CHAPTER 07

BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND PEACEFUL SOCIETIES IN THE AFTERMATH OF CONFLICT

+ "Gender must be at the heart of socio-economic development and peace consolidation. Supporting women in their initiatives is supporting the entire nation."

Respondent to the civil society survey for the Global Study, working in Burundi

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 1325

Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including [...]:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives [...], and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary

2000

2008

Resolution 1820

Stresses the important role the Peacebuilding Commission can play by including in its advice and recommendations [...] ways to address sexual violence [...], and in ensuring consultation and effective representation of women's civil society

Resolution 2122

Urges all parties concerned, including Member States, United Nations entities and financial institutions, to support the development and strengthening of the capacities of national institutions […] and of local civil society networks in order to provide sustainable assistance to women and girls affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations

2009

2013

Resolution 1889

Urges Member States to ensure gender mainstreaming in all post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery processes and sectors

As the United Nations has become more and more involved in rebuilding societies after war, it has begun to adopt common principles and practices based on the lessons it has learned. One lesson is the understanding that in post-conflict societies, invariably, where there is little semblance of the rule of law and a great availability of arms, violence against women in all its forms spikes and becomes a major problem for the entire community. At times it may also lead to issues related to human trafficking, drug trafficking and human smuggling. The need to immediately deploy an effective police force—national or international—that is, one trained in dealing with violence against women, is an urgent requirement. Unfortunately in many contexts, this realization comes late, after many women have suffered great violations that colour their experience of peace.

In other situations, instead of universal practices, there is a real need to understand local realities, and a greater need for localization of national and international programmes. The end of the war often results in the rise of female heads of households with urgent need for skills so that women can survive and grow in the immediate aftermath of conflict. For this, there must be a detailed mapping of the actual reality of the locality, in direct consultation with the women: what would they like to do, the nature of the market, the nature of the skills available and the type of plans to be developed by the government. It is only after such a mapping exercise that proper programmes may be developed for women in post-conflict situations. Most international institutions do not do these mapping exercises, and neither do national governments. As a result of these 'one-size-fits-all' policies, a great deal of funds are wasted, as programmes are not really useful for the women, and do not really help them get on with their lives. Detailed mapping requirements must be an essential requirement of any peacebuilding effort.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

> *Without women's engagement from the earlier moments of attempting to end the violence to the latter stages of consolidating the peace, the dangers of relapse are greatly heightened.*

The effects of a lack of appropriate mapping of women's concerns featured strongly at all the Global Study consultations, and revealed much about the state and level of women's inclusion and participation in peacebuilding efforts. Women in conflict-affected and recovering countries stressed that they lack economic opportunities necessary for survival, remain confronted by daily violence in their homes and communities, struggle to cope with heavy burdens of care and dependency and continue to endure the emotional and physical scars of conflict, without support or recognition. All of these challenges served as barriers, in one way or another, to their participation in peacebuilding.

Throughout, one message consistently repeated itself: whatever the leadership roles women may have played during the conflict, they found themselves largely locked out of the decision-making forums for building a new society once the conflict was over. This also meant that they shared in few of the resulting peace dividends. Women were routinely excluded from the post-conflict processes that determine power distribution, wealth-sharing patterns, social development priorities, and approaches to justice. Furthermore, they could not look to local or national government institutions for assistance, as the state itself was often being rebuilt and too weak or compromised to play a meaningful role. In this context, the international community has too infrequently played the role it should in placing women's participation in recovery and rebuilding efforts at the center of peacebuilding strategies.

Yet it is often women peace advocates on the ground who are instrumental in stitching the fabric of society back together after conflict has ripped it apart. Research over the past 15 years has concretely established that women's participation builds a stronger and more durable peace as it broadens the peace dividends beyond the fighting parties, engaging a constituency who can promote social acceptance of the peace deal (detailed further in Chapter 3: *Women's Participation*). As reaffirmed by the recent review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, women's participation is crucial for economic recovery, political legitimacy and social cohesion: "without women's engagement from the earlier moments of attempting to end the violence to the latter stages of consolidating the peace, the dangers of relapse are greatly heightened."[1]

From 2003 to 2010, every civil war that erupted was a resumption of a previous civil war.[2] Approximately half of the conflict-specific items currently on the Security Council's agenda can be considered cases of conflict relapse.[3] Given the importance of women's participation in preventing relapse to conflict, their exclusion therefore impacts not just the lives of women and girls, and their families and communities, but impedes societies' efforts for stability as a whole.

It is clear that there is a need to reimagine 'peacebuilding' in a way which is meaningful for women and girls—leveraging their capacities and contributions, and developing strategies for inclusion which recognize their roles, and diverse experiences of conflict. This inclusive and transformative peacebuilding is not only a series of activities, or checked boxes for women's participation. It is an approach which requires addressing systemic gender inequality, which is among the root causes of conflict.

