# WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2011

BACKGROUND PAPER

# WDR GENDER BACKGROUND PAPER

Sanam Naraghi Anderlini[*]

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## ABSTRACT:

This paper serves a background paper to the World Development Report on Development, Conflict and Security. It provides a synthesis of existing discourse and practices on the relevance of and integration of gender perspectives in conflict, development and fragility policies and programming.  It is based on existing publications and does not include field or primary research save the author's own work.  As the sole background paper addressing the gender dimensions of the WDR's theme, the paper by definition is limited in scope.  It seeks to provide an overview of the state of the field. As such much of the discussion is focused on women, attention to men's gendered identities and concerns is noted but not expanded upon due to limitations of time and space. It is however a critical issue and one requiring further research and analysis.  While gender, peace and security issues are evolving into a field, there is a lack of rigorous analysis and documentation of many innovative ongoing practices that tackle issues of inclusion and protection.  The paper covers three key themes explored in the 2011 WDR.  Part 1 provides an overview and discussion of the continuum of violence between the private and public spheres and the links and implications for conflict.  Part 2 addresses the tensions, opportunities and relevance of addressing gender issues and specifically women's inclusion in key processes during transition periods. Part 3 focuses on improving international institutions responses and current practices regarding addressing women's protection and participation needs and the integration of gender analysis more broadly in tackling fragile states and societies.

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender sensitivity - attention to the differential needs, circumstances and experiences of women and men - in the context of crisis and violence is contentious and challenging, yet critical. Gendered situation analyses reveal economic and socio-cultural factors that add depth and nuance to our understanding of the causes and consequences of violence in both conflict and non-conflict situations.  By virtue of focusing on the actions and reactions of men and women, gender sensitivity draws attention to the human dimensions of fragility, pointing to possible solutions and change agents that could mitigate and prevent violence or contribute to conflict transformation. But it is a challenging approach for external actors as it prompts us to examine, understand and respond to the context from the standpoint of the actual and potential beneficiaries – rather than from the standpoint of agencies undertaking interventions or indeed the states or governance institutions that are the primary partners or clients.

It remains a contentious issue for a variety of reasons. On the one hand the politics of 'doing' gender is a long-standing challenge in development work, dating to the 1970s and mired in a mix of cultural relativism, lack of political will and confusion about the terms used, the value added and the goals of gendered approaches. The gender discourse emerged out of the women in development (WID) paradigm.  The WID approach was both rights and efficiency based, meaning that advocates (overwhelmingly women's rights experts) called for the empowerment of women and promotion of equality as a basic human rights and as a key step towards sustainable economic and political development.  But the WID approach did not take account of power dynamics that affect women's lives so the shift was made to addressing 'gender' relations with a goal of drawing attention to the relations and power dynamics between women and men and structures that sustain inequality. But the practice remained circumscribed and heavily focused on women's empowerment. Terms such as gender mainstreaming have neither been well understood nor practiced effectively.

On the other hand, doing 'gender' –  or even more simply, addressing the differential needs and concerns of women in the context of crises and conflict settings is further compounding the challenge.  Different factors contribute to this challenge.  First, conflict sensitive development and peacebuilding work is still evolving and not fully integrated into the work of major bilateral and multilateral institutions. The work that does exist is often not gender-sensitive either for women or men.  Second, attention to women and gendered dimensions of violence and fragility is also relatively recent. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) is a key starting point in the international discourse and momentum has built since 2000 and the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. SCR 1325 provides a framework for addressing women's protection and participation needs during crises and post conflict recovery processes.  While it is often assumed that external actors and the 'north' drive the demand for gender sensitive interventions in crisis settings, in reality the demand is coming overwhelmingly from crisis-affected countries, particularly the female population. This is reflective (and reflected)

in the global women's peace movement –networked largely through civil society across nations and internationally- that advocated successfully for the Security Council resolution and continues to expand and gain momentum today.

## *The Evolving Field and Literature of Gender and Conflict*

Early analysis of gender dimensions of conflict (Oxfam 1994) focused primarily on the impact of war on women.  The prevalence and systemic use of sexual violence in post-cold war conflicts was first noted in the Balkans. In 1993 a EU commissioned report estimated that some 20,000 women had been raped. Reflecting on the extent of sexual violence, the European mission "accepted the view that rape is part of a pattern of abuse, usually perpetrated with the conscious intention of demoralizing and terrorizing communities, driving them from their home regions and demonstrating the power of the invading forces.  Viewed in this way, rape cannot be seen as incidental to the main purposes of the aggression but as serving a strategic purpose in itself" (Warburton 1993)[i]. In parallel, the use of systemic sexual violence – and deliberate targeting of Tutsi and moderate Hutu women during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 drew more attention to the gendered nature of violence. Simultaneously women's activism in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and South Africa drew attention to the role of women as change agents for peace, not simply passive victims of violence. During that same period the participation of women as combatants in Central America and elsewhere was also evident.

The recognition of the changing nature of conflict and the complexity of women's experiences was acknowledged in the 1995 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, where civil society activists introduced the theme of 'Women and Armed Conflict' into the emergent Platform for Action that was endorsed by all participating states.  In subsequent years, civic activism continued to drive the agenda, culminating in the UN Security Council unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2000.  SCr 1325's four key pillars  - prevention of conflict, protection of women's rights and physical wellbeing, participation of women in peace and security decision making, and gender-sensitive peacekeeping and security - were derived from extensive consultations with women in conflict and violence affected communities (International Alert 1999).

The resolution itself emerged from a tripartite partnership of global women's and peace organizations demanding recognition for their work, supportive governments[1] and the UN system.

In the past decade, the discourse and practice has not only evolved thematically, but also across the range of sectors and stakeholders (Rehn, Johnson Sirleaf 2002). Understanding of the gendered dimensions of security, peace and violence has deepened and broadened significantly through attention to issue-specific areas such as conflict early warning (Piza-Lopez & Schmeidl 2000; Moser 2005), peace negotiations (Naraghi Anderlini/UNIFEM 2000, Potter/Center for Humanitarian Dialogue 2005, UNIFEM 2010, Naraghi Anderlini and Tirman et al. 2010), disarmament demobilization and reintegration (Farr 2003, Mazurana 2004, UNIFEM 2005), justice (World Bank 2006), governance, psycho-social and economic development, as well as situational issues notably the gendered dimensions of emergency and displacement (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, UNFPA 2007, ). This is complemented by country and context specific studies that highlight the similarities and differences of gender issues in fragile and crisis settings. While much of the existent focus is on women, attention to men's needs and conditions in violent and crisis settings, is also gaining ground (Bannon and Correia 2006). Recommendations for programmatic action that includes interventions targeted at men, as well as fully gender-sensitive recovery programming (interventions targeted at men) are also being developed (Mclean. Hilker and Fraser 2009, UNDP Forthcoming 2011).

The research is complemented by the development of practical tools and handbooks for practitioners active in different sectors including humanitarian settings, (IASC 2007), security issues (Bastick and Valesak 2007, IDDRS), and political participation (Inclusive Security 2004, 2009). In addition gender analysis frameworks exist and efforts have been made to integrate gender into conflict analyses (UNDP 2003/2006, Naraghi Anderlini/World Bank 2005, UNIFEM 2006). Yet systemic programming to ensure gender sensitivity or promote gender equality in fragile settings is at best ad hoc. Neither the normative frameworks that explicitly demand attention to women's rights and protection needs[2], research findings, nor tools for gender sensitivity in conflict and recovery settings are used regularly to analyze, plan or implement development, violence reduction or peacebuilding interventions.

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[1] In 2000, the Governments of Bangladesh, Namibia and Jamaica held seats on the UN Security Council. Bangladesh introduced the theme to the Council in March 2000. Namibia sponsored the resolution in October 2000.

[2] By 2010 they included an additional three security council resolutions (1820/1888/1889 and ICC statute)

The lack of adequate funding and comprehensive programming, monitoring or evaluation has hindered progress significantly, creating a catch-22 situation: without the resources, programmes and evaluations it is difficult to make solid case for gendered approaches to crisis prevention and early recovery efforts in conflict zones or other situations of chronic violence. Yet without the evidence it is difficult to make the case that all programming must take men's and women's needs into consideration and have the necessary resource allocation, particularly when the overwhelming approach is security-oriented and gender is simply not considered as a security issue. There are few studies that have focused on how gender issues and women's participation contribute to enhancing governance, justice, peace and security (Institute for Inclusive Security/Women Waging Peace Policy Commission 2003-2005, Naraghi Anderlini 2007, Women Peacemakers Programme San Diego University). But they are the exception rather than the rule.

Lastly the ongoing development and evolution of this area of work is noteworthy. As the 10th anniversary of the adoption of SCr 1325 loomed in 2010, the political momentum to recommit to implementation of the agenda, and pledge resources for women peace and security issues grew. This included renewed attention by the US for example to women's security and protection needs in the DRC, Afghanistan and other initiatives to enable women's participation in peace processes. The impact of these new efforts will not be known for some time.

This paper serves a background paper to the World Development Report on Development, Conflict and Security. It provides a synthesis of existing discourse and practices on the relevance of and integration of gender perspectives in conflict, development and fragility policies and programming. A comprehensive overview of the gender dimensions of conflict and fragility and relevant sectoral responses (e.g. gender-sensitive security sector reform) is beyond the scope of this paper, nonetheless the discussion below does tackle a number of key issues relevant to the World Development Report's conceptual framework. A number of sources for additional information are noted throughout the text and listed in the bibliography. Part One focuses on the continuum of domestic to public violence in pre-conflict, during conflict and post- conflict settings. It touches on developments in policy and practice pertaining to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) prevention and services to victims.

Part Two offers a brief overview of the changes in gender roles and relations in the context of fragile settings, and the implications for external development interventions. It focuses on the stresses and opportunities emerging in transition setting – including during peace negotiations - in terms of integration of gender perspectives in key thematic issues notably disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and justice.  It also offers an exploration of women's representation and inclusion in governance structures in transition settings. The section offers examples of innovative practice and emerging themes.

Finally, in Part Three the focus shifts onto policy and programming norms, and improving practice. It reflects on the role of the international community in addressing gender issues, models of practice, timelines, sustainability and social capital challenges including promotion of national ownership, institutional concerns including staff capacities and competing agendas. Given that the overwhelming body of work has been on and about women, this overview is also predominantly women-focused. However the paper will also address emerging work regarding the challenges and experiences of men in crisis and violent settings.  It will also highlight existing gaps in knowledge and directions for future research.

**PART I: GENDER AS A FACTOR IN EMERGING AND INTERRELATED FORMS OF VIOLENCE.**

Research in developed and development settings reveals linkages between experiences of violence in the domestic setting and aggressive or violent behavior in the public setting.  As discussed below much of the existing information pertains to countries emerging from conflict, where at war's end, the violence continues in new forms, often in the domestic settings.  But if conflict and violence prevention practices are to improve, understanding the links between form of violence against women – direct individual and structural - and corporal punishment of children and communal or public violence in non-conflict and pre-conflict settings is also needed.

This section reflects on the linkages between different forms of violence in non-conflict states, conflict situations and post conflict settings.  Where available it also points to the data and research that has shaped the discourse, policy and programmatic responses to date.

*I.1      Gender Inequality & Domestic Violence as Indicators of Public Violence:*

*I.1.i      Gender inequality as a variable or indicator of state-level security and propensity for violence*: Using aggregate data from 1954-94,  (Caprioli and Boyer 2001, Caprioli 2003) demonstrate that states with higher levels of social, political, economic and gender equality are less likely to rely on military force to settle disputes.  They also demonstrate that a higher percentage of women in leadership positions correlates with lower levels of violence.

A more recent study (Hudson et al 2009) compares the efficacy of gender inequality as predictor of instability/violence compared to other criteria (e.g. level of democracy, Islamic nature of society). Preliminary conclusions of the study demonstrate that the physical security of women is a strong predictor of the peacefulness of a state.

USAID also uses male-female life expectancy ratios at birth as an indicator for state fragility. The rational given is that good health is an indication of human development and necessary for economic growth. "In every country with a high level of human development, females have longer life expectancy than males, often by five years or more. Thus, in countries with greater gender equity, the ratio is greater than one. In many developing countries, however, the relationship is reversed and the gender ratio is less than one. This a clear sign of serious disadvantages faced by women in obtaining health care, economic opportunities, and social empowerment." (USAID 2006)

Viewed with a lens of conflict or violence prevention, the studies suggest that higher levels of gender equality and women's physical security are not only important indicators of general stability, peacefulness, but that reduction in inequality and improvements to women's security are necessary conditions for stability and economic growth.  This mirrors much of the qualitative and empirical work on gendered early warning indicators (Piza-Lopez & Schmiedl 2000,

Moser/UNIFEM 2005) that claim the deterioration in women's security and increases in gender disparity are among the earliest signs of crisis and violence.  In effect women are the proverbial canaries in the mine.  Being the most susceptible and vulnerable sector of many societies, they are often the first to experience new threats to security – be it from extremist ideologues such as the Taliban, or the growth of organized crime such as human sex traffickers.

*I.1.ii        Why Tackling Domestic Violence Matters*:
Do higher levels of domestic violence pose a threat to communal peace and security? Given the high rates of domestic violence in many countries, the short answer is likely to be 'not directly'. However, qualitative and empirical studies conducted in the US (and other developed countries) do point to linkage and a continuum of violence between the domestic and the public sphere, particularly in terms of the trajectory of individuals' lives – i.e. those most likely to become the foot soldiers and perpetrators of violence.  High and rising rates of domestic violence are also tied to increased socio-economic and political stresses and can be indicative of more violence-prone countries and settings.

First, exposure to domestic violence or childhood abuse can lead to aggressive adult behavior.   In a 1996 US study 70% of male perpetrators of violence had been victims of childhood abuse (Lisak, Hopper and Song1996). In a 2009 study Jordanian university students when comparing their community, media, school or university settings, ranked the family first as the institution contributing to acquiring violent behavior (Okour, Hijazi 2009). A 2006 study of Colombian adolescents also found 'maltreatment' or harsh parenting as directly correlated with violent behavior (Mejia et al 2006).  Childhood violence can also affect emotional, cognitive and longer-term development (Edleson 1999).

Empirical and longitudinal studies in the US and across cultures indicate that contextual factors in early childhood (e.g. poverty) are indirectly linked to violence but more mediated variables – e.g. changes in family circumstance or disruption in discipline - are more directly linked.[ii]  Learnt behavior particularly in terms of how conflict is managed is also more directly correlated. Where higher levels of antisocial or coercive measures are used to resolve conflict, there is an increase in the antisocial aggressive behavior of the child.  The correlation between trivial antisocial behavior (e.g. lying, cheating, threatening) and more aggressive/violent act is evident in terms of the frequency of such behavior.   Parenting interventions (e.g. teaching parenting skills or building parents' capacities to manage children) reduces anti-social behavior. Community based interventions that engage violent perpetrators; particularly young men involved in gang-related activities, can also be effective. In Chicago for example where levels of violence are high, the NGO Ceasefire has succeeded in reducing shooting by up to 73%, and retaliatory shootings by 100 % in neighborhoods where it operates (www.ceasefirechicago.org).  The programme is based on five core components: community mobilization, outreach to youth, the involvement of faith leaders, public education and strengthening community relations with the criminal justice system. Similar programes exist in violence-ridden communities in Brazil, Jamaica and other countries, suggesting that solutions do exist, but they lack the resources to scale up significantly.

Second, Studies in Colombia and Guatemala (Moser 1997, Winton 2005), and interviews with women combatants in Sri Lanka and Nepal[iii] offer additional insight into the links between domestic and communal violence.  In many instance, young women who joined gang or insurgencies stated that exposure to violence at home compelled them to flee and join the group.  Gang membership provided protection, identity and emotional support to victims of abuse.  Those joining insurgencies offer a mix of motivations. For some joining the fight was a means of escaping an abusive home or avenging their own victimization by state authorities; for others it was exacting revenge for the death of a loved one (father, husband, brother).  Similarly, reconstructed narratives of the lives of female suicide bombers and interviews with some who failed in Palestine, reveals a complex mix of political beliefs, religious ideology, idealism mixed with emotional and social factors pertaining to their marital status or family life, that were manipulated by recruiters (often close relatives) that propelled women towards violence (Victor 2003).

Third, in addition to learning behavior in the domestic settings, young men and women are often recruited into state and non-state armed groups or gangs via social and familial networks. Among young men traveling to Iraq and Afghanistan to fight the 'jihad', friendship networks are key means of prompting recruitment and radicalization.  The networks provide a sense of belonging, identity, and purpose.  Fighting for the cause is a means of demonstrating courage or not losing face among cohorts.  At the individual or relational levels, perpetrating violence – justified through ideology – is also a demonstration of masculinity (New York Times, Atran).

