

The Gender Dimensions Of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: An Analytical Framework For Policymakers

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In this article, we propose a conceptual framework to ensure gender issues are included in the analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of post-conflict reconstruction. The normative foundation of this paper is rights-based, identifying three interrelated kinds of rights which must be guaranteed to women in the post-conflict period: the right to participate meaningfully in policy-making and resource allocation; the right to benefit equally from public and private resources and services; and the right to build a gender equitable society for lasting peace and prosperity. The paper is divided into three corresponding sections. Dimension One discusses women-focused activities; Dimension Two promotes gender aware programming; and Dimension Three proposes ways for societies to transform gender roles. Within these dimensions, we underscore that women are assets for successful reconstruction and that failure to recognize and address gender-related impediments may undermine efforts while purposeful efforts to strengthen gender equality may strengthen results. Thus all three complementary dimensions assert that successful post-conflict reconstruction depends on women's rights and gender equality.

Background

From the Women and Armed Conflict plank in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) (United Nations 1996) through government commitments in the June 2000 five-year BPA review, to Security Council Resolution 1325 (SC 1325) (United Nations 2000), the world has increasingly acknowledged the impacts of conflict on women – and of women on conflict. Many excellent papers have addressed women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations, peacekeeping and peacemaking, resulting in significant progress. This paper builds upon them, shifting the focus to women's inclusion and gender issues in the phases that follow violent conflict, humanitarian assistance, peacemaking efforts, and peace negotiations, namely during *reconstruction*. Our concern is with the gender dimensions of *development* – social, economic and political – but within a particularized context that is post-conflict.

The first gender dimension is women-focused activities, i.e. those that *compensate for gender disparities* – in rights, education, resources and power – and thereby enable women to contribute equally and fully to reconstruction. The second dimension takes a more economic approach, *recognizing that gender-related impediments diminish the effectiveness of economic and governance programs*. Characterized by urgent needs for leadership, resources, labor and talent, post-conflict societies cannot afford to bypass

women or to ignore gender-related impediments and opportunities. The third gender dimension, the most strategic, is transformative as it advocates *gender-oriented activities to change conflict-ridden societies of inequality to peaceful societies of respect and equality*.

We take the position that both WID and gender-mainstreaming approaches are complementarily needed. WID activities are required when it is necessary to work with women alone, to level the playing field and build their capacity. This is the case when women lack capacity, resources, or knowledge of their rights. In other cases, however, it is also important to pay attention to gender -- the gendered roles and responsibilities of women and men, and the ways in which they relate to one another. In such cases, it is important to work with men as well as women, and with them together; and it is also important to integrate attention to gender into mainstream programming or policy-making through “gender mainstreaming”.

Dimension One: Women-Focused Activities

Post-conflict reconstruction offers opportunities to establish new norms and rules, engage new leaders, and build new institutions. Each of these processes offers an opportunity to focus on women’s rights, and respect them; and to acknowledge and value the contribution of women in reconstruction. Yet, in addition to these processes, activities which focus on women as a specific group are required to redress gender disparities in women’s access to essential services and resources. For example, a World Bank project trained Afghan exiled women in Peshawar as teachers of Afghani girls who lacked schooling because of Taliban prohibitions against female education (World Bank2004a). This ‘women-in-development’ (WID) approach aims to eliminate gender inequality.

This section considers four sets of rights which require a WID approach. These are women’s rights to political participation, property ownership, employment, and freedom from violence.

Political rights and participation

As the Beijing Platform of Action underlines, women have the right to draft constitutions and elect representatives (UN 1996). Furthermore, post-conflict countries with greater female than male populations present *opportunities* for females to fill positions previously held by men.

Many post-conflict countries have taken steps to increase women’s political participation. The dominant parties in South Africa (ANC), Mozambique (Frelimo), and Namibia (Swapo), have all established women’s quotas on candidate lists. Quotas can increase women’s representation, but have attracted controversy (Tinker 2004). Controversy erupted in Kosovo in early 2004 when the UN Special Representative supported women’s representation quotas, despite a Kosova Women’s Lobby and Kosova Women’s Network campaign demanding ‘open lists’ to ensure representatives’ accountability to constituencies (Kosovar 2004). Some have questioned women’s quotas on the grounds of women’s qualifications for political work – a criticism that is not encountered with regard

to unqualified elected men. Strategies have been found to address this criticism. For example, when the National Council in Timor Leste rejected quotas in 2002, the Timor-Leste Women's Network (REDE) sought UN funding to train 200 women to compete effectively in elections. Women now comprise 26 percent of elected Constituent Assembly members (UNIFEM 2004).

