

# **WOMEN: FROM FRAGILE TO FLOURISHING**

**CORDAID'S APPROACH AND TRACK RECORD**  
AFGHANISTAN AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



*“Without women there will be no sustainable development, and without women’s leadership a peaceful future barely stands a chance.”*

Building flourishing communities in fragile contexts, that is Cordaid’s mission. Ambitious as it is, it is impossible without actively taking women and girls on board. With incredible courage, they face the many challenges of daily life in conflict and post-conflict situations. Therefore, I am proud to present to you our track record and approach that enables women to play their role as community change agents.

Perhaps you are wondering about our focus on fragility: isn’t it a lot easier to focus on more stable settings? It sure is. But Cordaid is not in the business of easy fixes and chooses to work where the risk is highest - and the return as well. I recently listened to the stories of women in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They lost their husbands in battle, survived rape and still kept their children alive when this seemed an impossible responsibility.

I also learned how women are able to instigate change within their families and communities. For example, not being satisfied with just the roads being demined, the Afghan women demanded that the fields where their children play be cleared, too. In Congo, they influenced the security sector performance by raising issues like: ‘Are the police keeping the markets open and safe? Can I continue selling my vegetables there?’ And: ‘Are the military protecting my daughters and their friends – or are they instead abusing them?’

It is very clear: enabling women to recover socially and economically from violence not only benefits the women themselves, but also their families and communities. I am deeply convinced that without women there will be no sustainable development, and without women’s leadership a peaceful future barely stands a chance. That is why they deserve our fullest attention.



**Simone Filippini**  
CEO Cordaid

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**One quarter of the world population, 1.5 billion people, live in societies affected by conflict. Consensus is growing on the importance of focusing international development efforts in fragile and conflict-affected situations.**

The reason is straightforward: without peace there will be no sustainable development, without development there will be no lasting peace. Consultations are ongoing about the Post-2015 Global Development Framework. Cordaid, together with its international partners, strongly recommends that matters of peace, security, stability and people's safety be mainstreamed across the entire Post-2015 Agenda.

Cordaid's mission is to contribute to the structural social change and transformation that is needed to build flourishing communities in fragile contexts. To achieve this, Cordaid focuses its efforts on women and girls. Their health, rights and opportunities suffer disproportionately in conflict and post-conflict situations. The flipside of the coin is that gender inequality is also a fundamental cause of fragility.

**When women's perspectives on peace and justice are taken as a starting point, societies as a whole will benefit. They understand that security is not just about the silence of guns.**

When women's perspectives on peace and justice are taken as a starting point, societies as a whole will benefit. In the absence of husbands, brothers and sons — drawn away or perished in fighting—women often have sole responsibility for the survival of their families. They understand that security is not just about the silence of guns. A decent life in safety requires the absence of gender-based violence, improvement of health systems and education for all, food security, economic opportunities as well as access to justice and political participation for women and men. It is for this reason that Cordaid's programs in fragile and conflict-affected situations focus in an integrated manner on improving all these aspects of life.

Cordaid has a strong track record in enhancing women's wellbeing and promoting gender equality. This report reviews case-based evidence from Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It shows that development interventions focused on health, food security and economic opportunities, which take women's priorities and capacities as leading, often have a positive impact on building peace and justice within communities and society at large.

Based on its long-term engagement with women and their communities in conflict situations, Cordaid recommends that:

- 1. Communities own their projects and interventions for social change.** Women's collective voice and capacity for peace and development must be built on the basis of their perspectives and priorities.
- 2. Priority is given to building trust and social cohesion** within communities and between communities and state authorities. Healthy state-society relations are a precondition for peace and development.
- 3. Long-term commitment in cooperation with local partners** guides all interventions. Local partners understand social and political complexities and are in the best position to negotiate a change in women's position and strengthen their vital contributions to peace and justice.
- 4. Local and international action go hand in hand.** While change starts with women and men at the local level, building strategic relations to connect their agendas to national and international policy levels where decisions are taken is a sine qua non for durable peace and development.

Cordaid and its local partners worldwide are dedicated to building flourishing communities in fragile contexts. Cordaid calls upon all NGOs, governments multilateral development actors and private sector working in fragile and conflict-affected situations to adopt an integrated approach to supporting women as change agents for peace and prosperity. It urges the international donor community to capitalize on the opportunity that the Post-2015 Agenda provides for translating their commitment to women and peace into meaningful action.



# 1. WOMEN AS COMMUNITY CHANGE AGENTS

## 1.1 Focus on fragility. A growing consensus

**There is a growing consensus internationally on the importance of focusing development efforts in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The urgency firstly lies with the numbers: 1.5 billion people, or one quarter of the world's population, live in societies affected by fragility, conflict and violence. According to the World Bank, this will have gone up to 32% by 2015.<sup>1</sup>**

Secondly, fragility hinders development. Since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, absolute poverty as a percentage of the world population has declined and the lives of many poor people have improved. However, progress on the MDGs has been very slow, if not stagnant, in low-income fragile countries. It is estimated that by 2015 half of the world's people surviving on less than \$1.25 will be found in fragile states.<sup>2</sup> There, fundamental human needs continue to go unsatisfied: women are unsafe and exploited, children are malnourished and unschooled, and communities are divided and insecure. Without focusing on the most vulnerable people in fragile and conflict-affected situations, global poverty will not be eradicated. The issue of peace and security remains one of the most contested issues in the ongoing international consultations on the Post-2015 Global Development Framework.<sup>3</sup>

According to Cordaid, fragility should be tackled not only to allow millions of women, men and children to live decent lives in safety.<sup>4</sup> Fragility should also be fought because in our world of economic interdependencies and globalisation, unstable countries and increasing inequalities between countries undermine global peace.

## 1.2 Cordaid's focus: women in fragile contexts

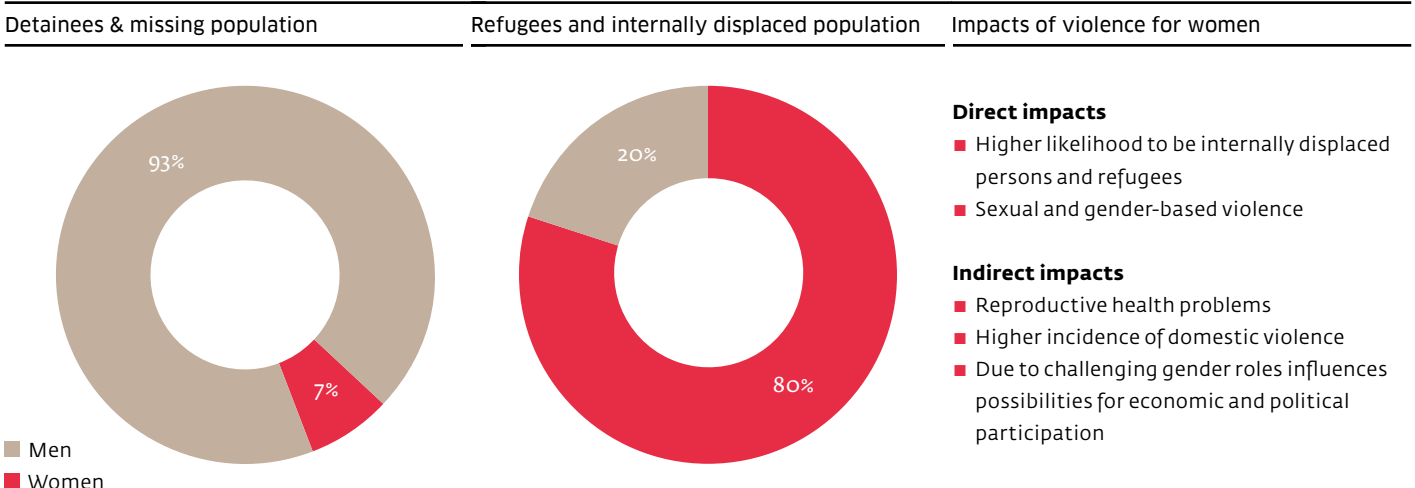
Cordaid's mission is to contribute to the structural social change and transformation that is needed to build flourishing communities in fragile contexts. To achieve this, Cordaid focuses a major part of its efforts on women and girls. Their health and wellbeing, opportunities and rights suffer disproportionately from the insecurity and violence that define daily life in their communities. Violence against women and girls affects their economic and political opportunities, their mobility, their personal health and their ability to get an education. The flipside of the coin is that gender inequality is also a fundamental *cause* of fragility as it intersects with other power imbalances in the economic, political and religious domains of social life.

A recent paper by UN Women<sup>5</sup> states that levels of gender equality and women's security in society are firmly correlated to development indicators such as national health, economic growth, corruption and social welfare. Therefore, fighting fragility and enabling development require addressing women's needs and priorities. History proves that without women there will be no sustainable development, and without women's leadership a peaceful future barely stands a chance.

