Helpdesk Research Report: Gender Equality in Fragile States
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Query: What interventions in fragile states have promoted gender equality, and have also supported peacebuilding and state-building?

Enquirer: DFID

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1. Overview

Gender gaps may be particularly prevalent in fragile states, with historical practices of exclusion, gender based violence and displacement, among other characteristics. State-building processes in fragile and post-conflict states provide good opportunities to transform the structures of the state and its relationship to women (Harcourt, 2009; Castillejo, 2010).

To date, however, the debate on state fragility has failed to take into account gender dimensions; and policy-makers have often ignored issues of gender in state-building approaches and interventions (Harcourt, 2009; Castillejo, 2010; Koch, 2008). The vast majority of the literature on gender and state-building is critical of donor approaches and interventions. Gender is typically seen as a luxury that should be left aside until the issues of security and governance are addressed. Where there is commitment to integrate gender into state-building programmes, interventions have often been in gender-stereotyped programme areas such as health, education and sexual violence. Gender here is equated with women's 'special needs', neglecting power relations between women and men and within society as a whole (Smits, 2010; Cordaid, 2010; Larson, 2008).   The result is that gender is not applied as a meaningful analytical framework; and gender dynamics are not properly addressed in security and governance, which are considered 'gender neutral'. This undermines the impact and effectiveness of state-building interventions (Schoofs and Smits, 2010; Cordaid, 2010).

Castillejo finds that in some contexts, international support for state-building is nonetheless contributing to reshaping gender relations; however, this impact is often unintentional and is not being documented and learned from (2010). A key challenge is thus to foster an understanding among donors and governments that addressing gender dynamics is a priority and integral component of strategies to foster peace, participation and prosperity (Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2009). Studies have demonstrated a link between gender inequality and the risk of violent conflict (Hudson, 2008; Caprioli, 2003 in Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2009). The persistence of unequal power relations can reinforce and sustain culture of violence and control (Cordaid, 2010; Hudson, 2008).

Gender analysis can also provide great insights into how power imbalances impact on state-society relations in fragile states and ability to exercise citizenship; and how to build inclusive state-society relations and transform political culture and power relations. Focusing on gender forces international actors to move beyond institution building, to also address issues of voice, inclusion and state responsiveness (Smits, 2010; Castillejo, 2010). Women may be considered 'proxies' for

understanding the disenfranchised, vulnerable and marginalised. Focusing on gender equality can thus be a way to address power imbalances, to strengthen the weak and develop positive human interactions (Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2009). Gender analysis can also force international actors to move away from a narrow focus on formal state institutions to customary governance structures, which are often central to women's lives in fragile contexts. Attention to state-society relations and non-state institutions and actors can make support for state-building more effective.

The literature presents a range of findings, lessons and recommendations for interventions in fragile states aimed at gender equality and state-building. These include:

➤ Gender needs to be understood "politically", as an issue of power relations. International actors should include gender within their conflict analysis and political analysis and promote the inclusion of gender concerns within the most central political aspects of state-building, such as within the political settlement. Likewise, donors need to understand gender based violence and gender discrimination within the context of fragility, and situate their responses to this violence within broader work on state-building (Castillejo, 2010).

➤ Non-state structures are often of greater importance to women in fragile states. A focus on state institutions would neglect the gendered power dynamics of non-state structures. Efforts should be made, as in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, to renegotiate the boundaries between formal and customary institutions and to adapt traditional authority structures into more gender-appropriate mechanisms of local governance (Schoofs and Smits, 2010; Castillego, 2008 and 2010).

➤ Efforts should be made to consolidate changes in gender relations that have taken place during periods of conflict. A political economy and gender analysis of such changes can provide useful information to assist in identifying strategic opportunities for supporting and increasing women's formal engagement. International interventions have in some cases, however, undermined opportunities for women. In Sierra Leone and Burundi, for example, women took up leadership roles after chiefs fled their communities. The international community's desire to quickly reinforce local institutions for stability post-conflict resulted in reinstating chiefdoms instead of consolidating the leadership gains for women (Castillejo, 2010).

➤ Increasing women's representation in security and governance institutions, such as in police services, can improve legitimacy of the institution and result in more effective community relations (UNIFEM and UNDP, 2007).