In Rwanda, where women make up over 60 % of the post-genocide population, women captured 49 % of parliamentary seats in the election of late 2003. Rwanda now has the largest female parliamentary representation worldwide. In Afghanistan, women are about to occupy at least 25 % of seats in the lower parliament, despite the religious fundamentalism and negative traditional attitudes towards women that still pervade the culture of the country. This result has come about through the work of strong Afghan women's groups and pressure from international bodies (including pressure from countries which cannot claim such impressive proportions of women in their own parliament; for example, the US, where women hold only 14% of congressional seats). Having said this, women's representation in some post-conflict parliaments is far lower. For example, it is only 8% in Guatemala's lower house.

With or without quotas, it is necessary to strengthen women's capacity for leadership if women politicians are to succeed in office. It is also necessary if voters are to support them (and thereby eventually eliminate the need for quotas). This strengthening requires resources to be spent on building women's ability to run for office, win, and serve effectively. Part of serving effectively means being able to collaborate effectively with men, as coalition partners and political party leaders. Finally but most importantly, electing women is not important only in itself, for reasons of equity, but because of the experience they share with women in the electorate of unequal treatment with men. For the exercise to bring about wider social transformation and an end to gender inequality in particular, training for women running for office needs to ensure women are willing and able to promote gender equality when governing.

Property rights

Post-conflict reconstruction often involves sorting out property ownership, and drafting property laws that uphold the rights of individuals to property. Such processes must guarantee women's full and equal rights to own property, *de jure*, and their ability to enjoy those rights, *de facto*. Too often, as in Namibia, Rwanda or Uganda, customary law, which does not recognise women's rights to own property, prevails even after new civil laws which uphold gender equality are promulgated. The consequences can be devastating. For example, a rural Namibian woman whose spouse dies usually loses access to land she farmed, and becomes homeless. If she herself becomes ill, she may experience violence, family abandonment, and lose her rights to property and children (Muhato 2003). Currently in sub-Saharan Africa, high death rates due to HIV/AIDS are making inheritance and property rights ever more important. Women can rarely benefit *de facto* from new property laws without understanding their legal rights, and having resources (including literacy, money, and power). Post-conflict reconstruction programmes must develop women's legal literacy and access to justice.

Employment without discrimination

While post-conflict reconstruction often entails new legislation forbidding gender discrimination, employers frequently ignore laws while enforcement mechanisms are weak. This problem pervades transition economies. Allowing employers to discriminate in favor of men reinforces gender disparities, violates women's rights and constricts women's contributions to economic growth. This is discussed further in Dimension Two's Employment section.

Right to freedom from violence

Post-conflict reconstruction often requires protection of these rights of women and girls, because male demobilised soldiers are accustomed to life in a military sub-culture (often involving extreme forms of abuse of women, including rape, forced 'marriages' or sexual slavery). Accustomed to the use of force, backed up by the possession and exercise of weapons, often searching for a role in the post-conflict economy, and prone to alcohol consumption that is linked to violence against women, ex-combatants are frequently brutal and unfamiliar with respectful, equitable gender relations.

Challenges to women's rights-based approaches

Some post-conflict reconstruction programmes have included laudable women-focused approaches. In Rwanda, Pro-Femmes Twese-Hamwe, a women's umbrella organization, trains members as leaders. UNESCO developed Rwanda's Mandela Peace Village (MPV) to provide shelter and literacy programs to displaced widow- and orphan-headed households. However, its conditions are poor: many of the impoverished MPV women still walk several hours daily to fetch contaminated water and fuel.¹ Pressured by women's groups and donors, the Rwandan Parliament passed legislation giving women equal rights to property and inheritance (Zuckerman 2000). The international community has also funded major women's initiatives in Bosnia and Kosovo. In response to pressure from women's groups, Serbia's first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in late 2003 allocated Euros 7 million to develop women's capacity (Vladisavljevic and Zuckerman 2004). Yet despite such achievements in some countries, it is a challenge for women's rights advocates to get most governments and donors to allocate sufficient funding for women's rights-based approaches. It is important to program sustainable funding.

