

Helpdesk Research Report: Aid Interventions on Gender and Conflict

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Query: What aid interventions have been effective in post-conflict situations? Where in the MECAB region (notably the Middle East and Eastern and Central Asia) has aid been effective in alleviating the impacts on women's lives in three respects: freedom of movement and access to services; gender-based violence; and voice and participation? Where in the MECAB region has aid been effective in preventing or reversing the social processes noted above?

Enquirer: DFID Iraq

1. Overview
2. General Documents
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1. Overview

It has been very difficult to find case studies of successful aid interventions on the issues above in the Middle East and Central and East Asia regions. Much of the body of literature in this area focuses on the Africa region. Many experts also point out that the impact of aid interventions on gender, especially in post-conflict settings, is rarely measured. Most of the literature on aid programmes that is available often takes a more critical perspective, with a view to suggesting what could have been done better. As a result, there is relatively more information on the *strategies* which are considered successful. Many of these general strategies, lessons learned and recommendations will be applicable to the MECAB region and are thus highlighted in this query.

Most commentators agree that the post-conflict period offers a unique opportunity to reconstruct a nation, including its social and political norms. This brings with it the chance of transforming conceptions about gender roles, gender-sensitising key sectors such as education and health, and laying the foundation for gender equality in the future. Post-conflict activities must address the effects of women's exposure to increased physical, social and medical vulnerability during the conflict - including sexualised violence both within and outside the domestic sphere; family disruptions; and displacement. On the other hand, the experiences women often gain from taking on new roles during conflict, as heads of household and income-earners, for example, also bring an added dimension to the post-conflict reconstruction phase.

The main challenges for humanitarian aid actors therefore are to:

- harness the post-conflict momentum for change to focus attention on gender equality and promote the participation of women;
- rebuild civil society;

- gender-sensitise the post-conflict legal framework;
- create equal employment and livelihoods opportunities;
- rehabilitate social services; and
- empower and mobilise communities to address gender issues.

As this query covers women's freedom of movement and access to services; gender-based violence; and voice and participation, the literature below offers a very wide range of experience, recommendations and lesson learned to draw from, including much detail on how interventions in the specific sectors of education, health, justice, elections and parliaments should be designed. However, it is possible to highlight some overarching policy options that apply equally to these areas in that they involve building on the new realities for women, creating awareness of the issues, enabling grassroots organisations to work amongst their communities, and providing training on gender mainstreaming. These include:

- Conflict can undermine the existing gendered division of labour and creating new opportunities for women. Women often enter into various occupations closed to them earlier. After the conflict, international donors should develop programmes to consolidate those gains.
- Education and training of women in refugee camps can prepare them to assume leadership roles in post-conflict societies. Thus the international community should support education and training in refugee camps, enabling women to acquire new skills, experience, and vision to help reconstruct gender relations on their return to society.
- The international community can help establish women's organisations in post-conflict societies. Such organisations can develop local roots and gain political legitimacy despite their dependence on international resources.
- Women's activities during the post-conflict phase are in most cases small-scale and informal, as often, they must act carefully to avoid community backlash. Much of the time, they rely on being physically present or having face-to-face contact in order to build peace and prevent sexual and gender-based violence. Approaches include raising awareness and increasing access to information through theatre or community exchanges, making spaces safer through door-to-door neighbourhood maintenance programmes or resolving conflict through women's peace huts.
- It is crucial for planners to ensure that projects are community-based and participatory, that they reflect women's and girl's voices, and that they are developed out of real-life experiences.
- The gender mix within specific activities depends on the type of intervention and whether it is appropriate. For example, support groups should be open only to women, whereas, in other cases, young men and women should be encouraged to participate in activities in mixed groups in order to feel comfortable together. The personal characteristics of service providers in this field are also extremely important, especially when working directly with victims of violence. Having emotional empathy and a deep understanding of the multifaceted and complex problems would bring service providers closer to the people they are supporting.
- Addressing SGBV requires a multi-sectoral response involving education, health, psychosocial, police and justice sectors.

There is however some scepticism amongst commentators about the effectiveness of post-conflict gender programmes, and the extent to which they adequately address gender concerns. Zuckerman and Greenberg (2009) (see below) argue "while some projects may include small activities for women, it is not clear that they stem from post-conflict gender assessments, or reflect some purposeful thought about gender disparities that require attention in order to achieve post-conflict goals. At the same time, very few major projects identify or address gender needs at all [...] Donor countries and institutions pump huge amounts of financial and technical resources into post-conflict reconstruction – with the potential to redefine the physical, human, government and economic infrastructure. Insofar as

they lack experience with the gender dimensions of post-conflict PPP (peace, participation and prosperity), donors and governments should seek technical assistance to ensure that they incorporate attention to women, to women along with men, and to women in relation to men. To achieve post-conflict objectives, investments must more systematically reflect research that recognizes the centrality of gender equality for successful development” (pp. 27-28).

