

GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING

Key Messages¹

- SDC staff needs to take into account that men and women are both actors and victims of armed conflict.
- The stages of conflict (pre, during and post) are parts of a complex interactive process with gendered implications throughout. Development programmes must therefore be planned and implemented on the basis of a gender and conflict-sensitive context analysis, i.e. considering the different needs and roles of men and women in conflict and peace.
- Violence in the “private” arena of the home and violence in the “public” areas, such as the street, form a continuum of violence. Violence reduction initiatives need to address violence at home as well as in the public arenas, based on the different needs of women, men, girls and boys.
- SDC staff needs to plan programmes and projects based on an extended understanding of violence, covering not only personal (direct, physical, “armed”), but also structural (indirect) and cultural (legitimising) violence against women, men, girls and boys.
- Conflict-sensitive gender work means enabling both women and men to meet their needs, as well as supporting recognition between men and women for each others’ needs and rights.
- Local community organisations are often run and managed by women. These play a key role throughout conflict situations, not only in the provision of basic needs, but also by occupying “advocacy space”. Women’s groups that have contributed to fostering trust and collaboration should be more actively involved in formal and informal peacebuilding and reconciliation processes.

INTRODUCTION

This tip sheet on gender and peacebuilding provides specific guidelines on how to systematically integrate gender aspects (i.e. the socially determined roles attributed to women and men) in programme strategy, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It also outlines thematic points of engagement for mainstreaming gender considerations throughout the conflict cycle. Why does gender matter in violence reduction and peace building activities?

Various forms of violent conflict have different impacts on men and women, and on gender relations. Because of the collapse of economic structures and the disintegration of family and social net-

works, women are generally more severely affected than men by an increase in violence in the private arena of the home conditioned by war. The systematic rape of women, particularly virgin girls and young women, is a deliberate war strategy intended to also humiliate the male enemies. This not only results in enormous distress and mental trauma for the concerned women and families, but can also lead to unwanted pregnancies and further endanger women’s health and lives through unsafe abortions and infections with HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. Thus, gender plays a role throughout the conflict cycle – conflict and violence are gendered activities.

This means that:

- “Women and men as social actors each experience violence and conflict differently, both as victims and as perpetrators; and
- Women and men have differential access to resources (including power and decision making) during conflict and conditions of violence”.²

In addition, peace processes are not gender neutral in their approaches and methods. Because women have far less access to and control of power and resources in most societies, peace processes are still dominantly in the hands of men. These differences must be taken into consideration in programme planning, implementation and monitoring so that

women can participate on an equal footing with men in peace processes and the reconstruction of war-torn societies.

“A gendered perspective is relevant in violence-reduction and peacebuilding strategies because of the following:

- Women and men as social actors often have different roles, relations and identities in peacebuilding and violence-reduction initiatives; and
- Women and men may have different needs and interests that a peacebuilding initiative must include in order to solve not only practical problems, but also underlying strategic interests relating to gendered power relations”.³

EXAMPLE OF A SDC INITIATIVE

Preventing Domestic Violence against Women in Vietnam

The reduction of the vulnerability of women toward family violence is a specific objective of the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy 2001–2010 of the Government of Vietnam and of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women by 2005. SDC contributes to the goal of reducing and eradicating gender-based violence in Vietnam through various bilateral and multilateral projects. SDC supports the project “Enhancing Awareness on Gender Equity and Preventing Domestic Violence Against Women in Ninh Binh Province”. It focuses on raising awareness in citizens and local authorities on gender equality and women’s rights, on preventing domestic violence against women through the establishment of an appropriate intervention system, and on capacity building of the Centre for Reproductive and Family Health (RaFH), the local implementing partner. This project is complimentary to a project on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in the Family in Vietnam’s Population Reproductive Health Programme, implemented by the United Nation’s Population Fund (UNFPA).