Beyond funding, women-focused activities must address other challenges, such as the need to ensure that women political representatives are women's and gender equality advocates -- not merely well connected, compliant politicians. Gender equitable laws and policies require a critical mass of capable women who voice positions and garner collegial support. *Their challenge is to engage all stakeholders*, including elder male leaders and younger men, to accept gender equality.

Dimension Two: Gender Aware Programming

Gender-aware programming is how we term what others call 'gender mainstreaming' -- that is, identifying and addressing gender issues that may obstruct or improve development programmes and projects. This is required in all macroeconomic and microeconomic development activities associated with post-conflict reconstruction. Post-conflict

reconstruction programs often flounder because they fail to address unequal gender relations and power dynamics (Strickland and Duvvury 2003). Financiers like the World Bank may produce excellent gender studies, and use powerful gender rhetoric, but fail to incorporate them into investments (Piccioto 2000; Zuckerman and Wu 2003).

Macroeconomic issues

To date, little attention has been focused on the ways in which gender relations intersect with macroeconomic policies (Zuckerman 2000; World Development 1995, 2000). These policies affect women and men differently because of their different economic roles in society. Lack of attention to this fact may both cause negative impacts on women and undermine socio-economic objectives (Elson 1991).

Post-conflict reconstruction macroeconomic reforms include spending reallocations, state-owned enterprise privatization, price and trade liberalization, civil service streamlining, and decentralization of governance. Many post-conflict reconstruction countries face severe resource scarcities that require choices. Post-conflict reconstruction programmes rarely recognise the impact of decisions on resource allocations to different sectors on women, men and gender relations. Removing gender barriers in setting priorities may affect development outcomes significantly, as reflected by women urging reallocations from weapons to social programs.² Often, post-conflict reconstruction expenditure cutbacks deprive new single mothers or widows of public support.

Studies demonstrate that women bear the brunt of painful structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) which have been integral to many post-conflict reconstruction frameworks (Elson 1991; Vladisavljevic and Zuckerman 2004; Zuckerman 2000). For example, a typical example of a SAP is that of Serbia and Montenegro, which requires: state-owned enterprises to be closed, restructured and or privatised; cutbacks to be made in public expenditure, including employment in the civil service, and in the provision of social services; and the liberalisation and commercialisation of a financial sector which is reduced in size. The design and implementation of such programmes neglects to take account of the different impacts they have on women and men. Cutbacks in health spending mean that women have to spend more time caring for sick household members, reducing time for paid work. Cutbacks in the civil service and other formal sector jobs result in women – who are more likely to have junior level posts – being shed first and rehired last. This process is also in part attributable to the fact that there is still a widespread assumption on the part of employers that women are secondary breadwinners, and hence that household livelihoods do not depend on their earnings. In reality, increasing numbers of households are female-headed, and changing patterns of economic development are also leading to job losses among unskilled or low-skilled men, meaning that many male-headed households are now dependent on women's earnings. Men who are unemployed often become drunk and increased domestic violence results, which also needs attention from policymakers (Greenberg et al. 1997; Greenberg 2000c).

Post-conflict reconstruction programme design and implementation must prevent such negative and unplanned impacts on women, men and wider society. This requires greater awareness of gender equality as a human right, and of the role of gender equality in

economic recovery and development. The effective participation of women in reconstruction planning is a key element in achieving this. Ensuring women's involvement is likely to enhance gender equality, accountability, and transparency. An example of this is the role that women have played in various contexts in the monitoring of public expenditures, in gender budget analyses – for example those in South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania (Budlender 1999; Commonwealth Secretariat 1999; Esim 1998). All post-conflict reconstruction countries should support gender budget analyses, and advocacy on improvements in spending patterns so that more government funding benefits women.