## I.2     Gender and Sexual Violence During Conflict

Sexual and other forms of gender-based violence (SGBV), defined by the World Health

> *In sum*: the continuum of violence begins in the domestic and social setting and extends into the public sphere.  High levels of social and gender based violence and inequality are indictors of fragility.

Organization (WHO) as "sexual and other forms of gender-based violence" comprises not only rape and attempted rape, but also sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, forced early marriage, domestic violence, marital rape, trafficking and female genital mutilation."  SGBV has been a feature of warfare throughout time.  For much of history it was neither recorded nor commented upon effectively.  Even the Nuremberg trials took no significant notice of such crimes. It took Korean women victims of the Japanese army's forced prostitution activities over fifty years to gain acknowledgement of their plight.[iv]

SGBV remains an integral dimension of the contemporary trends in conflict and violence. But the extent and patterns of such violence are not similar across all settings.  Although in cases such as the DRC there is clear evidence of the exponential rise of such violence, in other cases it could be that greater awareness of the issues has prompted more attention and reporting.

Women and girls represent the overwhelming number of known victims of SGBV in most settings. Reports of male victimization are also emerging, but the taboo and silence enveloping male sexual violence and exploitation is still profound at all levels.[3]

In each context there are different drivers and motivations for the emergence and escalation of such violence. It is rarely conducted in a vacuum, and typically is the result of a mix of socio-cultural, political, economic factors.

First, since the majority of violence experienced today takes place in civilian settings, civilians – including women – are directly targeted and impacted particularly by various forms of sexual and gender based violence. While in some settings (as discussed below) sexual violence is used as deliberate tactic of war to sow fear in communities, prompt an exodus or to exude power and control, in many settings it is also a crime of opportunity and an extension of other forms of violence and insecurity.

> "*In a patriarchal society, domestic violence is actually recognized as one way of disciplining one's wife. In fact, even the society socializes you as a woman to anticipate this discipline. It is so deeply inculcated in many peoples' minds. We have women who say, when they have not been beaten, their husbands have stopped loving them.*"
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> *Ann Njogu, Center for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), Kenya, March 2010*
> *In Majtenyi,K. "Cases of Domestic Violence Increase in Kenya" , www.voanews.com*

It can also be a by-product of broader socio-cultural norms that perpetuate the notion that women are subordinate to men and can be treated as 'property'. A general culture of impunity for violence against women (VAW) can thus give rise to opportunistic violence during crises as in Guinea (2009), or post-tsunami Sri Lanka and Aceh in 2004[v] (Carballo et al 2006).

Second, sexual violence can be used as a war tactic. The threat and execution of rape can be a means of promoting displacement and ethnic cleansing as in Bosnia and Darfur. It can be used to assert control and suppress dissent.  Used against men – as is now becoming more evident in the African Great Lakes region and other settings (e.g. Jamaica), it is a means of humiliation and emasculation. Women and men who are raped may be forced into silence for fear of being rejected by their families.  In countries where sodomy and homosexuality is illegal, male rape victims in particular face double victimization (Refugee Law Project 2009); if they seek treatment they risk being reported to the police and criminalized.  Their silence perpetuates impunity and heightens the chance of future attacks as well as health risks.

Third, sexual violence can be a strategic component of warfare or group violence. In internal conflicts and communal violence that pitch different communities against each other – be it on the

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[3] During negotiations on the text of SCR 1820 at the United Nations, the author was informed that at least one non-permanent member state rejected references to 'men and boys' as victims of sexual violence on the grounds that it did not occur.

basis of ethnicity, religion or gang affiliation – often the degradation and destruction of social fabric is a key strategic goal of fighting parties. During Rwanda's 100-day genocide, an estimated 300,000-400,000 women were raped[vi] (Rwandan Ministry of Social Affairs).  Existing data indicates that 20,000 children were born of rape. In such instances, sexual violence against women (and men) including forced prostitution and impregnation, or rapes conducted publicly are profoundly damaging and thus effective.  Women's bodies become the de facto frontlines as in the Balkans, where 20,000-50,000 women were raped – equal to 1.2% of the pre-war population (WHO). Again, men are also affected. In the Bosnian context there were reports of men being forced to sexually torture on one another[vii] and on female relatives. It is a mix of psychological and physical torture with long-term consequences.

Fourth, sexual violence and the oppression of women can also be a key element of the political or religious ideology of armed actors or states.  This is evident among some Taliban and insurgency groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It feeds off deeply patriarchal cultures that condone discrimination, and certain interpretations of religious texts.  The groups that condone such oppression often justify or couch it in terms of upholding cultural purity or pushing back against western cultural influences that are considered immoral, especially with regard to the status of women.  This is particularly the case in honor-based societies.

Fifth, the seeming anonymity of perpetrators and context of chaos that is often portrayed in reporting belies a more ordered reality and possibilities for mitigating and limiting sexual violence and exploitation.  From Nepal to Liberia, DRC and Colombia, armed actors including state police and military personnel - are often key perpetrators.  In some instances women and girls are abducted and forced into sex slavery, while in other instances, early marriage to military men has been a means of staving off abject poverty. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) – ie. the "actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another, and "the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions." (UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) (ST/SGB/2003/13)) – is another form of SGBV.. It is also a common feature of displacement (see Box 1 for examples). In addition to security forces, local actors, male relatives to international humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel (see Box 2) have been implicated.  While imposing discipline on non-state actors may be difficult, punishment of state security services and international personnel implicated in SGBV is also minimal.

The long-term impact of SGBV committed in conflict is rarely addressed. Although there is limited data to determine the impact, incidences of SGBV can damage reconciliation efforts, hamper rehabilitation especially of victims, and fuel retributive violence. In addition, rates of sexual disease including HIV/AIDS among rape victims are thought to be high, though little data exists across countries. In Rwanda HIV prevalence in rural areas rose from1 percent prior to the genocide in 1994 to 11 percent in 1997 (UNAIDS, WHO). A survey of 1000 Rwandan genocide widows conducted in 2000 revealed that 67 percent of rape survivors were HIV positive[viii] (AVEGA, WHO).

Regardless of the rationale, SGBV is neither an attack against women nor is it a one-off event. It has profound inflammatory impact on existing tensions (in gang or identity based settings), triggering revenge or retaliatory violence. It also has long term implications for development and recovery processes, ranging from the health care costs to address HIV/ AIDS, to caring for orphans and rebuilding the broken trust within communities.

**Box 1: Patterns of Sexual Violence in Contemporary Conflict and Violence**

The Balkans: By 1993 the Zenica center for the registration of war and genocide crime had documented 40,000 cases of war-related rape (UNFPA 2006).

Rwanda: In a 1999 survey of Rwandan women, 39% reported being raped during 1994 genocide; 72% knew their rapists (UNFPA 2006).

Kosovo: An estimated 23,200 to 45,600 Kosovar Albanian women were believed to have been raped between August 1998-99 at the height of the conflict with Serbia (UNFPA 2006).

Liberia: In a 2003 random survey of 388 Liberian women in refugee camps, 74% reported sexual abuse prior to displacement, and 54% during displacement (UNFPA 2006). In a 2008 survey, 42.2% of former female and 33% of male combatants (inc those associated with armed groups) had experienced sexual violence during the conflict (Johnson et al 2008, JAMA).

Colombia: Among 410 IDPs surveyed in Cartagena, Colombia in 2003, 8% experienced sexual violence prior to displacement, and 11% during displacement (UNFPA 2006).

D.R. Congo: According to UN sources, an average of 1,100 rapes are reported each month, with gang rape being common (Women's Refugee Commission, 2009). The American Bar Association runs a sexual violence clinic in Goma, where some 10% of cases per month are male victims. The numbers of male victims are never fully known as most men and boys are reluctant to come forward. Many of those who did report were instantly shunned by their villages – ridiculed and called 'bush wives' (Gentleman; New York Times 2009).

Burma: In 2005 it was estimated that 40,000 Burmese women were trafficked into Thailand each year to work in factories, brothels and domestic settings (Ward 2005).

Iraq: Accurate statistics are hard to come by, but UN news reports estimates that between 2003-2006, nearly 3,500 Iraqi women went missing; many sold or traded for sex work. Though difficult to ascertain, researchers predict that 25 percent were likely to be trafficked abroad with no knowledge of their own fate (IRIN 2006).

Iran: In the 2009 post election violence, male and female rape at the hands of state security forces generated significant public outcry and demand for investigations into prison practices by a presidential candidate. (UK Channel 4 2009, CNNI 2009, Human Rights Watch 2010).

**Box 2: Peacekeepers, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)**

In 2000, civil society activists demanded accountability for UN peacekeepers implicated in sexual abuse, and have continuously called for an increase in women peacekeepers as part of the solution to SEA committed by men. In addition SCr 1325 calls for 'gender and HIV/AIDs' awareness training.

In 2003 for the first time, the UN issued rules prohibiting sex with minors and prostitutes.

In 2004 following reports of systemic sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers in the D.R. Congo, the UN implemented a 'zero-tolerance' policy. One case involved a 14-year old girl who was given two eggs in exchange for sex.

Between 2007-2010 UN troop contributing countries have reported disciplining 75 peacekeepers for sexual misconduct and other offences.

In 2009 sexually related allegations against UN peacekeepers rose from 12% to a total of 55. Some of the allegations involved minors.

In 2009 the UN claims that member states responded to 14 out of 82 requests regarding sexually related investigations and their outcomes.

In 2009, over 80 international organizations signed a petition to the UN Secretary General (SG) demanding that the UN's most senior personnel in peacekeeping missions (such as the Special Representative of Secretary Generals, (SRSG)) should be held responsible and asked to resign for cases of abuse by peacekeepers and other personnel in his mission. The SG did not offer a response to this suggestion.

In 2010 there are 85,000 UN troops for 115 countries, serving in 16 missions. Many of the allegations of abuse are against civilian personnel.

There are only 60 UN officials available to probe cases. They have no authority to discipline soldiers.

Steve Stecklow, Joe Lauria, "UN Peacekeepers Dodge Discipline in Sex-abuse Charges",
Wall Street Journal, March 24, 2010

### I.3    From Communal to Private Violence: Gender and the Continuum of Violence

The continuum of violence from the public to the private space and from communal to ad hoc and domestic violence is most evident in post conflict settings and situations of chronic violence. For example, in a 2009 survey following the Israeli bombardments and invasion of Gaza 37 percent of women cited domestic violence as the primary safety problem facing women and girls in their communities, while over 50 percent of men cited public and political violence as the main security concern for men and boys.[ix] . In other words the Israeli bombings and subsequent loss of homes and livelihoods made women feel more vulnerable to domestic abuse from their partners or

relatives (perhaps as the means of venting frustration or seeking a sense of power in the domestic sphere in contrast to the humiliation meted out against Palestinians by the Israeli forces). Men however, were not fearful of rising domestic abuse. Their primary concern was increased risks in the public sphere.

The gendered dimensions of violence are pronounced as women and men in at-risk communities are affected by in different ways. Women are at greater risk of oppression and sexual violence and exploitation. In Iraq for example, since the US invasion, the rise in religious extremism has been matched with increasing violence against women. Accurate statistics are hard to come by, but one estimates that between 2003-2006, nearly 3,500 Iraqi women went missing; many sold or traded for sex work. Though difficult to prove, UN news reports estimate that 25 percent were likely to be trafficked abroad with no knowledge of their own fate.[x] In DRC there was a 17-fold increase in rapes carried out by civilians between 2004-08, but many of the civilians may be former combatants (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Oxfam 2010).

Men on the other hand are more prone to violent deaths resulting from rising criminality and fragmentation of perpetrator groups. Throughout Central America men make up at least 88 percent of homicide victims. This is so widely accepted that there is little discussion. Concerns arise primarily in terms of the nature of death and increasing rates of murder.

But the gaps in gendered experiences of violence are also lessening. In Central America, targeted violence against women now includes femicide – deliberate murder of women – often coupled with sexual torture (see Box 4). The cause and motivation is not fully understood, but it is often assumed that such violence is tied to gangland reprisals.

**Box 4: Rise of Femicide in Guatemala**
Femicide is defined as the murder of women because of their gender. In Guatemala there is impunity for 99% of femicide cases.
The murder rate of women has increased by over 300% in the past decade.
√   2000  - 213 women killed
√   2003 – 383       "
√   2006 – 603       "
√   2009 – 708       "
Source: Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA

There is also a notable rise in reports of sexual violence against men. This too is part of a growing sensationalization of violence.

Various factors contribute to the rise of SGBV in post conflict and fragile settings.

1. *More Awareness/Better Reporting*: Increased awareness about gender based violence (GBV) and gender disaggregated data collection has resulted in better understanding of the trends in violence and higher reporting. In war settings such as Liberia, the extent of SGBV was difficult

to determine, but anecdotal evidence and post-war surveys prove extremely high rates particularly among women and men associated with armed actors. In post-conflict settings, SGBV has often shifted location to civilian settings. It is more evident and seemingly more prevalent.

2. *Higher Tolerance Threshold/Normalization of Violence*: Exposure to violence in the public sphere and during conflict and crises often results in the general normalization and higher tolerance thresholds for violence in the aftermath. Ex-combatants are often key perpetrators of SGBV, in part because it was condoned or ordered during conflict, and was 'normal' or acceptable behavior (UNDP, Blame it on the War, Forthcoming 2011).

3. *PTSD, Drug and Alcohol Abuse*: Higher levels of SGBV are also linked to the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among returning combatants, witnesses and others exposed to the violence. PTSD and related alcohol or drug abuse are also factors in cases of suicide and homicide in the families and communities of ex-combatants. Recent documentation of such cases in the United States confirms the linkages.[xi]

4. *The availability of weapons:* In many post conflict and fragile states and communities, the easily availability and flow of small arms and light weapons (SALW) further exacerbates levels of violence. The impact is evident not only in terms of emergent gang activities, criminality or police persecution, but also victimization of women in public and domestic settings (UNDP Idle Minds, Forthcoming 2011).

5. *Chronic Poverty and frustration* resulting from unemployment is also a contributing factor to levels of domestic violence, including child abuse and abandonment. Sexual exploitation of young girls is particularly rampant in many fragile settings – with predators ranging from relatives to teachers, pastors, bus drivers and other older men. Sexual abuse of boys is also prevalent in many settings, including countries with strict separation of the sexes. In Afghanistan for example, some poor families sell their pre-pubescent to older, richer men for 'bacha bazi' (child/boy play).[xii] Where displacement, environmental damage or economic changes has resulted in the loss of traditional livelihoods, men's propensity for violence rises. It is linked to the inability to fulfill expected social roles that define manhood – having social prestige, being providers and protectors – triggering anger and depression. As the socially sanctioned 'head of house or family', the domestic setting becomes the only domain in which they can assert their concept of masculinity which often entails dominance. This can lead to physical and psychological abuse of wives, partners and offsprings.

6. *Often cramped living quarters exacerbate conditions*, making women and children more vulnerable to assault and sexual abuse from relatives and known perpetrators. Levels of reporting vary and are dependent on the extent to which the police are trusted, fear of retribution and whether perpetrators are primary providers for the family.

## I.4 Existing Approaches to Tackling the Problem of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

With many in the international women's rights and peace civil society-based movement pressing states and the international community, there has been a growing willingness to acknowledge the prevalence of SGBV in development and conflict settings. There is also growing understanding of SGBV as a weapon and tactic of conflict that threatens communal security. While there is still significant inertia and resistance to implementing strategies for the prevention and mitigation of such violence, there is some progress and innovation at the policy and programmatic levels.

### I.4.i Policy & Normative Level Frameworks:

Internationally, since the mid-1990s with precedent set at the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda (ICTR) and Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the inclusion of SGBV into the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), significant progress has been made in terms of defining such crimes as war crimes and crimes against humanity. In 2008 in resolution 1820 the UN Security Council formally recognized sexual violence as a threat to peace and security.

The unanimous passage of security council resolutions (SCr)1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) following SCr 1325 (2000) have given attention and momentum to the issue of sexual violence. The resolutions have multiple state sponsors, thus providing stronger national ownership. They mandate the collection of data and systemic reporting of SGBV in countries on the Council's agenda. In 2010 the UN appointed the Special Representative for Sexual Violence, who will sustain attention to the issues globally.

