

A STUDY GUIDE SERIES ON PEACE AND CONFLICT
FOR INDEPENDENT LEARNERS AND CLASSROOM INSTRUCTORS

GENDER, WAR & PEACEBUILDING



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Introduction

“We can no longer afford to minimize or ignore the contributions of women and girls to all stages of conflict resolution, peacemaking, peace-building, peacekeeping and reconstruction processes. Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men.”¹

Kofi Annan

Wars in the past two decades have heightened awareness of the vulnerability of non-combatants in civil strife. Civilians in every major conflict – Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador and others – have been regularly targeted as a tactic of war. Women have not escaped this targeting – in fact, in many conflicts, women have been particular targets, as armed forces attempt to demoralize their opponents. At the same time, women have not participated in political negotiations to end their conflicts. Neither have they been included in many UN-sponsored mediations. As a result, a special concern for women’s issues is often missing from peace settlements, hampering reconstruction and reconciliation processes.

Contemporary analysis of war and peace issues often draws on the idea of human security—in addition to national security—in order to focus on the individual as well as the connections between individuals and groups within societies. In that way, peace depends on the belief by all those affected by the outcome of a negotiated peace or the resumption of war and violence (referred to as “stakeholders”) that their needs and aspirations will be taken into account. Increasingly, the inclusion of women is an essential element to understanding the roots of a conflict and also to developing innovative, viable solutions that can help establish sustainable peace.

The importance of bringing gender into peacebuilding is not confined to redressing the violations of the human rights of women or addressing women’s economic, social, or justice needs. Instead, for many, a gendered perspective represents peacebuilding as a process of inclusion.

The guide begins with a brief discussion on gender, and how gender and conflict are interrelated. Additionally, there will be a short overview of vulnerable groups in armed conflict. This discussion is followed by a closer look at the role gender plays vis-à-vis armed conflict and, more specifically, how women are both affected by war and contribute to peace. The study guide concludes by examining how the international community is wrestling with the larger question of the challenges inherent in achieving gender equity, and why both men and women have an important role to play in achieving that goal.

Differences between men and women are often thought of only in biological and physiological terms. But the differences are far more complex when seen in society. It is the term **gender** that encompasses the socially constructed roles, activities, and behaviors that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. These roles vary according to socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts; and are affected by other factors, including race, age, class, religion, and ethnic group. Furthermore, gender roles are learned and reinforced through education, political and economic systems, social expectations, legislation, religion, culture and traditions.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, adopted in 2000, was the first resolution to address comprehensively issues related to women, peace, and security. It is a significant and unprecedented document that not only recognized the disproportionately negative impact of armed conflict on women but also highlighted the imperative of incorporating a gender perspective in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and reconciliation efforts. More importantly, it acknowledged the underestimated and untapped potential of women as effective decision-makers and negotiators, and urged member states to intensify their efforts for equal representation and participation of women in all endeavors for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. This was a significant step in identifying the inextricable nexus between sustainable peace and women's participation in decision-making.

It is important to emphasize that UNSCR 1325 did not develop in a vacuum, but instead was informed by the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and a number of other initiatives that tenaciously tackled the issues of increased gender-based violence and discrimination in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations at the end of the 20th century.² It gradually became obvious that the end of the Cold War had changed not only the international political environment but also the nature of warfare, i.e., from mainly inter-state to predominantly intra-state, with ethnic and religious differences becoming increasingly a cause or a pretext for violent conflict. The civilian population in general, and women and children in particular, thus have become the frontlines of warfare, subjected to systematic attacks by state armies and violent non-state actors alike. Major General Patrick Cammaert, a former UN

THE FOUR PILLARS THAT SUPPORT THE GOALS OF RESOLUTION 1325

- *Increased **PARTICIPATION** of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional, and international institutions.*
- ***PROTECTION** of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations.*
- *Improving intervention strategies in the **PREVENTION** of violence against women.*
- *Advancement of **RELIEF AND RECOVERY** measures to address international crises through a gendered lens.*

Peacekeeping Commander, has said “it is now more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern conflict.”³ Moreover, the women have been systematically sidelined and excluded from meaningful participation in peace processes. It is this situation that UN Security Council Resolution 1325 seeks to redress.

The United States has also taken steps to support this initiative. In October 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that “the only way to...reduce the number of conflicts around the world, to build sustainable peace – is to draw on the full contributions of both women and men in every aspect of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.” She announced that the United States was joining other countries which had developed national action plans (NAPs) to integrate the provisions of UNSCR 1325 in their domestic and foreign policies by formulating a U.S. “National Action Plan to accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325 across our government and with our partners in civil society.” In Secretary Clinton’s words, this action plan will be “a comprehensive roadmap for accelerating and institutionalizing efforts across the United States Government to advance women’s participation in making and keeping peace.” Today the US is one of 36 countries with a national action plan.

Furthermore, in addressing the women, peace, and security agenda of the international community Secretary Clinton emphasized that the key to its success is “an investment in early warning systems that incorporate gender analysis and monitor increases in violence and discrimination against women, which can be indicators of future conflict. We will also support grassroots women’s organizations that work to stop violence and promote peace [and] because women’s economic empowerment leads to greater prosperity for their societies, we are putting women and girls at the center of our global efforts on food security, health, and entrepreneurship.”⁴

Nevertheless, while the numerous benefits of enlisting the support of women in peace processes and mediation efforts have been thoroughly established by the UN, there has been little increase in the strikingly

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS ADDRESSING WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ISSUES

There are four follow-up Resolutions that provide support for Resolution 1325 and concrete areas for implementation.

Resolution 1820 (2008)

Recognizes that conflict-related sexual violence is a tactic of warfare, and calls for the training of troops on preventing and responding to sexual violence, deployment of more women to peace operations, and enforcement of zero-tolerance policies for peacekeepers with regard to acts of sexual exploitation or abuse.