Access to credit

Credit is a popular post-conflict reconstruction tool. It has been well-established by now that both women and men need access to credit, and that women living in poverty face particular barriers to obtaining it through conventional channels. Commercial banks set conditions on their lending which often mean women are unable to obtain loans. For example, they may require that their clients are literate, or demand collateral in contexts in which women lack the rights to own land or property. Hence, both borrowers and lending officers are almost all men. This general observation holds in places which have recently endured conflicts, as well as other contexts. Micro-credit programmes set up with a developmental aim have tended to target women as a means of addressing these issues. However, while micro-credit programmes have shown women to be more reliable repayers of credit than men, bank attitudes toward women have not tended to shift.

In post-conflict reconstruction, some women and men who are returning from conflict or displacement as a result of conflict not only lack money to start or maintain a business, but also lack relevant skills and knowledge. Hence, they not only need credit, but information and skills relating to business development. For example, many Eritrean and Angolan fighters who had been living in the bush for many years, lacked experience in handling money, and needed confidence when entering the market economy. Some female ex-combatants who borrowed micro-credit failed in their enterprises because of insufficient training. They ended up in abject poverty (Greenberg 2001b).

Many post-conflict reconstruction credit programmes do not target women at all. An example is the World Bank Sierra Leone Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit Project (III), which does not ensure that credit will target women (World Bank 2003). The project does not even acknowledge women's important role in the economy.

Methods to remedy gender inequalities include targeting credit to women and men equally, ensuring equal training opportunities for new bank jobs, using non-property collateral methods, and maintaining sex-disaggregated records to identify and remove gender disparities.

Agricultural development

Worldwide, agriculture is becoming 'feminised', in the sense that increasing numbers of men are leaving the land to migrate to cities for employment. Hence, increasing numbers of women are taking over previously 'male' agricultural activities. Conflict accelerates this trend. However, post-conflict reconstruction activities often assume farmers to be

men. For example, while men were at war in Angola and Rwanda, women maintained their farms (Greenberg et al 1997). Nevertheless, post-conflict agriculture programmes in these countries and in most other post-conflict countries, mainly target ex-combatants, bypassing women farmers. It is crucial that post-conflict reconstruction agricultural production and agribusiness programmes should recognise that both men and women farm, and target all training and other activities at both sexes.

Demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)

Substantial donor resources flow into DDR, which finances typical development activities like credit and training, but targets these activities mainly at male ex-combatants. More than 10,000 male ex-combatants in East Timor registered for DDR assistance, but women who had carried arms and occasionally fought were excluded (UNIFEM 2004). Angola's DDR programs bypassed women who followed soldiers into the bush to perform 'nonmilitary' service as carriers, cooks and forced sexual partners (Greenberg et al 1997).

DDR's male focus perpetuates gender stereotypes, unfairly bypasses women ex-combatants and others who supported combat, and hampers women from contributing to economic growth. Instead, DDR programmes should provide comparable assistance to demobilizing women and men, prepare men for respectful, non-violent household and community relations, and support gender-specific needs including support to rape survivors and treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases, as suggested in the next section. Finally, they should support families and communities to welcome and reintegrate returnees – often requiring contributions by women and attention to gender roles in households and communities (De Watteville 2002). In Dimension Three, later in this article, we discuss ways in which attention to transforming gender relations can help.

Demography and health

Conflicts cause demographic changes, including men lost in combat and temporary or permanent migration (rural to urban, or international). Age-related changes are increased numbers of dependent children or elderly people, and decreased numbers of young or middle-aged adults to support them. Gender-related changes include increased female to male ratios, female-headed households, and young women living alone in cities.

For example, in post-conflict East Timor, nearly half – 45% -- of adult women are widowed (UNIFEM 2004). In post-conflict Rwanda, females comprise over 60 percent of the population. The majority of households are female-or child-headed. Rwandan women play significant roles in all post-conflict walks of life (Hamilton 2000). In Eritrea following the war which ended in independence from Ethiopia, some women fighters who had had sexual relationships with male fighters in the bush were spurned by conservative families and wider communities when they tried to return home. Abandoned and rejected, many single mothers settled in Asmara needing homes, jobs and community support. Without jobs, some in desperation turned to prostitution – often linked to post-conflict reconstruction peacekeepers (Greenberg 2001b).