The impact of such measures is notable in the case of Guinea. During protests against the military regime in Guinea in September 2009 coup, reports of sexual violence by armed actors including military personnel were rife. Cell-phone images and YouTube video clips had profound impact. By 2010, the UN had instigated an inquiry and published a report that noted widespread and systemic attack by the Presidential Guard. The UN also took an unprecedented step of naming the head of state and a number of his associates as being potentially liable for crimes against humanity against civilians and the rape and sexual assault of at least 109 women. The international pressure and isolation prompted the leader of the military junta to scapegoat his senior colleagues and flee the country. A clear split in the military leadership opened space for mediation and steps towards civilian rule.

Perpetrators of sexual violence have not been brought to justice, but "*For those who fight for sexual violence to be taken seriously as a matter of collective peace and security, the international response to Guinea suggests progress. More importantly, for those who would wield rape as an instrument of war and terror, an ostensibly cheap and easy tactic of choice, it suggests heightened stakes and potential for political backfire*." (Anderson, Unifem/Democracy Now 2010).[xiii]

*Nationally,* a number of countries have initiated measures to address SGBV. Liberia has stringent legislation regarding rape cases, with perpetrators facing up to ten-years in prison sentences. It also has a special court (Court E) dedicated to prosecuting cases of sexual violence.

Sierra Leone, Croatia and Afghanistan are among a growing number of countries with dedicated family units in police stations designed to enable reporting of domestic violence. The goal in most instances is to have trained officers – men and women – to handle cases sensitively. In Afghanistan efforts were made to provide safe housing for police trainees and to ensure that women officers were not seen as 'unaccompanied'.

The impact of such interventions is still unclear. In reality the units are too few and under resourced. The numbers of women police officers are still too few to affect change. More emphasis is needed to ensure that male officers are recognized for their efforts in protecting women, are provided the necessary training and capacity building and held accountable. Moreover there is a profound lack of quality human rights and protection training to police recruits in many countries. Community based policing interventions supported by UNDP are an important contribution. Similarly the training and tools developed by the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) are significant resources. But neither gender sensitive policing nor the promotion of policing as a service to communities (rather than a force) is yet widespread.

*I.4.ii Advocacy and Awareness Raising*
There are a wide range of international and national level initiatives involving the UN in partnership with NGOs that are dedicated to raising awareness and action against SGBV. Civil society is often at forefront of demand for changes in state policies and laws. For example in Iran, the Million Signature Campaign to End Gender Discriminatory Laws, launched in 2006, has gained global attention, but received little support from multilateral organizations. In part this is due to the isolation that Iranian civil society is facing as a result of the Iranian government's status internationally. There is limited access and connection between Iranian civil society and their counterparts elsewhere. It is also due to the fact that the campaign is indigenous and independent and not funded by international actors. This can lead to less attention and less understanding of their goal and actions. Similarly as noted above, Afghan women's demands for protection and justice gain little or no concrete support from countries directly engaged in the conflict. In this case attention to the state and security threats that are prioritized by the international community override the concerns voiced by Afghan women.

Liberia has been the exception to the rule. While it is difficult to ascertain all the factors contributing to its success in addressing SGBV, four stand out. First, reports of the intensity and extent of SGBV in Liberia during the war were widely disseminated. Second, women played a pivotal role in securing a peace process, removing Charles Taylor from office and mobilizing public support for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Third, President Sirleaf publicly acknowledged the contributions of women to peace and vowed to address their security needs. She was fully aware of the nature and impact of sexual violence in conflict, particularly since 2000 when she was selected as one of

two experts to travel conflict zones globally and co-author UNIFEM's 2002 study on 'Women, War and Peace'. Fourth, President Sirleaf's willingness to address SGBV issues in Liberia was met by significant donor support. The governments of Demark, Sweden and the US are among those supporting women's empowerment, and SGBV prevention and protection. In effect a mix of national leadership, strong civil society and international support has enabled the Liberian state to pay attention and seek solutions to the challenges of SGBV.

NGOs both national and international are at the forefront of awareness raising initiatives in many fragile settings. The MenEngage network and organizations such as Men's Resources International are leading efforts to raise issues of SGBV with men in communities. The results from such initiatives are promising. But they operate on small scales and can be time/process intensive that up scaling remains a challenge.

### I.4.iii    *Tackling SGBV*: **Some Progress but Not Enough**

At the international level, the discourse and practice regarding SGBV overwhelmingly pertains to 'response' rather than prevention. In effect responsibility for SGBV is relegated to justice and rule of law programmes, with a strong focus on 'reporting' of cases, police responses, the provision of shelters and care for victims. While such response mechanisms are essential, and can contribute to lessening impunity, they are not sufficient.

The situation is evolving however. In DRC for example in 2009, the UN system launched the "Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence." Endorsed by the government and involving collaboration with a mix of state, NGO and UN entities, it is a major attempt at coordinating and tackling SGBV from multiple angles. The strategy comprises 5 pillars (see box) and an operational plan for national and provincial level action has been developed with a budget of $56 million over 2 years.

> *The 5 Pillars of the DRC Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence*
> 1. Protection and prevention (UNHCR)
> 2. Ending impunity for perpetrators (Joint Human Rights Office - MONUC/OHCHR)
> 3. Security sector reform (MONUC SSR)
> 4. Assistance for victims of sexual violence (UNICEF)
> 5. Data and mapping (UNFPA)

More systemic and strategic effort is still needed to mitigate SGBV incidences in urban slums, displacement camps or rural areas. But given that governments (even those that are committed to the issues) lack the means to provide direct services to communities and victims, it is imperative to ensure criteria that allow for an efficient and channeling funds to service providers. In most instances NGOs and CBOs are at the frontlines of providing service to victims and instigating awareness raising and violence prevention efforts. Yet many providers have no access and no means of holding their governments accountable.

While there is increasing attention to the prevalence of PTSD and other forms of mental illness including depression among war and violence-affected communities – all of which can be contributing factors to higher rates of SGBV – responses or interventions to tackle this issue are

negligible in most settings. Framed as a 'health' issue, resources are rarely available for diagnosing or treating mental illness within the framework of post-conflict recovery; when much of the funds and focus of international actors is on security, state institution building and macro-economic recovery. Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes could provide an important entry point for addressing the issues. This could also be an opportunity to raise awareness of sexual violence among ex-fighters. But most DDR programmes do not have this approach. Attention to these 'soft issues' – which are often the hardest and most complex to tackle, is missing. This gap has profound implications for post conflict crime and ultimately prevention of new cycles of violence.

Similarly although funding for SGBV has increased, there is often uneven distribution across the key sectors. Health and judicial services may be funded but security sector reform may not be tackled as aggressively. Service provision can be hampered by lack of transportation and capacity at the national level – particularly in terms of psychosocial care. Additionally the emphasis on judicial and legal justice inadvertently marginalizes victims' basic needs. For them recovery, protection (and future prevention) is often tied to their ability to move on and generate incomes for themselves and children. (Mantilla/World Bank 2006, IRIN 2009)[xiv]

There are innovative efforts underway and a number of practical recommendations that if implemented could contribute to the challenge.

o  UNHabitat's 'Safe Cities' programme addresses SGBV prevention issues through the lens of urban space planning. Consultations with women in areas of high violence help identify key locations and times of attack, and together solutions are sought. They can range from the provision of street lighting (also beneficial to other community members) to design of housing or redevelopment of wasted space for recreational activities to limit opportunities for crime and sexual assault in public settings.

o  The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC) has been at the forefront of research on SGBV issues in displacement settings. They offer a number of practical recommendations for mitigating such violence. For example women are often at high risk of attack when collecting firewood for cooking. WCRWC has long advocated the regular and systematic provision of cooking fuel or non-cooking food to women in displaced settings to limit their exposure to risk. In Darfur WCRWC advocated for the provision of 'firewood patrols' to accompany and protect women. Inclusion of women in the design and establishment of camps or urban settings is also crucial, as they can point to practical measures (e.g. placement of latrines, washing facilities or other services they use regularly) to limit their exposure to risk.

o  In Nicaragua, local CBOs in partnership with international NGO, PATH have developed social media messaging including radio soap operas to promote respectful treatment of women and girls. The 'entre amigas' initiative (between girlfriends) also promotes peer-based education to

convey information regarding safe sexual practices, HIV/AIDS and violence. The programme also includes a girls' soccer team that helps promote self-confidence, trust and a support network among adolescent girls in at-risk communities. Outreach to boys is also included with a focus on promoting gender equity and challenging machismo and aggressive male gender norms.  The peer-to-peer approach of the initiative is an effective means of reaching adolescents and young people that are often most at risk yet, hardest to engage in standard governmental initiatives.

o   Identification and targeting of perpetrators of SGBV is also essential. Too often the discourse is 'women are raped' with no indication of the key actors. It seems chaotic and unknown but often the perpetrators and those who condone the actions are known. A key approach must be to target perpetrator groups to end all forms of SGBV. In Afghanistan for example, through its Men's Leadership Program, Women for Women International trained 400 mullahs to incorporate the value of protecting women's rights and its value to the society and economy into their Friday prayers. While in the DRC, a leader of an armed unit that practiced rape habitually, banned the practice on learning about the spread of HIV/AIDS.[xv]

o   The attention to community driven development (CDD) and similar approaches is another important strategy for addressing gender dimensions of violence and recovery, especially given women's increased socio-economic activities at the community level. But international actors need to ensure effective representation of women in their interactions with local stakeholders.  Sometimes the rush to embrace local or traditional actors and institutions as a means of building a community base can be detrimental for women and youth as often existing structures are dominated by local oligarchy with little interests in promoting women's empowerment or opening space for youth and other marginalized sectors of the community. They view the 'gender' question as a direct threat to socio-cultural identity and the imposition of western norms and morals.  Identification of key champions and conduits into the community are therefore important steps.  Similarly direct engagement and empowerment of women at the community level to participate in security discourse and advocacy can be a key means of promoting accountability from the ground up.  In Sri Lanka, the Mothers and Daughters of Lanka (MDL) and in Nepal, the Women's Security Network (WSN) are examples of national NGOs, engaging and offering state security actors training in protection and prevention of SGBV. They also empower women to hold state security actors accountable. A multi-country Women's Security Campaign is also being proposed by the International Civil society Action Network (ICAN) and the MIT Center for International Studies in partnership with local NGOs.

### I.5     Concluding Reflections

In conflict or non-conflict settings, SGBV is a pervasive form of insecurity, affecting women, men, boys and girls, and implicating state and non-state actors.

These issues pose a significant challenge for multilateral organizations that are caught between opposing forces and interests. On the one hand, universal human rights standards coupled with the demands of women in communities (victims and human rights defenders who put themselves at risk to uphold universal values) mandates attention to the security and protection needs of women. There is an understanding that women's protection also results in better protection for children and the community at large.

On the other hand, multilateral entities, dominated by state interests must prioritize building state capacities in contexts where governance systems are weak. Yet oftentimes their key national counterparts are actors implicated in corruption or fomenting violence. In effect, by supporting them, international entities further legitimize and empower such actors. This also poses a challenge as the solutions that are developed may lack legitimacy in the eyes of the public. As the 2011 events in the Middle East indicate the tendency towards achieving 'stability' through support for illegitimate leaders can ultimately reach a breaking point.

One means of resolving this is by ensuring the inclusion of civil society voices in transition and peace negotiations processes. As the findings of a 2008 study suggest "durable agreements…feature direct civil society participation in peace negotiations, particularly in conflicts characterized by undemocratic elites….[I]n negotiations among democratic elites, civil society can participate effectively by influencing their respective political representatives and these agreements seem to be as durable as those featuring high civil society participation alone. This suggests a hierarchy of preferential partners for mediation: the ideal parties for durable peace agreements are democratic elites without civil society groups at the table, but with regular civil society influence on those elites. If elites are not democratic representatives, then direct civil society involvement in peace negotiations may increase the durability of agreements reached." (Wanis-St.John, Kew, JIN 2008).

Moreover, international development agencies are not attuned or equipped to addressing the socio-cultural factors that contribute to gender based inequality and tolerance of GBV. Yet to tackle such violence, a local socio-cultural framing is essential. Instead of assuming that sexual violence is a tolerated or socially accepted mode of behavior, it is essential to highlight it as a profoundly unacceptable practice that is symptomatic of a breakdown of socio-cultural norms and taboos. Preventive and protective strategies therefore must also draw on cultural, religious, historic precedence, directives and laws that promote protection and respect for women. One approach can be to recruit respected male leaders to denounce sexual violence and frame masculinity and manhood as the ability and willingness to protect women against such harm rather than to perpetrate it. Another approach is to condemn the acts publicly. Raising awareness and public demand for accountability are important strategies for challenging the status quo. Outreach and collaboration with community elders and faith leaders can also yield positive results. If they condemn the acts other men may heed their words and societal tolerance can diminish. Practical

steps such as providing victims access to justice and long term care are important and can convince victims to report cases. In Pakistan NGOs such as Bedari use street theatre to bring the issues to public attention and generate understanding and awareness.

In addition the pervasive and profound impact of PTSD and violence-related trauma cannot be ignored or minimized. There is direct correlation between such trauma and violence, thus tackling it must be a priority component of recovery programmes. The scale of the problem is beyond the capacity of many health systems, let alone those of fragile states. International institutions are either not equipped or mandated to address this need.

The process or 'how' things are done becomes as important as the actual goal or 'what is done'. For example, international actors must also acknowledge that in fragile settings, particularly where poverty and unemployment among men is also high, a heavy push for women's empowerment without attention to backlash and reactions of men can prompt a rise in SGBV against women. This does not suggest abandoning a rights-based agenda for women. Rather it calls for programming that draws men into the process, and demonstrates that value of equality and economic empowerment for women and men. Emerging men-engage initiatives are a step in the right direction. But for large-scale impact, the awareness and capacities of national government personnel to assess the gender dimensions of economic and social recovery must be enhanced.

Finally, there is a question of how far and fast should such issues be raised. Here too, women can guide and navigate the discussions. There is no homogeneity across or within countries. Rural and urban women have different priorities and concerns. They also have different levels and means of influence privately and publicly. They are best placed to identify the reactions and needs of their male counterparts. In addition drawing men into the discourse about women's security and participation is critical. While patriarchal norms prevail in many societies, crises and transitions also expose men to the challenges that women face and their resilience. It can shift attitudes and create openings for more equitable engagement. From a programmatic standpoint this means ensuring that assessments include questions and exploration of men and women's needs and attitudes. One simple step can be to ask men about issues that are traditionally 'women's issues', while engaging women in discussions and analysis of issues that are typically considered outside their domain, yet about which they often have opinions and knowledge. In Pakistan for example, women peace and development practitioners are involved in the deradicalization of youth away from Taliban and extremist forces.

Tackling SGBV requires coordinated approaches that address the social, political, economic empowerment, of potential and actual victims, while addressing security needs, and embracing preventive, protective and punitive measures. It requires full partnership and cooperation between state and non-state actors, national and community level stakeholders. Facilitating such partnerships is a minimum but crucial contribution that multilateral actors can make.

Like all socio-cultural norms, gender roles and identities evolve and change over time. In every context they are influenced by economic, political, social changes and technological advancements. The shifts can be 'progressive' but also regressive. Violence and crises tend to accelerate changes in gender roles and relations and institutions prompting both stresses and opportunities. Part Two opens with an introductory brief on the impact of crisis and violence on gender roles (see Table below); issues to consider and the benefits of a gendered lens in situations of violence and risk; and the international policy imperatives that can and should guide multilateral agencies. The discussion moves to an overview of gender dimensions of representation and governance, in crisis and recovery settings, identifying the opportunities, innovative practices and gaps that challenge practitioners.

## *Introduction*

Changes in gender roles, relations and institutions – particularly the involvement of women in the economic and public sphere (socio-politically as well) often appear to signal social progress, but in crises, the sudden increase in women breadwinners is primarily need-driven. Simultaneously, socio-political drivers often revert to traditional (even imaginary) identities and norms to withstand the onslaught of threats and to sustain community cohesion. Invariably gender roles and identities, particularly the status of women becomes contested. In effect, economic realities push in one direction, but societal traditions can pull in the opposite direction, as in Iraq where thousands of war widows are struggling to survive in an increasingly closed space dominated by extreme religious ideology.

This can generate significant tension at the domestic and the public level. Often the changes that occur – particularly when they result in reconfiguration of household members, the absence or migration of men (or women) - have long-term social, political and economic implications (Acord 2005).