## 1.3 Women in the lead

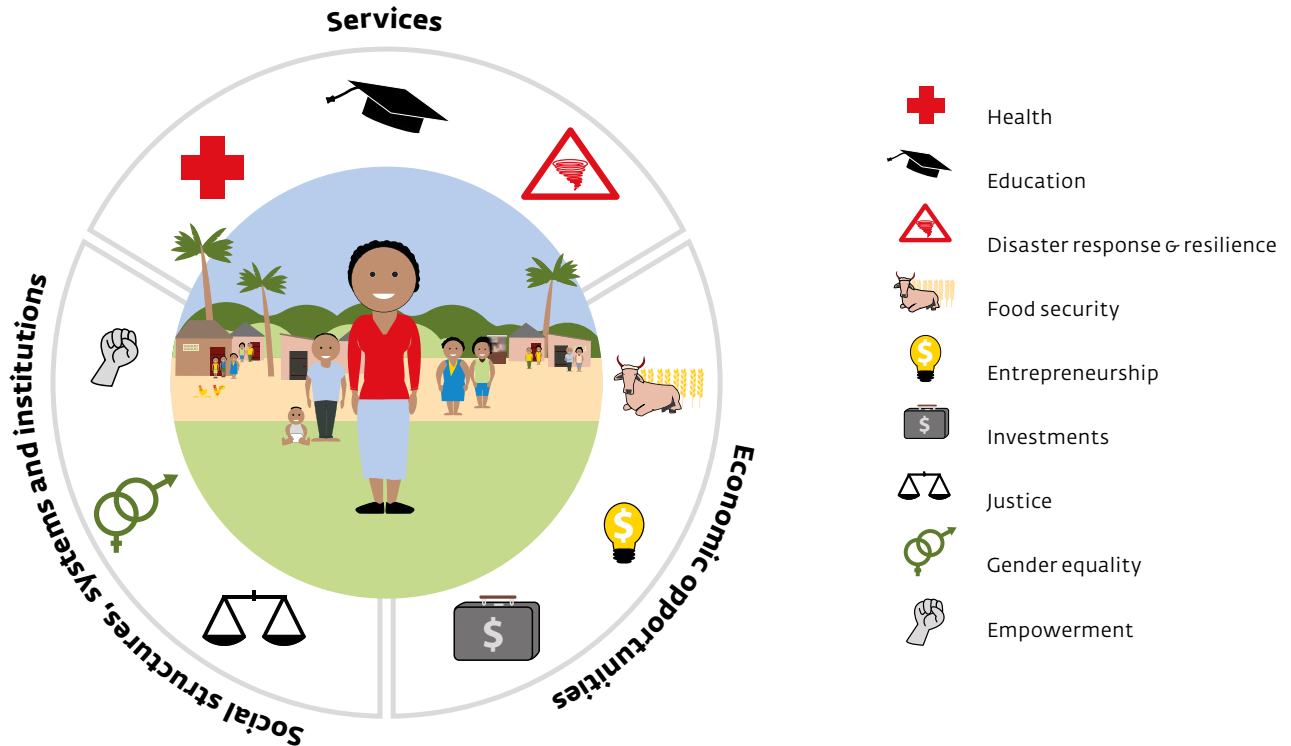
In the absence of husbands, brothers and sons — drawn away or perished in fighting— women in conflict and post-conflict situations often have sole responsibility for taking care of the survival of their families. This responsibility provides them with a holistic, grounded perception of what security means. Women understand that security is not just about the silence of guns. It is about dignity and a basic quality of life. A decent

## IMPACT OF VIOLENCE MEN AND WOMEN



**SOURCE** World Development Report 2011 ([http://sitesources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011\\_Full\\_Text.pdf](http://sitesources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf))

**CORDAID'S APPROACH FOR WOMEN: FROM FRAGILE TO FLOURISHING**



life in safety requires improving relations within communities, freedom from fear and the absence of gender-based violence, improvement of health systems and education for all, food security, equal economic opportunities for women and men as well as access to justice and political participation. The absence of such basic social, economic and political rights is often a major factor in generating and prolonging conflict.

This is the reason that Cordaid's programs in fragile and conflict-affected situations focus on improving all these aspects of life in an integrated manner (see visual). Working on services, economic opportunities and social structures simultaneously contributes to women's equality and empowerment and thus to women's capacity to contribute to peace and development within their communities and their countries at large.

Women, more than men, tend to take into account the day-to-day needs of their families and communities. They articulate very practical safety needs that are felt in their communities. Take the example of a de-mining program in Afghanistan. The men decided to clear the roads so that transport could be resumed. Women stressed that the fields where they work and where their children play were to be cleared as well. Women typically harbour different qualitative approaches to community protection than men. A woman in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, does not care about the absolute number of police or military in the streets. But she does care about the way they behave, the nature of their presence in the community and whether this leads to lower levels of violence against women. When women's perspectives are taken as a starting point, societies as a whole will benefit. The participation and support of men in the communities is a major factor in making this happen. Shifts in the balance of influence and the

redistribution of opportunities between men and women are an integral part of the structural social changes that Cordaid contributes to – so that women and men will work together towards peace on an equal footing.

**1.4 Cordaid's approach**

Cordaid has a proven track record in enhancing women's wellbeing and promoting gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The success of its work lies in its unique approach:

- 1. Community based.** The ownership of projects for social change lies with the communities where Cordaid works. Action needs to be home grown in order to be effective and durable. Cordaid starts its work at the community level, building women's collective voice and capacity based on their perspectives and priorities.
- 2. Local partnership** Cordaid works together with local partners, with whom it builds long-term relationships. Partners are selected on the basis of their expertise and on the fact that they are rooted in the communities and have a strong understanding of the complex social and political context.
- 3. Restoring social contract.** Cordaid's programs help to restore trust and social cohesion, both within communities and between communities and state authorities at local and national level. Healthy state-society relations are a condition for peace and development.
- 4. Linking national and international level.** The voice of local women rarely reaches institutional and political settings. Cordaid helps to build strategic relations to make sure that the agenda's of local women's networks are connected to national and international policy levels where decisions are taken.



*“We don't want to win the war, we want to win peace”*

**Brigitte Baptiste and Luz Stelle Luengas** of the Independent Citizens Initiative<sup>6</sup>

Women in Colombia barely remember what it means to live in peace. Nearly half a century of internal armed conflict between the government, drug gangs, paramilitary groups and left-wing guerrillas have created pervasive insecurity and a culture of deep distrust within and between communities. Families too have been torn apart as many women find themselves caught between the different warring factions that their sons and husbands belong to. The Colombian conflict has led to over 4.7 million internally displaced people and nearly 400,000 refugees; 80% of them are women and children.

#### **Women's Leadership**

Cordaid's program in Colombia focuses on strengthening women's leadership in peacebuilding - from the community up to the international level. Cordaid supports an *alianza* that mobilizes forty women's networks from across the country including the Independent Citizens Initiative.. Cordaid and its local partners use the innovative Barometer approach<sup>7</sup> to help these organizations to influence policy based on their self-formulated agenda's. The *alianza* has been very active in getting its voice heard in the ongoing peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). “Building on the mandate of UNSCR 1325,” says Margreet Houdijk, Cordaid specialist on women's leadership, “the women stress that dismantling the culture of war and a true commitment for peace and democracy are impossible to attain without including women's rights in the peace deal. They also insist that those who have committed violence against women will be held responsible, including the police force”.

**In November 2013, the first peace agreement was reached on political participation. It includes a statement that “everything about the extent of political participation including its implementation was carried out taking into account a gender perspective and ensuring the participation of women (confirming the UN's Resolution 1325).”** In the same month, president Santos appointed two women as the first female chief negotiators to join the Colombian government's negotiating team with the FARC.

<sup>6</sup> See section 4.4 about the use of the Barometer in Congo for more explanation about the approach.

### **1.5 International lobby**

Only 2.5% of the signatories of the major peace agreements signed between 1992 and 2010, were women. Reports by UN Women and UNIFEM show that if women and their views are included in decision-making, at negotiating tables and in governance and accountability structures, the result will be more sustainable peace and development.<sup>7</sup> Cordaid lobbies at international level for the inclusion of women in development and peacebuilding policies and strategies.

- **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security** (2000) acknowledges women's right to participate in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and peacekeeping and to be included in decision-making bodies at all levels of governance. Cordaid's lobby focuses on key factors - in particular financing and accountability - that block the effective implementation of National Action Plans (NAP) for UNSCR1325.
- **The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States**, adopted in 2011, is an agreement of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS). Cordaid hosts the secretariat of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), a South-North non-governmental coalition of peacebuilding organizations that coordinates and supports civil society participation in the IDPS.
- Cordaid lobbies for adequately incorporating matters of peace, security, stability and people's safety across the entire **Post-2015 Development Agenda**. Cordaid's policy paper ‘Gender inequality and fragility in the post-MDG framework’<sup>8</sup> has served as relevant input during several meetings including the General Assembly of the UN (September 2013) and the UN Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) (March 2014).