Resolution 1888 (2009)

Strengthens the implementation of Resolution 1820 by calling for leadership to address conflict-related sexual violence, deployment of teams (military and gender experts) to critical conflict areas, and improved monitoring and reporting on conflict trends and perpetrators.

Resolution 1889 (2009)

Addresses obstacles to women’s participation in peace processes and calls for development of global indicators to track the implementation of Resolution 1325, and improvement of international and national responses to the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Resolution 1960 (2010)

Calls for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict, particularly against women and girls, and provides measures aimed at ending impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, including through sanctions and reporting measures.

low numbers of women participating in these processes. For example, the UN itself has never appointed a woman as Chief or Lead Mediator in peace talks it has sponsored. A positive recent development has been the involvement of Graça Machel in the Kenya crisis in 2008 as one of the three mediators. It should also be noted that Dame Margaret Anstee in her capacity of SRS in Angola in 1991 and 1992, was successful in mediating a peace process in this war-torn country.⁵

In 2010, the United Nations Development fund for Women (UNIFEM) found that “in a limited but reasonably representative sample of 24 major peace processes since 1992, only 2.5 per cent of signatories, 3.2 per cent of mediators, and 7.6 percent of negotiators are women. Also, as of 2010 only 16 percent of peace agreements specifically address women’s rights and needs. Seeing that more than 50 percent of peace agreements fail within the first five years of signature, it is evident that something needs to be changed in formal peace negotiations.”⁶ Moreover, further delays in the implementation of full and effective integration of women in the field will likely result in failure to adequately address such issues as sexual and gender-based violence, women’s rights and post-conflict accountability.

Gender and Conflict

One of the essential questions regarding gender and conflict can be stated as follows: How are men and women differently affected by conflict because of their roles, needs, priorities, status, and access to power or legal structures? To some degree, roles and needs may reflect biological differences, but for the most part gender and the different roles, priorities, types of status, and access of women and men are determined by society. For instance, in many cultures, boys are encouraged to adopt the male ideals of toughness, strength, bravery, and aggression. These ideals promote the male status of warrior and the preparation for war as a core component of manhood. Girls, on the other hand, are often expected to take on caretaker roles, to raise families, and to be active in local communities rather than on the national political stage. Such expectations are reinforced by institutional norms and attitudes. However, what is critical to understand is that gender is about the learned roles and expectations as the result of being a man or a woman.

For most of history, men have been seen both as decision-makers and as soldiers. Women’s experiences in war have been little understood. The international community has only recently focused on women’s potential contribution to peacebuilding and on the difficulties that women face in war. A gendered perspective on war and peace allows us to unpack the effect of excluding women and other groups from power and access and to explore the impact of this exclusion on peacebuilding. It is important to emphasize that such exclusion does not only delineate who sits at the negotiating table but also reflects the lack of access to resources (including information and knowledge), political participation, legal rights and status (land and property ownership, legal documents, due process and representation), and economic rights and status (employment and income).

Vulnerable Groups and Armed Conflict

The changing nature of war since the 1980’s has had a particularly negative impact on those who are most vulnerable. While “men are more likely to die during conflicts—if only

because combatants are predominantly male...the female:male ratio of people dying as a direct effect of violent conflict seems to have gone up considerably in the post-Cold War era—that is, relatively more women are dying as a direct consequence of war.”⁷ Equally important are the indirect costs of violent conflict. In the Congo, as in many internal violent conflicts, the majority of deaths in zones of conflict, that is where fighting occurs, are due not to combat but to illness, contagious diseases, and lack of infrastructure (including clean water and health services). More die from dysentery than from bullets.⁸

Women and girls, while less likely to be victims of most types of battlefield-related physical violence (combat wounds, torture, etc.), are typically singled out as the targets of sexual violence and of domestic violence in far greater numbers—both during and after war. In the 1994 Rwanda genocide, a study after the massacre found that almost 75 percent of women had experienced sexual violence, typically in the form of rape by individual men or groups of men.⁹ In addition to sexual violence and forced abduction into sexual slavery, forced displacement is also a key tactic of modern warfare. During war, women may also suffer disproportionately from their lack of access to basic services, healthcare, food, or clean water. When men go off to fight (or are coerced to fight), women are left to care for the family—often without access to much, if any, income, without titles to any land or property, and without access to basic services or information. These consequences are compounded when families and communities are displaced. And, when war ends, women are often subject to greater domestic violence from returning soldiers, or they may have lost male breadwinners and are left to pick up the pieces in societies that no longer have functioning institutions. In *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century*, the authors note that the tolls on women are particularly great once conflicts are over: “Recent studies have shown that women suffer more and die in proportionally greater numbers than do men from human rights abuses, the breakdown of social order, the lack of medical care, and the consequences of economic devastation.”¹⁰

Rape has been a feature of war for a long time and there numerous historical examples of soldiers, armed actors, and civilians engaging in these abuses—such as the estimated 200,000 “comfort women” who were forcibly drafted into sexual slavery by Japan’s army from 1928 until the end of World War II.¹¹ Many women are still seeking reparations and a formal apology from the Japanese government for these abuses. In another well-known case, some 200,000-400,000 Bengali women were reportedly raped by Pakistani soldiers after Bangladesh declared its independence from Pakistan in the early 1970s.¹² Figures of raped women during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina are disputed, but range from 20,000-50,000 and, in numerous cases, the victims were kept enslaved in “rape camps.”¹³ More recently, rape has been used as a weapon of war in conflicts in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Researchers have found a number of reasons as to why sexual violence in conflict may occur. When it is used strategically as a form of warfare, studies have found that it creates fear and trauma in the population, destroys families and communities, and in some cases, serves as a form of “ethnic cleansing” in which perpetrators target members of a particular ethnic group to “pollute” the bloodlines of their victims.¹⁴ The consequences of such sexual violation, “erodes the fabric of a community in a way that few weapons can. Rape’s damage can be devastating because of the strong communal reaction to the violation and pain stamped on entire families. The harm inflicted in such cases on a woman by a rapist is an attack on her family and culture.”¹⁵