Changes in Gender Roles, Identities and Institutions during Crises (Table adapted from El-Bushra and Sahl, ACORD 2005)

| Elements of gender relations | Definition | How they change as a result of conflict | Implications/ Expectations | Stresses | Capabilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender roles | Everyday activities of women and men: the division of labour -e.g. in Pastoral communities in Kenya, Uganda men tend to cattle, /livestock, women work land and manage small agricultural production e.g. milk | Women take on more responsibility for providing for the family, men's work is reduced | Women gain confidence in their ability to take responsibility, While men feel 'lost', with their masculinity undermined | Tensions in domestic Setting/relations – Potential for increase in In violence; Increased rate of Single parent house- Holds as men abandon Families – seek new Partners e.g. Liberia | Interventions need to Support/sustain gains of women with Without overburdening them; Men's crisis of identity needs to be Addressed also. Need mix of Economic and psycho, socio- Cultural programmes |
| Gender identities | Expected characteristics and behaviors of men ('masculinities' and 'femininities') | Survival strategies or exposure to new ways of living may lead to change in livelihood, but values still tethered to past traditions- e.g. women may be forced into sex work – patriarchal society tolerates and provides demand (double standards) – but the women implicated are at higher risk of abuse/violence –as they have transgressed traditional femininity/honor. | Gap between expected behaviors and ability to meet expectations - e.g. if/when displaced men lack skills & unprepared to take on menial jobs. Women continue traditional domestic responsibilities and willing to seek low pay jobs outside. | Frustration of unmet expectations, inability to live up to social role as 'male provider' - increases Vulnerability of men to Perpetration of violence; Crime; recruitment into groups | Changes wrought by crisis Are key opportunity to Support evolution of More inclusive/equitable Processes/structures – Offer alternative role Models for women/men. E.g. women police officers (Liberia, Kosovo); |
| Gendered Institutions | Institutions (household, Community, state, etc.) which shape attitudes and behaviors and which control resources | Women gain some new decision-making power within household as a result of increased economic responsibility, but structures at community, local government and national level remain male-dominated. | Women have responsibility but limited power. Their experiences may lead them to organize, work towards establishing their rights, but often lack systemic support/resources to sustain changes | The lived reality of Women/men's lives Is not reflected in National policies/ Budgets etc. State priorities not Determined/addressing changes/needs | Women's organizing and se Self reliance – key Potential for development. If elite and Communities informed Of or experience Benefit of women's Empowerment – More supportive of Equality & inclusion Measures - |
| Gender ideologies | Culturally determined attitudes and values (including those manifested in religion, language, the media) established over a long time and woven into the fabric of society, which provide justification for the prevailing gender roles, identities and structures | Attitudes and values change very slowly. In some cases they may become more hard-line and more oriented towards male control over women. | The tenacity of patriarchal ideologies may lead to the gains women make being abandoned after the war is over. In some cases there may be a 'backlash' against women's empowerment, resulting in their increased vulnerability. | Emergence of Extremist/traditionalist Norms/gender ideology v. emergence of women's rights movement/ | Empowerment /participation of women in political discourse/ decision-making – indicator of inclusive/good governance Stronger civil society pillar of Effective state building. |

Across communities affected by the continuum of violence, there are a number of shared characteristics in terms of women and men's experiences and the turmoil that arise in gender relations.

√ Women's domestic and public/productive burdens increase. This can be a source of opportunity but also a challenge. Where they have sole responsibility for their families, they become primary breadwinners. Even where they continue to share the household with a husband or male partner, their share of contributions to the household purse rise. Increased income (or contributions) can create new opportunities for women and lead to more equal status at home and in spousal relations (Moser, Winton 2002). This positive impact cannot be assumed in all cases and contexts. In many instances women are forced to hand over their income to husbands, elders or in-laws. Women-targeted empowerment or livelihood programmes can also prompt conflict and violence in the household, if men are not adequately informed, included or prepared.

√ Men also face new challenges. Threatened by the external socio-economic changes, many men seek to assert their status as 'heads of households' unwilling to tolerate women sharing in the control of income and spending (Moser, Winton 2002).

√ In addition to heightened physical insecurity, women can be forced into risky income generation activities including sex work that exacerbates their vulnerability.

√ The withdrawal of basic state services and weakening of traditional community based mechanisms and safety nets often prompt women to take action and fill the void. In some instances, as leaders emerge, new groups are formed providing a mix of services, enabling networking and social contact as well as addressing security needs and social change (see Box; Widows of War). In other instances, women draw on their social roles – particularly as mothers- and relations to form new entities addressing security and violence issues directly (Lind and Farmelo 1996). As state institutions become polarized or enmeshed in violence, CBOs can emerge as trusted entities. A 2001 participatory urban appraisal (PUA) in Colombia for example, reveals that women's organizations are the most trusted membership institutions in the community – including among youth involved in gang activities - ranking significantly higher than other community-based groups. The findings were replicated at the national level. (Moser, Wilson Center, 2004).

> **Widows of War**
>
> In 2002,a Muslim Sri-Lankan human rights activists initiated an economic empowerment programme that united Tamil and Muslim war widow, rejected by their own communities (because of their widowhood) across the ethnic/religious divisions – building bridges between the two sides while supporting development. The success of this programme led to the launch of the Model Resettlement Project (MRP) – new villages for women war victims and their families - in 2005. Giving preference to widows, victims of rape, the disabled, IDPs and young female headed households, MPR resettles mixed group of Tamil and Muslim internally displaced families in their native Mannar region. The organization is setting an example of ethnic reconciliation and peaceful coexistence between these two polarized communities, while offering families a chance to access sustainable livelihoods.
>
> http://www.echoinggreen.org/fellows/shreen-abdul-saroor

√ Where there is outright war, women have also mobilized and proven their potential to break the cycle of violence.  In Liberia, throughout the 14-year struggle, women were at the frontlines of peace efforts. Their mass mobilization and direct advocacy with warlords and Charles Taylor led to the 2003 peace talks. Six weeks into the talks with the all sides still perpetrating violence against civilians in Monrovia, the negotiations reached an impasse. Women activists involved in the Women's Mass Action for Peace barricaded negotiating teams in the meeting rooms demanding a complete solution within two weeks. They also demanded that no warlords be included in the transitional government. Their actions broke the deadlock and agreement was reached within 2 weeks. Their mobilization was the key to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election as the first female President in Africa (Disney 2008).

√ Despite their actual and potential roles in sustaining livelihoods, protecting families and rejecting violence, women continue to face entrenched patriarchal norms and attitudes. Men in their own families and communities often view their empowerment with skepticism, suspicion and resentment.

√ Women who assert their rights and make a public stand for peace not only face challenges from their own community and government, but also lack access to technical, financial or moral assistance from multilateral agencies.  State and non-state armed actors often threaten women to stand down. They are subject to harassments, arrests and murders.   Among the multilateral entities, UNIFEM and UNFPA provide some of the support.  As UN agencies however, they face significant bureaucratic and political limitations and constraints.  Much of the support to the emergent crop of women-led CSOs working on violence, peace and security issues comes from transnational networks, INGOs (e.g. Institute for Inclusive Security, Femme Afrique Solidarite, ICAN/Global network of Women Peacebuilders, Isis-WICCE, Care International, Kvinna till Kvinna) and a handful of bilateral donors.

## II.1    Timing and Gender:  Now and not Later?

It is never too early to take a gendered perspective on crisis and recovery processes.  But it can be too late.  Earlier attention can stave levels of violence and strengthen resilience and people's capacities for earlier recovery.  But if left too late once priorities are set and finances allocated, women and men especially the young in poor and marginalized communities are again excluded and further victimized.

What do we mean by the gender dimensions of crisis and recovery? In tackling these issue the parallel universes of women's rights advocates and mainstream development and recovery entities come into full focus.  On the one hand, women's rights actors – within and outside state and multilateral institutions – make a case for:
1. Early and full integration of gender perspectives in all thematic issues;
2. Women's representation and inclusion at the negotiations table and related policy and programming matters. Since women are most active in civil society venues, the demand for women's participation is often shorthand for more inclusive processes.

On the other hand, gender sensitivity – if and when raised – fall mostly into 'post conflict' recovery. In reality, there is always an opportunity and need to ensure gender sensitivity. Without it, interventions can do additional harm, while if taken seriously they can compound resilience and socio-economic transformation (see box on Sri Lanka).

Where economic programmes are initiated, equitable inclusion of women and men is essential. Consultation with women prior to job allocation can help determine areas of cultural sensitivity. For example in Afghanistan women would be ostracized if they engage in road building, but in Kenya it is acceptable. In Nepal women have been traditionally involved in heavy construction work, so they should have equal opportunity to access construction jobs. Consultations also shed light on division of labor between women and men. This can enable more effective targeting (less wastage) of resources. For example in many settings men and women grow different crops or have different responsibilities regarding animal husbandry. Without knowledge of these practices, or assumptions based on pre-conflict times, interventions can be off the mark.

Similarly decisions reached in negotiations and peace processes impacts the recovery phases. The presumption that peace negotiations are 'gender neutral' and thus address the needs of all people, is false. Time and again, where peace talks have not addressed the differential needs of women and men (boys and girls), women and girls in particular have lost out, and become more vulnerable. Examples of this include:

1. Only 18 out of 300 peace agreements signed since the end of the Cold War mention sexual and gender based violence (UNIFEM 2010). Not only do victims have no recourse, but impunity and silence breed future impunity.

> **Sri Lanka. Consultation in lieu of Data: A World Bank Experience in Agricultural Recovery**
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> In 2000 as the conflict was still raging in Sri Lanka, the World Bank initiated a regional irrigation project. There was no baseline data available and security conditions would not allow for an in-depth assessment. The team opted for wide consultation with the main stakeholders in villages as well as provincial and district authorities, government agents in the project area, UNHCR, ICRC, the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) in the region, and the political wing of the LTTE.
>
> The selection of a woman to lead local efforts also led to the inclusion of women's networks in the consultative process and throughout the project cycle. According to World Bank reports, "the women's rural development societies (WRDSs) and the resultant empowerment of women was one of the most important achievements of the project…The WRDSs included the majority of women in the villages targeted, and their representatives demonstrated strong leadership. The WRDSs were seen by many as being the most robust village-level CBOs, catering not only to

2. Addressing the situation of male and female ex-combatants: Despite the development of tools, and past experiences (good and bad) across conflict settings, exclusion and marginalization of women and girl fighters from DDR provisions is a persistent problem. As

fighters and abductees they face bigger hurdles in reintegration. Often they are perceived to have transgressed gender norms by virtue of fighting, or seen to be sexually promiscuous and threatening on their return home. They can be marginalized, rejected from new security structures and forced into risky and sexually exploitative income generation work. Yet female ex-combatants often have useful skills and a commitment to the betterment of their communities. From El Salvador in the 1990s, across Africa and Nepal in 2006[4], interactions with women associated with armed groups reveals a desire and interest to support recovery processes and to realize gender equality. Yet they are thwarted by the lack of attention by their own military leaders, national governments and the international policy community, (Pampell-Conaway and Martinez 2004, Mazurana/Geneva Call 2006). In Sierra Leone, women took on the burden of supporting the reintegration of child soldiers without access to or assistance from the state or international actors (Mazurana and Carlsen 2004).

While male ex-combatants are more readily tolerated in society, many are marginalized and unable to reintegrate adequately in the aftermath of DDR processes. Limited attention to the psychosocial needs of ex-combatants, as well as brief reintegration programmes that often cannot provide the basic skills needed for employment are key challenges. Lack of attention to the basic needs and conditions of this cohort in the negotiations process can result in flawed interventions.

3. Peace accords often determine future governance processes (e.g. elections) and structures. They set the stage for constitution-drafting and legal reform. If issues of gender equality and women and men's differential needs are raised early in the discussions, they are more likely to be integrated into the agreements than if they are introduced at later stages. As the UN Experts Group Meeting on "Peace Agreements as a means of Promoting Gender Equality" (UN, 2003) found, "the greater the detail or specificity in a peace agreement, the more detail on gender equality may also be required." What is clear is that peace agreements provide a critical window of opportunity for addressing gender equality issues. If this opportunity is missed, the implications are profound in the reconstruction phase. Once agendas and the language of accords are set, it becomes difficult to introduce new issues, and too often the late introduction of gender-related issues can mean they are more easily negotiated away.

4. Peace accords also often tackle longstanding economic grievances. Land reform for example is addressed in many agreements. In instances where women's right to land is not addressed, they are more likely to be marginalized in the future as well. During the Burundi peace process, the right to land was a key demand of women's groups and it was rejected, leaving

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[4] The author conducted a needs assessment among Maoist fighters in cantonments. Discussions were held with women and men.

women, especially war widows and their dependents more vulnerable to violence in the aftermath of conflict (UNIFEM/Burundi 2005).

5. Even the most basic ceasefire agreements have gendered implications. For example the Sri Lankan accord of 2002 has no consideration for the safety and protection of civilians, especially women, attempting to cross the ceasefire line.  It created opportunities for sexual harassment and exploitation of IDPs and vulnerable populations by state actors.

6. Peace agreements also set the stage for truth, justice and reconciliation processes, and gender sensitivity is critical from the outset. The implications of this for women and men are profound. Their equal participation in justice mechanisms can help shed light on a wider range of abuses including sexual violence, and thus help bring 'truth' to a broader cross section of the public. In effect, they reveal that often victims are still alive (not murdered or disappeared) and struggling with the aftermath of the violence, seeking to reassert their sense of dignity to move beyond their victimhood.  Women and girls typically demand social justice

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*Justice for Victims: Innovative Measures*

In Timor Leste, the TRC (known by its Portuguese acronym CAVR ) framed **reparations and its recommedations** in broader recovery terms with key measures for women. Recognizing that many victims, especially of sexual violence will not come forward publicly, CAVR defined beneficiaries as not only those who appeared before it,  but also those identified over a two year period following the commission's end. Women-friendly recommendations that emerged included support to single mothers, victims of sexual violence and scholarships for their children; support for the disabled, widows and torture victims; and support to the most affected communities.  Specific measures were suggested to encourage women's participation. For example scholarship funds programs were tied to provision of services to women, so that in coming forward for their children, the women would benefit too.  Public education programmes were recommended along side victim counseling services and other measures (Wandita, G. in Rubio Marin, ICTJ)

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in the form of education, jobs or support for childcare (for their offsprings borne of rape) as a first requirement. Traditionally they have not been assisted, but innovations are underway as in Timor Leste  (see Box Justice for Victims).[xvi]

The issue of women's full participation or representation at negotiations thus has even broad implications.  The rationale can be synthesized as follows:

1. Inclusion is a basic right. Women effectively are saying that given the profound impact that conflict and peace accords have on all aspects of life, they do not want decisions made 'about them, without them'.  Exclusion on the basis of race or religion would be deemed as discrimination, gender based discrimination must be seen in the same way

(Naraghi Anderlini/UNIFEM 2000). Inclusion has two dimensions: first is inclusion of gender sensitivity in every topic and them being addressed; second is actual participation and equal presence when and where issues are being negotiated and the ability to shape the agenda and topics for consideration. This is a key point relating to citizenship. Women are challenging existing socio-cultural and legal norms that discriminate or diminish their equal rights as human beings and citizens in their states. The modalities of inclusion can vary from case to case but it is the responsibility of the major parties and especially international mediators to develop peace negotiations processes and structures that allow for the plurality of voices. In Northern Ireland Senator Mitchell suggested that the ten top political parties should gain seats at the table. Protestant and Catholic women who had worked at community levels until then formed the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition(NIWC) and contested the elections to successfully gain a seat at the table.

2. The presence of women – especially a critical mass – can alter the atmosphere of peace talks, toning down aggressive behavior and creating a more enabling environment. Where women have participated – notably South Africa, Northern Ireland - they have also contributed to building trust through demonstration of greater empathy and willingness to listen and engage all sides (Naraghi Anderlini/UNIFEM 2000, UN/Rehn and Sirleaf 2002). It is impossible to quantify the impact that women have on peace processes in part because of the range of variables always in play, and because of fundamental lack of women in such processes. In 24 peace agreements signed over 20 years, women made up less than 8% of negotiators. Nonetheless qualitative information based on in-depth interviews with negotiators point to a common set of characteristics:

   o Men behave better/less aggressively when women are present. This has a positive impact on the overall atmosphere of talks;
   o In the South African, Northern Irish, and Somali talks, women's commitment to dialogue and mediation with all sides, not only generated more trust in them, but also helped bring conflicting sides to compromise.