2. General Documents

Bouta, T. et al., 2005, 'Gender, Conflict and Development', World Bank Publications, Washington DC

The book is available for preview at Google Books:

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=r5meOmjpi_8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Gender,+Conflict,+and+Development&source=gbs_summary_r&cad=0#PPR11,M1

This book highlights the gender dimensions of conflict, and is organised around major relevant themes such as female combatants, sexual violence, formal and informal peace processes, the legal framework, work, the rehabilitation of social services and community-driven development. For each theme, the authors analyse how conflict changes gender roles and the policy options that might be considered to build on positive aspects while minimising adverse changes. These include:

- Using the post-conflict momentum to focus attention on gender equality and increasing the participation of women in the peace process: Policy options include organising training for politicians; encouraging consultation with women's organisations; increasing the number of female politicians by training women to run for office; setting quotas to ensure minimum numbers of female politicians; and establishing indicators to assess the influence of male and female politicians on political outcomes as well as on the political culture and process.
- Gender, informal peace processes and rebuilding civil society: strengthening the capacity of women's CSOs to bridge the gap between formal and informal peace processes; involving CSOs in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction; providing assistance in restructuring, professionalising and providing longer-term support for women's CSOs.
- Gender-sensitising the post-conflict legal framework: supporting governments to ratify and implement relevant international standards; developing and enforcing gender-sensitive legislation at the national level; informing and training men and women about their rights; and encouraging the judiciary to enforce gender-sensitive laws.
- Creating equal labour market opportunities: trying to reduce women's domestic and reproductive burdens so that those who want to earn a living outside the home may do so; efforts to reform gender-biased labour laws; providing micro-credit schemes, vocational training programmes.
- Rehabilitating social services: supporting home-based schooling and health care facilities; helping to gender-sensitize health systems through reproductive health care and psychological assistance to conflict survivors; gender-sensitizing education services by paying particular attention to adult education, especially for women and to girls' high dropout rates during and after conflict.

The authors also consider the importance of community-driven development (CDD), i.e. adopting community-based approaches in reconstruction, mobilising the community to support women's participation, training community leaders, etc. They argue that rebuilding social capital and cohesion after a conflict are deeply *gendered* processes. Women-headed households and widows can be particularly invisible groups in post-conflict reconstruction. The usual barriers to female participation in community-driven development (CDD) can apply in a post-conflict context (e.g. lack of time due to domestic burdens; lack of confidence; cultural reluctance to voice an opinion; and the logistics of attending meetings

after dark). However, female participation in CDD after a conflict are particularly difficult due to the trade-offs that need to be made between responding quickly to the urgent needs of war-torn communities and the longer socialisation phase needed to better understand the local context (especially critical where there are strong cultural barriers to women's participation). The chapter also warns against assuming that women's vulnerability can be addressed by having female participation on local committees or councils. It cites the example from Sierra Leone (Richards et al. 2004) where women from powerful lineages (such as the wife or sister of a paramount chief) are more likely to participate and speak up than women from weak lineages or unmarried women. The former is more likely to act in the interest of their lineage rather than of their gender. In this way "apparently successful examples of gender empowerment and voice may mask more complex cleavages based on class, lineages, religion, or ethnicity" (p.131) The chapter concludes that "much of the experience with CDD and women's participation in conflict settings is anecdotal and not as yet systematized. Although there is a growing body of work on engendering participation and empowerment in development activities more generally, there is little systematic analysis and documentation of experiences in conflict-affected countries. There has been little effort to develop an evaluation framework and to benchmark these processes." (p.132)

Zuckerman, E. and Greenberg, 2009, 'The Gender Dimensions of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Challenges in Development Aid', Gender Action
http://www.genderaction.org/images/GenderDimensionsPCR_2009.pdf

This chapter offers a framework for understanding the gender dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction (PCR), in order to strengthen assessments, project design, and policy-formulation with the aim of achieving sustainable peace, participation and prosperity. The authors suggest gender dimensions that may strengthen programmes, promote gender equality, and enhance returns on PCR investments. The conceptual framework proposes three gender dimensions: women's programmes; gender mainstreaming; and addressing gender roles to transform societies steeped in violence into the promise of peaceful prosperity. To illustrate the gender dimensions, the chapter uses examples from the World Bank and other donors.

The chapter offers recommendations of how donors, implementers and governments may create the data and environments in which to recognise gender issues as the basis for formulating practical steps by which to address them. These include:

- Policy-makers and donors must view attention to gender as strategic: not just an add-on to the budget for a small women-focused initiative;
- M&E plans must track gender-related factors and gender disparate impacts;
- Post-conflict learning opportunities should be for women and men alike; donors should use gender budgets to track where resources are going, who is benefiting, and actual expenditures against gender equality promises.