To remove gender inequality in all of its forms—from gendered poverty and exclusion, to structural discrimination, and violations of human rights—peacebuilding initiatives must empower women and girls economically, politically and socially. They must include long-term development strategies that benefit women and girls from the grassroots, building their capacity for individual and collective action.[4] These initiatives must equally attend to the physical and emotional trauma, and insecurity and violence that women and girls continue to experience after a peace agreement is reached, which pose clear obstacles to their participation in peacebuilding.[5] The trauma that results from war can have lasting effects on women's ability to move forward, and unfortunately, available psychosocial support can rarely grapple with the magnitude of trauma and pain that women in peacebuilding contexts often bear. Chapter 4: *Protecting Rights* addresses psychosocial support in detail, describing it as a necessity, not a luxury, for post-conflict recovery.

The 2015 review of UN peacebuilding architecture highlighted the importance of reconciliation, and addressing the long-term trauma of conflict, to curb the social propensity toward violence, which left unaddressed often manifests through rising rates of domestic violence in the peacebuilding period.[6] At consultations for the Global Study around the world, women spoke about their experiences of escalating domestic violence in the post-conflict period, and explained that a major factor contributing to this abuse was weak or absent rule of law institutions. In Chapter 5: *Transformative Justice*, the Global Study explores

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FOCUS ON

The UN peacebuilding architecture and women, peace and security

In 2010, the Secretary-General, in response to a specific request from the Security Council, submitted a report on 'Women's Participation in Peacebuilding.' The report affirmed that women are "crucial partners in shoring up three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy" and laid out an ambitious plan to support, reinforce and capitalize on women's participation in peacebuilding.[7]

The Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding commits the UN to progress in several thematic and programmatic areas. This includes a tangible increase in its financing for gender equality, setting an initial goal of ensuring that at least 15 per cent of UN-managed funds in support of peacebuilding be dedicated to projects whose main objective is to address women's specific needs, advance gender equality and/or empower women.[8] The Action Plan has been an important tool for planning and target setting. However, from the evidence collected for this study, it is clear that while some progress has been made in the area of processes, not enough impact has yet been felt in the daily lives of women in post-conflict contexts.

how women's access to justice is crucial to building peaceful societies after conflict.

This chapter reviews inclusive and transformative approaches to peacebuilding through a focus on three key aspects of post-conflict peacebuilding—economic empowerment, post-conflict governance, and demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) programmes and security sector reform (SSR).

Women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding

Conflict has devastating financial costs for societies, not least in the destruction of the domestic economy. As a result, post-conflict contexts are characterized by rapid rebuilding of national economic structures. Too often, the focus of this rebuilding has been on the liberalization of the economy and market reform—increasingly a standard component of post-conflict reconstruction intended to integrate the new state into the global economy.[9] These reforms, which intend to roll back the power of the state over the economy, can, in so doing, aggravate the burden of care on women, exacerbate inequalities and weaken the power of the

> "Women do not 'eat' peace. Women want programs that integrate peacebuilding initiatives with economic empowerment."
>
> Participant in the focus group discussion for the Global Study in Uganda

state to address women's specific needs through programmes and benefits.

Further, in the wake of conflict, large-scale external and domestic investments are often made in infrastructure, markets, labour force development, extractive industries and commercial agriculture. Latest data from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) show that while DAC donors invest large amounts in the economic and productive sectors in fragile states and economies, only a minute percentage targets gender equality as a principal objective. For instance, of USD 10 billion invested per year in 2012-13, only USD 439 million (or 2 per cent) went towards promoting gender equality as a principal objective.[10]

This is an area that clearly has not been a priority for international institutions or States, despite clear evidence that targeting women's empowerment in fact accelerates economic recovery. It is worth noting that several of the world's fastest growing economies, which have only recently emerged from conflict, owe their success in part to women's increased role in production, trade and entrepreneurship.[11] Strategies for rapid economic growth in these contexts included the promotion of girls' education and the expansion of women's access to agricultural extension and credit. In addition, by addressing discrimination, harmful stereotypes, patriarchal structures and exclusion that render women and girls vulnerable to violence and poverty, these States have taken steps to enable them to participate meaningfully and effectively in public and private spheres, and become a driving force in the economy.

