005). There is also the memorandum on the creation of an African Court on Human and People's Rights adopted on O4 March 2002. The creation of a Special Penal Court is to contemplate, as well as the creation of National Commission on Human rights and Freedoms. There is also an act authorizing the ratification of the agreement on extradition between State members of CEMAC of 14 April 2007. The Penal and the Criminal Procedure Codes were adopted on the 06 of January 2006.

Regarding this rich legal arsenal, the CAR seems to be irreproachable and even avant-gardist, in certain respect, in its geographic location area and in view of the circumstances. In fact, some countries such as Cameroon do not have certain key instruments like the Family Code and a law on gender equality. Nevertheless, this attractive showcase for the country's international marketing is not benefiting to majority of women who are concerned.

*Critical examination and suggestions

One should observe that CAR authorities usually rush to ratify the main instrument, as it happens. That means the convention or the pact are quickly internally integrated, but not the protocol which is optional indeed but sometime more precise. Examples are: The protocols and pacts on economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and politics rights; the CEDAW protocol, the one in the convention against torture. It is also the occasion to regret the non-ratification) of some major instruments as the convention on disable persons of the 13 December 2006.

However, CAR is a monistic country, this means that as opposed to countries with a dual international law system, its ratification of an international norm is equal to the incorporation of this norm in the country´s domestic legal order; but this is not what happens on the field. As an example, the letter of the Collective of Women of the Central African Civil Society (COFEM) to the Right Honorable President of the National Assembly on 13 June 2016 had the following object: Forceful protestation against the under-representation of women in government and in the Presidential cabinet, justified by a lack of women with ability and competences. Indeed, the event occurred before the vote of the law on gender equality, but after its promulgation, one cannot expect any great change because the decree to implement this Act still to come. However, the scope is clearly defined in the three paragraphs of the first in these terms:

"This Act establishes equality between men and women in public, para-public and private sectors, as well as in decision making bodies in CAR;

It applies to political mandates, to elective positions and to appointed positions based on their competence.

The quota regime concerns the institutions of the Republic, general administration, para-public and private institutions, political parties, and civil society's organizations. »

For all that, the monitoring of these ratifications without effect, clearly shows the inertia in the Government attitude that one must denounce, because periodic reports demanded to assess the implementation of integrated instruments are not prepared here, some are due since the end of the 80's.

Besides, the protracted unavailability of structures and State representatives is strongly prejudicial given its paramount role, he is the one who must provide and foster the dynamic with all the resources needed; to ensure the good functioning and, if necessary, to sanction the end of the chain.   At the local level, the absence of the Mayor, the Sub-divisional officer, the ineffective legal system and the closing of prisons correspond to a serious weakness of State authority making the complementary interventions of the civil society inadequate. Some cases of training have been initiated to support national, international NGOs and some donors (MINUSCA, OXFAM, Jurist Women Association, DRC, etc...) on the reference text, which is the resolution 1325 without ignoring the resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1960 that complete it.   Nevertheless, these attempts remain incomplete and is similar to a sprinkling, far from the expected critical mass and essential within the beneficiaries to foresee a real impact.

 By observing more closely, the access to that information is blocked at the base by illiteracy of the majority of people concerned. In these conditions, the appropriation of the content by the target population will merely be impossible.

Therefore, the dissemination of texts that one can rightly consider as women rights classics is necessary after mass education. These are: The CEDEF, the Protocol of Maputo and UN resolutions aforementioned.

With hindsight, the challenge is to associate gender equality to the effective application of legal mechanism tanks to the knowledge and the mastery of social and specific dimension of conflicts and peace. Therefore, these are two assets well used: effective available texts and gender consideration in their implementation, given that due to events experienced, women's might have been psychologically ahead. They are in serious need and chances for them to be receptive are high. However, we should not forget that the sustainability of peace relies on an inclusive approach.

Appendix 2: Survey profiles and samples

Table 1: Respondent assembled size

	Women	Men	Total	NGO/International institution	National NGO	Total
Bria	152	99	251	2	Indefinite	253
Bangui-Begoua	157	60	217	Indefinite	Indefinite	217
Batangafo	120	28	148	2	Indefinite	150
Paoua	57	16	73	4	Indefinite	77
Total	486	203	-	8	-	697

Source: OXFAM/LERSA, 2018

Appendix 3: Female/Joint Organisations / International Organisations met

Organisations	Meaning
OFCA	Organisation of Central African Women
UFDB	Women's Union for Bantagafo development
AFL	Association of Women Leaders
CPC	Community Protection Committee
OFCA	Organization of Central African Women
CLPR	Local de Peace and Reconciliation committee
CPC	Protection and cohesion Committee
CASAL	Spiritual Support Frame for Local Authorities
AFRDB	Rural Women's Association for Batangafo Development
JAD	Jeunesse en Action pour le Développement (Youth in Action for Development)
CNJ	National Youth Council
FJC	Central African Women Jurists
CLP	Local Peace Committee
CP	Protection Committee
CLJ	Local Youth Council
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
JUPEDEC	Youth United for Environmental Protection and Community Development
IB BE I (main dans la main)	Association of Batangafo Muslim Women
Gui na gbiki	Association of Batangafo Mixt Women
Kondo a assa	Dynamic but informal association
Mou be na kwa	Dynamic but informal association
Mo kere	Dynamic but informal association
AFRDB	Rural Women's Association for Batangafo Development
Gui si mo tè	Dynamic but informal association
Association of women leaders	_
Association of public servant women of Paoua	_
ZADON	Dynamic but informal association
FARDEP	Rural women for the Development of Paoua

ZIRANONE	Dynamic but informal association
MELONG	Dynamic but informal association
Sara si a ga nzoni	Dynamic but informal association

Appendix 4: Themes implemented in favour of women

1-Raising awareness on gender based violence
2- Raising awareness on resolutions 1325
3- Peaceful management of conflicts
4-Mechanisms for resolving conflicts
5- Women involvement in the management of conflict and post-conflict situations