The authors conclude: "(P)ostconflict efforts have not been as successful as either conflict's victims or peace's proponents have wished [...] Through a range of examples, by no means exhaustive, we have sought to demonstrate that while some projects may include small activities for women, it is not clear that they stem from post-conflict gender assessments, or reflect some purposeful thought about gender disparities that require attention in order to achieve post-conflict goals. At the same time, very few major projects identify or address gender needs at all [...] Donor countries and institutions pump huge amounts of financial and technical resources into post-conflict reconstruction – with the potential to redefine the physical, human, government and economic infrastructure. Insofar as they lack experience with the gender dimensions of post-conflict PPP, donors and governments should seek technical assistance to ensure that they incorporate attention to women, to women along with men, and to women in relation to men. To achieve post-conflict objectives, investments must more systematically reflect research that recognizes the centrality of gender equality for

successful development (King 2001). We close with a final but critical caveat – for all post-conflict and development work, but particularly from a gender perspective: success depends on political commitment at all levels and on *indigenous country solutions*. Leaders must ensure that the entire population, men and women alike, poor as well as rich, are full participants in building their new social and economic institutions, and that women and men find culturally appropriate and effective ways to work together for respectful gender relations that will benefit all.” (pp. 27-28)

3. Freedom of Movement and Access to Services

Kirk, J., 2006, 'Education in Emergencies: The Gender Implications', UNESCO Bangkok/ Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/092/edu_emergencies_Low.pdf

This advocacy brief describes effective strategies to overcome the barriers to education faced by women and girls in emergency situations. The paper outlines the features of education delivery in short-and long-term emergency situations, and highlights the importance of life skills training and the role of education in reconstruction and peace-building. The paper recommends a number of targeted gender-responsive measures:

- locating schools closer to girls' homes and away from dangers such as soldiers' quarters;
- involving community members in ensuring safe travel to and from school;
- pro-actively recruiting and training women as teachers;
- timing classes to accommodate girls' and boys' other responsibilities;
- providing childcare facilities for students and teachers;
- providing feeding programmes or rations for girl students; and
- involving girls and boys in identifying who is missing out on education in their community, and designing strategies to include them.

The paper concludes with an overview of good practice in the areas of programme design, teacher development and support, curriculum development, and monitoring and evaluation.

Intili, J. A. and Kissam, E., 2006, 'Fostering Education for Female, Out-of-School Youth in Afghanistan', Journal of Education for International Development, Volume 2, Issue 1

<http://www.equip123.net/JEID/articles/2/Afghanistan.pdf>

In 2003, in response to the lack of educational opportunities in Afghanistan for the general population and especially for women and girls, USAID funded the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP). APEP offers emergency access to accelerated elementary education for out-of-school youth between ten and eighteen years of age, focusing on females. Between 2003 and 2005, APEP supported Accelerated Learning (AL) programmes for 170,000 over-age youth in more than 3,000 villages in Afghanistan. This paper describes the programme strategies and the significant results achieved for female youth.

The authors find that student performance indicates that the APEP AL programme was able to overcome traditional gender inequities for the participating female students, assuring them equitable access and quality of service, as measured by outcomes. In talking with the few students in the longitudinal study sample who either dropped out or are chronically absent, they found that they either feared being photographed; being the subject of the community's disapproval; had to work instead; or their parents feared attending would create a breach of their security. In addition, the communities' seemingly natural respect for education was

tempered by cynicism about how education would benefit the student and the family immediately.

The authors argue: "Given these Afghan labor-market realities and the constraints on access to university-level education needed to enter professional careers, fostering female education will require that parents believe that the investment is worth the risks, whether they are security risks or the risk of a family's good reputation, or the time that is no longer spent doing chores or other home-based money-generating ventures. For example, if a daughter has learned to read and can subsequently protect the family from signing a bad contract or help family members use the postal system or the bank, this will be perceived as a benefit of her education. It would be wise for the APEP program to widen the AL curriculum to include a broader spectrum of occupational options, with a special emphasis on technical careers, where skilled workers are needed for economic development, and where education or training takes only 1-2 years, as opposed to lengthy university courses of study in medicine, teaching, or engineering." (p. 19)

Kirk, J., and Winthrop, R., 2006, 'Home-Based Schooling: Access to Quality Education for Afghan Girls', Journal of Education for International Development, Volume, 2, Number 2

<http://www.equip123.net/JEID/articles/3/HomeBasedSchooling.pdf>

This paper highlights that despite extraordinary increases in female primary enrolment in Afghanistan, nearly 60% of school-age Afghan girls remain out of school and those who are in school are not assured of completing sixth grade. This paper describes a home-based schooling programme that provides primary education for children in Kabul, Paktia, Logar and Nangahar Provinces. The authors argue that the programme is particularly interesting in a country that has been affected by decades of war and that is redefining its education policies and education system. They ask: Can the contributions of international NGOs serve to support this new Afghanistan education system, and especially to support the provision of quality education for girls?

The authors argue: "Home-based schools provide many thousands of children – and particularly girls, who would otherwise be excluded from education, with a culturally acceptable education. Teachers have a vested interest in their pupils' learning and happiness. They understand the context and can make education relevant to them. Home-based teachers need further training and support but they already possess many important teaching skills and attitudes.

As the Ministry of Education expands and strengthens the education system in Afghanistan, the home-based schools offer some indications of positive pedagogical approaches that could be useful, particularly in rural communities. The policy implications here are similar to those in other countries where complementary schooling models provide support to, and yet also introduce new ideas and methods into traditional and often relatively dysfunctional systems." (pp. 8-9)

Matthews, J. and Ritsena, S., 2004, 'Addressing the Reproductive Health Needs of Conflict-Affected Young People', Forced Migration Review

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR19/FMR1902.pdf>

This article outlines the activities of the Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury Fund for Reproductive Health Care and Rights for Adolescent Refugees (EBP Fund) which was established in June 2000 to provide small grants to local and international organisations for specific adolescent reproductive health (RH) projects.