In addressing gender and conflict, men must also be considered. Although men are generally not considered “vulnerable populations” in wartime, they are victims of the combat as the result of being a recruit into the armed forces or militias and thus are more likely to be engaged in combat. Furthermore, men who are non-combatants are often targeted in mass killings—such as the summary executions against men and boys in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. A website entitled Gendercide, which refers to gender-selective killing, claims that state-directed mass killings have overwhelmingly targeted men who are non-combatants. A gendered explanation of this includes the analysis that many male soldiers tend to “feminize” their enemies, which often leads to a desire to dominate, brutalize and humiliate them. Creating this link between masculinity and brutality has less to do with being a man biologically than it does a psychological motivation to use an idealized gender role for negative purposes, such as engaging in legitimate or illegitimate violent acts. Sexual violence against men is often underreported or not reported because of social taboos and the lack of awareness that these human rights abuses also occur at fairly significant rates.¹⁶

The Aftermath of War

Gender issues also affect the post-conflict period. A 2011 report from the U.S. Institute of Peace on “Gender, Conflict, and Peacebuilding,” notes that gender inequalities are heightened during conflict and can persist once hostilities end. During armed conflict, for instance, women may find themselves in the position of becoming economic providers for the family when the men are away fighting. This role may be one that they are unaccustomed to or do not get credit for during peacetime. When men return from war, however, they may expect the women in their family to return to traditional roles as homemakers. As men and women struggle to redefine their roles when wars are over, the result may be an increase in tension and domestic violence.

In a society recovering from war, the institutions that might help women—such as functioning civilian police forces and social service agencies—may be weak. And, where laws exist, the police may not be able to enforce the laws in cultures where local authorities consider domestic abuse to be a private affair. Or, those who have committed human

WOMEN AS WARRIORS

Although women are thought of as “peacemakers,” and are often at the forefront of such efforts, there have been many women who have taken up roles in violent movements. An editorial in the Christian Science Monitor noted that one-fifth to one-third of activists in violent political groups since the 1960s have been women. Women can play any number of roles in these groups, including as fighters, and they have been active combatants in places like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Cambodia, Peru, and Columbia. And, women can be just as brutal as men. As a USIP report on Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding notes in reference to an Africa Rights Watch report on the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, “a substantial number of women, and even girls, were involved in the slaughter in countless ways, inflicting tremendous cruelty on other women as well as on children and men. The women implicated in the violence came from many walks of life and social strata.” As this example demonstrates, it is impossible to assert that women are always peacemakers. If they are not actively involved in combat, they may be building armaments or contributing other forms of material support to fighting forces. For both women and men, the roles they take up depend in part on how they were socialized, what identities are important to them, and their individual circumstances.

rights abuses may be the same individuals who have obtained positions in new governments as part of a peace deal. In addition, levels of violence and/or lawlessness may still be high and there may be significant numbers of small arms in local communities.

Women, who may have been empowered with more responsibilities during war itself, may find their roles are diminished when male relatives return. And, they may suffer in other ways. For example, they may be struggling to rebuild destroyed livelihoods, have lost community and family support, face job discrimination, or have no access to healthcare. In many countries, widows are at a particular disadvantage because they may have no legal rights to inherit land and property. Even when land tenure rights exist on paper, they may not exist in practice. In places like Mozambique and Guatemala, for example, women have faced numerous hurdles in getting legal access to land that they may have farmed and tended for generations.¹⁷ As explained in “Women, War, and Peace,” published by the UNIFEM, “Even in countries where women have traditionally been allowed to own land, transactions are likely to be negotiated by men. That means that when land is available for purchase, widows and single women who are without a male relative may be unable to obtain credit, capital, and other necessary resources.”¹⁸

After a conflict, international donors may be quick to put money into disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs, which are designed to ensure that combatants turn in their weapons and are integrated back into local communities. Gender considerations factor into these programs too, which involve male combatants who need economic opportunities, female ex-combatants who often do not receive adequate assistance, and the needs of both men and women in local communities to which soldiers are returning. Some critics assert that the international community focuses on disarming and demobilizing male ex-combatants, but gives less attention to larger gender considerations, particularly the consequences for communities and families from the reintegration, which is essential for long-term stability. At the same time, there are a number of examples in which women contribute in ways that transform DDR programs. Teenage girls (and former fighters) in Northern Uganda have run community projects supporting young mothers and other abductees; women in Mali successfully advocated for an arms moratorium; and women in Cambodia have persuaded men to give up their weapons.¹⁹

In a paper on post-conflict reconstruction, Marcia Greenberg and Elaine Zuckerman argue that reintegration is not just economic. Reintegration, they suggest, should “focus on preparing men (and women) for positive household and community relations, and for nonviolent mechanisms for resolving differences. Building more peaceful societies requires addressing such gender issues resulting from war.”²⁰ Economics tends to get the most focus in reconstruction plans, but some gender activists emphasize that it is critical for donor agencies to take a closer look at how both the economic and social policies they recommend may affect men and women differently.

Inclusion Matters

While those who suffer the most during war may have a particularly vital role to play in rebuilding their societies, their contributions should not just be based on their status as victims.