➤ Quotas for women's representation in security and governance institutions are insufficient. They must be accompanied with a range of other institutional and informal reforms, which are essential for women to be able to take advantage of these rights and to effectively participate in decision-making processes. These include capacity building and training for women; and addressing other barriers to participation such as violence, corruption, economic costs, or social attitudes (Cordaid, 2010; Castillejo, 2008 and 2010; Harcourt, 2009; Schoofs and Smits, 2010)

➤ Gender responsive budgeting has the potential to transform gender inequalities and can be an important approach for discussions on gender and fragility (Harcourt, 2009).

➤ Women activists and women's organisations in fragile states need to be strengthened such that they can voice demands within state-society negotiations (Schoofs and Smits, 2010; Castillejo 2008 and 2010). Women's organisations have in some cases, however, been undermined by donor funding mechanisms that require them to develop short term projects which address donor priorities, rather than develop their own agenda (Castillejo, 2010).

➤ Both men and women need to be engaged. While it is important to improve the participation of women in leadership and decision making roles, it is also essential to involve men at all stages of interventions in order to transform existing power relations. Funding criteria should include not only the number of female beneficiaries but also the inclusion of men and the wider community in programming (Cordaid, 2010). The focus should be on women with, or in relation to men; how they share and divide responsibilities during and post-conflict (Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2009).

➢ Gender mainstreaming is important but should be considered in context. Specific interventions may have little impact if they remain isolated from other programming. It is important to consider engaging in fully gendered mainstream work. It is also important, however, to recognize that gender mainstreaming presupposes the existence of technical systems through which gender can be mainstreamed. In contexts where government apparatuses are only beginning to function (e.g. Afghanistan), gender mainstreaming may not be the most appropriate strategy (Larson, 2008).

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2. Gender and fragility

Harcourt, W., 2009, 'Literature Review on Gender and Fragility', European Report on Development http://erd.eui.eu/media/review-by-w-harcourt.pdf

This review finds that there is little literature that directly addresses the link between gender (in)equality and fragility, or gender inequality in fragile states. While there is some literature that addresses gender in post-conflict reconstruction, the debate on state fragility generally does not take into account the gender dimension. The review stresses the importance of bringing together the research community working on fragile states with the research community working on gender and governance in order to promote more gender sensitive and informed theories and policy making on fragile states.

The review highlights several projects that are relevant to addressing gender dimensions in fragile and post-conflict settings. These include:

➢ Gender sensitive indicators (piloted by UNIFEM) that can be mainstreamed into conflict risk assessment and early warning systems. They can also be used to track progress on gender equality in post-conflict settings.
➢ Gender responsive budgeting has the potential to transform gender inequalities and can be an important approach for discussions on gender and fragility.
➢ Requirements for gender sensitive governance structures (developed by UNDP), such as quota systems for women in parliament and the establishment of women's ministries. The review argues that state-building processes in fragile and post-conflict states provide good opportunities to transform the structures of the state and its relationship to women. Studies demonstrate that a rise in representation of women is insufficient however. Changes in attitudes, behaviour, thinking and policies are also necessary, in particular putting in place policies and mechanisms that are responsive to all citizens; are transparent and accountable; and are assessed on efforts to address gender inequality. In addition, capacity building of women is also essential.

Smits, R., 2010, 'UN-Resolution 1325 – Gender Policy Gone Astray: Questioning its Applicability with regard to Gender Sensitive Fragile States Policy', Translation from De Internationale Spectator, vol. 64, no. 10

This article critiques UN Resolution 1325 for failing to contribute to more effective gender sensitive international policy in conflict-affected areas. In particular, it argues that Resolution 1325:

➢ Fails to offer any entry points for the integration of a gender perspective within conflict-affected areas. Instead, it focuses on gender equality as a *goal in and of itself*. This goal is often translated into the need to strengthen the position of women through *quantitative equal participation*. While gender equality may be considered important in itself, and to achieve stability objectives, the article stresses that gender equality cannot be seen as a narrow objective. Rather, gender is an analytical concept that should be used to understand complex identities, power relations, and differential impacts of interventions on men women.
➢ Interchanges the terms 'gender' and 'women', reducing gender dimensions of violence and reconstruction-related challenges to 'women's cause'. However, the concept of gender extends to power relationships by society as a whole; and to determining what is socially acceptable behaviour for men and women on individual, relational as well as societal levels.