More Information: www.sdc.org.vn/

KEY CONCEPTS

Gender

Gender – as opposed to the biological differences between women and men – refers to the socially learned behaviour and expectations that distinguish masculine and feminine social roles. Feminine and masculine role models and expectations are learned, evolve over time, and are variable between cultures. Taking into account the different social roles of women and men improves the efficiency and effectiveness of SDC’s projects and programmes. Gender roles are closely linked to identity, i.e. a person’s self-definition is in part based on his/her gender. Changes in gender roles are thus challenging. In most cultures, gender is also a sym-

bol of differences. When a duality, such as “aggressive” <—> “caring”, is culturally ascribed as being masculine <—> feminine, a redefinition of gender roles is difficult.⁴ There is also a tension between the need to be gender-sensitive, and the need to be culture-sensitive. The universality of women’s rights can be questioned by conflict parties in the name of culture, local customs and practices. In some cases a normative human rights approach increases tensions. To avoid conflict escalation a pragmatic human rights approach may yield better results (e.g. by financing school books that do not reproduce discriminatory gender roles).

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Gender Equality

Gender equality requires the possibility of equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same, but that their opportunities and chances in violence-reduction initiatives, as well as during peace processes, are equal. The goal of gender equality needs thus to be embraced as a central value by SDC's staff.

A Broad Understanding of Violence

Violence does not only imply direct violence in armed conflicts, but also structural violence and actions that disadvantage certain people because of their sex, origin, ethnic group or political beliefs. It follows for SDC that the prevention of violence does not only mean preventing direct (armed) violence, but also having an impact on people, structures and symbols that employ, encourage, propagate or legitimise direct, structural and/or cultural violence in any form against women, men, girls and boys.⁵

An Extended Meaning of Peace

SDC's definition of peace covers freedom from violence at personal, structural and cultural levels, as well as a just social system. This includes equality of

the sexes; the same rights, opportunities and powers of decision making for men and women – a sine qua non for a just social system. Thus, gender equality considerations are a prerequisite of any SDC programme and project implemented in war zones as well as in supposedly "peaceful" societies.⁶

An Extended Understanding of Security

SDC employees should operate with a broad notion of human security, such as defined by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). This human security approach is based on the premise that military security measures for the defence of the territorial integrity of states hardly contribute to protect civilian populations against violent attacks. The human security approach therefore focuses on the security needs of the individual person. Measures designed to address these needs comprise protection against all forms of violence, the promotion of economic, ecological, political and social security. A gendered approach to human security also comprises the full guarantee and implementation of women's rights. Women call for security arrangements that ensure equal rights, absence of (domestic) violence, protection against sexual harassment, and equal opportunity for political participation and occupational equality.⁷

Gender Equality as a Cross-Cutting Issue in Peacebuilding⁸

First, all peacebuilding actors, including SDC, should embrace the goal of gender equality as a central value to peacebuilding; When doing so, synergies with the cross-cutting issue of HIV/AIDS should be developed and made use of;

Second, all peacebuilding initiatives should:

- incorporate a gender analysis into the assessment of the situation; this can be done in parallel with the HIV/AIDS context analysis;
- ensure that gender equality considerations are present at the level of results. In other words, gender equality issues should not be restricted to one component of a project, rather they should be part of and influence the primary direction of the initiative

Third, all peacebuilding initiatives should improve a gender-balanced representation by:

- increasing women's participation in conflict resolution at decision-making levels;
- promoting women as actors and protagonists (rather than as a "vulnerable" group) of peacebuilding initiatives;
- promoting specific initiatives to strengthen women's capacity to participate in peacebuilding initiatives in a meaningful fashion (women's empowerment);
- improving the capacity of organisations in order to deal with gender differences and inequalities and to reduce gender inequalities. This could involve initiatives and/or components that directly target women (including skills training, capacity and development for women's organisations) and/or men (such as sensitisation and analysis of links between notions of masculinity and violence).

A) Development Cooperation (DC) can support specific gender-sensitive peacebuilding initiatives and women's empowerment⁹

DC must always be gender sensitive, i.e. it must always consider the differences between the two genders (roles and needs), and the relationship between them. Besides being gender-sensitive, DC must in some cases specifically focus on women's empowerment, particularly when women have less power and are socially marginalised. In some cases DC may also need to pay special attention to work with men in order to have an impact on gender roles. Any women's empowerment should consider the effects of this on men and the relationship between men and women.

Pre-Conflict Situation

- Support actions that men and women are taking to prevent violence.
- Support the establishment of early warning systems that gather information from men and women from all classes of society.