The impact of women's participation on economic growth was recognized by the Peacebuilding Commission in a 2013 Declaration in which the Commission reiterated that "the economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the effectiveness of post-conflict economic activities and economic growth, and leads to improving the quality and social outcomes of economic recovery measures and policies as well as to sustainable development."[12] Beyond economic growth, women's economic empowerment has other important benefits for a society seeking to build peace. Experience and evidence show that women are more likely to spend their income on family needs including health care and education, thus making a proportionately larger contribution to post-conflict social recovery.[13] Studies also indicate that when women control income, they are better able to ensure the security of themselves and their children,[14] to engage in civil society activity and contribute to inclusive governance, particularly at local levels, thereby making a vital contribution to family and community stability.[15] Similarly, women's traditional role in many societies as managers of natural resources means that targeting female food producers—alongside legal recognition of their rights to land, housing and property—can lead to positive outcomes for food security in the aftermath of conflict.[16] One cross-country analysis found that the conflict-affected communities that experienced the most rapid economic recovery and poverty reduction were those that had more women reporting higher levels of empowerment.[17] In Rwanda for example,

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initiatives to increase women farmers' leadership in farmers' collectives, and their access to extension services, led to an increase in production yield, thus making a greater contribution to national food security, and increasing the women's status within the community.[18] FAO estimates that giving women farmers the same access to assets and credit as men could help increase their yields by 20 to 30 per cent.[19] This suggests that the potential of agriculture as an engine for economic growth and peace dividend as a whole could be increased by targeting female farmers.

Women heads of household and the burden of care

Households are transformed by conflict-related displacement, conscription and casualties, frequently leaving women as the head of the family in what are often deeply patriarchal societies.[20] In Nepal, widows of the disappeared spoke movingly of their daily struggles to survive and provide for their families (as detailed further in Chapter 5: *Transformative Justice*). Regardless of household composition, women and girls already affected disproportionately by the burden of care globally find these responsibilities exacerbated post-conflict, when educational and health facilities and social services may have been destroyed or become difficult to access.

At the same time, although the absence of a male head of household as a result of conflict increases care burdens for women and girls–and often, vulnerability too–these demographic shifts also present new and important opportunities for women's engagement in spheres and activities typically dominated by men, including male-dominated economic activities. For example, research conducted by Isis-WICCE in northern Uganda (2001), Sudan (2007), and Liberia (2008) found that women who were able to recover from conflict were more economically self-reliant than they had been in the past.[21] The challenge is consolidating and expanding upon gains for gender equality and women's empowerment as men return home, to prevent a reversion to pre-conflict norms that relegate women to the domestic sphere, and reinforce old gender stereotypes. This is especially important as peacebuilding and recovery efforts have tended to focus on building the economic space for men–rather than both men and women–to re-engage and reintegrate into their communities through job creation and expansion initiatives.[22]

Transformative, inclusive and equitable economic recovery

In order for economic recovery to transform underlying gender inequalities, women must be presented with livelihood options that avoid further entrenching gender inequalities and stereotypes.[23] This is a mistake that many internationally directed programmes have in the past made. For example, female ex-combatants have often been limited to choosing between activities such as hairdressing and tailoring, both of which could expose them to a lifetime of low wages and poor working conditions.[24] Instead, livelihood opportunities for women should be expanded and also extended to traditionally male dominated sectors, including extractive industries and natural resource management. In Sierra Leone, the "Women at the Wheel" project launched in 2014 by the Office of

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the President, offered taxi driving for women. This promoted women's economic empowerment, provided a service for the population, income for the women and simultaneously served to contradict gender stereotypes regarding 'women's work.'[25] The United Nations Mine Action Service employs women to clear landmines in countries including Afghanistan, South Sudan and the DRC. Women demonstrating that they are capable of the physical and technical demands of the job have had a powerful impact, strengthening women's status within their communities and providing a source of income.[26]

FOCUS ON

Extractive industries and natural resource management

> *"In my country armed conflicts are related to the exploitation of natural resources, which is funded by multinationals."*
>
> Respondent to the civil society survey for the Global Study, based in the DRC

In many post-conflict countries, extractive industries drive economic recovery and are a crucial resource for the national budget. This is evidenced for instance, by the tremendous reliance on oil resources by the two newest countries to join the international community: Timor-Leste and South Sudan.

The Security Council is increasingly recognizing the role that natural resources play in fueling conflict, requesting that the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) work with Central African authorities to develop a national strategy to tackle illicit exploitation and trafficking of natural resources.[27] The gender dimensions of extractive industries and natural resource management are complex, ranging from issues such as conflict over resources fueling extreme violence against women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,[28] to negative health effects on women and children due to unsafe oil drilling practices in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.[29] Women also continue to be largely excluded from job opportunities in the sector, despite their traditional roles and experience in natural resource management.

Consultations with women's civil society organizations in the global south revealed widespread perceptions that multinational corporations were being engaged to "develop" countries through extractive industries at the expense of local people.[30]

Inclusive, equitable and sustainable management of natural resources in the aftermath of conflict can play a crucial role in building peace and transforming social inequalities.[31] In order for women to reap the economic benefits from this sector, they must have land rights that are legally recognized, and be empowered to participate and lead in decision-making in the home, community and society on how natural resources are used.