In relation to health, as suggested in the previous section, diseases, including sexually-transmitted infections, are particularly high in post-conflict populations. These are often

passed on by infected combatants returning home, or women who have undergone rape and sexual slavery in wartime. They often increase once an end to conflict allows for increased mobility of people and of goods – e.g. along the Angola-Namibia border. In addition to diseases, women often suffer from the long-term effects of untreated injuries, including those associated with forced sex and unattended childbirth. There are also psychological health issues stemming from the wide range of war-related traumas. Finally, an ever-expanding population suffers physically and mentally as landmine victims. Gendered impacts are reflected in whose daily tasks put them in danger, e.g. women working in agriculture or searching for fuel, and who gains access to prosthetics (Greenberg et al 1997). Post-conflict reconstruction programmes can help prevent these tragedies – and could, through attention to gender issues.

Human capacity and life skills

Post-conflict reconstruction programmes must address shortages in human resources and skills, caused by interrupted schooling, fewer teachers due to HIV-AIDS attrition, and destroyed school infrastructure. Women and girls often have less opportunity for schooling than men in general, but in post-conflict contexts these disparities are exacerbated due to structural adjustment public expenditure cutbacks that force many young girls to care for families and seek informal sector employment, denying them the opportunity to attend school. In Angola, as a result of the need for girls to attend to family members with war injuries and AIDS, dislocation, destruction of schools and dangers travelling to schools, younger women have had less education than some older women who were educated before conflict or in bush schools.

Post-conflict reconstruction may represent a moment at which societies can take stock and plan for a brighter future. It can present an opportunity to aim higher than merely recreating the pre-conflict situation. In terms of education, this could mean that individual women and men develop skills in learning environments free from restrictive gender stereotypes. New opportunities, such as information technology training, should be available to women and men alike. If they are not planned with an explicit focus on equitable access, they may inadvertently have a negative impact on women and gender relations. Many post-conflict reconstruction programmes launch training activities quickly without regard to who can participate, and why some do not. In addition, as stated at the start of this section, analyses may reveal gender needs of women, but these may disappear at project implementation. For example, the World Bank-funded West Bank and Gaza Palestinian NGO II Project identifies women as the most marginalised group but allocates no funds to train them (World Bank 2001b). Taking deliberate measures to ensure that women can participate in education and training is essential if post-conflict reconstruction is to avoid reinforcing gender biases. For example, childcare and other family responsibilities often prevent women from travelling. The family of a Kosovo female lawyer selected for training in Prishtine forbade her to stay alone in a hotel. Thoughtful organizers moved the training to the woman's town.³

Besides developing male and female vocational skills to increase opportunities to earn income, post-conflict reconstruction programmes must also teach men and women social

and civic skills and values that are essential for building a nonviolent society. This includes training women and men to work collaboratively and respectfully together.

Employment

Generating employment is a top priority for constructing a sustainable post-conflict economy because high unemployment may trigger renewed conflict. Post-conflict reconstruction formal sector employment training programmes mainly target male ex-combatants. Concern to prevent men whose social connections, sense of purpose, and activities are conflict-derived from becoming ‘loose cannons’ is understandable. The current experience of Iraq demonstrates that demobilising armies without providing alternative occupations for ex-combatants can be explosive.

Yet a common post-conflict story is that women lose formal sector jobs and return to the household or to the informal sector (Greenberg et al 1997). Many in those jobs were replacing fighting men, and acquired skills that contribute to growth. In Kosovo, women who were pushed out of the workforce back into their homes lost their skills and regressed to home-based roles.⁴ The pattern is similar in Serbia and Montenegro (Vladislavjevic and Zuckerman 2004; Zuckerman and Jordan 2002). Post-conflict reconstruction programs must prevent such discrimination by providing equal opportunities to men and women. While it is crucially important to focus on employing men, missing the opportunity to engage women in formal economic activities is a strategic oversight. Yet post-conflict reconstruction programs often exclusively focus employment on demobilized men. For example, the World Bank West Bank and Gaza Industrial Estate Project, approved in 1998, promoting employment, does not target women, ignoring women’s potential economic contribution (World Bank 1998). The point that women are assets that a national economy cannot ignore is illustrated by Angolan women who survived economically in Luanda for decades (mid 1970s to 1990s) as businesswomen in the second largest informal market in Africa while men were engaged in combat.