Women's empowerment

- Use and strengthen existing networks of women's groups to raise awareness of conflict-prevention issues.
- Support platform-building activities of women to meet, share experiences, and strategise their ideas and solutions to de-escalate violent conflicts.

Peace Negotiations and Agreements

- Support multi-track peace processes that include civil society, women and men in the peace process.
- Support track two "back channel" talks, also drawing on the network of women activists across conflict lines.
- Help local actors develop a common agenda, highlighting the different issues that are critical to women and men, and that must be included in negotiations.
- Help local actors to lobby for their engendered peace agenda with key (inter)national negotiators, political parties and other important key persons.
- Train women and men at all levels in gender issues, women's rights, and women's and men's benefits from gender equality.¹⁰

Women's empowerment

Support women's groups that publicise the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security". Both documents call for women's inclusion in peace and decision making processes.

Post-Conflict Reconstruction

- Make sure women and men are involved in discussions about your agency's reconstruction priorities.
- Support legislative reforms that promote equal rights of women and men.
- Support programmes targeting the reduction of domestic violence (domestic violence tends to increase in the immediate post-conflict period).
- Make sure your staff members abide by the code of conduct of your development agency to prevent the sexual abuse of women and girls, men and boys.
- Send gender-balanced teams to the field to implement your agency's programmes.

Women's empowerment

- Support financial initiatives that support women running for election.
- Give women direct access to funds and credits.
- Make sure that women have access to sexual and reproductive information and related preventive and curative services (including family planning, safe motherhood services, condoms, etc.)
- Ensure that girls orphaned by conflict can satisfy their basic needs and those of their family without being pushed into prostitution.

Working with men

- Before and during conflict, men are often socialised to believe that aggressive behaviour is masculine. In a post-conflict setting they need to be supported to let go of this aspect of their masculine identity, in order to take up other roles and activities.
- Resources for work with men should not be taken from resources allocated to women's empowerment.
- Support vulnerable male groups .

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B) DC can support specific gender-sensitive security initiatives¹¹**Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)**

- Support DDR initiatives that address the specific situation, needs and interests of male and female combatants, their families, and the society into which combatants are reintegrated.
- Finance research programmes on the gender dimension of DDR processes.
- Provide appropriate medical and psycho-social care to HIV/AIDS infected civilians (such as victims of rape) and ex-combatants.

Women's empowerment

- Strengthen the involvement of women's organisations in the planning and implementation of DDR initiatives.

Small Arms, Light Weapons (SALW) and Landmines

- Finance projects and programmes that provide community incentives for former men and women fighters to disarm.
- Finance projects that promote awareness of the dangers of SALW, including landmines.
- Support women's organisations and community-based projects to eliminate SALW in homes and communities.
- Finance research programmes on the gender dimension of SALW.

Security Sector Reform (SSR)

- Provide gender awareness and human rights training for those branches of security institutions most likely to come in contact with civilians (such as the police).
- Educate women and men on SSR – its mechanisms, frameworks and policies, with a specific focus on how to address the particular needs of women.

CONCRETE STEPS IN THE PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Gender Equality as an "Objective" of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding requires interventions by different actors at multiple (in)formal levels (individual, community, communal, national, regional, international). Thus the role of SDC is necessarily limited. Peacebuilding cannot be achieved through SDC programmes alone. Nevertheless, "Do no harm" is the minimum requirement for any SDC programme. The programme must avoid any violence-breeding impact on women, men, boys and girls and/or the aggravation of existing violent conflicts. In addition, SDC can support specific gender-sensitive peacebuilding and security-enhancing initiatives at any stage of a conflict cycle. For this purpose the Conflict Prevention and Transformation Division (COPRET) of SDC has developed the "Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management" (CSPM). The aim is for SDC programmes and projects to contribute towards the non-violent resolution of conflicts and the promotion of peacebuilding efforts. CSPM is not some new-fangled instrument, but a means of consistently integrating gender- and conflict-sensitivity into SDC programme management, i.e. in programme strategy, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management: www.deza.admin.ch

Focus on gender and peacebuilding: Gender and Conflict-Sensitive Programme-Management: www.cdf-ch.org/newsletter_gender.html

The aim of the following chapter is to help SDC employees plan their programme and project management cycle in a gender- and conflict-sensitive manner. A synergic approach with efforts to mainstream HIV/AIDS should be applied.