Women, in particular, want their voices heard with respect to matters of peace and security. Because the social fabric and trust within communities and families has been destroyed, women can play a crucial role in promoting reconciliation and in rebuilding societies.²¹ In countries rebuilding from war and violence, from Burma to Afghanistan to Liberia, women are becoming important voices for peace, rights and inclusion. They are increasingly mobilizing across communities and using their social roles and networks to prevent violence and promote peace. But women, as well as other marginalized groups in societies, are too often excluded from the peace processes in many conflicts. Integrating these groups, particularly women, more effectively into processes designed to address the effects of war and to build lasting peace remains one of the great challenges in peacebuilding today.

As Sanam Anderlini, co-founder of the International Civil Society Action Network, explains in *Women Building Peace*, women are often better placed to seek common ground, to address the underlying structural causes of conflict, to ensure that issues of discrimination are included in new constitutions, to take negotiations back to grassroots constituencies and get support for them, and to use their capacities and experiences to heal communities torn apart by conflict.²² “Supporting women’s full and active participation in decision-making, particularly in countries emerging from conflict,” writes Anderlini, “is a key indicator of a shift away from the status quo that, in many instances, catalyzed the conflict.”²³

Making sure that gender considerations are built into reconstruction and stabilization plans once peace accords are signed is also seen as increasingly important since if left unaddressed gender issues that have the potential to create an enabling environment for conflict. Many in diplomatic positions and in the international community once prided themselves on developing “gender neutral” policies, which didn’t take account of gender differences in peacebuilding plans. Most now recognize that there is no such thing as “gender neutral.” Donald Steinberg, who served as an ambassador to Angola in the mid 1990s, reflects on the lessons he learned about the problems with the peace agreement in that country. It did not involve women in the governing body responsible for implementing the agreement, did not include justice for the many sexual atrocities committed against women during two decades of civil war, and camps for displaced people were not designed with women’s needs in mind. Men’s needs were also not taken into account. They were “sent back without skills or education to communities that had learned to live without them during decades of conflict. As is

MARGINALIZATION IN NEPAL

Nepal is in a post-conflict reconstruction phase after a decade-long civil war between 1996 and 2006, but many marginalized groups still struggle to have a voice in this process. Despite the election of a Constituent Assembly in 2008, political blocs continue to jockey for power and there is both a big social and geographic distance between government leaders in the capital, Kathmandu, and grassroots communities. Although civil society groups are growing and able to operate freely, indigenous peoples, individuals from lower castes, women, youth, and the poor (25 percent of Nepal’s population) still strive to have input into decision-making. Women, for example, comprised 40 percent of the Maoist insurgency that took power in 2006, but not one was involved in the fashioning of the peace agreement. Since then, women have been gradually getting more representation in the legislative branch, but, in a very patriarchal society, political parties and positions of power remain dominated by men. Women in Nepal have also seen little justice related to the rape and other atrocities they suffered during the conflict.

predictable in such situations, frustration of these men exploded into an epidemic of alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce, rape, and domestic violence.”²⁴ Full-scale fighting broke out again in Angola due to failed reconciliation attempts in late 1990s.

If key groups in society do not support the peace process, then stable societies may become that much harder to establish and/or conflict may reoccur. Most conflict resolution experts agree that it is not sufficient to stop violence and have a peace agreement on paper (“negative peace”) but it is crucial to address the underlying causes of war and violence and the structural impediments to peace. Thus, UNSCR 1325 calls specifically for “indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms” that can prevent, resolve, and promote recovery from conflict. The resolution also calls for the support of local women's peace initiatives and the inclusion of women in all the implementation mechanisms of peace agreements, as well as measures to ensure the human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police, and the judiciary.²⁵

By understanding the different physical, social, and economic needs that women and girls face after conflict, governments, international donors, and development agencies can be better prepared to put programs in place to meet their needs. International institutions often give significant amounts of financial aid to countries that are trying to rebuild after armed conflict, but some development plans may inadvertently marginalize women. For example, Sanam Anderlini argues that, in trying to rebuild Afghanistan, the international community developed job creation programs for men, but notes that women—who were both traumatized and isolated in their homes—received little attention. If women had been consulted, she suggests, they would have recommended work options that both empowered them and were culturally acceptable.²⁶

Furthermore, it is important to examine how funding for new infrastructure projects is being spent. When societies are rebuilding, donor money goes to support the construction of things like roads, water systems, and health clinics. A gendered approach to the distribution of this aid would take into account that women and men have very different needs related to infrastructure. Greenberg and Zuckerman, in the article cited above, note that “Often men—for whom culture and economics allow for more long distance travel and movement between rural and urban centers—prioritize highways. In contrast, women—whose travel may be closer to home and relate to reaching markets, water, fuel, schools, health facilities, and other essential services—prefer rural roads.”²⁷ Also, if clinics or other services are too far, women’s health and safety may be put at risk.

Some of the things that national and international institutions can do to assist women is to provide counseling services, to help them establish property rights, to improve public services for women (especially in healthcare), to offer microcredit programs, to expand skills and vocational training, and to support ministries for women’s affairs.²⁸ Asking for their input, however, is a first priority. As Susan McKay argues in a paper on reconstruction in northern Uganda and Sierra Leone, “At community level, at the level of the institutions which distribute resources, and at the level of national policy formulation, women and girls are usually rendered invisible or are, at best, marginalized by being perceived only as leaders and facilitators of cultural and social reconstruction.” McKay goes on to advocate for women and girls to be “recognized and empowered as key actors” in all reconstruction efforts.²⁹

Women and Peace

Getting individual women involved in decision-making bodies is no guarantee that women overall will be treated better in a given society. However, having a critical mass of women in positions of power can help ensure that women have a stronger voice and that their distinctive needs, particularly in a post-conflict environment, will be better addressed. Women's participation in drafting new constitutions is another important way to ensure that women are getting their voices heard, and that gender-inclusive language is incorporated into these documents. In South Africa, for example, women—particularly from the African National Congress—played a strong role in drafting the new constitution, which took effect in 1997. The constitution incorporates many rights for women, including access to property rights, healthcare, and education. After almost no representation under the apartheid regime, women today are well-represented in the government. In 2011, they held approximately 44 percent of seats in the parliament and 41 percent of cabinet posts.³⁰ A number of countries—like Jordan, Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Belgium—have instituted quota systems that ensure a certain percentage of reserved seats for women candidates.³¹ But, quota systems are controversial. While advocates believe it is one of the best ways to encourage women to take up political positions, others believe it does not guarantee equal opportunity for the most qualified candidates.

