

# Workshop 1: Context, approaches and methodologies

## Purpose of the workshop

The first workshop laid the groundwork for the Shared Learning Agenda by exploring the **contextual foundations, approaches, and methodologies** that shape the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) programmes of HealthNet TPO in Colombia and South Sudan. The goal was to understand how each country integrates mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into peacebuilding programming, and to identify the common principles and local specificities that guide their community-based models.

## Key discussion areas

- The **role of context** in defining the meaning and practice of psychosocial wellbeing and peace.
- **Community-based methodologies** as entry points to address trauma and strengthen collective resilience.
- The **centrality of women's groups and community organisations** as spaces for healing, trust-building, and civic participation.
- The **interplay between individual recovery and social cohesion**, and how MHPSS contributes to rebuilding social fabric.
- The **balance between cultural relevance and transferable practices** in cross-country learning.

## Building the foundations for psychosocial peacebuilding

Both Colombia and South Sudan are marked by long histories of violence, displacement, and gender inequality. Yet they also offer strong foundations for psychosocial peacebuilding: in Colombia through vibrant feminist organising and intercultural traditions; in South Sudan through resilient community structures and the authority of traditional leaders.

### In Colombia (WAP)

- Operates in conflict-affected regions such as La Guajira, Bolívar, Meta, Putumayo, Nariño and Cauca, where women face overlapping forms of armed and gender-based violence.
- Uses a feminist, intercultural, community-based methodology that understands healing as both personal and political. Psychosocial work is explicitly linked to challenging patriarchy, inequality, and everyday sexism.
- Integrates body-based, narrative and artistic practices, and draws on local frameworks such as the Kämentsá Guidelines and EMMA, co-created with women leaders.

### In South Sudan (LOP)

- Works in a highly fragile setting with some of the world's highest rates of violence against women and girls, restricted civic space, and weak formal institutions.
- Anchors its approach in community systems through Psychosocial Focal Points (PFPs), couple engagement groups, Champions of Change in schools, and traditional justice structures (ABC courts).
- Focuses on relational and grassroots MHPSS, using dialogue and trust-building with chiefs, elders, and religious leaders as key entry points for transforming norms and addressing harmful practices.