During the first three years, EBP Fund supported projects for conflict-affected adolescents in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Projects included supporting research and documentation of adolescent RH needs in Somalia; gender-based violence peer educator training in Kosovo to funding family planning services; and culturally appropriate RH workshops for mothers and daughters in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In 2003, it also supported a consortium of 13 local NGOs working on behalf of adolescent Burmese forced migrants on the Thai-Burma border to form the Adolescent Reproductive Health Networking Group (ARHNG). The objective of ARHNG is to develop the institutional capacity and management skills of member organisations for implementing adolescent RH projects.

The authors argue that while it is possible to quantify specific outputs from adolescent RH projects, it becomes increasingly difficult to measure the ultimate aims of such projects – improved adolescent sexual and RH behaviour and, ultimately, improved RH and well-being.

The article does offer some recommendations based on three years of EBP-supported RH projects:

- Effective RH projects for conflict-affected adolescents are varied in their approach. They must be creatively designed to be culturally appropriate and to meet the specific needs of adolescents in a particular community.
- Conflict-affected communities, especially adolescents themselves, are highly motivated to improve adolescents' RH but need capacity building, through technical guidance and support.
- Adolescent RH projects must identify and involve refugee young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of all project activities.
- Peer-to-peer education strategies provide opportunities for meaningful adolescent participation, which, with quality training and careful project monitoring and evaluation, can maximise project impact while minimising financial costs.
- Networks can help close gaps in service provision and strengthen limited capacities by facilitating coordination and collaboration among numerous and diverse adolescent RH projects within a particular region.
- The use of networks and the designation of a lead agency for the network make it easier to incorporate a broader perspective of adolescent RH for an entire region.

USAID, 2000, 'Aftermath: Women and Women's Organizations in Post-Conflict Cambodia' USAID Evaluation Highlights, Number 67

http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/pnacg602.pdf

This report finds that women's organisations in Cambodia have been contributing to the empowerment of women in various ways. They are helping women through vocational training and microcredit programs. They are assisting victims of HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, trafficking and forced prostitution. They are also beginning to influence the political landscape through voter education and advocacy programmes. "In brief, women's organizations are redefining and expanding the limited social, cultural, and economic roles available to women in Cambodian society. Empowerment remains a critical issue for women, whose social status and respect in society has been altered by loss of family, demographic shifts, changing kinship and marriage patterns, and a woman's increasingly burdensome role as sole supporter of her children." (p. 5)

But these women's organisations continue to face many obstacles. Cambodia does not have a tradition for civil society organisations and the government is not always supportive of them. They also depend upon external assistance for their programmes and survival, and this limits their autonomy and the capacity to fashion new programmes. Often, the leadership of these organisations is dominated by one charismatic figure reluctant to delegate authority. Most of

them have yet to develop an open management system in which the staff can discuss issues and problems freely. Thus, they will require continual international support to survive and play an important role in improving the long term social and economic conditions of women and promoting gender equality.

The Cambodian experience draws nine major lessons:

- The war undermined the sexual division of labour, creating new opportunities for women in economic and political affairs. Women entered into various occupations closed to them earlier. They also held important offices at national and local levels during the conflict. After the war, international donors have developed programmes to consolidate those gains. International donors can follow such a course in other post-conflict societies.
- Education and training of women in refugee camps can prepare them to assume leadership roles in post-conflict societies. Thus it makes sense for the international community to support education and training in refugee camps, enabling them to acquire new skills, experience, and vision to help reconstruct gender relations on their return to society.
- The international community can help establish women's organisations in post-conflict societies. Such organisations can develop local roots and gain political legitimacy despite their dependence on international resources.
- In Cambodia, women's organisations have not specialised. Instead, they undertake similar programmes, competing with one another for external resources. International donors can learn from the Cambodian case and encourage sectoral specialisation by women's organisations.

4. Gender-Based Violence

Bastick, M., Grimm, K. And Kunz, R., 2007, 'Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Global Overview and Implications for the Security Sector', Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva

http://www.humansecuritygateway.info/documents/GCDCAF_SexualViolenceInArmedConflict.pdf

This report aims to explore the scope and magnitude of sexual violence in armed conflict. The first part of the report profiles documented conflict-related sexual violence in 51 countries – in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East - that have experienced armed conflict over the past twenty years. The second part of the report 'Implications for the Security Sector', explores strategies for security and justice actors to prevent and respond to sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. It includes a section highlighting some of the ways in which civil society organisations contribute to security. The report also identifies challenges and common shortcomings in responding to conflict-related sexual violence, and presents examples of good or promising practices.