Focus group discussions for the Global Study revealed that locally-led initiatives are a key resource for women's economic empowerment, and provide a sense of ownership over economic security. Projects such as community loans and revenue-generating cooperatives have succeeded in providing a stable source of income to women in Burundi and Rwanda for example.[32] However, the danger is that economic recovery for women too often translates *only* into micro-credit or micro-enterprises, while the large-scale projects continue to be dominated by men. As reflected in efforts by the African Development Bank in post-conflict contexts, the vision for economic recovery should be transformative and long-term, assessing not just the state of the inherited economy, but rather what the future economy will be, and how women can be placed to lead, contribute to and benefit from a transformative recovery programme.[33]

Finally, transformative economic initiatives must address the diversity of economic needs among women and girls recovering from conflict, with tailored approaches for particularly economically vulnerable groups, including internally displaced peoples and refugees, indigenous peoples, women and girls with disabilities, older women and the LGBT community, among others. As with the economic empowerment of women in general, the empowerment of each of these groups will contribute to the strength and resilience of peaceful and democratic societies.

WOMEN IN POST-CONFLICT GOVERNANCE

Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict is often accompanied by sweeping political and governance reforms that are meant to address the root causes of conflict, political exclusion, impunity and absence of the rule of law, centralized governance and economic marginalization. With the foundations of the post-conflict society being laid, governance reforms offer a unique window of opportunity to transform discriminatory social structures, and to promote women's human rights, participation and meaningful engagement. Pursuing the goal of 'gender balance,' as suggested in the Beijing Platform for Action, can encourage transformational change in institutions and has been found to lead to different choices in social spending. This, in itself, can address some of the underlying marginalization and inequalities that generate conflict. In addition, women's equal, meaningful and effective participation in post-conflict government institutions and political processes ensures a greater array of views is reflected in decision-making.

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Whether in lobbying for gender-responsive constitution-making or decentralization processes, or supporting women as voters and candidates in elections, it is clear that members of women's civil society often play a key role in transforming the political space. According to the World Development Report of 2012, "women's collective voice—either through direct participation in decision-making institutions or through shaping the context for decisions—can result in policies, programmes, and laws that are quite different from those that would have emerged without it. Providing an environment where women's voice can coalesce into a collective voice can thus promote women's agency and greater gender equality."[34] For example, in Somalia, where women are often excluded from the all-male arena of clan-based politics, women have focused their political energy on civil society organizing—monitoring human rights violations so that perpetrators can be brought to justice when proper institutions are in place, disarming and reintegrating young militiamen and advocating for women's rights.[35]

Women's participation in elected bodies

Over the past 15 years, significant strides have been made in terms of women's representation in parliaments in post-conflict countries. Several of the countries with the highest representation of women globally are also those emerging from conflict, including Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Rwanda, Serbia and South Sudan.[36] Many of these countries adopted temporary special measures as a result of efforts by multiple actors, including women advocates, during and after the peace negotiations. 'Temporary special measures' are instruments, policies and practices aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women,[37] and may include outreach and support programmes, allocation or reallocation of resources, targeted recruitment and promotion and quota systems.[38]

Electoral quotas in particular have had a quantifiable impact on women's representation in conflict and post-conflict countries, contributing to the overall gender balance of their national elected bodies.[39] The 2002 report, *Women, War, Peace*, recommended a 30 per cent minimum quota for decision-making positions, in a clear finding on the value of quotas for women's participation.[40] By July 2015, in conflict and post-conflict countries where legislated electoral quotas had been adopted, women represented almost 23 per cent of parliamentarians, compared to 15 per cent in those countries without legislated quotas. Similar representation rates were evident in 2014, when women occupied 23 per cent of parliamentary seats in countries using electoral gender quotas, and 10 per cent where quotas were not in use.[41]

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Quotas are most effective when they are adapted to the country context and accompanied by enforcement mechanisms. Electoral quotas may be accompanied by a range of measures, including targeted training for women candidates, public awareness campaigns on women's right to participate in political and electoral processes, and working with appropriate bodies to ensure women can participate in a safe and secure environment. All serve to confront the existing cultural and legal discrimination that prevents women's full participation in political decision-making, a fact especially important as the political space evolves in the wake of conflict. The presence of women in decision-making positions, in turn, has an important demonstrative effect: that public life is not the exclusive domain of men.[42] A positive example is illustrated by the case of Afghanistan, where gender quotas have seen an increase not only in the election of women to parliament, but in the registration of women voters, women participants in rallies and public demonstrations, and as candidates.[43]

Women's inclusion in post-conflict political processes has been shown to benefit societies as a whole. Studies have found that states with high proportions of women in parliament are less corrupt,[44] and that women tend to focus more of their legislative proposals on social service oriented legislation–rights, education and health, including sexual and reproductive health—to the benefit of society as a whole.[45]

However, despite progress in some areas, women politicians in post-conflict societies continue to face harmful gender stereotyping, cultural and legal barriers and discrimination that cannot be addressed by gender quotas alone. Violence directed at women politicians is an especially significant obstacle, and only heightened in contexts of insecurity. In Iraq, for example, women have been targeted while campaigning for office,[46] and in areas occupied by ISIS, women who have run for office have been executed.[47]

Gender-responsive decentralization and public service delivery

Post-conflict governance reforms often include decentralization, so that decision-making power is devolved to levels of government that are closer to the community. As capital-based decision-making is more far-removed and less likely to favour the interests and needs of different groups at the local level, decentralization can provide an important entry point to translate national laws, policies and frameworks to the local level. Such processes can have a major impact on addressing the root causes of conflict.