Planning

1. Gender- and Conflict-Sensitive Context Analysis

- Changes in the relationship between the sexes: how has the relationship between the sexes changed as a result of a conflict? Has the scope of action of women and of men – in the home, community, region, at the national level – diminished or increased? What does this signify for our programme/project?
- Gender-specific violence: who (women/men/girls/boys) is subject to what kind of violence? Who commits such acts of violence and/or benefits from them? What strategies do men and women use to counter this violence? Can we help men or women curb and overcome violence?
- Peace environment: are there any existing peacemaking efforts? Who participates in these efforts? How can we ensure that both men and women are involved? How far are these peacemaking efforts gender-specific? How can we help to strengthen the peacemaking efforts? Which gender issues are crucial to the peace process? How can they be integrated into the peacemaking process? Does a code of conduct for peacemakers exist? How is it disseminated and enforced?

Women's empowerment

- Services: do women and girls have equal access to essential services that may have been disrupted during a conflict (such as education, food distribution and health services)?
- Vulnerability: has the vulnerability of women and girls increased due to the conflict? Are women and girls pushed into harmful behaviour such as sexwork in exchange for food and commodities, or unsafe sex?

2. Gender-Sensitive Programme Strategy

Practical or strategic gender interests: should we try to cater more to the practical gender-specific needs of men and women, i.e. to have as an ultimate aim the improvement of living circumstances for men and women in the roles attributed to them? And/or do we want to change the strategic gender-specific interests of men and women, i.e. should the ultimate aim be to influence gender roles, always taking into account a holistic approach and considering "Do no harm" (e.g. by combating structural discrimination

against women in property ownership). And following this, which gender strategy is therefore the right one for our programme/project?

- Empowerment of women, to enlarge their scopes of action?
- Work with men, to support new roles?
- Cooperation between men and women?
- Gender sensitisation within an existing programme/project?
- Several strategies all at once?

3. Targets and the Development of Indicators

- When setting targets, we must put conflict- and gender-related targets (of both a practical and a strategic nature) at the top of the list in any programme/project.

4. Budget

- Is the chosen gender strategy reflected in our budget?
- Are training in gender- and conflict-sensitivity and, if necessary, the advice of experts in the field accounted for in the budget?

Implementation

1. Partner Organisations

- Who is to implement the planned project? Women, men, or both? Why?
- What is the attitude of these partner organisations towards gender equality?
- Will only women or only men, or both men and women participate in the realisation of the project?

2. Target Groups

- To whom are the planned measures addressed? Only women or only men? Or both men and women?
- If a programme/project is intended for both men and women: what must we bear in mind particularly, so that both men and women can benefit from the programme/project?

3. Gender- and Conflict Competence

- How can the gender and conflict competence of our employees and our partner organisations be promoted and strengthened?

Monitoring

1. Gender-Sensitive Monitoring Instruments

- Are the men and women concerned satisfied with what has been achieved up until now? What changes or adjustments are important to them?
- Based on our current experience with this pro-

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gramme, are the targets still totally relevant? Or should they perhaps be redefined? How?

- Have the indicators proven to be useful? To what extent must we change or extend them?

Evaluation

1. Gender-Sensitive Evaluation Instruments

- What has happened to the gender- and conflict-related targets during the project/programme management cycle? How or why have these targets changed, or why have they been dropped?

2. Lessons Learned

- What lessons have been learned with regard to gender and conflict?
- What should we bear in mind?
- What needs to be changed?