3. **Shifting the focus from War to Peace:** If women were a security threat, they would be present at peace talks. In other words peace processes are overwhelmingly tilted towards neutralizing negative and violent actors rather than empowering and emboldening positive peace actors. The armed and violent groups are needed for ending the war but they often do not have the solutions or the will to engage in sustained and transformative peacebuilding. While they may claim to be legitimate leaders often they are not. The inclusion of women's groups (and other civil society actors) can be a means of focusing on the priorities needed for rooting and building peace, and a means of holding armed actors accountable.

4. **From Power talks to Peace Talks:** Finally, as women and men have different experiences they can bring alternative perspectives to the discussions and understanding of peace talks and to the negotiations table (Naraghi Anderlini 2000, UNIFEM/Burundi 2005, Falch 2010). This is particularly stark when women's voices are those representing civil society and communities affected by conflict in contrast to senior male political or opposition leaders that may have limited understanding of the realities on the ground.  In the 2005 Aceh peace process for example, the opposition leaders had lived in exile for an extended period of time and had no detailed experience of life in Aceh.   Women's groups often question many existing processes in which armed actors and the state are often seen to conflate ceasefires with peace, and haggle over power and positions, with little attention to the needs of the war-affected populations.  For example in Northern Ireland, women raised the question of victim support. They were also more focused on practical solutions for unity and equality moving forward, than on addressing historic narratives and grievances (Fearon 1999) including joint policing mechanisms, education and economic recovery.  In Burundi where women cannot inherit land, women demanded that the peace process redress this inequality particularly in light of the high rates of widowhood due to war.  A change in property ownership laws was not only a step towards equality, but also a means of staving off future instability among children and orphans who were at risk of being forcibly removed from their homes (UNIFEM 2005).

In many instances both non-state armed actors and the state have a poor track record of addressing equity and inclusion issues.  The violence continues through the political process, creating a state of negative peace – with neither war nor sustained peace and security.   Meanwhile, stakeholders who opt for non-violent action or those who demonstrate a commitment to peacebuilding are excluded.  This model of peacemaking is flawed. The continued failure of some 40% of peace processes as well as the prevalence of violence in so-called post conflict states is a testament to the need for new inclusive approaches to peacemaking.   Inclusion of gender perspectives that naturally draw attention to the needs and conditions of ordinary people (women and men), and the participation of women at negotiations can alter the process and the outcomes. Yet neither approach has been tried thoroughly.

## II.2     Designing Programs in Situations of Risk – The Gendered Lens as Opportunity

International development agencies, especially the state or multilateral entities, active in crisis or violent settings are faced with a difficult challenge.  On the one hand their primary partner and client is the state. On the other hand, in crisis settings states and governance structures are invariably implicated in the perpetuation of violence. Where violent conflict exists between the state and its challengers, as noted above in most instances only *armed actors* are accorded the

respect and legitimacy to participate in formal negotiations where their demands are addressed. The message conveyed and repeated, is that the international system rewards violent behavior.

**Enabling Women's Inclusion in Decision-making and Recovery Contributes to Transformation**

Using gender issues, particularly the mandates that require attention and inclusion of women and NGOs in crisis prevention and recovery (SCR 1325/1820/1888/1889), can be an effective means of:

√　Breaking this deadlock bringing alternative voices and leadership into decision making,

√　Recognizing and enhancing existing social capital and resilience in civil society which is also a critical element of robust state building;

√　Ensuring that programming is developed on the basis of information/needs identified by target communities. In Sri Lanka during 2009 for example the government barred most of the international community's access to the Tamil population in the North of the country. National NGOs and CBOs had information about the displaced and were frontline service providers ranging from provision of shelter and food to addressing issues of sexual violence; and

√　Facilitating a homegrown sustainable transformation that is bottom-up and can link into and bring accountability to the top-down state building efforts.

This is not an artificial or externally driven approach. Rather it is recognition of sub-national processes and transnational connectivity that is pressing states and multilateral entities to be more accountable and inclusive of all stakeholders.

**Gender-Sensitivity Ensures More Targeted Programming & Prioritization of Needs**

Another challenge is the experience and capacities of multilateral agencies and personnel in undertaking gender and conflict sensitive development and recovery programming in conflict and violence ridden settings. Questions that have arisen in the past decade (and are being partly addressed through the emergence of conflict-sensitive development processes) include:

a. Are international agencies working *on* the sources and actors of conflict and violence? Or
b. Are they continuing traditional development work *in* and *around* ongoing conflict and violence?

In most contemporary cases, the likelihood is that there is a mix of approaches, but comprehensive conflict-sensitive development is still not widely evident.  The same applies to gender issues.  For example are health systems, staff and services being equipped to tackle the impact of sexual violence, rising HIV/AIDS and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) arising from conflict and post conflict settings?  Are agricultural interventions taking account of the increased participation of women in all areas of production?  The gender dimensions can be framed in the following ways:

a. Where gender sensitive or 'targeted' gender programming exist, are they driven by a general MDG-oriented goal of promoting equality and ending discrimination (e.g. in all

sectors/health/education/income) without taking account of the impact of violence and conflict on those sectors?  Or

b.  Is it tailored to the context of insecurity and violence and focused on addressing men and women's protection needs, supporting women's and youth activism and leadership in decision making pertaining to reduction of violence and promotion of peace at the community or national levels?  Similarly do interventions address issues that arise out of violence and insecurity (e.g. psycho-social support) and target specific cohorts (e.g. ex-combatants, IDPs and returnees)? Alternatively is the thrust of programming focused on economic recovery, state security and institution building such that the gender and social dimensions of recovery are lost or ghettoized into small projects?

In addition to the practical question of in-house capacities, multilateral entities must navigate a delicate political space when designing programs in high-risk situations, especially those aiming to empower marginalized stakeholders.  There are a number of issues to contend with:

1.  Existing power brokers including governments resist the empowerment of actors and entities that may be voices of dissent or challengers to their control over resources.  Yet international agencies primarily partner with governments to set development and recovery agendas. This can empower and legitimize a political elite with a history of poor governance and violence.   It can also marginalize the new voices and alternative leadership that emerged in the midst of crisis - thus reinforcing the status quo, rather than enabling a transformation.

2.  CSOs and local actors are often politicized so authenticating independence can be difficult; CSOs are not homogenous. There is plenty of competition and divisiveness among them including among women's groups.  In principle this diversity should be fostered as a pillar of good governance, invariably however, it can lead to the exclusion of many groups – especially newer entities or those working primarily in rural areas;

3.  CSOs working on crisis and violence issues are often very localized and community oriented.  They may have limited access to, knowledge of and capacity to administer grants or reach international actors.  The lack of connectivity can be a lost opportunity for international agencies. Often local actors are more flexible, innovative in their approaches. They typically have a deeper understanding of the drivers of violence in their communities;

4.  Recovery efforts are still overwhelming focused on addressing infrastructure, traditional security issues and institutions.  There is limited attention or resources dedicated to social (or psycho-social) aspects of recovery or peacebuilding or efforts to promote community and individual resilience to withstand the spread of violence effectively.   Yet these seemingly 'soft' issues are integral to sustaining peace or breaking the cycle of violence. By definition they are context specific so interventions must be rooted in local settings, drawing in all stakeholders. Processes of inclusion are instrumental to the outcomes and success;

5.  In engaging with communities, external actors must understand and acknowledge the changes wrought by crisis – particularly in terms of gender roles and identities. Assuming that traditional practices and systems exist or are sufficient to cope with the new realities can result in significant if inadvertent harm to sectors of the population.  There is need for:

- Situational Analyses and assessments that factors in socio-cultural/gender dimensions of crisis/violence (World Bank 2005);
- Recognition of stresses & opportunities emerging based on changes in gender roles and relations, including the rise in female headed households, widows and single mothers;
- Outreach, consultation and inclusion of new and emergent non-state civil society actors/voices particularly women and youth;
- Use and leverage of international agencies to widen participation and diversity in policy and programming at the country level in fragile settings.
- Recognition that problems and solutions are often localized. The challenge therefore is having the flexibility and capacity to tailor responses to local needs, while providing an overarching national framework of priorities. UNDP's Community Security and Social Cohesion (CSSC) approach and the World Bank's Community Driven Development (CDD) processes are among innovative practices.

## II.2    *Gender and Governance in Fragile Settings: Opportunities and Stresses*

Much of the discourse and debate surrounding women's political participation is articulated from a rights-based approach or from the standpoint of women as victims of bad governance or corruption. While valid and relevant, this approach has made limited headway in promoting systematic efforts to improve gender balance or address the structural causes that keep women away from politics.

Gender issues need to be framed and addressed in the context of good governance – or simply put: given that governance structures are overwhelmingly male dominated[xvii], can increased women's participation and gender balance contribute to improved governance, security and development?

> **Inter-parliamentary Union Figures 2009**
> √ Only one country – Rwanda – has a majority female parliament (56.3%).
> √ The world average for female representation in upper and lower houses combined is 18.9%;
> √ Nordic countries have the highest regional female representation at 42.1%;
> √ The lowest female representation is in the Pacific region (13%) and the Arab States (10.1%)

The limited (and some outdated) quantitative and qualitative data that exists offers the following answers:

i. According to a 1999 quantitative study by the World Bank (Dollar and Gatti, World Bank 1999) *"at the country level, higher rates of female participation in government are associated with lower levels of corruption. Increasing the presence of women in government may be valued for its own sake, for reasons of gender equality. However…there may be extremely important spinoffs stemming from increasing female representation: if women are less likely than men to behave opportunistically, then bringing more women into government may have significant benefits for society in general."[xviii]* Eleven years has passed since this

study was undertaken and while the overall percentages of women in governance remain low, there is more experience to draw on. The findings of this study should be tested against recent cases.

ii.   In crisis and transition settings where governance and the politics of exclusion are often linked to violence, redressing the situation by enabling the participation of a critical mass of women in decision-making can be an effective means of promoting transparency and dispelling root causes of conflict.  Qualitative studies from post-war Cambodia (McGrew et al, Hunt Alternatives 2004) and Rwanda (Powley/ Hunt Alternatives: 2004) indicate that women are perceived to be more trustworthy, less corruptible, more approachable and likely to respond to needs of constituencies.  Experiences from post-apartheid South Africa and a number of Latin American countries (Naraghi Anderlini 2007) reveal that where women have made actively participated in military and national security-related issues, they have demonstrated a willingness to increase transparency around decision making, and reducing military budgets in favor or increased socio-economic spending.

iii.  Where the political arena becomes the stage for highly competitive and often violent interactions between competing groups. Increased participation of women is a means of fostering more cooperative approaches. In places where women's cross-party caucuses have formed, they have bridged ethnic, religious and political identities and found common ground and platforms around their gender identities.  Typically such caucuses focus on issues that are primarily women's concerns, notably gender based violence legislation (e.g. Timor Leste 2009).  But they can be a platform for wider cross-party cooperation.  In Rwanda and South Africa during the transitional years particularly, parliamentary caucuses also worked effectively in partnership with women's civil society networks, thus bridging the divisions between policymaking and constituency needs and concerns (Powley, Hunt Alternatives 2004).

iv.   Women as voters are often perceived to be supporters of moderate candidates.  Where they have exercised their power, the results are evident. In Liberia, women led the campaign for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's presidency in 2005.  In Northern Ireland, the women's movement was pivotal in garnering the 'yes' vote in support of continued peace talks in the 1998 referendum. Even in Iran's 2009 elections and subsequent events, women were present in large numbers in the public protests against the election results and in their demands for equality and civil rights.

v.    By contrast, the participation and treatment of women voters can be an indication of the levels of fragility and emergent extremism.  During Pakistan's 2008 elections, despite significant strides by national parties to support women candidates, in the Northwest Frontier Province, where pro-Taliban groups were influential, women were ordered to stay away from polling stations. In a number of villages, local elders cast their votes a day before national elections, effectively excluding women from their chance to cast a ballot.[xix]

vi.   Despite the entrenched nature of politics, the transitional nature of fragile settings does provide an opportunity for increasing women's political participation.  As activists they are forging new spaces in civil society to articulate their demands, and many come forward to stand as candidates in national and local level elections. The transitional period is also the

time for political reform, new legislation, and introduction of mechanisms including quotas to promote more inclusive governance structures.

## II.3    From Civil Society to Politics: The Challenges Facing Women

i.  <u>Civil Society is not supported as a key pillar of State building</u>: Despite the politicization of civil society, as a sector it is essential for effective state building, and can be a counter-weight to poor governance.  CSOs are also critical service providers in many fragile settings where state services are non-existent. Even in post conflict settings as in Liberia, the government and international actors often rely on CSOs to be 'implementing partners'. Yet support for civil society development, particularly of organizations engaged in political issues or peacebuilding or security is not widely supported. This has a profound impact on women, who tend to populate and operate through CSOs more than men.

ii.  <u>Women are not transitioning from civil society leadership to formal politics:</u> Many talented women leaders are not transitioning in significant proportions from informal civil society spaces into the formal political arena. A number of factors contribute to this reluctance.

√  Many find the aggressive nature of formal politics too jarring. The few women that do step into the political fray are often the exception that proves the rule.  In some instances they emerge from traditional political families as in the case of the late Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan and have a pre-existing constituency and force from which they garner support and to which they are beholden.  In recent cases across Western and developing countries, religious and conservative parties are fronting female candidates, whose independent influence and power is ambiguous. The fact that the sex of new leaders is still a point of commentary, and that women leaders (past and present) are still remembered are indicative of the continued paucity of women in such positions.

> **Haitian Women's Exclusion from Politics: 5 Key Reasons**
>
> a. Education and tradition do not encourage women to be interested in politics;
> b. More than 60% of heads of families are women who shoulder sole responsibility for the home and fear the violence and insecurity often associated with politics;
> c. Traditionally women have fewer financial resources for running political campaigns;
> d. Politics are often linked to corruption and as such are not considered to be a suitable environment for women;
> e. Some women do not involve themselves in politics for fear of becoming "like men" thereby becoming "de-feminized".
> Quoted from *A City in the Sand: Women in Politics for the Transformation of Haiti* 2007

√  For many women active in civil society or local level politics, the lack the financial backing and affiliation with parties or old boys networks that often ease the way, is an additional obstacle. They are fighting an entire system.

√  Socio-cultural resistance to women in politics is still prevalent even in women-majority countries.  Politics is often perceived as 'dirty' business of men. Women are caught in a catch-22 situation. On the one hand they have to prove themselves capable of engaging and demonstrate impact. On the other hand they are typically held to a higher standard or practice and ethics.  There is also disconnect and levels of mistrust at times between women candidates and women constituents. In Iraq for example where women fought for reserved

seats and achieved a 25 percent quota, experiences since 2005 have been sobering (see Box: Iraqi Women Face Resistance, Kvinna till Kvinna 2010).[xx]

√ Civil society space enables women to speak out more freely, uphold and fight for principles without making compromises for political deals. The public space is also more conducive to raising issues that might be politically sensitive at first –e .g. sexual abuse, corruption.

√ Even where women do enter formal politics by omission or commission, they are often absent from the decision-making processes pertaining to security. As a result their perspectives and priorities are neither heard nor accounted for.  Even in the women's wings of political parties these issues are not on the agenda or prioritized. Similarly in women's caucuses the norm is still to focus on traditional 'women's issues' in a limited frame, instead of ensuring that national policies – on economics security or other issues - are influenced and shaped by the needs of women and other sectors of the population.

> Iraqi Women Face Resistance:
>
> √ Experience from the 2005 election shows that many women were there to fulfill the 25 per cent quota requirement. Similar to their male counterparts, they were chosen based on party loyalty.
>
> √ Women who defied this and openly pursued women's rights were threatened and out-maneuvered. A similar pattern emerged from the 2009 provincial elections.
>
> √ The fact that many women MPs are weak and lack a voice of their own has further eroded the confidence in women politicians. Women voters feel that voting for women candidates is waste.

√ Higher levels of violence and insecurity are a key deterrent for women seeking entry into politics.  A 2010 survey In El Salvador, revealed significant disparity between men and women's public activism, despite the strong presence of women in the guerilla movement during the conflict. The survey found that 23.7% of women compared to 39.8% of men were 'highly active' in civic issues at the community level, and only 7.9% of women compared to 22.1% of men were political active. Women's reasons for non-engagement included the high cost of entering politics, lack of time by virtue of holding 2-3 jobs, and increased public insecurity.[xxi]

√ Token Leaders & Exploited Quotas: In many cases, the few women that do enter and succeed in politics are not tied to, or representative of the broader social movement of women.  From South Asia to Israel, where there is a history of women leaders for example, their key constituencies have been based on familial or clan ties or links to key business or military interests.  This creates a profound dilemma for advocates of women's rights, who are not satisfied with 'just any woman', and thus argue for the higher representation and critical mass to ensure inclusivity not tokenism.  As noted above, political parties that have learnt to abuse quota systems and other forms of conditionality for their own advantage further complicate the situation. In Afghanistan, many Afghan men, including warlords learned how to attract international aid using the pretext of conducting 'gender' projects or supporting women (Abirafeh 2005, Notten, Schueb 2009).