*“Cordaid has successfully promoted the inclusion of a gender perspective into New Deal processes.<sup>9</sup> Starting point has been a discussion organized by Cordaid on gender, during the IDPS Steering Group meeting in Juba in December 2012. After this session, the issue has been discussed with many stakeholders including the US State Department and staff of the World Bank.”*

**Peter van Sluijs**, Senior Corporate Strategist Cordaid and Coordinator of the CSPPS

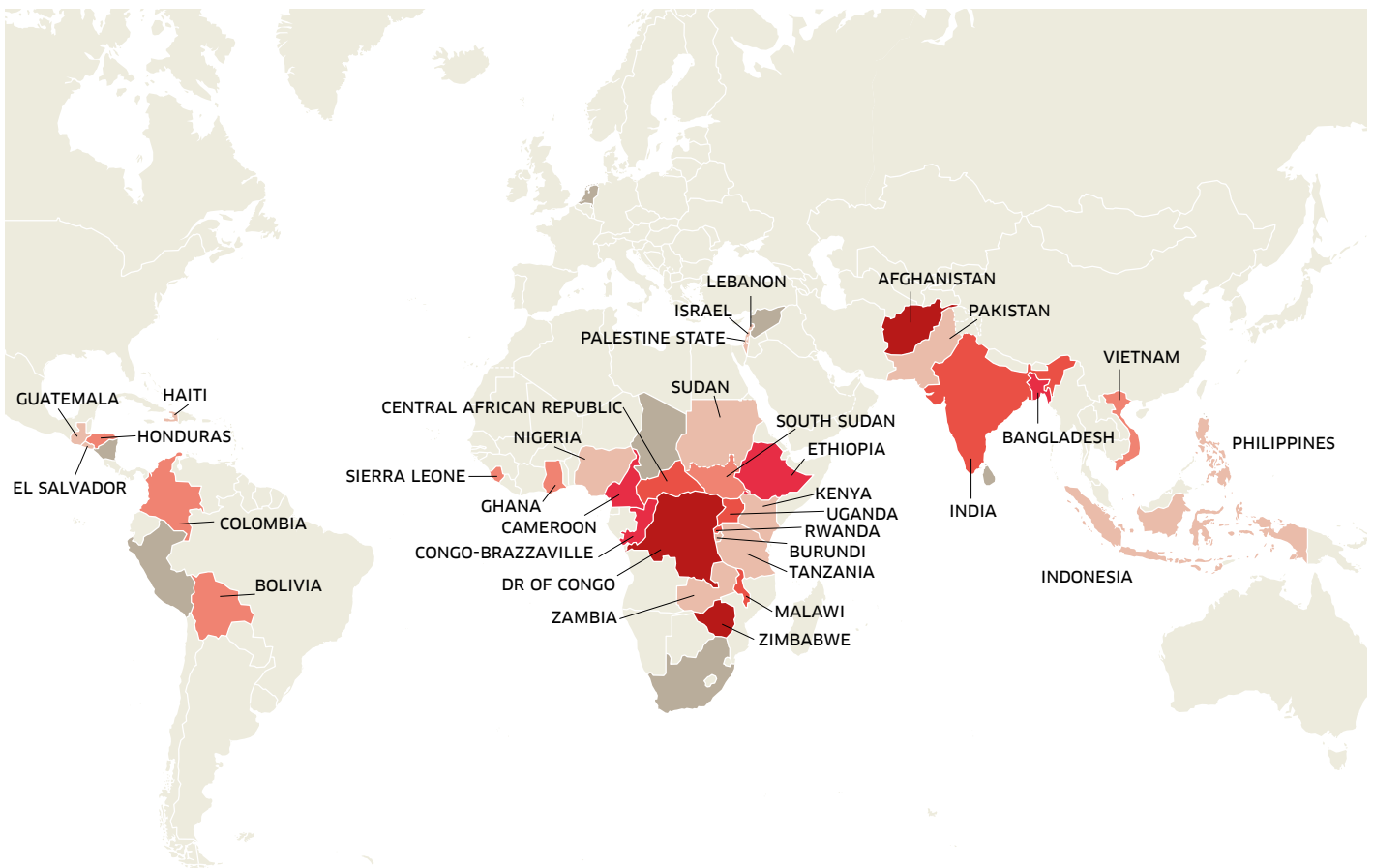
## 2 . CORDAID'S TRACK RECORD

**The integrated approach that Cordaid adopts in fragile and conflict-affected situations is reflected in its programs and achievements in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These are only two of the more than 30 countries where Cordaid is active in enhancing women's security and supporting their initiatives for peace and sustainable development.**

The Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan respectively rank 156 and 162 out of 162 on the Global Peace Index.<sup>10</sup> In all countries, Cordaid and its local partners encourage

women and men to identify their own security, justice and social service needs, and to act upon them. Cordaid supports community members in engaging with local and national authorities by placing their needs at the heart of the dialogue with civil servants, health and education providers, the police and representatives of the judicial system. A dedicated focus on women is a necessary component of working towards gender equality. Mainstreaming gender into all activities aimed at addressing fragility is the second component of Cordaid's two-pronged approach to gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected situations.<sup>11</sup>

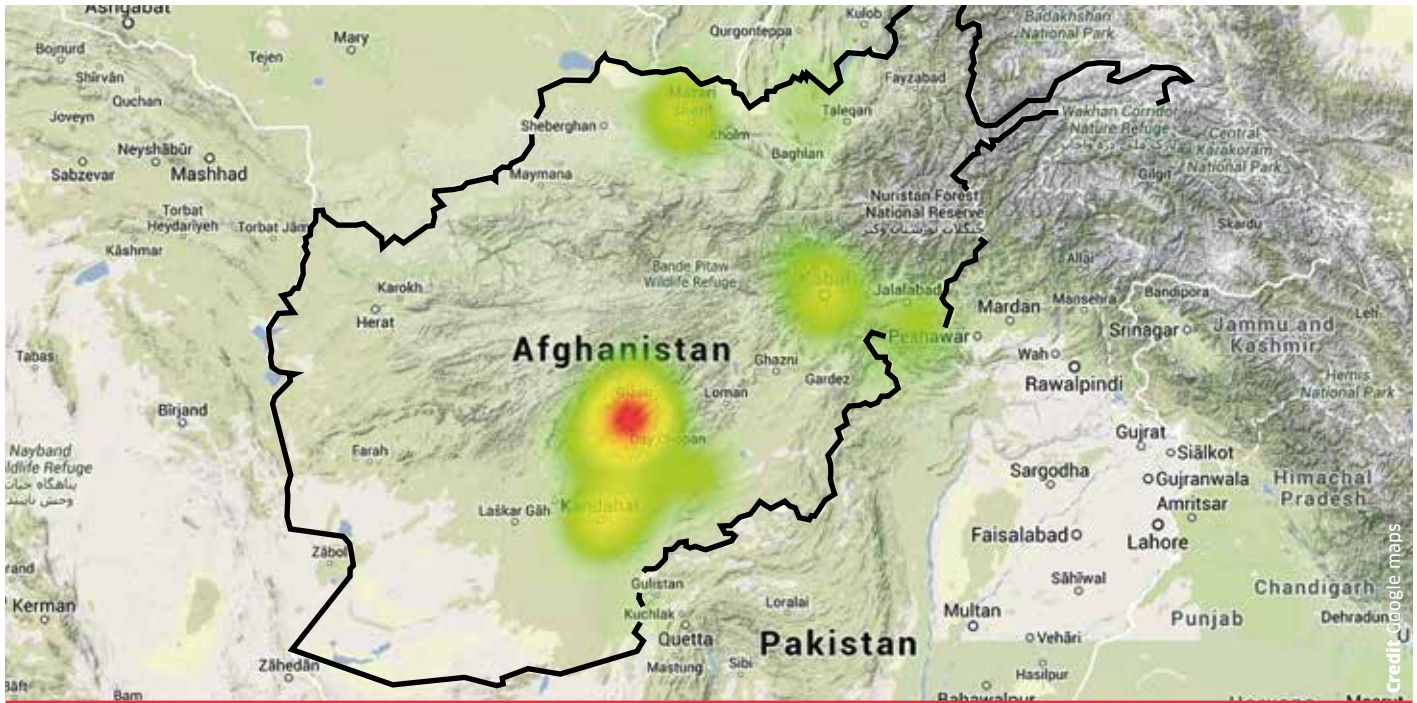
### FOOTPRINT: CORDAID WOMEN RELATED PROJECTS



**SOURCE** Cordaid IATI activity file, January 2014 - <http://iatiregistry.org/dataset/cordaid-activities>

## 3. AFGHANISTAN

### TRUST BUILDING AND LONG-TERM COMMITMENT ARE KEY



Heatmap of Cordaid's women related projects in Afghanistan

**SOURCE** Cordaid IATI activity file, January 2014 - <http://iatiregistry.org/dataset/cordaid-activities>

**Decades of conflict in Afghanistan have had many negative impacts on women, including displacement, poverty, the loss of male breadwinners, and ongoing high levels of insecurity and sexual violence. Cultural traditions determine that women are not mobile – they are not permitted to leave the family compound without male company – which severely limits their access to health care, education and paid employment.**

Over 80% of Afghan women are illiterate.<sup>12</sup> Perceived as bearers of male and community honour, women frequently face violence if they go against accepted gender roles, and have little ability to challenge their status in society. Traditionally, their voice is hardly heard in the public domain. Since the Taliban government was toppled in 2001, the position of Afghan women has improved and some important gains in women's rights have been made. This progress is fragile though. The current transition period is a source of great concern among many women's organizations about whether the gains made in their status and rights will be protected.