As a consequence, gender as a meaningful analytical framework has been neglected in fragile states. The article formulates the following principles to help in terms of the assessment of gender-responsive engagement with fragile states (see pp. 3-5):

1. Gender entails all men, women, boys and girls within a given society
2. Women are not necessarily natural 'gender champions': increasing the participation of women in peace and reconstruction processes does not necessarily lead to improvement's in the position of women and greater gender equality
3. Gender is not about women's 'special needs': this perspective sees areas such as security as 'gender neutral' and fails to understand that attention to gender dimensions of instability and violence can improve the situation of both women and men
4. Gender is inextricably connected to state-building: gender analysis can provide great insights into building inclusive state-society relationships in fragile states and transforming political culture and power relations; however, Resolution 1325's primary reference to state-building is only to emphasize the importance of women's representation in decision-making processes and institutions.

Koch, J., 2008, 'Does Gender Matter in Fragile States?', DIIS Policy Brief: Fragile Situations, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen
http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Briefs2008/PB_2008_10_Does_Gender_Matter_in_Fragile_states.pdf

The policy brief argues that although gender relations are critically important in fragile states, they are often ignored by policy-makers. It focuses on three areas that it considers particularly important in conflict-affected situations: health and education; employment, assets and income; and violence. It offers various recommendations in these areas, including special measures to ensure women and girls' non-discriminatory access to and participation in health and education (e.g. scholarships); support to income-generating activities for women and men and for child-care facilities; and the establishment of counseling services for those who have experienced gender-based violence.

Hudson, V. M. et al, 2008, 'The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States', International Security, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 7-45.
http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/IS3303_pp007-045.pdf

This study provides empirical support for a relationship between the physical security of women and the security (relative peacefulness) of states. It argues that gender relations are representative of the societal treatment of difference between and among individuals and collectives. If forces that are predisposed to violent patriarchy are not checked through social learning to address gender inequality, dysfunctional templates of violence and control become pervasive throughout society and impact on state security.

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3. Gender and State-building

Castillejo, C., 2010, 'Integrating Gender into International Support for Post-conflict State-building: Evidence from a FRIDE Research Project', Background paper for the seminar, 'Gender in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding', 17-18 November, Amsterdam

This paper argues that state-building approaches adopted by the international community have thus far lacked any substantial gender analysis: 'they have not engaged with existing knowledge about women's relationship to the state; examined how state-building processes impact women and men differently; or asked in what ways women can participate in state-building processes' (p. 1). State-building processes, however, have the potential to fundamentally transform the structures of the state and its relation to citizens, including women.

The paper presents findings from a FRIDE research project that explores women's experience of citizenship in fragile states. It demonstrates some challenges and opportunities to improving the gender focus within international support for state-building. The project involves case studies in

Burundi, Colombia, Guatemala, Kosovo and Sierra Leone. It finds that in some contexts, international support for state-building is contributing to reshaping gender relations; however, this impact is often unintentional and is not being documented and learned from. The paper highlights common themes emerging from findings across the case studies:

Political settlement - reshaping the state
Women's inclusion in establishing the political settlement is necessary in order to provide the framework for a state that is responsive to and inclusive of women. However, women are largely excluded from the negotiation of the political settlement. While the case studies demonstrate that women were able to shape issues at the local level and on peripheral issues, they had little influence on decision making at the central level concerning how the state and its politics should be structured (Sierra Leone, Kosovo). Even where women did initially play a central role in peace processes, lack of ongoing political support and funding can undermine these structures (Guatemala).

Formal – customary boundaries redrawn
In many fragile state contexts, women's relationship to the state is often more limited to that of men, and exists only at local level, or is mediated through family, community or customary institutions. Issues of concern to women (e.g. family law, inheritance, land rights etc.) commonly fall under the authority of customary institutions, which can be discriminatory to women. Post-conflict state-building often involves renegotiation of the boundaries between formal and customary institutions, and thus can have a positive impact on women's rights. For example, in Sierra Leone, donor-supported legal and justice reform has provided new rights that women can claim within the formal justice system; and decentralisation has provided women new opportunities to participate in political decision making at the local level.

International interventions can also undermine opportunities for women, however. In both Sierra Leone and Burundi, conflict affected the power base of customary institutions and opened up opportunities for women to take leadership roles after chiefs fled their communities. 'The international community's desire to quickly reinforce local institutions that can provide stability in the immediate aftermath of conflict meant that these possibilities for reform of customary institutions were not fully seized, and instead chiefdoms were reinstated in a largely unreformed state' (p., 4).