√ Women Not Necessarily Acting for Women:  Even with strong women in a legislature, there is no guarantee that women's interests will prevail – particularly if they are seen to conflict with state interests. In 2009 Rwanda, the labour law was revised to include provisions that are detrimental to women's economic security, gender equality, and potentially to child nutrition. The maternity leave provision was revised to include only 6 weeks of paid maternity leave,

with an optional second 6 week period in which women could collect only 20% of their salary (Labor Law 2009, Articles 64 to 69). This provision passed, despite the fact that Rwanda is the only country in the world with a majority female legislature. Informal interviews with several women parliamentarians revealed that they felt they had to choose between creating a friendly investment climate for foreign companies and protecting women's ability to participate in the marketplace (Powley, forthcoming 2010). In a resource-poor environment like Rwanda, women legislators may feel pressured to act to protect state interests (in the name of economic development), rather than women's interests.

√   Women Vulnerable to Same Social Divisions as Men

Despite their successes to unify along a gender equality agenda, women politicians can and often do succumb to political and societal pressures. Afghan women for example have not sustained the momentum gained during the constitutional loya jirga. "Due to conservative gender relations and traditional beliefs about the status of women in Afghan society, women politicians much more than their male counterparts have to prove themselves in their roles as the people's representatives. However, instead of joining together as one force against the current political environment that is curtailing the political, social and economic freedoms that have only recently been achieved, women parliamentarians are being swept up in political, ethnic or regional power structures and agendas." (Fleschenberg, 2009[xxii]).

√   Quotas and other mechanisms are a critical first step, but for sustained impact need to be part of a comprehensive package of political reform.  A combination of quotas (reserved seats) and proportional representation (PR) systems can prompt an initial surge of women into politics and exponentially alter the historic trend lines of women's participation.  But these mechanisms alone are not a panacea. They are neither sufficient to ensure women's full participation in decision-making processes, nor to sustain their involvement over a longer time frame.  Moreover the assumption or expectation that women's political participation will result in improvements to women's lives in the immediate term is misconstrued.  A wide and coordinated range of interventions is needed to improve livelihoods.

Afghanistan is a case in point. In 2001 the United States and European nations highlighted the plight of Afghan women as a rationale (alongside the war against terror) for their attacks on Afghanistan and the Taliban. While women's networks called for assistance in a wide range of areas, notably social, economic, health, political and security needs, much of the international attention was focused on securing

| Womenkind's Overview of Afghan Women |
| --- |
| o   80% of women are illiterate |
| o   54% of girls under 18 are married; |
| o   Only 2% of women have identity papers, 98% have no formal citizenship or identity documents. |
| o   Afghanistan still has the second highest maternal mortality rate; |
| o   Approximately 50% of women prisoners are serving time for running away from husbands – many prefer prison, feeling safer there than in their marital or paternal homes. |
| o   Over 90% of women suffer from domestic violence and in the South; and |
| o   An estimated five percent of women have access to medical care; |
| o   In 2007 former warlords sitting in parliament 'forgave' themselves by passing an amnesty law for war crimes committed during the Soviet invasion, the Mujahedeen rule and the Taliban era. |

women's representation in governance.

There was limited success. 25 percent of parliamentary seats and 33 percent of upper house seats are reserved for women. But the numbers were not replicated across government structures. By 2005, one out of 25 ministers and one out 37 provincial governors was female. Although gender sensitivity across all sectors was mandated, sector-specific outputs were negligible. While 25% of the 28,000 civilian government employees were women, the majority occupied lower-level positions in ministries of women's affairs, agricultural and higher education. More pertinently however, despite claiming to champion women's and girls' rights in Afghanistan, policies have not been coordinated or comprehensive in approach. Little has improved in the lives of ordinary women (see Box: Womenkind's Overview of Afghan Women). Parliamentary quotas are not a panacea; they must be supported by other measures across governance structures, including for example gender budgeting efforts that help target resources more effectively to women and men.

## II.4     Existing and Innovative Responses and Initiatives

Studies on improving women's formal political participation point to several key factors.

1. The legal and institutional frameworks to promote women's political participation must be in place. As UNDP's experiences in Eastern Europe and CIS states suggest (UNDP/CIS 2010) 'gender equality laws' must serve as the overarching binding framework across 'all spheres of life, and they must be implemented. In addition political party and election laws that often have negative impact on women must be reformed to enable equal and equitable access. Harmonization of national laws with international conventions and resolutions is an effective means of advancing the legislative framework.

   √ National gender equality mechanisms such as ministries and parliamentary gender equality commissions can monitor and promote adherence to laws. With sufficient 'teeth' including political, technical and financial resources such mechanisms can reduce barriers and ensure sufficient attention to gender parity within all braches of government.

> **The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network: On Quotas and PR**
>
> "Implementing quotas in proportional representation systems has proven to be very successful…Among the countries in Africa that implemented some type of quotas, 12 countries have a proportional representation system…Proportional representation systems make it easier for political parties to implement quotas, especially voluntary quotas…[R]ather than having to look for a single candidate who can appeal to a broad range of voters, parties in proportional systems are more inclined to consider candidates with ties and appeal to different groups and different sectors of society to help attract more voters to their party. Conversely, parties may be afraid to lose some of their voter base if they fail to provide some balance by nominating only men. The political costs for nominating a woman candidate would be lower in proportional representation systems because the party would have several slots from which it could find room to do so. (The Effect of Electoral Systems on Women's Representation. International IDEA.)
>
> A mix of legislated quotas and a proportional representation (PR) system result in the best and quickest route to gender balance in politics. Examples include Namibia where legislated quotas and PR system were complemented by a voluntary party quota resulting in 43.8% women in local government. If there is no PR system, Tanzania can serve as an example. A 30% legislated quota was "distributed among parties on a PR basis. Mixed systems, such as the one in Tanzania, and local government in South Africa raise the possibility of the PR system becoming a way for women to enter politics and then to contest constituency elections." (Morna, C.L. IDEA 2003.)

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√ Tough anti-violence legislation is needed to create an environment for women's safe participation in politics.  Punitive measures must be put in place and acted upon against incidences of harassment, defamation, character assassination, insult, threats, sexual violence and degradation of women, as well as targeting their relatives; all of which are experiences shared by many women politicians globally.

2.  Additional mechanisms and strategies are needed to provide equal opportunities and redress the entrenched and historic imbalances.
>    √ Mandatory and voluntary quotas can be introduced as short term measures to open spaces for women in legislative and government structures and on political party lists.
>
>    √ Proportional representation (PR) systems tend to be more conducive to women and other marginalized groups as the political costs for nominating such candidates is lower in a PR system because parties can have several slots in which to place them (see Box on Quotas and PR).
>
>    √ Women and youth ballots (as used in Rwanda's provincial elections in 2004) are an innovative means of enabling representation from marginalized sectors of society.  In Rwanda's case, women above 18 could run on either the general ballot or on the women's ballot. Councils were comprised of 1/3 members selected from then general ballot, 1/3 from the women and 1/3 from the youth ballot.
>
>    √ Women's branches) of political parties (as well as youth branches) can be a space in which women can network, build confidence and engage in the mainstream.
>
>    √ The formulation of a women's agenda/platform is important both in terms of demonstrating the party's commitment to advancing women and informing the public. It also strengthens female politicians status.
>
>    √ Cross-party women's caucuses can leverage women's voices and ensure demands are heard across the system not in small pockets. The Initiative for Inclusive Security, a Washington based foundation has supported such work in Rwanda and Sudan in recent years. In Sri Lanka, the Association of War Affected Women (AWAW) and the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) have worked with women politicians to develop stronger ties.

√  The importance of training and building a "pipeline" of candidates cannot be overlooked. Women AND men need capacity building to be effective legislators or leaders, particularly in the context of crisis and transitions.[xxiii]  They need to develop their understanding of the impact of violence/conflict on different economic and social issues. They also require skills building to build trust across societal divisions, rather than perpetuating divisions and mistrust (See Box: Innovative Practices: Building Capacity).[xxiv];

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### Innovative Practices: Building Capacity

**Rwanda**: the training of women to run for local office (and preparation of the National Women's Council) laid the groundwork for a robust roster of women candidates to fill quota seats, and allowed women to be elected to a majority in parliament – 56% - far beyond the 30% quota.  Such capacity-building programs should work in concert with quotas, thereby improving the quality of women candidates and increasing their number. Training in basic communication and messaging skills, as well as sharing experiences of political campaigning for potential women candidates is extremely effective when it provides role models to build women's self-confidence, allows for candid discussion in a safe environment, (Powley, 2008).

**Haiti**: Between 2005-07 the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) undertook an extensive capacity building programme for a group of Haitian women seeking political office. In 2005 prior to elections the group identified and received training in skills ranging from conflict resolution, management, planning and communications to analysis of key electoral issues.  In the aftermath of elections, those interested in pursuing political careers received 'coaching', i.e. regular access to advisers to enhance personal development and strengthen ties across political parties to undertake projects for their communities. Learning from past mistakes and perseverance were central component of the training.(Almog, Peuchguirbal 2009)

**Cambodia:** The NGO, Women for Prosperity identified and trained over 5000 women prior to commune elections in 2000.  Women of different political parties attended the sessions together, and through the workshops ranging from public speaking to countering negative stereotypes established personal relationships that also transcended the political difference. Some 1000 of the trainees won seats in the elections. The organization continues with its coaching and capacity building program of male and female councilors on substantive issues (McGrew et al, Hunt Alternatives 2004).

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√  Sustained and adequate funding of gender equality mechanisms and processes is essential to their long-term success. Monitoring of resources to ensure appropriate usage and avoid diversion of funds to other matters is also necessary.

3.  <u>Partnerships & Networking</u> between political actors, civil society and media is critical. Collaboration between civil society and political institutions has been a key ingredient of elevating women's voices in politics.
    √  CSOs are instrumental in identification, formulation and implementation of policies and programmes. They are often the most consistent proponents of equality and empowerment.  They also provide a space to foster women leaders, while reaching out to the public to raise awareness of emergent social, political and economic threats and concerns.

4. <u>Linkages with the media are also critical</u> to dispel negative stereotyping of women, and to ensure that issues of concern to women, and women's activism are reflected in the public discourse.  In Iran for example for over 2 decades (until it was shut down in 2008), Zanan magazine was a monthly publication that provided a venue for dialogue between religious and secular thinkers; revealed issues such as the rise in sex trafficking; and reported regularly on the activities of women in parliament as well as on the gendered implication of other legislation being drafted. It set an example for other publications and triggered an increased media reporting on women's rights and equality issues.  It was also the training grounds for many young women journalists who continued their efforts through weblogs, and are pillars in the fight against discrimination now.

5. <u>A Space For Women to Speak for Themselves</u>:  To avoid accusations of imposing foreign cultural norms onto a nation, it is imperative to create spaces and opportunities for women to speak for themselves. Afghan women for example, have clear notions of how gender sensitivity and addressing women's needs can be integrated in a culturally sensitive manner into recovery and security programmes.  But major international interventions and the government continue to marginalize them.  In 2010 as the security situation has worsened, the same warlords that wreaked havoc on the country for decades remain in government and the international community continues to engage them in decision-making (London conference), leaving the majority of the population unrepresented and silenced.

6. <u>Sustained Leadership in Support of Women:</u> Much of the support for women is rhetorical and not followed through systematically.   Where national leaders demonstrate genuine commitment, changes can occur at a quicker pace and female role models can come into the public sphere. These changes alongside commitments to girls education, legal equality and women's equal opportunities economically catalyze deeper social changes.

7. <u>Embracing Alternative Models of Leadership, the New Generation Leaders:</u>  Is pursuit of gender balance in political structures solely a question of equal rights for women regardless of the policies or leadership styles they may pursue or is it a matter of efficacy? The debate still rages within women's movements globally. There is no simple answer. But implicit to much of the discourse is the notion that women do bring different skills and perspective to politics, and a critical mass  (25-30% as highlighted by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and widely accepted) would result in changes in the style and substance of political processes. Existing studies and interviews with women leaders do suggest common approaches. Typically consensus building, inclusivity, non-hierarchical attitudes and empathy are associated with women. Yet among the handful of women leaders globally

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**Michelle Bachelet: Modeling Leadership for Women**

"Perhaps most important, Bachelet remained faithful to her personality-- maternal, affable, non-confrontational. Even as defense minister, and later as president, she never thought she needed to be compensate for her gender by becoming the toughest person in the room. She was our anti-Thatcher, not adopting all the old male-dominated codes of power but transforming them. She proved that women can govern and wield power in a variety of styles. Hers was not the stuff of brilliant oratory or populist inspiration; it was warmth, closeness, and empathy. The instant intimacy she forged with the public compelled everyone, from the lowest socioeconomic classes to our most prominent chief executives, to admire her.

Escobar Chavarria, P. "In Chile Departing President Bachelet Proved Women Can Lead" *Washington Post, March 14, 2010.*

many do not display such qualities. Politics is still perceived as 'unfeminine' as Haitian women indicate (Almo and Puechguirbal 2009). If the goal is to attain a critical mass of women in decision-making, then valuing the feminine aspects of leadership and fostering them is urgently needed. Chile's Michele Bachelet can be an important role model. Bachelet began her term as the first female president with significant resistance from the political class with only 46 percent of the vote. In a country steeped in machismo and military leadership style, she faced an uphill battle and at times seemed to be losing. Yet ultimately she ended with historic 85% approval rating, and a long lasting legacy that included pension reform, social protection nets for the poorest in Chile, legislation against domestic violence and fiscal prudency in the face of a global economic crisis.[xxv]

8. <u>Balancing Family and Professional Responsibilities:</u> Without attention to the work/family balance issues that pressure women' lives, the percentages of women in politics will not increase substantially. Policies and laws are needed to promote equal sharing in family responsibilities, and incentives to enable working parents (and those caring for elderly parents) to continue. Institutional facilities and services such as childcare centers can be significantly useful. Flexible work hours/voting times to accommodate family life can ease pressures off women, and provision of compensation for time spent away from family (evenings, work dinners etc) can benefit fathers, mothers and careers. While these issues are debated openly in Western societies, they represent critical hurdles to women's participation in politics. The domestic and financial burdens on women, particularly in fragile settings, severely limits women's access and time to participate in political processes at local or national levels.

## II.5    Latest Trends

Recent development in the context of promoting women's political participation include the following:

1. Working with men to advance gender-sensitive policies (e.g. female/male collaboration in parliaments) and avert much of the misunderstanding and tension that arises around references to gender equality. There are a number of initiatives underway reaching out to men in leadership positions in support of women's rights and with a emphasis on prevention of violence against women. Mix of dialogue groups at local levels and international level consultations also draw attention to 'positive' masculinity norms that emphasize responsibility and non-violence.

2. Greater attention to the quality of participation and factors that impede or enable women to make substantive contributions, rather than focusing on the gender balance issues only. A number of INGOs have programmes and resources dedicated to strengthening women's leadership skills, confidence and knowledge of prominent security and development issues. Workshops and consultations focus on informing women activists and leaders of the international discourse, while enabling them to interject their concerns into policy discussions.

3. Greater attention to gender budgeting. Championed by UNIFEM is analysis of national budgets to ensure equitable allocation of resources based on demographics (e.g. health care, education, etc). While complicated, it is a means of tracking funding and seeking to

highlight gaps and ensuring better targeting of resources based on the differential needs of women and men.

4. In addition, new language is emerging in terms of quotas (i.e. "neither sex can be more than 70%") and there is increased recognition of the importance of women's caucuses and networking between governmental, parliamentary and civil society actors.

## *Concluding Reflections*

Improved governance requires a profound shift away from business as usual and patriarchal, highly aggressive political cultures that dominant many fragile states. The sustained and substantive inclusion of women in politics is a key strategy for making the shift and improving governance. Existing studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that gender balance not only reduces corruption, but also ensures greater transparency and responsiveness to community needs. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, women often emerge as local leaders and community mobilizers. They are effective service providers and mediators of conflict. To capitalize on their potential and sustain their participation, emergent women leaders in communities and among CSOs should be supported and leveraged

Gender sensitivity sheds light on how people – men and women – are affected by and respond to violence and fragility.  It calls for bottom-up beneficiary centered responses and challenges the top-down, supplier driven approach that is implicit to many development interventions.    If interventions are gender sensitive, they address the critical need for building human and social capital in contexts where this capital is diminishing and violence perpetuating.  But this can involve significant changes to existing practices and institutional priorities. It typically impacts every sector. Building on the discussion above, this section reflects on key issues, lessons, existing opportunities and challenges for improving gender responsiveness in programming.