Cordaid has been working in Afghanistan since 2001. The withdrawal of NATO troops after 2014 and the fact that many countries are cutting back their aid programs, is by no means a reason for Cordaid to end its engagement with the country. On the contrary, it considers long-term commitment a vital

success factor when working in a politically and socially complex country as Afghanistan, where it takes time to gain trust among both the population and the authorities. Over the past 13 years, Cordaid and its Afghan partners have managed to build that trust with the local population, with village leaders and women's organizations, as well as with the Afghan government and donors including the World Bank and the European Union. Improving the security and social, economic and political opportunities of Afghan women remains the focus of Cordaid's programs. Experience has shown that supporting basic health services and development goals such as education for girls, reduction of mother and child mortality and improved agricultural production can serve as entry points for enhancing women's security and empowerment and for strengthening their capacities for building peace.

**Supporting services like health and education for girls and improved agricultural production are entry points for women's security and empowerment.**

*“In ten years Afghanistan has become a different country. There has been a lot of progress, something the media rarely cover. Today, around 80% of the population has access to basic health care, ten years ago it was 9%. A lot has also been achieved in the fields of education, agriculture, infrastructure and communications. Life expectancy has increased from 42 years in 2004 to 62 years in 2013. Those results were achieved for 90% with foreign aid. We urge the international community to remain committed to the people of Afghanistan. Stopping support now will be disastrous. Real change does not come by just injecting money. It involves the development of knowledge and talent and of changes in mentality and behavior. This is a process that may take decades. And this is exactly what Cordaid is contributing to.”*

**Said Shamsul Islam**

Programme Coordinator for Cordaid Healthcare in Afghanistan

### **Afghan women's priorities included in the New Deal**

In a process facilitated by Cordaid, women's networks and organizations in Afghanistan identified the following key issues for inclusion into the New Deal on Engagement in Fragile States:<sup>13</sup>

- **Politics:** Lack of clear laws and political will to ensure women's political participation and leadership.
- **Security:** Limited action to end violence against women and lack of political will to increase awareness and implementation of the Violence against Women Law.
- **Justice:** Lack of linkages between the formal and informal justice system, and lack of monitoring of the informal system, which causes cases brought forward to be resolved against the interest of women and girls.
- **Economics:** Women do not have their own income and are dependent on male family members resulting in ongoing economic insecurity for women across the country.
- **Services:** The government does not use gender budgeting and the majority of programs designed for women do not get implemented on time.

## **3.1 SECURITY & JUSTICE**

**Over the last 13 years, the international community has invested a lot of money and effort in rule of law and security and justice projects in Afghanistan. Nearly all these efforts have focused on formal institutions – ministries, courts, the police and legal aid organizations – in a top-down manner.**

*“Sitting with communities to listen and discuss what their needs and priorities are, has hardly happened,”* says Fatma Wakil, Programme Coordinator for Security and Justice based in Kabul. *“Donors and NGOs have been talking to the people, not with the people.”* Evidence shows that most of the well-meant international efforts have not made a tangible impact on people's local security situation. Communities struggle with long-drawn yet urgent conflicts over water, land and domestic violence. The focus on building the formal justice system, which is what the international community decided is what Afghanistan needs, has little relevance to their day-to-day concerns.

### **Community Security Architects program**

Cordaid's Community Security Architects (CSA) program, piloted in four communities in Nangarhar and Kabul province,<sup>14</sup> builds the capacity of communities to improve their safety and security instead of being dependent on (inter) national NGOs or the state. The CSAs are trained people from the community who are responsible for assessing the local security and justice situation with their community members. Together they develop an action plan and design and implement local-led initiatives to improve safety and security within the community. To ensure that women's concerns are included, special attention is given to training women to become CSAs. Actively including women is only possible through the support of local partners who have built up trust within the communities. *“Women in Afghanistan live inside the house,”* says Fatma Wakil, *“it is impossible to ask them to gather in a public space without the approval of the men. This is a reality that we cannot circumvent. Even the women's organizations we work with advise us: ‘start by getting the men on board’. We want to address women's massive safety concerns, most importantly the high incidence of domestic violence, but we need to convince the men of the relevance of the project before women will be able to participate.”*

**Two-track approach: helping to strengthen existing local security and justice mechanisms, while at the same time improving people's knowledge of the formal system and teaching them how they can access it.**

*“Trust is the glue that will allow change to happen and help people to hold on to it.”*

“In the past three years the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated. We were used to hearing about a suicide attack or roadside bomb once every two weeks; recently it happens nearly every day. Provinces that used to be relatively safe are not so anymore. Travel by road has become increasingly dangerous. Another destabilizing factor is that unemployment is going up because many international programs are coming to an end. Women and men have serious concerns about what will happen after 2014. The women still carry a deep-felt trauma about the period that they were living under Taliban rule. I share their concerns, but I also believe that a lot has been achieved that will not easily be wiped out.

Women have been educated, women’s organizations have established themselves and are doing impressive work. We saw this recently with the new law approved by parliament, which bans relatives of an accused person from testifying against them. If president Karzai agrees to sign it, this will have massive implications for the fight against domestic violence. Violence against women happens within the walls of the family home, and this law will silence not only the women but also their potential witnesses. The response was immediate: women’s organizations, including our partners, took to the streets. This was unthinkable not so long ago.

The end of 2014 is approaching fast and we should consider this new chapter for Afghanistan as a new opportunity – to show the international community that we will not go back to square zero. One of the most important challenges is to keep rebuilding the trust that was eroded by 25 years of war. Trust in the government and its institutions, trust within and between communities. We need to learn to listen to each other once again. Trust is the glue that will allow change to happen and help people to hold on to it.”



**Fatma Wakil**  
Program Coordinator for  
Cordaid Security and Justice in  
Afghanistan

A key aspect of the CSA program is that communities share their self-formulated security and justice agendas and action plans with relevant authorities such as local government, police and judiciary actors. For Cordaid, this also means engaging with the informal justice system of *shuras* and *jirgas*. In rural Afghanistan, 80 to 90% of all conflicts are resolved through this system. People see it as less corrupt than the formal institutions, it works faster, and the majority have no knowledge about the routes to formal justice institutions. Wakil: “We would be the last to say that these informal systems are without faults. Their verdicts often are based on traditions that are negative for women and do not conform to international human rights principles. But we cannot ignore them. We take a two-track approach: helping to strengthen existing local security and justice mechanisms, while at the same time improving people’s knowledge of the formal system and teaching them how they can access it. The CSA program thus increases people’s legal awareness”.

### 3.2 HEALTHCARE

**Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Especially in the conservative rural areas of the country, the very rudimentary health care system and the influence of cultural traditions limit women’s access to health facilities. Women are only allowed to visit a hospital or clinic if accompanied by a male family member; women cannot be seen or treated by a male nurse or doctor.**

At the same time, in rural areas in Islamic countries such as Afghanistan, health care is a vital entry point for development – exactly because visiting a clinic is in some cases the *only* valid reason for women to leave their family compounds, and because receiving training as a midwife or nurse is culturally more accepted than any other education.

#### 2003-2013 10 years of building Afghanistan’s health sector\*

**900 -> 2000**

Increase in health facilities, including 73 district, 28 provincial and 6 regional hospitals

**9% -> 80%**

population with access to basic healthcare

**9% -> 39%**

women giving birth at health facilities

**467 -> 3000+**

trained midwives

**165 -> 77**

decrease in infant mortality deaths per 1000 live births

**1600 -> 374**

decrease in maternal mortality deaths per 100,000 live births<sup>15</sup>

\* Various sources point at the difficulty of obtaining reliable statistics about people’s access to health especially in rural and remote areas. These figures are based on authoritative sources such as the WHO and field data collected by Cordaid.

Cordaid's efforts in Afghanistan focus, firstly, on building the healthcare system through better service delivery (especially for women and children), innovative financing models like Performance Based Financing (PBF) and the development of human resources (in particular training nurses and midwives). The second focus is on improving the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) of women and girls. This is done by discussing norms and attitudes, for instance about the age of marriage and birth spacing, at the community level and by improving access to family planning services, antenatal clinics and safe delivery at health centres and hospitals. Cordaid's track record is recognised internationally: in 2013, Cordaid won six of the seven major contracts for health projects in Afghanistan with the World Bank and the European Union.