Finally, as suggested in the earlier section concerning SAPs, post-conflict reconstruction programmes, like development programmes in peacetime contexts, commonly fail to recognise, value and support women’s contributions in the informal and reproductive areas of the economy, where most economic activity occurs.

Physical infrastructure

Much post-conflict reconstruction rebuilds destroyed infrastructure. Donors push rapid rebuilding, ignoring opportunities for gender equality and sustainability. Yet taking the time to conduct gender analysis in different contexts can reveal special infrastructure needs. Women must participate in identifying and designing infrastructure to reflect their gendered needs, such as day-care centres and water systems that permit them to work and their daughters to attend school. Gender relations may create particular infrastructure needs depending on social norms: for example, in Afghanistan, women require private road rest areas for their own and children’s needs.⁵ In general, security while traveling on public roads is critical for women who are vulnerable to sex-based crimes, but this need increases in post-conflict environments, where security is a major problem amidst armed, unemployed ex-soldiers. Livelihoods in post-conflict contexts often depend on safe

infrastructure. In countries like Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, where women historically have been traders, insecurity impedes work travel. In addition, attention to security is also necessary for girls traveling to schools.

Women and men have been shown to prioritise rebuilding different types of infrastructure, due in part to different roles in the gender division of labour and different conceptions of well-being. For example, while men often prioritise the construction of main roads, to enable them to reach cities to search for work, women may prefer rural roads to access markets, water, schools, health facilities, and other essential services. But post-conflict projects too rarely solicit female and male road preferences. For example, the World Bank Guatemala Rural and Main Roads Project, approved in 1997, which emphasized road maintenance nationally and rural road construction in the post-conflict ZONAPAZ region, did not address gender issues although a project objective was to enhance access to social and other public services (World Bank 1997).

Another issue relating to gender and physical reconstruction is that women often face discrimination in obtaining food-for-work infrastructure jobs. These are a common feature of post-conflict development work, and are intended to provide short-term work, income, food, and skills. While such jobs could potentially enable women to develop skills and experience in occupations which are commonly associated with men, this is a relatively rare occurrence.

Water supply and sanitation are basic needs for all humanity. In the poorest countries of the world, it is almost always women and girls who perform the daily task of water-collection over long distances. Billions of dollars of investments in roads, water and sanitation have not relieved females of this onerous burden, which steals time from schooling, income-generation and other work, and much-needed sleep and rest.

Gender concerns are also present in the question of which companies are selected for public works contracts. Project consultations should incorporate female inputs, and integrate gender analysis into feasibility studies. A positive example is gender equality training in the new Swedish-supported Kosova railways management reform. However, the process of contracting often involves corruption, and the selection of poorly-performing companies which generate low-quality infrastructure. Although some studies demonstrate that women's involvement reduces the likelihood of corruption (particularly involvement of women in civil society, as watchdogs), women beneficiaries rarely participate in procurement decisions (World Bank 2001a). Most contracted companies are owned, managed and staffed by men.

Dimension Three: Transforming Gender Roles

In an analysis of the literature on gender in the context of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, Strickland and Duvvury find a "slow but positive shift in international opinion and understanding about the *consequences* of conflict on women and the importance of their participation in peacebuilding processes and social transformation" – but find that "gender discrimination continues through political exclusion, economic

marginalization and sexual violence ... denying women their human rights and constraining the potential for development” (Strickland and Duvvury 2003). They suggest that sustainable peace requires a more permanent transformation of social norms around violence, gender and power, and call for transformative approaches to achieve gender equality premised on more gender-equitable relationships. This call inspires Dimension Three of our analytical framework. This Dimension calls for transforming the violent and dominating power relations which are widely associated with masculinity, war and militarized societies with alternative values of co-operation, peaceful dispute resolution, and equality. Without gender equality, it is impossible to achieve economically and physically secure societies, which are cleansed of structural violence (Strickland and Duvvury 2003).