Much of the focus in promoting women's participation post-conflict has been centered on national level elections. Too little attention has been paid by comparison to women's participation in formal local

> "Evidence shows that women in the front line of service delivery, whether as polling agents, police officers, registration officials, judges, court clerks, teachers, medical attendants, or agricultural extension agents, deliver better quality services for both men and women."
>
> **Ana Lukatela**, "Gender and Post-Conflict Governance: Understanding the Challenges"[48]

FOCUS ON

Gender equality and decentralization in Timor-Leste and Nepal

In Timor-Leste, women's civil society groups and international actors partnered to advocate for a strong gender equality component to be included in the decentralization process post-independence. They were successful and the 2009 'community leadership law' mandated that three out of seven village leaders must be women. Further, the 2010 ministerial directive on local development mandated that women should have 50 per cent representation in each sub-district Assembly.[49]

In Nepal, outcomes were not as positive. Even though a law passed in the post-conflict period mandates local level basic service committees to include women members, the women themselves still feel reluctant to speak up unless they are discussing issues in women-only meetings. This suggests that capacity building for local women's leaders must also accompany efforts to increase their representation.[50]

governance structures. These are crucial not only as the most accessible interface for communities with the state, but also for the delivery of social services. When power is decentralized, women may struggle to have their voices heard if local governance is dominated by powerful male local elites.

Effective and inclusive service delivery can play a conflict-mitigating role by reducing tension and grievances between parties to a conflict over key basic services. The resumption and improvement of basic public service delivery is considered a crucial peace dividend, signaling an inclusive new system of governance and stability.[51] Provision of basic needs like security, water, access to food and health—including sexual and reproductive health—have deep implications for women and girls. In the post-conflict environment women struggle with specific barriers to accessing public services, including the threat of sexual and gender-based violence in insecure environments, difficulties with transport, finances and childcare, and continued marginalization from decision-making processes. Rural women in particular face major obstacles in accessing water, sanitation and health care.

Incorporating accountability to local women in the planning and delivery of services in fragile and post—conflict contexts can be a major contribution to improved social, political and economic outcomes for women. In addition, targeting women as beneficiaries of infrastructure development initiatives, cash transfers, and subsidized goods and services not only enhances the overall effectiveness of such interventions, but has the potential to reduce gendered poverty in conflict-affected societies, and serve as a tool for rebuilding and social protection by facilitating social and economic cohesion.[52]

Government and UN engagement with women in the design and decision—making stages of public service delivery systems—including in monitoring and evaluation—has proven to be a key factor in ensuring the voices of women service-users reach decision-makers, and that quality services reach women.

> “Prioritization needs to be given to restoring social infrastructure and to establishing basic social services – otherwise women will continue to bear an excessive burden of care, in a situation where conflict will have increased the number of disabled and dependents.”

Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture “The Challenge of Sustaining Peace”[53]

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION POST-CONFLICT

Reform of the security sector (SSR) and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants are the processes through which post-conflict states stabilize the security situation so that longer-term recovery and development can take place. Women and girls can be affected by these processes as victims of violence, members of armed groups, peace leaders in the community, human rights defenders and every day citizens. Over the past 15 years, increased awareness of the gender dynamics within the security sector has resulted in more attention to the specific needs and capacities of women and girls as ex-combatants, members of host communities and users of security services.

The Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security touch on DDR and SSR from the planning, implementation and accountability perspectives. Technical guidance has been developed, both within the UN and elsewhere, to help practitioners and policy makers to operationalize the normative framework, and to design and implement strategies for gender-responsive DDR and SSR in the field.[54] Furthermore, as a result of the evolving normative framework and operational guidance, important efforts have been made to mainstream a gender perspective in DDR and SSR policy and implementation. This has led to some good practices in the field on the one hand, and highlighted continuing gaps and challenges on the other.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

Many of the early DDR processes in the 1990's were criticized for their gender-blindness. Despite the presence of women and girls in armed groups, both in active combat and supporting roles, their needs were not reflected in DDR design and delivery. For example, in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the "no weapons, no entry" criteria excluded many eligible women, especially those in support roles.[55] In addition, demobilization sites frequently lacked facilities and equipment for women and girls, and reintegration programmes failed to offer sustainable and empowering livelihood opportunities.[56]

Although blindness to the needs of women and girls was oftentimes by simple omission,[57] in many other cases, women who had played leadership roles in armed groups were deliberately sidelined into more traditional roles in a misplaced effort to ease the political and economic reintegration of their male counterparts.[58] Whether intentional or not, the exclusion of women and girls from DDR has resulted not only in hardship for them as individuals, but also in missed opportunities to support and strengthen the leadership capacities of these female ex-combatants. Finally, gender-blind approaches fail to assess the role of women in the receiving community, especially their role in supporting social reintegration of ex-combatants, including those who are under-age, disabled or traumatized.