Hidden barriers to women's participation and access
The case studies demonstrate that quotas for women's participation are insufficient; the way in which politics is actually practiced is a critical barrier to women's political participation, undermining formal structures for political inclusion. Women tend to hold less key decision-making positions. In addition, levels of patronage and corruption, which are generally high in fragile states, can disadvantage women as they lack the financial or patronage resources to "engage" in these systems

Security for women
Security sector reform programmes in the countries researched did not involve women sufficiently and failed to meet women's security needs. Addressing gender violence is an important issue in post-conflict contexts. Lessons from Guatemala indicate that the international community cannot address such violence in a technical fashion, for example, solely through legal and justice reforms. It is also essential to understand that gender violence can be a part of national and regional fragility. As such, interventions need to be situated within a comprehensive state-building approach that supports a broader range of state and civil society institutions to address the violence and its causes.

Women's voice within state-society negotiations
In order for women's demands to be heard within state-society negotiations, strong women's organisations are needed to voice those demands. Such organisations are often weak in post-conflict contexts. Moreover, in all the research countries, 'women's organisations are being undermined by donor funding mechanisms that require them to develop short term projects which address donor priorities, rather than develop their own agenda' (p. 6).

The paper outlines some lessons for working in fragile states. International actors must (see pp. 6-7):

➢ Recognise that integrating a gender focus within their state-building support is not just a normative requirement, but can actually make that support more effective. Focusing on gender

forces international actors to move beyond institution building, to also address issues of voice, inclusion and state responsiveness.

➢ Understand gender "politically", as an issue of power relations. This means international actors should include gender within their conflict analysis and political analysis and promote the inclusion of gender concerns within the most central political aspects of state-building, such as within the political settlement. Likewise, donors need to understand gender based violence and gender discrimination within the context of fragility, and situate their responses to this violence within broader work on state-building.

➢ Identify and support a range of women activists and women's organisations that can represent the plurality of women's experiences and views

➢ Work on a variety of levels. Evidence suggests that there are more opportunities for action and change in relation to gender at a local level, while at central level it is harder to shift gender power relations. There are often also important regional movements.

➢ Not assume that building inclusive political structures is enough. Support for institution building needs to be complemented with efforts to address the hidden barriers that prevent women accessing these institutions - including violence, corruption, economic costs, or social attitudes.

➢ Approach support for 'hybrid legitimacy' (the fusion of customary and formal systems as way to ensure legitimacy) carefully, with rigorous gender analysis. The legitimacy of customary authorities may be based on values that are in contradiction of women's rights.

Schoofs, S. and Smits, R., 2010, 'Aiming High, Reaching Low: Four Fundamentals for Gender-Responsive State-building', CRU Policy Brief, no. 13, Clingendael Conflict Research Unit, The Hague http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2010/20100300_cru_policy_brief_13_rosan_smits.pdf

This brief argues that gender is typically seen as a luxury in state-building interventions that should be left aside until the issues of security and governance (considered gender-neutral) are addressed. Where there is commitment to integrate gender into state-building programmes, interventions have often been in gender-stereotyped programme areas such as health, education and sexual violence. The result is that gender dynamics are not properly addressed in security and governance, which undermines the impact and effectiveness of state-building interventions. In the area of security sector reform, for example, there is a risk that technical and institution-oriented approaches will be ineffective as they fail to address underlying power dynamics important to citizen security. Increasing female participation in the security sector under a technocratic approach is insufficient as there are additional obstacles to female participation that must be assessed and addressed (e.g. cultural pre-judgements that prevent women's application to join security forces; daily harassment and mistreatment of women in forces; insufficient education that renders women less qualified to participate in police training programmes).

The brief recommends that a gender perspective is adopted during policy analysis, programming and implementation and that greater attention is paid to state-society relations and less tangible aspects of gender dynamics and state-building. This would help to counter the often strong focus on institution building in fragile contexts and point toward the need to look beyond formal state institutions. Women in many fragile contexts are often less likely to have contact with and access to state institutions; a focus on state institutions would neglect the gendered power dynamics of non-state structures. In Afghanistan, for example, women often had more contact with local shuras – traditional authority structures. When Community Development Councils (CDCs), which resemble traditional shuras, were established, attention was paid to evolving them into more gender-appropriate mechanisms of local governance through active encouragement of the participation of women.

Attention to state-society relations would also increase focus on the need to mobilise gender-transformative capacities at the broader level of society by supporting women activists (and progressive men) present in conflict-affected and fragile societies. In such contexts, women have often had to break out of traditional gender roles and are keen to consolidate these changes.