Even when women do not reach formal positions of power, they have been at the forefront of informal movements related to global peace and nonviolence. “Formal activities include conflict resolution, peace negotiations, reconciliation, infrastructure reconstruction, and provision of humanitarian aid,” note Strickland and Duvvury from the International Center for Research on Women. “Informal activities include peace marches, intergroup dialogue, and the promotion of inter-cultural tolerance and understanding.”³² Donna Ramsey Marshall points out that it is often because women lack a voice in formal processes that they have taken up leadership roles in informal processes, and with civil society organizations.³³

For example, a women's peace group helped end a bloody civil war in Liberia in 2003. The “Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace” movement brought together thousands of women—across Christian and Muslim divides—to engage in nonviolent demonstrations against the war. They pressured then-President Charles Taylor to attend peace talks in Ghana at which the women staged a sit-in and blocked all the doors until a peace agreement between the conflicting parties was realized. These efforts ultimately paved the way for Taylor to be turned over to a war crimes court and for Liberia to see a free and fair election that enabled Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to become the first female president in Africa.³⁴ Sirleaf and Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee (and Tawakkol Karman, a pro-democracy campaigner from Yemen) were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women, and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.”³⁵

Women in Northern Ireland had an important role to play in drafting the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Because of the lack of women's representation in the male-dominated political parties during the initial peace talks, women activists rallied over 200 women's organizations to form a new party called the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. The coalition represented women across religious and political divides and promoted an agenda of inclusion

and reconciliation. Votes for the coalition put women at the peace table and, in this role, they were able to incorporate important provisions related to housing, youth, and prisoner reintegration into the Good Friday Agreement.³⁶

Women were also important in bringing peace to Bougainville in the South Pacific. Bougainville's struggle for more autonomy from Papua New Guinea resulted in violent conflicts between rebel forces and the government in the late 1980s.³⁷ Thousands were killed and the island's economy and social structures were all but destroyed. Despite being victimized themselves during the conflict, women mobilized—mostly through church communities—to put an end to the violence. They met with rebels, petitioned the government, advocated for the destruction of weapons, distributed relief assistance, and organized large peace forums.³⁸ Seeing the larger problem of the militarization of society, a nongovernmental organization called the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency also worked closely with men, youth and communities to break the cycles of violence.³⁹

Progress and Setbacks on the Global Stage

Reflecting the sometimes horrifying violence against women and girls that had occurred during various armed conflicts in the 1990s, UNSCR 1325 was not only the first UN resolution focused specifically on women, peace, and security, but it actively advocated for the protection of women and emphasized importance of including women at the peace table. The resolution, as noted by Rachel Mayanja in the *UN Chronicle*, “fundamentally changed the image of women in conflict situations—from that of victims to active participants—as peacemakers, peacebuilders and negotiators...It urged Member States to ensure increased representation of women in decision-making in national, regional and international institutions” and “called upon parties to armed conflicts to take special measures to protect women and girls from violence in war, and to provide them opportunities to participate in peace processes as a way of achieving long-term solutions.”⁴⁰

Significant gaps remain, however, between the law itself and its implementation. As of July 2012, only 37 countries (out of the 192 that adopted it) had developed national action plans for implementing the resolution.⁴¹ National action plans might include support for activities like giving women education and training for leadership positions or conducting gender training for political and military officials. In some cases, gender considerations are being integrated into other national strategies. Germany's development plans for 2009-2012, for example, include measures to support women's groups and networks promoting peace; to include women in peace negotiations; and to deploy female gender advisors in peace missions. Argentina's Ministry of Defense has been looking at ways to bring gender perspectives into its work.⁴² In Liberia, gender advisers from all ministries are tasked with monitoring and evaluating the implementation of UNSCR 1325, with a specific group tasked with monitoring implementation within civil society organizations. One reason for the lack of progress on national action plans and more robust implementation is the fact that the UN's Member States are not held accountable for results. As with many other resolutions that it passes, the UN has limited power to enforce them.

In addition to UNSCR 1325, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1820 in June 2008 which recognizes that where there is continued sexual violence it is impossible to build sustainable peace. It is the first Security Council Resolution to recognize sexual violence as a tactic of war and the Security Council directs the UN Secretary General to improve the UN's prevention and protection response to sexual violence, including through the training of peacekeeping personnel and regular reporting on progress within the UN system. The resolution essentially calls attention to the link between sexual violence and women's participation and empowerment, as well as strengthening the recognition of sexual violence as a war crime and crime against humanity. To date, however, those committing acts of sexual violence against women and girls during armed conflict have generally not been prosecuted, with some rare exceptions. Judgments handed down by the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda did set some historic precedents for prosecuting those committing sexual violence in war. In 2001, for example, several former Bosnian Serb commanders were sentenced from 12-23 years in prison for committing such crimes.⁴³ Thousands of women in Bosnia, however, will never see such justice. Many women too may not come forward to testify for fear of retribution, feeling that their testimony will not make any difference, or that they do not want to relive painful memories. More recently, in March 2012, the International Criminal Court handed down its first guilty verdict when it convicted Thomas Lubanga of conscripting and enlisting children under age 15 and using them to participate in "hostilities" during the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Court, however, was unable to rule on the charges of rape and sexual violence against the girls that were conscripted into the army because the prosecution had not included these charges when it initially filed its case, demonstrating that heightened awareness of sexual violence is still necessary.