In this section, we respond to Strickland and Duvvury’s challenge by proposing some ways to transform gender roles that could heal the traumas associated with violent conflict, and re-build social capital (a term used here to denote social networks that would contribute to successful development by restoring trust in communities and wider society). This dimension addresses: the traumas of conflict; gender factors in rebuilding social capital; and gender equality as essential for sustainable peace.

Addressing the trauma and breaking cycles of violence

Nearly every war-affected demographic group needs healing. Fighting men and boys must learn to function in a nonviolent culture, resolve differences without force, and handle their detachment and fears. Female victims of gender-based violence and witnesses of violence must heal and move on. They must not transmit their experiences to their children as hate, or urge revenge.

To meet these aims, post-conflict reconstruction programmes must include measures to heal the trauma. According to a survey of 750,000 people in East Timor, 40% of respondents experienced psychological torture, 33% experienced beatings or mauling, 26% experienced head injuries, and 22% witnessed a friend killing a family member (UNIFEM 2004). Reports abound from the Balkans to Rwanda of family members watching male relatives killed or mothers and sisters raped. In Croatia and Kosovo, people who had previously lived amicably with their neighbours burnt their houses down and committed sexual violence against them. Gender-focused trauma work can assist boys who were child soldiers, girls who were abused in military camps, both perpetrators and survivors of sexual violence, and returnees who are unaccustomed to living in families or communities. All these groups can harbour anger, yearn for vengeance, lack purpose, and/or suffer depression, boredom and frustration.

Building social capital after conflict

Social capital is essential to peace, and hence post-conflict reconstruction programmes must rebuild social capital. Conflict saddles households and individuals with uncertainty and mistrust, upon the disintegration of groups and networks that previously knitted communities together. Losing family members through conflict may redefine roles among survivors. Widows or children may become household heads. New roles and

responsibilities need to be defined, and respect and collaboration built between household heads and members. This process contributes to strengthening new household structures.

Some post-conflict reconstruction efforts to build social capital are women-focused – the type of intervention which we focused on in Dimension One of this framework. For example, World Bank Post-Conflict Fund grants support: (1) The Bosnian ‘Knitting Together Nations’ project, which aims to create employment opportunities for displaced women in the knitwear business, and revive and sustain traditional multiethnic cultural ties among designers and producers; (2) The ‘Empowering Women: Socioeconomic Development in Post-Conflict Tajikistan’ project which aims to empower women, nurture social cohesion and reduce potential conflict through creating employment and women’s associations; (3) A Northern Albania and Kosovo project that focuses on early childhood care and development, but with the objectives of supporting social cohesion and conflict prevention through community dynamics and enhancing the role of women as mediators and representatives of non-violent conflict resolution (World Bank 2004b). These laudable ‘WID’ projects constitute a minority of World Bank post-conflict reconstruction projects: From its 1997 inception through September 2004, only 3 percent of the World Bank Post Conflict Grants or 5 percent of their total funding targeted women as a specific group (Zuckerman and Greenberg 2004).

Gender Inequality and Preventing Violence

Our final point draws on a recent World Bank study which linked gender inequality to violence (Caprioli 2003). Caprioli examined the impact of gender inequality on the likelihood of intrastate violence, through a regression analysis covering 1960-1997, a literature survey and a structural and cultural violence analysis. She concluded that gender inequality is not merely an issue of social justice, since it harms women’s status and hampers them from making livelihoods, but also increases the likelihood of internal state conflict (Caprioli 2003). Constructing *sustainable* peace requires offering opportunities to all – and that means gender equality.

1 Co-author Elaine Zuckerman interviewed MPV residents in their homes in 2001.

2 Co-author Marcia Greenberg participated in a Beijing +5 PrepCom meetings in Budapest and Geneva in 1999, where Balkan women pressed this point.

3 Co-author Marcia Greenberg interviewed rule of law program staff in Prishtine in April 2004.

4 Co-author Marcia Greenberg interviewed Sevdie Ahmeti, founder and Executive Director of the Center for Protection of Women and Families in Prishtine, April 2004.

5 Co-author Marcia Greenberg interviewed Judy Benjamin following assessment of gender issues related to proposed U.S.-funded roads project in Afghanistan.

6 Regression analysis is a statistical technique that analyses data from more than one variable and makes quantitative predictions about one variable from the values of other variables.

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