Cordaid, 2010, 'Gender-responsive Peace and State-building: Changing the Culture of Power in Fragile States', Policy Brief, Cordaid
http://www.epp-women.org/images/dbimages/docs/DraftPolicyBrief-GenderResponsivePeaceandState-building-A.Zonneveld.pdf

The aims of gender-responsive peace and state-building, as articulated in this brief are to transform the culture of power into one that supports gender equality and sustainable peacebuilding by creating:

➢ gender responsive decision-making structures in politics and society, and
➢ a sustainable national infrastructure for peace that allows societies and their governments to resolve conflicts internally and with their own skills, institutions and resources (see p. 5).

This culture of power is reproduced by society as a whole. If it is not addressed, quotas and support to increase the participation of women in decision-making processes will be ineffective. Women would still be unable to take up positions of power as this would be resisted by families, communities and wider society.

This brief also highlights two key shortcomings of donor policy (and some positive developments) in the area of gender and fragility:

Equating gender with women: many policy makers translate 'gender' into a single focus on women's needs and women's empowerment, neglecting power relations between men and women. This often leads to the treatment of gender as a special issue rather that at the core of establishing stability and security. It also results in a focus on sectors stereotypically associated with women, such as health, maternal mortality, education and sexual violence. This leaves sectors such as economic development, infrastructure, government and security unaddressed.

The brief notes the MDG3 Funds as a positive example of an intervention that does not equate gender with women. Although it does target funding to stereotypical women's issues, it also includes more 'masculine' issues of property rights, women's representation in politics and employment. In addition, it has adopted an inclusive approach that seeks to change gender stereotypes and unequal power relations.

Considering gender to be a luxury: many policy makers see gender as a luxury and not strategic to establishing security. Gender is a core aspect of creating sustainable peace and security, however: 'in many fragile states, it is particular gender ideals of power that reinforce and sustain a culture of violence in which client-patron relations, corruption, money politics, and suppression of women and minorities can flourish' (p, 5). A culture of 'power over' is prominent rather than a culture of 'power on behalf of' or for a larger social good. One of the lessons learned from DDR projects is that if gender is not mainstreamed in programmes and is considered to be a special issue or an 'extra', it will not be addressed in programme activities.

The brief's recommendations include:

➢ Move beyond small-scale interventions: there is a need to move beyond small micro-credit projects, for example, for women. These often maintain the subordinate economic position of women as they do not offer substantial prospects for growth. Instead, women should be encouraged to participate in non-traditional paid work and donors should aim to challenge unequal gender relations in larger economic development plans and projects.
➢ Make gender a priority: gender should not be perceived as an 'extra' or a 'luxury'. Instead, it should be seen as core to the programme. Those involved in programme design should ensure that gender-responsiveness is listed as a key objective and key operational principle.
➢ Strengthen state-society links: it is important to draw on local informal systems of service delivery and conflict resolution that have proven to be successful coping mechanisms for women and men in conflict affected and fragile environments. Although donor policies reference state-society relations as important to state-building in fragile states, there are few initiatives and little allocated funding that seek to build structural engagement between national or distraction government and civil society.
➢ Adopt an inclusive approach: while it is important to improve the participation of women in leadership and decision making roles, it is also essential to involve men at all stages of

interventions in order to transform existing power relations. Funding criteria should include not only the number of female beneficiaries but also the inclusion of men and the wider community in programming.

Greenberg, M. E. and Zuckerman, E., 2009, 'The Gender Dimensions of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Challenges in Development Aid', in Making Peace Work: The Challenges of Social and Economic Recontruction, eds. T. Addison and T. Brück, Palgrave MacMillan and UNU-WIDER, Helsinki
http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3584&source=rss
http://www.genderaction.org/images/GenderDimensionsPCR_2009.pdf

This chapter reviews projects in post-conflict settings. It adopts the view that building and maintaining peace and prosperity requires attention to gender roles and relations and that incorporating gender equality dimensions enhances returns on post-conflict reconstruction investments. The chapter looks at women-focused activities; gender aware programming; and strategic and transformative programming.

Women-focused activities: these cover situations where gender analyses reveal disparities of need or opportunity that affect women and their families or where conflict-affected settings present opportunities to address pre-conflict inequalities. Examples of such programming include training women as leaders (e.g. Rwanda). Such programmes have often been under-resourced. The key challenge is to foster an understanding among donors and governments that addressing disparities is not a luxury but is a priority and integral component of strategies to foster peace, participation and prosperity. Another challenge is to go beyond increases in numbers of women participants to effective participation and commitment to gender equality. This requires, for example, training for women to negotiate and work effectively with male colleagues, and the emergence of male leaders that also support gender equality.