Ward, J., 2002, 'If Not Now When? Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Refugee, Internally Displaced and Post-Conflict Settings: A Global Overview', Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, New York

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2002.nsf/FilesByRWDocUNIDFileName/ACOS-64CGCE-wcrwc-asia-apr.pdf/\\$File/wcrwc-asia-apr.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2002.nsf/FilesByRWDocUNIDFileName/ACOS-64CGCE-wcrwc-asia-apr.pdf/$File/wcrwc-asia-apr.pdf)

This report outlines the major issues, programming efforts, and gaps in programming related to the prevention of and response to GBV among conflict-affected populations in twelve countries: three each for Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. This Asia section includes information on Pakistan/Afghanistan; Burma/ Thailand; and East Timor.

On East Timor, the report finds that local and international organisations have made a commitment to addressing GBV. Some of the most remarkable activities include: FOKUPERS and ET-WAVE's rapid response to survivors of Indonesian violence and subsequent attention to domestic violence; the first Women's Congress and resulting platform for Action; UNHCR's direct investment in police training on GBV; Dili Hospital's safe room; IRC's community-based capacity-building model; and the sex-disaggregated data analysis system of CIVPOL's VPU. Even so, according to those interviewed, most initiatives are limited in scope, temporary, or do not yet have nationwide relevance.

The report highlights various recommendations:

- Confidential reporting systems for cases of GBV should be established, as well as mechanisms for prosecution of GBV crimes should the survivors seek prosecution.
- Training to all refugee communities on basic refugee rights should be provided, including legal recourse in cases of GBV committed by fellow refugees or the host community.
- Strategies to address GBV throughout refugee camps in Thailand should be established, with specific provisions for: 1) accommodating the needs of culturally diverse refugee populations; 2) creating a sectoral response that identifies paths of intervention for health, psychosocial, education, and security sectors; and 3) coordination among the sectors and with representatives of the women's committees and the camp councils. The strategies should be designed with the participation of all those involved in their implementation, with priority attention given to members of the refugee community, especially camp leadership structures and women's committees.
- For the health sector, strategies should include: methods of confidential and active screening for health providers; conducting rape exams; and collecting and monitoring GBV-related health data.
- For the psychosocial sector: supportive interventions for survivors; creating safe spaces for survivors; establishing links with other sectors; and conducting basic education in the community about GBV-related issues and services.
- For the education sector, strategies should include sensitisation curricula (that may be implemented by youth organisations); introducing basic education to adolescents about healthy relationships, safe touch, and access to assistance.
- For the security sector (including UNHCR protection officers and MOI officials) strategies should include methods of immediate assistance, police reporting, referrals for prosecution, data collection, and coordination.
- There should be ongoing oversight of implementation of strategies and for coordination of GBV-related activities and data collection. Mechanisms should be introduced to regularly evaluate data and adjust programming accordingly. Data should also be used to conduct ongoing advocacy and facilitate communication.
- Participatory education campaigns targeting refugees living outside of the camps on issues of GBV should be facilitated.

United Nations Population Fund, 2005, 'Gender-Based Violence in Occupied Palestinian Territory', Prepared for a UN Consultative Meeting, Bucharest, October 17-20

http://www.unfpa.org/women/docs/gbv_opt.pdf

This case study assesses the political, legal and socio-economic status of Palestinian women and discusses the extent to which gender-based violence is prevalent within Occupied Palestinian Territory. It examines institutional responses to gender-based violence at the governmental and non-governmental level; assesses the state of coordination among organisations working in the field; analyses the challenges, successes and lessons learned within the context of the political and socio-economic situation in Occupied Palestinian

Territory; and offers recommendations for combating gender-based violence at national, regional and international levels.

The paper notes that there have been numerous programmatic successes among the different institutions working to combat gender-based violence in Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Women's Studies Centre implemented an action-oriented study which explored the impact of violence against women and how it affected their relationships with their families and society. Based upon the interviews with individual women and local service providers, a series of support groups were formed with women who had experienced similar losses. The Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development cited its open-line service for counselling vulnerable women as one of its greatest achievements. "The increasing number of women who have referred their family and friends to the service has supported the process of social transformation that is needed to eradicate the phenomenon of gender-based violence." (p. 33)

The Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling cited its long-term programme interventions as one of the keys to its success. Partnerships with the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, Health, Social Affairs and Women's Affairs all resulted in policy changes such as adopting manuals on teaching reproductive health in schools, convincing health-care providers that they have a crucial role to play in the care and support of victims of violence, and drafting a new law to protect and uphold women's rights.

Based upon these and other programming successes, the authors identify several lessons learned:

- The language that is used makes a difference when addressing topics that are sensitive or taboo, such as sexual assault. It is important to have a common understanding of the issue being discussed and to ensure that all participants agree on the terminology. In this way, the use of the media to raise awareness among communities is extremely important for gender-based violence to become a commonly known term.
- When designing projects, planners must recognise that it is crucial that projects are community-based and participatory, that they reflect women's and girl's voices, and that they are developed out of real-life experiences. Socio-economic needs assessments should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that the most needy and relevant target groups are being addressed.
- The gender mix within specific activities depends on the type of intervention and whether it is appropriate. For example, support groups should be open only to women, whereas, in other cases, young men and women should be encouraged to participate in activities in mixed groups in order to feel comfortable together. The personal characteristics of service providers in this field are also extremely important, especially when working directly with victims of violence. Having emotional empathy and a deep understanding of the multifaceted and complex problems would bring service providers closer to the persons they are supporting.