> "We want to be political leaders, and guide society, but we have no resources for basic survival."
>
> Woman ex-combatant,
> Global Study visit to Nepal

Since 2000, the Security Council has urged the consideration of the needs of women in DDR processes by peacekeeping missions in some of its country-specific resolutions. Whilst this is the case for some specific country resolutions, including some of those related to Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, South Sudan, Sudan and Haiti,[59] overall references to gender and DDR continue to be limited. Analysis of DDR implementation in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nepal and Colombia present similar conclusions in that advances in policy do not necessarily translate to better DDR delivery for women.

While several DDR programmes have been relatively successful in mainstreaming gender in the initial disarmament and demobilization phases, their reintegration components have fallen short, either insufficiently or inappropriately addressing the needs and experiences of female combatants, supporters and dependents. This is the direct result of the ongoing failure of DDR programmes more broadly, to effectively assess and address women's and girls' roles as agents during conflict. Instead, approaches keep reaffirming gender stereotypes, depicting them solely as victims, and failing to capitalize on their leadership skills.[60] For example in Liberia, skills training of ex-combatants focused on perceived women-specific activities such as sewing and hairdressing.[61] These activities reinforced traditional gender roles and also, in the absence of a thorough gender-responsive job market analysis, were not ultimately meaningful and viable economic livelihood options. In Nepal, only a small number of female ex-combatants have been integrated within the army or entered the political arena. The vast majority "became invisible and quietly returned to their communities deeply stigmatized and disempowered."[62] Such women, in Nepal and elsewhere, belong to the many that have been left behind and left out of peacebuilding processes.

While some DDR programmes have grappled with transforming 'violent masculinities,' concrete interventions in this area are nascent.[63] In the same vein, DDR processes that separate child and adult programmes present structural problems and fail to address the specific needs of young girls. For example, several girls under the age of eighteen who were eligible for the children's DDR programme in Sierra Leone did not consider themselves to be children, "either because they were already mothers, or because of the loss of parents, some had taken on adult roles for a number of years."[64] This resulted in many girls not registering for the child DDR-programme. Furthermore, the high levels of psychosocial trauma that women, men, girls and boys experience as a result of conflict-related violence have also been insufficiently addressed by reintegration programmes.[65]

DDR processes often implicitly rely on the unpaid labour of women in the community to care for disabled, young, sick or traumatized ex-combatants. In Sierra Leone, a survey asked predominantly male ex-combatants to identify those who played a significant role in helping them reintegrate; 55 per cent named women in the community.[66] Women grassroots peacemakers in Liberia played a crucial role in mitigating tensions around the return of ex-combatants to the very communities where they had been perpetrators of violence.[67] DDR programmes would benefit from increased engagement and coordination with women peacebuilders as partners, stakeholders and valuable resources in DDR design and delivery.

Security sector reform

Security sector organs in post-conflict contexts often bear the legacy of being the main perpetrators of violence during the conflict. As a result, communities can associate police and armed forces with threats, violence, intimidation and abuse. Therefore, their reform into democratic, effective and transparent institutions is key to gaining the public's trust in the peacebuilding process.

Security sector vetting processes, which exclude perpetrators of human rights violations from security sector employment, are critically important tools to protect civilians from those with a record of abuse.[68] Such processes must also be linked with DDR processes to ensure that former combatants who have committed gender-based violations are also not integrated into the security sector. Failure to engage in vetting, including for sexual and gender-based crimes, puts societies at risk of further violence from dangerous actors, constitutes a significant barrier to seeking justice assistance from the State, erodes public faith and confidence in rule-of-law institutions, marginalizes victims and sends the message that gender-based and sexual violence is socially acceptable.[69] Other measures to develop internal oversight and accountability within the security sector include clear reporting and disciplinary and criminal measures in case of discrimination, harassment and sexual abuse by security forces towards community members or fellow officers.

Effective and inclusive service delivery can play a conflict-mitigating role by reducing tension and grievances between parties to a conflict over key basic services.

Increasing the representation and participation of women, women's human rights defenders and women's organizations in SSR processes—and in the security sector itself—can help shape security institutions that are responsive and representative of the population at large. In this respect, women's organizations and women's human rights defenders have a vital role especially in community security and security sector oversight.