Gender aware programming: this concerns gender mainstreaming in programmes and activities. It is important to consider, for example, how women and men are affected differently by macroeconomic and microeconomic policies. Many post-conflict credit programmes do not target women; where they do, they target only poor women with small loans and bypass more educated women who may be ready for larger loans (e.g. the Balkans). DDR programmes also often bypass women ex-combatants and women in communities to which combatants are to be reintegrated. Training and employment is focused on demobilised men, while laying off and disempowering women – reinforcing stereotyped divisions of labour that existed pre-conflict. Many women may engage in business activities, however, that with greater assets could engage male family members. Further, reintegration should include women and prepare both men and women for positive household and community relations and for nonviolent mechanisms for resolving differences.

More generally, post-conflict education policies should consider the importance of teaching social and civic skills and values with purposeful attention to gender relations. In Sri Lanka, for example, a World Food Programme food-for-work project had men and women working together on rehabilitating tanks, which promoted cooperation and shared experiences.

Gender role transformation: post-conflict interventions differ from 'normal' development work in their need to heal societies, rebuild social capital, develop positive societal relations and build non-violent institutions. Women may be considered 'proxies' for understanding the disenfranchised, vulnerable and marginalised. Focusing on gender equality can be a way to address power imbalances, to strengthen the weak and develop positive human interactions.

Efforts to rebuild social capital in post-conflict contexts need to extend beyond women-focused initiatives (e.g. knitting together projects in the Balkans) to those that promote gender equality. The chapter notes that there are increasing opportunities to build social capital within local development institutions, including investing in programmes where project leaders are committed to gender equality (e.g. Angola and Sri Lanka).

The chapter provides the following recommendations for policy-makers and donors (see pp. 26-27):

- ➢ View attention to gender as strategic: gender should not be seen as an 'add-on' that is satisfied through a small women-focused initiative. Rather, it should be seen as integral to peace and stability: studies have indicated that gender inequality increases the likelihood that a state will experience internal conflict (Caprioli, 2003).
- ➢ Incorporate gender-analysis into every post-conflict analysis, and policy and project design: each programme and project proposal should explicitly address where there are gender opportunities or barriers; and where there are aspects of the programme that promote gender equality.
- ➢ Ensure that collected data is always sex-disaggregated data: this is necessary for programme design and for monitoring and evaluation. Donors should also use gender budgets to track where resources are going and who is benefiting.
- ➢ Invest in understanding gender within different cultures and societies: this will help to build solid foundations for gender equality
- ➢ Engage both men and women in order to promote gender equality: the focus should be on women with, or in relation to men; how they share and divide responsibilities during and post-conflict.

Baranyi, S., and Powell, K., 2005, 'Fragile States, Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness: A Review of Donor Perspectives', Report prepared for CIDA, The North-South Institute, Ottawa
http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3280
http://www.nsi-ins.ca/english/pdf/Gender_FS_Paper_Donor_Perspectives.pdf

This paper presents findings from a review of policy on state fragility in six agencies (AusAID, DFID, OECD DAC, selected UN agencies, USAID and the World Bank). It finds that 'donors are only beginning to bring their considerable learning about gender equality into their emerging work on fragile states' (p. 1). Gender equality has not been embedded in human rights and good governance theory and practice. Instead, where donors do address gender equality in fragile contexts, it is usually in limited areas such as promoting equity in service delivery and providing basic education to women and girls. The paper argues that: '[t]he failure on the part of donors to address gender inequalities in policy and programming in challenging environments may undermine the effectiveness of strategies to address fragility. Effectiveness can be undermined by inattention to the different ways in which fragility affects men and women. It can also be undermined by missed opportunities for engaging women (and men) as agents of change' (p. 10). It recommends that donors:

- ➢ Involve key stakeholders (e.g. women and women's organisations; male stakeholders; gender equality experts) in policy and programme development in fragile states;
- ➢ Review their gender equality theories and practical tools in other areas of work to see how they can be applied in fragile states
- ➢ Review analytical frameworks in related fields such as peacebuilding and human rights to help understand the gender dimensions in situations of fragility.
- ➢ Use policy dialogue to advance gender equality.

Baranyi, Stephen, and Powell, K., 2005, 'Bringing Gender Back into Canada's Engagement in Fragile States: Options for CIDA in a Whole-of-Government Approach' North-South Institute, Ottawa
http://www.nsi-ins.ca/english/pdf/Gender_FS_Paper_Engagement.pdf

This paper stresses the importance for donors to develop policies and tools to understand and respond to fragile contexts where there is little armed violence and no large-scale humanitarian crisis. Gender differences in such contexts may be similar or distinct to situations of conflict and crisis. It recommends that gender analysis is conducted to improve understanding of local contexts and to help identify opportunities for promoting both gender equality and state-building. In order to conduct such analysis, gender equality must be seen as a cross-cutting issue upfront. Sex-disaggregated data must be collected on the roles of men and women and how this affects their access to resources and power; the views of men and women on interventions; and the social and cultural constraints on promoting gender equality.