EXAMPLE OF A SDC INITIATIVE

Uncovering Sexual Violence against Women and Girls in the Great Lakes Region

In October 2002, having been alerted by its local partners of the mass rapes of more than 2000 women by combatants belonging to various armed factions temporarily occupying the town of Uvira, the SDC Cooperation Office in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, supported spontaneous action by a local NGO to help 500 raped women with first aid medical care and psycho-social support. The tragic events of Uvira served as an ice-breaker to reveal the all too often hidden gender-specific problems and suffering resulting from violent conflict. To ensure that such atrocities are no longer ignored but openly discussed, the SDC Cooperation Office in Bujumbura initiated various humanitarian programmes to assist victims of sexual violence. The project activities follow three lines: "Medical care", "Support with psycho-social rehabilitation" and "Advocacy". Medical care includes first aid medical assistance to victims of sexual violence, including free of charge HIV/AIDS tests; psycho-social rehabilitation covers a wide range of psycho-social activities, including individual trauma counselling of victims of sexual violence, as well as professional training of local trauma counselling experts; the advocacy line encompasses general legal advice to victims of sexual violence and legal assistance during court procedures. In addition, various public outreach campaigns are supported through the financing of radio shows, flyers, workshops, etc. On the multilateral level, the Head Quarter of SDC's humanitarian aid in Bern ensures that the issue of sexual violence against women and girls receives appropriate international attention and follow-up by other external actors working in the Great Lakes Region.

More information: www.deza.admin.ch

WORKING WITH OTHERS

During the last decade, a variety of organisations – think tanks, non-governmental, and development agencies – have developed conceptual and practical knowledge on gender issues and peacebuilding. It is advisable to consult them during planning, implementation and evaluation of peacebuilding programmes. The following list is just exemplary and not complete:

BRIDGE, UK, www.bridge.ids.ac.uk
cfd – The NGO for Women’s Empowerment, www.cfd-ch.org
CIDA, www.acdi-cida.org
GTZ, www.gtz.de
INSTRAW, www.un-instraw.org
International Alert, UK, www.international-alert.org
International Center for Research on Women, www.icrw.org
KOFF – Center for Peacebuilding, www.swisspeace.org/koff/t_gender.htm
Peace Women, www.peacewomen.org
SDC, www.deza.admin.ch
Siyanda, www.siyanda.org
UNIFEM, www.unifem.org
Women, Peace and Security, www.womenwarpeace.org
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, www.wilpf.org

Further Reading

Gender and Conflict Early Warning:
A Framework for Action: www.international-alert.org
Gendering Demilitarization as a Peacebuilding Tool:
www.bicc.de
Gender Perspectives on Disarmament,
Demobilisation and Reintegration:
<http://disarmament2.un.org/gender/note4.pdf>
Gender perspectives on Landmines:
<http://disarmament2.un.org/gender/note5.pdf>
Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Practice,
a SDC toolkit with a collection of resources,
checklists and examples on CD-rom
Gender Perspectives on Small Arms:
<http://disarmament2.un.org/gender/note3.pdf>
The Police and Equality between Women and Men:
<http://www.oecd.org>
Programming for Results in Peacebuilding –
Objectives Tree & Performance Indicators:
www.acdi-cida.gc.ca
SDC Gender Toolkit: <http://www.deza.ch>
UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on „Women,
Peace and Security“:
http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf

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Schirch, Lisa and Sewak, Manjrika (2004), *The Role of Women in Peacebuilding*, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, <http://www.gppac.net/>
Moser, Caroline and Clark, Fiona eds. (2001), *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, Zed Books, London
CIDA (1999), *Gender Equality and Peacebuilding: An Operational Framework*, www.acdi-cida.org
INSTRAW (2004), *Resources on Gender and Conflict Prevention / Resolution*, <http://www.un-in-straw.org>

Footnotes

- ¹ Adapted from Moser, Caroline and Clark, Fiona eds. (2001), *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, Zed Books, London
- ² Moser and Clark (2001:30)
- ³ Moser and Clark (2001:30-31)
- ⁴ Harding, Sandra (1986), *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press
- ⁵ Adapted from cfd – The NGO for Women’s Empowerment, www.cfd-ch.org
- ⁶ Adapted from cfd, 2004
- ⁷ Adapted from cfd, 2004
- ⁸ Adapted from CIDA, 1999; and Schirch and Sewal, 2004
- ⁹ Adapted from International Alert and Women Waging Peace, 2004
- ¹⁰ Women’s empowerment without work on greater understanding between men and women (which also includes clarifying the benefits of gender equality for women and men) can lead to tensions.
- ¹¹ Adapted from International Alert and Women Waging Peace, 2004

Editor:

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC
Conflict Prevention and Transformation Division (COPRET)
Freiburgstrasse 130
CH-3003 Bern

Author:

Patricia Barandun