The presence of women can transform an institutional male-dominated culture and promote respect for human rights within security organs.[70] Furthermore, by bringing in a variety of skills and competencies, the increased participation of women can help create a more trusted and legitimate security apparatus. This can result in better policing outcomes for the community, such as improvements to violence against women reporting rates, intelligence gathering, and the treatment of female witnesses, victims and suspects. Data from 39 countries showed a positive correlation between the proportion of female police and reporting rates of sexual assault.[71]

Despite the positive impact of female officers, the global proportion of women in national police forces remains low, with an average of 9 per cent.[72] However, some positive practices are taking place in some countries, including using temporary special measures to increase the numbers of new women recruits,[73] and providing capacity building and skills training to encourage women to join. In Afghanistan, where between 70 and 80 per cent of women of the Afghan National Police are illiterate, an innovative literacy program offered through a mobile phone based application helped female police officers to overcome some of the challenges they face in improving their literacy skills, such as shifts and family duties which often cannot accommodate regular class schedules.[74] Mutual support, in the form of mentoring and networking between female staff is also contributing to the creation of an overall supportive environment for women in the security sector. Female UN police networks that were created within the peacekeeping missions in Darfur, South Sudan and Haiti, played critical roles in helping set up the national female police networks in host state police services.[75]

> *The presence of women can transform an institutional male-dominated culture and promote respect for human rights within security organs.*

Am important innovation in the last 15 years has been the establishment of special protection units in countries such as Afghanistan, Guinea, DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Timor-Leste.[76] These units are often staffed exclusively by female personnel or women and men specially trained to deal with victims of gender-based violence. The units have been most successful at increasing awareness of women's rights within the community, and contributing towards rebuilding trust, especially by women, in security sector institutions.[77] In some cases, the units have led to increased reporting and conviction rates, and helped expand survivors' access to services, such as support and referral services. In Guinea, for example, cases increased from 82 to 689 within a year following the creation of the special protection unit.[78]

Special units face a number of challenges however. These range from insufficient links to the judiciary, resulting in limited prosecutions, to lack of appropriate infrastructure to carry out hearings once cases reach the courts. In some cases survivors must also travel long distances to even reach the special units. For such special units to build on their effectiveness, it is thus critical that they be integrated in the overall structures of the security and justice sectors, and that they benefit from the necessary authority, funding and capacity to carry out their duties.

FOCUS ON

Vulnerable Persons Units in Timor-Leste national police

> *"I am here to help survivors use the referral network, get medical treatment if they need it, and get counseling to be able to feel better after their trauma. I help them take their cases through the Prosecutor's Office. This is why I became a police officer."*
>
> Sergeant Amelia de Jesus Amaral, Commander of the Vulnerable Person's Unit (VPU) of the National Police of Timor-Leste[79]

In 2000, the UN Police Force (UNPOL) in Timor-Leste created a Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) to investigate cases of domestic violence, sexual violations, crimes against children and human trafficking.[80] The VPU is now a critical component of the National Police Force of Timor-Leste. Its dedicated officers are valuable resources for communities, encouraging reporting and prosecution through their personal assistance to survivors and direct engagement at the grassroots level. A complementary network of thirty-five community centers across Timor-Leste offers survivors mediation, physical and emotional recovery services, legal assistance and skills training. The centers have also become spaces for capacity building and for women's organizations to meet, thus evolving into an empowerment resource for all women, and not solely survivors of gender-based violence.

While this approach has been successful, more resources are sorely needed to broaden its impact—VPU officers still lack sufficient vehicles and other equipment, making it difficult to access survivors in remote areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Across the various elements of peacebuilding, similar concerns emerged from the Global Study consultations with women in post-conflict contexts:

- Gender-responsive peacebuilding as a field continues to suffer from a lack of resources and insufficient expertise and capacity, especially at the country level.
- At the policy level, steps must be taken to improve women's participation in decision-making on peacebuilding priorities and fund allocations at country-level and ensure women fully, meaningfully and equally participate in peacebuilding programming at design, implementation and monitoring stages.
- Gender ministries or national institutions for the advancement of women, women parliamentarians and gender caucuses, and women's organizations should participate in peacebuilding priority setting, decision-making and oversight.
- For women on the ground, the delineations between areas of intervention are meaningless. Women cannot access markets if the roads are inaccessible. Women cannot till the soil if landmines are not cleared. Women cannot avail themselves of income-generating activities if they or their loved ones are injured or traumatized and require care. Psychosocial support must be accessible to women and girls, if they are to rebuild their lives sustainably.

Importantly, women emphasized their need for long-term comprehensive programmes aimed at systemic changes. Without such systemic changes to facilitate and enable political participation, economic security and physical safety, women and girls will not be able to realize their potential as individuals, as well as active contributors to peacebuilding and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Moving progress beyond 2015: Proposals for action

Member States and the UN should:

- ✓ Ensure that all local level peacebuilding efforts are preceded by mapping exercises to ascertain what programmes are relevant for communities affected by war, and which will most effectively empower women. There should not be a one-size-fits-all policy.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR PEACEBUILDING

Member States should:

- ✓ Consult with local women leaders, including women's human rights defenders, on concessions agreements negotiated as part of post-conflict reconstruction efforts, and ensure a minimum level of 30 per cent women's representation in all decision-making bodies with regards to the country's natural resources.