Alvarado, M. and Paul, B., 2007, 'Involving Men on the Thai-Burma Border', Forced Migration Review, Issue 27

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR27/full.pdf>

This article describes an International Rescue Committee (IRC) programme on GBV which began in 2004 and includes a 'men involved in peace-building' (MIP) component. The MIP project began with a series of focus group discussions with married and unmarried men to discuss their attitudes and beliefs about gender roles, GBV and violence in the community. "These first sessions seemed to catch men off guard. Many claimed that it was the first time they had been asked to reflect on these issues. The initial results from the focus groups

indicated a very male-dominated social structure strongly influenced by militarisation, and attitudes that condoned violence as an appropriate means of conflict resolution. While violence against women was an acknowledged, documented problem in the camps, it was not accepted as a community problem by many men.” (p. 56)

The men insisted that they too had suffered loss of self-esteem and power and questioned why the GBV programme only focused on women’s issues and women’s rights. The MIP project has helped to highlight the issues of men’s disempowerment and has enabled dialogue about their role in relationships and family life and in resolving community problems. MIP has also identified and supports key individuals in the community – men and women – who understand GBV and either directly or indirectly support the programme. Over time, many men have expressed the desire to be involved in community change projects and to become more knowledgeable about GBV in order to be active in finding solutions. Many people, including many male leaders, now openly recognise that they do not have the skills to deal with problems related to GBV and need assistance. Other lessons learned include:

- Male beliefs condoning GBV must be addressed in order to effectively implement community-based GBV programmes.
- GBV must be presented from the outset as a community-wide issue, not merely as a women’s issue.
- Programmes should focus on the positive potential of all men to be partners in prevention.
- Time, pragmatism and sustained funding are needed to achieve change.
- Careful screening and selection of staff are critical. Expectations about behaviour outside of work-related activities must be clear.
- Training must be context-relevant: where there are no local words for the idea of gender, staff and translators must find vocabulary to describe the different social roles and expectations of men and women.

Moser, A., 2007, ‘Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict-Affected Contexts: A Review of Community-Based Approaches’, UNIFEM

http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/WomensBuildingPeaceAndPreventingSexualViolence_eng.pdf

This paper provides a review of successful approaches to women’s engagement in peace-building and preventing SGBV in conflict-affected communities around the world. Each section and issue begins with an analysis of the relevant obstacles faced by women, and is followed by case studies relating either to peace building or to the prevention of SGBV. The paper is organised around thematic sections on: peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives; reconciliation mechanisms; increasing access to justice; access to support services; awareness raising and attitudinal change; conflict monitoring systems; and making communities safer.

The author notes several commonalities amongst the case studies:

- In some cases, women’s initiatives are challenging and transforming the nature of dominant institutions and identities. Many of the case studies demonstrate a strategic use of gender roles, with women often choosing to use approaches which are readily accessible to them in their daily lives, and capitalising on the commonly-held images of women as peace-makers. “Many of the case studies demonstrate a strategic usage of stereotyped gender roles. Women in communities choose to use strategies which are readily accessible to them in their daily lives: being present, using silence, public shaming, holding coffee meetings. They also capitalize on the commonly held images of women as peace-makers, as mothers who are both nurturers and arbitrators. In this way, women themselves are appropriating stereotypical gender

- roles, and using them to empower themselves and to strengthen their organizations at the community level.” (pp. 18-19)
- The approaches accessible to women are in most cases small-scale and informal, as often, the women must act carefully to avoid community backlash. Often, they rely on being physically present or having face-to-face contact in order to build peace and prevent SGBV. These include raising awareness and increasing access to information through theatre or community exchanges, making spaces safer through door-to-door neighbourhood maintenance programmes or resolving conflict through women’s peace huts.
 - These issues and strategies employed by women point back to the significant obstacles women face when working at the community level. In many ways, these common threads are direct responses to the need to overcome multiple constraints in order to work effectively. The authors argue that “it is crucial not to underestimate the intensity of patriarchy at local levels. Beyond this, other key obstacles involve exclusion from decision-making, lack of access to information, justice and basic services, lack of technical skills, constraints to mobility, risks to physical safety, social resistance and backlash.” (p. 19)

Vann, B., 2002, ‘Gender-based Violence: Emerging Issues in Programs Serving Displaced Populations’, Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium
[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/LGEL-5MRLTP/\\$file/rhrc-GBV-jan03.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/LGEL-5MRLTP/$file/rhrc-GBV-jan03.pdf?openelement)

This report provides information about gender-based violence programming with populations affected by armed conflict. It is divided into the following three sections: Emerging Standards; Common Issues, Practical Solutions; and Varied Programs, Shared Challenges.

Chapter 17 looks at the issues facing Burmese refugees in Thailand. Of the estimated 1.5 million refugees who have fled Burma, approximately half live primarily in refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, and several hundred thousand are scattered throughout Thailand. Many forms of GBV occur in and around the camps, or occurred prior to arrival in the camps. There is no documentation available of any reported incidents, so it is impossible to know the extent and severity of the problem. There is anecdotal information that rape, domestic violence, child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and abuse do occur.