JUSTICE DENIED

In their book "Women, War and Peace," Rehn and Sirleaf share the sentiments of a young woman in Rwanda some eight years after the genocide took place there in the mid 1990s: "We feel great pain to know that our attackers, the people who killed our husbands and male relatives, who tortured, raped and mutilated us, have not been punished. Many of these people are in exile. It is as if they are being rewarded for the crimes that they have committed. They deserve to be punished. And what is happening to us here? We have been reduced to suffering, begging and misery. It is as if we are the guilty ones."

Although implementation of Resolutions 1325 and 1820 have been slower than hoped, the international community has made some progress over the past decade in advancing opportunities for women. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, is at the forefront of programs to improve the status of women, the prosecution of rape used as a weapon of war, gender analysis that is to be more frequently conducted for development projects, training for gender sensitivity at various levels of society, and the gradual increase in the election of women to leadership positions in government. Other international bodies—including the European Parliament, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Group of Eight (G8)—have also called on their members to ensure that women are participating more fully in negotiation teams, that gender perspectives are incorporated into development plans, and that female ex-combatants receive more and better assistance.⁴⁴

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GENDER, WAR & PEACEBUILDING

Exercise: Growing Up in My Gender

Rationale: Discussions around identity are often theoretical. Giving students the opportunity to reflect on experiences in their own gender allows them to apply concrete realities to theoretical frameworks. In this exercise students are asked to think about themselves in terms of their gender and to listen to the stories of their peers. In reflecting on how they were raised in terms of their gender, students are asked to think about the hidden messages that shape how they perceive of others.

Objectives:

1. To reflect on experiences around gender that shape students' assumptions of others and their world view.
2. To understand the range of experiences and perspectives around gender.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: List of questions for instructor to read during exercise

Procedures:

1. Explain the purpose/rationale of the activity.
2. Divide students into concentric circles. Have them count off 1,2,1,2... Have the 1's stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle facing each other. Ask them to turn around so they are facing the rest of the students. Have each 2 stand up and face a 1. To make sure everyone has a partner, have the 1's acknowledge their partner by raising their hand (they can shake hands with their partner, if culturally appropriate). If you have an odd number of students, you can have the extra student observe the activity and share what they observe at the end of the activity.
3. Explain that you will read a statement and either the 1's (inside circle) or the 2's (outside circle) will respond. The person speaking will have one minute to respond. The person listening should not talk. They should use body language to show they are engaged, but they should remain silent, allowing the speaker the full minute to respond.
4. After one minute, have the pairs switch roles, so the person speaking is now listening, and the listener is now responding the statement.

5. At the end of one minute, have the outer circle rotate one person to the right, so everyone has a new partner. Read the next statement, following steps 3 and 4 above. This time however, the person who responded second to the previous statement should now respond first. After both pairs have responded, have the inside circle move one person to the right.
6. Continue through the statements, alternating who speaks first after each statement and alternating the order in which the circles rotate one person to the right.
7. After you have read the statements, lead a discussion using some or all of the following questions.

Discussion:

1. How did it feel to share personal information about yourself with different partners?
2. Which questions were more difficult to answer? Why?
3. What did you learn about yourself in this activity? What did you learn about others, both your peers of the same gender and peers of a different gender?
4. Where do the messages we receive about identities come from?
5. How do these messages shape our perceptions of others, as well as our expectations of others?
6. How can our perceptions of other identities lead to conflict?

Growing Up in My Gender – List of Statements

Share with your partner the messages you received when you were younger about male and female gender roles.

Share with your partner how you were taught to interact with people who are of a different gender.

Share with your partner the people of your gender that you were encouraged to hold as role models.

Share with your partner the people of a different gender that you were encouraged to hold as role models.

Share with your partner something you were discouraged from doing because of your gender.

Share with your partner a stereotype about your gender that bothers you.

Share with your partner a stereotype that you have about another gender.

Share with your partner the ways in which you do not fit the gender roles assigned to you by society.

Share with your partner how gender differences affect you on a daily basis.

Share with your partner an example of gender differences in an international context, either from your experience or from the news.

GENDER, WAR & PEACEBUILDING

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountability is the notion that individuals, including public officials, should be held responsible for their actions. Political accountability means the responsibility or obligation of government officials to act in the best interests of society or face consequences. Legal accountability concerns the mechanisms by which public officials can be held liable for actions that go against established rules and principles. In cases of crimes against humanity, accountability means that individuals should be held accountable by the state in which the crimes occurred or by the international community.

Capacity Building is a broader concept than training because it embraces the development of skills and knowledge as well as infrastructure, organizational capacities and resources, in which all stakeholders participate (from ministries and local authorities to security sector institutions and NGOs). Capacity-building involves an integral process of creating and building on existing capacities so that individuals, organizations and societies can put those capacities into subsequent action to achieve their development objectives.

Child Soldier refers to an individual, typically between the ages of 15 and 18, but often younger, in the armed forces of the state or of an armed group, whether or not the child is armed or is used in combat. Child soldiers are often conscripted by coercion or manipulation.

Civil Society is a term for a wide array of nongovernmental and nonprofit groups that help their society at large function while working to advance their own or others' well-being. It can include civic, educational, trade, labor, charitable, media, religious, recreational, cultural, and advocacy groups, as well as informal associations and social movements. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family, and market, though in practice, the boundaries are often blurred. A strong civil society, or "public space," can protect individuals and groups against an intrusive government and positively influence government behavior. Most definitions do not include commercial enterprises but do include business associations. Some definitions do not consider the media, most of which is for profit, to be part of civil society but rather a tool that can promote civil society.