The UN should:

- ✓ Design programmes for economic recovery that target women's empowerment, challenge rather than entrench gender stereotypes and are forward looking on the transformative role women can play in an economy for the future.
- ✓ Design programmes with meaningful participation and end-benefit in mind for rural women, widows and female heads of households.
- ✓ Develop and use gender-sensitive tools that would map and analyze local contexts and markets to implement livelihood activities that are locally relevant, conflict sensitive, and that empower women instead of further pushing them into poverty.
- ✓ Develop guidance on post-conflict macroeconomic policies that take into account gender dimensions, and prioritize public expenditure to reconstruct vital services for women.
- ✓ Design economic recovery programmes and macroeconomic policies in a gender-responsive manner and evaluate their impact on women's economic security and human rights.

Member States and the UN should:

- ✓ Make effective and meaningful participation of women in decision-making and planning a condition of any UN-supported economic recovery programme.
- ✓ Design, implement and monitor economic recovery programmes and macroeconomic policies in a gender-responsive manner, and evaluate them for their impact on women's economic security.

WOMEN IN POST-CONFLICT GOVERNANCE

Post-conflict Member States should:

- ✓ Adopt legislative and policy measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country, and to ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate in the new, post-conflict structures of governance. This includes the adoption of temporary special measures to accelerate achievement of gender equality in all decision-making posts.
- ✓ Establish quotas for women of a minimum of 40 per cent of service delivery employment opportunities at local level.

- ✓ Provide women and girls with identity documents as a matter of priority during and after conflict, in order to register to vote, access land and avail themselves of social services and benefits, including education and health services.

- ✓ Adopt service delivery measures that specifically target women and take into account the often-disproportionate burden that women face in caregiving responsibilities, including child grants for households; education incentives for girls; free and accessible healthcare of good quality, including sexual and reproductive health, for pregnant mothers and young children; and other measures designed to alleviate the burden of unpaid work and family care.

The UN should:

- ✓ Continue to ensure that technical assistance to post-conflict elections includes advice on temporary special measures. Elections basket funds should allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of their funding to women's participation. Elections bodies should be supported to develop capacity in gender-sensitive data collection and the management of sex-disaggregated data.

- ✓ Provide technical assistance to public administration reform, to assist governments to implement schemes to achieve gender parity in civil service.

- ✓ Facilitate grassroots women's organizations and women human rights defenders' access to participate in the planning and delivery of basic services in crisis contexts, taking into consideration the implications for women's security and their often disproportionate burdens of care.

Member States and the UN should:

- ✓ Provide leadership capacity-building opportunities to national and local women leaders.

SSR AND DDR
Member States should:

- ✓ Incorporate a gender-sensitive approach in SSR and DDR, ensuring that not only are these responsive to women's particular experience of conflict, but that women fully participate, and their rights and perspectives are adequately addressed.

- ✓ Develop and implement strategies to increase participation and leadership of women within armed forces, police services, defense institutions, the penal system and the judiciary.

- ✓ Ensure that security sector reform fosters family-friendly and non-discriminatory work environments free of all forms of harassment and violence within the security sector, in order to increase the participation, retention and promotion of female personnel.

- ✓ Vet candidates for new or re-forming armed and police services for crimes of sexual violence and other violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, giving particular attention to confidentiality and protection of victims of sexual violence.

The UN should:

- ✓ Include gender analysis and full consideration of women's human rights in SSR/DDR planning and implementation, so that entry requirements do not inhibit women's access, and that reintegration opportunities do not further entrench harmful gender stereotypes and gender-based discrimination, or violate women's human rights.

- ✓ (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) Should ensure gender-responsive DDR/SSR are integrated in mission planning with dedicated funding, gender expertise, and regular reporting on gender-responsive DDR and SSR in mission reports and briefings to the Security Council.
- ✓ Ensure female uniformed personnel in all UN peace missions participate in the implementation of DDR/SSR programmes, as they can play a key role in confidence-building, especially in screening activities and providing security in demobilization sites.

The UN and Member States should:

- ✓ Facilitate the participation of women leaders and organizations in all stages of DDR/SSR
- ✓ Engagement should be with the entire spectrum of actors involved in SSR, including customary and religious leaders, private military and security companies, security sector oversight actors and the penal system. They should also engage men and boys to strengthen gender equality within DDR and SSR processes, and prevent and respond to human rights violations, including sexual abuse.

The UN and other service providers should:

- ✓ Ensure reintegration processes respond to trauma and improve the availability and quality of psycho-social support services.

Member States, parties to conflict and mediation teams should:

- ✓ Ensure the presence of gender and DDR/SSR expertise in the negotiation of formal peace agreements, to make certain that women participate in DDR and SSR programmes.

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