### Performance-Based Financing

Cordaid has been working in the conservative and insecure Uruzgan province in southern Afghanistan since 2003. Access to basic healthcare for women and girls was practically non-existent ten years ago.

*“There are many hurdles for women on their way to a health clinic.”*

*“The obstacles for women seeking healthcare are many. First, there may not be a clinic anywhere near. Second, if there is a clinic, it may not have any female staff, and even if it does, insecurity more often than not prevents women from travelling to the clinic. Then when the roads are relatively safe, there may be no male family member available or willing to accompany her. This is why the majority of women never saw a clinic, received no antenatal care and delivered their children at home under very difficult circumstances with no help in case of complications.”*



**Said Shamsul Islam**  
Program Coordinator for  
Cordaid Healthcare in  
Afghanistan

The objective of Cordaid's work in Uruzgan is improving equitable access to healthcare and reducing preventable diseases and avoidable deaths among women and children. The program is carried out in close cooperation with the NGO Afghan Health & Development Services (AHDS), which has been working in Uruzgan since 1995, and the Ministry of Public Health. At the provincial hospital in Tarin Kowt, as well as in several district clinics, Cordaid has introduced Performance Based Financing (PBF). Together with the

hospital personnel, performance and output indicators are agreed that qualify for bonuses to be paid, for instance the number of children fully immunized, the number of pregnant women who attend at least three times the antenatal clinic, or deliveries assisted by skilled and qualified health personnel. It has worked wonders. *“Suddenly”,* says Christina de Vries, Women's Health Innovation Advisor at Cordaid, *“change appears possible – and in their own hands. Hospital staff feel the ownership and are determined to perform well.”* The hospital management is free to choose how to improve their working conditions or quality of service, for instance by renovating the hospital premises or buying medicines and equipment.

Due to PBF, Tarin Kowt hospital managed to hire more and better trained health professionals, including midwives, medical doctors, surgeons and pharmacists. This is a remarkable achievement given the difficulty of attracting health care professionals to work in the insecure province. 2013 saw a clear increase in the number of major surgeries, bed-occupancy rates, hospital deliveries and post-natal visits. Many more women have started visiting the hospital. The other major advantage of the PBF model is the accountability of public and private health facilities towards the community. Local communities are included in monitoring and verification, for example through patient satisfaction surveys to check the quality of care, often with the use of mobile phones. *“And at the end of the day,”* says De Vries, *“they vote with their feet. If the services improve, there is no doubt that patients will come.”*

### Training of midwives program

Cordaid has helped to improve the accessibility and quality of care in dozens of health centres in rural areas and provincial hospitals, often deprived from health services. It is also addressing the shortage of qualified health staff by facilitating the training of midwives. Cordaid supports four schools (in Balkh, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces) where about 100 young and enthusiastic female students study midwifery each year. Said Shamsul Islam explains the importance of these projects in a country where until recently only 9% of women gave birth under medical supervision. *“Maternal mortality is extremely high in Afghanistan and especially in the insecure and conservative South of the country. The girls who enlist for our training come from villages in all districts. The fact that their parents cooperate and encourage their daughters to get an education in town is in many ways spectacular. That they will train other girls in their own villages after their graduation makes this program even more special.”*

Training as a midwife is relatively accepted also by men as it is perceived as a fairly neutral action for the common good. Nevertheless, it is not self-evident that all graduates find employment upon return to their villages. Cordaid found that many of them, not mothers yet themselves, were considered ‘too young’ to be of use at childbirth. Others got married and were not allowed by their husbands or in-laws to work. *“This is where the principle of long-term engagement pays off,”* says Christina de Vries. *“During the follow-up to our project we noticed what was happening. We organized meetings with traditional leaders and women's representatives to explain the importance safe deliveries attended by well-trained professionals. Gradually we witnessed a change of attitude and the trained midwives were allowed to take over tasks from traditional birth attendants.”* At the moment, about 80% of the graduates are



Credit: Hans Stakelbeek

*Midwife training in Tarin Kowt in the province of Uruzgan*

being paid for working as midwives in their communities. Cordaid also supports the Afghan Midwives Association, which assists midwifery graduates with their professional development.

**Gradually the attitude changed and trained midwives were allowed to take over tasks from traditional birth attendants.**

### 3.3 SECURING FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD

**Eighty per cent of the Afghan population lives in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture and livestock for their livelihood. However, agricultural productivity has consistently declined over the last three decades of nearly constant war.**

As many as 4.7 million people, or nearly 20% of the population, do not meet the daily calorie and protein requirements. At least 1.5 million children aged under five reside in food insecure households. Many small-scale farmers do not produce enough food to feed their families. They lack access to land, markets, credit, extension services and agricultural

inputs and often suffer from the unjust distribution of irrigation water. Although women play a crucial role in small-scale agricultural activities and in sustaining their families, this often goes unacknowledged in Afghanistan's conservative society.

Research shows time and again that if women are given access to productive resources production increases, household nutrition improves and household income is reinvested in family members.<sup>16</sup> Cordaid's programs for rural development, which enable 120,000 small-scale Afghan farmers to produce more food, therefore have a clear focus on the position and opportunities of women.

#### **Rural development program**

In Balkh province in northern Afghanistan, together with its long-term local partner the Norwegian Project Office/Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan (NPO/RRAA), Cordaid supports a project for poor, landless households headed by women. Recurrent droughts, poor water management, the neglect of irrigation systems and decades of war have adversely affected the agricultural sector in Balkh province. It is therefore important to diversify people's sources of income so as to provide for food security. This project focuses on households involved in carpet weaving, a livelihood activity mainly done by women. NPO/RRAA helped to set up five weaving cooperatives, each of which reaches about 750 members and their families.

*“Under the umbrella of cooperatives, there are many important social impacts too.”*

*“Only five years ago, women had no right to leave their houses. Men took all decisions and the women’s role was restricted to cooking and caring for the children. Now that the women are organized under the umbrella of cooperatives, a lot has changed. Through the legally registered cooperatives, women can now receive loans and funds for their productive activities. The fact that they earn their own income has gained them more respect from their husbands and brothers and generally improved their social standing. Many women are now involved in decision-making within the family and community. The cooperatives are also used to organize literacy and vocational courses that further improve women’s opportunities.”*



**Ahmad Salim**

Program Coordinator for  
Cordaid Food Security in  
Afghanistan

By collectively buying the raw materials and reducing the need for middlemen the women earn more, which allows them to feed their families and to enroll their children, especially girls, in school. Moreover, for the first time, the families can afford to buy the necessary school stationeries and uniforms.

Cordaid’s food security programs also extend to Uruzgan province. The Uruzgan Livestock Development Program was designed to bring more economic activity to the insecure and poverty-stricken province and to encourage farmers to work together to enhance their productivity and gain better access to the market.

The programs in Uruzgan pay specific attention to women, who have great difficulties participating in economic activities in the conservative province. In Gizab district, 420 women were given vegetable seeds and trained on vegetable cultivation and processing. Their kitchen gardens led to more diverse diets and reduced malnutrition within their communities. To diversify their diets and income, a total of nearly 1300 women received either chicken, hens and incubators for egg hatching, milking goats, or wool processing machines. Women also use the income generated by the different activities for the education of their children and to buy medicine and clothes.

### Cooperatives reduce conflict

Cordaid’s work on rural development in Afghanistan has proved two things.

1. Projects that aim to enhance food security and increase farmers’ incomes often have a positive effect on the reduction of conflict. This is because economic improvement is in everybody’s interest.
2. Establishing cooperatives helps to reduce tension and to restore the trust and social cohesion that are a vital precondition to building flourishing communities.

Cordaid’s programs bring together people of different ethnic and tribal backgrounds. By working together and restoring food production the cooperatives help to create new connections and increase understanding between people who previously distrusted one another. Through community dialogue, social conflicts over water or grazing land are discussed and where possible resolved. *“The program has brought significant changes in people’s behavior and attitudes,”* says Ahmad Salim. *“The people feel responsible towards each other and are dedicated to make the program a success. Tribes that were entangled in conflict have shown willingness to forget the past. Some of them are now discussing how their cooperatives can increase their capital to serve more poor people within their communities.”* The cooperatives at the same time function as a platform through which farmers can negotiate with authorities about injustices (land rights, water distribution) or the absence of basic infrastructure.

*By working together and restoring food production the cooperatives help to create new connections and increase understanding between people who previously distrusted one another.*



*Carpet weaving, a livelihood activity mainly done by women*



### 3.4 WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

**Traditionally, Afghan women have had very few opportunities to act as leaders in the public sphere. The past decade has seen some progress as an equality provision was included in the new Constitution (2004) and women now have the right to vote in elections.**

There is a 25% quota for women in the lower house of parliament and a 17% quota in the upper house, which have both succeeded in increasing the level of women's political representation. However, such quotas do not automatically lead to more effective participation, given the persistent discriminatory attitudes that continue to exclude women. Moreover, women's status in the private sphere has remained largely unchanged and has at times been worsened by a backlash against the growing women's rights discourse. With the elections in April 2014 and the transition of power, there are serious doubts over the future of the movement for greater rights for women.