### III.1     Is the Demand for Gender Sensitivity Driven by International or Locally Driven?

Though often unstated, the notion that attention to 'gender' is a western or externally driven demand that is politically correct rather than expedient, is implicit in much of the discourse and practice pertaining to recovery and early response programmes in situations of conflict and fragility.  This is partly due to confusion and misunderstanding about the terminology.  In other words, 'gender' is understood as the promotion of women's rights and often equated with western cultural values, rather than the broader construct of men and women's differential needs and experiences. Yet despite the reams of policies and resolutions, both state actors and many mainstream international development actors and donors can be dismissive of the issues.  Why is that?

Internationally, particularly since the advent of the 'war on terror', much of the attention for international actors is on attaining 'security'. Resources and attention are directed at the military and police, and co-opting the erstwhile spoilers or armed entities.   The question of 'security for whom?' is rarely addressed. Security is seen overwhelmingly through the lens of state actors and international powers.  Human security approaches that were gaining traction in the 1990s lost ground in the aftermath of 9/11.  But the military security lens is a short-term approach that has backfired in many settings including most recently, Afghanistan.

Additionally as mentioned, there is a 'terminological' and conceptual hurdle.   Gender mainstreaming is often conflated with 'gender balance' and notions of affirmative action in the work place, rather than attention to the differential needs and circumstances of women and men in programming and policy.  Additionally, women's inclusion in governance or addressing their needs is typically framed as a social not a security or good governance issue per se.  Yet as noted above, despite the constraints and limitations, gender balance in politics improves accountability and lessens corruption.   There is insufficient data to determine the impact that women can have

on national security issues. Nonetheless experiences from South Africa during the transition and South America indicate that women are more supportive of transparency of the security and military apparatus. They also favor human security approaches to national security policies (Naraghi Anderlini 2004). At the community level, existing research, limited as it is, indicates that women's participation in decision making has proven highly effective in the prevention and mitigation of violence in a number of countries including Cambodia (McGrew et al 2004), Liberia, Mozambique (Murdock 2010) and Kenya.

Since the 1990s across multilateral and bilateral development agencies small units and pockets of work have emerged that integrate gender perspectives into peace and security issues, but they are the exception rather than the rule. Much of the international response to gender issues and specifically discrimination of women has been plagued by the *triple* "A" syndrome of apathy, ad hoc practice and amnesia (Naraghi Anderlini 2007)[xxvi].

√ Apathy: Regardless of the policies, the inaction and lack of leadership within major institutions sets a tone that women are not important and gender sensitivity is an 'optional extra'…if the time or situation allows for it. There has never been any punitive consequence for lack of attention. This apathy seeps to all levels of practice from information gathering and analysis to engagement with women or inclusion and representation of their perspectives in peace making and recovery, and resource allocation.

*"No one may invoke cultural diversity as an excuse to infringe on human rights or limit their scope…cultural diversity should not be used "to support segregation and harmful traditional practices which, in the name of culture, seek to sanctify differences that run counter to the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights…Universal values of human rights should serve as a bridge among all cultures and should not be subservient to social, cultural or religious norms...[C]ultural rights include the right to question the existing parameters of 'culture,' to opt in or out of particular cultural entities, and to continuously create new culture."*

Excerpts from UN Experts Statement on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity 2010.

*The culture card*: Apathy is often hidden behind the veil of cultural sensitivity. Again as gender is conflated with women only, the approach is to focus on women and justify inaction based on cultural relativism. "Women are very important, but in this culture, under these circumstances, we cannot" etc. etc, is the way of many a conversation with senior staff, especially men in national and international structures.[xxvii] The 'culture card' is an effective means of avoiding the question of women and continuing work along a well trodden that not only excluded them but also is detrimental to society and peace building as a whole. [Yet] culture sensitivity is rarely a concern when democracy promotion (aka elections) or market liberalization is being promoted.

*Ad Hoc Practice*: Inevitably in every institution there are pockets of innovation and good practice. But there is no systemic integration of the issues into

the mainstream programmes of the institutions.  The adhoc practice is evident in a number of ways. First, there are pilot programmes that are designed to be catalytic, yet are rarely replicated or up-scaled.

Second, donors can be inconsistent in the application of their gender policies and support for the SCr 1325 agenda. Thus with one hand they may espouse the need for women's political participation or economic empowerment. While with the other they provide significant funds to major agencies or governments with a mandate to support good governance or reconstruction, but do not specify a focus on the full inclusion of women in mainstream political or economic programming as a key criteria for the provision of funds, or in the overall priorities of the major players.  Similarly, at international donors' meetings in the scramble to prioritize priorities, the needs of women are among the first to be taken off the table.   In part because of the lack of understanding or awareness, the stated priorities are rarely if ever framed with a full gender lens. In other words a government may identify support for security sector reform as a key peace building priority.   But in detailing the elements – economic, social, political or security oriented - they are very likely to omit any mention of women's inclusion, women's perspectives or women's needs in this area.  The rhetoric of gender equality or mainstreaming is not put into practice where it counts. The financial data reflects this reality (see PCNA-TRF Toolkit 2009, box and Figure 1)

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**Funding for women's needs within Post Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs)**

UNIFEM analyzed eight Post Conflict Needs Assessments to assess the extent of gender mainstreaming in PCNA situation analyses and in cost estimates for priority actions. The study finds that gender issues are 'front-loaded' in PCNAs – **mentioned in sub-sectoral overviews but less often specified in cost estimates for priority spending.  About 38% of budgeted sub-sectors contain gender analysis, but on average fewer than 8% of actual budgets specifically mention women's needs**.

Economic recovery and infrastructure sub-sectors receive 60% of total funding but are weak on gender analysis and fund allocation for women's needs.  It is often argued that these sectors are "gender neutral" and that women benefit as much as men from investments in these areas…This is not necessarily the case. If temporary employment programmes for instance do not make specific provisions to make employment accessible for women, addressing constraints on their labor such as childcare, women may not benefit. Similarly, women may not benefit from infrastructure programmes that revive markets in which women are not active or build social infrastructure without facilities for girls and women. **The Social Protection and Human rights sector seems the one paying most attention to women's issues, with about 50% of its budget clearly linked to such needs. However, this sector only attracts about 4% of post-conflict funds.**

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Figure 1

PCNA total budget, by extent of inclusion of gender issues (US$ billion and %)
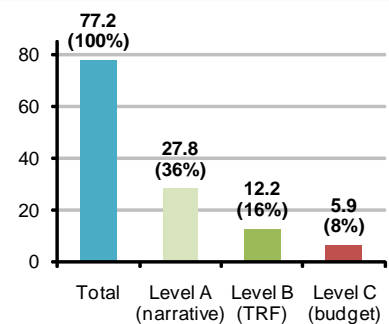


Third, the adhockery is perhaps best exemplified by the odd projects and last minute attempts to put 'gender' in. The one-off project to support women's political participation, the small fund, the odd workshop and the now

obligatory 'gender' paragraph in reports feed the notion of something being done.  But these initiatives cannot make a difference if the major efforts have not taken on board the implications that attention to women can have.  If gender is a crosscutting issue, it must be taken into consideration at the outset of every intervention, not at the final hour.

√ ***Amnesia:*** Finally, there is pervasive institutional amnesia.  Good practices get lost, are not well documented, or transferred. The lack of strong documentation and codification of experience – successes and failures – is a major hindrance in this field, within and between institutions.  In many cases field and headquarters' communication on practice is also weak.  Thus lessons from one place are not readily available to staff in another.   It is further perpetuated by the assumption among some practitioners that initiatives cannot be replicated or adapted across regions.  Lack of institutional memory is not helped by a reliance on short-term consultants. Often times they come to assist with planning or programming yet may not have access to past information or the impact of other initiatives. As short-term staff they also take away much of the knowledge on their departure. In other words, initiatives targeting women or aimed at ensuring the equitable treatment of women, appear not be monitored, reviewed or collated in a systematic manner to enable exchange of experience and improvement.

The international community's failure to address the pervasive discrimination faced by women in development and fragile settings was also synthesized by Stephen Lewis and Paula Donavan in May 2010, as they critiqued the UN's member states for their inertia and unwillingness to allow the formation of a single UN agency dedicated to women with adequate funding, expertise and operational capacities (see Box:  Catalysis and Paralysis on Gender Equality below)[xxviii]:

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### Catalysis and Paralysis on Gender Equality

*" …When nations emerge from conflict, they don't look for a "catalytic demonstration project that will test innovative approaches"; they want an operation built on decades of UN peacekeeping experience.*

*Why is it that the UN and Member States only request catalytic programming when it comes to women? …we all understand that it is code for "low priority", "experimental" and "unsustainable"…*

*[T]wo fallacies stand between the General Assembly and its…goals of gender equality and women's empowerment…The first fallacy is that operational capacity for the new women's entity is optional: that global equality for women can somehow be achieved with 'catalytic programming' in select countries. This low-budget, low-skills approach has been leading the UN and UNIFEM's work on women's empowerment for decades.*

*…**for nearly seven decades, the UN has neglected and mismanaged women's issues, leaving the real work of women's equality and empowerment to women themselves;***

*There is simply no cheap, ad hoc, para-professional short-cut to the empowerment of women. The second fallacy is that adequate gender expertise and programming exist within the UN, and merely need to be encouraged, coordinated and "enhanced". The truth is that the entire UN - its agencies, funds, programmes, including UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, WHO, FAO, as well as the Office of the Secretary-General, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues - lacks sufficient expertise and experience to address women's issues effectively, and has never committed the time, energy or human and financial resources required to bring results in line with rhetoric on gender…*

*The "evidence base" is solid; the "catalytic programming plus gender mainstreaming" formula has been tried, again and again, and each time, it has served to maintain the status quo of men's power and women's inequality. For the UN to repeat it again as though it has any real chance of success would be an exercise in blatant, willful deception."*

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Stephen Lewis, Paula Donavon

May 2010

### III.2    *National Level Resistance*

At the national level the resistance is often due to a mix of traditional patriarchy, fear of cultural domination and a concern that empowering women and other disadvantaged groups in politics or economics rocks the 'power' boat.   Various factors drive this resistance.

o   Traditional attitudes regarding masculinity are key drivers. For example in a brief 2006 survey of men in South Kivu, DRC 87.2 % believed that men are the heads of households and women must obey and submit to them (Women for Women International 2006).  These attitudes are also alive and present in the multilateral and international institutions.  Lack of sustained leadership and demands for accountability of senior personnel in the United Nations and other institutions has meant that many senior figures have

o    Misunderstanding about the concept or goal of gender equality is a factor.  In Mozambique for example, a human rights organization that believed they could empower women by giving them a source of income, in the form of cows or goats, found that 'when the women returned home with their newly acquired income, their husbands abandoned the family, alleging they were no longer needed to support the family." (Murdock, Zunguza, CDA 2009)

o   Suspicion of western cultural imperialism is another common factor.  Promotion of gender equality or women's empowerment often raises fear of the imposition of 'western' values – i.e. immorality - resonates among conservative religious figures and leaders in Muslim-dominated countries as well. In 2010 for example, speaking at an international conference, Iran's first lady accused Western countries of using the UN to promote adulterous behavior among women worldwide.[xxix]   Ironically, while women's rights advocates regard the post conflict setting as an opportunity to improve the status and conditions of women and marginalized groups, traditional elites can perceive this as a threat.

o   Lack of awareness about the profound and irrecoverable socio-cultural changes wrought by conflict and violence often shapes the attitudes and discourse.  Often there is a lack of information about demographic changes and altered social practices in violence affected settings. As a result political leaders and government officials can base policies on assumptions or knowledge of the past, rather then the reality of present-day conditions.  For example in contexts where women have no right to land ownership or inheritance, war widows can face eviction from their homes as land laws and policies are often unchanged post war (UNHabitat 1999, Accord 2007).

**Development and Innovation**

While changes in national level policies often move at a glacial pace, there is a momentum building with regard to the women, peace and security agenda. Since 2005, some 20 countries worldwide including a number in Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Rwanda and Uganda) have developed and adopted national action plans (NAPS) for the implementation of SCR

1325 at the domestic level. This embrace of an international normative framework and adaptation to the national context is innovative. In most instances the processes by which the NAPs were developed were also consultative and inclusive of national women's rights movements. How far the implementation goes is yet to be seen, but the NAPs provide a mechanism for governments to own and act on the agenda, and civil society to hold the state accountable. The NAPs can also be a means of bottom-up approach to holding external actors such as the UN and the World Bank accountable for ensuring that gender issues are fully integrated into their efforts. In effect if the client state demand compliance, multilateral and bilateral actors should be compelled to uphold the provisions of the resolution too.

### III.3    Sub-National and Trans-national Demands

The resistance to gender issues may be more vocal or political, but the demand at the sub-national level – i.e. in the citizenry and particularly civil society and community based activists  - is undeniable.   In part this is a result of an increasingly connected world. Women, youth and minorities involved in civil rights movements are networking with counterparts globally. Information and strategies are shared and the similarities of experience have led to common demands.   International conferences have fostered this exchange and transnational rights based movements are active and growing.

But the networks – particularly the women's groups addressing violence and crises-amplify the needs and voices of women in communities. By choice or force of circumstance in fragile settings, women emerge as breadwinners and community activists. They are supportive of (and many demand) increased attention to issues of empowerment and discrimination.  Their needs and contributions cannot be ignored and they demand their rights to be heard.

There is, of course, significant discrepancy within and across communities, and sub-groups. Among women for example the concerns and priorities of urban middle class women in any fragile setting may vary significantly with their rural, poorer counterparts. Differences can arise across ethnic groups or on the basis of age.  Their solutions to problems can differ according to the context in which they live. For example in many rural settings where state security or justice provisions are non-existent women have no choice but to rely on traditional and informal mechanisms.  Engaging and seeking to alter the processes of these mechanisms to ensure equitable treatment and protection of women is thus important.  But this can contradict the demands of women in urban settings, who seek adherence to the rule of law, and fear increased legitimacy of informal (typically male dominated) structures.

The differences can pose significant challenges for international actors, often pulled in opposite direction. Nonetheless, while the priorities and solutions may vary across cultural or regional settings, the core demand for basic rights is similar, and cannot be relegated as a western

phenomenon. For international actors, enabling consultations and exchanges among the diverse groups is critical. Not only the process promotes cooperation and increased mutual understanding, but it also generates increased understanding of gender issues and locally developed and owned solutions.


## III.4    Are International Norms Being Imposed By Outsiders?


Beyond the founding documents of the UN including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and body of international law, over the past decades international conventions and resolutions have broadened the normative framework for tackling gender issues. Some like the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have been ratified by the majority of UN member states and are influencing laws, and national policies. That states choose to ratify CEDAW (and its optional protocol) indicates that they are adopting the principles as a nationally, politically and culturally accepted set of norms, for which they bear responsibility.

Other instruments such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) are not legally binding, but were drawn up as consensus documents by UN member states. As such, they are not imposed or driven by the values or norms of one set of countries alone. Similarly the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was also negotiated, and nation states choose to ratify and join the process.

But Security Council resolutions have a different status. As stated in Article 25 of the UN Charter, UN member states agree to abide by the decisions of the Council, thus they are obliged to implement SCR 1325 and others. However, these are not consensus documents or conventions. Accusations of externally imposed norms and demands may appear more credible. But the processes by which these resolutions were developed tell a different story.

**SCr 1325: Women, Security and the Council**

The provisions of SCR 1325 (and subsequent resolutions) emerged from extensive consultation with and mobilization of women in violence and conflict affected settings. None of the issues raised emerged in a vacuum. Elements pertaining to sexual violence in conflict settings for example related directly to widespread incidence of SGBV in the Bosnian conflicts and the advocacy of local Balkans-based organizations to raise awareness and international response. Similarly demand for inclusion of women in peace processes and decision making was inspired by women's advances across countries worldwide including South Africa and Northern Ireland, Guatemala and Cambodia (UNIFEM 2000).