There are two overarching recommendations to strengthen GBV prevention and response in the refugee communities in Thailand:

- Multisectoral system for coordinating the action, and a strategy and action plan for prevention of GBV:
 - Integrate issues of gender, including GBV prevention and response, into the activities of all organisations that work with refugees.
 - Foster the understanding that GBV action is a normal part of the humanitarian responsibility of all four key sectors: health, psychosocial, security, and legal justice.
 - Formalise support to refugee women’s organisations and build their capacity to take the lead in GBV interventions.
- Humanitarian actors must increase their own knowledge and awareness of GBV and leverage their positions to influence change in gender inequalities, gender discrimination, and GBV in the refugee communities and among their own staff.

Spees, P., 2004, 'Gender, Justice and Accountability in Peace Support Operations', International Alert, London

http://www.international-alert.org/pdfs/gender_justice_accountability_peace_operations.pdf

This policy brief looks specifically at the way in which peace support operations (PSOs) can foster a culture of gender justice and accountability; how their capacity and mandate to respect, protect and promote the human rights of civilians, especially women can be strengthened; and how to better address violations committed by UN civilian or military peacekeepers and the lack of accountability that has surrounded such incidents to date. Section II of the report examines key aspects of ensuring gender justice in complex nationbuilding PSOs with a focus on experiences in East Timor and Kosovo and some of the successes and challenges of gender mainstreaming in the establishment of rule of law mechanisms.

The report finds that the PSO in East Timor (UNTAET) was characterised by close interaction with the local population and especially women's groups. Local women successfully lobbied for the Gender Unit when UN financial backing to set it up was not initially allocated. Once in place, the Gender Unit organised consultations, workshops and trainings with women's groups and incorporated the Women's Platform for Action adopted by women's groups after the end of the conflict as part of its work plan. The Unit worked to help women gain a foothold and supported their involvement in the drafting of key policy documents, legislative and electoral processes using the framework of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and later Security Council Resolution 1325. The Unit became the National Department for Women, once governance was officially handed over to the East Timorese government.

Recommendations include:

- Recruitment policy standards and practice for PSOs should include emphasis on gender aware expertise and leadership.
- The UN Secretary General, the UN Security Council and regional peacekeeping bodies should ensure that gender mainstreaming and the participation of women are included as priorities from the early planning and drafting stages for all PSOs.
- All PSO mandates should include provisions requiring the prevention of violence against women and the protection and promotion of women's human rights as detailed in CEDAW with reference also to the Beijing Platform for Action.
- DPKO, DPA, OCHA and relevant regional peacekeeping bodies, should ensure that PSOs adopt an inclusive approach with more systematic consultation and interaction with formal and informal sectors of local populations as standard practice when developing programmes.
- PSOs should be mandated to focus on securing women's civil, political, economic and social rights as an integral part of security sector reform in the development of governance mechanisms and rule of law developments.
- CivPol and other relevant components of PSOs should be trained in and prepared to work in accordance with any host government and international justice mechanisms in the documentation and investigation of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

5. Voice and Participation

McGrew, L., et al., 2004, 'Good Governance from the Ground Up: Women's Roles in Post-Conflict Cambodia' Women Waging Peace, Cambridge and Washington

<http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/Cambodia/WWPCambodiaFullCaseStudy.pdf>

This paper looks at how women in Cambodia are leading many important initiatives that foster good governance and peace building. Primarily through civil society, they are bridging cross-party divides, monitoring human rights, challenging corruption, empowering grassroots constituencies, and strengthening legislation:

- Forging cross-party ties: “Women for Prosperity (WfP) is one of the most effective organizations in this sector. Led by returnee Pok Nanda, it has pioneered a program that not only encourages and enables women to enter politics, but also bridges cross-party divides at the commune level. Among its network are women council members from all sides, including the three main political parties. WfP focuses on the common challenges facing women in politics regardless of ideology and provides ongoing coaching, thus building their skills over time. In preparation for the 2000 commune council elections, WfP supported 5,527 candidates, offering guidance in public speaking, assisting in speechwriting, answering questions from voters, and combating challenges from male party members unsympathetic to women's participation. With plans to formalize a nationwide network, WfP has not only forged new political ground for women's participation—it has provided an effective model for bridging the impasse that exists at higher levels.” (p. vi)
- Monitoring accountability in governance structures: The Center for Social Development has enabled women to become the leading advocates for anti-corruption legislation. It has been leading anti-corruption public forums across the country since 1996, convening vulnerable communities, rural-based NGOs, and government authorities. These social dialogues have been broadcast live by Women's Media Center radio station FM 102, enhancing public awareness and desire for anti-corruption legislation.
- Promoting non-violence: “Using their accepted identities as mothers, women place themselves at the forefront of public protests and engage their adversaries, even police or army personnel, verbally. Their presence among the protesters significantly diminishes the use of force. Peter Swift of the Southeast Asia Development Program (SADP) explains that, though male soldiers have a shameful history of violating women in private, they are culturally prohibited from doing so in the public arena. He says, “If two to three men talk to soldiers, they beat the hell out of them. But if it is women, they don't. Soldiers find it very difficult to deal with women; they are used to raping them, not calmly discussing if a woman is standing up to them.” (p. vii)
- Civil society partnership with government: Women's NGO networks have actively sought to cooperate with the government on the development of policies and legislation. Umbrella groups such as CAMBOW and GADNet worked with the government on the development of legislation on violence, trafficking, and labour.