Cordaid's leadership programs in Afghanistan are aimed at strengthening the capacity of women's organizations and networks and advancing a change of attitude about women's rights among the youth. Cordaid partners the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) and the Afghan Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) work tirelessly in perilous conditions to push for the implementation of international laws and resolutions such as CEDAW<sup>7</sup> and UNSCR 1325 and for national legislation to prevent discrimination and violence against women.

#### Monitoring women's security in transition

Together with the AWN and the Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO), Cordaid publishes a periodical survey, *Afghanistan: Monitoring Women's Security in Transition*, which tracks and documents changes in women's safety, access to rights and basic services in the transition period (2012-2017). Both the Afghan government and the international community insist that NATO's withdrawal should not be at the cost of women's rights. The Transition Monitor systematically keeps track of women's security in a transitioning Afghanistan. By doing so, this unique research project meets the need to support the common claim of deteriorating security for women across Afghanistan with strong evidence.

This research that is conducted in nine Afghan provinces provides first-hand data about women's actual experiences of safety and security during the transition period. The women interviewed show concern not only about their daily insecurities, but also about the lack of transparency in ongoing peace negotiations. The evidence-based outcome of the Transition Monitor is used for lobby and advocacy and is shared with relevant bodies within the Afghan government, notably the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan Transition Coordination Commission (TCC). The research findings are also shared with embassies in Afghanistan, UN agencies, NGOs and the international media. The survey report has served as input to the NATO Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions.



*Afghan women and Cordaid partners share the findings of the Transition Monitor during international meetings like the CSW in New York (March 2014)*

#### 'Bayan': a social media platform for youth

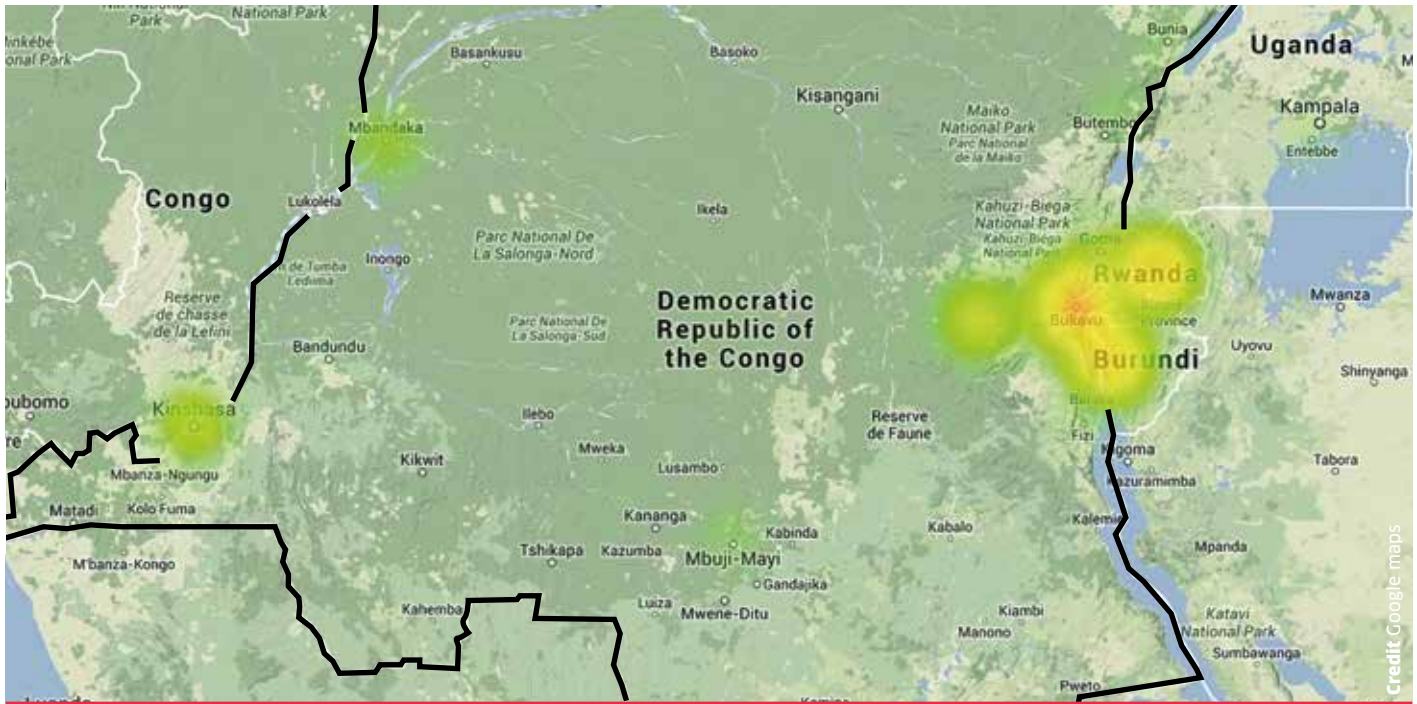
Together with the AWRC, Cordaid supports a project to engage Afghan youth with the issue of women's rights. The name of the social networking platform that is central to the project is *Bayan*, which means "to express oneself" in the Dari and Pashtu languages of Afghanistan. New media has emerged as an attractive means for young Afghans in the country and abroad to become socially and politically engaged without needing to become a formal member of an organization. The anonymity of the *Bayan* social media enables young Afghan women in particular to be actively involved without facing the risks normally associated with expressing their views. The platform allows both mobile phone and internet users throughout Afghanistan free access to content, to share information, interact and learn from others, network and advocate for change.

#### Women-inclusive peace deal

As foreign forces begin to leave the country, the Afghan government is working on a negotiated settlement with the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Afghan women's organizations are concerned that the deal will compromise the gains in women's rights made in the past decade. High-profile international pressure, such as from former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, along with tireless lobbying from the Afghan women's movement, however, have resulted in the inclusion of women in the peace process. This is a significant victory. The Afghan Women's Network (AWN), a coalition of 112 non-governmental organizations and 5,000 individuals, has led the way in supporting women's participation in the official peace process. The 2010 Loya Peace Jirga included 160 women among 1,500 delegates; 9 women were elected to be among the 61 members of the High Peace Council, which operates under the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program. Afghan women's key demands are loud and clear: any peace negotiations must address the root causes of conflict and secure the rights and gains of women. Leeda Yacoubi, deputy director of AWN, says: "I want my country's women, who constitute more than half of the population, to become the torch bearers for their coming generation. They should consolidate their efforts together with their male colleagues in all developmental efforts for their country".

## 4. THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

### BREAKING THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE BY SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND BUILDING HEALTH AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS



Heatmap Cordaid women related projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo

**SOURCE** Cordaid IATI activity file, January 2014 - <http://iatiregistry.org/dataset/cordaid-activities>

**In 1998-2003, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was the epicentre of what was called 'Africa's World War', the deadliest conflict since World War II. Throughout the last decade, violence and terror have continued, especially in Eastern Congo, where Cordaid focuses its efforts. Rebel groups, both local and foreign, fight over control of land and natural resources. In 2013, the DRC ranked first on the Failed States Index.<sup>18</sup> Despite Congo's immense wealth in natural resources, the country ranked last but one (186 out of 187 countries) in the UNDP's Human Development Index published in 2013.<sup>19</sup> A majority of the people suffer from chronic food insecurity.**

Women and girls bear the biggest burden of poverty, insecurity and lawlessness. Gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) is extremely widespread in Congo. In 2012 alone there were 15,654 reported cases of sexual violence, a 52% increase from 2011. Of these, 98% were perpetrated against females.<sup>20</sup> Many cases remain unreported and impunity persists. This is a matter of both cultural attitudes and a failing legal system. A prolonged lack of government investment moreover means adequate health services are sorely lacking. As a result of all of these shortcomings, illegal abortions and unsafe deliveries are the order of the day.

The long history of violent conflict has also damaged relations within and between communities, where levels of trust in each other and in the government are very low. In many Congolese communities, women have a lower social status than men. While women are the motor of the local economy, they are virtually absent in public decision-making.

Cordaid has been active in DR Congo since the 1970's and has an extensive network of partner organizations. Together, they have built up a track record in combating poverty (by improving access to healthcare, education and agriculture), tackling impunity and breaking through the culture of violence, and promoting effective governance, with a focus on the right to political participation, particularly for women.

#### 4.1 SECURITY & JUSTICE

**In a society where violence, insecurity and impunity are as widespread as in Eastern Congo, a priority of all development efforts is to improve people's security situation.**

When people feel unsafe and lack confidence in the formal security and justice providers such as the police or courts, this not only undermines their motivation to challenge injustice but also diminishes their ability to earn a decent living.