Western based NGOs have often initiated the mobilization of women on a global scale and facilitated access to the international community, notably the UN Security Council, but the messages, concerns and demands are locally articulated. With regard to SCr 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda that it has generated, Bangladesh was the first country to adopt the issues and bring them to the Security Council's agenda in March 2000. Jamaica and Canada were early supporters, and Namibia sponsored the resolution during its presidency of the Security Council in October 2000. The UK, Norway and Sweden were among early financiers of SCr 1325-related issues at international and national levels. In 2008 the United States sponsored resolution 1820, and the UK followed with SCr 1888 in 2009. Vietnam joined the ranks by sponsoring Resolution 1889 with a detailed focus on gender and post conflict recovery. The agenda received western support, but it was not 'western-driven'. Indeed at the earliest stages and more recently, resistance to the agenda has come from countries more concerned about the potential threat to state sovereignty that these resolutions imply, than the notion that the protection or participation of women is unacceptable culturally.

Following the passage of SCR 1325 in 2000 the international community – notably the UN system and member states - did little to support its implementation. Not unlike countless other security council resolutions, there were no plans in place to realize its provisions. A year after its adoption, however, civil society groups were demanding an anniversary to take stock. "No other resolutions have anniversaries" was the implicit message of the UN system. "No other resolutions have such a constituency" was the explicit response of the women's peace and rights groups. While the pressure mounted on the UN to act, national and international civil society groups took the lead, translating into over 100 languages including local dialects, and adapting its message into street drama, radio shows, cartoon booklet, lyrics and music. Ten years on the work continues, it is being adapted to local settings, and gaining UN and bilateral donor support. There is growing momentum to generate national action plans (NAPs) to further root the provisions of the Security Council resolutions in national level policies and legislation. Seventeen countries including the Philippines and Liberia have adopted NAPs. Implementation still varies however, as resistance to the agenda is found within state institutions, and resourcing has been limited. The tensions around gender issues that exist within international agencies and are reflected at the community and even family level are also evident in among governmental entities. Ministries and Commissions mandated to promote gender equality often scare resources and can face uphill battles against more established line ministries. The benefits of progress and increased awareness have yet to reach most women in conflict and fragile settings. But the decade has seen significant progress in terms of awareness, discourse and evolving practice on the protection and participation of women in peace and security.

### III.5    Gender Work: Doing Harm or Doing Good?

Like all sectors, some gender equality interventions are simply bad practice. Detractors may try to capitalize on these practices to argue against gender sensitive programming, but that is untenable. Recovery efforts can only be sustainable if the direct needs of women and men are met.  The key therefore is to acknowledge and learn from past lessons.  Some of the common elements are listed below:

o   Interventions that overtly promote women's advancement, without addressing the local socio-cultural context or engaging men, can be harmful.  In many local settings, women are the first to request that men be consulted (and co-opted) at the outset of empowerment programmes targeting women.  If men are excluded, goes the argument, they will feel threatened and sabotage the process.  Additionally, outreach to women for economic or political empowerment is rarely sustainable if fundamental gender issues and relations are not tackled. This requires working with women and men to demonstrate the benefits to both and promote shared responsibility.

o   Lack of gender analysis and superficial approach to gender issues can often do more harm than good.  Again Afghanistan offers lessons (see Box: Bad Gender Practices).  As noted above, terrorism was the driving force behind the military attack in 2001, but the 'liberation' of women from the oppressive Taliban was widely promoted by American and European officials at the time (Notten and Scheub 2009).  Yet women's liberation was largely limited to the removal of the compulsory Burqa in the streets of Kabul and rhetoric on political participation. The fundamental gender inequities were barely touched upon. Indeed US policies and the presence of foreign troops and development actors exacerbated the

> **Bad Gender Practice: Lessons from Afghanistan**
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> Writing in 2005 Afghan author Lina Abirafeh pointed to the superficiality and counterproductive implications of 'gender' projects as follows:
>
> i.     Afghan men believe that 'gender' helps women to 'dominate men';
>
> ii.    The proliferation of 'gender advisers' with little understanding of the Afghan context and provision of 'gender training' to a handful of Afghan women who have little chance of implementing what they learnt, has contributed to wasted resources; and
>
> iii.   Many Afghan women feel 'degraded and deprived' of their own voice through the imposed concepts and interpretations of 'liberation' and 'empowerment'.
>
> iv.    Neither Afghan women nor men appreciate the imposition of ideas. The manner in which issues are raised and addressed is critical to how local populations accept or buy into them. (Abirafeh in Notten and Scheub 2008).

conditions of women and created a profound backlash. For example, they took no account of the traditional use of women and girls as debt repayment or 'blood money'.  In 2008 for example a bride was valued at $3000. When US anti-drug interventions led to the destruction of poppy fields, no measures were put in place to support farmers who were indebted to

opium buyers (and hoping to repay their debt in poppy crop) instead the US opium crop eradication forced them to give their daughters (some as young as 2 months old) in marriage to repay their debts. One young girl, estimated to be 9 or 10 years old, who wanted to be a teacher, was exchanged for a $2000 debt. The numbers of 'loan brides' are never known, but locals reported that the rise correlated with the spread of the poppy eradication program. The practice was sufficiently prevalent to prompt Afghan President Hamid Karzai to speak out: "I call on the people [not to] give their daughters for money," he stated in 2008. "They shouldn't give them to old men, and they shouldn't give them in forced marriages. (Newsweek 2008, The Guardian 2010)[xxx]. A basic gender analysis of the potential impact of the operation could have highlighted these issues and the harm that would be done to young girls.

### III.6.  Key Elements of Good Practice in Gender Sensitive Programming

Poor programming due to lack of gender sensitivity and badly conceived 'gender' programmes can overshadow the positive developments and increasingly sophisticated approaches that many gender equality advocates and international entities draw upon.  Key issues noted regularly by women's rights activists and beneficiaries in communities include the following:

1. ***Drawing on existing national laws and policies***, as well as regionally framed agreements (e.g. African Charter) is an important tactic to counter claims of cultural insensitivity. Similarly applying the provisions of international norms to local or national contexts is needed to demonstrate the relevance and usefulness of the instruments.

2. ***Acknowledging the ways in which local actors have used and adapted international norms is also useful***.  Following Kenya's post election violence, women's rights activists introduced SCR 1325 to the Commission of Inquiry and it became the basis on which the Commission investigated sexual violence during the post election violence (PEV).[xxxi]

3. ***Finding the Entry Points for Gender Issues in Local Cultural and Religious Contexts is essential***. The pendulum swings from one extreme to the other.  On the one hand development practice has taken a culturally relativistic attitude to existing traditions and norms, particularly with regard to gender roles and relations.  The fear of 'offending' local counterparts or taking the views of traditional leaders at face value has often resulted in a lack of attention to the differential needs and circumstances of women and men. It has also resulted in international actors abrogating their responsibility for upholding universal rights and values.  A lack of understanding of local cultural contexts or religion also contributes to overly cautious behavior (see box).[xxxii]

> An Iraqi female development practitioner who secured the permission of local elders and officials to provide employment to widows in his community, met resistance from US military commanders in the region, who claimed that her work 'was not culturally acceptable or sensitive.'
>
> Author discussions April 2010

On the other hand however, development practitioners, including gender equality advocates can sometimes take an overly legalistic approach to the issues, demanding an end to certain practices or norms, without fully understanding the cultural context or the reality of people's lives. Women like men can be resistant and fearful of ideas or approaches that seem to threaten their belief systems. It is thus essential to demonstrate the compatibility of seemingly 'external' values with local ones.

One approach is to use existing cultural or religious traditions as a reference point for the interventions. In other words instead of only advocating issues on the basis of international laws or secular norms, drawing on the religious or cultural equivalent to make the case (see Box; Transitions with Traditions).

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**Transition with Tradition:**

**Restoring Women's Participation in Afghanistan**

In 2001 as the US and its allies focused attention on Afghanistan's recovery, the Transitions within Traditions initiative was launched by the Women and Public Policy Program at the Kennedy School. The goal of the initiative was to frame issues regarding women's status and needs within a cultural and religious framework that would allow progress without backlash from traditionalist elements in Afghan society. Afghan and Islamic scholars and experts addressed key issues including women's access to education, economic empowerment, and political participation and framed them within mix Islamic jurisprudence and practice from other Muslim countries and Afghan history and culture. For example they noted:

- In the 7th century Islam recognized the disenfranchised position of women in Arab society and prescribed measures to address women's rights in the economic arena; and
- Education as a right and responsibility of every citizen is supported by normative teachings of Islam;
- While women's political participation is contested in Islamic discourse, there are numerous female leaders and key figures in Islamic history.

The recommendations to the international community included:

- A strong sense of local ownership is essential from the outset for the long-term sustainability of any program. Therefore at all levels in each of these settings, afghan women should be involved in the decision-making and implementation of program planning, investment, enforcement, and resource allocation.
- Local women should be involved in needs assessments and situation analyses at the provincial and district levels and in the refugee camps to encourage grassroots women's economic empowerment at the community level.
- Strategies for equitable and gender-sensitive distribution of emergency funds, humanitarian aid, and relief should be developed with special attention to widows and female-led households.
- For the sake of accountability and transparency, funds should be channeled directly to locally based afghan NGO Coordination agencies rather than transferred to government agencies.

http://www.swaneehunt.com/articles/TransitionWithinTradition.pdf

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Initial assessments also help identify attitudes and potential entry points for addressing gender issues. For example among the DRC men, despite their patriarchal attitudes, 90.7% of all surveyed

"supported the notion that community leaders should encourage sympathetic attitudes to victims [of sexual violence] and their families." (Women for Women 2006). In other words, in a society where raped women have been shunned, there is scope for changing behavior and attitudes.

4. ***Consulting with women at every level is fundamental***. Women can provide insight and information about their own situation and perspectives on the factors that affect their male relatives and community at large. Consulting with them is a fundamental step towards a gender analysis. They are best placed to identify the priorities and navigate through the cultural terrain. Where differences arise between the perspectives of different sectors of women – for example urban-rural or age-based divisions – there is a need to facilitate dialogue and exchange. International actors can play a critical convening role. Inevitably simultaneous approaches may be needed tailored to the different settings. For example while strengthening state security and justice capacities at the national level, there may be a need to also engage with traditional institutions to ensure that women have equal access to justice and their needs are met fairly. This is sensitive terrain, as international actors should not condone local practices that discriminate or harm women. But ignoring the local systems is not helpful either. A process of dialogue and engagement is needed to determine mutually acceptable means by which local leaders and institutions uphold the human rights of women.

5. ***Gender Focal Points and Advisers***: The appointment of dedicated senior gender advisers is a welcome development. The efforts of major institutions can often be traced to individual personnel who have an interest or dedication to the issues. In many instances the people taking on the task of mainstreaming gender are *Focal Points* -individual (typically a woman) tasked with an additional set of responsibilities but without compensation or consideration of time allocation. There are focal points for other issues too, but the notion that one person at half or less of their working hours, should be responsible for (and has the requisite expertise) to ensure that every policy, programme and document produced by their department is addressing the differential needs of women and men is unworkable.

The formation of gender advisory posts has alleviated some of this burden. But the contradictions prevail. Staff are often face a dual challenge of 'having to prove' the significance and benefits of gendered perspectives or women's inclusion, while at the same time, being marginalized by the institution for being overly focused on the issues. There is also the expectation that gender advisers will be equally adept and able to inform all development and security issues, instead of putting the onus on sectoral experts to develop their capacities for gender sensitivity. This is true across organizations – governmental or non-governmental, NGOs and foundations.

6. ***Strategic Partnerships with Men***: Partnerships with male community leaders and opinion shapers is an important step towards rooting gender-related programming at the local level.

Locally respected figures can be effective conduits for taking the message to the constituents – particularly men – and contextualizing it. In addition, targeted programming with and for men is needed. Providing them the space and safety to discuss gender issues can raise awareness and generate greater empathy and appreciation of the challenges facing women. It offers men the opportunity to question militarized notions of masculinity and opt for alternative non-violent norms (UNDP forthcoming 2011).

7. **Models and Cross-country Learning**: By definition attention to and programming that is gender sensitive has to be context specific. Models cannot be replicated without appreciation of the local dynamics, capacities, institutions and security context. Nevertheless, significant learning and adaption can take place if cross-country learning is supported systemically. Much of existing documentation either states the need for specific models – for example quotas in parliament or reflects on the outcomes/impact (this is less available). There is insufficient documentation of the processes, conditions and variables that are needed or that can affect outcomes.

8. **Sustainability and Ownership** – Demand for change is coming from the women in violent communities, so there is local 'ownership' but they represent an alternative set of actors – neither the state nor the non-state challengers. They are locked out of formal processes involving state or armed actors. They need support from the international community to strengthen their capacities to engage in different sectors and with state institutions.

The international community can play a key role in facilitating dialogue and exchange, across government, civil society and international entities. Recognition from international actors and

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**Pledging for Women: Sudan's Donor Conference 2008**

For example the Institute for Inclusive Security (IIS) a private US foundation has partnered with local women's consortia, UNIFEM and bilateral donors to host women's symposia alongside major donor conferences. One such initiative was the 2008 Oslo conference for the review and further pledging in support of the Sudanese Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Prior to the donor conference, Sudanese women met and identified four strategic demands:

1. Fast track efforts to address areas where women's most serious human development deficits are concentrated;
2. Prioritize women's leadership;
3. Enhance cooperation between government and women's civil society organizations; and
4. Increase the accountability of governments and donors to women.

Their information was made available to donors and throughout conference, women met with government representatives to generate awareness and support for their concerns. The impact was significant: at the outset of the meetings only 9 countries had mentioned women or gender issues in their opening remarks. By the close and during their pledging, 20 out of the 22 donors present mentioned the need to support women's leadership and priorities, and Norway set aside additional funds targeting women in Southern Sudan.

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*Gender Symposia During Donor Conferences: A Model to Guarantee Women Leaders A Voice in Setting Priorities for Reconstruction.*

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http://www.huntalternatives.org/*download/1865_gender_symposia_during_donor_conferences.pdf*

invitation to participate in major processes (mediations, donor conferences) not only allows external actors to benefit from the insight that civil society may bring, but bolsters the credibility of civil society actors, enabling them to engage and hold national decision makers more accountable (see Box; Pledging for Women).

9. **Indicators and Reporting:** The development of indicators in April 2010 to track implementation of the provisions of SCr 1325 is another important step, provided the indicators are used systematically for information gathering, analysis, reporting, policy and programme development.

10. **Tracking Funds**: Standard systems are needed to track gender responsiveness in project design and humanitarian funding at the outset of the funding cycle. The existing methods are not fully representative of the way in which funds benefit women and men. For example a road or hospital is useful for women and men. The question is does the hospital provide the necessary care for women? Or were women and men consulted in the decision-making and priority setting that resulted in the road project? They may have alternative priorities and rationales.  In addition to gender budgeting (mentioned above), other efforts are underway to monitor the flow of funds and integration of gender sensitivity to programming in recovery settings.  The UN's Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiated a 'gender marker' pilot project to track and help increase the gender-responsiveness of project design and humanitarian financing.  The tools developed and recommendations emerging from the four-country study should be adapted to other settings (GENCAP, IASC 2009).[xxxiii]

11. **Institutionalizing Gender Sensitivity and Building Staff capacities:**  Staff capacities within institutions need to be developed more to be better equipped at analyzing contexts and developing gender sensitive/mainstreamed programming.   Incentives and leadership are needed to drive this process; currently gender work is not a prospective 'career enhancer'. Trainings (e.g. UN OHRM) and the development of strategic work plans or institution-specific goals (e.g. UNDP's 8 Point Agenda) are important steps in systematizing the issues, but cannot have the necessary impact without leadership support or adequate monitoring.


**Concluding Reflections:**

Attention and understanding of gender dimensions of violence and recovery is relatively new to the development world, paralleling the emergence of peace building and conflict sensitivity.  The need however is urgent not only because of the violence and insecurity that women and men face, but also because gendered analytical frameworks offer insight and solutions that are often overlooked.  40% of peace agreements still fail within the first 10 years and those that remain often lead to high levels of violence and crime. Given the challenges and failure of existing

processes, alternative approaches are needed. One major step could be to develop criteria that enable civil society and women's groups that are actively engaged in peacemaking to participate equally in peace negotiations and have the same 'legitimacy' given to armed actors. The current paradigm that violence pays and peace activism is largely disregarded must be altered. The lack of evidence regarding the efficacy of gender mainstreaming also still hampers efforts, but there is sufficient analysis and experience on which to build and move forward more rapidly. Moreover, the failure of international development entities in upholding and implementing their own policies, undermines the credibility of the institutions, and diminishes the value of international norms and standards.

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