Bennett, J. and Esfandiari, H., 2006, 'Regional Strategies for Empowering Women', Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, Washington DC

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/empoweringwomen_4.pdf

This report documents the proceedings of a series of workshops held to discuss regional methods for enhancing the social and political involvement of women. The first workshop: “Strategizing Women's Role in Influencing Legislation” explored how women in the Middle East and North Africa are working for increased rights within existing legal frameworks. Participants reviewed regional examples of women's empowerment and discussed methods

for influencing legislation within the framework of existing constitutions, personal status laws, civil codes based on *shari'a*, and international conventions. The workshop also aimed to expose Iraqi women activists to lessons learned by women from the region, as they determine joint plans of action for influencing legislation that addresses women's rights in political, economic, legal, and social realms. The key points from discussions on mechanisms for increasing the political participation of women throughout the Middle East and North Africa included:

- There should be open discussion between local, national, regional, and international activists, as well as between NGOs and political parties—through coalitions, networking, and training to encourage the exchange of experiences and the formation of mutual treaties.
- The capacity of women to enrol in political parties should be developed, as well as increasing the capabilities of women who are currently enrolled in political bodies.
- Women should participate in making legislation and in making amendments to legislation. MENA region constitutions that do not champion equality for women should be revised.
- Women should be trained in negotiation tactics, to ensure their participation in drafting constitutions and monitoring the implementation of legal stipulations.
- Women's communication with supporters and constituents should be encouraged, in order to build a critical mass to discuss sensitive subjects about women's issues and put pressure on the government. Form pressure groups and institutions to influence decision-makers.
- A comparative study of quota systems and best practices should be undertaken, and women trained in the facilitation of the quota systems.
- Media should be used to clarify the importance of women's economic, political, and social equality. Integrate women's platforms into the political campaigns of both men and women candidates.

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), 2004, 'Women and Elections: Guide to Promoting the Participation of Women in Elections', OSAGI, United Nations, New York

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/WomenAndElections.pdf>

This paper examines strategies for promoting women's participation in elections and highlights the conditions that must be present in order to maximise women's ability to participate. These include:

- The legal framework;
- Social and political opportunities and openness to political participation;
- Access to voter registration and voter education; and
- Election management and observation.

The authors also make several general recommendations for all actors in post-conflict electoral processes. They must:

- adhere to international standards for the protection of women's civil and political rights;
- include women as members of delegations to peace negotiations and in bodies created for the implementation of peace accords, including those responsible for the development of new electoral processes;
- carefully design and implement new laws and electoral processes to ensure and enhance women's participation and to effectively increase the possibility of women being elected;
- make certain that the practical aspects and details of the electoral process do not indirectly discriminate against women;

- consider adopting temporary special measures such as quotas;
- require or encourage political parties to nominate and support women candidates, in part by placing them high enough on their candidate lists to be elected;
- ensure that refugee and internally displaced women enjoy the right to vote;
- create platforms to ensure women's voices and concerns are heard; and
- design and conduct voter registration and education campaigns targeting women.

UNDEF/ UNIFEM, n.d., 'Making Democracy Work for Women: Initial Experiences from 10 UNDEF Funded Projects', UNDEF/ UNIFEM

http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/MakingDemocracyWorkForWomen_eng.pdf

This report outlines initial experiences with UNDEF funded projects underway in Argentina, Cambodia, Ecuador, Haiti, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. A common factor among all the projects is the creation of an enabling environment that provides an opportunity for women to participate in reform policies, agendas and decentralization processes. The projects focus on capacity building; building networks; communications and advocacy strategies; and raising awareness.

In Cambodia, a project to increase female participation in decision-making increased the number of women commune councilors elected from 27 to 28 in Takeo (11% of all seats); from 28 to 79 in Kampong Tom (14% of all seats) and from 95 to 148 in Kampong Cham (11% of all seats). They provided support to over 900 women candidates and doubled, from 1,161 to 2,328 the number of women listed at the top of the roster of candidates.

A project with the Youth Rights Corps in the Occupied Palestinian Territories trained a youth corps of 98 members. "The training improved their understanding and knowledge about the functions of the Palestinian Legislative Council, its structure, human rights and gender, and provided them with the skills and tools to lead workshops with direct beneficiaries on several issues, including human rights and gender. The projects raised awareness among grassroots youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip about their rights and mobilised them to act on issues that concern them. A majority of the youth reached in seventy two localities was female. Awareness raising sessions increased their confidence to speak about their rights while male participants were very supportive of gender and women's equality."

4. Additional information

Author

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Websites visited

Google, Google Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center, Women's Studies Center Jerusalem, Siyanda, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, PeaceWomen, UNIFEM, WomenWatch, UN INSTRAW, Hunt Alternatives Fund, iknowpolitics.org, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, ILO, Joint Consortium on Gender-Based Violence, Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium

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