Cordaid started its security and justice programs in Eastern Congo in 2007. Its primary aim is to support communities in exercising their right to justice. Currently, an estimated 80% of the population does not have access to courts.<sup>21</sup> This is not only due to a hugely under-resourced and understaffed justice system; high illiteracy and poor knowledge of constitutional, civil and human rights are equally important inhibitors of access to justice.

Cordaid's recent activities in Eastern Congo focused on improving access to justice as well as medical and psychosocial assistance for women who were survivors of sexual violence. But just as important, Cordaid and its partners focused on raising awareness among communities and among legal practitioners about the failing legal system that allows impunity to persist. A documentary was shot, titled 'Justice for Sale', which follows Claudine, a young and courageous human rights lawyer in her struggle against injustice and widespread impunity. As many as 300,000 community members and legal practitioners have watched **'Justice for Sale'** at screenings across towns and villages in Eastern Congo. The campaign, which is still ongoing, uses a mix of communication media, such as radio spots, a TV-series and comic books to reach people in remote areas. All activities together prove to contribute to an emerging mind shift in this society that traditionally holds women responsible for the sexual violence committed against them – often by expelling them from their families and communities.

*“We noticed a decline of the number of sexual abuses before and after the campaign. Before the campaign, we registered around 60 cases a month. Nowadays it is 10 cases a month or less.”*

**Chair of Ntyakabolo**, a grassroots organization participating in the Justice for Sale campaign - South Kivu

#### 4x4<sup>Justice</sup> program

Cordaid's initial activities as part of the Justice for Sale campaign have developed into a comprehensive program carried out together with various local partners, called 4x4<sup>Justice</sup>. Lawyers and magistrates drive a 4x4 vehicle to visit communities that are disconnected from formal legal institutions. This program combines the ongoing campaign on the failing legal system with training of paralegals and magistrates, capacity building of civil society on human rights principles, and the organizing of (mobile) judicial clinics to provide concrete legal advice to community members. *“If these judicial clinics operated in all territories of South Kivu, sexual and gender based violence would be reduced,”* says Amani Cirimwami, one of the participating magistrates. The activities no longer focus only on sexual and gender-based violence, but also on land rights and inheritance rights for women. The 4x4 concept builds on what justice systems already exist locally and tries to bridge these to the formal legal institutions. 4x4<sup>Justice</sup> is now active in seven territories in South Kivu and has achieved considerable results (see box). Most importantly, in terms of impact, many women have testified that they have discovered their rights and are now confident that they know how to obtain (formal) justice.

#### Results: Justice for Sale program

In the period 2011-2013:

- **300,000 community members and legal practitioners** watched the documentary 'Justice for Sale' at screenings across towns and villages in Eastern Congo.
- The documentary was also screened at a range of festivals in Europe and the USA.
- **150 paralegals** in six territories were trained to mediate in local conflicts and to provide legal assistance to their communities in South Kivu.
- The mobile clinics led to **750 legal consultations** of which the majority consisted of judicial assistance to women.
- Five lawyers have been involved in taking cases to court and the program has led to **75 court cases**.

Perspective for 2016:

- Intensify services in Kinshasa and South-Kivu.
- Start the program in three additional provinces: Ituri, North-Kivu and Maniema.
- 15,000 people will have received legal assistance.
- 1,500 cases will have been taken to court.

**SOURCE** Evaluation finale du projet Justice for Sale, February 2014

#### Community Security Architects program

Insecurity and impunity are cause and consequence of weak social bonds within communities and low levels of trust between communities and authorities. Through the Community Security Architects program, Cordaid helps to rebuild this trust and at the same time increase people's security. Together with members of their community, Community Security Architects (CSAs) assess the local security and justice situation and prioritise what they want to tackle. A local action plan is then developed. The important next step is that the communities start a dialogue about their needs and action plans with the relevant authorities: local government, the police and representatives of the judicial system. Engaging these actors as allies empowers the community and increase the chances that their plans and actions receive support. At the same time, their cooperation enhances the accountability of formal security and justice institutions.



Female lawyer participating in the 4x4 Justice program in Bukavu



Over 300,000 community members across Eastern Congo watched the film 'Justice for Sale'

### Results: Cordaid's Community Security Architects

- 120 trained Community Security Architects
- 8 Community Platforms operational
- 6 Security & Justice Action Plans agreed upon and partly implemented

Perspective for 2016:

- CSA active in two additional provinces
- 150 communities have developed a Security & Justice Action Plan
- 1,500 community-led security and justice initiatives have been realized

## 4.2 HEALTHCARE

**The healthcare sector in Eastern Congo has suffered tremendously from the prolonged conflict and insecurity. Poor governance causes massive supply chain problems: hospitals and clinics in the eastern provinces - located at some 1,500 km from the capital Kinshasa - are nearly always out of stock of even the most basic medical supplies such as antibiotics or contraceptives.**

The high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence in Eastern Congo - which is for a large part due to a large highly mobile male population of Congolese military and police, UN peacekeepers, and rebels who are based temporarily in villages and towns - makes the lack of medical services an even more acute problem for women and young girls. Statistics clearly show the urgency: in South-Kivu, only 10% of the population uses contraceptives and the teenage pregnancy rate among 15-19 year old girls is as high as 34%.

*“Sexually transmitted infections including HIV, unwanted pregnancies and early marriages among the youth are mainly caused by a lack of knowledge regarding safe sexual alternatives.”*

**Liliane Rwezangabo**, SRH Next Generation Program Assistant in Bukavu, DRC

**The Next Generation - SRH program**

Together with its local partners, Cordaid implements a large program in Eastern Congo called the SRH Next Generation program.<sup>22</sup> The primary aim of the program is to prevent unwanted teenage pregnancies. It focuses on providing comprehensive sexual education through schools and youth-friendly health services, integrating quality SRH services with the mainstream health care system, and improving access to contraceptives for all, for instance through the 'pharmacy-in-the-box' approach: social franchises at community level that offer contraceptives and a small range of medicines.

All Cordaid's interventions in Eastern Congo's health and education sector are based on Performance Based Financing principles.<sup>23</sup> With clinics, performance-based contracts are negotiated that pay bonuses based on a list of criteria about quality of services and output, such as the number of women giving birth under supervision of skilled health staff and the number of clients given contraceptives. Newly established youth centres welcome young people to give them sexual education and provide voluntary HIV testing and contraceptives. Secondary schools agree on bonuses that can be obtained for each additional year that girls stay in school and for inclusion of sex education in the school curriculum. *“This is the strength of the program”, says Christina de Vries, “the palette of interventions at different levels that all work together towards the same goal: making sure that quality SRH services are available and that women and girls are empowered to make decisions on their sexual and reproductive health based on full and objective information”.* To address socio-cultural barriers that prevent women deciding on SRH and family planning, the program trains male peer educators and encourages traditional and religious leaders to publicly discuss the importance of SRH services.

**The strength of the program is the palette of interventions that all work together towards the same goal.**

In terms of safe deliveries, the program has already shown its worth: safe deliveries rose by 97% in PBF facilities compared to non-PBF facilities. *“Just as encouraging,” says Rwezangabo, “is that thanks to the program sex is no longer a taboo subject. It has opened up space for the education of girls on safe sexual behavior.”* Rwezangabo sees a rapid shift in perceptions and attitudes among young people, witnessed by changes in their daily behavior and not least their resistance to unwanted sex and pregnancy. *“Access to family planning means that girls and women are increasingly looking for jobs and improving their economic independence”.*

<sup>22</sup> The program also runs in neighbouring countries Rwanda and Burundi.  
<sup>23</sup> See also the explanation about PBF in section 3.2 on Afghanistan.

### 4.3 FOOD SECURITY

**The Democratic Republic of Congo is a country with huge agricultural potential, consisting of 80 million hectares of arable land. It is also one of the countries most affected by severe food insecurity. The DRC has the highest number of undernourished persons in Africa, around 75% of the total population, and the highest prevalence of malnutrition in the world.<sup>24</sup>**

The agricultural sector is plagued by low levels of investment over the past 20 years, an inadequate transport network due to the deterioration of agricultural feeder roads, over-taxation and the use of low-tech production and processing methods, and weak human and institutional capacity. These factors, combined with the destabilizing effects of war, have contributed to widespread hunger. Despite its poor performance, agriculture remains the main economic activity in the DRC. The sector employs nearly 70% of the active population and contributes to over 46% of GDP.

### Reducing inequality in markets also enhances women's position and status within their communities and society.

Cordaid's interventions in the DRC are aimed at helping small-scale farmers shift away from subsistence farming or aid-driven coping behavior to a restart of agricultural production and processing, to assure food security and increase the income of the rural population. Female farmers are a very important target group as they are the backbone of the rural economy and at the same time have the least access to information, markets and agricultural services and inputs.

#### Market Information Systems program

Many female farmers in remote areas produce only for subsistence purposes because their negotiation position in the existing agricultural markets is very weak. They lack adequate knowledge of prevailing prices, quantities, qualities and conditions of sale – all of which are indispensable for rational production and marketing decisions. They are easily exploited by middlemen.

