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Simple Truths on International Women's Day

On the occasion of International Women's Day, we acknowledge the inspiring women who have worked with The Advocacy Project (AP) through the years. AP has partnered with 115 community organizations and over half were founded by women. Six of our 12 current partners work for women's rights. Six are led by women.

Through them, we have learned some simple truths:

Women as Survivors: It takes special qualities to survive tragedy and emerge stronger. We see this in ageing mothers like [Pham Thi Do](#) in Vietnam, whose children have been poisoned by Agent Orange; and in the wives who search for their disappeared husbands in Nepal.

Women as Advocates: As long as we have known them, [Samita Pradhan](#) and [Indira Thapa](#) have been driven by a determination to free village women in Nepal from the scourge of uterine prolapse. Dr Kemi DaSilva launched the [Women at Risk International Foundation](#) to educate schoolgirls in Nigeria against sexual violence. Constance Mugari founded the [Women Advocacy Project](#) to combat child marriage in Zimbabwe. These are powerful advocates.



Thanh Hong Nguyen, right, runs the AEPD in Vietnam. She is seen here with Ai Hoang, 2016 Peace Fellow.

Women as Managers: It requires sound management to translate a vision into viable programs, as we have learned from Thanh Hong Nguyen (photo) and her sister Hao at the [Association for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities](#) in Vietnam. The same professionalism has helped Amanda Lane to turn the [Collateral Repair Project](#) in Jordan into one of the foremost centers for women refugees in the Middle East.

These leaders are the latest in a long line of remarkable women who have partnered with AP since 1998. They have included:

- **Beba Hadzic** from Srebrenica in Bosnia, who set up the [BOSFAM center for women refugees](#) and used advocacy quilting to expose the horrors of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.
- **Soraya Post** from the Roma community in Sweden, who served as the first president of the International Roma Women's Network and was the first Roma woman elected to the European Parliament.
- **Kakenya Ntaiya**, who survived excision in a Kenyan village, earned a PHD in the United States and returned to Kenya to set up a pioneering boarding school for girls. Kakenya was named [one of CNN's top 10 heroes](#) in 2013.
- **Sadiqa Basiri Saleem** (top photo) who grew up in a refugee camp in Pakistan and returned to Afghanistan to educate hundreds of girls in remote Wardak province.
- **Igo Rogova**, who led vulnerable refugees out of Kosovo to safety during the 1999 war and returned to set up the [Kosovo Women's Network](#) - a resounding voice for women in post-war Kosovo.

We are deeply touched that these women - like all of our partners - have found time in their busy lives to mentor our Peace Fellows. Of the 294 Fellows recruited by AP to this point, 220 have been women.

Our thanks to them all.



AP partners like Indira Thapa in Nepal, right, have mentored 220 female Peace Fellows, including Morgan Moses.

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