4. Case studies

Clare Castillejo, C., 2008, 'Strengthening Women's Citizenship in the Context of State-building: The Experience of Sierra Leone', Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Madrid http://www.fride.org/descarga/WP_Women_Citizenship_ENG_aug08.pdf

Focusing on Sierra Leone, this paper discusses how state-building processes can provide opportunities to strengthen women's citizenship in fragile contexts. Key decisions of relevance to women's lives have traditionally been made by customary authorities in Sierra Leone, yet women's participation in customary governance has been limited. State-building processes that challenge customary governance structures and strengthen the state at national and local levels have created protection for women and opportunities for participation in governance. The state has taken charge of areas traditionally regulated by customary law (marriage and divorce, inheritance and domestic violence), for example, through the 2007 "Gender Bills". Donors have also been working with customary authorities to strengthen the human rights compliance of customary law. In addition, decentralisation policies and local government have made the state more accessible to women by brining it physically closer to them. They have provided a forum for women to participate in local decision-making and to hold the state accountable. Initiatives to strengthen rule of law can also provide opportunities to enhance women's rights and improve access to the justice system.

Despite these positive developments, however, women's protection and participation in national and local government has still been constrained. Key barriers to participation and representation include lack of education and self confidence, lack of financial and political resources, heavy domestic workloads, limited mobility, and cultural attitudes against women's participation in public life. Implementation of the Gender Bills has been patchy; some local courts continue to adjudicate cases based on customary laws that remain in contravention of women's rights.

The paper briefly looks at the impact of international donor interventions in relation to women's citizenship in Sierra Leone and highlights the following two shortcomings:

➢ There is little information on donor activities available to citizens outside of Freetown or in local languages. As such, women outside of the capital or with limited education are rarely informed or engaged on donor policies.
➢ Donor support to civil society activities aimed at strengthening gender equality has been directed to a select group of national level NGOs to implement projects based on donors' agendas. There has been insufficient support for the growth of an organic women's movement with its own priorities.

The paper recommends based on the experience of Sierra Leone that donor operating in similar post-conflict settings can support the strengthening of women's citizenship within state-building processes by:

➢ 'Ensuring that their support for state-building, democratisation and institution strengthening includes, as an explicit aim, the strengthening of women's rights and participation in governance;
➢ Engaging with, understanding, and supporting reform of the customary governance structures that are central to women's lives, rather than working only with formal governance structures with which donors are comfortable;
➢ Ensuring that reforms to strengthen women's civil and political rights are accompanied by support to create the enabling social and economic environment required for women to access these rights;
➢ Providing institutional support to women's civil society organisations at national and local level to foster a strong, independent women's movement that can meaningfully represent the interests of women across the country;
➢ Supporting the development of evidence and knowledge on how state-building processes affect women and can be used as opportunities to strengthen women's citizenship. This could be generated through comparative research in similar contexts' (p. 14).

See also:

Clare Castillejo, C., 2009, 'Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone', Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Madrid
http://www.fride.org/download/WP83_Women_political_ENG_jun09.pdf

Clare Castillejo, C., 2009, 'Building Accountable Justice in Sierra Leone', Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Madrid
http://www.fride.org/download/WP76_Building_Accountable_Eng_ene09.pdf

Larson A., 2008, 'A Mandate to Mainstream: Promoting Gender Equality in Afghanistan', Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), Kabul
http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3281
http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=613&Itemid=26

This paper explores the obstacles to implementation of gender mainstreaming, which is the Afghan government's primary strategy for promoting gender equality in the country. These include:

➢ Strategic and coordination challenges: 'as part of the state-building process in Afghanistan, gender mainstreaming does not seem to have been strategically selected as a singular mechanism to promote gender equality on the merit of its strengths or as a result of substantive contextual analysis' (p. 11). A range of mechanisms to promote gender equality are being supported by different donors; this uncoordinated support has resulted in overlap and confusion that hinders processes of mainstreaming.
➢ Technical challenges: gender mainstreaming presupposes the existence of technical systems through which gender can be mainstreamed. In the case of Afghanistan, where government apparatuses are only beginning to function, gender mainstreaming may not be the most appropriate strategy. Further, it should not be assumed that new technical systems operate with a clean slate, in the absence of pre-existing norms and practices and ingrained cultures.
➢ Political challenges: active political will of influential figures are needed in order to move gender mainstreaming beyond token phrases in national policy documents.