Conciliation is often used as a synonym for mediation. Some authors argue that there are substantive differences concerning impartiality and level of involvement, for example, but analysts tend to disagree on these issues. Mediation seems to be the more common term.

Crimes Against Humanity are mass killings and targeted attacks against civilians, including systematic rape. These crimes are described more fully in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, article 7. To be found guilty, an individual must have developed or carried out a policy of widespread or systematic violations. Crimes against humanity do not require the specific intent that genocide does.

Demobilization “refers to the process by which parties to a conflict begin to disband their military structures and combatants begin the transformation into civilian life. It generally entails registration of former combatants; some kind of assistance to enable them to meet their immediate basic needs; discharge; and transportation to their home communities. It may be followed by recruitment into a new, unified military force.”(1)

Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR): The process of disarming soldiers or other fighters, disbanding their military units, and helping them integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods. This can be done by comprehensive programs offering skills training, job creation, housing, psychological assistance, and re-socialization.

Disarmament “is the collection of small arms and light and heavy weapons within a conflict zone. It frequently entails the assembly and cantonment of combatants; it should also comprise the development of arms management programmes, including the safe storage and final disposition of weapons, which may entail their destruction. De-mining may also be part of this process.” (2)

Empowerment implies people - both women and men - taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having their own skills and knowledge recognized), increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcome.

Gender refers to socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviors, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Where biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them.

Gender Analysis is a systematic effort to identify and disaggregate the different roles of women and men in a specific context and the potential impact of a planned intervention.(3)

Gender Balance is the equal representation of women and men at all levels in all areas. The promotion of gender balance requires the explicit support for women's participation, including at all levels and phases of decision-making.(4)

Gender-based violence refers to violence directed against individuals or groups on the basis of their gender or sex. It includes acts or threats of acts that inflict physical or mental harm or suffering, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty, including rape, torture, mutilation, sexual slavery, forced impregnation, and murder. Although men and boys can be victims of gender-based violence, women and girls are the primary victims.

Gender Equality assumes that all people are free to develop their own personal abilities and to make choices without structural or social barriers, such as stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally at all levels and in all spaces, public and private. Gender equality does not infer gender sameness, but implies that substantive rights, responsibilities and opportunities are not dependent upon biological sex.(5)

Gender Focal Points are "Staff members assigned to support the incorporation of gender perspectives in the substantive work of their departments or offices."(6)

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated.(7)

Gender-Responsive Budgets (GRBs) ensure that governmental budgets and related policies and programs to address differential needs and interests of women, men, boys and girls and the specific impacts upon each. This does not infer separate budgets for women and men, nor divided equality, but rather, the allocation of funds based on an understanding of where needs are the same and where they differ. GBR identifies gender-biases while considering a holistic approach to discrimination, including ethnicity, caste, economic status, location and age. In this regard, initiatives can significantly contribute to national efficiency, accountability, equity and equality and the subsequent realization of women's rights and empowerment.(8)

Gender Roles are the socially constructed norms by which men and women are expected to behave. Roles are determined by cultural definitions of masculine and feminine and an understanding of their relation to men and women.

Gender-Specific Security Needs refer to the ways in which men, women, girls and boys experience security differently. These particular needs are related to the assignment of gender roles, structural barriers, and reproductive biology.

Gender Training is part of capacity-building, with the aim of increasing gender awareness, knowledge and practical skills through the sharing of information, experiences, and techniques, and the promotion of reflection and debate. The ultimate goal of gender training is to generate an understanding of the different roles and needs of both women and men in society, to challenge gender-biased and discriminatory behaviors, structures and socially-constructed inequalities, and to apply this knowledge to daily activities and work.

Good Governance “promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law, in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring. In translating these principles into practice, we see the holding of free, fair and frequent elections, representative legislatures that make laws and provides oversight, and an independent judiciary to interpret those laws. The greatest threats to good governance come from corruption, violence and poverty, all of which undermine transparency, security, participation and fundamental freedoms.”(9)

Human Rights are the basic prerogatives and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. Supported by the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and several international agreements, these rights include the right to life, liberty, education, and equality before law, and the right of association, belief, free speech, religion, and movement.

Human Security means “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms ...freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.”(10) The term inclusive human security emphasizes the protection of freedoms and lives of all members of society - women, girls, men and boys - in an equal manner.

Inclusive Peace implies substantive peace and human security for all members of society. Recognizing that the absence of violent armed conflict does not necessarily guarantee a safe environment nor the full enjoyment of human rights, human development or physical safety, inclusive peace refers to an overarching conception of human security and freedom for all men, boys, women and girls.

Indicators are measurable qualitative and quantitative data, which aim to identify change, achievements and impacts. Indicators should measure change that result from intervention, project or programme implementation. “Gender-sensitive indicators have the special function of pointing out gender-related changes in society over time. Their usefulness lies in their ability to point to changes in the status and roles of women and men over time, and therefore to measure whether gender equity is being achieved.”(11)

International organization (IO) or Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) is a formal institutional structure generally created by international agreement with the goal of fostering cooperation in specific areas. In the conflict management field, the primary international organization is the United Nations, but regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to name a few, also play an increasingly active role in peace and security.

In-Mission Training is a term used in the context of UN peacekeeping missions. Upon arrival to the mission of duties, peacekeepers should receive specific training in the host country. In-mission training on gender for peacekeeping personnel falls under the responsibility of the specific gender units.

Masculinities are socially constructed gender conceptions of behavior, generally associated with men. No single type of masculinity exists. It is expressed differently among and across cultures and time, and men, like women, who do not fit into the hegemonic ideal of masculinity are also oppressed within patriarchal structures.