To help increase women's competence and competitiveness, Cordaid supports a Market Information System project in North-Kivu. The key technology is mobile phones. Mobile phones, owned by even the poorest women, are a powerful instrument to inform female farmers about market conditions and prices and about the optimal timing of buying and selling, to induce them to store optimally and to plan ahead, and to find willing buyers. This information empowers them to enter the agricultural markets by making their transactions more equal and fair. "Congo's women are courageous", says Roger Vutsoro, Cordaid's Programme Coordinator Market Information Systems based in Goma, North Kivu. "The MIS program has really helped them to increase their food production and improve their access to markets". Around 50,000 members of the federation of farmer

#### Supporting women in the rice value chain

Women represent about 90% of the labor force in self-subsistence agriculture in the DRC. Men are mostly interested in export crops like coffee, cocoa, palm oil or rubber. Women have virtually no access to production assets and no say in decision-making related to resources. Cordaid supports a project to improve the position of female farmers in the rice value chain.

- **900 female farmers from 22 localities** in North Kivu have been organized into producer groups. They are trained and equipped with tools and credit to produce, process and commercialize new rice varieties.
- **150 female farmers are trained as 'model' farmers.** They help to disseminate information and materials among women within their communities.
- **22 community-based farmer's field schools** were set up in the same localities and are co-managed by the 'model' farmers.
- The female rice farmers have started supplying the local brewery with rice. Their position in the value chain has been considerably strengthened thanks to their improved position on the market through collective offer and diversified sales.

organizations (FOPAC) benefit from the program, of whom 34,500 are women. Field reports show that in 2013 the earnings enabled at least 300 households to pay for their children's tuition fees: 1,200 children joined primary and secondary school. Vutsoro: "Reducing their inequality in markets has a positive effect not only on helping women break the vicious poverty trap, but also enhances their position and status within their communities and society".

### 4.4 WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

**The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo includes the principle of gender parity. However, women are hardly included in the policies and politics that concern the country's security situation. Women head only 5 of the 37 national ministries, and they are all but absent in the upper hierarchy of the police and army. Of the 54 judges in South-Kivu province only two are women.**



International Women's Day celebration in Goma, DR Congo

*“There is still a lack of mechanisms to improve women’s participation. It proves difficult to break the tradition that women shouldn’t speak in public or in front of men. And due to persistent prejudice that women can’t keep secrets, they continue to be excluded from security institutions. However, women are increasingly organized in activism and are determined to extend the political space to express their opinions”.*

**Deodatte Chishibanji**, Advisor to Cordaid Women’s Leadership program in the DRC

### Peace & Security Barometer

The parliament has accepted a UNSCR 1325 policy, but not a single woman participated in the decision-making. To advance women’s leadership and to increase their participation in assessing the implementation of Resolution 1325, Cordaid developed the Peace & Security Barometer. The barometer is a measuring instrument that reflects the daily reality of peace and security issues of local women through data that they themselves provide. *“It goes beyond the indicators defined by the United Nations, because the women added indicators that they felt were pertinent to their situation”*, Chishibanji explains.

Different organizations in North and South Kivu join hands in the Barometer project, which in Congo is called **Femmes-au-Fone**.<sup>25</sup>



Radio Mandaleo is instrumental in mobilizing women’s listeners groups

The Femmes-au-Fone project empowers women by mobilising women’s listeners groups to express their concerns via their mobile phones (SMS system) and radio stations, like Radio Mandaleo. Women call in or send text messages about personal insecurities or what is happening in their communities. The radio programs reach all areas of the Kivu’s, with a coverage of approximately 80%. The project thus serves as a collective learning tool for women and the same time empowers them to reflect on their own information and take action. The information returns to the women who participated through different channels – SMS, data analysis, information dissemination – and they use this locally in discussions and workshops. A vital aspect of the program is to support the linkages between the local and the national and international levels. The evidence-based information gathered from local women is used for lobbying activities at national policy level and up to the UN. Cordaid links the organized women with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders to help integrate bottom-up and community evidence into Resolution 1325. The data can also be used for indexes such as the Failed States Index, the Global Peace Index and the Global Gender Gap Report.

### More women in local government

The 2013 local and provincial elections in the DRC bore witness to the improved participation of women in political processes as promoted by Cordaid and its partners. Women actively participated in the elections in all provinces. Deodatte Chishibanji describes how women left their homes in the rain, some carrying their babies, and despite violence and unrest were determined to cast their votes. Some women stayed all day, others even overnight, to monitor the polling stations.

Cordaid and its partners promoted women’s participation in political decision-making. In the run-up to the elections, Cordaid and its partners organized the campaign *‘De la parité dans la gouvernance en RDC’*:

- The radio and TV campaign reached as many as **1.2 million voters**, informing them of the electoral process and the importance of having women represent them in local politics.
- In Kinshasa and South Kivu, **15 women leaders** were trained on electoral campaigning, dialoguing with voters, and planning realistic social projects.
- **100 community mobilizers, of whom 75 women**, were trained on the electoral process, promoting the political participation of women, monitoring of the elections and organizing discussions with civil society organizations, women’s groups and political parties to share their strategies.

# NOTES

## Chapter 1

- 1 World Bank, World Development Report 2011. Conflict, security and development. Washington, 2011.
- 2 OECD, Fragile States 2013. Resource flows and trends in a shifting world. Paris, 2012.
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- 4 Cordaid, Focus on Fragility. Position paper, The Hague, November 2013.
- 5 National and Regional Implementation of Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Background Paper for Global Review Meeting, prepared by Natalie Florea Hudson for UN Women, September 2013, see <http://conflict.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/Final%20Background%20Paper%20for%20Global%20Review%20UNWOMEN%2030%20October.docx/466918760/Final%20Background%20Paper%20for%20Global%20Review%20UNWOMEN%2030%20October.docx>.
- 6 Brigitte Baptiste and Luz Stelle Luengas of the independent citizens initiative driven by Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad.
- 7 Who Answers to Women, UNIFEM, 2008; Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence, UN Women, 2010.
- 8 See: [http://www.cordaid.org/media/publications/Cordaid-7264-02-PP-The\\_New\\_Deal\\_and\\_UNSCR\\_1325-DEFHR-web.pdf](http://www.cordaid.org/media/publications/Cordaid-7264-02-PP-The_New_Deal_and_UNSCR_1325-DEFHR-web.pdf). March 2013.
- 9 'Integrating Gender into the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States', see <http://www.cordaid.org/en/publications/gender-new-deal/>. September 2012.

## Chapter 2

- 10 See [www.visionofhumanity.org](http://www.visionofhumanity.org). The GPI is the world's leading measure of national peacefulness, measuring peace according to 22 qualitative and quantitative indicators. In 2013, the bottom ten least peaceful countries 162 Afghanistan, 161 Somalia, 160 Syria, 159 Iraq, 158 Sudan, 157 Pakistan, 156 Congo, Democratic Republic Congo, 155 Russia, 154 North Korea, 153 Central African Republic. Cordaid is active in four of these countries.
- 11 This is also the direction taken by UN Women and others that promote a stand-alone gender goal as well as mainstreaming into all other Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

## Chapter 3

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- 13 Cordaid, Integrating gender into the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile Countries. Policy paper, The Hague, September 2012.
- 14 The pilot was conducted in 2013, program implementation started March 2014.
- 15 According to MSF, Afghanistan is still one of the most dangerous places in the world to give birth. During childbearing years, one in 42 Afghan women is likely to die of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Mediciens sans Frontieres, 'Between rhetoric and reality: the ongoing struggle to access healthcare in Afghanistan'. February 2014.
- 16 'Challenging Chains to Change, Gender Equity in Agricultural Value Chain Development', Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), 2012
- 17 The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979.

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- 18 Fund for Peace, Failed States Index 2013, Washington 2013.
- 19 UNDP, Human Development Report 2013. The rise of the South: Human progress in a diverse world. New York, 2013.
- 20 Report on sexual violence 2011-2012, Ministry of Gender of DR Congo and UNFPA, June 2013 <https://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/news/2013/Rapport%20DM%20SGBV%202011-2012.pdf>
- 21 Freedom House, Freedom in the world, 2012. Washington, 2012.
- 24 UNDP, Human Development Report. The rise of the South: human progress in a diverse world. New York, 2013.
- 25 See <http://www.cordaid.org/en/projects/femmes-au-fone-the-voice-of-local-women/109981/>

## ABOUT CORDAID

Cordaid is the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid, with its headquarters in the Hague and country offices in 11 countries. It has been fighting poverty and exclusion in the world's most fragile societies and conflict-stricken areas for a century. It delivers innovative solutions to complex problems by emphasizing sustainability and performance in projects that tackle security and justice, health and economic opportunity. Cordaid is deeply rooted in the Dutch society with more than 300,000 private donors. Cordaid is a founding member of Caritas Internationalis and CIDSE.

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