The paper provides an extensive list of guidance and recommendations to address these obstacles, including:

  ➢ The Afghanistan National Development Strategy needs to clarify its position on promoting gender equality and the role of women in the public sector.
  ➢ Gender budgeting should be relied upon more in development budgeting process.
  ➢ The various entities that have the potential to further gender equality should be differentiated in mandates and separated from one another in practice, not just on paper.
  ➢ Attempts to promote gender mainstreaming needs to be put forward within an Islamic framework in order to move beyond incremental progress toward a transformative agenda.
  ➢ Gender issues need to be dissociated with the notion of 'women's problems', which blurs gender equality with welfare concerns.
  ➢ Gender mainstreaming requires strengthening of government institutions such that they are fully operational.
  ➢ Positive discrimination based on increases in numbers of women in ministries is insufficient; all systems, policies, programmes and services need to be made gender sensitive.
  ➢ Active political will of influential champions of gender issues is important in order to reform institutional cultures.

UNIFEM and UNDP, 2007, 'Gender Sensitive Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies', UNIFEM and UNDP
http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/gender/Gender_Sensitive_Police_Reform_Policy_Brief_2007.pdf

Police reform is considered a key component of post-conflict recovery since the effectiveness of all governance processes stem from effective law enforcement. This brief stresses, however, that women's entitlement to security has often been an overlooked aspect of the reform process. In order to support more effective programming in this area, the brief reviews key components of gender-

sensitive police reform (GSPR), drawing experiences in Kosovo, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It identifies the following as key interventions:

Criminalizing Abuses of Women's Rights

In post-conflict contexts, law reform has been a priority for the women's movement and for UNIFEM and UNDP. GSPR therefore needs to invest in specific training to build understanding of new mandates in law enforcement that specifically include gender-based violence.

Operating Practices, Incentives, Performance Measures

Training must be reinforced by changes in operating protocols and procedures; incentives to motivate and reward changes in behaviour; and sanction systems to prevent or punish failure to comply with a gender equality mandate. Examples of changes in operating practices include physical and communications infrastructure in a police station that allows staff to attend to and record the complaints, depositions, and narratives of gender-based violence; and the set up of dedicated police units to address crimes against women. Such units can support attitudinal change among the police officers and the general public. In Kosovo, for example, the creation of a gender unit helped bring human trafficking and forced prostitution out into the open and made them priority areas for the police. For this positive effect to occur it is essential that dedicated gender units do not become undesirable areas of police work, under-recognized and under-rewarded. Powerful incentives must be provided to encourage police personnel to work in these areas.

Staff Composition: Divisions of Labour and Power

Increasing women's representation in police services is considered an important element of gender-sensitive police reform for a number of reasons: it can improve legitimacy of the police service and result in more effective community relations; it can moderate extremes in the use of force; and it can improve responsiveness to preventing abuses of women's rights. Efforts must be made to attract a critical mass of women and to ensure that women are not relegated to the lower ranks and the least-valued tasks. Post-conflict contexts can offer special opportunities for attracting larger numbers of women recruits to the police, because of the way conflict may have changed traditional gender roles, with women taking on new roles as community leaders and even combatants. However, lack of education and qualifications can be an obstacle to recruitment and promotion of women. In Liberia, the Liberian National Police (LNP) provides free high school education to young girls who are willing to undergo specialized police training once they are awarded their high-school diplomas.

Accountability Systems: Responding and Correcting

Women's engagement in oversight mechanisms can be facilitated by encouraging women in national politics to participate in Parliamentary defense and internal security committees; and through police review boards, national human rights commissions, and community-police liaison committees. In Kosovo and Rwanda, the police work with women's networks and organisations to ensure that they are aware of women's needs and concerns and are responsive to gender-based violence.

In addition, new operating systems should be backed up by gender-sensitive information systems, which allow for evidence based performance reviews and evaluations.

5. Additional information

This query response was prepared by **Huma Haider**: huma@gsdrc.org

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Selected websites visited

ACCORD, Clingendael Conflict Research Unit, CRISE, Danish Institute for International Studies, Eldis, European University Institute, FRIDE, Google, Google Scholar, GSDRC, Human Security Gateway, Ingenta journals, UNDP, UNIFEM World Bank

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