Mediation is a mode of negotiation in which a mutually acceptable third party helps the parties to a conflict find a solution that they cannot find by themselves. It is a three-sided political process in which the mediator builds and then draws upon relationships with the other two parties to help them reach a settlement. Unlike judges or arbitrators, mediators have no authority to decide the dispute between the parties, although powerful mediators may bring to the table considerable capability to influence the outcome. Mediators are typically from outside the conflict. Sometimes mediators are impartial and neutral, in other cases they have a strategic interest that motivates them to promote a negotiated outcome. Mediators may focus on facilitating communication and negotiation but they also may offer solutions and use leverage, including positive and negative incentives, to persuade the parties to achieve an agreement.

Peacebuilding as a term was originally conceived in the context of post-conflict recovery efforts to promote reconciliation and reconstruction. The term has more recently taken on a broader meaning. It may include providing humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, ensuring security, establishing nonviolent modes of resolving conflicts, fostering reconciliation, providing trauma healing services, repatriating refugees and resettling internally displaced persons, supporting broad-based education, and aiding in economic reconstruction. As such, it also includes conflict prevention in the sense of preventing the recurrence of violence, as well as conflict management and post-conflict recovery. In a larger sense, peacebuilding involves a transformation toward more manageable, peaceful relationships and governance structures—the long-term process of addressing root causes and effects, reconciling differences, normalizing relations, and building institutions that can manage conflict without resort to violence.

Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) involve “the deployment of international military and civilian personnel to a conflict area with the consent of the parties to the conflict in order to: stop or contain hostilities or supervise the carrying out of a peace agreement.”(12)

Peacemaking refers to activities to halt ongoing conflicts and bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter 6 of the Charter of the United Nations: “negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or agreements, or other peaceful means.” Peacemaking typically involves the process of negotiating an agreement between contending parties, often with the help of a third-party mediator. A closely related term is conflict management.

Reconciliation is a long-term process by which the parties to a violent dispute build trust, learn to live cooperatively, and create a stable peace. It can happen at the individual level, the community level, and the national level. It may involve dialogue, admissions of guilt, judicial processes, truth commissions, ritual forgiveness, and *sulha* (a traditional Arabic form of ritual forgiveness and restitution).

Reintegration “refers to the process which allows ex-combatants and their families to adapt, economically and socially, to productive civilian life. It generally entails the provision of a package of cash or in-kind compensation, training and job- and income- generating projects. These measures frequently depend for their effectiveness upon other, broader undertakings, such as assistance to returning refugees and internally displaced persons; economic development at the community and national level; infrastructure rehabilitation; truth and reconciliation efforts; and institutional reform. Enhancement of local capacity is often crucial for the long-term success of reintegration. (13)

Security Sector is defined as those who are, or should be, responsible for protecting the state and communities within the state. This includes military, paramilitary, intelligence, border control, and police services as well as those civilian structures responsible for oversight and control of the security forces and for the administration of justice.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) means “exchanging money, shelter, food or other goods for sex or sexual favors from someone in a vulnerable position” (exploitation) and “threatening or forcing someone to have sex or provide sexual favors under unequal or forced conditions” (abuse).(14)

Sexual Harassment is a type of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is severe or pervasive and affects the dignity of a person or creates a hostile environment.(15)

Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence and refers to any act, attempt, or threat of a sexual nature that results, or is likely to result in, physical or psychological harm. It includes all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, such as rape, spousal battering, sexual abuse of

children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in educational institutions, and trafficking and forced prostitution. Sexual violence has also been used as a tool of ethnic cleansing, as has been recently documented in Bosnia and Darfur.

Transitional justice refers to efforts to address a legacy of large-scale human rights abuses that cannot be fully addressed by existing judicial and non-judicial structures. Government responses have included criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations, gender justice, security system reform, memorialization, and other reconciliation efforts.

Truth (and reconciliation) commission or **truth and justice commission** is an official body, usually set up by states after periods of state-perpetrated violence, whose main task is to establish a record of wrongdoing as part of an overall process of catharsis and reconciliation. Such commissions are sometimes empowered to grant full or partial amnesty in exchange for full disclosure, but this practice is rare. Some commissions also address issues of reparation and rehabilitation.

UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is a UN Security Council resolution that was unanimously passed on 31 October 2000. It is one of the most important international mandates covering the full and equal participation of women in all peace and security initiatives and the mainstreaming of gender issues in the context of armed conflict, peacebuilding and reconstruction processes. The Resolution represented the first recognition by the UN Security Council of the distinct roles and experiences of women in different phases of conflict, its resolution and its long-term management. The Resolution also emphasizes the increased effectiveness and practical security policies and activities associated with the incorporation of women during all phases of conflict.

UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) is a document that spells out the steps that a government is currently taking and those initiatives and activities that it will undertake within a given time frame to meet the obligations of UNSCR 1325. National Action Plans can help to increase the comprehensiveness, coordination, awareness-raising, ownership, accountability and monitoring and evaluation of a government's women, peace and security activities.

Violence against Women (VAW) is a type of gender-based violence, which targets women and results in or is likely to result in her physical, psychological, or sexual harm or suffering in private or public spaces. Violence against women varies in form and includes “sexual, physical, or emotional abuse by an intimate partner; physical or sexual abuse by family members or others; sexual harassment and abuse by authority figures (such as teachers, police officers or employers); trafficking for forced labor or sex; and such traditional practices as forced or child marriages, dowry-related violence; and honor killings, when women are murdered in the name of family honor. Systematic sexual abuse in conflict situations is another form of violence against women.”(16)

Vulnerability applies when a person is highly susceptible to violence, especially gender-based violence (including sexual violence), illness, immobility, poverty, lack of shelter. Different categories of people such as women, men, single heads of households, children, youth, the elderly, people living with HIV/AIDS, people living with disabilities, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer) and people experiencing traumatic or post-traumatic shock, encounter different hazards and to different extents. They experience conflict differently and they have different needs.

Endnotes

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